

The Last Frontier Theatre Conference 2014 Evaluations Report



Eric T. Miller and Joy Barrett in the national touring production of Jaclyn Vilano's "Unanswered, We Ride," which first appeared in the Play Lab in 2010 and has since been performed around the world.

Introduction



Each year, Conference participants have the opportunity to give their feedback on their experience in Valdez via an online survey. The responses are analyzed here. This document then becomes a major part of planning for the subsequent year. It is also recommended to new participants as a good place to get a feel for what they will experience in Valdez.

The first ten pages are a breakdown of participants' numerical rankings of various topics. Scores from previous years are included, as are initial reactions and plans for 2015. After that are quotes from the participants, sorted first by question, then more specifically by the topic of the response. My analysis is throughout the document.

Coordinating the Last Frontier Theatre Conference remains the great honor of my life. Much like the program itself, continued improvement is a constant goal. This document is where that growth starts for 2015.

Dawson Moore

Theatre Conference Coordinator

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Information Received Prior to the Event

Our goal is to maintain ongoing communication with everyone planning to attend. Particularly for new participants, the size of the event and remoteness of its location can be daunting. To help allay this, all participants correspond directly with the Coordinator, and are repeatedly encouraged to contact him with any questions.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	71%	66%	61.5%	45%	75%	58%	63.8%	55.1%	69.2%
Good	20%	24%	29%	39%	20%	28%	27.6%	39.1%	23.1%
Satisfactory	7%	8%	4.5%	12%	3%	6%	6.9%	4.3%	6.2%
Unsatisfactory	2%	0%	2%	2%	0%	4%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%
N/A	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	1.5%

Generally, communication was solid this year, on a par with previous years. As long as there is continued diligence in this area, it will continue to be a strength of this event.



First-time participating playwrights Andy Joseph Brown (Missouri) and Catherine Weingarten (New York) review the program over lunch on the first day.

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

The only major change planned in communication is to share who is working with whom more clearly prior to everyone's arrival.

Conference Schedule

The ambitious slate of activities for the week provides participants with more activities than they can possibly attend. Daytime activities go from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day, with two to three choices during any time slot. Evenings contain both a production and late night theatre activities.

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	73%	67%	55%	59%	50%	50%	62%	58.5%
Good	23%	29%	38%	39%	46%	36.7%	32%	32.3%
Satisfactory	4%	3%	7%	1%	2%	13.3%	6%	6.2%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1.5%
N/A	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1.5%

This year featured a large change to the schedule, moving all daytime events one hour later and the evening performances a half-hour later. This involved losing a half-hour from the dinner break, and starting the Fringe Festival a half-hour later. There was also no show on Friday night for the first time in the event's history. Largely this seems to have been accepted.



Anchorage theatre icon Michael Hood led a two-part stage combat workshop.

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

There are no major changes planned for next year, though we will attempt to re-add the Wednesday morning off from Conference activities.

Conference Website

Aside from direct contact with the Coordinator, the website is our main means of distributing information to participants prior to the Conference, and of publicizing the event. Information contained includes the Conference schedule; Featured Artist biographies; Play Lab selections and information; a “how the Conference works” essay; registration form; list of financial benefactors; available local discounts for participants; and a link to contact the Conference Coordinator. We also use it to facilitate programs such as the Monologue Workshop by making material available to participants there prior to their arrival in Valdez. Lastly, it is used to as a historical record of the event. Programs, photos, and other information give evidence of the Conference’s rich history.

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	52%	51.5%	52%	45%	46%	48.3%	49.3%	44.6%
Good	27%	22%	21%	35%	30%	41.7%	46.4%	38.5%
Satisfactory	4%	4.5%	10%	12%	11%	6.7%	0%	9.2%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
N/A	17%	22%	15%	8%	11%	3.3%	4.3%	7.7%

There were a couple of technical issues with the website during the spring, which probably led to the slightly lower rankings that in the past couple of years.



Anchorage actors Taylor Campbell and Jill Sowerwine in TossPot Productions’ staging of Ashley Rose Wellman’s “Gravidity.”

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

No major changes are planned.

Play Lab

Every year, the overall success of the Conference flows from the quality of the Play Lab. Experience has shown that when there are good plays being presented by strong writers, the positive effects are felt in every other aspect of the event. The continued improvement in the quality of the Play Lab is our top priority.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	71%	81%	76%	71%	77%	87%	75%	80%	73.4%
Good	26%	15%	20%	25%	23%	5%	20%	16%	17.2%
Satisfactory	3%	4%	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	3%	4.7%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
N/A	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%	4%	0%	1%	4.7%

As long as we stay at 90% or better total good to excellent rankings, it is a good bet that we are running an effective Lab. There are limitations on our process because of how many plays we present; if we presented ten plays, for example, each could have two to three rehearsals, and each actor would only have a couple of roles to focus on. But we wouldn't have nearly the number of participants, and a huge part of the event's success would go away. It's a trade-off.



North Carolina playwright Karyn Traut rehearsing with her cast of Alaskan actors, including Reagan James, Bruce Rogers, and Nancy Caudill.

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

We will endeavor to let people know whom they're working with in advance of the event, as that was frequently cited in responses.

This year we presented 44 plays, which was down from our average of 52 or so. This was fairly random... we received a record number of submissions, 393, and accepted the same number as usual, around 70. It just happened that more people than usual were unable to join this year. It is preferable to have a larger number, as this gives more roles for actors, and we will try to be more diligent about finding replacement plays for authors who are unable to attend.

Panels and Classes

While the Play Lab is the primary educational component of the daytime programming, the Conference also offers classes and panel discussions.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	55%	73%	58.5%	52%	62%	68%	59%	44%	54.7%
Good	17%	22%	29%	37%	17%	24%	31%	34%	34.4%
Satisfactory	13%	0%	4.5%	7%	7%	2%	7%	9%	3.1%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	1.5%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
N/A	15%	5%	6.5%	4%	13%	4%	3%	13%	7.8%

The rankings were marginally up this year.



Sherry Kramer leading her class "Choice and Consequences: Alternative History."

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

We are going to continue expanding our multi-part training programs for actors, including adding a 4-5 part class on dialects, bringing back Jason Martin to do more improvisation classes, and expanding the combat workshop to a multi-class format.

There will also be at least one class focusing on the business of the craft for both playwrights and actors. While I have questions about the validity of such classes, whenever they are not on the schedule, people ask for them. We will also explore the idea of a more collaborative class that involves creating work at the Conference.

Evening Performances

There are evening performances every night, staging a wide variety of work. The focus is on playwrights developed at the Conference and work by the Featured Artist staff. The shows provide both education and entertainment for our participants. They are also our main connection with the community of Valdez, who often cannot take the week off to attend the day-time events due to work, but are available to see shows in the evening.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	55%	65%	56%	23%	61%	57%	18%	51%	45.3%
Good	39%	23%	30%	44%	34%	35%	39%	38%	42.2%
Satisfactory	6%	6%	12.5%	29%	5%	2%	25%	7%	9.4%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	15%	1%	1.6%
N/A	0%	6%	1.5%	2%	0%	2%	3%	3%	12.7%

The results are skewed here by the inexplicable 12.7% who evidently didn't attend evening performances. There was a little lack of variety this year, but we also had more standing ovations than any time since 2007. No one mentioned that we had one fewer show than in years past.



Valdez actors Kyra Meyer and Sarah Jorgenson performing in the opening performance, Eric Coble's "Bright Ideas."

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

We will continue with the basic principles from this year, primarily that we want to provide performance opportunities for pieces that were presented in the Play Lab in the past.

Fringe Festival

The Fringe ran Sunday through Thursday at a new location, the Fat Mermaid, under the direction of Bostin Christopher and Janna Shaw for the third year.

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	35%	27%	38%	38%	28%	33.9%	33.3%	46%
Good	12%	28.5%	26%	29%	22%	25.4%	31.9%	33.3%
Satisfactory	8%	11%	6%	3%	13%	11.9%	11.6%	6.3%
Unsatisfactory	2%	5%	0%	3%	2%	3.4%	2.9%	1.6%
N/A	43%	28.5%	30%	27%	35%	25.4%	20.3%	12.7%

The percentage of people who aren't involved in the Fringe dropped again this year, and it set a record for percentage of people who said it was excellent. While there were a couple of complaints from people who felt like it was a closed shop where one had to know someone to get involved, my observation was that they involved a wide variety of performers and writers from across the event.



California playwright Bennett Fisher reading in the Fringe with Knox and Crow, two Conference regulars who this year had a nightly ongoing skit where two wacky cops tried to figure out the murder of one of our Featured Artists, "Craig Popsicle."

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

Next year will move on to a new coordinator, Carrie Yanagawa, as Bostin Christopher has decided to step down from the position. Carrie will co-coordinate with Janna Shaw, who has been the assistant coordinator for the past three years.

Featured Artists

The goal is to create a group of professionals from multiple aspects of theatre who can provide attendees with insight and inspiration. We strive to involve featured artists who are accessible, intelligent, good-natured, and talented. These people are picked to suit the collaborative spirit of the Conference and the education we are endeavoring to provide. There is also an effort to involve Alaskans on the staff, both from within the University system and outside of it.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	62%	76%	81%	69%	77%	70%	67.2%	57.4%	64.6%
Good	33%	20%	17%	27%	23%	26%	26%	33.8%	26.2%
Satisfactory	5%	4%	2%	2%	0%	2%	5.1%	5.9%	4.6%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1.7%	0%	1.5%
N/A	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2.9%	3.1%

Generally, this year's artistic staff was well-received.



New Featured Artist Eric Coble talks to playwrights about his career in his presentation "The Script is Not the Play."

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

The staff for next year is largely already determined through a rotational system. There will continue to be an emphasis on having racial diversity and around 50% women on the staff.

Conference Staff

The staff is the backbone of any quality organization. PWSCC strives to have the highest quality staff possible year-round, and the Theatre Conference is no exception. Through staff meetings and information packets, we make sure that all of our staff is qualified and capable of handling anything that comes their way (or finding someone who can).

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	94%	100%	98.5%	94%	100%	94%	93.4%	94.2%	86.2%
Good	6%	0%	1.5%	6%	0%	6%	3.3%	4.3%	10.8%
N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3.3%	1.4%	3.1%

Staff rankings are always high, and this year is no exception. While it looks like there was a drastic drop, they are still 97% good or excellent with 3% saying that, somehow, the staff had no effect on them...



PWSCC President J. Daniel O'Connor addresses the participants at the Gala Dinner.

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

This year, the staff was bolstered by a strong volunteer effort by past assistant coordinators. Next year, the plan is to hire them for the week of the event. We went with about the smallest possible staff size this year, cutting back on front desk workers. It essentially worked, and certainly cut back on the budgeting for staffing.

Food

We provide coffee, tea, and snack cookies all day at the Conference, in addition to a free daily lunch. We stopped asking for feedback on this in 2008, but began again in 2013.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Excellent	33%	50%	26.5%	37.7%	12.7%
Good	20%	28%	47%	47.8%	42.9%
Satisfactory	39%	30%	23.5%	8.7%	30.2%
Unsatisfactory	8%	0%	1.5%	1.4%	11.1%
N/A	0%	2%	1.5%	4.3%	3.2%



Every Wednesday night of the Conference, the City of Valdez hosts a dinner for the Featured Artists staff at the Totem Inn.

Our Goal for improvement for the 2015 Conference

Next year, the primary aim for lunch will be to make it as healthy as possible, while still staying affordable. Our location makes everyone's desire for a daily salad essentially impossible to facilitate without a large increase in budget for an item that is provided for free.

1. How did you hear about the Conference?

This data backs up common knowledge, that a majority of the participants are returning ones. Respondents are allowed to list multiple sources.

Answer Options	Response Percent
I'm a past participant.	74.1%
Friend recommendation	19%
Cyrano's Theatre Company	5.2%
TBA Theatre	3.4%
Dramatists Guild	3.4%
Came with production	3.4%
Anchorage Community Theatre	1.7%
UAA Theatre	1.7%
UAF Theatre	1.7%
Official Playwrights of Facebook	3.4%
Yahoo Playwrights Group	1.7%
Googled "playwriting submissions"	1.7%



The crew who brought "Unanswered, We Ride" to the Conference.

This information is essentially the same each year, and we will stop asking for it next year.

2. Please rank the following aspects of the Conference.

Responses to these questions are listed on pages 2-11.

3. Are there any other types of activities you would like to see added to future Conferences?

Responses in this section indicate some specific areas of study that participants would like to see addressed in future years. Often, these classes have been presented in other years, but the curriculum is kept varied from year to year because of the number of repeat attendees.

There are a number of requests for additional classes; my feeling is that we have as many classes as the schedule will permit. If we were to add more, it would mean having fewer readings in the Play Lab, which is a) the lifeblood of the event, and b) serves as a high level playwriting class itself.

There will be some exploration into the collaborative process that many people mention. Such projects are tough to incorporate at the event, as everyone is already very busy. While many people find time to write, mandating it for a class pulls them away from being each other's audience, and has other potential negative consequences as well.

No Suggestions

- "I think there is more than enough for now to keep everyone stimulated."
- "It gets better each year. Surprise us!"
- "It's hard to think of more that can be in it."
- "None that I can think of right now."
- "I really liked the workshop and class options."
- "No."
- "N/A."

Acting and Directing Classes

- "Maybe more workshops for actors, like Peter Ellenstein's 'the wrong choice' (I think it was called) from 2 years ago- or other things along those lines."
- "Classes for directors as well as actors."
- "Workshops related to directing would be nice, and would compliment the sessions related to design."
- "Classes about networking/promoting oneself as an artist."

Playwriting Classes

- “More playwriting classes.”
- “More workshops on advanced playwriting.”
- “More writing workshops. Loved the old Rant workshop we had once.”
- “Playwriting as literature, i.e. incorporating structure that enhances the theme.”
- “More of and variations on what you have already, as time allows.”
- “Ten minute play overnight workshop. An open forum between featured artists on creating the work today.”
- “Any workshops that are oriented to write new work is always welcome.”
- “I would love for an acting class to coincide with a writing class. Maybe the playwrights are assigned certain actors to write a short piece for and they workshop it together. It could be cool for the actors to see how a writer would characterize them just from a first impression and it could be cool for the writer to be inspired by that. I'd love an opportunity to work on an original piece together. This may be too much for a week, but who knows?!”
- “[More workshops] like Connie Congdon's or Paula Vogel's classes.”

Business Classes

- “I would also love advice from Featured Artists on producing original work in a panel.”
- “Perhaps some kind of panel, discussion, or resources related to getting a play produced.”
- “Yes - it would be advantageous to offer some workshops for actors that dealt with the BUSINESS of show business. Marketing, social media, networking and branding...”
- “Maybe a panel discussion on the question of publishing. The conference has a great mix of artists for some of the newer playwrights to learn from on this topic.”
- “Info on productive ways to workshop new scripts to get the most out of all that work.”
- “I missed having the class with outside artists talking about how they got started in the industry, or how the industry works. So those who are contemplating moving have good information.”
- I've been to several Theatre Conferences around the country that have a lot more "theatre focus" workshops than this one. I would like to see workshops on "How to transition from theatre to film workshop," "Making the leap from Local community theatre to professional theatre workshop," "Acting as a business," "Movement for the Actor," and "How to Market yourself - the competitive Actor.”

More classes in general

- “More classes/workshops with featured artists.”
- “More classes and workshops for playwrights, please!!”

Collaborative processes

- “A Chain Play exercise (as in writing a play with numerous writers in a chain-like format).”
- “Scene development workshops for the writers where experienced actors rehearse and perform a selected scene they can use to develop or refine their composition with.”
- “A workshop where each participant creates a short play under the guidance of a Featured Artist.”

Social Activities

- “An evening meet and greet/orientation for new people on day one.”
- “Get to know you activity when you get there.”
- “A beginning social event early on.”
- “For featured artists, perhaps alternatives to a cruise on PW Sound. Kayaks? Fishing? Hikes?”

Food

- “Wish the Chocolate Gypsy had permission to add more gluten free and/or dairy free, veg options.”

Schedule

- “I would like to see the conference go longer, actually, to allow me to do more.”
- “I miss the half-day off; it gave everyone a chance to do something non-conference related for a while.”



Cyrano's Theatre Company's production of Dick Reichman's "The Audition," pictured are Julia Cossman and Taran Haynes, with Janet Stoneburner and Tiffany Cooper in the background.

4. Which Featured Artist was most helpful to you in your time here?

The details of this response section are not included in this public report. This information is for me to assist in staffing choices for the future. The artistic staff of this event remains consistently strong, and publicly weighing their comparative merits is not fair to that team.



The Featured Artists at the final Saturday's reception.

5. What did you enjoy most about the Conference?

Many respondents listed multiple aspects in their answers, so each individual response might not be a person's single favorite part (for example, 'Valdez' might not have been the absolute best part of someone's Theatre Conference, but they wanted to make sure they cited its importance to them). Much of what is to be enjoyed in attending the Conference is not a specific part of it, but the overall experience.

Generally, the most important part of this event is the people: the collaborations and friendships they form, the ways in which they educate each other, and the energy they create. The opportunity for this number of theatre artists to work together in a non-competitive environment is rare, and is probably the primary gift of the Conference to its participants.

The People, Atmosphere, etc.

- “The people.” X2
- “Camaraderie, sense of play and easy-goingness, scenery.”
- “The spirit of the conference is wonderful. The generosity of the participants, the town and the staff makes you feel so welcome and safe to be creative!”
- “Pretty much everything at this point.”
- “The conference is one of my favorite times of the year. I loved it, every part.”
- “Everything.”
- “I enjoyed the connections, workshops, play labs, and the performances. The price.”
- “Enjoying the workshops, getting to perform and make NEW FRIENDS. Thank you!”
- “The collegiality of everyone.”
- “Wonderful people.”
- “Opportunities to perform with actors and writers in similar career situations.”
- “Opportunity to meet other theatre artists.”
- “Being surrounded by people who have such passion for theatre.”
- “The accessibility and camaraderie amongst all. There’s a sense of single purpose there-- to raise the standard of the art while having ass-kicking fun, BTW!”
- “Getting to know many new friends.”
- “I enjoyed the camaraderie. There was a nice air of support that helped to nourish creativity.”
- “Getting to meet the other featured artists and the Play Lab playwrights.”
- “Meeting a wide selection of theatre artists.”
- “Meeting people from around the country.”
- “The people. Everyone is so kind and willing to talk about ideas, as well as possibly being open to future artistic collaboration.”
- “Long talks with my roommate and fellow playwright.”
- “Making new friends and connections to other playwrights from around the country.”
- “The workshop participants and the excellent goodwill, as well as the staff.”
- “Interacting with other theatre artists.”
- “Seeing Alaska Friends, talking about theatre way into the night with my suitemates...laughing ‘til 2 a.m.”
- “Meeting lovely people and inspiring people and connecting with colleagues.”
- “Seeing old friends I've made.”
- “Getting caught up with old friends.”
- “Collaboration amongst artists.”
- “Seeing friends.” X2
- “I like that it is a supportive environment to help foster new plays.”

- “Everyone was so friendly, the social atmosphere.”
- “Seeing people from last year / meeting new people.”
- “Socializing with other writers.”

Play Lab

- “The Play Lab.” X8
- “I love the intelligent feedback I get on my work. Do you KNOW how hard it is to get intelligent feedback?”
- “Reading in Play Lab.”
- “And of course the play labs are always great.”
- “Having my play read by such excellent performers.”
- “Listening to feedback from the featured artists following play lab readings.”
- “The lab readings.”
- “Lab Readings and Panelists Discussions.”
- “The plays, and always hearing my work and reading in other work. Discovering the voices of all that talent!”
- “Readings.”
- “The plays.”
- “The focus on the work.”
- “The material I was asked to work on - the play labs.”
- “The wide variety of play subjects.”
- “The thoughtful feedback on my play.”

Monologue Workshop

- “Monologue Workshop” X4
- “Monologue workshop w/ that chick from Devil Wears Prada ;)”
- “Having my monologue given by two excellent young actresses.”

Fringe

- “The fringe festival, it was always so much to watch and be a part of.”
- “Fringe.”
- “I always love the Fringe Festival.”

Staff

- “The featured artists' feedback was AMAZING. I really like that rather than focusing on celebrity, this conference seems to focus on community. The featured artists return frequently, know each other, and are committed to giving generous, helpful feedback.”
- “The conference staff. The availability of featured artists to conference attendees.”
- “Friendliness and helpfulness of conference staff.”
- “Seeing Dawson's smiling face.”
- “A one-on-one consult with Tim Daly.”

Performances

- “The evening shows were PHENOMENAL this year, especially the plays that had previously been read in the play lab. Wonderful evenings.”
- “Evening performances.”
- “Evening shows (most of them).”
- “I also liked that the shows started later this year--both as an attendee, but also when we were performing.”
- “*Gravity*. For one, it was a solid production. And two, any time there's an evening performance of a play from a previous year's Play Lab with a returning playwright, it's always a highlight. It feels like the Conference is actively working for its playwrights when that happens.”
- “*Gravity*.”
- “The three good evening performances were wonderful.”
- “The Play Slam on Saturday was particularly successful this year!”
- “The majority of the evening performances.”
- “PERFORMANCES.”
- “Mainstage shows-- especially *From the Heart* and Dick Reichman's *The Audition*.”
- “Evening performances - in particular the Featured Artists' night.”
- “I enjoyed the live theater performances every evening.”

Classes

- “Workshops.”
- “Bruce Rogers Shakespeare class. Eric Coble's class on his life as a playwright.”
- “Singing workshop.”
- “Cassandra's workshop.”

The Cruise

- “The cruise on Spirit of Valdez was absolutely stunning and I would like to thank the Stevens' family and our Skipper for this very special event!”
- “The boat cruise.”

Schedule

- “The slightly relaxed schedule (both in Lab and no Friday performance) made for more time to socialize and enjoy other participants.”
- “Having just enough plays to attend/read in.”
- “The wide variety of events.”
- “The experience itself. I felt things ran smoothly and there was plenty to do.”
- “Constantly having at least one thing I wanted to be watching/participating in (usually more like two or three at a time)!”
- “Wine at the museum.” (*this event was added back to the schedule this year*)

6. What did you enjoy least?

Again, we don't list individual shows or artists for negative criticism in this report; they are noted as it is being processed by the coordinator for knowledge in future planning.

Generally, the responses are to fairly scattered subjects. These are likely specific responses to individual experiences, not automatically systemic problems that need addressing. Food continues to be a sticking point; the same caterers who were well received last year were employed again, but to less positive results. We will continue to try to improve the quality and healthiness of the meals, but some of the requests, such as daily salad, are unfeasible.

Nothing

- "This was one of most fun and inspiring weeks of my life, and I can't wait to return next year."
- "N/A." x2
- "My lack of sleep. ;)"
- "Nothing." X3
- "It ended."
- "Leaving."
- "Having to leave early (Friday morning)."

Schedule

- "Not enough time to attend everything I wanted to!"
- "Not having time to participate in more of these incredible offerings!"
- "At times it was overwhelming. There was so much to do, I worried I was missing out on other things because the schedule was so tight."
- "The fact that I couldn't go to more play labs because they were scheduled at the same time as other workshops. It was so hard to choose!!"
- "There were a few times when there was confusion regarding schedules of classes versus readings."
- "Only that I wasn't able to see all of the play readings."
- "Last minute changes. I know they are inevitable. There were a few times when things happened that I was not prepared for. Maybe my fault."
- "I wasn't able to make as many play lab plays this year as I would have liked (further comments on this below.)"
- "It's too bad that more people weren't able to attend the readings."
- "Monologues were too early on Saturday."
- "So many people in the monologue workshop I felt like I didn't get a lot of feedback for the amount of time it took during the week."

- “This was my first year. Next year I will try to participate in more, but it's easy to get overwhelmed with so much going on concurrently.”

Fringe Festival

- “Fringe (crowded and exclusive – seems you have to know someone or you can't play).”
- “The Fringe Festival was embarrassingly bad, disorganized, and full of drama... Very unsavory for what I heard was the best part of the week.”

Housing

- “Unfortunately there seemed to be a mix up in regards to reserving a bed; I was assured I had one (and paid for the reservation but I had a cot instead). Turned out okay, just a mix up I would prefer to avoid. Otherwise, the conference was great!”
- “Had kind of a crazy roommate in the dorms.”
- “The room I stayed in was always freezing cold (but heat in Alaska is expensive), beyond that I can't think of anything.”

Play Lab issues

- “I hate it when playwrights aren't taking notes during feedback. It's like they aren't taking it seriously or taking in the work everyone is doing for their play.”
- “My lead panelist made me feel awful about my play and didn't talk to me one on one after.”
- “Casting.”
- “I wrote some comments in the actor survey regarding how readings would benefit from directors. I heard some feedback in readings (from featured artists, playwrights in the audience, and random audience members) that I found pretty appalling, but that's bound to happen, and it was mostly overshadowed by the very smart, constructive feedback I heard. Other than that, no real complaints.”
- “I love that people come from all over with many different levels of experience (it's important to be inclusive and give opportunity), but I found myself wishing for some of the actors to have more experience. I don't think the playwrights words were always heard as much as they could be. If the playwright needed to spend too much time on an actor's performance in rehearsal, the script got lost and there wasn't enough time to focus on the story. I also think there could be a huge advantage to assigning directors to the readings. I would love for the writer to have a chance to focus solely on the script and have someone with directing experience at the helm. It could even be helpful (if scheduling permits) to have 2 rehearsals for some of the longer plays.”
- “Sometimes the casting is a little dicey- but I understand we have to work with what (who) we have.”
- “Some of the shorter plays - the 45 minute ones - I felt were not strong writing.”
- “I would've enjoyed having one or two more Lab reads, but not a big deal - I enjoy listening, too :)”

- “It's still impossible (and probably always will be) to see all the readings I want to see due to schedule overlap. However in recent years I've compensated for this by pulling copies of plays that I wanted to see but missed out of the books behind the front desk and reading them. As a result I now am able to check out more play lab plays than in the past. I only wish I'd thought of it sooner!”
- “Sometimes the panelists became a little esoteric in their discussions. The panelists I enjoyed most were the ones who spoke to the structure of the play and what worked and what didn't work as far as the structure. I learned a lot listening to the latter discussion. It made me more aware of playwriting as an art.”

Evening Performances

- “Not all evening performances were weak but some shows were not up to LFTC standards. I felt I had to apologize to new featured artists and let them know there would be better performances on other evenings.
- “Evening performances should be a privilege, not a right.”
- “[specific evening performance].”
- “While the acting and direction in the featured evening plays was excellent, I'd like to see more attention to programing. I feel an overly-long play and singularity of subject a little excruciating. I felt there could be better programing in terms of variety from dark to light and drama to comedy. Just a thought.”
- “The other evening performances were terrible/maybe not THAT terrible. I felt that [specific theatre company]'s performance was really low level. But I felt that about last year, too...”

Food

- “Food.” X2
- “The food was good. I really appreciate all we got for what we paid.”
- “The meals were mostly basic and bland. Not a lot of vegetables or nutritional proteins :{.”
- “Food. Borderline inedible. I would be willing to pay an additional \$25 or so for registration for better meals, as I ended up going to restaurants half the time anyway.”
- “Less fried food would be fab... But it's FREE, we have no room to whine, really.”
- “Lunches.”
- “The food was a bit too fried and low nutritional value for my tastes. Could of used a nice salad option for lunches.”
- “It was unfortunate that almost none of the lunches had gluten free alternatives. (The rice and beans meal being a good exception.) I'm used to bringing my own food, but others had trouble with this.”
- “The free lunches were appreciated, but not always that healthy.”

- “The FOOD at the conference and in the town was horrible. I wish there were more HEALTHY options such as fresh fruit instead of ONLY cookies and coffee and a NOT-SO-HEALTHY lunch. Believe it or not, people want healthier options if given the choice. Since we are at the conference all day, we need to fuel our bodies and mind with substance. Maybe you could partner with the local health food store in town. I did observe other actors leaving the conference for lunch to obtain healthier options in town. Just food for thought!”

Social Issues

- “Cliques.”
- “Underrepresentation of women and minority artists.”
- “This one non-conference member who wandered around the venues, giving odd critiques, storming out of rooms and disrupting play readings. He seemed to make everyone else uncomfortable and, for a moment, I even wondered if he might pull a gun on someone.”
- “The interactions with those who didn't really respect the process and seemed to interfere with the goings on of the event.”
- “The hierarchal social dynamic [a playwright] mentioned in a FB post. Although I agree not much can (or even should) be done to prevent this, it was something I heard about from several (mostly older female) participants this year. What to do to integrate newcomers? How to empower social cows? Take them by the frikkin hand and lead them around? I dunno. We've got the Fringe, karaoke, museum night, fish fry... all sorts of opportunities to make friends. Maybe it's a non-issue, but thought I'd mention it only because it was definitely something I heard about from a few folks.”

Classes

- “None of the seminars grabbed me.”

Space Issues

- “Lack of seating in the hallway.”
- “Not enough places to rehearse for both monologue and singing.”
- “The schlepp from Anchorage to Valdez. I love the ferry, it's beautiful, but it's expensive and the drive is long and taxing. It's just hard to do that after a full day spent on planes, etc.”
- “Please suggest to other featured artists that holding their classes/presentations etc. in a circle works really well, to get away from the soporific, audio-challenged, lecture hall effect of those large rooms. Gary Garrison and Cassandra Medley know what they are doing, arranging the chairs that way. I guess it takes a few minutes out of the allotted time, but well worth it!”

7. What information do you wish you had prior to participating this year?

Pre-Conference communications is a strength of the event, as was mentioned earlier. These comments back that up.

The primary area cited as a need for better communication is in the Play Lab, where participants would like to have more advance knowledge of whom they will be working with, and which panelists are responding to what plays. The former part is done by posting the program on-line ahead of time, but correspondence could clearly be better in letting people know about this. The plan is to have the panelists listed in the program, which will solve that problem as well.

There will also be some modifications to the website page about housing, to make sure that it's clear how minimal what we are providing is. It bears mentioning that the free housing used to be floor-space in classrooms. Upgrading it to the student housing has many positive aspects, but it also creates elevated expectations.

Nothing

- "I felt the communication was great."
- "I felt well informed."
- "Was fully informed."
- "None." X2
- "I felt well informed. Nothing comes to mind."
- "I had all I needed."
- "I felt the pre-Conference info to be through and informative."
- "Nothing."
- "You got this covered, imo."
- "Seemed very informative to me, and responsive."
- "I felt I had all the important information before participating, thanks!"
- "Satisfactory."
- "Nothing I can think of."
- "I was very happy with the pre-conference information and communication."
- "I felt I was well informed."
- "To be honest - I really can't offer suggestions - this conference just rocked!"
- "The packet emailed was helpful enough."
- "N/A" x5

- “As a long time participant I knew pretty much everything to expect.”
- “Nothing. Dawson and the staff did an awesome job keeping on top of everything.”
- “This was my 3rd year so I really can't think of anything. I felt excellently informed.”
- “I thought information provided was quite good.”
- “Everything was well-explained.”

Play Lab info

- “It's obvious to me now that the conference is most useful to playwrights with works-in-progress that are at an earlier stage of development, and next year I will submit something in need of more work to make the most of the really smart, generous panelists.”
- “Two years ago, I was able to receive a partial travel reimbursement which was very much appreciated. I kind of assumed I would get one this year before I booked my flight. I didn't realize I wouldn't receive a partial reimbursement until after the flight was booked. I'm not sure if it would have changed my decision or not, but I would have preferred to know that before making up my mind to go.”
- “Contact info for playwrights whose plays I was going to be reading in Play Lab. Especially if it is a large role or if I have a lot of questions.”
- “Who the Play Lab panelists would be for each play - one more way to choose what to see when you don't know the writer and are mostly guessing.”
- “It would have been great if playwrights found out their casts when the cast members were emailed their scripts.”
- “Conference participants/ Who was cast in what.”
- “Knowing who my panelists would be.”

Housing

- “You really need to let people know what to expect while housing in the dorms - specifically that they are completely barren when you arrive. Not even a hanger...”
- “I didn't know that there would be no cooking utensils in the dorms.”
- “I wish I would have secured dorm space earlier, as I understand dawson might be able to put compatible types together?”

Classes

- “More information about preparation for workshops. For instance, didn't know we were supposed to be 'warmed up' before we arrived for the Acting for Singers workshop.”

Clothing

- “And I feel that there should be a few sentences about the Gala as some people never realize that it is a fancy evening.
- “To bring a nice suit or tuxedo for the gala at the end of the week (and a winter sleeping bag for the free housing, but that's mostly on me).”

Food

- “I was not aware that lunches were included in the event. I reviewed the website again and I don't see that. This is a big plus in my opinion.”

Travel

- “Contact info for travel options.”

They just missed it...

- “I was unsure about the scheduling as I didn't see it on the website.” *(it's there and regularly updated through the year)*
- “I don't think, though I could be mistaken, that I had a list of the featured artists.” *(also on the website and regularly updated through the year)*



Featured Artist Cassandra Medley reads from her work as a part of “From the Heart,” the Sunday night show.

8. How was the Conference website? Any suggestions for improvements?

We got a couple of great quick fixes from this section, but do not have great ambitions for the site beyond its current set-up. It's meant as a practical place for distributing information, and it does that effectively.

Positive Comments

- "I found myself referencing it a lot. So, very useful."
- "Great."
- "It's good."
- "Fine."
- "Well done."
- "It was very useful – it was great being able to look at the program and being able to plan out my days before getting there."
- "Very."
- "It's easy to navigate and well put together, no suggestions for improvement."
- "Most of my questions were able to be answered by the website."
- "Very helpful."
- "Very useful." X2
- "It was good."
- "It's very useful! Keep it up!"
- "Very useful. I downloaded a lot of the information to take with me."
- "I found the site very useful, especially the local discounts, and other participant info."
- "It's great. I really appreciate it."
- "It was helpful."
- "Seemed great."
- "I used it to find monologues and schedule information with much problem."
- "Useful, particularly the carpool message board and the availability of the schedule prior to the conference."
- "It does the job quite well."
- "The website was pretty good; I can't think of any suggestions, but I had no problems with it so keep up the good work."
- "Well done."
- "I found it useful and have no suggestions."

Neutral Comments

- “N/A.”
- “It's fine - it serves its purpose but nothing special.”
- “Not to say I never use it, but...”
- “I only looked at it a couple of times and it was fine.”
- “Can't think of any right now.”
- “I didn't use it much.”
- “It was okay to use. I found what I needed.”
- “Didn't really use the website.”
- “No suggestions.”
- “I don't look at it much, but should- I suppose all the info is there as far as what to expect, schedule-wise.”
- “I didn't really use it enough to comment.”
- “Didn't use.”

Specific Stuff to Add/Change

- “It would be more useful if you had some advice or testimonials from folks who have been coming for years: what do they always bring? what do they make sure to leave time for? what is a 'make sure you don't miss...' or a 'make sure that you pack' item from the veterans if the program?”
- “There was a little confusion about dorm housing this year, but it worked out without snafus.”
- “The website was helpful. Perhaps just a bit more graphical layout for current year assets. And it would be nice to leave current year info up on the site a bit longer for retroactive research of the event.”
- “It would have been helpful to have pictures of the inside and outside of the student housing and the location. A map with the housing and civic center would have been helpful to get an idea where everything was.”
- “Very useful. It might be great to set up a conference contact list and people could give their email (only if they choose).” *(we leave this in the hands of the participants to honor privacy)*

Update frequency

- “It was very useful. Though it did seem to be updated late.”
- “Great. The only problem was with the housing being very late. It was nervous making. But that was an unusual situation I'm told.”
- “The website is good. My only complaint is that sometimes updates are a little slow.”

Technological issue

- “Mostly useful, I had trouble using it from my mobile device, but on a laptop everything worked well.”

Info they wished had been there:

- “If possible, I would like to know which respondents will be at each reading. Sometimes, if I have to choose between attending two readings the respondents involved might sway my choice. I learn more from the respondents sometimes than the actual reading.”
- “Add an easy to find page for schedule, maybe a page just for actor opportunities- with schedule, A page for writer opportunities with a schedule.”
- “I wouldn't mind seeing the program posted there in advance like has been done in the past.” *(it was posted two weeks prior to the event... then again, see next comment...)*
- “It's nice when the program gets put on so you can see everyone who will be there. It was a bit slow getting up this year.”

9. If you participated in the Fringe Festival, please rank each of the following aspects of the event on how important they are to you.

This year's Fringe enjoyed one of its best years on many levels (see page 8). Attendance was strong, and generally the performances in the evening were well received. There were issues with the space again this year, however. To attempt to get a feel for the participants needs, a question was added to gauge their priorities.

	Very important	Important	Sure, why not	Don't really care	Would rather this wasn't a priority
Hearing only great scripts	16.7%	31.3%	29.2%	8.3%	14.6%
Using only the best actors	10.6%	12.8%	29.8%	27.7%	19.1%
Hearing work by many different writers	55.1%	30.6%	10.2%	4.1%	0%
Inclusivity in casting, giving everyone a chance	47.9%	31.3%	8.3%	8.3%	4.2%
Seating availability	38.8%	40.8%	10.2%	8.2%	2%
Food service	8.3%	22.9%	35.4%	33.3%	0%
Bar service	14.9%	46.8%	21.3%	14.9%	2.1%
Knowing in advance what will be performed	4.2%	22.9%	27.1%	41.7%	4.2%

10. Additional comments.

Mostly people use this section to say 'thank you' in one form or another. The additional comments are generally covered in other areas of this report.

Purely Positive

- "This experience is one that has profoundly changed my life - I am definitely a lifer :)"
- "LONG LIVE LAST FRONTIER!!"
- "The conference is always the highlight of my year – thanks, Dawson!"
- "Thank you Dawson, staff, and everyone that worked so hard on putting the week together! Great job!"
- "Thank you! I love this conference, and the fact that I take limited vacation time that I have to come should demonstrate how valuable I find it."
- "THANK YOU AND GREAT JOB!"
- "I'm very glad that I attended the conference. It has undoubtedly enhanced my skills as a playwright."
- "Thank you Dawson for coordinating this festival. I know that it was a lot of hardwork, and it is amazing what is created in such a small town of Valdez. The mountains are gorgeous."
- "Amazing time - best yet (but I say that every year!) Counting down to next year!"
- "Excellent staff. Excellent organization for performance day rehearsals and performances. Excellent performances. I was amazed at the quality of all performances and thrilled that I could be at them and see fine artists at work."
- "Thanks, Dawson. You're one in a mill."
- "Another wonderful conference! Had such an amazing time!"
- "Overall, I just love the conference, always have, right from the first time I attended, several years ago. It's dawesome. Thanks!!!!!"
- "Does Dawson have tenure yet? If not, WHY NOT?!!!!"
- "Dawson Moore does it once again! Thank you Dawson!"
- "You all did an awesome job!"
- "THANK YOU for all your thoughtful, hard work to make the Conference happen, and thank you for valuing our feedback!"
- "Staff was great, really appreciated the hard work put in by all members. I thought it was great to see the president of the college working on the ground, side by side, with the rest of the employees."
- "Any complaints I have are always minor. Love the conference. Long may it live."
- "Thank you for all your hard work!"
- "I had a very nice time. I would love to come back."

- “I love coming to the conference. I love hearing the voices and seeing the growth of writers who have returned and the new voices unfamiliar to me. This year I especially enjoyed. It would be great if there were travel funds again for the writers...but I know that may be too much to ask for. And the housing staff was especially terrific. Kudos to all.”
- “Overall, it was a fantastic experience and I'm glad I had a chance to be a part of it.”

Communication

- “The information sent before the conference was really great - extensive advice on travel and housing, plus information about the process and running of the conference itself. Dawson was quick to respond to all emails, and to give specific advice to participants. The one thing that was a little tricky was that there were a number of long emails sent, and it was sometimes hard to keep track of everything.”
- “Hope to have enough boat seats next year without encouraging people not to go, also some of the housing things were complicated, some people ordered beds, and weren't told until arriving they actually were only getting a cot.”

Artistic Staffing

- “I think it would be beneficial for the conference to get more mid to high profile writers to the conference. Like Annie Baker who just won the Pulitzer, or Christopher Durang who apparently is also a great teacher. People who would add notoriety and allow for more participants to come and more contributions to flow in. Though people who are also good people and still down to Earth and willing to integrate into the community and not have an elite feel.”

Schedule

- “I LOVE the schedule this year. Two years ago, there were way too many activities overlapping one another and I felt like I was missing way too many workshops or readings. This year, the schedule was perfect, and I felt like I had just the right amount of options when choosing which workshop or play lab to attend.”
- “I thought the short and sweet Gala event was nice.”
- “I wasn't sure why there was a daily time slot dedicated to seminars (1:30-3:00 or whatever.) I would have rather seen seminars scheduled opposite plays, giving people the chance to see more plays if they wanted. That is to say, have options for plays in every time slot, including after lunch.”

Fringe

- “In past years I liked that we were given Fringe scripts further in advance, not just moments before we performed them.”

We're Not Friendly Enough

- “There's a bit of a "good ol boys" quality that I encountered - hard to be the new kid on the block.”

Programming

- “I heard some good plays this year. I liked the evening programs very much.”
- “Also, the monologue workshop was a bit overcrowded - it might behoove you to cap the number of participants. In addition, I would make it mandatory that monologue participants attend the first meeting of the workshop on Sunday. I missed it because of rehearsal and it took me a long time to catch up.

Food...

- “Thanks for improving the food service! Well done - overall.”
- “PLEASE bump up the FOOD QUALITY and healthier options.”

Play Lab

- “I would like to see more time in rehearsing a script prior to reading, not for the sake of attaining a performance but for the playwright to be able to benefit from 'hearing' the script at table and discussing the work with the actors. I feel this will strengthen the work and benefit the actors as well as the script, allowing them the opportunity to better know the writer's intent and to give feedback at table from their perspective. This said, a reading director would also enable the playwright to sit back and 'hear' rather than be concerned about directing or playing traffic cop.”

Classes

- “Add more ACTOR-friendly workshops mentioned earlier.”

Tech

- “The only input for improvement that I have is to always do a tech run through on equipment for any of the events. The mic was not working for the final dinner. So much work had gone into the writing to honor Stan and Mary Stephens and although I strained to hear as much as I could, a lot was missed. That could have been prevented by testing the mic beforehand. It is just a detail but so important. Even if someone says the mic is working, never believe it until you've tested it. It is just too important. However, that was the only thing out of the whole festival that did not work! Pretty amazing! I was so grateful as a reader to be provided the housing, the meals, and the performances besides an opportunity to study acting and perform as an actor. THANK YOU SO MUCH!! I will tell everyone what a wonderful and awe inspiring event this is!”

Responses from Participating Playwrights in the 2014 Play Lab

1. How useful was the information you received before the Conference regarding the process, rehearsals, selection of readers, etc? Is there other information you wish you had prior to arriving in Valdez?

Purely positive

- "It was excellent. I felt fully prepared."
- "I thought everything was covered in the materials."
- "Very good."
- "Excellent."
- "The information was fine. I see no reason to change it."
- "As a longtime conference goer I pretty much knew all I needed to know going in."
- "The information was thorough and well-organized."
- "The information was very clear. However, I have attended the conference before and already had a good idea of the process."
- "I had what I needed."
- "I received all the info I needed. I felt well prepared."
- "Very useful."
- "Very helpful. As a returner, I knew most of what to look for and ask for. The selection of readers was awesome, and the schedule was MUCH better this year than two years ago. I also felt very informed and much more a part of the loop this year than two years ago."
- "Since I'd been there before, I didn't really need the information before coming."
- "Information received before arrival was fine."
- "I got everything I needed. I had to figure a couple things out once I got there, but that seems inevitable with such a big event."
- "Very helpful."
- "Very useful- I read all the guidelines in advance- Marshall Mason's advice was very clear and helpful- especially for directing my own play."

With feedback...

- “Very useful - though it would have been nice to know who the actors were sooner.”
- “Would have liked to know more about the selection criteria for the scripts.”
- “I felt that the best information I had re: the conference was my experience at last year's conference. There's really no substitute for having already experienced the conference 1 time around.”
- “I would love to be emailed in advance the names of the actors, mostly so I can know know who to look for upon arriving at the conference, as well as in case if there is any necessary casting changes to address. I only found out the names of my actors once the program was made available.”



Anchorage actors Dick Reichman and Danielle Rabinovich in LA playwright David MacGregor's "New Year's Eve."

2. Were the responses from your panel helpful to you?

We showed improvement in a couple of areas. The general quality of the feedback was stronger, and no one reported a purely negative experience.

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Very Helpful	53.1%	85.7%
Reasonably Helpful	28.1%	9.5%
Somewhat Helpful	15.6%	4.8%
Not Helpful	0%	0%
The Opposite of Helpful	3.1%	0%

Positive

- “I was very pleased with my comments this year.”
- “Just want to say thanks to Erma who jumped in at the last moment to replace a panelist of mine – despite the last minute change, she still had very meaningful & useful feedback on the reading!”
- “They REALLY rocked: Craig Pospisil, Cassandra Medley, and Michael Hood. Really spectacular.”
- “My panel was PERFECT for me this year. They gave me great ideas that have greatly improved my play.”
- “They were very open to giving me the kind of feedback I requested (instead of turning it into the Wild West).”
- “Comments were thoughtful, yet critical. It was great to have a one-on-one session with the lead panelist.”
- “My panel was good – good suggestions and advice.”
- “Their comments were thoughtful and insightful I asked for specific feedback and then followed up with questions. I was especially thrilled with how willing each one of them was to talk to me one-on-one. Of course, they suggested things that I disagreed with, but they really got my wheels turning. It was a great experience.”
- “Gregory Pulver had some brilliant insight into my play, and gave me some excellent feedback. I very much appreciated speaking with him and hearing his thoughts. I actually believe I know how to fix some of the problems in the script now, that I could not quite place my finger on before. [My other two panelists] also offered some excellent advice, although their feedback did not dig as deep into the script as Gregory's did. (This makes sense, since Gregory was my main panelist).”

Mixed

- “The panel was kick-ass. I really appreciated their input. They were insightful and kind. I did wish there was one woman on my panel rather than three white men (because I'm female and my play was about two women) but that's okay...”
- “Lead panelist was detached and didn't lead the discussion well. But the other two panelists were great.”
- “I wish I had more time with all three of them. But I had to leave the conference early, so that's my issue. I had a good one-on-one with my point person. I know there is networking time made available, but the panelists always seem so busy and I hate to ambush them when they are having a much deserved break, etc. I want to respect their time.”
- “Here is where the problem of featured artists not knowing how to respond to a play comes in. [One panelist] was helpful in that he talked about the staging of the play which was interesting. [Another] was helpful in that he mentioned that it was a unique view of the 'coming out to family' play that is usually of a young person coming out rather than an old person in denial. [The third] was intent on trying to 'improve' the play rather than responding to it. Not helpful. Most helpful were my actors. They were excellent to work with and gave me terrific responses. The audience too was very helpful. I've been doing this for many years so I know whom to listen to and to whom not. Unfortunately a young playwright might listen to the 're-writers' and get confused. You gave excellent recommendations in the booklet but I fear more than one featured artist ignored it and stuck with the 'workshopping' technique.”

3. Were the audience feedback session helpful to you?

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Very Helpful	34.4%	33.3%
Reasonably Helpful	40.6%	33.3%
Somewhat Helpful	15.6%	33.3%
Not Helpful	3.1%	0%
The Opposite of Helpful	6.2%	0%

We periodically talk about removing this section of the process, as it is often hard to control and leads to some of the more negative parts of the week. But despite a couple of negative experiences, it generally is viewed as a helpful part of the process. It's hard to see how we could do much more to educate the audience about how to respond.

Timing was a little issue this year. There were a number of playwrights who felt that there audience feedback session was truncated. The primary reasons this would happen are that a) there was a late start, or b) the initial running time of the play, which is provided by the author, was too short.

Generally, if there was a part to miss, this would be it. Audience members have ample time and access to the authors in the Civic Center halls to let them know their feedback.

Positive

- “Again, did I agree with everything? No. However, all of the feedback was thoughtful and helpful.”
- “Again, the audience responses were very helpful. They were genuine, immediate and when they expressed having been touched, I knew the play was working.”
- “Some really interesting and useful feedback.”
- “It wasn't so much what the audience said as where they noticed issues that I found helpful.”
- “I did hear some very helpful feedback from the audience, although many audience members mimicked the feedback from the panelists. However, it was helpful to hear how MANY people agreed or disagreed with feedback from the panelists. When two or more people take issue with a specific moment in the play, it tells me that that moment may need to be worked on. When one person takes issue with that moment, but several others thought that moment was excellent, then that gives me another level of insight into that moment. It's all extremely helpful.”
- “I've learned how to take comments that resonate with me and ignore the others - I can't write the play that twenty people want me to write or the result would be too watered-down, and not cohesive.”

Timing issues

- “Didn't have much time to get feedback from many audience members- but yes, good stuff all around.”
- “We got a late start, so audience feedback was mostly cut off.”
- “This was no one's fault (well, probably my fault because I wrote a really long play), but I did not receive audience feedback because we ran out of time after the panelists' feedback. However, people did come up to me individually afterward with feedback which was helpful & supportive.”

4. Was your private meeting with a panelist helpful to you?

We saw a good increase in the general effectiveness of this program. Panelists were strongly encouraged to pre-read the scripts they would be lead respondent on, and were informed of past issues with late readings not being responded to. While it's not perfect, and probably will never be so, it was improved.

The one suggestion being weighed for next year is to have these meetings pre-scheduled prior to the Conference, so that it is not up to the playwright and their panelists to make an appointment at the event. This could alleviate the problem of missed meetings.

There are some logistical challenges here... readings are back-to-back, so it won't work to just have it directly after the initial feedback session. It's tricky to know everyone's schedule well enough to create a half-hour time commitment to fit within it. And it eliminates the flexibility that allows the panelist and author to find a time that truly works for them, be it dinner break or during other Conference events that don't interest them. We might try a modified system where we just schedule the meetings for readings on the final Friday.

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Very Helpful	46.9%	71.4%
Reasonably Helpful	18.8%	19%
Somewhat Helpful	12.5%	0%
Not Helpful	3.1%	4.8%
The Opposite of Helpful	0%	0%
Didn't Have One	12.5%	4.8%
Didn't Have One Yet (but have plans to do it via distance)	6.2%	0%

Positive

- “This was a great opportunity to speak with the lead panelist privately.”
- “Yes, Gregory Pulver was fantastic. He dissected the play in a way that showed me he really cared about the work and about my process. He analyzed it both from his specialized viewpoint as a designer, but he also took the time to hear my point of view, and help me shape the play in a way that would reach my own expectations. I did not feel that he imposed his expectations on the play. Rather, he shared with me what he liked, what he felt needed work, and then offered me guidance on how I could achieve my own goals with this piece. It was eye-opening, exciting, and encouraging.”
- “Craig Pospisil cut right to the chase, and the entire 45 minutes was full of thoughtful and useful info.”

- “He gave me such great advice. I loved him!”
- “I feel like Michael Hood really cared about the play and about my revisions of the play.”
- “I had Sherry Kramer who was great- very specific on text- asked lots of helpful questions- made great helpful suggestions.”

Mixed

- “[My panelist] had very detailed and terrific thoughts concerning the script, which I will be incorporating in my rewrites. However, I would've loved to have a dialogue and conversation of ideas with Peter because he's a very intelligent person. He seemed to want to speak his thoughts and have me listen, but it gave me lots of great notes to take home.”
- “Again, [my panelist] was trying by her own admission to find the DNA in a piece and help it evolve (grow?). We wrestled more than discussed. She was very fun but not helpful to the play process. She did let me know of one line that confused her which I looked at but was reassured later by [one of my actors] and others was perfectly clear.”

5. Were you satisfied with the performance of your readers?

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Very Satisfied	40.6%	33.3%
Satisfied	37.5%	47.6%
Somewhat Satisfied	18.8%	9.5%
Dissatisfied	6.3%	9.5%

We work with a wide range of actors, ranging from professionals to amateurs. While balance is an objective, not all casts will be created equally. That is reflected in these responses. Some playwrights express a desire to be more involved in casting and selecting their panelists, but this is not practically feasible for a project this size.

Positive

- “Oh yeah, the whole cast was awesome. Especially the young man who came up with a melody for two of my songs on the spot. He sang beautifully, and the rest of the cast was absurdly awesome.”
- “The pool of actors seems to be getting better and better. This was probably my strongest cast yet.”
- “I couldn't have been happier with Nancy and Bruce. Nancy was so committed that she set up extra time for us to work on the speaking parts (unusual for her to do) and Bruce had an intuitive feeling for the character which allowed him to take it an run.”

- “The all gave me a lot of insight into what's working and what still needs work.”
- “They each came well prepared, and did a great job.”

Mixed

- “There were some pronunciation issues. On the other hand, some of the actors really went the extra mile (Jeremy Gaunt gets a gold star.)”
- “Actors were somewhat flat, and a bit disengaged. I think this may have been due to the fact that they were also in many other readings and in evening performances as well.”
- “Would love it if had a little longer to rehearse, like an hour and a half/2 hours.”
- “[One actor] seemed a little hungover. But it was fine. :)”
- “They did much better than rehearsal - but weren't so hot - but that's ok - at least I could hear them- so, yes, ok, good!”
- “All the actors were great - if I have to get picky, only one actor was slightly miscast (no one's fault), but he still did a great job as a villain.”
- “They were all delightful people to work with. The one fellow who read the directions messed up quite a bit, but he was a super nice guy.”
- “I loved two of my readers, but the third one was terrible.”

6. What worked best for you in this process?

Feedback

- “Hearing the play out loud and getting specific feedback.”
- The feedback from the panel. The lead panelist was really prepared, and the other two were smart and generous with their comments.”
- “Audience feedback was great.”
- “In this case there was a general agreement from the panelists, the audience, and even me as to what needed to happen next with the play. First time I've seen that happen for a play of mine.”
- “It helped that they liked my play. I felt I had good panelists suited to me and to the content of my play. They each had different things to talk about that were helpful. So that was good.”
- “Meeting privately with members of my panel.”
- “My favorite part was getting to meet with the panelist.”



LA playwright John Hendel.

The General Atmosphere & Process

- “I got a lot out of this reading - the support of Dawson and the conference staff worked especially well for me being able to provide an up-to-date draft of the script to actors before the rehearsal, even as I was making rewrites up to the eleventh hour. This kind of support is invaluable as a playwright.”
- “The casting was incredible. The feedback was excellent. Frankly, it was all amazing.”
- “Everything went smoothly.”
- “Working with the actors.”
- “Meeting other playwrights, actors and theatre professionals is always exciting.”
- “Bringing a play that I felt still needed work.”
- “Simply to have the chance to hear the play read out loud by talented actors, then being able to hear the thoughts of the panel, the audience, and then the one-on-one with my panelist. It helped clarify a lot of my own thoughts and will make moving forward in the revision process much easier.”

The Rehearsal

- “Just letting the actors read and talk, taking questions and discussing the material.”
- “Rehearsal.”
- “The guidelines and suggestions regarding directing and participating in the readings.”

The Reading

- “Reading.”
- “The reading and hearing immediate reactions from the panel and readers was very helpful.”

7. What would you like to see improve or change in the Play Lab?

There were very few suggestions, hopefully indicating an acceptance for our Lab process (and its failings). The only planned change for next year is to find a little more time to extend rehearsal time. We will not be going to a two-day rehearsal process, but there were a few minutes to add on to the rehearsals for the longer plays.

Nothing

- “N/A.”
- “I don't know- its pretty good now- even the acoustics are better (but that's because I now sit in the first row).”
- “Nothing comes to mind. I enjoyed the entire experience.”
- “I don't know.”

Rehearsal process

- “Maybe one extra rehearsal.”
- “It would be nice to have more rehearsal time.”
- “More rehearsal time - even ten or fifteen minutes. The one before mine was still finishing up last minute discussions when we were coming in, we were talking into the lunch hour... We had a tight, efficient rehearsal, but just a little extra time would have helped with the notes.”
- “I felt the rehearsal time was not long enough by about 20 or 30 minutes. Luckily, our rehearsal ended when lunch began, so all of the actors chose to stay an extra 20 minutes longer so we could finish rehearsing. However, if another group was scheduled to be in that room after us, we would not have gotten through a full reading of the play before the rehearsal time ended.”

Feedback Process

- “1st time featured artists maybe not as lead panelists.”
- “I can't think of anything major. Perhaps knowing who the panelists for each reading will be in advance would be nice.”
- “Having the featured artists really informed that Conference is not a typical 'workshopping' event where the Featured Artists tell the playwrights what needs to be done.”
- “Again, they like my play. So I could have used more time with each of the panelists to ask more questions of them. But had they not like my play...that would be unnecessary, of course.”

Scheduling

- “It's too bad that multiple plays are scheduled simultaneously (I always miss something I really want to attend), but understandable.”
- “Nothing really - perhaps only a time keeper of sorts to make sure there is decent time for both panelist and audience feedback.”

Acting Pool

- “Actors seem to be a bit overstretched. If the actors were involved in fewer readings, it would provide the opportunity for one additional rehearsal prior to the reading, which would make a tremendous difference in the quality of the reading. I know that it's just a reading, but the quality of acting makes an enormous difference.”
- “I would like to see less experienced actors do stage instructions, as a way to gain experience and also as a way to avoid derailing a reading.”
- “I'd like to somehow be able to pick my actors.”

And from left field...

- “So this is sort of a non sequitur, but I'm not sure where else to make this suggestion - how about doing a mainstage show that's the best of the shows from the 10-minute play slam? I usually find the plays from the slam are superior to the shorts on the mainstage.”
- “Honestly, I'd love a vegetable at lunch.”

8. How Long Have You Been Writing Plays?**Less than one year: 0%****1-5 years: 14.3%****6-10 years: 33.3%****11-15 years: 19%****Over 15 years: 33.3%****9. How many plays have you written (regardless of length)?****1-5: 4.8%****6-10: 14.3%****11-15: 0%****16-20: 9.5%****More than 20: 71.4%****10. What type of training, if any, have you received in the craft of playwriting?****BA in Playwriting or Theatre: 27.8%****Master's in Playwriting: 27.8%****A college course in playwriting: 16.7%****More than one college course in playwriting: 5.6%****Workshops: 72.2%****Other responses included:**

- MFA
- MFA in fiction writing
- Participation in many writing intensives
- [past UAA professor] Leroy Clark had an informal thing where we would get together and write and then read what we wrote (first time, 1988, I think) - and the rest of my training is from hanging out at the conference and listening
- Read a lot of plays and watched a lot of plays.
- None!
- I have an MFA in acting, which is obviously helpful even if not directly relevant

11. How many hours a week do you spend on playwriting?

1-4 hours: 9.5%

5-8 hours: 14.3%

9-12 hours: 14.3%

Over 12 hours: 28.6%

No weekly commitment, it's sporadic: 33.3%

Responses from Readers in the 2014 Play Lab

1. How useful was the information you received before the Conference regarding the process, advice, and rehearsal schedule? Is there other information you wish you had prior to arriving in Valdez?

Generally speaking, actors feel well-informed. Many have been coming for years, and it is important to continue to act as if none of them had done it before, so that new performers don't get left out.

Purely positive

- "Very useful. There were some new people who seemed confused about where to go/how to check in upon arrival, but I'm personally not sure how they could have been confused if they had read the material!"
- "Very helpful. I knew what to expect and what my schedule was."
- "Extremely useful."
- "Amazing. Dawson is a wonder. I felt more than informed."
- "Excellent information. My questions were answered via email prior to arrival and I knew exactly what to do for registration upon arrival. This was a new experience and the help I received was both encouraging and supportive which made me feel more confident in finding my way around."
- "I felt very informed. The schedules and information sheets were organized and clear."
- "It was very clear and useful."
- "Very useful don't change."
- "It was great. Dawson contacted me directly, and gave me exactly what I needed."
- "Very useful & no."
- "Excellent info provided via web site and personal e-mail response to questions. Thanks!"
- "Very useful." X3
- "Very useful. Though as a past participant, I knew what to expect. Good to have the program with the cast list posted ahead of time."

- “Very useful. I felt well informed and ready to roll.”
- “Very useful. I'm glad to have had the play well in advance.”
- “Quite useful.”
- “I got all necessary information in advance.”
- “It was fine.”
- “Nothing really.”
- “If this had been my first time I think it would have been very useful.”
- “Totally useful. No further info was needed.”
- “Very useful. Greatly appreciate the advanced casting and sharing of scripts. Especially having the scripts printed and available at the front desk was very helpful.”
- “Always very useful. Didn't long for any other info.”
- “Very.”
- “Excellent.”
- “No, it was very useful.”
- “Good, but I didn't need much.”
- “All very useful.”
- “It was very helpful and well-considered.”
- “Very useful...didn't feel anything was missing.”
- “I had a ton of information from Dawson, who was also wonderful at promptly responding to queries.”
- “Very complete.”
- “This conference was very organized which made this newbie very happy :) I felt I was very informed and that great lengths were gone to - to insure such.”
- “As a returning participant, I already knew what to expect with regards to programs I had been involved with.”
- “Acting for singers was very very helpful, I learned soo much information that I will use a lot.”

Positive, with feedback

- “Thorough. Would have appreciated an email letting me know the sked was online.”
- “I was able to arrange for housing, and I knew I would be a room monitor. Either I missed the rest (including parts I would read) or they weren't sent. I can be hasty, so maybe I missed something that was sent to me (e.g. attachment that I didn't notice).”
- “For a first-timer, it would have been wonderful to have someone (besides Dawson because he's already got too much to do) to get a feel for how many different events/workshops to do. I overloaded myself by taking both the monologue workshop and the acting for singers workshop as well as doing three playlabs. I loved it all, but as a result, I only got to attend only a half of one play lab. Next time, I'll definitely pace myself and not sign up for so many workshops that require a lot of prep time while I'm at the conference.”
- “It was very helpful - my only concern was receiving some last minute casting this year before arriving to the conference which limited my preparation as an actor, but it all worked out.”
- “I enjoyed receiving the conference packet but would have liked more information about the FRINGE FESTIVAL every night. Every theatre conference does it different.”



Fairbanks actor Theodore Hooker II improvises with Anchorage's Jeff Brion, Valdez' Isaac Fannin, and Anchorage's Tom Lucido in class with Scared Scriptless' Jason Martin.

- “The Play Lab info was useful and specific. However, it would be very helpful for the artists who are residing in the dorms to be told in advance the LACK of anything necessary: from hangers to silverware to can openers... perhaps a checklist of 'camping' type materials you may want to bring while 'roughing it'.”
- “A "for actors" section would be helpful to focus their attention to the activities and opportunities available to them. Perhaps a formal Fringe signup for writers and actors too.”
- “The information was quite useful. Perhaps an announcement/reminder of the Sunday morning orientation would be helpful -- I know it wasn't really geared towards actors, but it was beneficial nonetheless to hear what the playwrights were getting told and what their expectations of the actors would be.”
- “Very helpful= all good – although I see, as usual, that a lot of the readers kinda go a bit over the top (self included), when I always thought we were told to not act so much as just 'read' the part- like, it's about the words and not selling them like one would do in a play- but the panelists I think can tell the difference.”

Things they wished they knew

- “Contact info for playwright or an e-mail from playwright introducing him/herself and perhaps some words of advice to focus my preparation.”
- “The only thing I can think of is I would have liked the playwrights to contact me ahead of time so I could get a better idea on how they wanted their characters to be played,”
- “Necessity to register way ahead for workshops.”
- “I wish we'd been given the names of those we would be working with, so we could become familiar with their work.”

2. Once in Valdez, was there any part of the Play Lab process that confused you?

Generally, most people are not confused. Some of this is that most participants are repeat attendees. None of the comments raise major concerns.

Purely positive

- “No.” X19
- “Nope.” X6
- “Nope I was brand new and traveled alone. I navigated swimmingly.”
- “No, but I have participated for many years.”
- “No, but I've done it before.”
- “It seemed very clear what to do.”
- “No, all mine ran smoothly.”
- “Nothing was confusing!”
- “Not a single bit.”
- “No. Well outlined and staffed.”
- “No not really, once I had a copy of the schedule and a map of the town I was able to attend all the things I wanted to do and see.”
- “After 11 years, I should be able to say nothing.”
- “No. I thought the rehearsal and reading set-up was straight-forward and brief allowing for large volume of plays to be read.”
- “Nope, been doing it for a while.”
- “No, all of it was familiar to me since I've been there before.”
- “No. Everything was fun and professional.”
- “No. I've taught writing before, and it followed many of the guidelines I used for responding to writing.”

Casting

- “Some plays are strong, but given weak actors. Some plays are weak but given strong actors. It seemed unfair and arbitrary.”
- “Casting.”
- “I was confused by some of the casting. Especially in a reading, if the essence of the character is there, the play can come alive, but if the casting is off, the story can be confusing. I totally understand that you can only work with what you have and scheduling chaos happens, but advice from the playwrights themselves could help or a director (if one is assigned). I know it gets complicated though. It's such a big job, that in a perfect world, (if it's possible) it would be great to have someone delegated just for casting, especially with the amount of last minute changes that must happen. I only mention it because I felt like it affected my experience both as an audience member and as an actor in rehearsal.”

Schedule

- “Nope! The rehearsals are really just an opportunity to read the play aloud as they aren't long enough to properly "rehearse" but that's always the case at these things. I was only reading stage directions this year so this didn't particularly affect me anyway :)”
- “A few times the schedule was off a bit.”
- “Maybe the scheduling a bit, but then I wasn't there for the whole week so maybe I should not comment.”

Miscellaneous

- “As always, some playwrights are not good directors and wasted time on making decisions that should have been made before the rehearsal.”
- “I was CONFUSED how the FRINGE worked.”
- “I wasn't sure where to wait for the monologue coaching and Dawson Moore personally walked me over to the area.”

3. Did you feel like you were given enough rehearsal time for Play Lab readings?

Probably there's not much point in asking this again, as the process works for most people, and there's not time to add more rehearsal schedule.

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Yes	65.6%	73.1%
Mostly	21.9%	13.5%
Somewhat	6.3%	13.5%
Not at all	6.3%	0%



Participants gather on the final day of the Conference.

4. How useful are the following additional activities and opportunities for actors?

The feedback here is very positive. The statistics here back up what an important part of the event the Fringe Festival has become, with a very high level of participation. Of those involved, 55% rated their involvement as 'very' useful, and none said 'not at all.'

The level of satisfaction of those involved in the Monologue Workshop is exceptionally high, with over 80% saying they found it 'very' useful. The program, currently running so well, is tethered tightly to its two exceptional leaders, Laura Gardner and Frank Collison.

The Acting for Singers Workshop is a small program for a few people, and it is hard to get much useful statistical information from a sample size that small. This is the first year we started tracking the improv workshop and the combat workshop, both of which will be expanded in 2014.

	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>DN Participate</u>
Fringe Festival 2013	0%	18.8%	18.8%	46.9%	15.6%
Fringe Festival 2014	3.9%	9.8%	23.5%	45.1%	17.6%

	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>DN Participate</u>
Monologue Workshop 2013	0%	3.1%	6.3%	43.8%	46.9%
Monologue Workshop 2014	0%	7.8%	7.8%	62.7%	21.6%

	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>DN Participate</u>
Acting for Singers 2013	3.1%	6.3%	3.1%	6.3%	81.3%
Acting for Singers 2014	6.1%	4.1%	10.2%	26.5%	53.1%

	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>DN Participate</u>
Improv Workshop 2013	0%	4.1%	16.3%	34.7%	44.9%

	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>DN Participate</u>
Unarmed Combat 2013	0%	2.0%	16.3%	20.4%	61.2%

5. Did you receive adequate notice prior to the Conference about these programs?

The Monologue Workshop and Acting for Singers program are mentioned in almost all group communication with the cast. The Fringe Festival could use more promotion ahead of time; the reticence to doing this is based on its impromptu roots, but now that it is filling such a large role in the additional programming for actors, it could use further explanation in the future, possibly including a way to indicate one's interest ahead of time.

Yes: 56.9%

Yes, but would have liked more: 35.3%

No: 7.8%

6. Did you feel like there were enough additional opportunities available to you to either perform or participate in performance classes during the Conference?

Generally we are in a good place with this. Actors would almost universally like more roles in the Play Lab, but there are no plans to expand this. Casting the Lab is tricky, with many factors to balance, including schedule, talent, appropriateness, and balance. While everyone would like more roles, the first priority in casting has nothing to do with all those factors. It has to do with best serving the playwrights by casting their readings as well as possible.

Yes: 86.5%

No: 13.5%

Schedule

- "My only issue was wanting to attend two classes being offered at the same time. A good problem to have."

Want more to do personally...

- "More roles for Moi!"
- "Would always love more!"
- "I just wanted more opportunities to act."
- "Same people are used in play slams and fringe all the time - too buddy buddy."

Specific other ideas:

- “A workshop where a Featured Artist leads each participant in creation and performance of our own monologue.”
- “I would have liked to see more workshop classes for actors, like "movement for actors" and "how to 101 how to audition for film.”
- “scene selections from playwrights performed and workshopped by experienced actors to assist in developing dynamic, or dramatic appeal for the stage.”
- “Tai Chi, Singing for Actors, Classes on the Business: AEA, SAG, etc.”

7. Would you be open to being in contact with the playwrights of the plays you are reading in prior to the Conference?

While it's good to know that an overwhelming majority of the actors are willing, how to institute this in a useful way is unclear.

YES: 96.2%

NO: 3.8%



The hall is always a busy place.

8. Did you experience any problems with playwrights during the Lab process?

It's good that there were no reports of major personality conflicts. The answers raise two primary concerns. The first is that separate directors be involved in the Lab process; the second that the scripts be better prepared by rehearsal. Both of these issues are raised are in communication with the writers ahead of time. They are offered the option of having a director, and are asked to prep a reading script for the actors.

At this point, there is no point to further emphasize these areas. Writers are encouraged and reminded to send in revised scripts. They are offered the service of a director. It's their reading.

No Problems

- "No." X15
- "Nope." X5
- "None." X4
- "No. They were all wonderful to work with."
- "It was all very collegial."
- "No, they were all wonderful!" X2
- "No problems."
- "No, they were all excellent."
- "The playwrights in the LAB are fantastic; very open to feedback, generous in rehearsal and so appreciative. I loved meeting all of them!"
- "None - they were all eager, open and gracious."
- "Not a single bit. Every single playwright was amiable and open to any ideas."
- "No. She was great."
- "Delightful and instructive. The playwrights I worked with were appreciative and supportive--open and collaborative. Very cool."
- "No. He was great."
- "Not at all, it was a wonderful process for me."
- "No, not at all."
- "Not this year."
- "No, not at all. I was amazed at how open, inclusive, humble, and kind the playwrights were. They left their egos behind."
- "Not at all."

- “NO! My experience was fantastic and all the spirit seemed nurturing and positive all around.”
- “No – everyone was lovely.”

The Director-Question

- “For one of my readings, the playwright was very clear about what she wanted and clearly followed the advice/instructions from the Sunday seminar. At one rehearsal the playwright followed none of the instructions, and it left the cast to ask every little question like, "Who do you want where? Should we sit or stand?" The playwright was very passive, and we didn't even rehearse standing, even though she said we would in the Lab. Besides these technical things, her summary of the play for us was, "This is a play about loss." I would recommend pushing the "come up with an ACTIVE summary sentence for your actors" thing more, perhaps even mentioning it before the Conference. All that being said, I completely understand that it's uncomfortable for a playwright to be put in a director's position. Having directed one of the readings at this conference, I am a huge advocate for more of that in the future. I'm very against playwrights directing their own work, in general, and particularly before the first production of a piece. I think the collaboration we had between playwright and director served the play, the actors, and the rehearsal process. I understand not every reading can have a director, but it's obvious that more playwrights should take you up on the offer. If you find a handful of directors who can each direct a few plays by the playwrights who have little experience in the rehearsal room, the Lab would greatly benefit.”

Script Preparation

- “During one rehearsal, the playwright made extensive script. changes, and then decided to go up to the desk and print new copies, as the version he submitted had been modified extensively since he submitted it. having had plays read in the playlab, I completely sympathize with the need to polish and make the best impression, but reviewing and highlighting an outdated script was not a good use of our time.”
- “All playwrights were great! I would only recommend to one playwright to have printed copies of the script they want read at the rehearsal the day before the reading -- it was already a great play, but I felt he could have gotten a lot more out of his rehearsal and his staged reading otherwise.”

Miscellaneous

- “I enjoyed all of my limited interaction. I do wish all playwrights would have been present for the monologue workshops.”

9. How Long Have You Been Acting?

Less than one year: 1.9%

1-5 years: 9.6%

6-10 years: 11.5%

11-15 years: 11.5%

Over 15 years: 65.4%

10. What type of training, if any, have you received in the craft of acting?

BA in Theatre: 42.2%

Master's in Theatre: 28.9%

A college course in acting: 11.1%

More than one college course in acting: 40%

Workshops: 62.2%

Other responses included:

- "Musical Theater."
- "Masters in Vocal Performance. Most formal training was in opera and musical theatre and some workshops, Subsequent training has been in the theatre doing plays."
- "Professional teachers: Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, Misner, Alan Alda and Estelle Parsons."
- "And Graduate School in Theatre plus two playwriting fellowships from Shubert Foundation."
- "On the job, as it were."
- "I've been acting for over 27 years with Broadway, film, TV and Regional theatre experience."
- "I have taken private lessons as well as several great online programs. I have been doing this for over 45 years."
- "Directing."
- "None at all, just from being in plays and from participating in the Conference – the Conference is how I learned to be a reader."
- "Many years on the stage."
- "A play reading group I was in, a play and a musical as a young adult. For diction/expression, five plus years of radio work. Several years reading at the Conference. An ACT musical. Stuff I can't remember."
- "30+ years on stage and screen."
- "NEH grant "Acts of Collaboration" at Bread Loaf."

- “Work experience.”
- “I have acted in two main stage plays at UAF, & one student play.”
- “I don't really act anymore. The programs offered at the conference for actors are great. I just don't really act anymore so I don't participate. I'm primarily a writer now.”
- “Reading books and learning by watching the great actors.”
- “Been in 100 or so plays plus or minus Seen 250 plays in NYC Seen 75 plays in London One of my first directors has masters in acting learned from him.”
- “Community theatre, professional theatre, workshops, classes, training in specific fields of acting. You name it, I've done it.”
- “Multiple courses and workshops.”



The cast of the 2014 Theatre Conference.