

## **The 2016 POD Network Membership Survey: Past, Present, and Future**

A collaboration of the Scholarship, Membership, and  
Diversity Committees

# The 2016 POD Network Membership Survey: Past, Present, and Future

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We encourage any POD Network member to use the data from the survey for further research. Access can be requested by going to - <https://sites.google.com/a/podnetwork.org/wikipodia/pod-sponsored-surveys>.

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## Introduction

### History

From humble beginnings with a handful of practitioners, the POD Network has grown to embrace the increasing size and diversity of the field of educational development. As part of its commitment to evidence-based practice, the POD Network periodically initiates a comprehensive membership survey in order to best meet the needs of its changing membership body. Surveys have been administered in 1996, 2010, and 2016 (the latest of which is the focus of this report). The timing for this survey is auspicious. In 2015, the POD Network celebrated its 40th anniversary, an occasion that was met with reflection on the past, present, and future of the organization. We encourage the continuation of that reflection through the evidence gathered in this survey.

### The Survey

In its current iteration, the survey contains 73 questions and the average completion time of 20 minutes. The survey was disseminated electronically via SurveyMonkey to the members-only email distribution list kept by the POD network executive office. Members had approximately 3 weeks to complete the survey, and periodic reminders were sent to encourage participation.

For the 2016 survey, the response rate reflected approximately 37.22% of the POD network membership, representing a relative increase over the 2010 survey (see Table 1, below).

**Table 1: POD Network Membership Survey: Participation 1996-2016**

|      | <b>Surveys Received</b> | <b>% of Membership</b> | <b>Total Membership</b> |
|------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1996 | 517                     | 46.28%                 | 1117                    |
| 2010 | 402                     | 23.3%                  | 1725                    |
| 2016 | 405                     | 37.22%                 | 1088                    |

- The POD Network significantly adjusted the process by which it determined membership numbers in 2015. The 2016 response rates were calculated based on the new process. At the time of this survey there were 1088 members.
- The POD Network changed to a new system of communicating with its members in 2015, moving from an email listserv to Google groups. Due to issues with this transition, the 2016 POD Membership Survey was disseminated via the POD network listserv, which means it is possible that the survey was received by participants who were not current members of the POD network.

## Subject Matter

Like the organization, the survey instrument has evolved over time, but it has remained focused on four primary areas of inquiry: demographics (who we are); involvement and membership services (what we do), professional development (how we grow); and center information (where we work).

In 2015, the POD Network Membership Committee spent considerable time refurbishing the 2010 survey, revising language, content, and organization in order to streamline the experience both of those taking and those analyzing the survey. This revision is reflected in the, final 2016 POD Network membership survey (see Appendix A for the complete survey).

We intend for this document to be the first in a series of reports and research generated from the 2016 POD Network membership survey. Other reports in the series will offer deeper and differentiated analysis drawn from data in all 3 survey iterations. Reports are provided for the POD Network leadership (Executive Board), POD Network members, and researchers (upon approved request).

## Who Are We?

When the POD Network began, the organization consisted of only a few dozen members, largely drawn from major research universities. Now, the POD Network is a national and even international network, with over 1,200 members who hail from a diverse range of academic backgrounds, institutions, and demographic groups.

So, according to the 2016 POD Network Membership Survey, who are we?

- The majority of us are white-identified (86%) and female-identified (75%)<sup>1</sup>.
- We are fairly evenly distributed by age, although concentrated in the 40s and 50s, with 31% aged 41-50 and 29% aged 51-60.
- 24% of us have been a member of the POD Network for more than 10 years, but most us have been involved with the POD Network for a shorter time: 40% have been involved between 1-5 years, and 16% (53 respondents) have been members for less than a year.
- A majority of us (75.67%) hold an academic or professional doctorate, with 17% holding non-terminal Master's degrees.
- Many of us hold degrees in Education (40%), but substantial percentages hold degrees in the Arts and Humanities (25%), Social Sciences (18%), and STEM (16%)<sup>2</sup>.
- Most of us work in the United States (94%) and in a unit responsible for educational development or related services (93%).
- 60% of us are employed in Public universities or colleges, 37% work in private universities and colleges, and just 3 (.79%) of us work in for-profit educational institutions. We work largely in research universities (38%) and doctoral/research universities (25%).
- The institutions where we work vary in size. The highest percentage (22%) work at institutions with enrollments between 7001 and 15,000. Only 14 respondents (3.72%) work for institutions with fewer than 1000 students.

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<sup>1</sup> After the 349 respondents who identified as White or Caucasian, the next most predominant response are the 13 members who identify as Black, African American, or African Diaspora and the 13 members who preferred not to respond.

<sup>2</sup> These numbers are problematic, however, because the survey seems to have counted separately the 25% of participants who indicated their specific disciplines.



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE PAST: Open to All Ages

The strength of POD's Network of educational developers lies in its diversity. This exploration of diversity begins with age. The results of both of the previous surveys (1996, 2010) engendered multiple conversation about the aging of the membership and a need to renew efforts to recruit new members.

Because of the time needed to obtain advanced doctoral degrees, it is not surprising that the majority of POD Network members remain over 40, but in 2016 there does appear to be significant growth in the number under 40 and a slight decline in those 61 or older.

**Table 2.1: POD Network Membership Survey and Age Cohorts, 1996, 2010, and 2016**

|          | 1996 (%) | 2010 (%) | 2016 (%) |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Under 40 | 11.03%   | 18%      | 23.38%   |
| 41-50    | 43.91%   | 29%      | 31.09%   |
| 51-60    | 38.1%    | 30%      | 29.10%   |
| 61+      | 6.19%    | 23%      | 16.17%   |

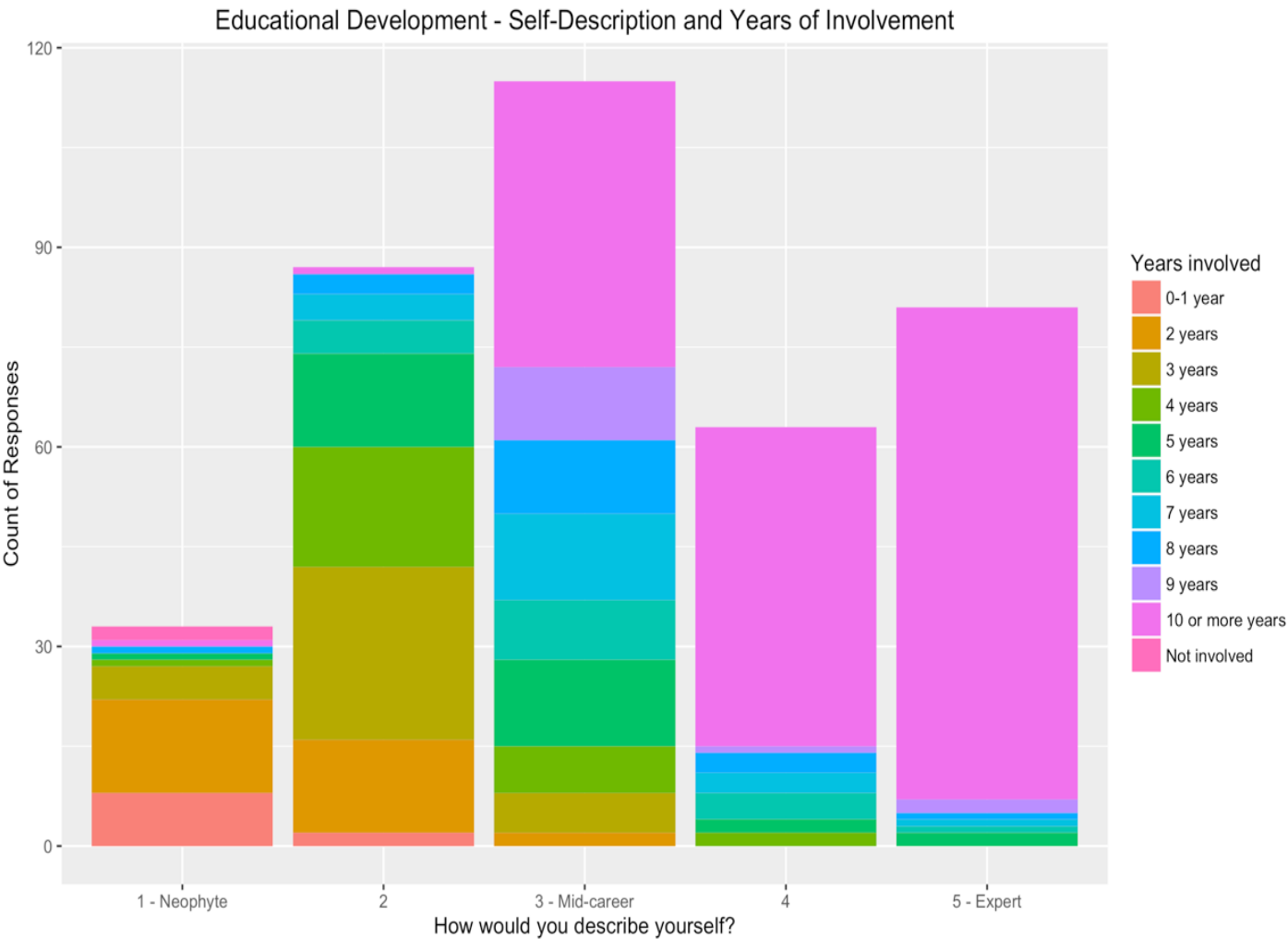




SPOTLIGHT ON THE PRESENT: Career Pathways

The 2016 POD Network Membership survey suggests an emerging developmental path for educational developers. The early career phase might be described as five years of practice or less, mid-career as five years or more, and expert as 10 or more years in practice (see chart 2.2, below).

Table 2.2: Educational Development - Self-Description and Years of Involvement



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE Future: Roles in Educational Development

Looking through the lens of the POD Network Membership surveys, the trend towards professionalization is reflected in the fact that the percentage of respondents who are Center of Teaching and Learning (CTL) staff (including directors, associates and assistants) has grown steadily from 1996 (32%) to 2016 (60%).

At the same time, however, the “other” category continues to be a significant percentage, even with the 2016 addition of more formalized roles to the list of options (including consultant, instructional designer, GA/TA developer, instructional technology specialist, and web/media designer roles). A future study could explore the expanding nature of these roles and perhaps identify future career growth areas. It might also be interesting to correlate these results with job descriptions that are posted to the POD Network listserv and/or posted on the POD Network job board.

**Table 2.3: 2016 POD Membership Survey: Roles for Educational Developers**

|  | Percentage (%) | Number |
|--|----------------|--------|
| Educational developer/consultant               | 17.9           | 68     |
| Instructional designer for online instruction  | 1.06           | 4      |
| Graduate assistant/TA developer/specialist     | 2.12           | 8      |
| Instructional technology specialist/consultant | 2.38           | 9      |
| Media/web developer                            | 0              | 0      |
| Director                                       | 43.65          | 165    |
| Associate Director                             | 10.58          | 40     |
| Assistant Director                             | 5.29           | 20     |
| Not applicable                                 | 4.76           | 18     |
| Other  | 12.17          | 46     |

N=378

# WHAT WE DO

## What do we do

In each of its iterations, the POD Network membership survey has focused on finding out more about our work: the services we provide, the clients we serve, and how we assess our impact.

So, according to the 2016 POD Network Membership survey, what do we do?

- Full-time faculty (generally, across career levels) are an extremely important base of “clients” for educational development services: 89% of us reported that full-time faculty were one of their three most common “clients.” 48% of us reported that “new faculty” were a top-three client base, and 35% report working with graduate students with teaching assignments (TAs). Strikingly, part-time adjunct faculty were a top-3 client base for 172 (46%) of respondents<sup>1</sup>.
- We reported that our centers for teaching and learning engage in an array of activities, including 1-2 hour workshops (94%), one-on-one consultations (90%), panel discussions, brown bag lunches, and roundtables (79%), guest speakers (73%), Multi-day workshops/institutes (68%), Faculty Learning Communities (66%), semester or year-long development programs (66%), book discussion groups (62%), hybrid workshops including online and face-to-face components (34%), online synchronous events (17%), and podcasts (8%).
- These services are frequently evaluated for quality by satisfaction surveys (cited by 87% of respondents, who were allowed to check all that apply) and knowledge-based questionnaires focusing on what information was learned during a workshop/seminar/program/consultation (36%). The impact of these services are largely measured and demonstrated by self-reporting of changes made to teaching after use of unit’s services (75%).
- Most of us (63%) reported that they have no role in the evaluation of teaching, and only 6% evaluate instructors (including recommendations/reports for promotion/tenure dossiers); 15% help train faculty members of departmental administrators to evaluate instructors, and another 16% take on other roles.
- More than half of us (53%) are involved in the accreditation work of their institutions or of component schools/departments.
- According to the CTL Directors who received the question, most of the represented centers report to either a Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost (48%) or an Assistant/Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (32%).
- 34% of CTLs do not have an advisory committee, but the centers that do rely primarily on tenure-track faculty.
- General Institutional Funds are the largest source for CTL budgets, although CTLs also rely on grant monies, donations, and endowments. Personnel is by far the largest expense.

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<sup>1</sup> 20% of respondents selected other as an answer choice.

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE PAST: Governance

The report on the 1996 POD Network Membership survey was entitled “Defining the Field”, perhaps because it was the first survey of its kind. There were almost no questions about the nature of educational development work, so there is little longitudinal or comparison data in this category. That being said, the data does seem to indicate significant changes in the governance for educational development since 1996, including a marked increase in oversight through senior leadership in Academic Affairs (Table 3.1, below).

**Table 3.1: POD Network Membership Surveys 1996, 2010, & 2016: Reporting Structure**

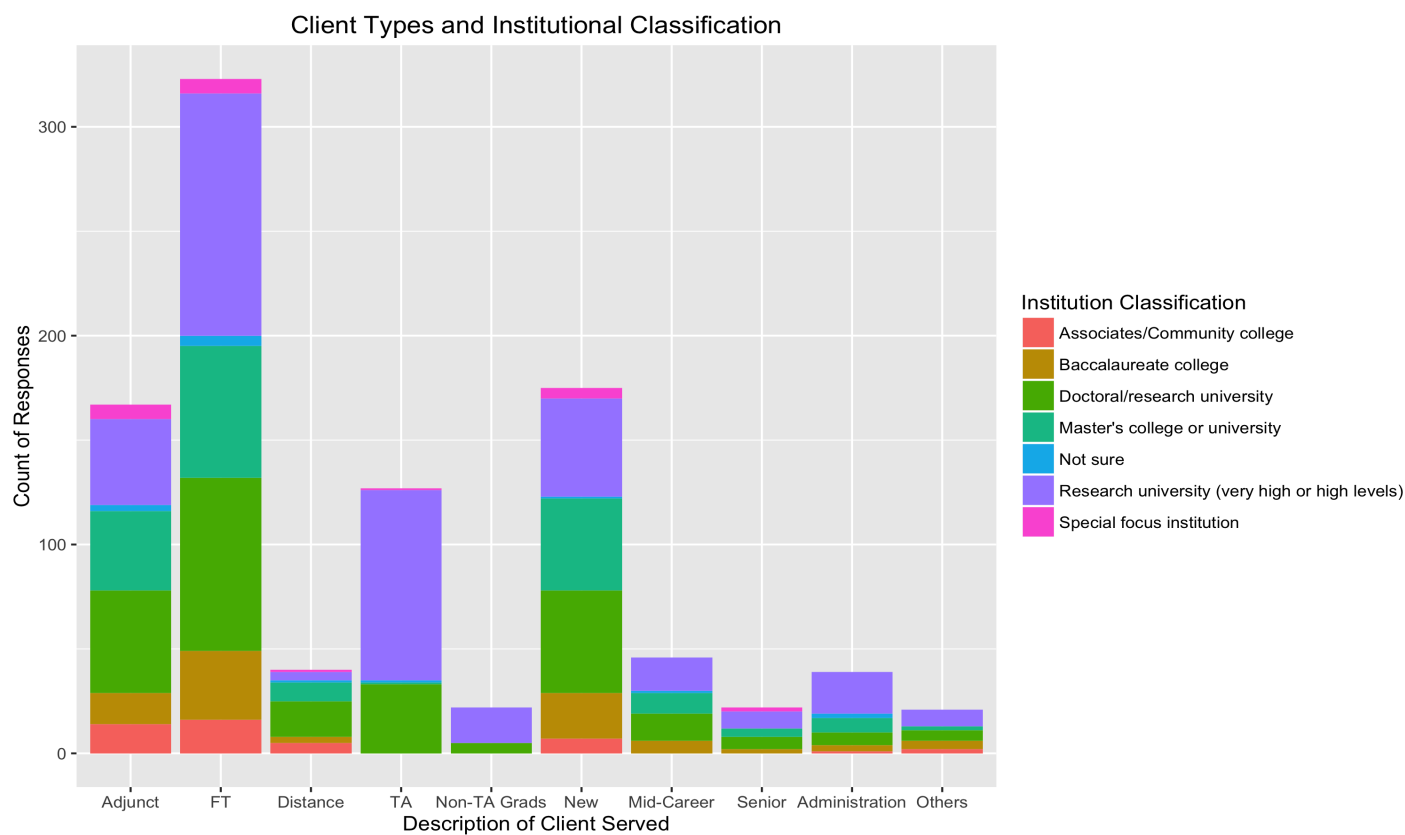
|   | 1996 (n=368) | 2010 (n=357) | 2016 (n=161)* |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Chief Academic Officer (including Provost; Vice-President for Academic Affairs; and Associate VP) | 58.96%       | 72.55%       | 80.13%        |
| CIO/Assistant or Associate Vice-President for IT  | N/A          | N/A          | 1.24%         |
| Dean  | 16.03%       | 14.57%       | 11.18%        |
| Director  | 5.43%        | 3.36%        | 0             |
| Other   | 16.30%       | 15.13%       | 12.42%        |

\*In 2016, these questions were limited only to those respondents who identified as directors of Centers of Teaching and Learning.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PRESENT: Client Base

There have been multiple conversations and studies about divergence in the work of CTLs, particularly at those units that serve different institutional types. When looking at the 2016 POD Network Membership Survey data, there does appear to be a relationship between institutional type and clients served (see Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.3: 2016 POD Network Membership Survey: Client Types by Institutional Classification



SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE: Growth Mindset

In the 2016 POD Network Membership survey, we asked directors of Center for Teaching and Learning (CTLs) if their funding had increased or decreased over the past five years and whether or not they thought their funding would decrease or increase over the next three years. Interestingly, our responses revealed a certain degree of optimism about the future (see Table 3.3 below).

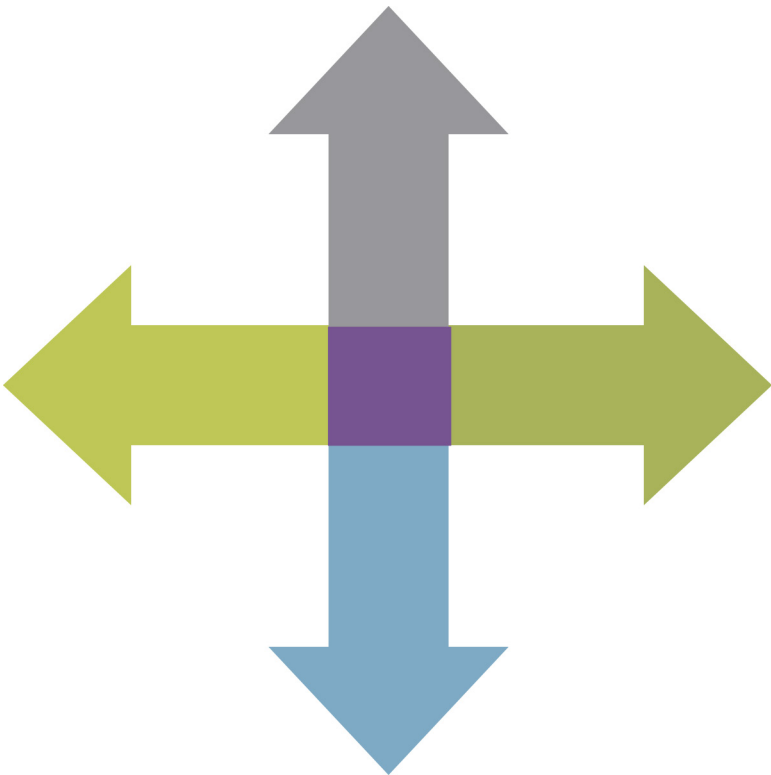
What could this mean? The concept of growth mindset has received a great deal of attention, both in the popular press and in research on student success. To date, there has been little to no attention paid to the mindset of practitioners, such as educational developers, and what effect, if any, that may have on our success, retention, and professional development in our field. This certainly suggests that non-cognitive factors in educational development have the potential to be an interesting line of scholarly inquiry.

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Table 3.4: POD Network Membership Survey 2016: Past and Future Funding

|               | Past three years % | Next three years % |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Increase      | 38.75              | 41.88              |
| Decrease      | 22.50              | 43.75              |
| Stay the same | 38.75              | 14.37              |

N=160



## WHAT DOES THE POD NETWORK DO?

The POD Network provides a variety of services, resources, and opportunities as a benefit of membership.

According to the 2016 POD Network Membership Survey, how does the POD Network help us to do our work?

- We indicated that measuring the impact of services is the top area POD could help them develop, followed by evaluating the quality of service, then career development and job searches.
- We engage with the POD Network by attending the annual conference (76%), reading the discussion forum postings (70%), reading To Improve the Academy (TIA) (63%) and reviewing annual conference proposals (49%).
- 58% of us feel that they are involved at about the right level and 40% of us want to be more involved.
- The majority of respondents (44%) feel that the annual conference is very important and would not miss it, followed closely by those that (38%) feel it is important and attend when it's possible.
- To Improve the Academy (TIA) is the most used POD publication in the past 12 months (80%) followed by the POD website (62%) and A Guide to Faculty Development (50%).
- Over half of us report reading a few articles in TIA and feel it is important while 28% report scanning through each issue. Twelve percent of us thoroughly read TIA and 10% report not reading it.
- The POD discussion forum is equally viewed as very important, important, and somewhat important (29%, 28%, and 28% respectively) with 14% rarely reading or posting.
- When asked about the usefulness of POD Network networking as it presently exists, 44% of us reported that it is moderately useful, 28% as highly useful, 23% as marginally useful and 5% as not useful at all.

### SPOTLIGHT ON THE PAST: The POD Network Conference

The annual POD Network Conference, a mainstay of the work of the organization, has become increasingly important to the work that we do.

**Table 4.1: POD Network Membership Surveys 1996, 2010, & 2016: Significance of the POD Network Conference**

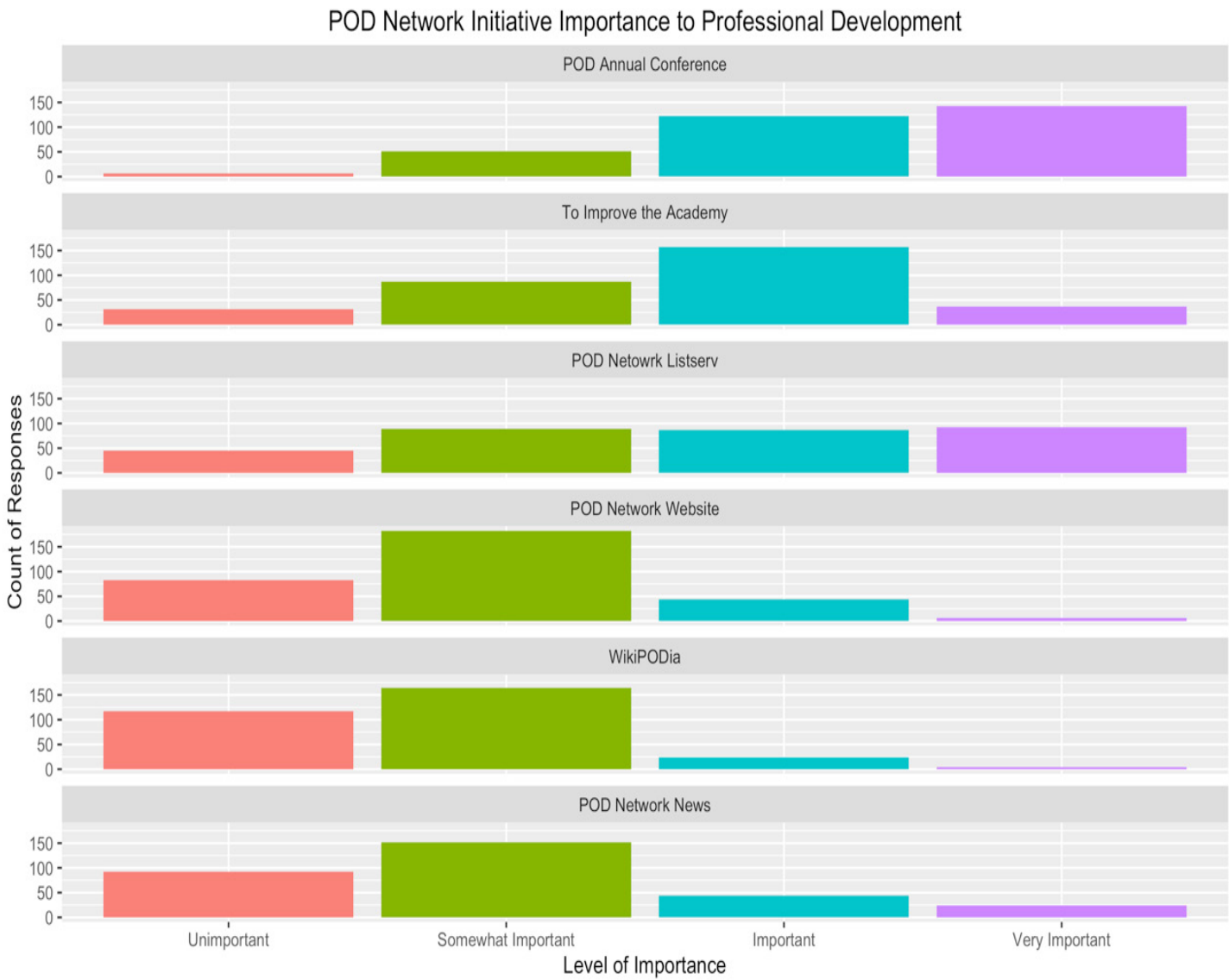
|                       | 1996 (%) | 2010 (%) | 2016 (%) |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Would not miss        | 12.96    | 31.85    | 44.14    |
| Attend if possible    | 39.26    | 43.46    | 37.96    |
| Consider among others | 33.46    | 20.99    | 15.74    |
| Unimportant           | 10.83    | 3.70     | 2.16     |



SPOTLIGHT ON THE PRESENT: POD Network Initiatives

Survey respondents were asked to rate how a number of POD Network initiatives related to their professional development. When these responses are viewed together (as below), a distinctive pattern emerges in which the conference leads the way with POD Network News and Wikipodia rating at the lower end. A potential follow-up study could look at how this information correlates with usage/metrics collected from these initiatives.

Table 4.2: POD Network Membership Survey 2016: Ranking of POD Network Initiatives in Professional Development



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE: Networking

Improving networking opportunities appears to be an area of potential growth for the POD network. While we acknowledge that progress has been made, including the Conference Buddies program and the encouragement of committee participation, there seems to be even greater opportunities for us to connect with each other, an insight that was revealed through qualitative analysis.

In question 49, we were asked “in what ways could the POD Network improve its networking opportunities?”

A detailed qualitative analysis of the responses to this question revealed the following trends:

- We want more networking opportunities beyond the POD conference.
- We want improved visibility and transparency for the networking opportunities available to POD members.
- We want smaller groups with which to network.
- We think the size of the POD Network conference can be a barrier

Some representative comments follow below:

*The social events at the meeting are too crowded and noisy for easy networking for me. I am reluctant to sacrifice interesting and useful sessions to create a quiet time to converse with another attendee (who is also willing to sacrifice a session). Without pre-planning, connecting with people is a challenge. The excursions sometimes provide good opportunities for one-on-one conversations, although these may be limited to transit times in a bus or van to the excursion location.*

*It is very difficult for new people to be accepted into the established groups unless they already know someone or are a director of a center; it would be great if POD was able to really see that as true and work to be more inviting, especially at the conference.*

Suggestions from respondents on ways to provide more formal opportunities included:

- Organized small group lunches
- Intentional working sessions
- Team time at the conference (similar to Institute for New Faculty Developers)
- Shared interest group time
- Fewer excursions and more focus on intentional networking time

# Professional Development

Professional development, in the form of sustained personal and professional growth, is the cornerstone of our field.

So, according to the 2016 POD Network Membership Survey, how do we continue to grow?

- Many of us receive professional development support (78%) as part of their faculty development work. Others (26%) reported receiving flextime from the unit and 7% receive research leave.
- Reading journals, books and other professional literature was the most used method reported for maintaining and increasing knowledge and skills in educational development (98%), with networking with other faculty development specialists/directors (82%) and attending the POD annual conference (80%) as well.
- Online workshops and seminars are used by 57% of us for professional development.
- Graduate students (24%) and tenured professors (23%) are the two largest groups to become involved in educational development, followed by administrative/staff and adjunct instructors.
- Interestingly, the most reported avenue for preparation for being in educational development was through reading about educational development programs (57%), followed by attending the POD annual conference (55%) and being mentored or coached by an educational developer (52%).
- 40% of us reported having a degree related to educational development.
- More than half of us (55%) report having a mentor in educational development and feel that having a mentor is either essential (35%) or important (48%).



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE PAST: Currency

All 3 surveys asked how we maintain and increase our own knowledge and skill development. A longitudinal comparison reveals several trends. Some are not surprising—for example the increasing use of online resources. Others, such as the increasing importance of reading, may have multiple explanations. Overall, though, it would appear that we are doing more, and through more varied avenues, to keep ourselves current in the field, than we have in the past.

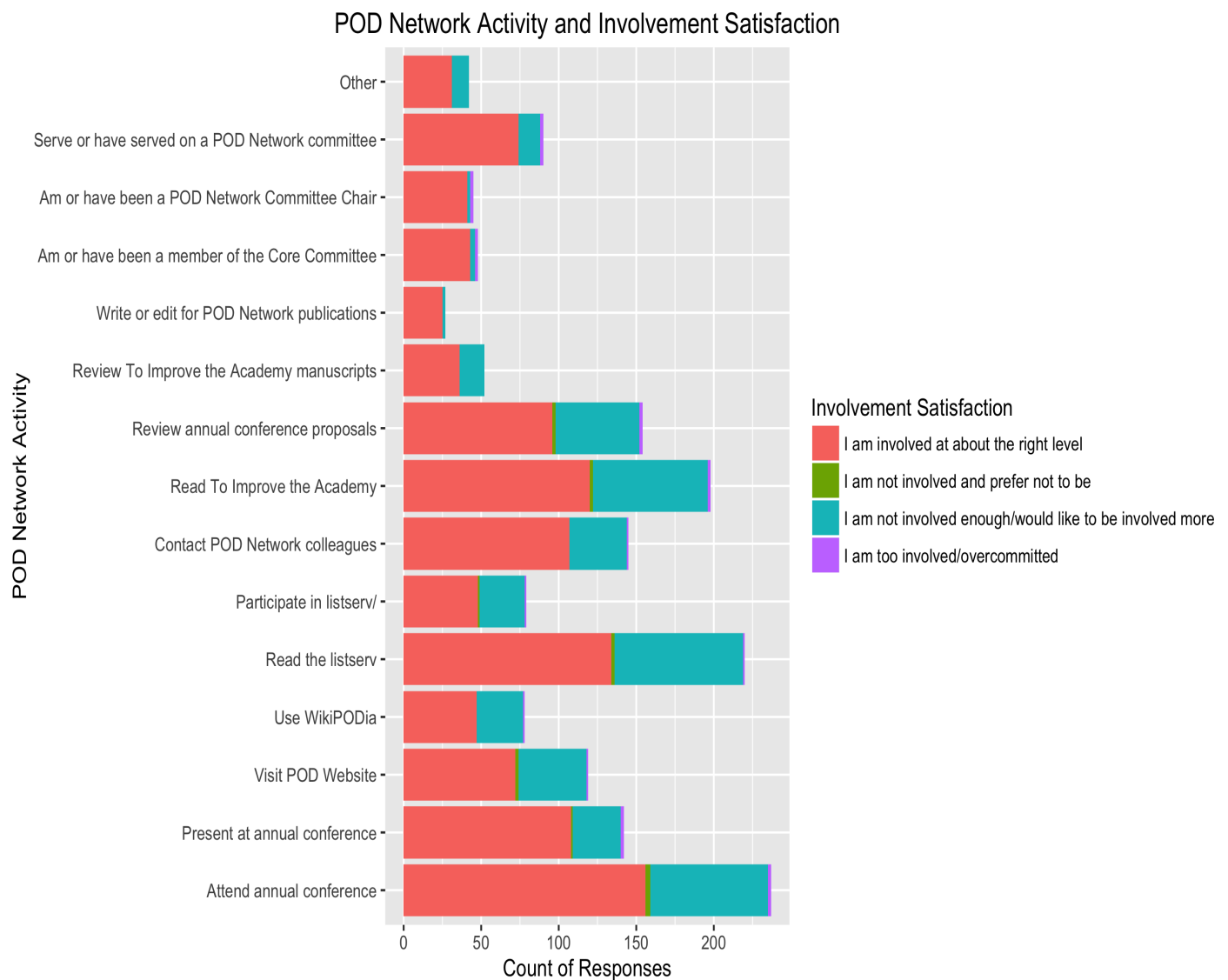
**Table 5.1: POD Network Membership Surveys 1996, 2010, & 2016: Maintaining Currency in the Field**

|                                   | <b>1996 (%)</b> | <b>2010 (%)</b> | <b>2016 (%)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Visiting other developers         | 41.30           | 38.31           | 45.81           |
| Reading                           | 82.88           | 92.87           | 97.90           |
| Networking with others            | 60.86           | 71.71           | 82.34           |
| POD Electronic Network (listserv) | 44.56           | 58.57           | 71.56           |
| POD Network website               | N/A             | 26.95           | 32.93           |
| POD Network Conference            | 60.32           | 70.38           | 80.24           |
| Other conferences                 | 53.26           | 72.16           | 76.05           |
| Workshops                         | 27.44           | 37.19           | 34.13           |
| Online Workshops/Webinars         | N/A             | 35.86           | 56.59           |
| On-the-job training               | 22.55           | 49.67           | 44.01           |
| Formal coursework                 | 7.06            | 11.58           | 13.17           |
| Mentoring                         | 22.55           | 29.62           | 39.82           |
| Other                             | 10.03           | 16.93           | 8.08            |

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE PRESENT: POD Network Activity

The 2016 POD Network Membership survey data offers multiple possibilities for identifying correlations that may prove to be illuminating. In this case there appears to be an interesting correlation between our involvement in POD Network activities and our satisfaction with that involvement. The chart reveals some gaps where there may be meaningful opportunities to involve more of us in the work of the organization.

**Table 5.2: POD Network Membership Survey 2016: POD Network Activity and Involvement Satisfaction**



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE: Pathways to the Profession

A growing body of research in educational development focuses on pathways to, and through the profession. This survey data could prove to be the basis for further study in this rapidly changing area.

Question 30 of the 2016 POD Network Member survey asked us to briefly explain how we became involved in educational development. The word cloud (below) shows some of the keywords that emerged from these responses.



Out of 288 responses to this question, nearly one-fifth of us stated that our involvement in educational development began when we were faculty members. We got started because we were involved in a committee or advisory board, served as a “go to person” for teaching and learning; supported teaching and learning initiatives, or attended multiple events or activities offered by our Center for Teaching and Learning.

Slightly over a quarter (26%) of us started in educational development as graduate students; either working as graduate assistants or in graduate assistant development, and/or received degrees in relevant fields.

The rest of us had a more varied experience, with serendipity influencing many of our pathways to this profession. For some of us, the identification of the need to support teaching and learning proved to be a strong motivator to enter the profession while for others, it provided a post-tenure challenge.

Many respondents took this opportunity to note that the POD Network and the POD Network conference influenced their decision to enter the career and/or to continue working in educational development.

## PLANTING THE SEEDS

This document serves as an overview of the data collected through the 2016 POD Network Membership Survey, but it is also designed to highlight how a range research methodologies can be used to mine interesting and relevant data from the POD Network membership dataset. As a member of the POD Network, we invite you to become not just a part of the survey process, but a part of ongoing scholarly projects that seek to further define, explore, facilitate, and analyze who we are, what we do, and how we grow.

## INVITATION TO AND FROM POD NETWORK COMMITTEES

This membership survey (and resulting analysis) represents a collaborative effort on the part of the Scholarship, Membership, and Diversity committees. Each committee will use the data collected in these surveys to advance the mission and strategic goals of the organization, according to their responsibilities and functions.

### Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee supports the scholarship of educational development in multiple ways, including:

- Leadership for POD Membership Survey analysis and reporting
- Support of *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*, a leading periodical in the field (where multiple articles have been published using POD Network Membership survey data)
- Discovery of new opportunities for collaborative research activities, especially those that involve larger data sets, through the SEED PODS program.
- Identification and sponsorship of opportunities for increased knowledge, mentorship, and networking focused on research/scholarship/creative works in educational development

### Membership Committee

As the Tiger Survey Team wanted to compare the survey respondents to the POD Network membership, we found that it was difficult to make such comparisons because the demographic data was not available for POD Network members. To remedy this, the Membership Committee is making suggestions on which demographic data would be good to collect in the New Member Application or Renewal Application. We have come up with about ten demographic questions to include on the application that would allow us to compare with the survey results. Hearing concerns that the additional demographic data would lengthen the time it takes for someone to become a member, we determined that the addition of the demographic questions to membership application would only add about a minute of time.



## Diversity Committee

Increasing the diversity of the POD Network membership has been the subject of much conversation and attention and had emerged as a major finding from the 2010 survey. Despite much valuable work, the diversity of the POD Network membership in respect to race/ethnicity remains largely unchanged.

Additionally, while the membership survey captured age, gender, and race, there are other identities that influence an individual's experience within an organization and profession. The Diversity Committee will continue to offer opportunities to connect with others and critically engage in discussion about diversity in our centers, our profession, and our work.



## Open Invitation to POD Network members for further research

### **Did something in this report inspire you to want to learn more?**

The POD Network Scholarship Committee invites all POD members to consider using this data to answer their own questions about membership in the POD Network and the field of educational development. Access to the data does require permission of the Scholarship Committee. For policies and procedures as well as the request form, please visit <https://sites.google.com/a/podnetwork.org/wikipodia/pod-sponsored-surveys>.

