

# The ALISE 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

## Overview

In 2006, the ALISE Board created a strategic plan for 2007-10. Goal number 3 is to deliver “relevant, high quality services and [develop] strategic new initiatives to ensure membership growth to develop the Association’s unique purpose and vision.” Goal 3.3 is to develop regular (at least semi-annual) member satisfaction surveys targeted to specific areas of interest or specific member groups as part of an evidence-based decision-making process for member services.”

Since ALISE had not carried out a survey for many years, the 2008 survey was designed to be more comprehensive than subsequent surveys will be. In this survey we sought to learn from you which services you value, and how we can deliver them better. Additionally, we wanted to gather some basic data about the membership; such information will assist us with future planning.

As you will see in the analysis below, we received a lot of feedback from you. In nearly all of the questions we gave you the opportunity to provide further input. The final question, 34, was reserved for additional comments. We collected some 40 pages of comments. Many thanks for your participation.


## Demographics: Questions 24-33

We heard from 116 members, a 22% response rate. Of the respondents, 32 have been members for 1-5 years; 27 have been members for 6-10 years, and 26 joined ALISE 16-25 years ago (Figure A). Fifty-nine described themselves as full-time faculty, 25 as deans/directors/chairs, and 10 as students—though only 96 members answered this question. Of the faculty, 32 are full professors, 27 are assistant professors, and 17 are associate professors. Seventeen students answered the question about students, so at least 17 of the respondents to the survey are students (Figure B).

Figure A.



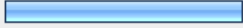



1. 1. When did you first become a member of ALISE?			Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1 year ago			7.8%	9
<b>1-5 years ago</b>			<b>27.8%</b>	<b>32</b>
6-10 years ago			23.5%	27
11-15 years ago			7.0%	8
16-25 years ago			22.6%	26
26 or more years ago			11.3%	13
			<i>answered question</i>	<b>115</b>
			<i>skipped question</i>	<b>1</b>

Figure B.

26. 19. Please describe your professional role. (Check all that apply)				
	Primary	Secondary	Rating Average	Response Count
Full-time Faculty	80.8% (59)	19.2% (14)	1.19	73
Adjunct/Sessional	0.0% (0)	100.0% (10)	2.00	10
Assistant Dean/Director/Chair	62.5% (5)	37.5% (3)	1.38	8
Dean/Director/Chair	100.0% (25)	0.0% (0)	1.00	25
Student	90.9% (10)	9.1% (1)	1.09	11
	Other (please specify) 			13
	<b>answered question</b>			<b>96</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>			<b>20</b>

To question 29, regarding age, 102 responded. Thirty-eight are 46-55 and 38 are 56-65; thus 76 of the respondents are 46-65. No one falls into the 25-35 age group, nine are 36-45, seven are 66-75, and one is older than seventy-five. Twenty-seven are male, 76 are female, and one is “other” (Figure C).

Figure C.

29. 20. Age			
		Response Percent	Response Count
24 or younger		0.0%	0
25-35		8.8%	9
36-45		8.8%	9
46-55		37.3%	38
56-65		37.3%	38
66-75		6.9%	7
Older than 75		1.0%	1
	<b>answered question</b>		<b>102</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>		<b>14</b>

Eighteen respondents described themselves as part of a visible minority, 86 did not so describe themselves, and 12 skipped the question. Responses included:

Educator  
African-American  
GLBT Community  
Asian-American  
Asian  
Old women.

All of the 101 respondents to questions about citizenship and residency live in either Canada (9) or the United States (92), and all are citizens of these countries (Canada=14; United States=87).

Thus, of the respondents, 76 or 65.5% range in age from 46-65 and 9 or 7.7% are 36-45. Eighteen members described themselves as a visible minority which is 17% of the 104 respondents to this question.

#### Member Participation: Questions 3-6

We asked how you participate in ALISE; 112 members responded. (Figure D.) In rank order, here are the responses:

Attend conferences (108)  
Give presentations at conferences (73)  
Participate on committees, juries (66)  
Advocate for ALISE (recruiting members) (46)  
Contribute to the *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* (as authors, editors, reviewers, etc.) (38)  
Nominate colleagues or self for awards (35)  
Apply to grants (17)  
Other (15)

Nearly 18% of ALISE members serve on committees and/or participate in SIGs; this is a high percentage of participants for a professional organization. Yet a couple of people who took the survey commented that they don't know how to get involved: "I'd like to get involved—don't know how. Have never been approached to help—would like to be involved in the organization and/or SIGs."

#### The Annual Conference: Questions 7-14

We asked two questions about conference attendance. The first was, "In what ways do you participate in ALISE? (Please check all that apply.)" We received 112 answers to this question, and 108 members indicated that they attend the annual conference. We included as a separate question, "Do you attend the ALISE Conferences?" Out of 115 responses, 107 attend, and 8 never attend. Of those who attend, 52 go to the conference annually, 33 go almost every year, and 13 attend every 2-3 years. Nine indicated that they attend only infrequently.

Figure D.

4. 4. In what ways do you participate in ALISE? (Please check all that apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Attend conferences		96.4%	108
Present at conferences		65.2%	73
Participate on committees, juries, etc.		58.9%	66
Participate in Special Interest Groups (SIGs)		54.5%	61
Contribute to the Journal of Education for Library and Information Science (JELIS) (serve on board, review articles, as author, etc.)		33.9%	38
Apply for grants		15.2%	17
Nominate colleagues or self for awards		31.3%	35
Advocate for ALISE (recruiting members to ALISE)		41.1%	46
Other (please specify)		13.4%	15

The Board wanted to find out *why* members attend. Fifty-nine attend if they are interviewing candidates, 56 will go if they have a paper accepted, 30 go if they are being interviewed, and 27 will attend if they win an award. Additionally, 47 indicated that they will go if they get funding, and 34 attend if the location is convenient (Figure E).

The Board wanted to learn which five aspects of the conference are valued most. In rank order, the reasons are:

- Networking opportunities (89)
- Job placement activities (57)
- Doctoral poster session (56)
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs) (55)
- Juried papers (52)
- Birds of a Feather (36)
- Work-in-Progress Poster Session (31)
- Coffee breaks and receptions (29)
- Plenary session (27)
- Committees (18)
- Awards (17)

Good value compared to other conferences (16)

Pre-Conference workshops (11)

Julie’s movie at end of conference (3)

Other (8) (responses included: “research presented at conferences,” and “social.”)

Figure E.

7.7. What are the factors that influence your decision to attend the conference? (Check all that apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
If I have a paper accepted		62.2%	56
<b>If I am interviewing candidates</b>		<b>65.6%</b>	<b>59</b>
If I am interviewed		33.3%	30
If I win an award		30.0%	27
If I can get funding		52.2%	47
If the location is convenient		37.8%	34
	Other (please specify)		45
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>90</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>26</b>

Over the years members have asked the Board about moving the conference to another time in the year. Seventy-six (71%) members indicated that they prefer having the conference before ALA Midwinter and 36 explained why. The answers fell into three categories: travel convenience and reduced travel costs; timing with semester; and timing with ALA. Regarding “timing with the semester,” for most of you the conference does *not* conflict with your class schedule; for some it does. Many of you mentioned the convenience of holding ALISE right before ALA. And for those at programs being accredited or re-accredited in any given year, COA attendance is mandatory. One person summed up the views of the majority: “Discussions of other venues have never presented any compelling motive for changing the timing. Changing to a time when no classes are in session anywhere would be compelling but probably impossible.”

Of the 31 who do not like the schedule, 34 reasons were cited. The responses fell into eight categories: timing with the semester; inconvenience of overlapping with ALA midwinter; preference with scheduling before or after ALA Annual; weather; cost; prefer to meet immediately before or after ASIS&T; preferred times, and recruitment timing. Paralleling the positive responses about the timing of ALISE in the semester, an equal number of people find that the timing is not convenient. A couple of people described weather problems, “The weather is frequently bad—I been prevented from getting to or leaving an ALISE conference 3 times in the past 12 years because of snowstorms. I never attend ALA Midwinter, so bumping it against ALA is just a hassle, not an advantage.”

Membership Services: Questions 15-25

In this section of the survey we asked about member services and benefits. Question 15, “Which aspects of ALISE membership are most valuable to you? (Please check the top three)” drew 115 responses (Figure F). In rank order the responses are:

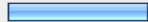



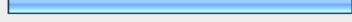
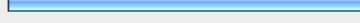








- Networking (64)
- Conference (62)
- Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* (62)
- ALISE statistics (59)
- Job placement services (52)
- Membership directory (32)
- Listserv (25)
- Venue to disseminate research (16)
- Grants (11)
- Website (11)
- Mentoring (10)
- Awards (8)
- Alumni reception at ALA (6)
- Management headquarters services (6)
- ALISE updates (5)
- ALISE News (3)
- Booths at other conferences (1)
- Other (5)

“Other” responses included one suggestion, and a complaint. The suggestion was that we increase the amount of money in the grants. The complaint is that there is a backlog with the ALISE Statistics.

Figure F.



15. 12. Which aspects of ALISE membership are most valuable to you? (Please check the top three)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Journal of Education for Library and Information Science (JELIS)		53.9%	62
ALISE statistics		51.3%	59
Job placement services		45.2%	52
Website		9.6%	11
Membership directory		27.8%	32
Listserv		21.7%	25
Awards		7.0%	8
Grants		9.6%	11
Venue to disseminate your research		13.9%	16
Conference		53.9%	62
<b>Networking</b>		<b>55.7%</b>	<b>64</b>
Mentoring		8.7%	10

Figure F.  
Continued

Listserv		21.7%	25
Awards		7.0%	8
Grants		9.6%	11
Venue to disseminate your research		13.9%	16
Conference		53.9%	62
<b>Networking</b>		<b>55.7%</b>	<b>64</b>
Mentoring		8.7%	10
Alumni reception at ALA		5.2%	6
ALISE News		2.6%	3
Booths at other conferences		0.9%	1
Management headquarters services		5.2%	6
ALISE updates		4.3%	5
 Other (please specify)		4.3%	5
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>115</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>1</b>

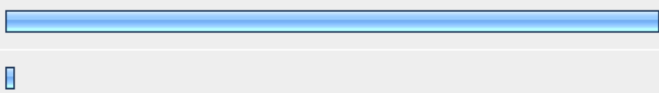
Questions 16-18 asked about whether we should continue to belong to IFLA (Figure G). The question was prompted by the fact that the IFLA dues have increased significantly and we wanted to find out how much ALISE members value the membership. Apparently, most of the respondents do: 94 voted to continue it. Only nine respondents think that we should cancel our IFLA membership. While 102 members responded to the yes/no question of whether we should belong to ALISE, 85 responded with reasons as to *why* we should continue to belong to IFLA. These reasons fall into the following categories: global networking, support for ties to sister organizations, visibility for ALISE, interest in international education and policy, and, the importance of international presence, representation, participation and/or support.

Figure G.

16. 13. ALISE currently belongs to IFLA. In your opinion, should we continue our membership?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		92.2%	94
No		7.8%	8
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>102</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>14</b>

Question 19 asked whether ALISE should collaborate with sister organizations on core services (Figure H). Of the 105 respondents, 104 indicated “yes,” and one, “no.” Questions 20-22 asked specifically about whether we should coordinate our job listings with ASIS&T. There were 110 responses to this question: 91 yeses and 19 no’s. In questions 21 and 22, members expressed their views, pro and con.

Figure H.

19. 14. In general, do you think it is a good idea for ALISE to collaborate with other sister organizations on core services?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		99.0%	104
No		1.0%	1
<i>answered question</i>			<b>105</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>11</b>

Eighty-three members support coordinating our job listings with ASIS&T. Among the reasons:

- those who can’t attend both conferences could submit their dossiers to both
- a large portion of LIS faculty belong to both associations
- it would help both associations with little cost
- it would provide a broader exposure for LIS positions
- it would make things easier for job seekers and employers
- the timing of ASIS&T is more suitable to the hiring cycle
- economy of information creation and access
- there are plenty of people who look for positions in both places
- promotes cross-disciplinary opportunities
- “ASIST meets before ALISE. Often the best candidates are snapped up at ASIST making ALISE seem redundant and less significant. If the two associations cooperate, LIS programs and candidates would know they would receive equal exposure at both venues.”
- I can think of no disadvantage.

Seventeen members are not in favor of a collaboration for these reasons:

- this is a revenue source for ALISE, so if there is coordination, ALISE should manage it
- this is a core draw for ALISE; we risk losing people to ASIS&T
- the “I” schools will take over
- the organizations are different, with different needs
- this could lead to a merger of the organizations, which would be a mistake.

Another membership service is the ALISE website. Questions 23-25 asked members which features of the website are most and least useful. There were 82 responses to question 23, about the most useful features. Fifty-six members responded to question 24 about the least useful features, and 55 people provided suggestions about how the website could be improved (question 25).



The most useful features are:

- conference information (25)
- job placement (11)
- member information (11)
- conference and job placement (9)
- clean and easy website interface (6)
- access to documents and publications (5)
- easy access to information about all the Association's activities. (5)

Ways in which the website could be improved:

- make the event calendar more timely and easy to use (10)
- the SIG section is difficult to use; streamline it and add more content (4)
- add more content, particularly around the conference; e.g. links to presenters
- in general, more timely updates are needed
- add content to the members area
- statistical data is not current enough; update it
- add content to the research section.
- archive older issues of newsletters, etc.
- include a site map
- the site is too text-heavy; liven it up
- make a "login" button on the front page instead of a drop-down.

There were several suggestions about enhancing site content. Some examples: include a list of doctoral programs, add quotes for the media from area experts, and, incorporate news about the schools.

For question 34, we invited members to share additional comments; 24 did. The comments were free-ranging: 4 thanked us for surveying the membership, 3 complimented the new management firm. Two people indicated that they would like there to be more focus on teaching methods. One person described ALISE as "dull and often self-serving," while someone else advised that "it is important to focus on ALISE's strengths." Someone complained that SIGs are less active than they used to be. One member told us to "keep up the good work."

Another member observed that "I want ALISE to be strong and it should be the premier conference to attend if one is in an I-School, Library School, or LIS school." That is certainly the aim of our current strategic plan.

### *Summary*

We received much useful information from you. The Board is particularly appreciative of your thoughtful suggestions. We have implemented one idea already: we now have an online volunteer form which will make it easier for you to participate in ALISE.

Other responses will be addressed at the ALISE Board Meeting in January. For example, we will further consider the merits of coordinating our job listings with ASIS&T. Finally, we will look for continuing ways of reaching out to you.

Thanks so much for participation in our trial survey balloon.

Michele V. Cloonan /December 31, 2008