

## Results from the ANA Education Survey

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Earlier this spring, we sent an email inquiry to all 820 members of SCB who listed “Austral and Neotropical America” (ANA) as one of their section affiliations within the Society. In this short questionnaire, distributed in both Spanish and English, we asked section members to rank the following potential activities that ANA Education could undertake or facilitate in terms of priority:

1. Develop and maintain an updated database of conservation education programs in the ANA region on the SCB website
2. Develop and maintain an updated list of conservation-relevant course and workshop offerings across the ANA region on the SCB website
3. Facilitate technical support to those interested in developing needs assessments and new curricula for conservation biology education in the ANA region (help in developing survey instruments, advice for data analysis, relevant literature, matching needs with appropriate experts, etc.)
4. Develop and offer short topical courses in conservation biology
5. Develop and offer short courses on improving teaching in conservation biology, and provide a forum for the exchange of resources and ideas on teaching conservation biology for faculty members in the ANA region
6. Other initiatives: please describe:

Over the three-week response period, we received a total of 80 responses, or slightly below 10% of the section membership (Table 1). The majority of responses (59%) were from ANA members residing in the United States; this group also constitutes 70% of ANA section membership. Respondents from within the ANA region were relatively strongly repre-

sented in the survey responses at 35% of total response, in spite of comprising only 20% of ANA section membership. No responses were received from ANA section members residing in Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, or Uruguay.

Table 1: Survey Respondents by Country

Country	# of respondents	% of responses
Argentina	4	5.0
Bolivia	2	2.5
Brazil	2	2.5
Chile	2	2.5
Colombia	2	2.5
Ecuador	2	2.5
Guatemala	2	2.5
Honduras	1	1.2
Mexico	4	5.0
Peru	3	3.8
Venezuela	4	5.0
Canada	2	2.5
France	1	1.2
U.K.	2	2.5
USA	47	58.8
TOTAL	80	100.00

Top-ranked responses are displayed graphically in Figure 1, and complete survey results are presented in Table 2. One important result is that there appears to be broad support for each of the five proposed activities. However, some activities in particular were noted as high priority; for example, more than 30% of respondents gave a number 1 ranking to activity 3, “facilitating technical support to those interested in developing needs assessments and new curricula for conservation biology education in the ANA region”. There were also some interesting differences among respondents from within the ANA region as compared to those living outside of the region. As indicated in Figure 1, respondents from within the region were less likely to consider options 1 and 2 (“developing and maintaining an updated database of conservation education programs” and “developing and maintaining an updated list of conservation-relevant course and workshop offerings”) as top priorities than were respondents from the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Perhaps because of relatively reduced availability of conservation training opportunities, respondents from within ANA were more likely

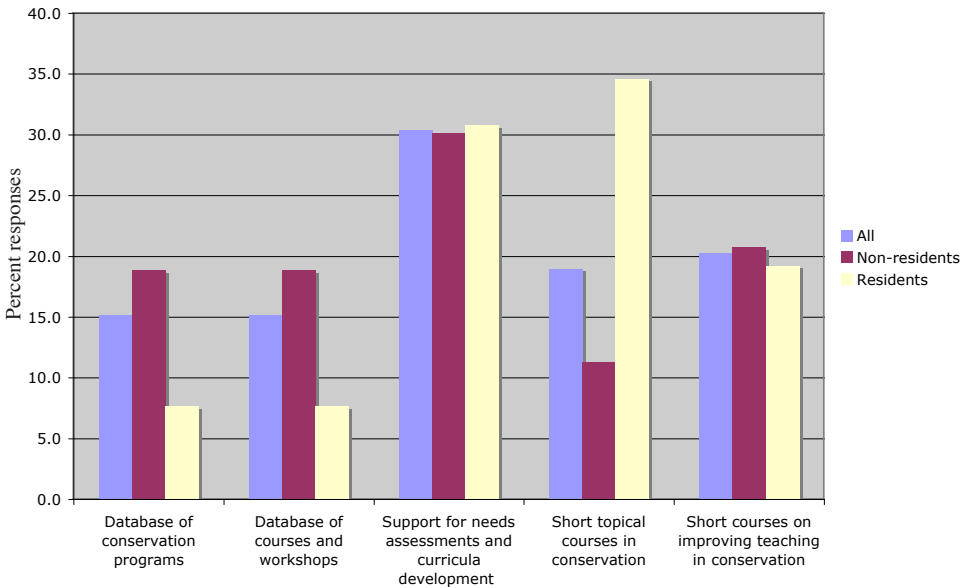


ANA members and others at a capacity-development workshop in 2005 at SCB in Brasilia

to rank activity 4, “developing and offering short topical courses in conservation biology” as a top priority. The distribution of number one ranked responses was significantly different (Chi-square,  $p < .05$ , d.f.=4) between ANA residents and ANA region non-residents.

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to comment on the survey, or to propose other educational initiatives that

Figure 1: Number one ranked activities



ANA should consider. One respondent suggested that ANA should develop and maintain lists and reviews in Spanish of conservation biology textbooks, to complement the current effort of the Education Committee of SCB to do the same in English. Several respondents proposed that ANA should develop a database of funding opportunities for conservation education programs, or even that ANA should seek to identify and procure funding for new conservation education programs. Others suggested that ANA publish a directory of members who are actively working in conservation education, or that some short courses be developed and offered through virtual or distance learning programs. One respondent suggested that rather than develop and offer new topical courses, ANA should instead focus on providing financial and technical support to existing academic programs and short courses in the region.

The results of this survey provide valuable information to the ANA Education Director and the ANA Section Board. In particular, respondents gave high priority to support activities that would facilitate effective needs assessments and strengthened conservation curriculum development. Additionally, respondents from within the region indicated the importance of ANA-sponsored educational offerings. Both of these types of activities would require at

least some funds and significant time commitments on the part of SCB staff or ANA volunteers, and in the case of the needs assessment/curriculum development, would be quite different from the types of activities previously undertaken by ANA.

Finally, the ANA section is second only to the North American section of SCB in terms of membership. As the response rate to this questionnaire indicates, we are fortunate to have a large group of interested and active participants. However, the current distribution of ANA members, in which only 20% come from ANA countries, also illustrates the work that remains to be done to recruit additional members from within the region. This is entirely consistent with the SCB strategic goal of increased internationalization across the Society.

Table 2: Percent responses by priority ranking for each activity proposed

	Ranking Assigned (1=highest priority)	Database of conservation programs	Database of courses and workshops	Facilitate technical support for needs assessments and curricula development	Offer short topical courses in conservation	Offer short courses on improving teaching in conservation	Totals
All respondents	1	15	15	30	19	20	100
	2	17	27	15	17	24	100
	3	14	21	19	14	32	100
	4	30	23	23	18	7	100
	5	28	16	13	28	16	100
Non-ANA residents	1	19	19	30	11	21	100
	2	20	25	12	18	25	100
	3	15	28	21	13	23	100
	4	30	11	27	23	9	100
	5	21	19	12	29	19	100
ANA residents	1	8	8	31	35	19	100
	2	13	29	19	16	23	100
	3	12	8	16	16	48	100
	4	30	41	15	11	4	100
	5	41	9	14	27	9	100