

**Penn State Faculty/Staff Club Member Survey  
Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment  
January 2006**

**Introduction**

The Faculty/Staff Club Board of Directors recently surveyed club members in order to get feedback and ideas on areas for improvement. The on-line survey was drafted by the club's Board. The Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment administered the survey during December 2005. Participation was solicited via an initial email invitation and one follow-up email reminder, both from Board president Peter Deines.

109 of the club's approximately 550 members responded, for a response rate of close to 20 %. Almost half of all respondents have been members of the club for over six years (46 percent); virtually all respondents (over 98 percent) have been members for at least one year.

Responses show that members are generally very pleased with the services that the club has to offer and are satisfied with their membership. Most of the suggestions for improvement focused on the lunch menu, the rising price of meals, and promotion of club services in recruiting new and younger members.

**Use of Faculty/Staff Club Services**

The data suggest that respondents make good use of the services that the club provides. Virtually all respondents (95 percent) used a Faculty/Staff Club service at least once during the past year. Indeed, over 64 percent of respondents used a club service at least five times over the past year, while over 27 percent made use of a club service more than ten times. The few who did not make use of any club services in the past year said that the reason was either that the club is too far from their office, or that they are not located at University Park.

By far, the most popular club service that respondents made use of during the past year was the lunch service (over 87 percent). Special events (such as theme lunches and special evening events) as well as the Penn State Forum were the second and third most popular services, respectively, with about 40 percent of respondents taking part in each.

Despite the fact that so many of the respondents made use of the lunch service during the past year, only 11 percent of survey participants answered that the Faculty/Staff Club is what "best describes" where they eat lunch. One out of three respondents usually bring their lunch and eat in the workplace, while another 19 percent typically eat at one of the on-campus eateries.

**Importance of Club Services**

On a scale of one to five, with a one indicating "not important" and a five indicating "very important," more than 77 percent of respondents rated the lunch service as either a four or a five in terms of importance to them, with over 53 percent giving it a five. The overall average rating

for the lunch service was a 4.1. No other club service received as high an average score in terms of importance as the lunch service. The Forum Lectures was the service ranked second in terms of importance, with 46 percent of respondents rating the importance of the Forum with either a four or a five. The overall average rating for the Forum Lectures was 3.4.

Respondents view three services as relatively unimportant. Wine seminars, reciprocity with other university clubs, and the welcome reception all averaged around 2.3 to 2.4 on the five-point scale.

### **Member Satisfaction**

Almost 79 percent of respondents indicated that they are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their membership, while less than five percent of respondents said that they are dissatisfied. Likewise, almost 82 percent of respondents indicated that the club has met all of their expectations in terms of services and activities. Only 13 percent of respondents said that there are services or activities that they expected when they joined that have not been provided. For those indicating that the club has not fully met their expectations, the primary reason for dissatisfaction is the food service. For example, some survey participants indicated that the price of the lunches has increased too much, or that they want the monthly theme dinners brought back.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

As noted, the responses to the survey were largely positive, but there were numerous ideas for changes that the Board might wish to consider. This included ideas such as more vegetarian options, providing incentives (such as a free lunch) for potential new members, and more; these ideas are compiled in the Tabulation of Survey Results, below.

### **Methodological Considerations**

This survey was conducted on-line and made available to all Faculty/Staff Club members. It is believed that nearly all members have electronic access; the Faculty/Staff Club routinely uses the Internet for communicating with members.

As in most surveys, there is the possibility of non-response bias in these results. In other words, the data gathered from this sample of respondents may or may not be representative of the club’s member population with respect to the questions explored by this survey. For example, it is possible that the sample of respondents could be over-representative of those members who used the club’s services in the past year, while most of those members who did not recently make use of any services did not respond. This could explain why 95 percent of respondents indicated that they did use a club service in the past year, while only five percent said they did not. Likewise, some respondents may have decided to take part because they specifically had something to say about the club (either positive or negative), while other club members may have chosen to not participate in the survey because they had no strong opinions to share one way or the other.

### Tabulation of Responses

**109 total respondents (n = 109) of 662 members; response rate = 16.5%**

**1) How long have you been a member?**

Less than one year	n = 2 ( 1.8 %)
1 to 3 years	n = 27 (24.8 %)
4 to 6 years	n = 30 (27.5 %)
Over six years	n = 50 (45.9 %)

**2) How many times, if any, did you use Faculty/Staff Club services (lunch, welcome receptions, special events, etc.) during the past year?**

Never	n = 6 (5.5 %)
1 to 4	n = 33 (30.3 %)
5 to 10	n = 40 (36.7 %)
More than 10 times	n = 30 (27.5 %)

**3) Which of the following Faculty/Staff Club services have you used during the past year?**

Connoisseurs dinner	n = 14 (12.8 %)
Lunch	n = 95 (87.2 %)
Welcoming reception	n = 17 (15.6 %)
Special event	n = 44 (40.4 %)
Penn State Forum	n = 43 (39.4 %)
Used services of other faculty/staff clubs when visiting universities	n = 3 (2.8%)
Wine seminar	n = 0 (0.0 %)
Other -- Please specify	n = 4 (3.7 %)
Monthly evening dinners	
Ten Thousand Villages Sale	
Trip to Belleville	
Third Thursday Theme Dinners	

- 4) Please rate the following services in terms of their importance to you as a member, using “5” to indicate “Very important” and “1” to indicate “Not important.”

<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Avg = 4.13</b>
“1—Not important”	n = 10 (9.2 %)
“2”	n = 2 (1.8 %)
“3”	n = 10 (9.2 %)
“4”	n = 26 (23.9 %)
“5—Very important”	n = 58 (53.2 %)

<b>Welcome reception</b>	<b>Avg = 2.38</b>
“1—Not important”	n = 34 (31.2 %)
“2”	n = 16 (14.7 %)
“3”	n = 24 (22.0 %)
“4”	n = 9 (8.3 %)
“5—Very important”	n = 9 (8.3 %)

<b>Special events</b>	<b>Avg = 3.02</b>
“1—Not important”	n = 15 (13.8 %)
“2”	n = 14 (12.8 %)
“3”	n = 35 (32.1 %)
“4”	n = 20 (18.3 %)
“5—Very important”	n = 13 (11.9 %)

<b>Forum Lectures</b>	<b>Avg = 3.44</b>
“1—Not important”	n = 9 (8.3 %)
“2”	n = 12 (11.0 %)
“3”	n = 29 (26.6 %)
“4”	n = 26 (23.9 %)
“5—Very important”	n = 24 (22.0 %)

<b>Reciprocity with clubs at other universities</b>	<b>Avg = 2.36</b>
“1—Not important”	n = 35 (32.1 %)
“2”	n = 16 (14.7 %)
“3”	n = 24 (22.0 %)
“4”	n = 12 (11.0 %)
“5—Very important”	n = 7 (6.4 %)

<b>Wine seminar</b>	<b>Avg = 2.32</b>
“1—Not important”	n = 35 (32.1 %)
“2”	n = 17 (15.6 %)
“3”	n = 24 (22.0 %)
“4”	n = 5 (4.6 %)
“5—Very important”	n = 10 (9.2 %)

<b>Other – Please specify</b>	
Newsletter	n = 1 (0.9%)

**5) If you answered NEVER to Question 2, please share the reason(s) that you do not take advantage of the club's services**

Long walk from my office	n = 3
I am at a non-UP location	n = 2
Parking	n = 1

**6) Are there any services or activities that you expected when you joined the Club that have not been provided?**

Yes	n = 14 (12.8 %)	No	n = 89 (81.6 %)
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**If you answered "yes" to the question above, please explain your answer:**

- Bring back the monthly evening theme dinners (n = 2)
- a la carte menu for more variety (n = 1)
- Hours of operation are too limited compared to faculty clubs at other universities. Most others open daily (n = 1)
- Monthly dinners are no longer held at regular dates. Drinks are no longer included in the regular price, and are too costly (n = 1)
- I expected dinner service as well as lunch (n = 1)
- Ways to meet people through mutual interests (n = 1)
- Lounge for happy hour would be nice. A "coffee break" would also be nice (n = 1)
- An informal meeting place that would allow faculty to meet with other faculty at no charge. A comfortable room with stuffed chairs and couches rather than hard-backed chairs (n = 1)
- The club needs to be more active in the community. People want to be part of something (n = 1)
- Bar service (n = 1)

**7) In general, how satisfied are you with your membership?**

Very satisfied	n = 28 (25.7 %)
Satisfied	n = 58 (53.2 %)
Neutral	n = 17 (15.6 %)
Dissatisfied (please explain)	n = 5 ( 4.6 %)
Very dissatisfied (please explain)	n = 0 ( 0.0 %)

**If you responded "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied", please provide reasons below:**

- It seems to be a club for retired faculty and alumni.
- In the two years that I have been a member, the price of the lunches has increased twice, and there are times when I can't even get a regular salad from the buffet. I can pay far less at other locations and get what I want.
- Friends no longer attend the dinners, and the Forum speakers have been less interesting.
- As a teaching faculty member, it is inconvenient to attend Forum events at the Penn Stater. It is also inconvenient to get tickets to Forum events at the HUB.
- Bring back the monthly evening theme dinners.

**8) During the work week, what best describes where you eat lunch (choose one)?**

I generally do not eat lunch	n = 11 (10.1 %)
I bring lunch and eat in workplace	n = 36 (33.0 %)
I eat at the Faculty/Staff Club	n = 12 (11.0 %)
I eat at one of the on-campus eateries	n = 21 (19.3 %)
I eat lunch at a favorite restaurant (specify below)	n = 6 ( 5.5 %)
Other – (specify below)	n = 22 (20.2 %)

**If prompted via your answer above, please specify which restaurant is your favorite or what your other lunch arrangements typically are during the work week.**

- Eat at home (n = 11)
- Variety of local restaurants (n = 4)
- Variety of local restaurants, occasionally the Faculty Club (n = 3)
- Autoport (n = 2)
- Usually use lunch time to run errands (n = 2)
- Indian Restaurant on Calder Way (n = 1)
- Either on campus, bring my own, or downtown like Wendy's or RolyPoly (n = 1)
- Varies between home, off-campus, and FSC. But I'm often at Innovation Park (n = 1)

**9) Do you know a friend or colleague who would like to join the Club? If so, please provide a contact name and contact information.**

- I have friends who have shown some interest, but I don't feel comfortable giving names
- I know a friend who would like to join, but unfortunately isn't an active or retired faculty or employee, but is on the Board of the College of Ag, and is a PSU Grad
- <name suppressed but forwarded to Board>
- We are trying to get a gift membership for a friend. Is there a procedure in place for this?

**10) Do you have any additional comments or recommendations for services and activities that would make our Club better?**

- A second welcoming reception in early spring for late newcomers
- Maybe a shuttle bus could be used specifically to pick up members. Making a trip to and from the NLI would allow me to use the club more frequently.
- Noon parking in the garage is too far from location of club in NLI
- Chinese does not appeal to many as a regular lunch choice. General Cho doesn't work as a buffet item. Hot and sour soup is not appealing.
- Happy hour and coffee break would be good addition.
- Have more options for desserts besides cookies, e.g, seasonal desserts like pumpkin pie around Thanksgiving, etc.
- I appreciate receiving the menus for the week in advance.
- I would not want to see any more increases in lunch prices. And it would be good to have at least one good vegetarian hot dish on the lunch menu.
- I like to change from print to on-line newsletter.
- I recommend swiping the card as the member enters for their meal. This can identify any problems early (like are they an active member) and guests may leave whenever they are finished. Sometimes I have to wait for someone to take my ID card to pay for lunch.

- I'd like to see more active faculty and staff belong. The majority seem to be retired. The "group" table for people coming alone is a good idea. Try to get more people involved. Maybe you could do random drawings among faculty and staff and give one free lunch per month, which would introduce more people to it. Maybe each member who is able to enroll a new member should get a free lunch or a ticket to the Forum.
- I'd like to see more opportunities for evening events. The newsletter in paper format is better, as I don't always remember to go to the PDF site. Perhaps you could charge extra to have the newsletter mailed? More "fun" events at club dinners would be nice, such as the 10,000 villages sale.
- I have enjoyed the special theme lunches. My family also enjoys the free tickets to basketball games and group prices to theatrical performances. Also enjoy the group tours of Beaver Stadium, BJC, Sports Museum. How about a tour of the IST Bldg or the new Business Bldg?
- It would be nice to be able to charge meals of guests on University business.
- I preferred the former lunch method of presenting different meals, not rotating through ten different menus.
- Do more promotion of club services.
- More summer BBQ buffets, like the BJC does every Wed in the summer.
- Move out of the basement to a room with natural light. Reinstate the tickets with dinner used for beer or wine.
- My problem with the dinners is that they conflict with other major events.
- Need some events away from the NLI. Participate in some campus events that position the club as a group that benefits the campus rather than just hosting meals.
- Possible discounts at other eateries.
- Club should be open all day.
- Cost is too high, compared to that at other universities.
- Tours of university facilities, such as Beaver Stadium, BJC, Foods Bldg, Applied Research Lab. Have summer picnics. Special dinner, such as the Valentine's Dinner. Lunch during summer should be twice a week. Allow members to bring in their own beverages, as the Inn does for a minimal price for special events. Bring back the monthly newsletter so we know what is going on. Use the mail system with bulk mailing. FSC desperately needs better public relations to showcase benefits of the club. Better marketing at the Forum would yield more new memberships. This is the single most important project the club could undertake.
- Try to increase usage, especially among younger faculty. Perhaps deans could hold "conversations at the Faculty Staff Club."
- Things start shutting down around 12:30. Items start disappearing from the table. Service starts winding down.
- Recruit more young faculty. Also, the soup bowl is often empty and the meats/whole wheat bread are gone.
- You might consider free limited period memberships to increase the size of the club.