

Southern Region Advisory Council Survey – October 2015

On 02 October, the Southern Region sent about 300 emails invitations to the RAC survey directly to the ministers, congregational presidents, and DREs listed in the myUUA.org database. Over half of the invitations were opened, and 70 recipients “clicked through” to the survey.

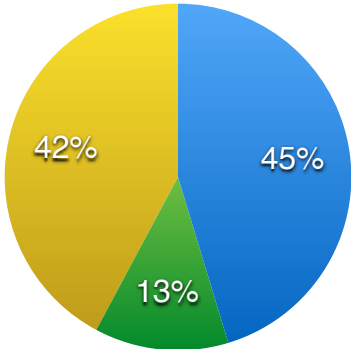
Because we do not have accurate records for many of our congregations’ leaders and staff, we advertised the opportunity for feedback in our newsletter for those who did not receive a direct invitation. Those who should have been included in the direct invitation were asked to request the survey link from their Primary Contacts.

We had 63 responses to the survey.

A summary of the results is below. If you have question, please contact our Communications and Technology Specialist, Christine Purcell (cpurcell@uua.org).

Roles of Respondents:

● Ministers ● DREs ● Presidents

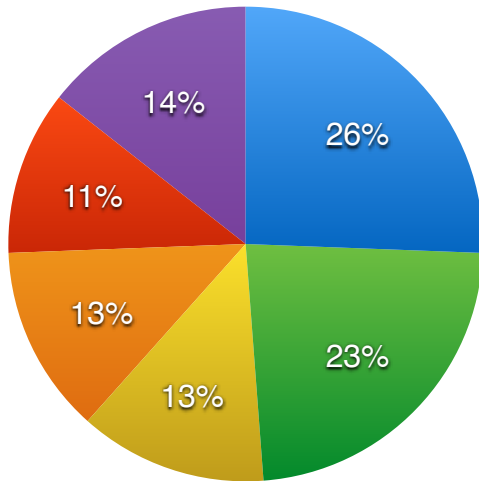


Congregation Size: 25-720 (range), 203 (mean), 146 (median)

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Causes of Excitement in Congregations

- new ministries/programming
- new minister
- growth
- community outreach
- youth programming
- new/improved building

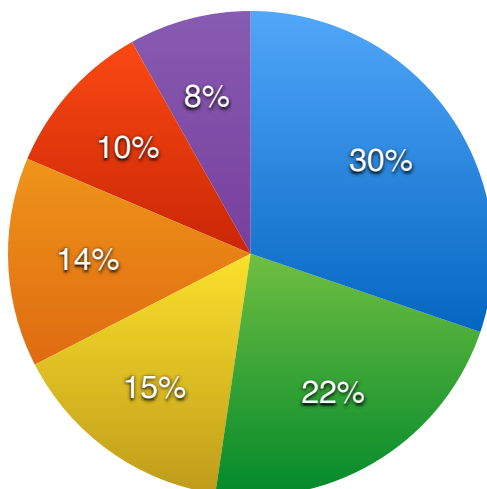


Ranked causes (#of responses)

- new ministries (32)
- community outreach (29)
- new (or increased time for) minister (16)
- youth (16)
- growth (14)
- new or improved building (11)
- leadership development (9)
- stewardship (7)
- new or restructured staffing (7)
- events/celebrations (6)
- worship (6)
- mission/vision/covenant/LRP work (5)
- communication (4)
- cluster (1)

Causes of Frustration in Congregations

- stewardship
- conflict
- lack of programming
- filling volunteer roles
- building issues
- communications

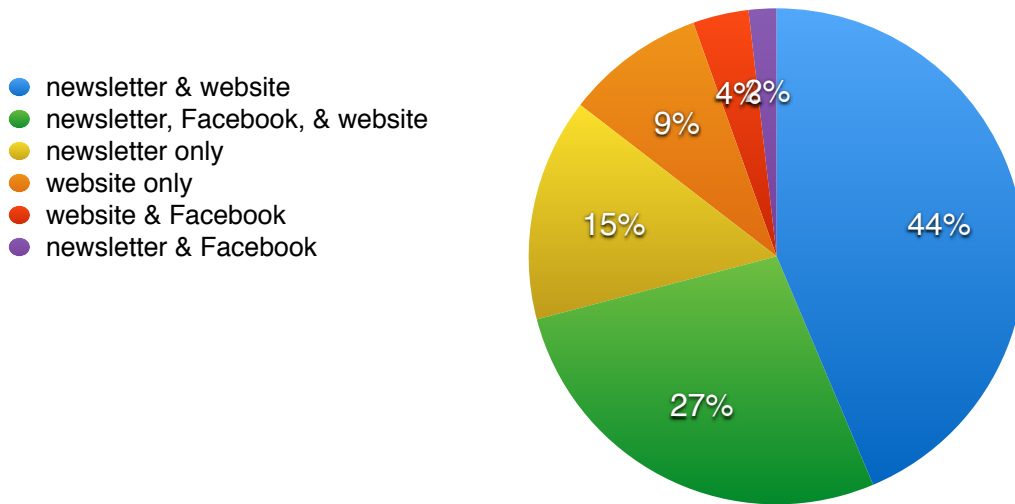


Ranked causes (# of responses):

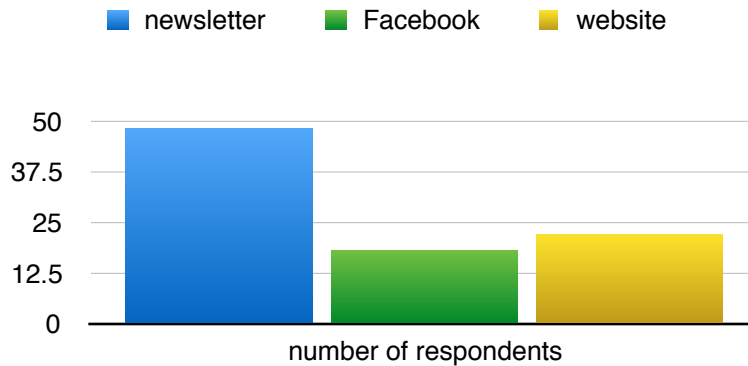
- stewardship (26)
- filling volunteer roles (19)
- conflict (13)
- building issues (12)
- lack of programming (9)
- communications (7)
- lack of growth (7)
- staffing (6)
- minister (6)
- leadership development (6)
- size change dynamics (5)
- governance (4)
- lack of outside support (3)
- mission/vision (1)

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Awareness or use of SR communications channels:



Another way to look at this:



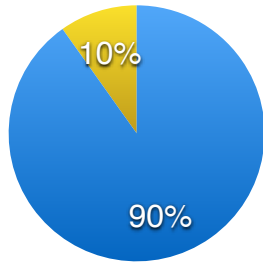
The most common remarks about our SR communications were that congregations are well-informed about events, that readers wish to learn about trends or be inspired by the staff blog, and that readers would like to hear more about what is happening in other congregations.

Eight respondents did not provide an answer for this question. Some stated that they did not have time to pay attention to regional communications, expressed a desire for gossip about what's REALLY going on, or claimed to have no awareness of regional communications.

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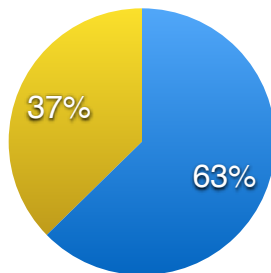
Familiar with Primary Contact program and assigned contact?

● Yes ● No



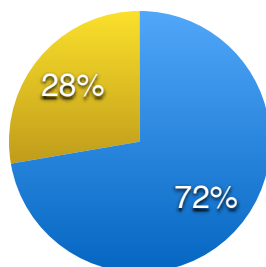
Has your congregation engaged your Primary Contact?

● yes ● no



Is there a reason NOT to engage your Primary Contact?

● no ● yes

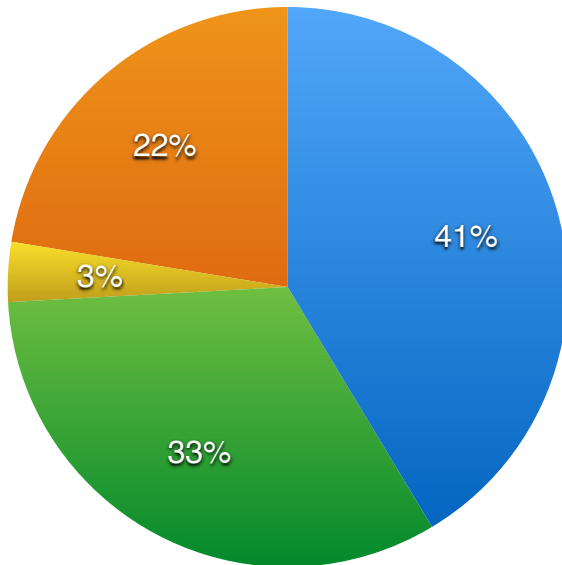


Reasons NOT to engage the Primary Contact included (in order of prevalence): bad past experience with slow response or lack of help, suspicion of UUA hierarchy, self-reliance, reluctance to escalate issue with “busy” UUA staff, staff lack of understanding about individual congregations, staff seems distant, unfamiliar, or irrelevant

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Programming for developmental and leadership needs

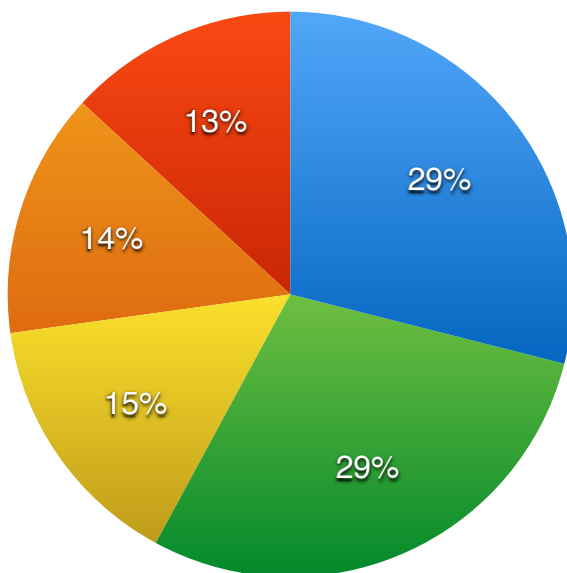
● association*** ● regional ● UU consultant ● non UU



*** association includes General Assembly workshops and professional groups (UUMA, LREDA)

UU engagement “beyond the walls”

● GA ● regional workshops ● district assemblies ● cluster involvement ● UUSC



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Community impact of congregation: anti-racism work, homeless/low-income assistance, undocumented immigrant assistance, Planned Parenthood partnership, environmental work, LGBTQ support, interfaith work, voter registration, share the plate initiatives, public witness and advocacy, campus ministry, community gardens, music camps and ministry, etc.

Every respondent provided detailed data in this field. That stood out, as most questions were skipped by a few respondents.

What respondents would like the RAC to know:

The most common responses were messages of gratitude for the work of our regional staff and for the opportunity to provide feedback. Some respondents urged the region and association to measure relationships with and relevance to leaders, ministers, and congregations of different sizes. Other respondents urged the regional staff to focus on sharing what is working well in larger congregations while helping to build smaller congregations.