

**DELAWARE HUMANITIES FORUM
CONSTITUENTS RESPONSE**

by

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Preface

The data entry and processing necessary to accomplish this analysis was by the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR) of the University of Delaware's College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. I would like to thank Mrs. Lola Hoffman, Mrs. Robbie Miller, and Mrs. Phyllis Raab, all of CADSR. Without them this study would have never happened. Thanks also to Dr. Gail Johnson for providing invaluable guidance in my research and analysis and for reviewing the drafts of this report.

A copy of the Delaware Humanities Forum constituent questionnaire -- with the response frequencies indicated -
- is appended to this report.

Introduction

The Delaware Humanities Forum (DHF) seeks to promote and cultivate understanding of the humanities in the State of Delaware. DHF accomplishes this by granting monies for scholarly presentations of topics related to the humanities and by planning programming dealing with various topics in the humanities. To inform its constituents of upcoming events and other news, DHF tries to send its newsletter to all those interested in the humanities in Delaware.

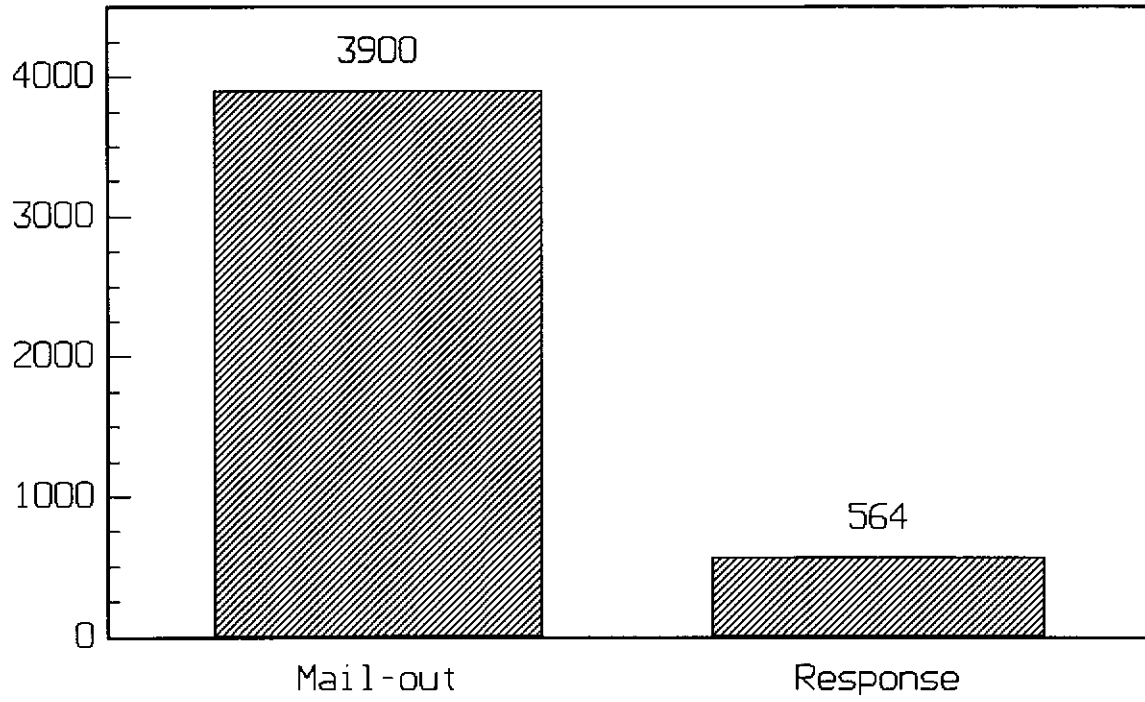
In an effort to determine the needs and interests of those who use its services, DHF contracted with the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy of the University of Delaware to conduct a survey of its constituents. The study arose from DHF's desire to engage in planning future events and the recognition that public input was needed to plan effectively.

The purpose of this survey was twofold: (1) to evaluate the needs and interests of persons who received the *Delaware Humanities Forum Newsletter*, who will be referred to as "constituents", and (2) to assess the effectiveness of current Delaware Humanities Forum programming. Knowledge of the needs and interests of its constituents are a key element in the success of the Delaware Humanities Forum, and the results of this survey will be used in planning future forum events.

Methodology

The survey was mailed to 3900 addresses that received the *DHF Newsletter*. Of the surveys mailed, only 2000 were addressed to particular people (others were addressed to "librarian," "curator," "office manager," etc.). No surveys were returned to sender as undeliverable; 564 respondents returned the survey. The response rate was 14.5% based on 3900 deliverable questionnaires (Figure 1). Those who chose to participate in this study constituted a voluntary sample since the respondents simply "volunteered" to take part. Because they constitute a voluntary sample, there may be some error in assuming that they represent all the constituents.

Figure 1 Response



Profile of Respondents

The "typical" user of DHF services is middle-aged, well-educated, and belongs in the upper middle-class income group. Though the respondents in the study were from various backgrounds, a substantial proportion of respondents fall into this "typical user" category. Two-thirds of the respondents (66%) indicated that they were over 45 years old; half(50%) were between 35 and 54. Very few respondents (9%) were less than 35 years old, but 19% indicated that they were over 64 years of age (Figure 2). A majority of the respondents had an annual household income over \$45,000. Only 7% of the respondents had annual income less than \$20,000, while 81% indicated that their income was greater than \$30,000 annually (Figure 3). The level of education of the respondents was similarly high, as 61% indicated they had achieved graduate or professional degrees and some 89% of the respondents said they completed college.

A substantial majority (86%) of the survey respondents were Caucasian, while 6% indicated they were African-American. Hispanic and Asian ethnic groups each accounted for 1% of the sample (Figure 4). Finally, 61% of the respondents lived in New Castle County, 19% lived in Sussex County, and 16% in Kent County. Only 4% of the survey respondents lived out of state (Figure 5).

It should be stressed that, since the sample was a volunteer one, extrapolations back to a larger population simply are not valid. That is to say, the results from this survey cannot be used to show that all users of the DHF would answer the survey in a particular manner. However, for the purposes of planning for future programming, the results of this study may be used with confidence since the demographics of the sample fairly represent the demographic profile of the constituents.

Figure 2 Age

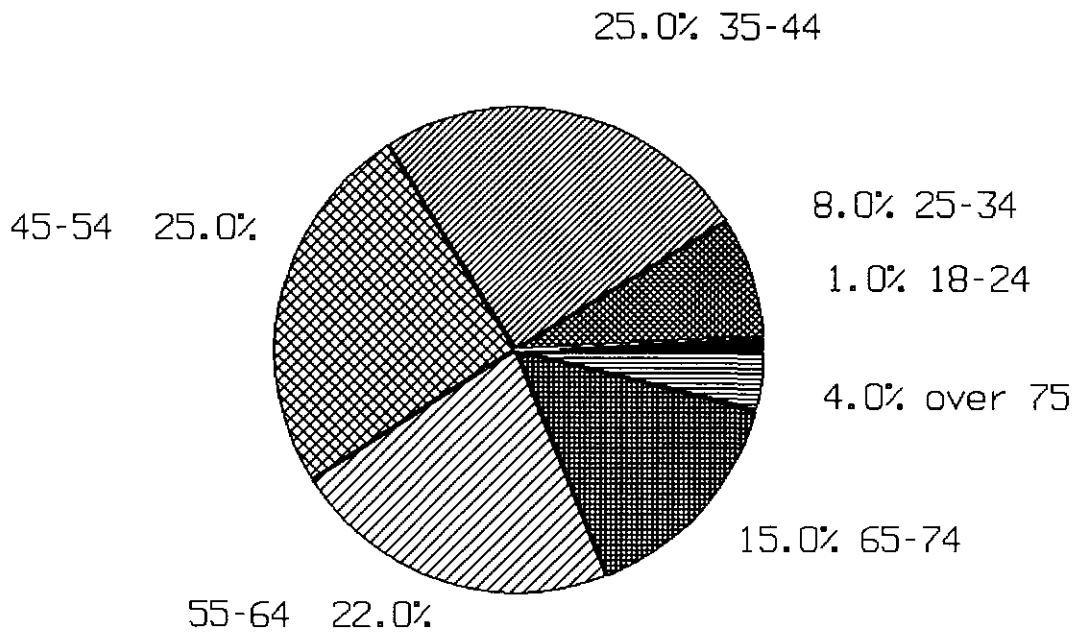


Figure 3 Income

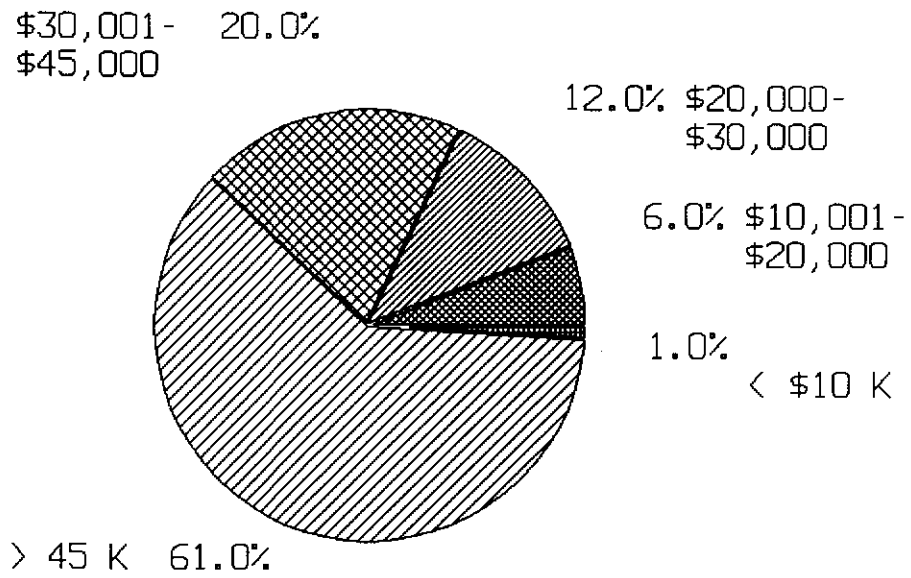


Figure 4 Race

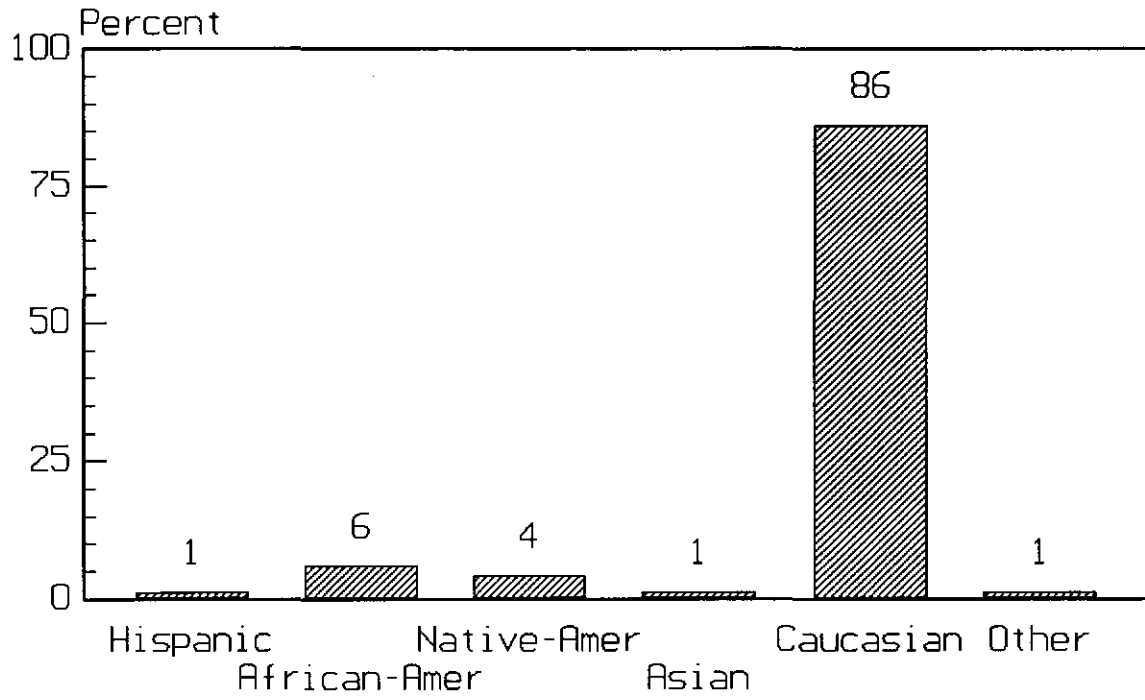
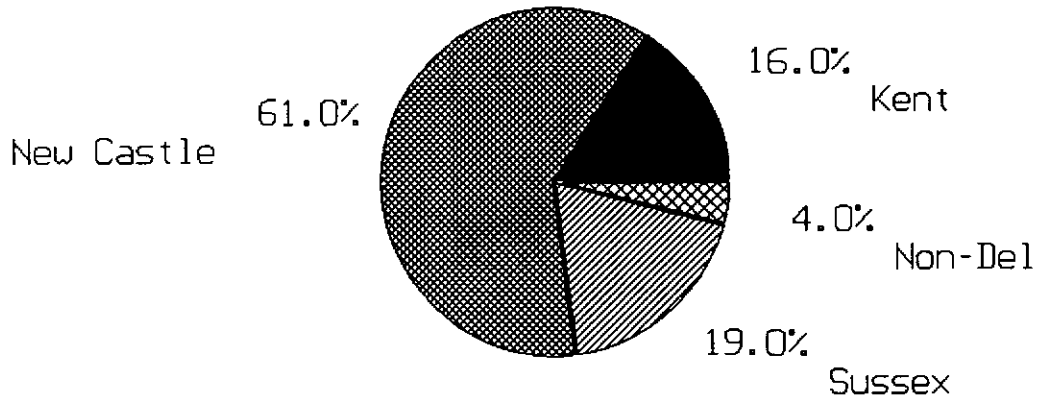


Figure 5 Residence by County



Principal Findings

The reactions of survey respondents are grouped in six categories: programming interests and attendance, sponsorship and program delivery, affiliation with DHF, experience with the DHF grants process, confusion between DHF and DHC, and potential improvements to DHF programs.

Programming Interests and Attendance.

Respondents expressed the most interest in attending events on local history (64% very greatly or very interested) (Figure 6), history (57% very greatly or very interested) (Figure 7) and Delaware folklore (49% very greatly or very interested) (Figure 8). Of the eleven other proposed topics, the least interest was expressed for science and technology (28% very greatly or very interested) and the anniversary of Columbus's voyage (21% very greatly or very interested).

Interest differed by race and ethnicity. An analysis of interests by racial or ethnic groups revealed that 93% of African-Americans are very greatly or very interested in ethnic groups, while only 28% of Caucasians show similar interest (Figure 9). Similarly, 70% of African-Americans are interested in public education policies, while only 41% of Caucasians are similarly interested (Figure 10).

Interests also varied by age. Older respondents were more interested in history than younger ones: over 65% of respondents over 65 years of age indicated they were very greatly or very interested in history as compared to 53% of those under 65 years of age. In contrast, energy and the environment topics were of greater interest to the younger respondents: 77% of respondents aged 18-24 were very greatly or very interested, while about 45% of each of the other age groups were similarly interested. Younger (18-24) respondents also revealed a preference for science and technology: 44% indicated they were very greatly or very interested, while only 30% of each of the other groups revealed the same interest in science and technology.

Interest was also influenced by affiliation with particular professional groups. Of those respondents affiliated with historical societies, (84%) indicated they were very greatly or very interested in history as compared to 49% who were not so affiliated. Of those belonging to museums, 73% indicated they were very greatly or very interested in history, while only 53% of those not affiliated expressed that kind of interest. Of the respondents who belonged to historical societies, 84% also expressed the same interest in local history; only 58% of those not affiliated indicated they were very greatly or very interested in local history. Of the respondents who were affiliated with K-12 education, 60% said they were very greatly or very interested in public education policies as compared to only 36% of those not so affiliated who expressed similar interest.

There was low (less than 10%) attendance at each event save three. "Killing the Sky" drew 10% of the respondents; 14% of the respondents indicated that they attended "Delaware Discussions"; and 14% said they

Figure 6 Respondent Interest in Local History

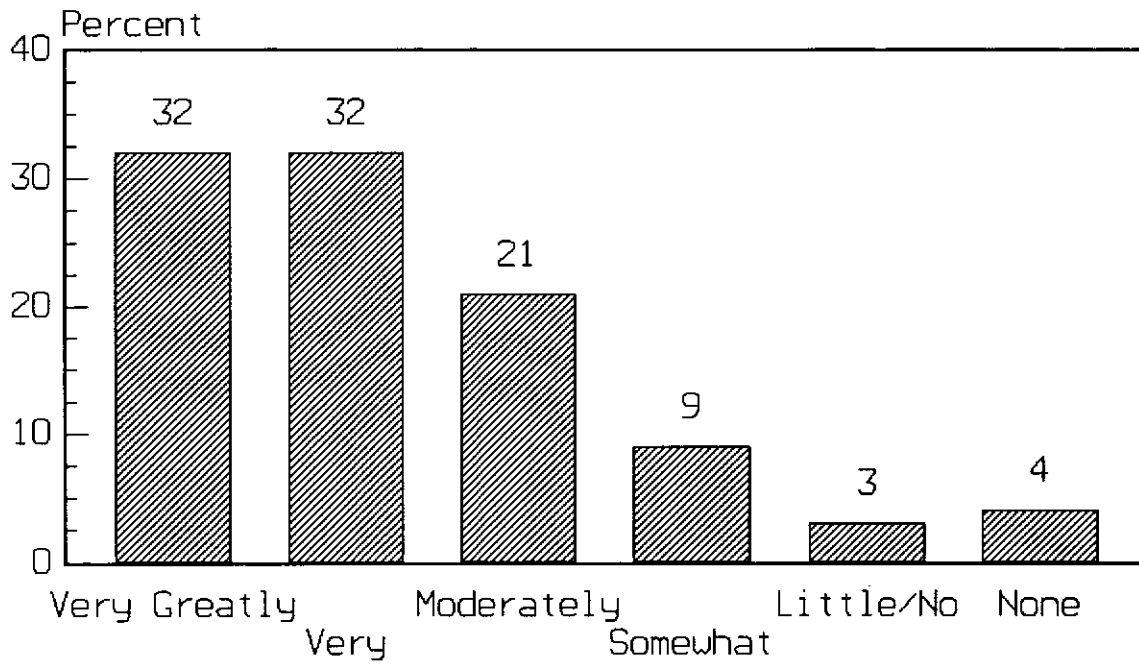


Figure 7 Respondent Interest in History

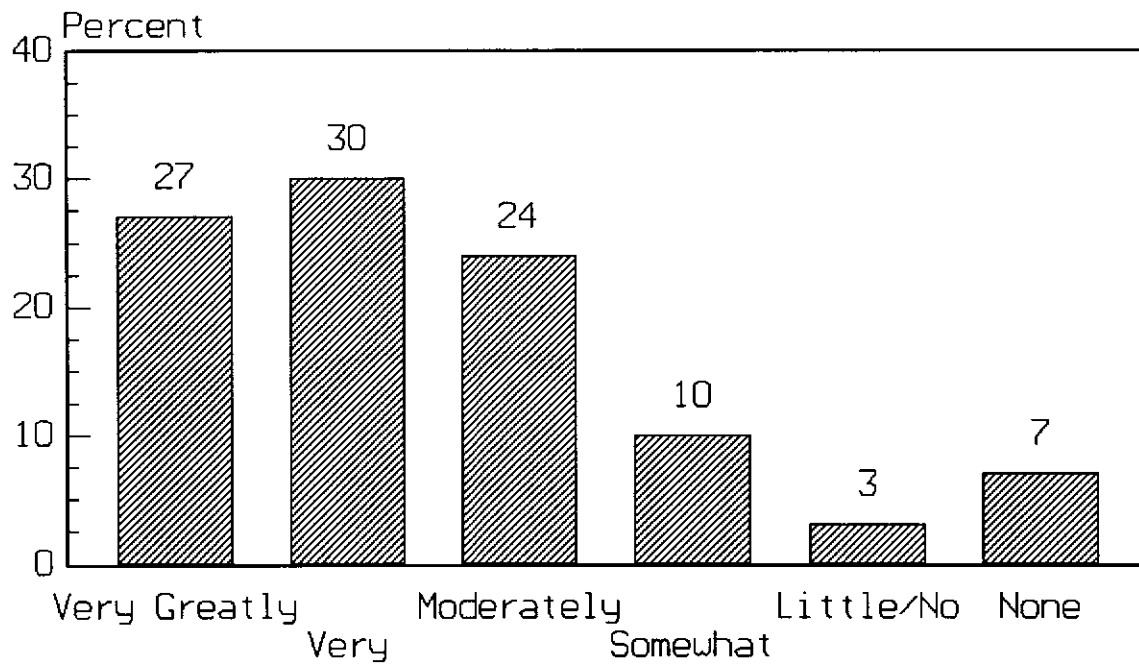


Figure 8 Respondent Interest in Delaware Folklore

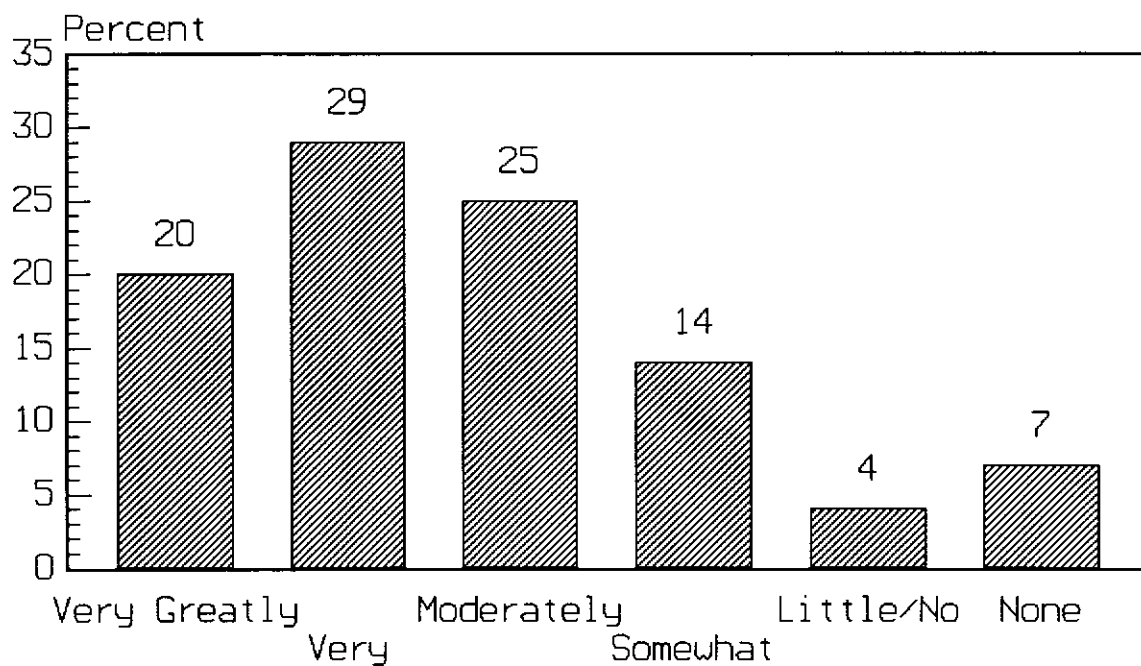


Figure 9 African-American & Caucasian
Interest in Ethnic Groups

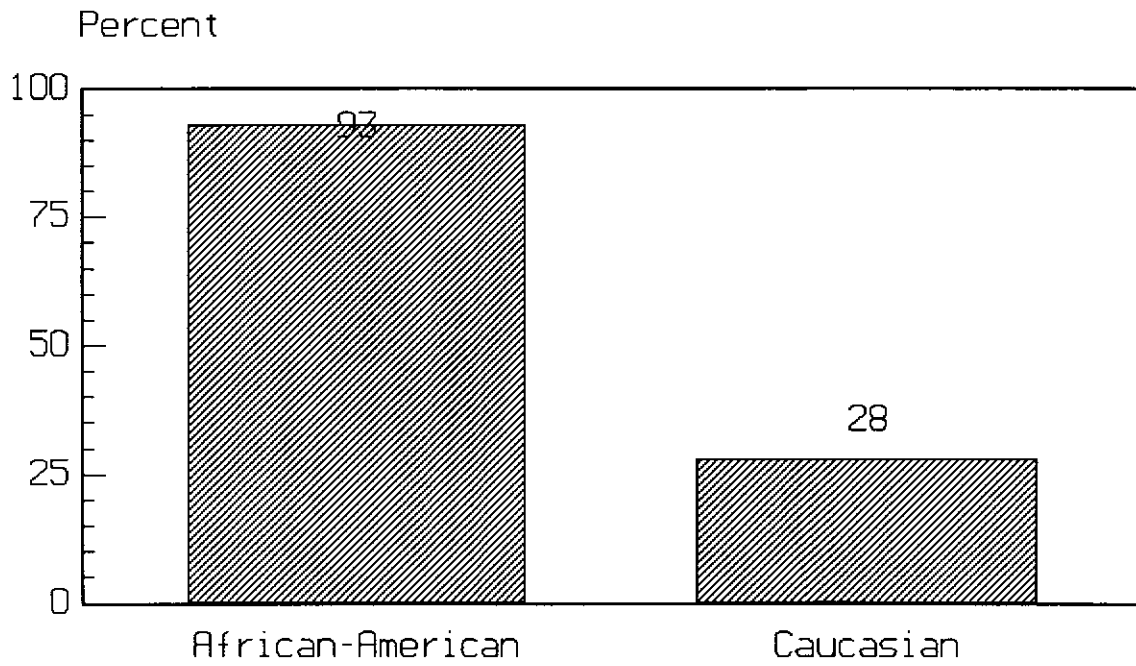
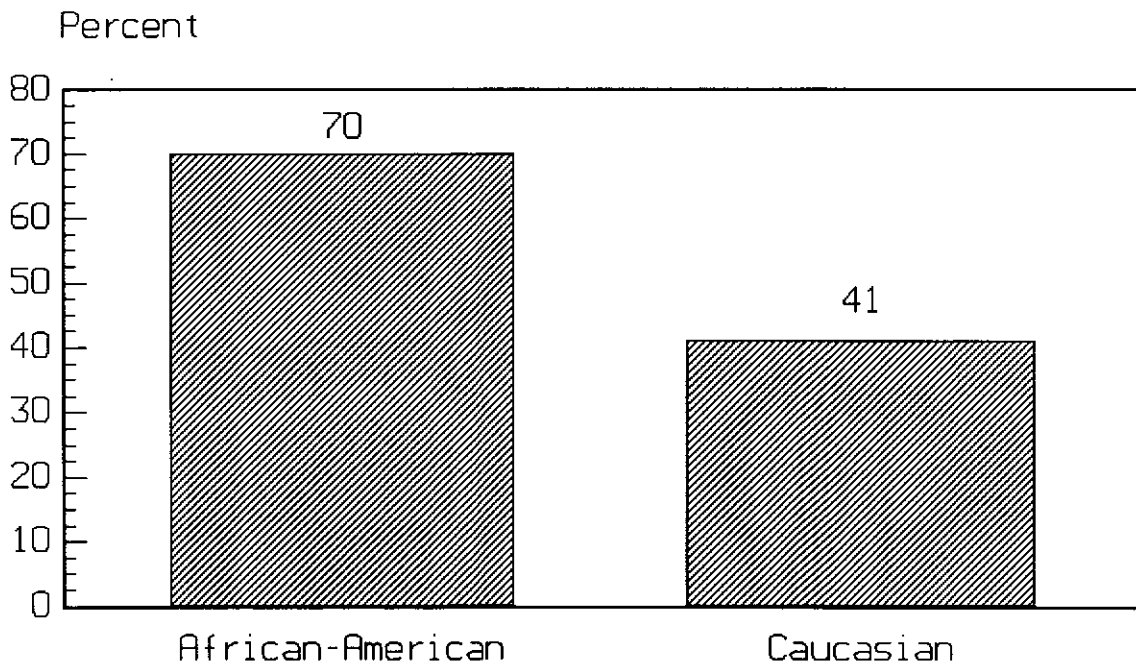


Figure 10 African-American & Caucasian
Interest in Public Education Policies



attended "Opening the Door to Freedom." In the open-ended response which inquired of other events, 11 respondents indicated that they attended Historical Society-sponsored events.

Respondents who expressed an opinion indicated that they would like to see the DHF conduct more programs dealing with local history (56%) (Figure 11), literature (49%) (Figure 12), and folklore (45%) (Figure 13). A high (39%) proportion of the respondents felt that the DHF sponsors a good mix of events already.

Sponsorship and Program Delivery

A majority of the respondents who had an opinion wanted DHF to continue the present level of sponsorship of their own events (61%) as well as the present level of grants for events sponsored by other organizations (53%). In terms of program delivery, respondents indicated that they would like to see more emphasis on short (1-2 hour) lectures (54%), programs for children in the K-12 group (45%), and a lending library of video resources (43%). Conferences and day-long events were not as popular as means of program delivery. It appears that more short programs and more programs for schoolchildren would be called for, as many responses to open-ended questions indicated that more should be done in these areas.

Several differences for program delivery and format emerged based on county of residence. Respondents from New Castle County do not feel there needs to more effort to increase the lecture/speaker type of program delivery; only 31% of the respondents from New Castle County felt there needs to be more emphasis on this type of programming. Southern Delaware respondents differed: 43% of the respondents from Kent County and 40% of the respondents from Sussex County felt there needed to be more emphasis on the lecture/speaker format (Figure 14). While 52% of the respondents from Sussex County thought the DHF should try to place more emphasis on such a lending library service, only 40% of respondents from both Kent and New Castle Counties felt there needed to be efforts to increase this type of program delivery (Figure 15).

Affiliation with DHF

When asked to describe their affiliation with DHF, most (76%) respondents indicated that they liked to stay informed about the humanities, and 42% said that they attended humanities programs and activities (Figure 16). When asked to describe their professional or avocational affiliation concerning DHF, 37% of the respondents indicated "general public"; other categories included at least 20% of the respondents save "business or corporation," which included only 9% of the respondents.

Figure 11 Emphasis on Local History
(Respondents Who Had an Opinion)

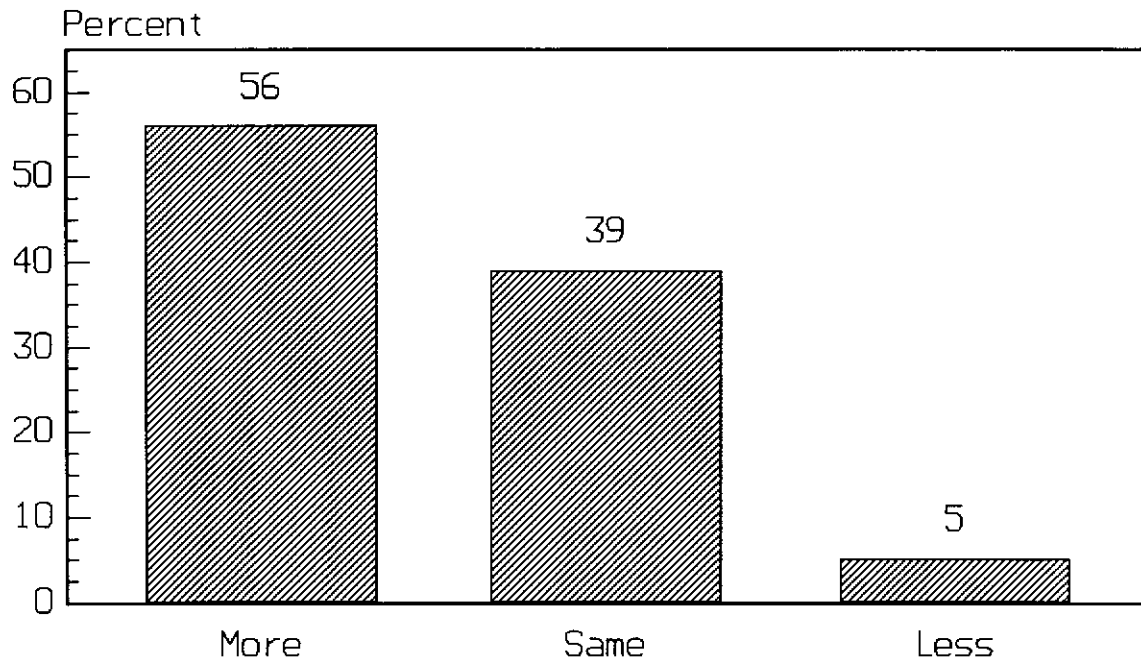


Figure 12 Emphasis on Literature
(Respondents Who Had an Opinion)

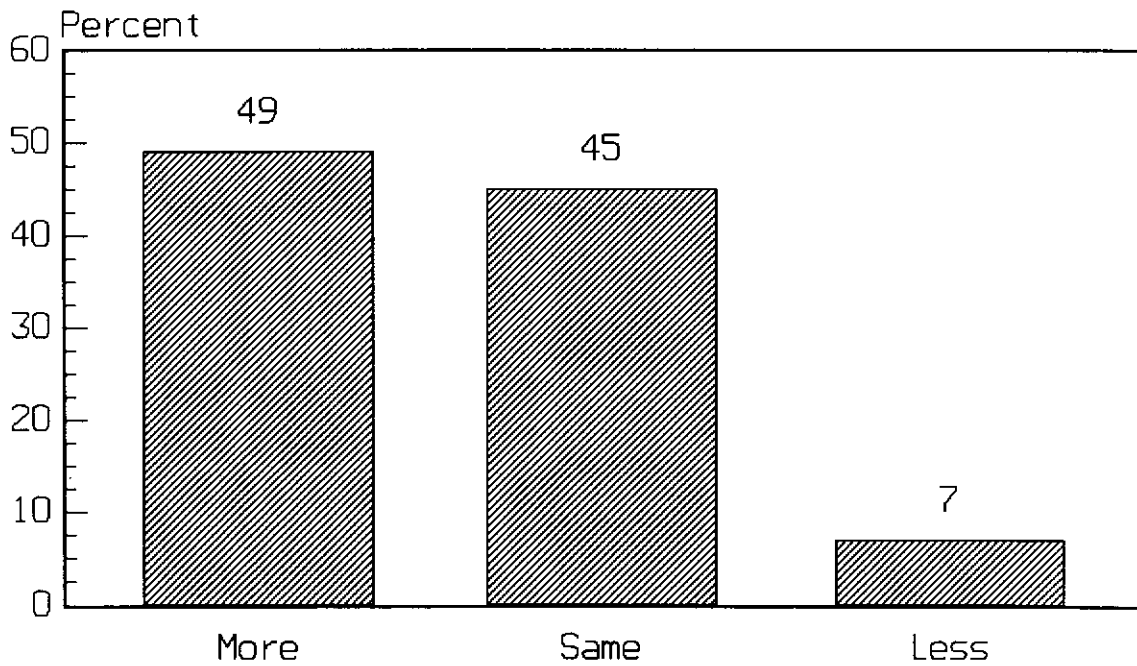


Figure 13 Emphasis on Folklore
(Respondents Who Had an Opinion)

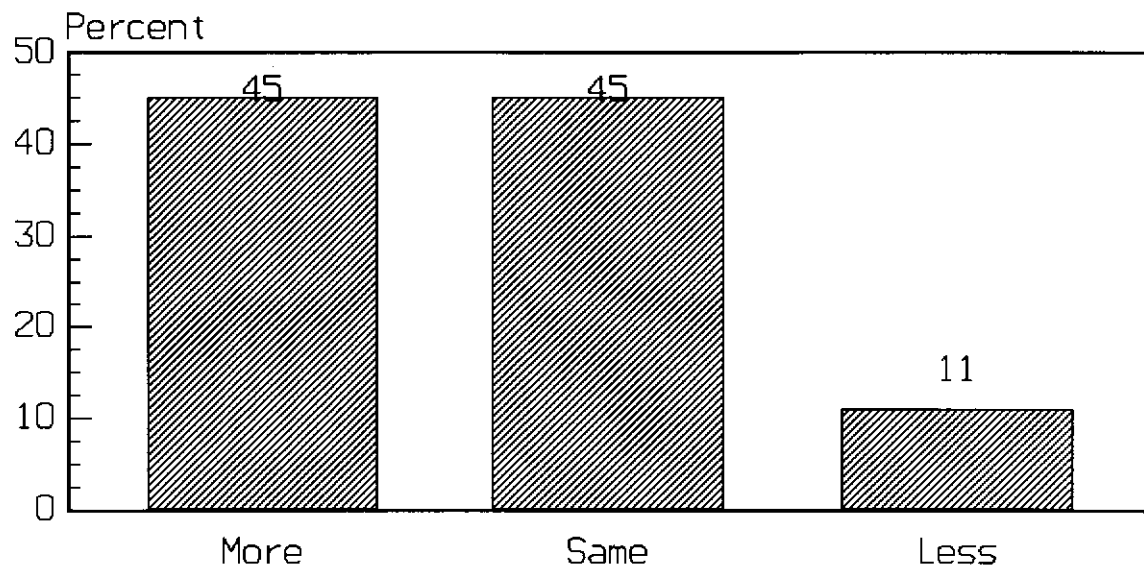


Figure 14 More Emphasis on Lecture/
Speaker Programming by County
of Residence

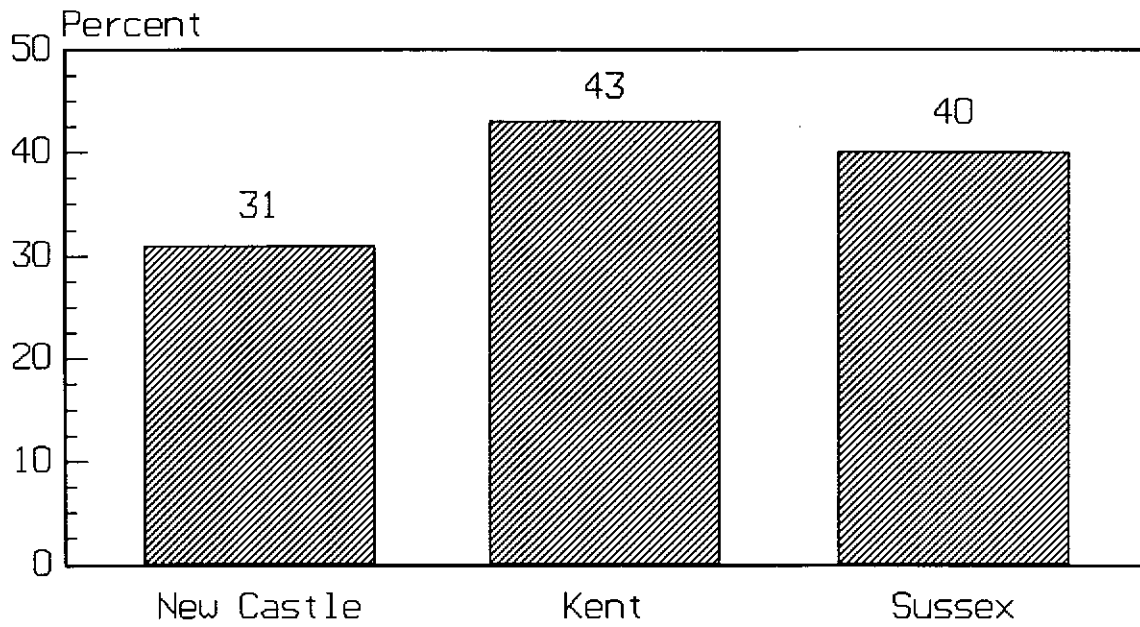


Figure 15 More Emphasis on Lending
Library Programming by County
of Residence

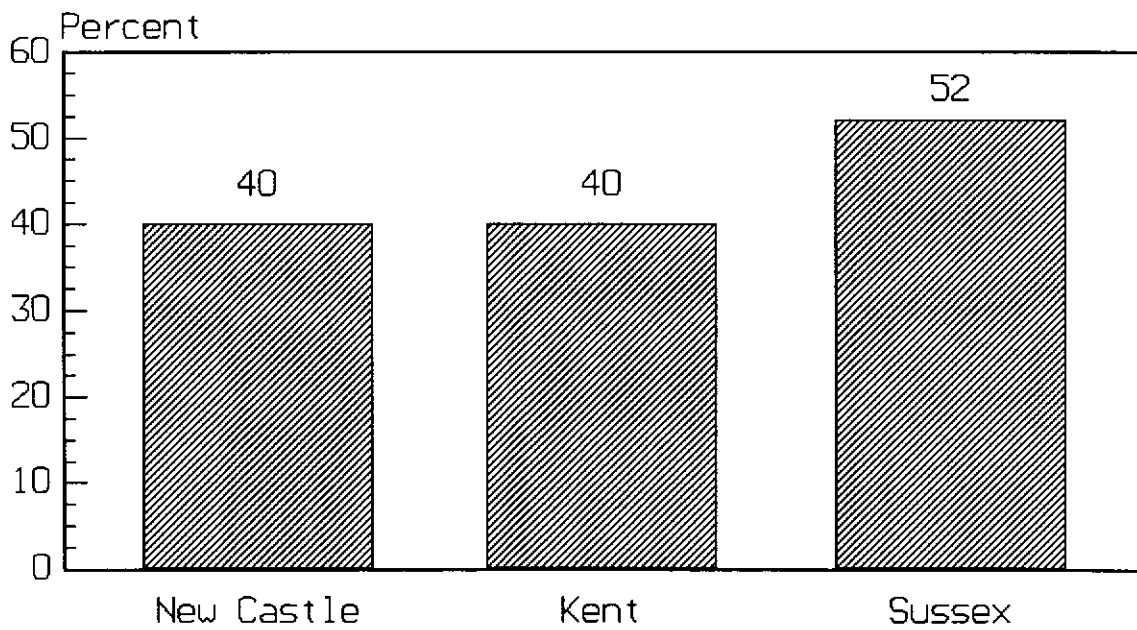
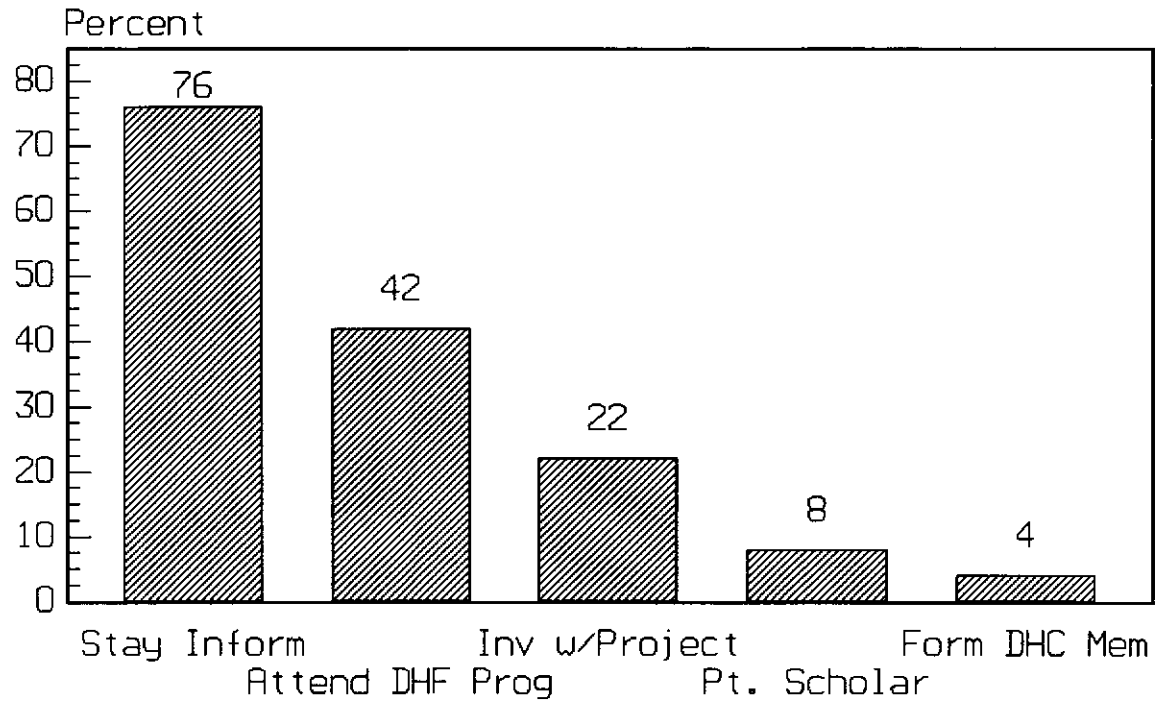


Figure 16 Affiliation with DHF



Experience with the DHF Grants Process

One out of every four respondents indicated that they had applied for a grant from the DHF. Of these respondents who applied, 24% felt that the grant application process was complex, while 70% indicated that they found the process fairly simple and straightforward. In a follow up "open-ended" question, five of these respondents indicated that a way to speed up the grant application process would be to have a form of "mini-grant" fund that could be used to fund projects with reduced procedural and administrative activities. Similarly, another five respondents suggested that they had no problem with the present 2.5 month gap (lag time) between grant application and the event itself.

The process of applying for a grant appears to cause few problems: 77% of the respondents indicated that the instructions and procedures for this process were "very clear" or "clear." Similarly, the staff seems to be very capable: 83% of the respondents indicated that the staff was either "very helpful" or "helpful."

Confusion between DHF and DHC

Another area of concern for DHF was the possible confusion between it and the Delaware Humanities Council (DHC). Half of the respondents said that they had heard of the Delaware Humanities Council, and 11% said they were not sure whether they had heard of the council or not. Of the 279 respondents who had heard of the DHC, 48% said there was some confusion between its activities and those of DHF, and 44% said there was no confusion between the two entities (7% did not know whether there was confusion between the two). Responses to the open-ended question that inquired why there was confusion indicate that people simply did not know the different responsibilities and functions of the two groups. The fact that the titles of the two entities are similar was also cited frequently as a cause of confusion.

Potential Improvements to DHF Programs

Respondents were asked to indicate what one change they would make to the programs supported by DHF. A large portion of the respondents indicated that more should be done in terms of publicity and public relations in order to make known to the public the broad range of programs sponsored (in full or in part) by DHF. Many respondents felt that, had they known about a particular event and the time and location, they would have made an effort to attend the program. As would be expected, many respondents felt that there should be more programming in southern Delaware so that DHF resources could be utilized by the residents of the area. Of those who indicated that there should be more downstate programming, 80% lived in either Kent or Sussex counties.

Conclusions

Since the survey was based on a volunteer sample, there can be no extrapolation back to a larger population; however, these results can be used to help in the planning of future events and programming for DHF. The sample population was not unlike the typical user group of DHF services; for example, the demographic profile was what was expected as the "typical" user of DHF services is a well-educated, middle-aged, upper-income person. In other words, any planning based on these results will likely appeal to the larger population of DHF constituents as the respondents seem somewhat typical of the people who use the Delaware Humanities Forum.

The respondents indicated that additional emphasis on short events (lectures, speakers bureau, and discussions) dealing with history, local history, Delaware folklore, and literature would be well received. It appears that the constituents would like to see DHF do more for schoolchildren.

Respondents felt that more public relations and advertising of events and programming would help the DHF increase attendance at its programs, and they indicated that a more thorough newsletter with a calendar of events would prove useful to them. More programming in southern Delaware would increase the DHF's appeal to people in Kent and Sussex counties; many respondents indicated that they were not happy to drive to northern New Castle County just to attend an event. Increased southern Delaware programming can only help to broaden the appeal of DHF to all the residents of Delaware.

**DELAWARE HUMANITIES FORUM
CONSTITUENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The Delaware Humanities Forum is conducting a survey to assess the needs and interest areas of the users of services provided by the Forum. Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire so that we may better serve you in the future. Be assured that your comments are confidential and that your opinions can in no way be traced back to you.

1. The Delaware Humanities Forum is considering sponsoring events on a variety of topics. Please indicate how interested or not you would be in attending events dealing with the following topics:

topic	very greatly interested 1	very interested 2	moderately interested 3	somewhat interested 4	little or no interest 5	none 6
a. History n=564	27	30	24	10	3	7
b. Local history	32	32	21	9	3	4
c. Ethnic groups	12	21	26	19	10	12
d. Energy and the environment	19	29	27	14	4	7
e. Delaware folklore	20	29	25	14	5	7
f. Public education policies	17	27	22	17	8	11
g. History and culture of foreign lands	11	29	26	17	8	9
h. Biomedical ethical issues	10	20	26	17	15	12
i. Science and technology	8	20	31	16	13	12
j. Women	18	24	24	14	8	11
k. Anniversary of Columbus' voyage	8	13	22	20	18	19
l. other n=76 (please specify) _____	83	17				

2. What other areas, if any, interest you?
-
-

3. During the last 18 months, have you attended any of the following events?

n=564	yes 1	no 2	don't know 9
a. Cultural lecture series on archaeology and Delaware folklore at Del Tech in Georgetown	4	95	0
b. "Glasnost," a lecture series at Tower Hill School concerning recent changes in the Soviet Union	6	94	0
c. "Killing the Sky," an all-day symposium in Newark exploring the humanities perspective of our current environmental troubles	10	90	0
d. A conference on Housing Policy in Dover which discussed the social and cultural implications of the housing shortage in Delaware	4	95	0
e. "Delaware Discussions," a statewide series of 40 book discussions in Delaware Public Libraries	14	85	1
f. "Opening the Door to Freedom: The Civil Rights Movement in Delaware," an exhibit in downtown Wilmington chronicling the struggle of African-Americans for civil rights	14	86	0
g. "American History Through Opera," a statewide travelling lecture series sponsored by OperaDelaware	8	92	0
h. "Folk Artistry," an exhibition and series of slide talks on American Folk Art with emphasis on Sussex County, at the Rehoboth Art League	7	93	0

4. What other events have you attended?

5. Would you like to see more, less, or about the same emphasis in the following areas for the next 2 years from projects supported by Delaware Humanities Forum?
(percentages of those with opinions are in parenthesis)

n=564	more 1	same 2	less 3	no opinion 4
a. Local History	44 (56)	31 (39)	4 (5)	22
b. Architecture	23 (35)	32 (50)	9 (14)	36
c. Folklore	33 (45)	34 (45)	8 (11)	26
d. Public Policy	26 (37)	34 (48)	11 (15)	29
e. Art History	26 (37)	36 (51)	9 (12)	30
f. Literature	36 (49)	33 (45)	5 (7)	26
g. Other (please specify) n=63	100			

6. In your opinion, would you like to see the Delaware Humanities Forum undertake more, less, or about the same in the following areas:
(percentages of those with opinions are in parenthesis)

n=564	more 1	about the same 2	less 3	no opinion 4
a. Forum sponsorship of events (funding of our own events)	25 (35)	42 (61)	3 (4)	30
b. Grants for events mainly sponsored by other organizations	30 (42)	37 (53)	4 (5)	30

7. In your opinion, would you like to see more, less, or about the same emphasis on the following types of program delivery:
(percentages of those with opinions are in parenthesis)

n=564	more 1	about the same 2	less 3	no opinion 4
a. Day-long events	11 (17)	37 (56)	18 (27)	34
b. Short (1-2 hour) lectures	54 (68)	24 (30)	1 (2)	20
c. Use of the Speakers Bureau	32 (48)	32 (48)	3 (4)	20
d. Programs for children in the K-12 group	45 (68)	19 (28)	3 (4)	33
e. Conferences	16 (26)	36 (59)	10 (15)	39
f. Books on tape	23 (40)	28 (48)	7 (12)	43
g. Lectures/speakers	34 (46)	38 (51)	2 (3)	26
h. Films and discussions	35 (50)	31 (44)	4 (6)	29
i. Lending library of video resources	43 (63)	23 (33)	2 (3)	32

8. Which statement most closely describes your affiliation with the Delaware Humanities Forum?
CHECK ALL THAT APPLY n=564

- a. 76 I like to stay informed about the humanities
- b. 42 I attend humanities programs and activities
- c. 22 I have been involved in a humanities project as a project director or planner
- d. 8 I have been a participating scholar or consultant
- e. 4 I am a former Delaware Humanities Council member

9. Which of the following categories best describes your professional or avocational affiliation concerning the Delaware Humanities Forum?
CHECK ALL THAT APPLY n=564

- a. 22 Churches
- b. 21 Historical societies
- c. 24 Libraries
- d. 22 Civic groups
- e. 27 Academic institutions (college, university)
- f. 28 Education (K-12)
- g. 37 General public
- h. 20 Museums
- i. 9 Business or corporation

10. Have you applied for a grant from the Delaware Humanities Forum?
n=564

- 1 25 Yes
- 2 73 No (SKIP TO QUESTION 15)
 (1% said they did not know)

11. In your experience, have you found the process of applying for a grant to be complex or have you found it fairly simple and straightforward?
n=143

- 1 24 Complex
- 2 70 Fairly simple and straightforward
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 6 Don't know/no opinion

12. At the present, it takes 7 weeks from application deadline to the awarding of a grant. Events normally take place 2-3 weeks after the grant has been awarded, resulting in a lag time from grant application to the event itself of about 2.5 months. In your opinion, what can be done to speed up the process of awarding grants in order to increase attendance at an event dealing with a timely, popular issue?

13. In your opinion, how clear or unclear are the instructions and procedures for applying for grants from the Delaware Humanities Forum? **n=143**

Very Clear	Clear	Neither	Unclear	Very Unclear	Not Applicable	(don't know)
1	2	3	4	5	8	
22	55	7	8	1		7

14. In your opinion, how helpful or unhelpful is the staff of the Delaware Humanities Forum in assisting you or your group in obtaining a grant? n=143

Very Helpful 1	Helpful 2	Neither 3	Unhelpful 4	Very Unhelpful 5	Not Applicable 8	(don't know)
46	37	6	1	2		7

15. Have you heard of the Delaware Humanities COUNCIL?
n=564

- 1 50 Yes (ASK QUESTION 16)
- 2 40 No (SKIP TO QUESTION 18)
- 9 11 Don't know (SKIP TO QUESTION 18)

16. If yes, is there some confusion between the activities of the FORUM and the activities of the COUNCIL?

- n=279
- 1 48 Yes (ASK QUESTION 17)
 - 2 44 No (SKIP TO QUESTION 18)
 - 8 Not applicable (SKIP TO QUESTION 18)
(7% did not know)

17. If yes, why, in your opinion, is there confusion between the two entities?

18. If you could make one change to the types of programs supported or sponsored by the Delaware Humanities Forum, what would you change?

19. Which of the following categories best describes your age?

- n=558
- 01 1 18-24
 - 02 8 25-34
 - 03 25 35-44
 - 04 25 45-54
 - 05 22 55-64
 - 06 15 65-74
 - 07 4 over 75

20. Which category best describes your annual household income?

n=532

- 1 1 less than \$10,000
- 2 6 \$10,001-\$20,000
- 3 12 \$20,001-\$30,000
- 4 20 \$30,001-\$45,000
- 5 61 over \$45,000

21. Please indicate the highest level of education you achieved.

n=552

- 1 3 completed high school
- 2 8 some college
- 3 28 completed college
- 4 61 graduate/professional degree

22. Which category best describes your racial or ethnic group?

n=546

- 1 1 Hispanic
- 2 6 African American
- 3 4 Native American
- 4 1 Asian
- 5 86 Caucasian
- 6 1 Other (please specify) _____

23. Please indicate the county in which you reside.

n=550

- 1 16 Kent (DE)
- 2 61 New Castle (DE)
- 3 19 Sussex (DE)
- 4 4 out of state

24. Do you have any additional comments?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE