

2006 Survey Results – Your VUU Board is Listening to You!

In case you are wondering what your VUU Board is up to, we have started out this new Church year with a retreat and visioning process for our future. We started by listening to you—through the survey you filled out in May. Here is what we heard from you and how we will use the survey results as we move forward this year.

First, a big THANK YOU to all of you who took the time last spring to respond to the survey.

Remember that the purpose of the survey was to assess the overall health of the VUU community, to gain a sense of members' and friends' engagement, sense of belonging, commitment, shared accomplishment and spiritual well being. Another purpose is to help your VUU Board identify some key themes to focus on this year, in addition to our ongoing responsibilities of stewardship, financial responsibility, maintaining our policies, and visioning.

Who responded to the survey this year?

- 129 individuals responded
 - 114 members with average membership of just over 9 years
 - 14 friends of VUU with average involvement of nearly 3 years
- Average age 50.8; range 21-83
- 33 of the people who responded currently have children in RE

What did we learn?

- Overall the results were very similar to last year—since the results were very positive last year, this is a good thing!
- We learned that overall people feel VUU is doing very well in terms of achieving the goals set out in our mission, opportunities for involvement, member engagement, and helping people live better balanced, more effective and loving lives. On a scale from 1-5, all of these areas had average scores of 4.2 or greater. This is very good.
- The highest scoring question on the whole survey was “How likely are you to continue to be a member of VUU?” rated 4.74 overall on a 1-5 scale. This is good news and certainly can be interpreted very positively. It means VUU is doing something right, and we can all take pride in that.
- Responses to the questions were categorized into four groupings in terms of how people perceive their engagement with VUU: (1) Personal Involvement and Friendships; (2) Spiritual Wellbeing; (3) Social and Community Responsibility; (4) Welcoming, Respectful Community. Of the four areas, members assess their personal Spiritual Wellbeing highest (4.36), with the church's Social and Community Responsibility being lowest (3.78).
- The results of the survey showed that the strongest predictor of individual commitment and engagement with VUU is the person's Personal Involvement and Friendships (4.34 average). This reconfirms the importance for all of us of helping

each other become involved in various ways, and developing and maintaining friendships.

What do the scores mean?

- All questions on the survey were scored using a 1-5 scale where a score of 5 was most positive (e.g., strongly agree) and a 1 was most negative (e.g., strongly disagree).

Any surprises?

- While the results overall were very positive and similar to last year's, there are a few changes worth noting. Three questions in particular showed a large increase in positive response.
 - "At VUU children and adults have opportunities to learn and explore the spiritual dimensions of their lives" increased from 4.18 in 2005 to 4.51 in 2006. This is a significant jump, and something we should be very pleased about! Our spiritual growth, as children and adults, is a major reason most of us are at VUU.
 - Another question that increased significantly in its positive rating was "I have good friends at VUU" which increased from 3.86 in 2005 to 4.29 in 2006. People tend to stay associated with places (work, clubs, churches) where they have friends, so this is also very encouraging and a good sign of a healthy community.
 - "VUU welcomes newcomers warmly" increased from 3.88 to 4.11. Since we have been working hard to be more welcoming, it is nice to see this.
 - Most questions stayed the same, or went up just a little from last year in terms of their overall score. Not one question dropped significantly lower than its score last year.
- We worry a lot about communication at VUU, so we decided to add a question this year that said "I get the information I need to be an involved member". This question received an average score of 4.31, indicating that communication (at least communication regarding being an active, involved member) is not a major problem.
- Only five questions total (out of 37) had an average score less than 4.0, and none was less than 3.5. In 2005, nine questions fell below 4.0.

How will the results be used?

- More detailed results will be posted on the VUU Board page of the website and the Board will continue to use the surveys throughout the year to provide direction for our visioning and future plans. Other groups within VUU should feel free to use the results as well.
- Already we as a Board have decided to focus on a few significant things:
 - **Friendships.** Because Personal Involvement and Friendships is the best predictor of a member's commitment to VUU, we will encourage all relevant committees and groups to focus on developing more ways for people to connect with each other and make friends.

- **Conflict Resolution.** Two questions on VUU's conflict resolution approaches were ranked among the lowest on the survey so we will begin a process to identify better means of conflict resolution.
- **Social and Community Action.** Our church covenant vows that service is our prayer, yet our social action and community commitment is ranked lowest among the major categories on the survey. Thus, we will continue the focus that began last year to support and encourage community action and community connections through VUU.

Again, we want to thank everyone who responded to the survey. If you have any questions about the survey or would like more detailed information, please let us know. Also, feel free to contact your VUU Board members throughout the year. We don't just want to listen once a year at survey time!

Written by Mary Jo Bitner

On behalf of your VUU Board
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