

ashe

American Society of Health Economists

# Report

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## “Economics of Population Health”

Inaugural Conference of the American Society of Health Economists

Madison, Wisconsin

June 4-7, 2006

*new perspectives  
in health economics*

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# Report on “Economics of Population Health: Inaugural Conference of ASHE”

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## Executive Summary

October 10 2006

The Inaugural Conference of ASHE held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, June 4-7, 2006 was regarded as a success in virtually every dimension according to attendees who responded to the online questionnaire as well as those who provided personal comments during and after the meetings. The papers were of very high quality and span almost every area of health economics. Over 330 papers were presented in 107 sessions. Eighty five posters were on display at the poster session. Presenters and attendees were particularly happy with the three paper sessions, which provided ample time for serious discussion in most cases. The ability of participants to network with colleagues was outstanding, and the social affairs were highly praised by the 535 attendees. The conference had over 10 sponsors and 7 exhibitors setting a good benchmark from which future conferences can grow.

The overall success was facilitated by the excellent facilities of the Pyle Center, the ample food provided on all occasions, the convenience of the hotels and the fine summer weather in Madison. The Presidential Address by Joseph Newhouse, the John D. MacArthur Professor of Health Policy and Management, Harvard, along with the plenary speeches by David Cutler, Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics, Harvard, and B. Douglas Bernheim, Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Economics, Stanford, were given high marks by all in attendance. The ASHE Medal winners were David Cutler and Jonathan Gruber, MIT, clearly setting a high standard for future choices. The student paper award was presented to Grant Miller, Stanford, for his paper titled "Contraception as Development? New Evidence from Family Planning in Colombia." We believe that the conference was a success in every dimension and clearly promotes the mission of ASHE to promote excellence in health economics research and provide a forum for emerging ideas and empirical results of health economics research. Clearly, this conference set very high standards for future ASHE conferences.

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## Local Organizing Committee / Program Planning Committee

**John Mullahy,**

Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences,  
University of Wisconsin, Madison. LOC and PPC

**Barbara Wolfe,**

Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences,  
University of Wisconsin, Madison. LOC and PPC

**David Banness,**

Assistant Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences,  
University of Wisconsin, Madison. LOC and PPC

**Jody Sindelar,**

President Elect of ASHE and Professor, Yale University. PPC

**Richard Arnould,**

Executive Director of ASHE and Emeritus Professor of Economics,  
University of Illinois. PPC

PPC - Program Planning Committee

LOC - Local Organizing Committee

## Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee has the extremely important task of reviewing the abstracts submitted for possible inclusion in the program. This committee sets the quality standards necessary to assure that the papers are of high scientific quality.

Marjorie Baldwin, Arizona State University  
Ana Balsa, University of Miami  
Jessica Banthin, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Anirban Basu, University of Chicago  
Glenn Blomquist, University of Kentucky  
David Bradford, Medical University of South Carolina  
Robert Brent, Fordham University  
Kate Bundorf, Stanford University  
Susan Busch, Yale University  
Charles Cangialose, Amgen  
Christopher Carpenter, University of California, Irvine  
William Cartwright, National Institutes of Health  
John Cawley, Cornell University  
Sajal Chattopadhyay, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Jon Christianson, University of Minnesota  
Benjamin Craig, University of Arizona  
Diane Dewar, State University of New York, Albany  
Jalpa Doshi, University of Pennsylvania  
Jose Escarce, RAND  
Roger Feldman, University of Minnesota  
Bowen Garrett, Urban Institute  
Kathleen Gillespie, Saint Louis University  
John Goddeeris, Michigan State University  
Michel Grignon, McMaster University  
Michael Hagan, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Jill Herndon, University of Florida  
Emmett Keeler, RAND  
Genevieve Kenney, Urban Institute  
Meredith Kilgore, University of Alabama, Birmingham  
R. Tamara Konetzka, University of Chicago  
Audrey Laporte, University of Toronto  
Pierre Leger, Ecole des hautes etudes commerciales de Montreal  
Rein Lepnum, University of Saskatchewan  
Douglas Leslie, Yale University  
Lan Liang, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Richard Lindrooth, Medical University of South Carolina  
Kirsten Long, Mayo Institute  
Timothy McBride, Saint Louis University  
Jennifer Mellor, College of William and Mary  
David Meltzer, University of Chicago  
Gwendolyn Morrison, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis  
Edward Norton, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
John Nyman, University of Minnesota  
Albert Okunade, University of Memphis  
Tomas Philipson, University of Chicago  
Maria Pisu, University of Alabama, Birmingham  
Steve Pizer, Boston University  
Nazmi Sari, University of Saskatchewan  
Jennifer Schultz, University of Minnesota  
Eric Seiber, Clemson University  
Dennis Shea, Penn State University  
Mark Showalter, Brigham Young University  
Merrile Sing, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Mark Smith, Veterans Administration  
Sally Stearns, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
Joe Terza, Medical University of South Carolina  
Mick Tilford, University for Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
Jennifer Troyer, University of North Carolina, Charlotte  
Vivian Valdmanis, University of Sciences in Philadelphia  
Norman Waitzman, University of Utah  
Amy Wallace, Dartmouth College  
Teresa Waters, University of Tennessee  
William Weeks, Dartmouth College  
Rachel Werner, University of Pennsylvania  
Richard Willke, Pfizer  
Robert Woodward, University of New Hampshire  
Tetsuji Yamada, Rutgers University  
Winnie Yip, Harvard University  
Xinzhi Zhang, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Stephen Zuckerman, Urban Institute

# Sponsorship

The officers and management of ASHE are very aware that a conference of this caliber and size could not be conducted without the generous support of the sponsors. Their donations permit many activities and events to be a part of the conference. This support allows us to have a reasonable registration fee and include everyone in all events. We sincerely thank the sponsors for their support.

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Department of Population Health Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Berkex  
i3 innovus  
Mayo Clinic, College of Medicine  
Merck  
National Federation of Independent Businesses  
Sanofi Aventis  
TAP Pharmaceuticals  
University of Wisconsin Medical Foundation  
Cornerstone Research

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# Exhibitors

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Center for Disease Control  
Dymaxion  
Elsevier  
ICMPE  
Wiley  
World Bank

# Awards Committee and Awards Presented

**ASHE Medalists** awarded biennially to economist age 40 or under who has made significant contributions to the field of health economics.

**Recipient:** *(Tie vote)*

- **David Cutler**

*Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for Social Sciences, Harvard University*

- **Jonathan Gruber**

*Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

**Student Paper** awarded to the student who wrote the best sole-authored paper while still holding the status student in the two years prior to the conference.

**Recipient:**

- **Grant Miller**

Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Stanford School of Medicine, a CHP/PCOR core faculty member, and a faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research, PhD- Harvard, 2005, for his paper titled "*Contraception as Development? New Evidence from Family Planning in Colombia.*"

## Awards Committee

**Edward Norton**, Chair, Professor, Department of Health Policy and Administration, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Melayne McInnes**, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of South Carolina/Columbia

**Martin Gaynor**, E.J. Barone Chair in Health Systems Management, Professor of Economics and Health Policy, Carnegie-Mellon University

**Susan Ettner**, Professor, Department of Health Services, UCLA School of Medicine

**Jose Escarce**, Professor, UCLA General Internal Medicine

**Jody Sindelar**, Professor, School of Public Health, Yale University, President Elect, ASHE, ex officio

**Bobbie Wolfe**, Professor, Departments of Economics, Population Health Sciences and Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Richard Arnould**, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois Executive Director, ASHE, ex officio

**Frank Sloan**, J. Alexander McMahon Professor of Health Policy and Management and Professor of Economics, Duke University

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# Registration

Registration Type	Registrants
Total Paid Registrations	535
Pre-conference Registrations	55
Oral Presentations	331
Total Sessions	107
Poster Presentations	85

# Workshops & Pre-Conference Sessions

Organizer	Title	Type	Attendees
Joseph Terza	Econometric Methods for Health Policy Analysis using Non-Experimental Data	Half-Day	33
Randall Ellis	Risk Adjustment and Predictive Modeling	Half-Day	10
Willard Manning, et al	Health Econometrics of Health Costs, Expenditure and Utilization Data	Half-Day	42

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# Venue

The **Pyle Center** on the campus of the **University of Wisconsin** provided a near perfect facility for the conference. Concurrent sessions were held in state of the art conference rooms that ranged in capacity from 50 to over 125 people. Eleven sessions were held at each of the designated concurrent time slots. The Pyle Center also provided excellent space for registration, exhibitors, the poster session, lunches and breaks. All activities except the plenary sessions were held at one location which provided great ease for social and business networking among the attendees and excellent attendance at the sessions. The relaxed ambiance of the conference was enhanced by being able to stroll along Lake Mendota (the Pyle Center is located on the lake) while discussing issues in health economics with a colleague, thinking about a presentation or eating lunch with friends.

Each of the three plenary sessions was held in **Union Hall** at the **University of Wisconsin Student Union**. While the room was larger than necessary, acoustics were fine and the facility was very close to the Pyle Center.

Three receptions were held. The opening reception was held late Sunday afternoon on the rooftop terrace of the **Monona Terrace**, a beautiful conference center built from a Frank Lloyd Wright plan, located on Lake Monona. Thanks to excellent June weather in Madison, the setting was beautiful, the food was very good, and the free water show on Lake Monona was an interesting added attraction. This reception provided an excellent start for the conference.

The second reception was held Tuesday evening on the **Terrace of the Student Union** following an excellent plenary speech by David Cutler. Once again the setting was very attractive along Lake Mendota. Two surprise events occurred at this event. All enjoyed a surprise visit by Bucky Badger, the mascot of the University of Wisconsin. And the spirits of the attendees were not dampened by a tornado warning that required all in attendance to go to the interior of the building. The food was excellent.

The third event was the closing reception/lunch which followed the plenary speech presented by Doug Bernheim. It too was held on the **Terrace of the Student Union**. Many took this opportunity to leave early, but those who remained provided many accolades for the fine food and overall ability to network with colleagues at this and other events throughout the conference.

We did not have an official hotel since registration and all activities were held in an academic setting on the campus and attendees were responsible for making their own reservations. Members of the Board and plenary speakers were hosted at the Dahmann Campus Inn one block from the Pyle Center. Other attendees who made plans early also stayed at this location. Other hotels actively used by attendees were the Madison Concourse Hotel, Madison Hilton, Best Western Inn, and Doubletree in downtown Madison on or near the Capital square (10-20 minute walk from the Pyle Center). Two facilities operated by the University of Wisconsin Extension Program, the Lowell Inn (two buildings from the Pyle Center) and the J. F. Friedrich Inn (about a 15 minute walk to the Pyle Center along Lake Mendota) were also the conference homes of many attendees. Finally, a few people, mainly students, rented dorm rooms.

The academic setting of the Pyle Center and the convenience and reasonable rates at the hotels in Madison added to the enjoyment of attending the conference.

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# Finances

The meeting was financially successful in the sense that revenues of \$301,706 exceeded expenses of \$290,422. \* We are very excited about exceeding the break-even point at the inaugural conference and are challenged to generate more funds at future conferences to cover more of our non-conference operating expenses.

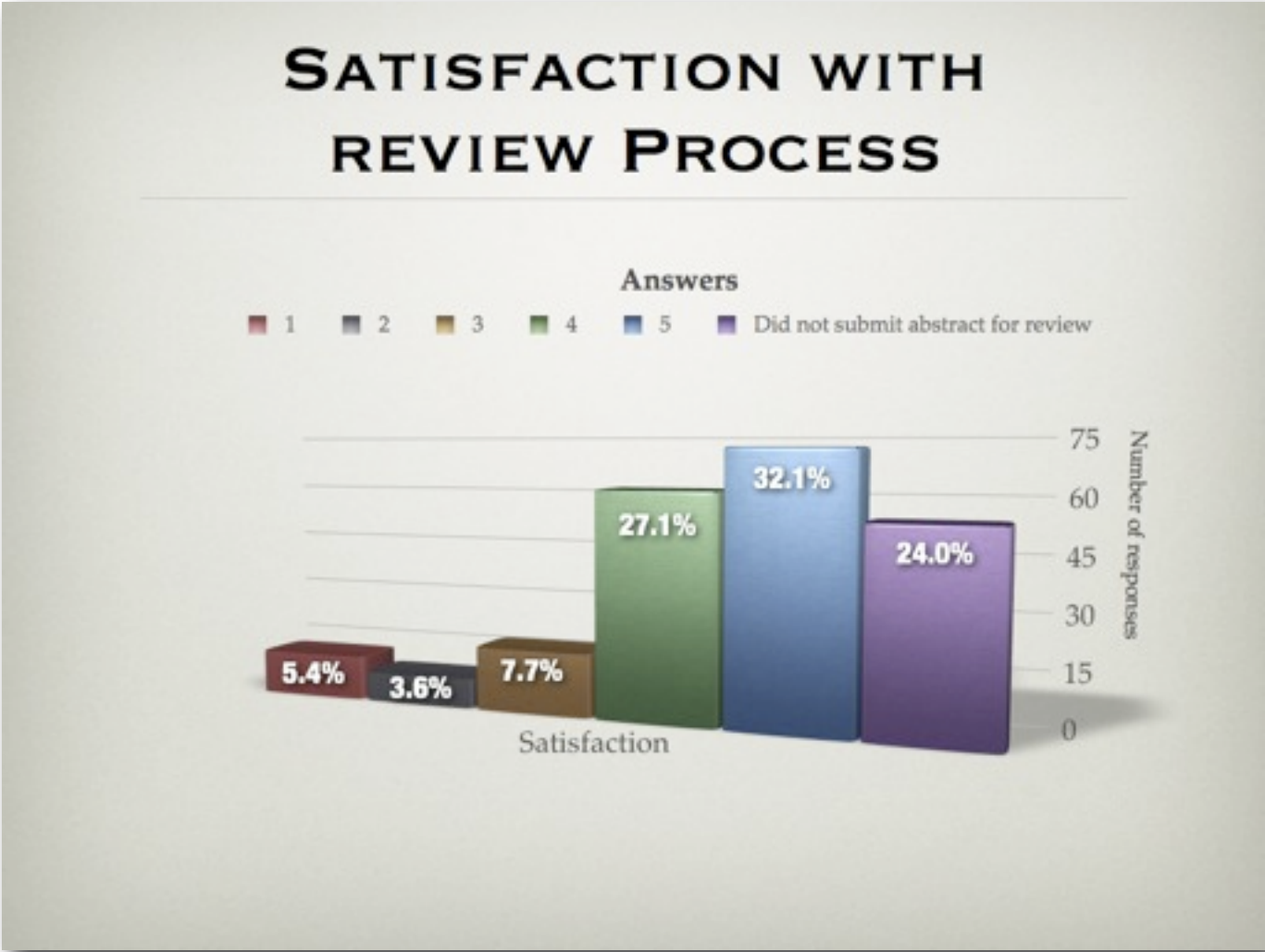
\*These amounts are subject to revision due to late arrival of certain receipts and expenses.

# Online Post-Conference Questionnaire

Respondents to the online post conference questionnaire gave the conference very high marks. People were asked to provide a 1-5 score on most of the questions, where 1 is the lowest ranking and 5 the highest. Respondents were not required to answer all questions so there is some variation among the questions.

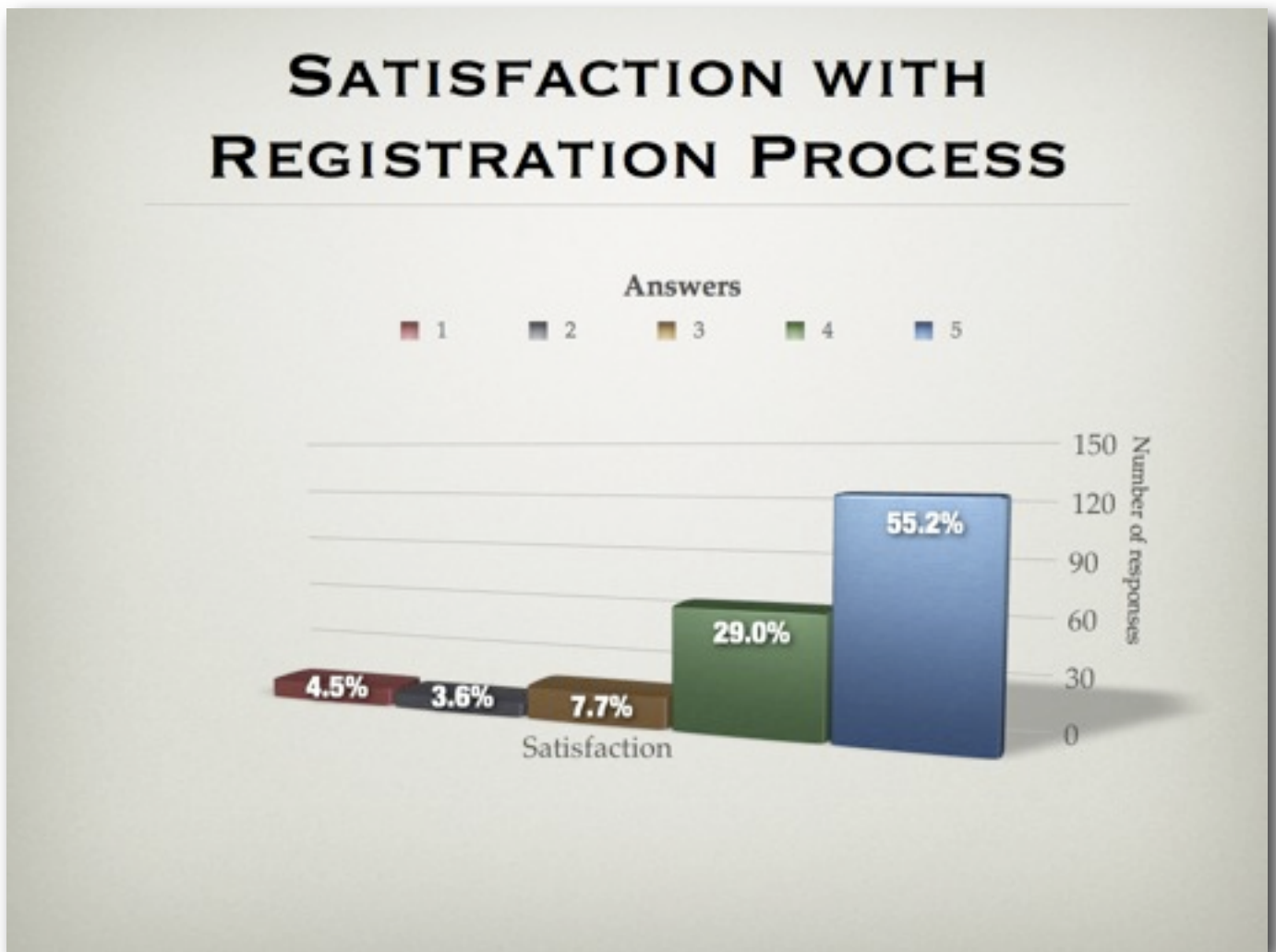
We believe the response from the attendees suggests a high level of satisfaction with virtually every aspect of the conference. As pleased as we are with this, the officers and management of ASHE will work to further increase the quality of the next conference.

## Satisfaction with the review process



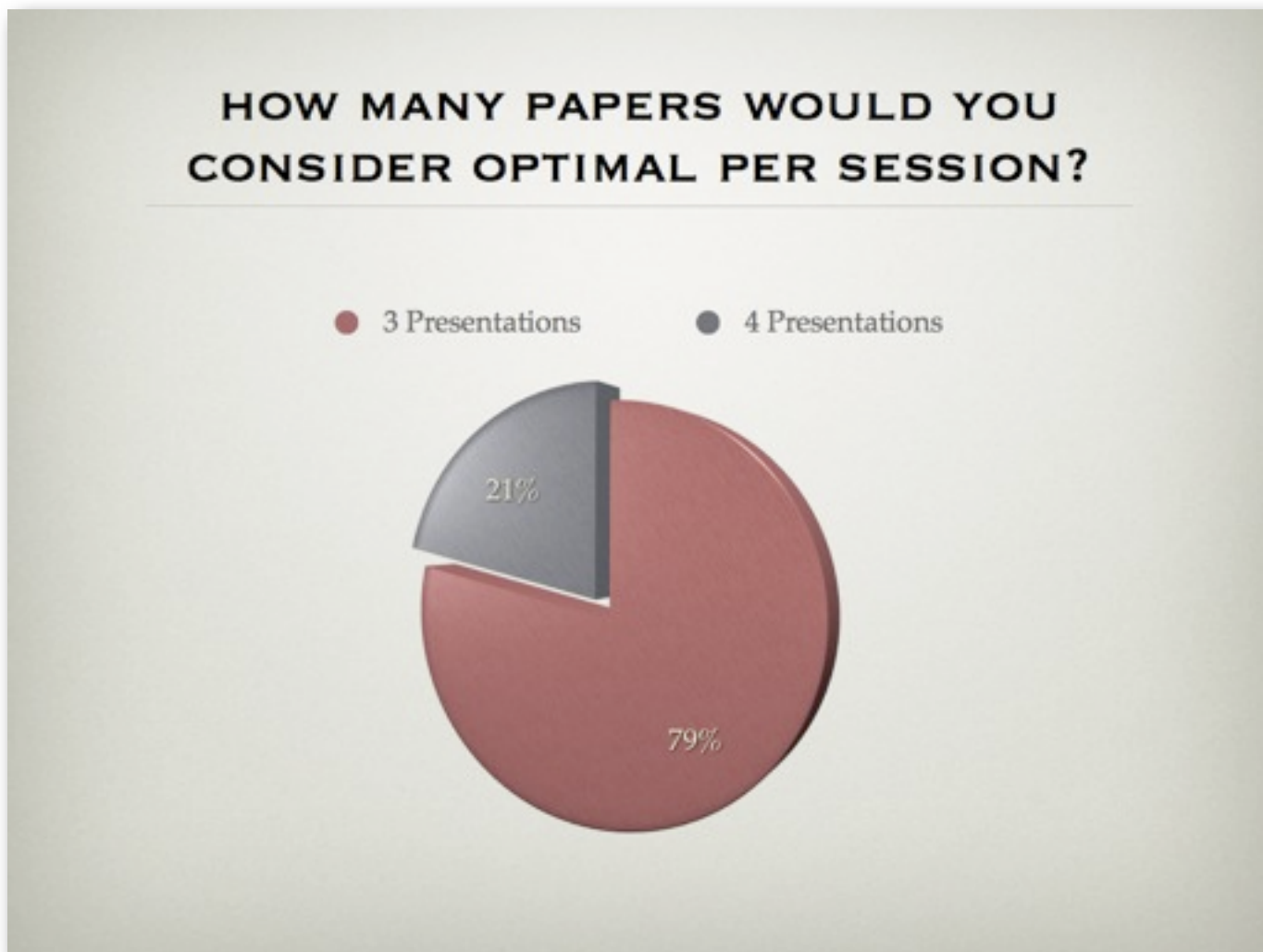
Over 75% of respondents submitted abstracts for review. The overwhelming majority of respondents gave scores of 4 or 5 which correspond to the two highest ratings.

## Satisfaction with the registration process



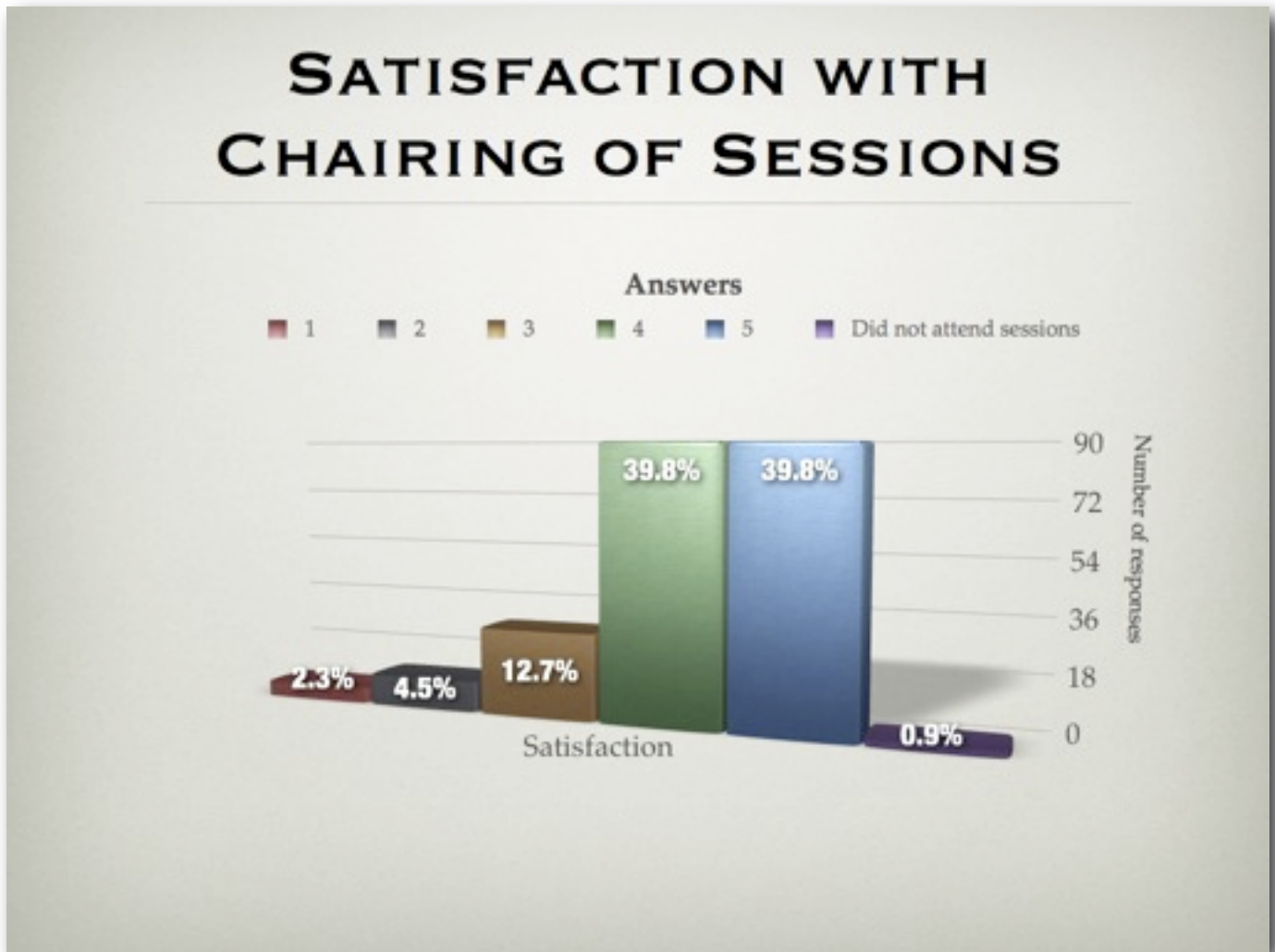
All respondents had to go through the registration process. Over half of all respondents gave the highest score possible.

**How many papers would you consider optimal per session?**



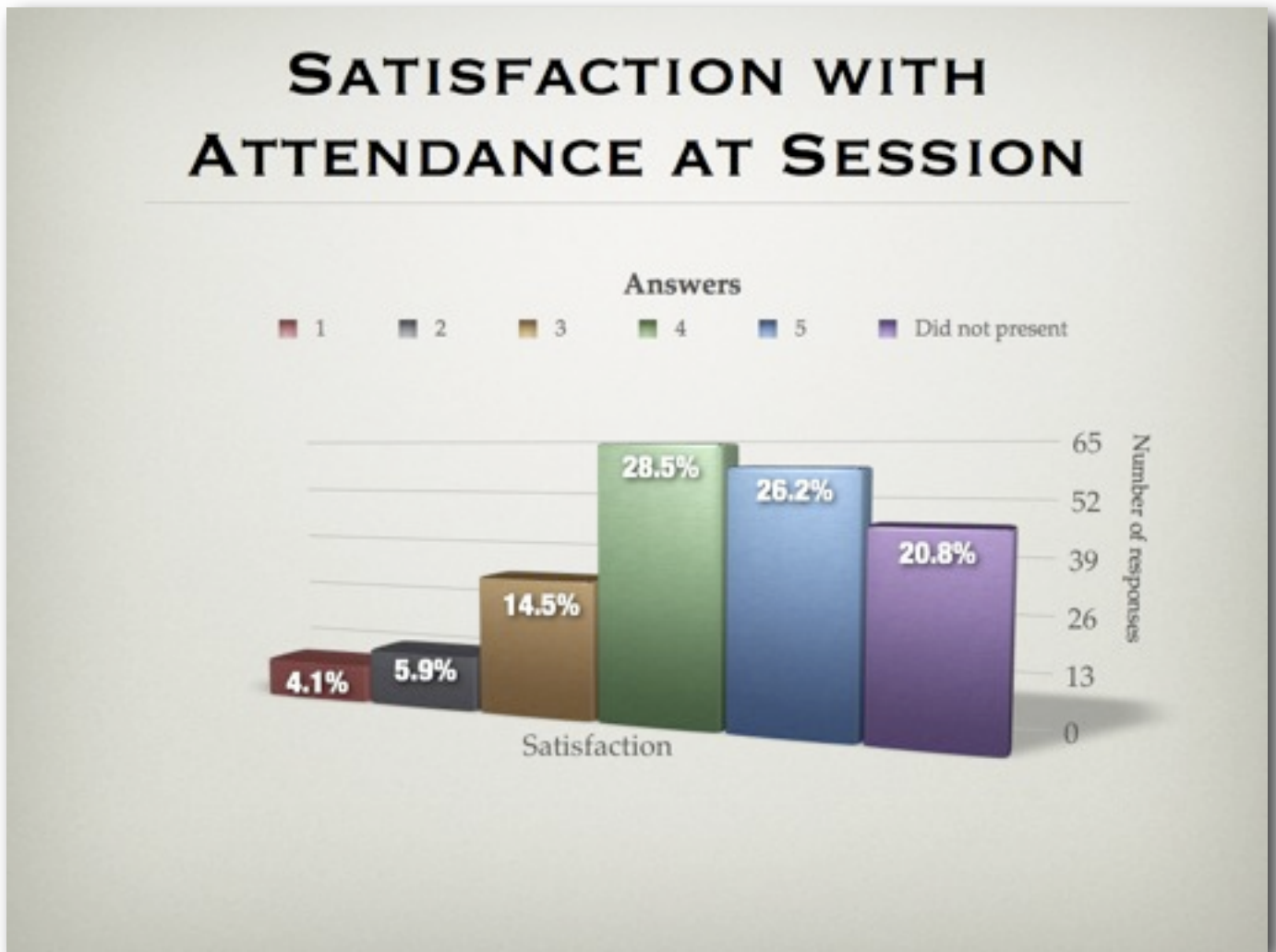
A strong preference was shown for sessions with 3 papers, with 79% of respondents preferring that option.

## Satisfaction with chairing of sessions



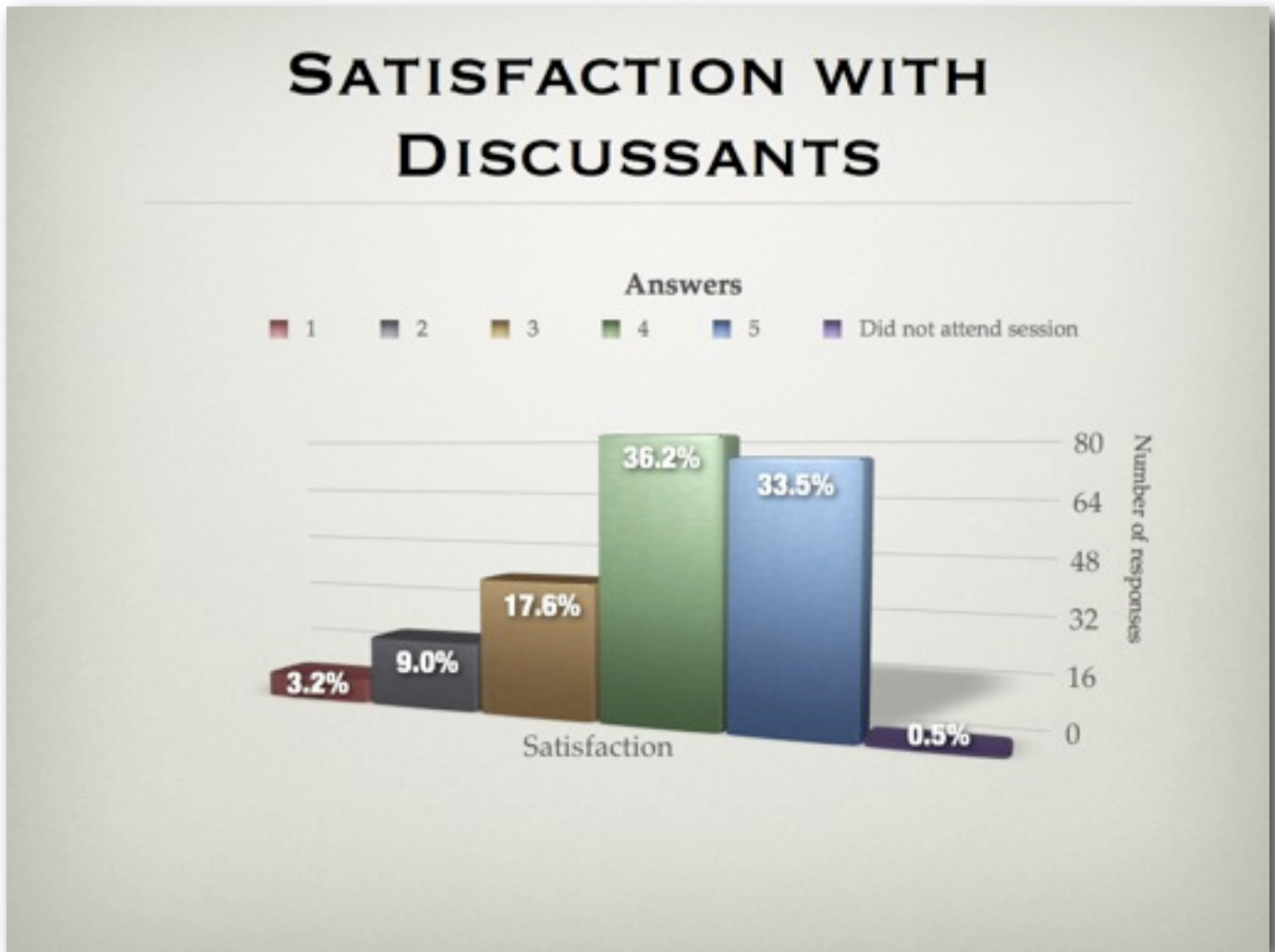
Less than 1% of respondents did not attend any sessions. Almost 40% of respondents gave the chairing of sessions the highest score (5). An equal number of respondents gave the second highest score (4).

## Satisfaction with the attendance at session



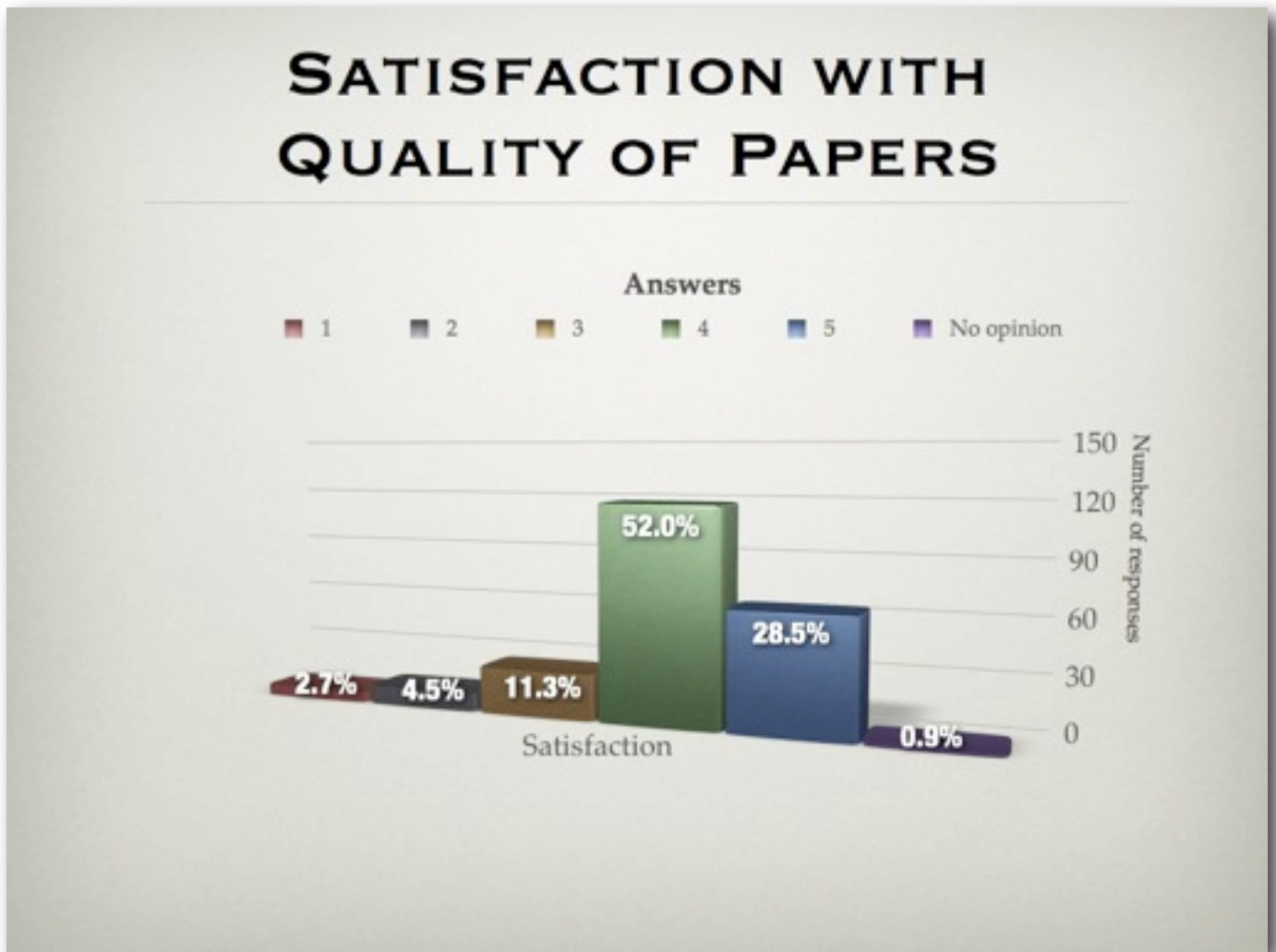
A bit over one-fifth of attendees tell us they did not present. While the satisfaction scores are still impressively high, 10% of respondents gave scores of 2 or less.

## Satisfaction with discussants



Less than half of 1% of respondents to this question did not attend a session. Again we see very high scores with some signs of dissatisfaction among 12.2% of respondents.

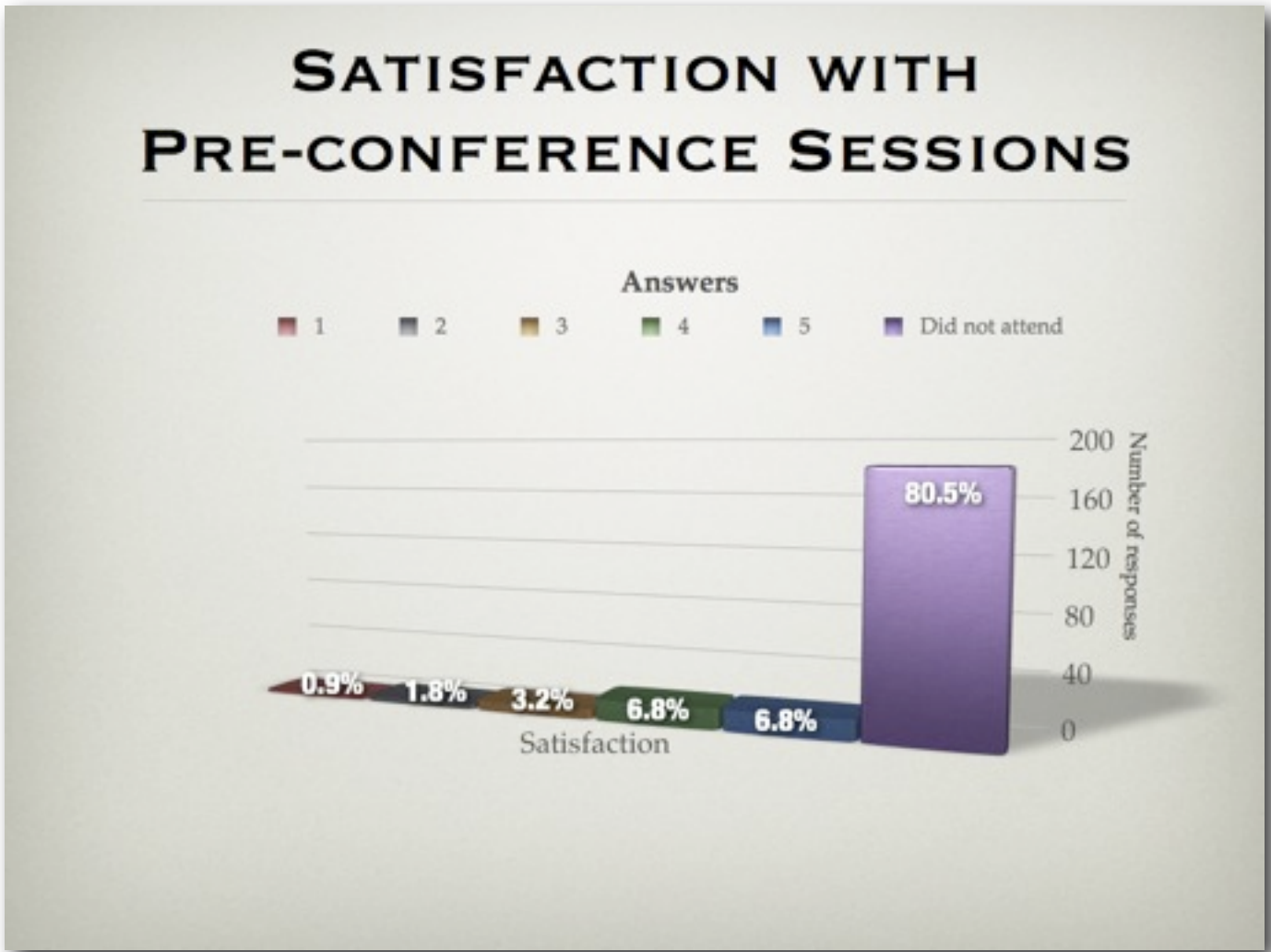
## Satisfaction with quality of papers



Less than 1% of respondents had no opinion. Over half of all respondents gave a score of 4, with over 80% of respondents giving a score of 4 or higher.

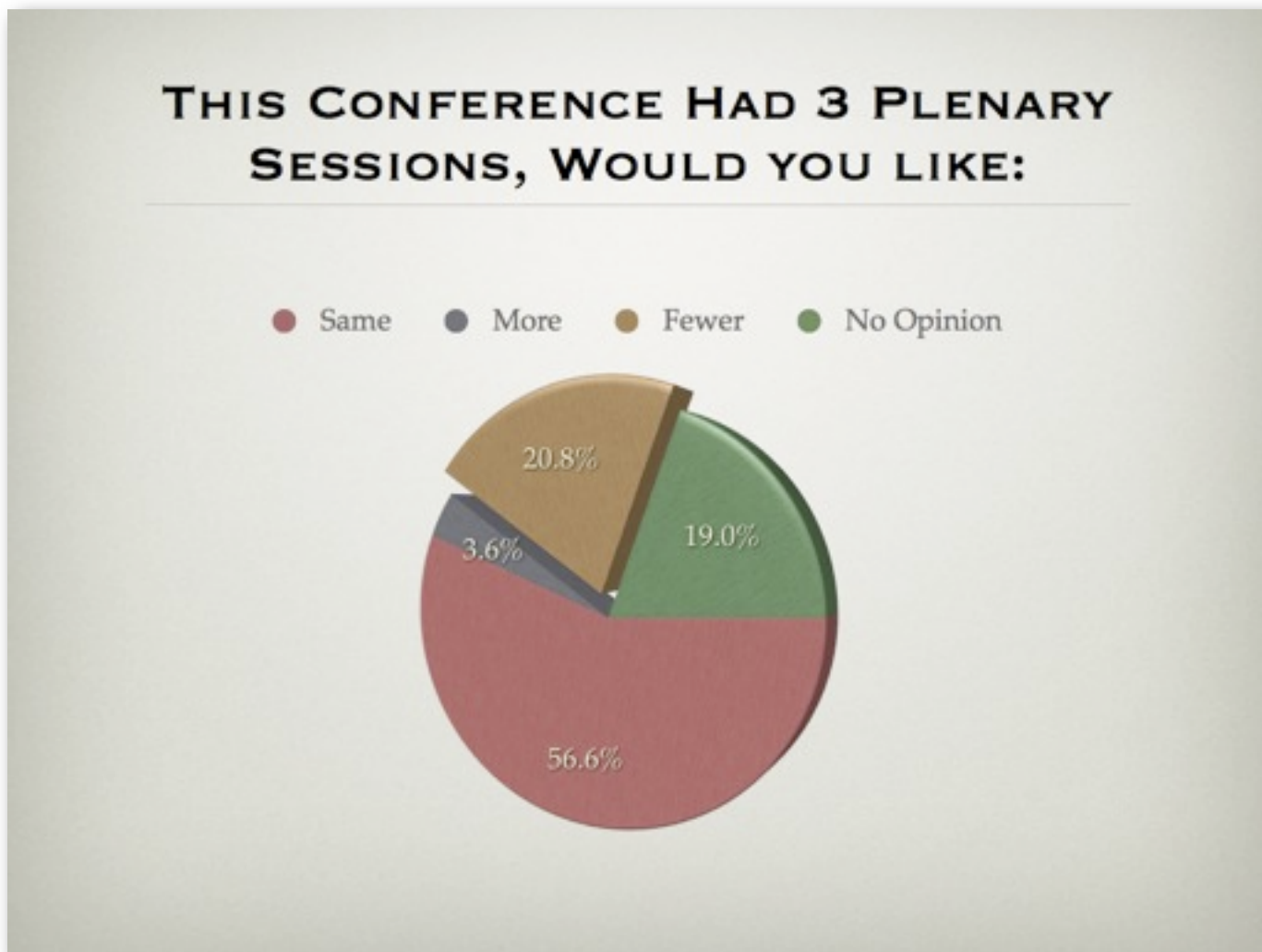


## Satisfaction with pre-conference sessions



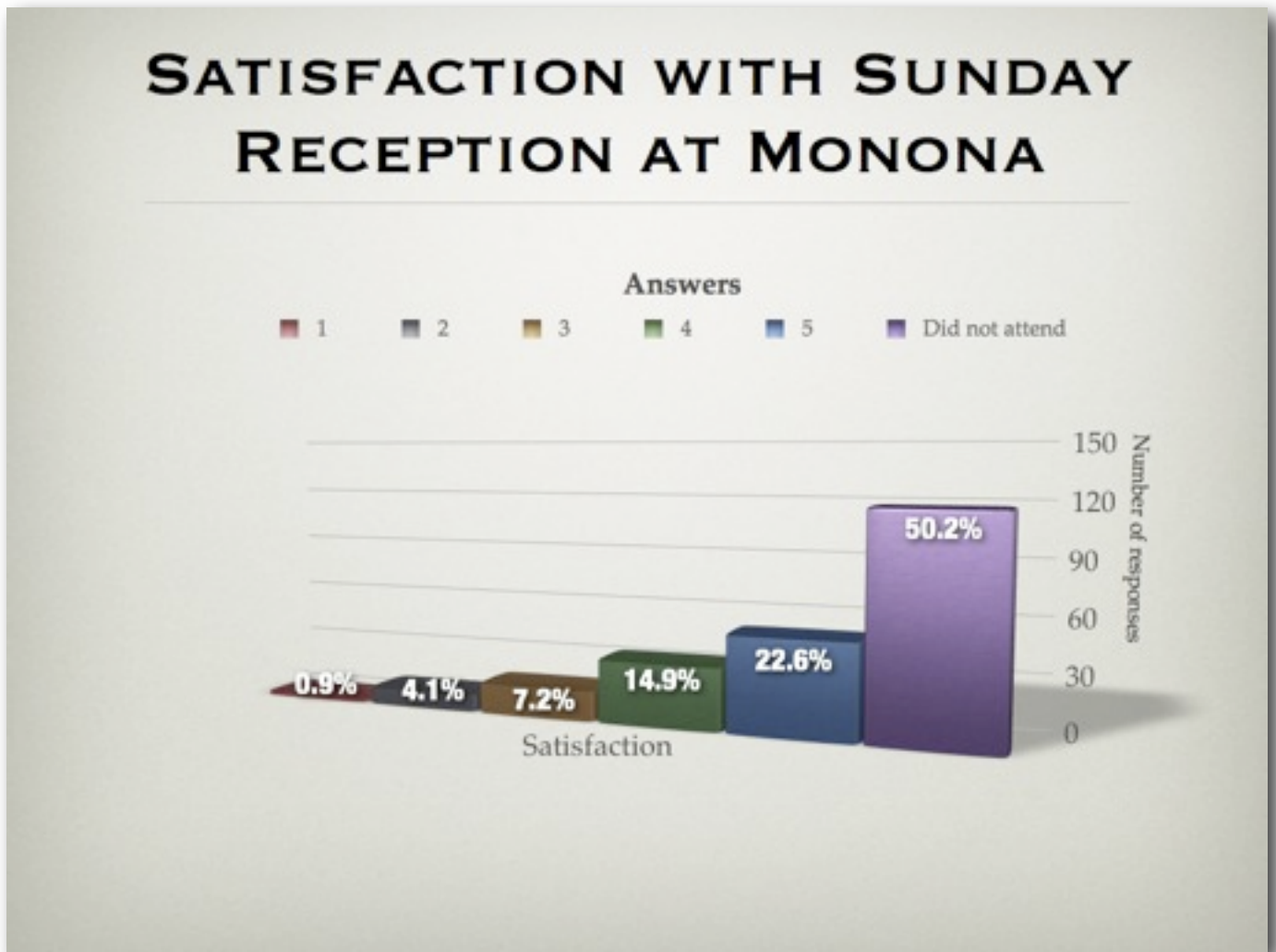
Over 80% of respondents did not attend pre-conference sessions, which makes it hard to distinguish the response rate of those who did attend. Over two-thirds of those who did attend gave scores of 4 or higher. Obviously the relatively low rate of pre-conference participation is an area where ASHE can work on.

**This conference had 3 plenary sessions, would you like: Same, More or Fewer?**



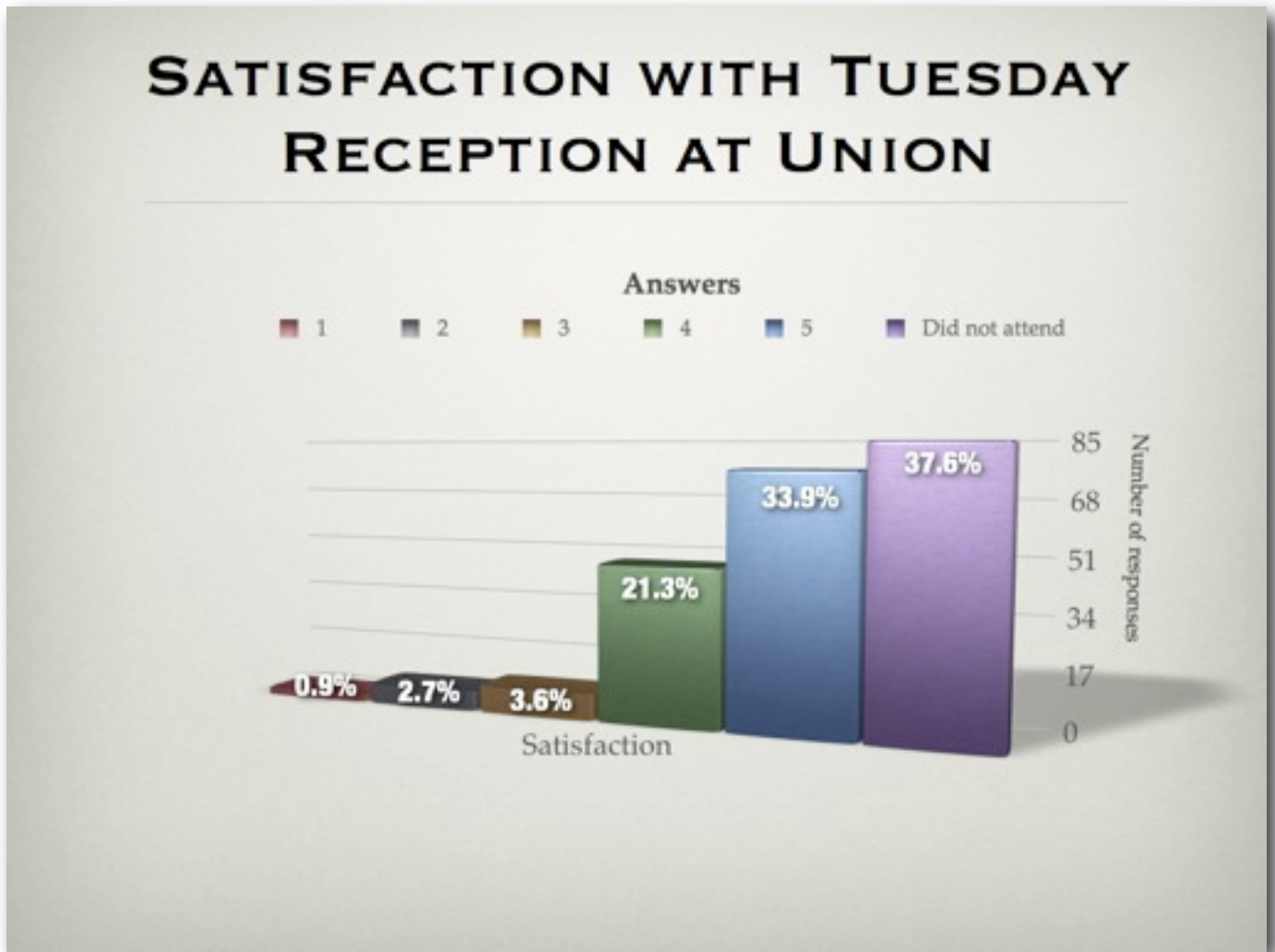
Less than 20% of respondents had no opinion on the number of plenary sessions at future sessions. Over half liked the number of plenary sessions and thought it should be kept at that level. A bit over one-fifth of respondents thought that there should be fewer plenaries. There was a small contingent which supported having more than 3 plenary sessions at future conferences.

## Satisfaction with Sunday reception at Monona



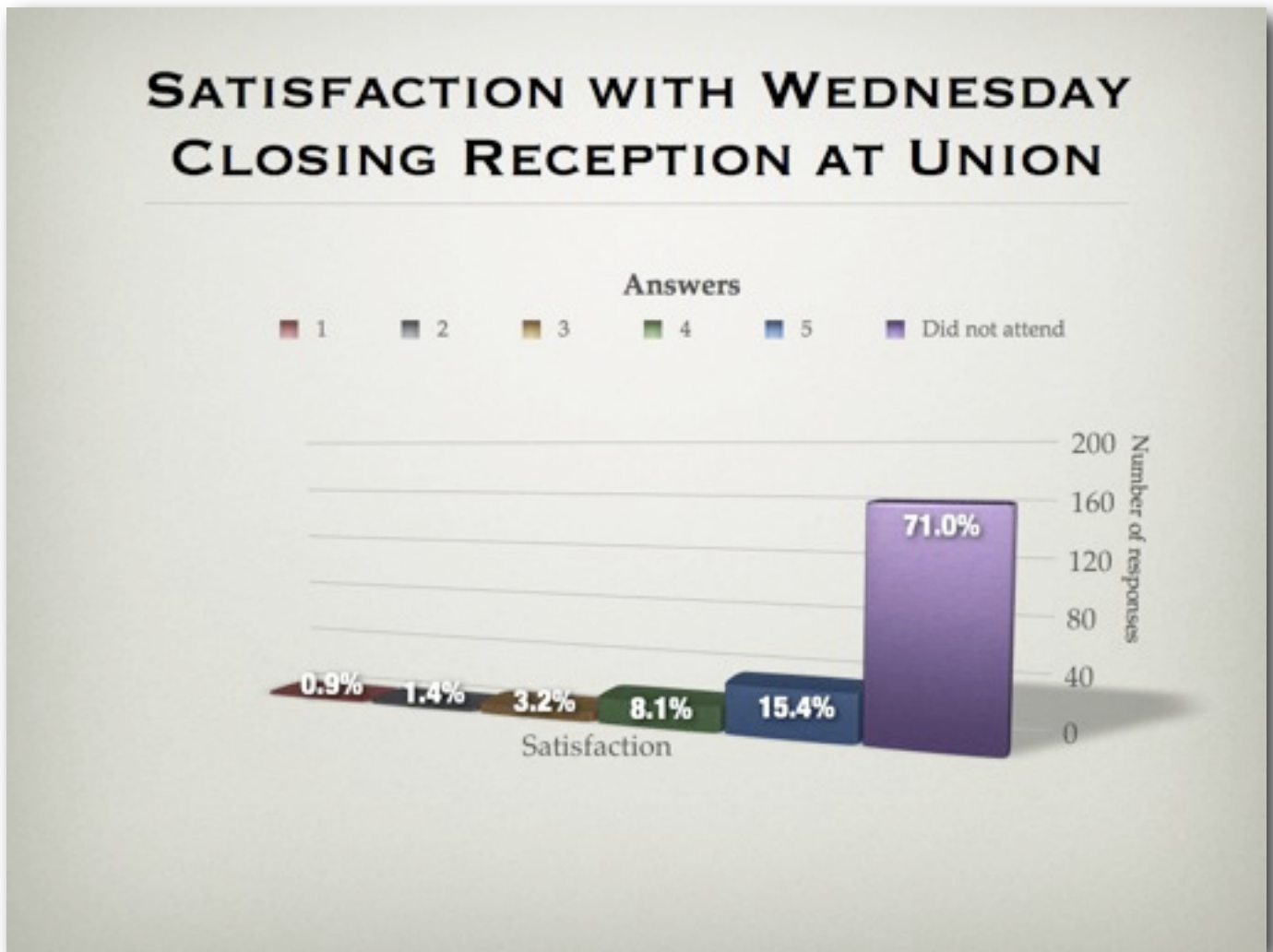
A bit less than half of our respondents attended the Monona reception, but there was a high level of satisfaction among the attendees.

## Satisfaction with Tuesday reception at Union



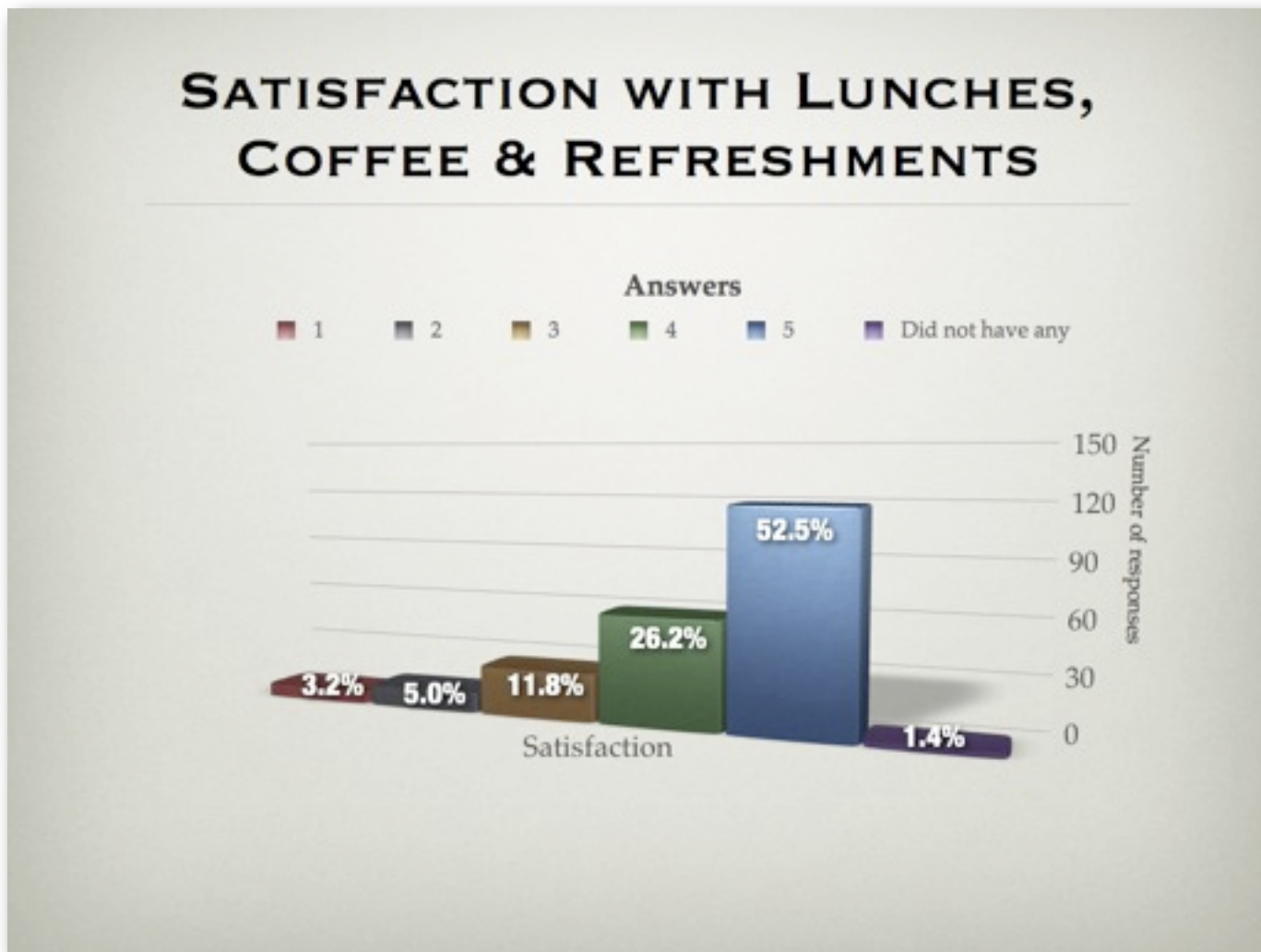
The Tuesday reception at the Union shows better attendance with only 37.6% of respondents reporting that they did not attend. Satisfaction levels are very high.

## Satisfaction with Wednesday Closing Reception at Union



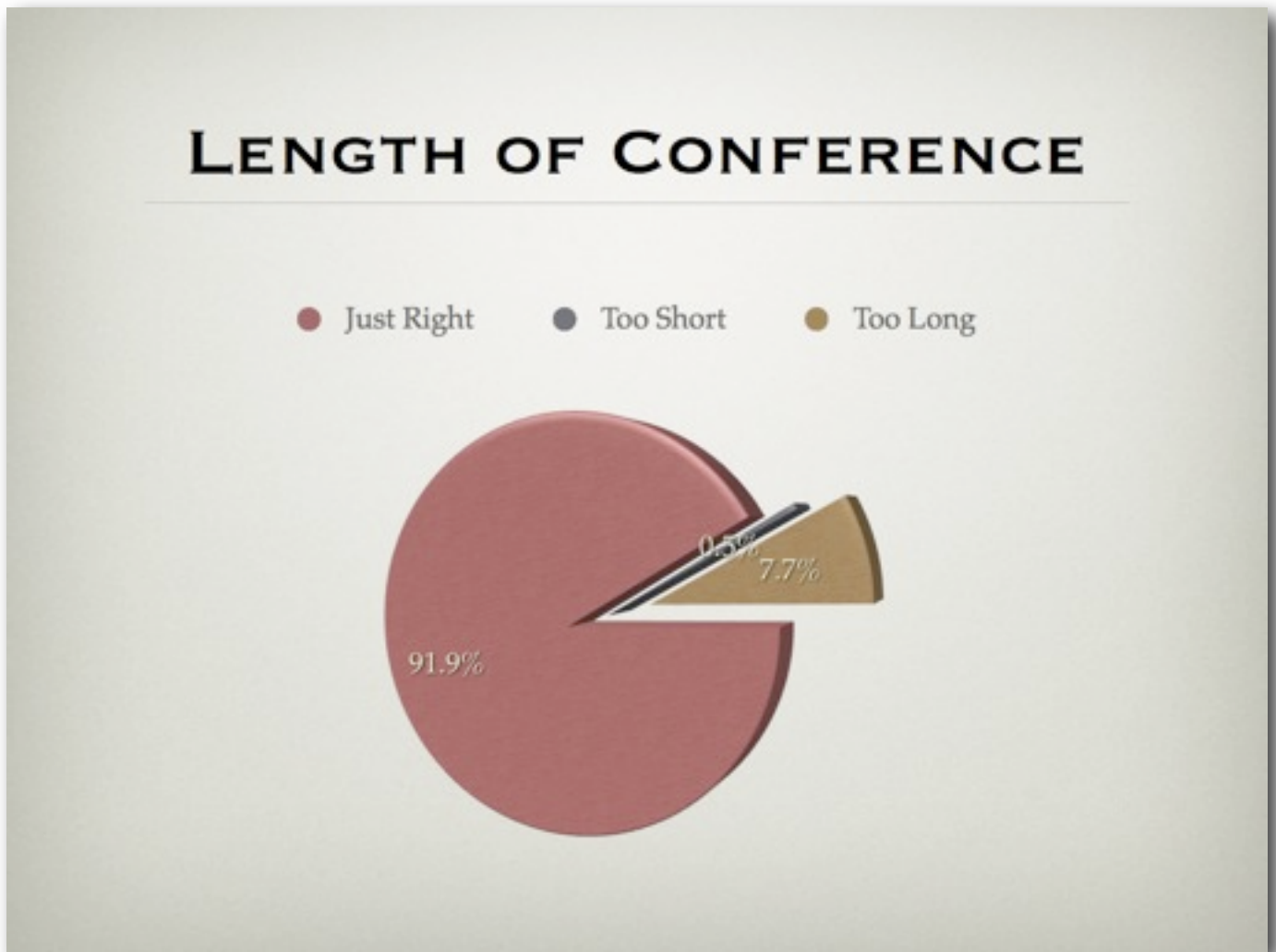
71% of respondents did not attend the Closing Reception. In spite of a tornado warning, the responses show a high level of satisfaction among attendees.

## Satisfaction with lunches, coffee and refreshments



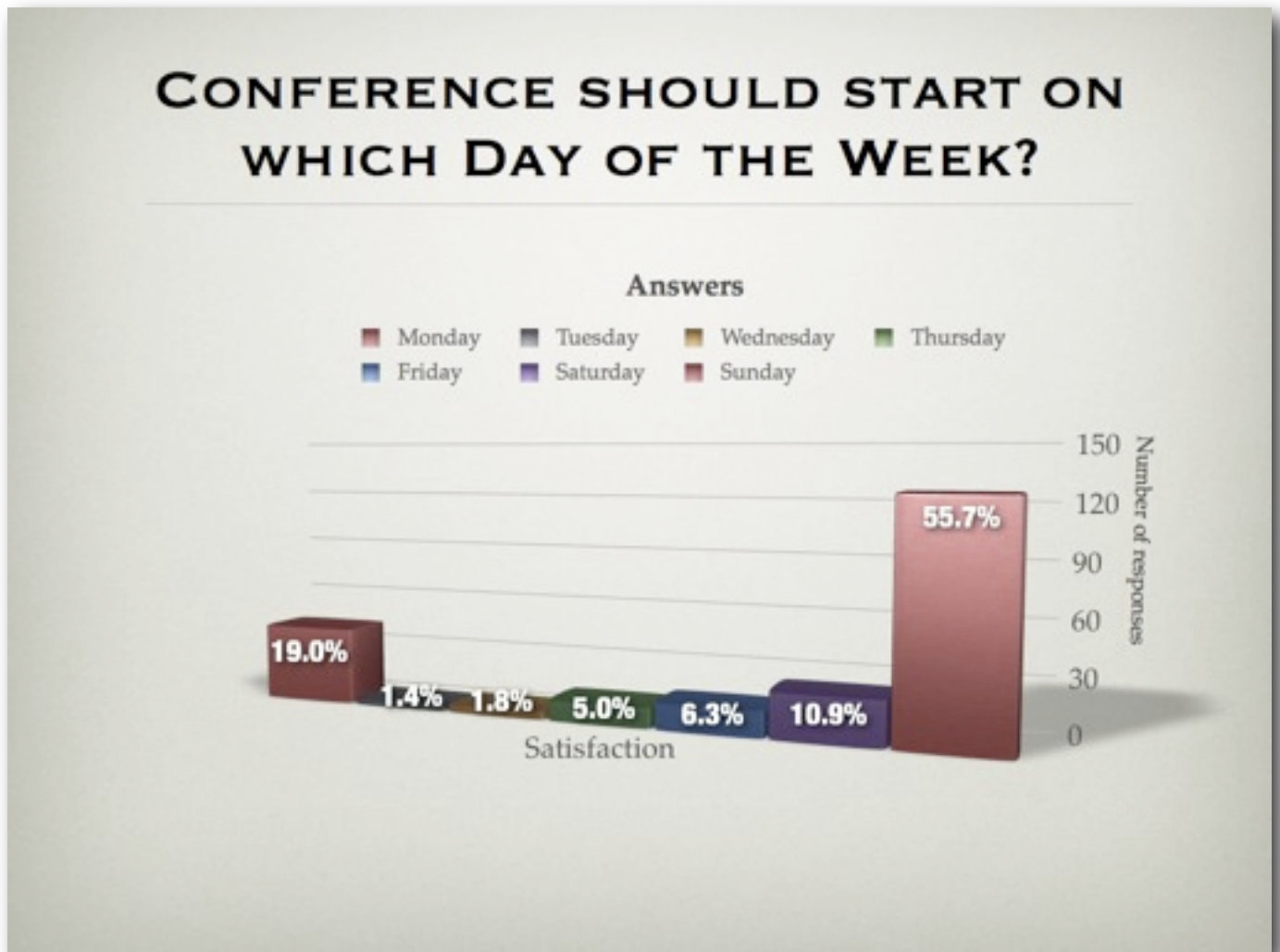
98.6% of respondents had an opinion about Lunches, Coffee & Refreshments during the conference. Over half of all respondents gave this category a rating of 5. Almost 80% of respondents gave the category a rating of 4 or higher. One concern raised was the need for more vegetarian options.

## Length of Conference



91.9% of respondents thought the length of the conference was just right. 7.7% felt the conference was too long. A very small contingent (1 person) thought the conference was too short.

## Conference should start on which day of the week?



Given a choice on the day of the week that respondents preferred, over half chose Sunday. Just under one-fifth chose Monday. There was very little support for the middle of the week.

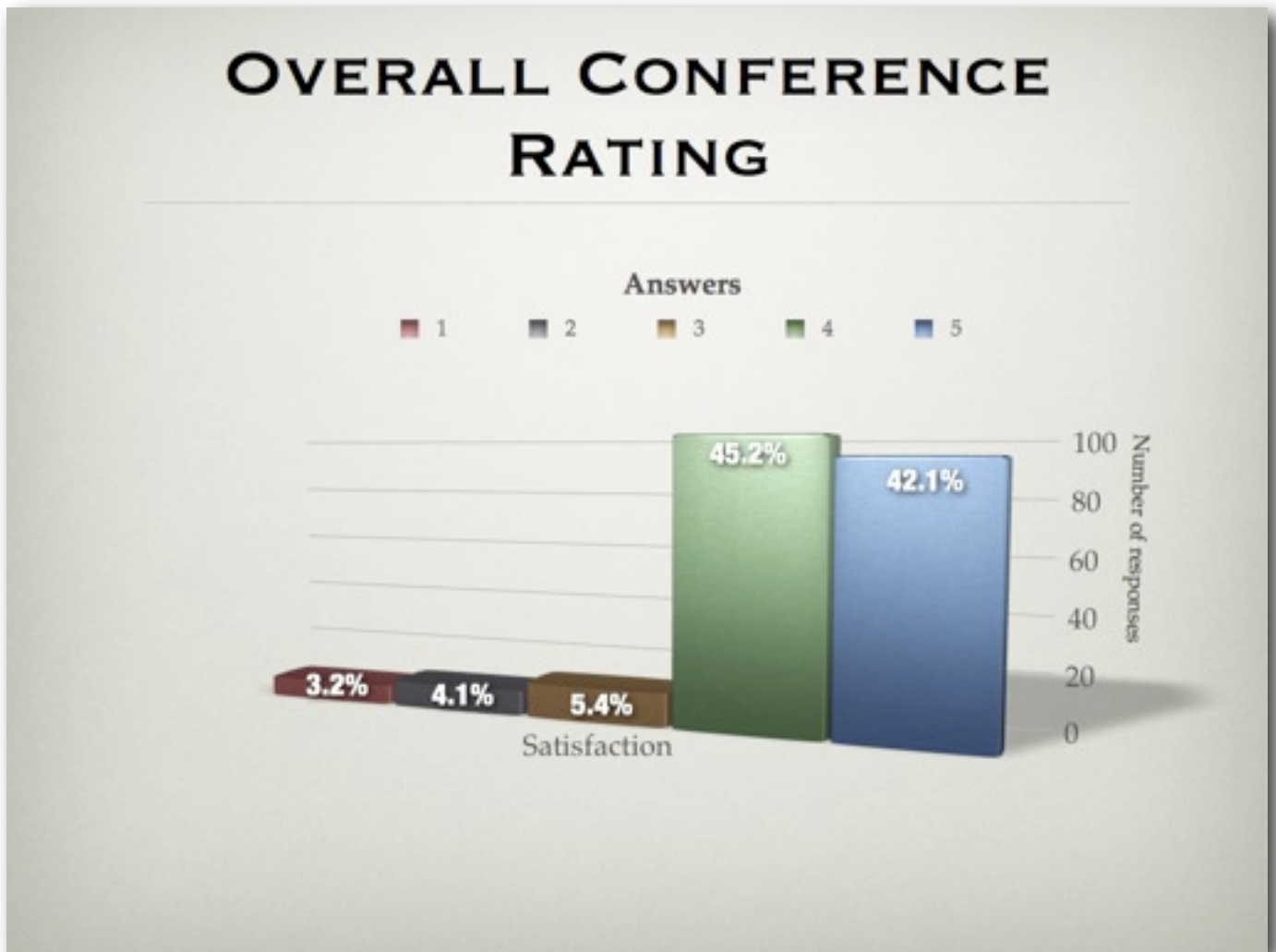


## Time of Conference



Given a choice for when in the year the conference should occur, over 85% of respondents said they preferred having the conference at the same time of year as the Madison Conference. The remainder were split over whether it was too late in the year or too early (with a slight advantage to the latter group in numbers).

## Overall Conference Rating



Over 87% of respondents gave the conference a rating of 4 or higher which is very gratifying. Not everyone will have the same experience at an event, but one of our goals for the next conference will be to learn from our inaugural conference. We'd like to do our best to ensure no one has an experience which leads to rating the conference as a 1 or 2.