

**Resilience Involvement Quick Survey:
A Snapshot of 2016 PEER Annual Meeting Participants' Perspectives
about the Broader Field of Community Resilience**

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with support from PEER
January 28, 2016

PEER is actively considering ways it can build stronger connections between the earthquake engineering community and broader professional audiences involved in resilience planning more generally. Prior to and during the 2016 PEER Annual meeting, attendees were invited to participate in a survey that asked five questions about the current actions, interests, and suggestions on this topic.

Participants submitted their responses via a paper form or online on the first day of the conference. The data from 58 responses (approximately one third of meeting attendees) were analyzed overnight and summarized during the final plenary session.

The professional backgrounds of the response sample mirrored the overall composition of attendees at the event. Structural engineers appropriately made up the majority of the audience (69 percent). The proportion of the group that were not engineers or geophysical scientists was about nine percent. Diversity of training fields represented was high, but the low number of social and applied scientists and practitioners suggests an opportunity to increase representation and presence of these groups in future meetings and interactions. Doing so would increase the diversity of represented opinions *within* those fields, much the same way that having many structural engineers present increase the range of experiences, quality of debate, and depth of integrative learning that can occur between members of that group and between groups of different backgrounds.

Two thirds of participants rated their level of interest in doing more work related to community resilience as Medium or High. In aggregate, respondents regarded their level of interest in the topic higher than their level of knowledge, which was also higher than their level of current involvement. This suggests a conscious but underutilized desire among many PEER affiliates to learn more and make deeper connections to community resilience topics and practices.

Few survey participants stated that they are members, regularly attend meetings, or contribute to a set of significant policy and advocacy-related organizations in the community resilience field. SPUR, a Bay Area good governance entity, and Geohazards International, a peninsula-based non-profit, were the less technical groups with which the most respondents reported having relationships, at about ten percent each. To the extent that professional organization affiliations reflect the network, sociological perspectives, and information pool to which people have easy access, there is opportunity here to increase PEERs connectedness to the overall community resilience field by encouraging its own members to seek greater participation in *other* types of organizations.

Persons who responded to this survey expressed strong beliefs that PEER can and should do more to connect its research program and organizational partnership to the broader field of community resilience. The highest areas of importance were Lifeline Systems, Information Technology, and Water infrastructure. The survey did not ask participants to state why they answered as they did. Therefore, it would be beneficial for PEER to explore further whether people answered as they did because PEER itself is not doing enough research in these areas that respondents feel are important to resilience, or because PEER research is sufficient but linkages and use of research results in those areas has not yet been achieved.

The last question on the survey asked participants open-endedly to suggest what PEER should do if it wants to increase its impact on the field of community resilience. About half of participants provided comments. One theme was the advice to broaden and deepen person-to-person, organization-to-organization, and place-to-place connections. A second theme was advice to put more effort into better communicating to others outside the field what engineers know and why it is important beyond the field of engineering. A third frequently mentioned topic was advice about increasing the amount of integrative, applied, and interdisciplinary research that the Center itself is doing.

Next steps given the above findings could include such actions as:

- Proactively soliciting interest from a wider range of leading social scientists regarding the setting of resilience-focused research program and about their possible interest in pursuing relationship with PEER, possibly by:
 - Hosting a workshop event where from leading engineers can mix and brainstorm with a wider range of leading social scientists about their possible interest in pursuing relationship or doing a collaborative projects;
 - Setting up a Community Resilience External Science Advisory Panel;
 - Planning more resilience-, social science-, and practitioner- focused as well as interactive sessions during future annual meetings.
- Advocating for member universities to place more emphasis on outreach and interdisciplinary work in the community impact portion of faculty performance evaluations;
- Investing in development of training opportunities or curriculum that expose engineers and geoscientists to the wide body of knowledge about policy systems, planning processes, and effective messaging and communication practices;
- Joining with sister institutions to develop a campaign to cultivate more funding opportunities for researchers to pursue innovative community-resilience focused collaborative science investigations, including funding for process evaluation and effective, broad dissemination of research results.

The content and findings of this survey are closely linked to the key theme of the meeting: the role of earthquake engineering research in helping to advance community resilience. Meeting participants got a chance to inform PEER about their individual

efforts while also becoming more informed about how other scientific organizations are doing on this topic. The data and discussions between people about the data can inform discussions of PEER organizational strategy and research directions going forward.