

2013 Annual National Meeting Participant Survey

By Hillary Kane, Co-Chair

The Green Party of the United States held an Annual National Meeting July 25-28, 2013, in Iowa City, Iowa. Approximately 122 individuals attended the meeting. A survey was distributed to 76 participants following the meeting so the ANMC could learn more about their feelings about the quality of the event.

Survey Preparation

The ANMC took the attendee list provided by the national staff and looked up email addresses for anyone whose email address was not listed. This yielded a pool of 76 participants for whom an email address was identified. On September 17, 2013, ANMC Co-Chair Hillary Kane emailed participants to request that they complete the survey through the SurveyMonkey platform. Nonrespondents were sent a follow-up email on September 27, 2013, and the survey closed on October 6, 2013.

ANMC members created the survey in the fall following the July meeting. The survey was designed with SurveyMonkey and contained 17 questions, 8 of which were open-ended.

Profile of Respondents

A total of 38 participants responded, which is a response rate of 50%.

55 percent of respondents identified themselves as a National Committee Delegate; 37% identified themselves a Green Party member who is not a delegate or alternate, and 8% listed themselves as observers.

73.6 percent of respondents paid for their attendance at the meeting with their own personal funds, the exact same portion as in 2012. 10% relied on a combination of personal funds and state funds; and 5% relied on waivers for some or all of their costs.

Nearly 34% of respondents are frequent participants in ANMs, saying they “almost always attend regardless of location, cost, or date.” This larger portion (70% higher than reported in 2012) is likely due to the smaller number of delegates and attendees during a odd-numbered year as compared to other years and the fact that this type of meeting attracts more “frequent attenders” more so than casual observers.

Despite that, participants noted that the location and the cost are the most significant factors in their decision to attend any ANM.

Expectations and Motivations

Many ANM participants spoke of meeting other Greens as one of their primary expectations for the event. Other common responses to the open-ended question about expectations were: networking with other Greens, learning about issues, and attending workshops. A small group said they had few expectations because this was their first meeting.

94 percent of respondents said that their expectations of the ANM were met.

When asked about specific reasons for attending, top responses were “to network with other Greens and learn about what’s happening in the party” (63%), “I enjoy ANMs and use them to renew myself for Green Party work” (44%), and “I had a role as a workshop leader, presenter, speaker, local host, etc.” (39%). The top two reasons last year (represent my state at the PNC and see Jill Stein nominated) were not possible this year.

67.5% of respondents rated the meeting as “excellent” or “very good” in terms of providing them with networking opportunities; 76.3% of respondents rated the meeting as “excellent” or “very good” in terms of providing them with information.

Plenary Sessions and Other Activities

Generally speaking, most participants attended the plenary sessions and other special activities that took place on Saturday. In fact, and consistent with last year, the Saturday day-time events (panel of Elected Greens and Jill Stein’s speech) were the only activities for which a majority of respondents indicated that they attended the event and found it to be “excellent.” Most other plenary sessions or special events (Thursday evening panel, Friday evening Skype with international Greens, and Friday evening film) had “did not attend” as the majority response. The NC Business meeting sessions had more people attending than not, but the satisfaction among respondents was more mixed. Only the Saturday evening fundraiser at the Trumpet Blossom had equal responses for “did not attend” and “excellent” (34% each).

That said, most of the events were rated highly by those who did attend. The most popular event was the panel of elected Greens which was rated “excellent” by 70% of respondents. 54 percent of respondents rated the Jill Stein’s speech as “excellent.” The only event which garnered significant criticism was the Thursday evening panel with State Senator Robb Hogg and State Representative Mary Masher with 10% rating it “poor” or “average.”

Workshops

22 different workshops were offered over the course of the four days, the majority of which took place on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. (This is only one fewer workshop than the 2012 PNC).

When looking at results for any given workshop, the great majority of respondents selected

“did not attend” for each offering. Being as most of the workshops ran concurrently with other workshops, it was not expected that most respondents would be able to assess all offerings. That said, when the “did not attend” and non-respondents were removed, all workshops ranked highly by those who did attend. Two workshops stand out as being particularly well-attended and well-liked: the “Developing a Campaign Support Network” workshop put on jointly by the Stein campaign and the CCC and the day-long Campaign School training by Karen Kubby (also put on by the CCC).

Based on the responses, the most attended workshops were Campaign Support Network (13), Shifting the Green Economic Paradigm (12), and the Campaign School (10).

The most common theme in open-ended comments about workshop offerings was regret about not being able to attend any workshops or as many as was desired. This was mostly due to availability -- participants were often already committed to other activities such as the merchandise table or Steering Committee work.

Logistics

When asked about meeting logistics such as a space, location, food, and registration process, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The majority of respondents rated all aspects of meeting logistics as a “5” or a “4” with the meeting website rating the least favorable.

Limitations of the Survey

Like with any informal survey, this survey has inherent limitations. The most important one is the possibility that only the most enthusiastic Green Party supporters took the time to respond, leading to an overly positive bias.

Conclusions

The survey committee believes that there are three important lessons to be learned from volunteers who responded to the survey, all of which are consistent with prior years, namely:

1. People generally attend Green Party Annual Meetings to learn about the Party and connect with fellow Greens.
2. The cost and location of the meeting are very important factors for most Greens when deciding whether to attend.
3. The workshops are valued by those who attend, but they are in general, the least well-attended aspects of the overall convention/meeting.