

The Pulse of the RID Members: Survey Results from RID Fall 2008

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Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the RID Fall 2008 Membership Survey, which was open from October 31 through December 1, 2008. The responses provide insight from the membership regarding the current operations and governance of the association as well as give guidance to what benefits and services the membership would like RID to explore offering in the future; especially as the board and national office implement strategic planning techniques.

Who Participated in the Survey?

This survey drew responses from more than 1,100 members (8.4 percent of the total membership) with 38.3 percent of those responses coming from individuals who have been members between six and 15 years and 29.7 percent who have been members more than 15 years. Certified members provided a majority of the responses as 74.7 percent with Associate member providing 20.8 percent of the responses. Hearing respondents represented 95.4 percent of the respondents; with 4.6 percent deaf or hard of hearing; males were at 14.8 percent; and females were 85.2 percent. Membership dues are self-paid by 87.6 percent with 12.4 percent having dues paid by their employers.

As far as activity with other internal and external organizations, 52.3 percent responded that they occasionally participate in regional and affiliate chapter activities; 34.6 percent frequently participate at that level and 13.7 percent never participate. For other national association involvement, 43.1 percent responded that they do not belong to any other national organization; 30.8 percent are members of the National Association of the Deaf; and 10.1 percent are members of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers.

Overall Ratings: Member Services & Benefits

A majority of the respondents (63.7

percent) are satisfied with the current member services and benefits available to them through RID; however, when asked if RID provides sufficient benefits, only 52.2 percent agreed with that statement. As far as the specific reasons for their membership,

- 86.2 percent believe it is expected by their peers;
- 68.9 percent agree that it provides for greater input into the future of the interpreting profession;
- 81.4 percent believe it enhances their professional development;
- 67.8 percent agree that RID membership increases the confidence of the consumers they serve; and
- 76.5 percent feel that it provides networking opportunities.

When assessing the benefits of membership, the top four benefits of being a member of RID received the following response rates:

- 19.3 percent – *VIEWS* (quarterly)
- 16.9 percent – CMP/ACET programs
- 11.8 percent – member discounts to conference and on publications and tests
- 11.8 percent – national and regional conferences
- 11.6 percent – being listed in the online registry of interpreters
- 6.6 percent – *Journal of Interpretation*
- 6.2 percent – networking
- 5.8 percent – RID *e-NEWS* (monthly e-mail)
- 3.5 percent – professional publications
- 3.3 percent – access to the members-only section of the Web site
- 2.1 percent – RID *Interpreting in the News* (bi-weekly e-mail)
- 0.6 percent – no benefit from RID membership
- 0.5 percent – awards/grant programs

In evaluating the new publications scheme that was put into place starting July 2008, we asked members to provide input on *VIEWS*, *e-NEWS*, *Interpreting*

in the News, the *Journal of Interpretation* and the RID Web site. Following is an analysis of the results from that inquiry.

The new quarterly *VIEWS* received high marks with 77.4 percent of the respondents agreeing that it has significant value and 64.2 percent choosing it as the most beneficial source of information from RID.

The monthly distribution of the RID *e-NEWS* found 61.3 percent of respondents agreeing that it has significant value; the bi-weekly distribution of *Interpreting in the News* came back with 48.5 percent of respondents finding significant value; while 61.9 percent agree that the *Journal of Interpretation* provides significant value.

The questions regarding the Web site provided additional insight regarding the measures RID will have to undertake to create a more user-friendly site. While 82.7 percent agree that the RID Web site is a beneficial source of information, there were a great many issues addressed in the open-ended question asking for suggestions to make the site better. Some suggestions include, more archived articles in the *VIEWS* searchable database; in-depth licensure information by state; a bulletin/discussion board; more pictures; a list of frequently used links; better search tools; easier navigation for certification and testing materials and much more.

When asked about the biennial national conference, 58.5 percent responded that they agree the conference is a benefit that provides significant value and 41.3 percent are planning on attending while another 27.3 percent are undecided. For those who responded that they are attending conference, the two main reasons for their participation are educational and professional development purposes (41.0 percent) and a mix of professional development, business via the business meeting and networking (43.3 percent).

With professional development being such a big factor for conference

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participation, we also asked if members would be interested in RID offering online educational opportunities as a means to earn CEUs. An overwhelming response of 74.3 percent would like see RID offer these types of CEU-earning events.

Other conference related questions pertained to the business meeting, which is traditionally held at the biennial conference. 72.7 percent of the respondents supported mail/e-mail/Web site referendum for voting; 20.8 percent were undecided and 6.5 percent supported voting at conference only.

With the above question, we offered respondents the opportunity explain their rationale for voting at conference only. There were some very thoughtful responses to this, even recognizing that a small percentage of the membership is present at the conference business meeting. Some of those responses included: the discussion surrounding a motion is extremely important to the actual vote and may sway opinion one way or the other; the face to face dialogue is invaluable; it is the tradition of the association; viewpoints are shared at the meeting are not via a mail referendum; and more. With this, some suggestions were also given to be more inclusive of a greater portion of the membership at the business meeting by moving to a delegate voting system or Web casting the meeting so that other members can participate in the dialogue.

Leadership

Overall, the performance of the RID Board of Directors and national office rated at 64.2 percent of the respondents being satisfied with the direction of RID under the current leadership of the board and 60.6 percent satisfied with the operations of the association under the current leadership at the national office.

While an overwhelming of the respondents (82.0 percent) support the inclusion of educational interpreters in RID, 43.9 percent support the RID board's decision to include EIPA at 4.0 or better in the certified membership category; 33.8 did not agree with the board's decision and 22.3 percent were neutral on the issue.

Finally, we asked respondents to provide the top three programs/services in which they think that RID should be focusing. Following is a list of some of those identified within the survey:

- Certification – reliability, validity, customer service, more test sites
- Improved customer service at the national office
- Publishing more books relevant to the field
- CDI advocacy and training opportunities
- Supporting mentorship programs
- Advocating for, educating and marketing the profession and RID certification
- Funding for interpreter education programs
- Becoming allies with the Deaf community
- Increased professional development opportunities with focus on online learning
- More member benefits such as medical and health coverage
- Stronger relationships with NAD, CIT, NAOBI, ALSTA and spoken language interpreter organizations
- Stronger inclusion of educational interpreters and new interpreters to the field
- Occupational health for interpreters
- Addressing shortage of interpreters
- Recruitment of interpreters
- More information on self-employment and taxes
- A more user-friendly Web site

Again, RID would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the survey. We asked a wide array of questions on issues impacting all areas of the association. These responses will provide the foundation we need to review the programs and services currently offered and what more we can do to meet the growing and changing needs of the membership. The thoughtful responses on the open-ended questions will be particularly helpful as we discuss future strategic challenges and how to implement those challenges into a productive and efficient strategic plan that can fully serve the membership.

