

2006 AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY MEMBER SURVEY REPORT

1. Demographics

Age?

18-25	6 respondents	2%
26-35	52	17
36-45	57	18
46-55	86	28
56-65	79	25
66-75	27	9
No response	2	1

Gender?

F: 57%
M: 43%

Culture/Ethnicity/Race?

White	86.3%
Black or African American	1.3
Asian	1.6
Latino or Hispanic	3.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	.6
Other	6.7

US State or Other Country of Residence?

Top 10 states:

California	23 responses	7%
Indiana	20	6
New York	18	6
Pennsylvania	17	5
Ohio	14	5
Virginia	12	4
Maryland	11	4
Utah	10	3
Washington DC	9	3
North Carolina	9	3

43 (14%) from outside the US, of which 19 responses were from Canada (6%)

2. Education

Almost all of the 297 respondents who have already completed degrees followed some part of the BA/MA/PhD track.

70% of these respondents earned their first degree before 1990; 61% of first degrees were earned before 1985, and 38% were earned before 1975.

37% earned a second degree since 1990.

48% earned a third degree before 1990; 63% earned a third degree before 1995.

297 respondents cited more than 50 different fields of study for their first degrees, but most frequently cited: English (86 responses; 32%), anthropology (48; 17%), foreign languages (25; 9%), folklore (23; 8%) and history (23; 8%).

270 respondents cited 39 different fields of study for their second degree, but most frequently cited: folklore (116; 43%), English (42; 15%), anthropology (26; 10%), area studies (14; 5%), American studies (13; 5%), and programs in education (10; 4%).

207 respondents cited 26 different fields of study for their third degree, but most frequently cited: folklore (116; 56%), anthropology (18; 9%), English (17; 8%), area studies (14; 7%), and American studies (9; 4%).

70 respondents described “other” certification or training in more than 35 different areas, of which the five most frequently cited were: teaching diplomas or certification (13 respondents), post-doctoral research (5), library science (4), and training in documentary production (4).

Student Status?

Currently, 45 respondents (14% of total) are students. 33 (73% of students) expect to receive their degree within two years (by 2009); 8 (18% of students) expect to complete their current degree program within 5 years (by 2012).

Students report being enrolled in 12 different degree programs; the most frequently cited are folklore (62%), English (11%), and anthropology (9%). 7 (16%) anticipate pursuing another degree beyond their current one; 57% (4) of them will seek a further degree in folklore.

Of 36 student respondents, 25 (69%) anticipate an academic position, 4 (11%) in folklore, 3 (27%) in English, and the rest in an unspecified capacity. 7 (19%) of these respondents anticipate a position in the public sector or in a museum.

3. Employment

Are you employed at the present time?

Y 84%
 N 16%
 No response 15 respondents; 5% of total respondents

If you are not employed, are you retired or unemployed?

Retired 25 (54% of those unemployed)
 Unemployed 21 (46% of those unemployed)

Is your employment related, at least in part, to folklore?

Y 88%
 N 12%
 No response 65 respondents; 21% of total respondents

Is your folklore-related employment full- or part-time?

FT 80%
 PT 20%
 No response 111 respondents; 35% of total respondents

Category of employer(s), full-time and part-time:

Arts organizations	22	10%
Community development organizations	5	2
Cultural organizations (humanities, museums, etc.)	27	12
Independent folklore organization	19	9
Self-employed (freelance, consulting)	28	13
Subtotal "Public Sector"	101	46%
University or college (administration)	13	6
University or college (faculty)	125	57
University or college (non-faculty)	23	10
Subtotal "Academic"	161	73%

[Note: Percentages add up to 100+ because this includes part-time as well as full-time work.]

No response 95 30%

Years in current position or mix of positions:

1-5 years	72	34%
5-10 years	49	23
10-15 years	24	11
15-20 years	16	8%

20-25 years	21	10
25-30 years	17	8
More than 30 years	14	7
No response	103	33

Approximate salary in 2006 from folklore-related work:

Under \$5,000	16	8%
\$5,000-10,000	10	5
\$10,000-20,000	15	7
\$20,000-30,000	6	3
\$30,000-40,000	22	11
\$40,000-\$50,000	37	18
\$50,000-60,000	28	14
\$60,000-70,000	30	14
\$70,000-80,000	11	5
\$80,000-100,000	20	10
Over \$100,000	13	6
No response	107	34%

Average annual salary from folklore-related work, 2002-2006:

Under \$5,000	23	11%
\$5,000-10,000	15	7
\$10,000-20,000	22	11
\$20,000-30,000	11	5
\$30,000-40,000	22	11
\$40,000-\$50,000	46	22
\$50,000-60,000	23	11
\$60,000-70,000	10	5
\$70,000-80,000	11	5
\$80,000-90,000	7	3
\$90,000-100,000	9	4
Over \$100,000	7	3
No response	110	35%

Employees of a university/college:

Department? 159 responses; 52 different

Most frequently cited:

English	43	27%
Folklore	25	16
Anthropology	13	8
Music	8	5%

Humanities	5	3
American Studies	4	3
Religion	4	3
History	4	3

Academic Rank?

Full	31	20%
Associate	38	24
Assistant	27	17
Lecturer	9	6
Contract instructor	12	8
Graduate student	11	7
Other	29	17

(no position cited by more than 2 respondents)

Tenured? (167 respondents)

Y	78	47%
N	89	53%

Adjunct?

Y 16 responses (app. 10% of university/college employees)

4. Professional Identification

Do you identify yourself as a folklorist?

Y	151	52%
N	22	8
Sometimes	125	43
No response	26	8

If you answered No or Sometimes, how (or how else) do you identify yourself professionally?

147 responses, 79 different. The most frequently cited:

Anthropologist	24	16%
Writer	15	10
Ethnomusicologist	14	10
Ethnographer	10	7
English professor	7	5
Teacher	6	4

Do your colleagues identify you as a folklorist?

Y	129	45%
N	37	13
Sometimes	127	44
No response	26	8

5. Other Society Memberships

538 responses from 247 respondents who answered this question:

Top societies mentioned:

American Anthropological Association	36	15%
Western States Folklore Society	26	11
Society for Ethnomusicology	20	8
Modern Language Association	17	7
American Studies Association	12	5
New York Folklore Society	12	5
International Society for Folk Narrative Research	10	4
Middle Atlantic Folklife Association	10	4

A few more follow with 6-7 responses, then none gets more than 3-4.

6. AFS Membership and Participation

How long have you been an AFS member?

<1 year	20	7%
1-5 years	46	16
6-10 years	42	15
10-20 years	75	26
20+ years	104	36
No response	28	9%

How important is your membership in the AFS for each of the following?

Percentage of respondents answering “very important” or “somewhat important”:

To keep abreast of research and methodology in the field of folklore.	272	95%
To establish, develop, and sustain my professional relationships.	252	88%
To express my professional responsibility and identity.	247	86%

To see people with whom I want to have a personal or social relationship.	228	79%
To provide an opportunity for reading and discussion across the disciplines.	219	76%
To represent my field to the larger public.	202	70%
To present papers at AFS annual meetings.	196	68%
To contribute actively in support of my profession (via committees or governance).	154	54%
To publish my work in the <i>Journal of American Folklore</i> .	125	44%
To involve my students in the field.	91	32%
To improve my teaching skills.	89	31%
To help in finding employment.	85	30%

Have you engaged in these AFS activities or used these AFS services in the past 3 years?

Obtained information from the AFS website.	259	92%
Read the <i>Journal of American Folklore</i>	249	88
Read the <i>AFSNews</i> or the newsletter of an AFS section	242	86
Voted in AFS elections	221	79
Referred to the AFS member directory	152	55
Used AFS resources to locate information regarding ethical standards for the field.	93	35%
Attended the AFS annual meeting without being in the program.	79	29
Presented a paper, participated in a forum/workshop, or served as a discussant at an AFS annual meeting.	78	29
Organized a session at an AFS annual meeting.	78	29
Used AFS resources to locate a fellowship or grant opportunity.	57	21
Published a review in <i>JAF</i>	48	18%
Submitted items for the <i>AFSNews</i> or the newsletter of an AFS section	45	17
Published an article in <i>JAF</i>	28	11
Made financial contributions, such as gifts or bequests to AFS, over and above required membership dues	28	11%
Nominated someone for an AFS section prize	27	10
Served as a member of an AFS committee	22	8%
Received an AFS prize or an AFS section prize	20	7

Served in an editorial capacity for JAF	19	7
Nominated someone for an elected AFS position (President, Executive Board, Nominating Committee)	13	5
Served in an elected AFS position (President, Executive Board, Nominating Committee)	13	5
No response	28	10%

7. American Folklore Society Present and Potential Activities

Please indicate [up to three] present Society activities you believe are the most important.

Annual meeting	248	87%
<i>Journal of American Folklore</i>	229	81
AFS website	152	53
Section activities	84	29
<i>AFS News</i>	57	20
Special projects (e.g., Ethnographic Thesaurus, Veterans History Project, WIPO)	46	16%
Annual meeting travel stipends	19	7
Prizes	6	2
Other	2	1
No response	29	9%

If the AFS planned to eliminate one of its present activities, which would you recommend for elimination as of least importance to you?

Don't eliminate anything	40	20%
Prizes	38	19
<i>AFS News</i>	29	14
Annual meeting travel stipends	24	12
Section activities	20	10
Special projects	16	8%
<i>Journal of American Folklore</i>	5	2
Veterans History Project	4	2
Ethnographic Thesaurus	2	1
AFS website	2	1
Don't know	10	5%
Other	5	2%
No response	114	36%

Does your employer provide financial support for you to attend the AFS annual meeting?

Y	155	57%
N	119	43
No response	41	13

How much support does your employer provide for you to attend the AFS meeting?

Under \$100	4	3%
\$100-300	20	13
\$300-500	37	24
\$500-1000	46	30
Only registration	1	1
All expenses covered	47	30
No response	160	51%

Would your employer provide this support if you did not present a paper or participate in the meeting in some way?

Yes	54	34%
No	73	47%
No response	157	50%

If the AFS, in trying to change its mission, could change one thing about the way it operates now, what single change would make the greatest positive difference?

The most frequently cited responses among more than 30 different answers:

Diversify membership [e.g., more international (7), younger (6), racially diverse (3), and/or independent or unemployed (3) members]	25	16%
Promote folklore/folklorists within the university and to the general public.	17	11
Promote contact with other disciplines and/or other professional organizations.	15	10
Make participation more affordable (inc. travel stipends (4) and scaled membership dues (2))	12	8
Improve support for novices and job-seekers [inc., mentoring (3), advocacy for employment opportunities (3)].	9	6%
Change leadership	6	4
Improve the website [e.g., add information, discussion, improve navigation]	6	4
Change coverage in JAF [more public-sector folklore (2), American subjects (2), writing for more general readership (2)]	6	4

Overcome perceived division between public-sector and academic folklore.	5	3
Provide more support of teaching [e.g., in high schools (2), develop textbook (1)]	4	3
Provide more meetings and/or regional retreats.	4	3
Advocate social/political policy for general audience.	4	3
Provide information about relevant meetings, conferences, publications for other organizations.	3	2
Raise funds.	2	1
Return to a print newsletter.	2	1
Don't know	31	20
No response	160	51%

If the AFS could change one thing about the annual meeting, what would it be?

Be more selective in choosing papers	25	14%
Too many concurrent sessions	21	12
Make attendance more affordable	19	11
Promote more diversity among participants	16	9
No change	7	4
Provide more discussion sessions	6	3%
Provide more travel stipends	5	3
Choose more accessible host cities	5	3
Provide more time for Q&A, follow-up discussion	5	3
Provide more free time	4	2
Improve AV support	4	2%
Publish papers before and/or after the meeting	3	2
Don't schedule the meeting in October	3	2
More poster sessions	3	2
Encourage novices to participate	3	2
Encourage senior members to participate more actively	3	2
Don't know	17	10%
No response	139	44%

Please indicate the potential AFS activities [up to four] that you believe will be the most important in helping the Society reach its mission.

Create teams of folklorists to make effective long-term connections with related fields and disciplines.	122	45%
Advocacy concerning regional, national, and international cultural issues.	119	44
Produce additional multidisciplinary meetings on critical cultural issues, designed to place folklorists at the center of major cross-discipline conversations.	105	39
Serve as applicant organization, project manager, and coordinator for folklorists' initiatives; e.g., "think tanks" to encourage the most creative new scholarship, a series of NEH teacher institutes or summer seminars, coordinated national documentation activities, public education projects with networks of libraries and museums.	102	38
Market our field to targeted audiences, including culturally diverse audiences, to build knowledge of the field and increase AFS membership.	101	37
Develop AFS services (financial support, meetings, mentoring, networking) specifically intended to encourage the production of folklore scholarship. [I put these here because they are close behind the top 5; there is a big drop off in the count for each activity after these. Cut or keep?]	96	36
Create or share engaging, innovative materials for folklore courses, both introductory and advanced.	85	32
Create teams of folklorists to make effective long-term connections with communities of color and relevant cultural institutions.	62	23
Provide activities and services to support greater international communication and exchange among folklorists.	57	21
Support independent folklorists.	36	13
Produce additional meetings on specific topics within the field.	32	12%
Develop new publications to serve new needs.	27	10
Improve the AFS website.	9	3
No response	45	14%

