

Executive Summary

A needs assessment for the University of Nevada Academy for the Environment (UNAE) was conducted via a Web Survey between March 18, 2008 and April 30, 2008. There were a total of 648 valid email addresses on the targeted list sample of UNAE clients provided by UNAE (sampling frame contained 697 names and addresses targeting current clients and prospective clients of UNAE), of which 636 were successfully sent. A total of 104 respondents completed the survey during the six-week study period, representing a response rate of 16.4%. Almost three-fourths of the respondents were affiliated with UNR, while approximately the other quarter of respondents was affiliated with either the Desert Research Institute or another organization.

With respect to the seven mission objectives of the UNAE, interdisciplinary connections and courses was seen as most important. The next highest mean rank was given to supporting the development of interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate degree programs, followed respectively by enhancing research and scholarship opportunities for environmental faculty, conducting public outreach activities, linking science and engineering programs with the arts and humanities, promoting environmental programs within the university, and raising environmental awareness on campus.

Respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of all of the UNAE educational activities, although they were less consistent in their desire to participate in these personally. The greatest interest was in interdisciplinary seminars with an overwhelming 92.3% of respondents expressing support.

Respondents were less interested in the development of recruiting materials promoting environmental programs; however 78.7% of respondents were still in support of this activity.

In general, there were very high levels of awareness of the activities in educational activities and off-campus outreach, and very few respondents indicated that they were opposed to the UNAE's participation in them. An exception was in the area of some specific *on-campus* outreach activities, some of which were unfamiliar to a large minority of respondents, and a few of which produced some measurable opposition. A large number of respondents were unfamiliar with the UNR Energy and Climate Committee, the American Colleges and Universities Presidents' Climate Commitment, and public events. In addition, there were also instances in which a meaningful percentage of respondents actively opposed the UNAE's *on-campus* participation in campus sustainability projects and support for student organizations.

With respect to UNR Community "*In-Reach*", the cross-disciplinary activities respondents would most like UNAE to offer were: workshops, seminars, or mini-conferences organized around a guest speaker or topic, followed by off-campus field trips, and topically-oriented brown bag discussions. There was less interest in regular informal off-campus gatherings, a film series, and workshops to address specific challenges in teaching or research.

Respondents were less familiar with some of the UNAE research activities, which resulted in more variability in their support for them. The greatest interest in terms of research activities was for the mini-grant program, with an

overwhelming 86.2% of respondents supporting it, and 43.1% saying they also were interested in participating.

Respondents were asked to rate up to three activities that they thought should be the top priorities for UNAE to focus its resources on in the future. The most commonly chosen options were interdisciplinary project support (52.9%), graduate student support (45.2%), and the undergraduate major in environmental studies (40.4%). Respondents also indicated that the best method of communication to disseminate information about UNAE's future activities and events is via an email newsletter.