

Japan-America Society of Oregon
2022-2027
Strategic Plan



Acknowledgements

Thanks to all who participated in this 2022-2027 Strategic Plan.

Your time, commitment, and energy is an inspiration.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

JASO RETREAT ATTENDEES

JASO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair

Tamako Hayashi, *Deloitte*

Chair-Elect

Masa Yamaguchi, *Lane Powell*

Treasurer

Paul Waldram, *Moss Adams*

Secretary

Cathy Bowman, *Mackenzie*

Vice Chairs

Rick Aizawa, *Port of Portland*

Tatsuo Ito, *SEH America, Inc.*

Nancy Lange, *NW Natural*

Rob Langstaff, *Sweet Onion Consulting*

Masami Nishishiba, *Portland State University*

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tamako Hayashi, *Deloitte - Strategic Planning Committee Chair*

Rick Aizawa, *Port of Portland*

Cathy Bowman, *Mackenzie*

Rob Langstaff, *Sweet Onion Consulting*

Masami Nishishiba, *Portland State University*

Sydney Owen, *Vanport International*

Mari Watanabe, *Partners in Diversity*

Masa Yamaguchi, *Lane Powell*

JASO STAFF

Sarah Saito, Program Manager

Kaoru Miyanaga, Assistant Director

Graham Morris, Executive Director

Vision

A vibrant, flourishing relationship with Japan based on mutually beneficial relationships and connectivity, with JASO as:

- a central resource to connect business, education, and cultural programs that facilitate U.S. and Japan relationships
- the hub for networking and inter-generational engagement
- a facilitator of an inclusive and diverse community that embraces all those who hold Japan close to their hearts

Mission

To support business and develop community by strengthening the US-Japan relationship.

We work in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Values

Connection and Collaboration

Inclusion

Flexibility, Adaptation, and Learning

Cultural Respect and Authenticity

VISION

JASO began this planning process with an existing mission that continues to guide our work. From this starting point, 24 volunteers gathered at a retreat. Here, they were asked to envision JASO's future through a drawing activity, called the "Picasso / Okamoto Exercise."

Several themes emerged. JASO was envisioned as a resource that leverages experiences of all kinds to generate inclusion and sustains interaction across interests and generations to offer a low-barrier avenue to participation in programs, activities, and shared experiences.

VALUES

The JASO values describe the way we work with each other, our partners, and the community.

Connection and collaboration: our desire to partner internally and externally towards a common goal.

Inclusion: our commitment to engaging diverse members in mutually beneficial ways, all centered by a love for Japan.

Flexibility, adaptation, and learning: our continued pursuit of excellence depends on our ability to listen and learn.

Cultural respect and authenticity: our shared commitment to bring our community together in ways that are meaningful and focused on solidifying the Japan-U.S. relationship.

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JASO Strategic Plan Summary

This strategic plan builds upon a solid foundation of programs and initiatives underway at JASO. The development of this plan focuses on how JASO's current initiatives and programs connect and leverage to achieve its mission.

This 2022-2027 Plan establishes strategic priorities in four areas:

- Leading, Convening, and Facilitating
- Communication and Engagement
- Professional and Leadership Development
- Connectivity and Collaboration

This plan builds upon the important work already accomplished. Its purpose is to highlight areas of strategy, not to list all current activities and programs. Conversations that generated this plan and its final form will facilitate decision-making and the development of a shared understanding of direction for the Board, Executive Committee, Committees, and Staff.

To create the plan, JASO worked with the Portland State University's Center for Public Service in facilitating the process. This Plan focuses on the central question regarding what strategic priorities would better position JASO to fulfill its mission and pursue its vision. The process included a widely distributed survey to members and non-members, framing discussions with a strategic planning committee, and a day-long priority setting retreat with committee members and volunteers.

JASO Strategic Plan Input and Development

In preparation for the development of the plan, the organization developed a broadly distributed survey and hosted a retreat. The input was valuable as a way to understand both internal and external needs.

Survey

This was distributed electronically through the SurveyMonkey platform. The survey was open from February 28, 2022 through March 31, 2022 and generated 190 responses. The survey results appear in Appendix A.

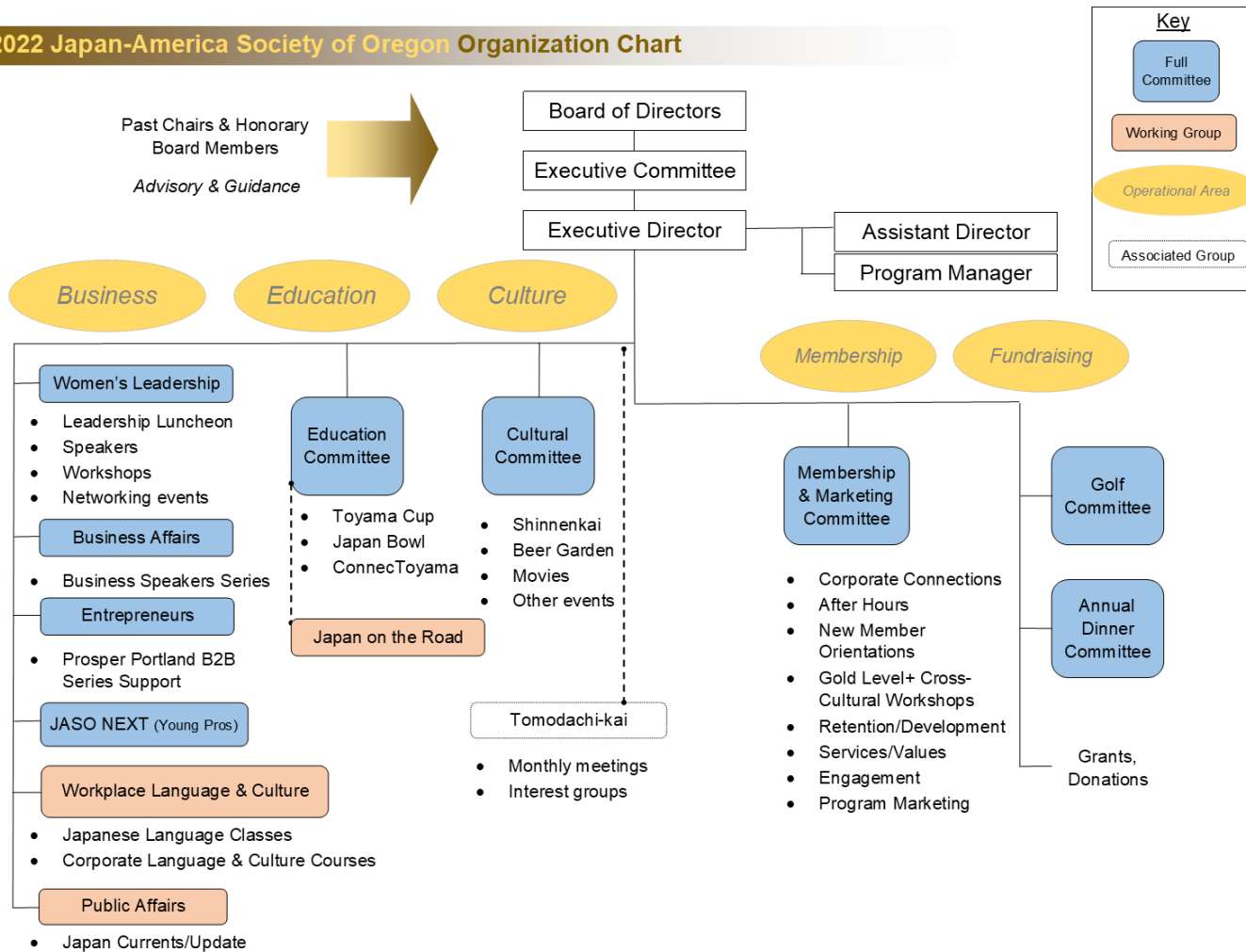
Retreat

Following the survey analysis, the JASO retreat brought together 24 board and committee members and other volunteers on the evening of May 5 and all day on May 6. The agenda included conversations around the vision, reflection on the survey, values brainstorming, and development of strategic priorities.



JASO 2022 Organizational Structure

2022 Japan-America Society of Oregon Organization Chart



JASO Current Conditions

Membership

Membership plays an important role in the organization. Service to members is a core component over and above the mission-driven purpose of the program itself, providing multiple opportunities in business, and culture-related education, including engagement and networking.

JASO membership consists of corporate and individual membership types:

- Corporate. JASO welcomes corporate members at six levels of support, graduating from Copper to Diamond. As of December 2021, there were 117 corporate members, which has stayed relatively stable since 2016.
- Individual. Individual memberships are offered according to category (Senior, Student, NEXT (Young Professional), Individual, and Columbia Circle. This number has steadily increased from a low of 97 in 2017 to 332 individual members in 2021.

Revenue

JASO has a variety of funding streams that make the work of the organization sustainable. As a 501 (c)(3) organization, JASO relies upon membership dues and different forms of fundraising. Programs are self-supporting, meaning that the funds generated sustain the program hard costs at a minimum.

Programs and Activities

Programs

JASO leads a number of important activities throughout the year that can be categorized under the broad umbrellas of business, education, and culture. Though the programming and activities are categorized in this way, many JASO members recognize the important symbiotic relationship among these activities. For example, Japanese Language Classes support business engagement and are also educational. Similarly, the Japanese Beer Garden is categorized as cultural, and at the same time generates great business networking. As described later in the strategic priorities section of this plan, the synergy among these activities is important to understand JASO as the center, or hub, of building Japan – U.S. relationships. Table 1 summarizes the current major JASO programs.

Table 1: Major JASO Programs

Business

Corporate Connections
After Hours
Business Speaker Series
Japanese Language Classes
Corporate Curriculum
Women's Leadership Council
NEXT
Entrepreneurs

Education

Japan on the Road
Toyama Cup
Japan Bowl
Oregon-Toyama Relationship

Culture

Shinnenkai
Japanese Beer Garden
Movies/Online Events

Organizational Sustainability Initiatives

JASO also engages in programming that is designed primarily for fundraising purposes, an annual dinner and a golf tournament. As with other programming, these fundraisers advance other business, educational, and cultural goals.

Given that there are limits to how much total programming can be accomplished by a staff and volunteers on the board and committees, new initiatives or changes in programming would impact existing programs.

Assessment of Current Work

As part of the survey development JASO asked respondents to rate how well it was doing overall. A majority of respondents rated JASO as Above Average to Outstanding. Looking at the results from the perspective of members and non-members, it appears that members rate the organization more highly than non-members. While JASO appears to be meeting the needs of JASO members, different and more engagement efforts may help to address the ratings overall and of JASO Non-Members. Figure 1 shows that member ratings cluster around Above Average and Excellent, where non-members cluster around the Average rating.

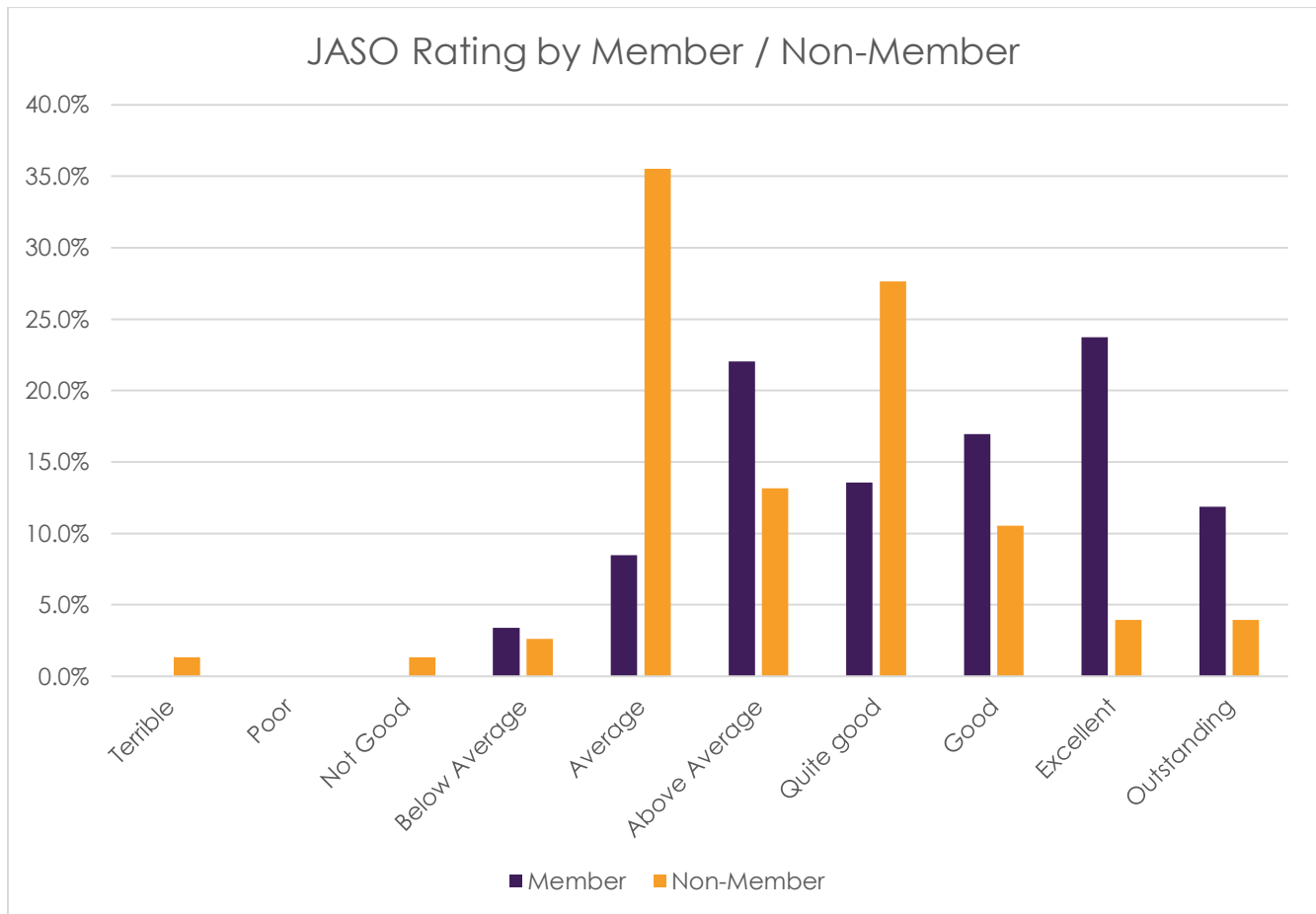


Figure 1: JASO Rating by Member Type

SWOT Analysis and Drivers of Change

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis can provide an opportunity for organizations to reflect on what is working and not working currently. It also helps to identify areas where the organization can take advantage of opportunities or mitigate threats in the future. The development of a strategic plan allows organizations to think about significant changes, or drivers, likely to impact the accomplishment of goals in the next several years.

Based on the survey results, retreat discussions, and organizational assessment, Table 2 outlines the main SWOT analysis for JASO.

Table 2: JASO SWOT

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><i>Current Conditions</i></p>	<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-standing, proven, sustained programming • Sustainable budget with small annual surpluses • Diverse sources of revenue • Growing individual memberships • Organizational adaptability during COVID-19 disruptions • Capable and committed volunteers and staff • Highly engaged volunteers 	<p><i>Weaknesses (Areas of Improvement)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of programming – internal and external • Interconnectedness • Declining corporate membership numbers through COVID • Limited staff time capacity (2 full-time, 1 part-time) • Committee structure may result in silos of communication and/or duplication of efforts • Programming heavily reliant on volunteer capacity, which may limit some growth if not expanded
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><i>Drivers of Change</i></p>	<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with other cultural organizations and businesses for collaborative programming • Membership diversification to include young professionals, college students, women, and others interested in the Japan-US relationship • Leverage, expand, and support connections to diverse audiences (JASO Next/Women’s Leadership) • Expansion of outreach and marketing efforts through social media and other creative outlets to reach newer audiences (e.g., anime/manga) 	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older (Boomer) generation moving into retirement and reducing leadership presence • Loosened connections to traditional structures (e.g., family, schools, or business.) that serve as a bridge to JASO • Younger demographic(s) changing relationship to work and business • Impact of globalization that may change or weaken perceived importance of the Japan-U.S. relationship

Developing Priorities

The process of developing priorities required retreat participants to assess and reflect on members and non-members feedback and consider the implications of future opportunities and threats. Throughout the planning process, several themes emerged to help JASO focus its work.

From these activities, several priorities emerged that indicate some direction for the Strategic Plan. These included the following:

- 1) the leadership role of JASO in strengthening Japan-US relations
- 2) communication and engagement
- 3) professional and leadership development
- 4) interconnectivity

Leading, Convening and Facilitating

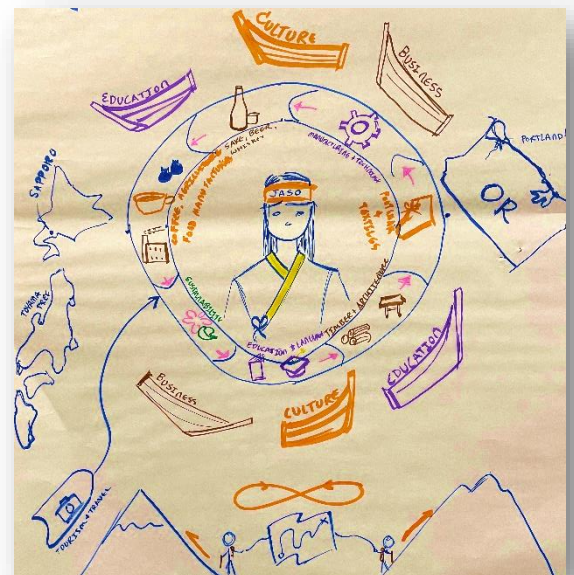
The role of JASO in leading, convening, and facilitating was a central theme throughout many strategic planning conversations. JASO as a 'hub' at the center of Japan-U.S. relationship building was discussed in several different ways. During the visioning activity, JASO was viewed as a resource, a networking tool, a convener, and a 'hub'. Participants noted that JASO has an opportunity to leverage its own work with that of other organizations for a greater impact. Survey participants supported JASO in its efforts to build community, focus on enhancing membership and membership value, and offer networking opportunities. Moreover, current activities that have a networking feature were rated as being beneficial and that JASO should do more of these kinds of programs. In the prioritization process, facilitating networking and focusing on membership value were significant suggestions.

Communication and Engagement

Communication and engagement developed as a strategic priority through the feedback among both survey respondents and retreat participants. Specifically, survey respondents considered communication with volunteers and community members to be important as a priority. Engagement was discussed as a way to increase JASO visibility in the broader community. Communication within the JASO organization was also considered a high priority where committee members could create synergy among shared activities within the organization. Notable suggestions included, telling the JASO story, increasing program marketing and content packages, increasing social media presence, and working with other organizations.

Professional and Leadership Development

Survey respondents and retreat attendees both discussed the benefits that JASO provides for members. Of these benefits, those that fall broadly under "member professional development" developed as a priority. Professional development refers to the opportunities that JASO provides to engage in networking and other professional development endeavors. Survey respondents and retreat participants noted the high priority of mentorship programs, internships, and JASO Next were significant. The focus across all responses was on engaging the younger generation across all areas of programming - business, education, and culture.



Connectivity and Collaboration

Connections, synergy, and collaboration among JASO activities, both internally and externally was a strategic priority and theme. Both survey respondents and retreat participants noted the importance of working together inside and outside JASO. To refocus priorities and engage in new initiatives, there will be increased demands for members and non-members time and attention. To mitigate this, there is need for synergy that can be achieved through connection. Looking for opportunities for shared programming within JASO Committees and with external organizations can add value. External collaboration was noted as building relationships with other Japan-related organizations and educational initiatives. Internal collaboration was also seen as being particularly important where retreat participants noted possible synergies among committee activities.

There is a notable interdependence among the four strategic priorities. For example, interconnectivity requires communication and engagement; and supporting professional people requires interconnectivity. These four strategic priorities, taken together, support the mission and vision of JASO.

Plan Overview and Structure

This Plan recognizes that accomplishing the vision requires JASO to have the tools to organize and focus its efforts. As a result, this plan outlines four broad **Strategic Priorities** and actionable **Objectives**.

The plan embraces the core idea that JASO can act on its vision of being at the center of strengthening US-Japan relationships through the strategic priority of Leading, Convening and Facilitating. This priority recognizes that JASO is fueled by the committed work of volunteers on its board, committees, and in the community. From the broadest perspective, all of the work of JASO falls under one or more of these Strategic Priorities. All work helps to advance the vision of JASO.

Because JASO is volunteer-driven, the strategic priorities are broad enough to resonate with committee programs. Through innovative and creative volunteers, committees can use these Strategic Priorities and Objectives as a guidepost to align initiatives and programs; coordinate internally and externally; and guide activities.

Strategic Priorities

To meet the needs of residents over the next five years, JASO has identified four strategic priorities. These priorities are overlapping, multidimensional, and synergistic. Improvement in one area will result in better outcomes in other priorities. Below, each strategic priority includes an objective implementing critical tasks.

The relationship among these priorities is expressed in the figure below.

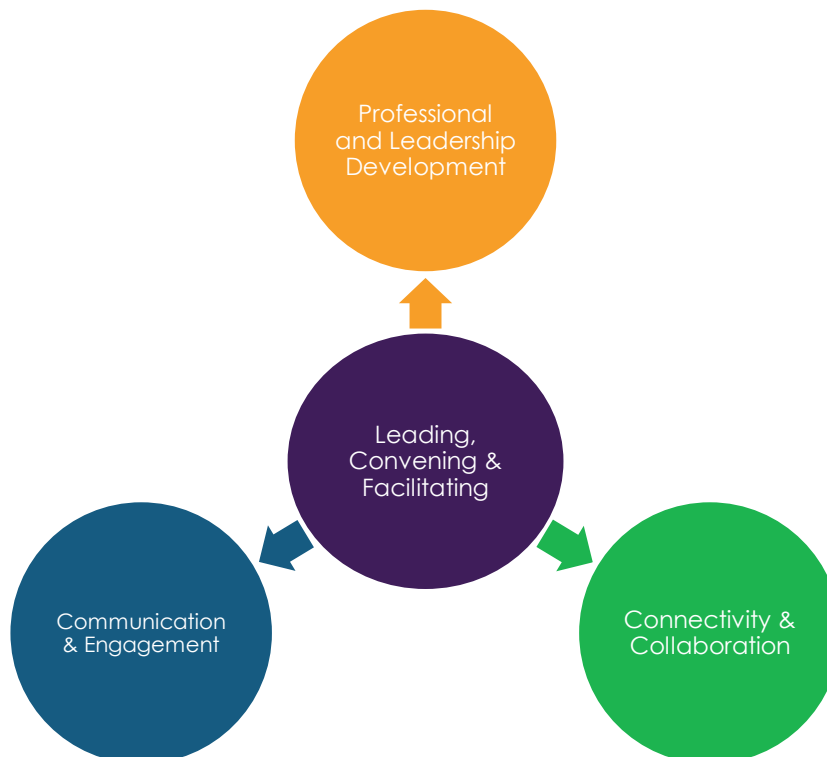


Figure 2: JASO Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1: Leading, Convening and Facilitating

Strategic Priority	Objective
<p>1. Leading, Convening and Facilitating</p> <p>Provide support internally and externally to increase the JASO and its leadership, convening and facilitating roles</p>	<p>a. Increase corporate and individual membership(s)</p>
	<p>b. Increase member and non-member access to programs focused on strengthening Japan-US relationships</p>
	<p>c. Support and enhance opportunities for business, education, and cultural networking</p>
	<p>d. Increase administrative and organizational capacity</p>

Strategic Priority 2: Communication and Engagement

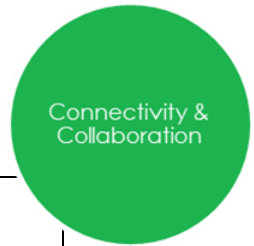


Strategic Priority	Objective
2. Communication and Engagement Focus on strategic communications that enhance internal coordination and external engagement	a. Develop internal communication strategies that enhance understanding between and among members and committees
	b. Develop external engagement programs and content to connect to key audiences

Strategic Priority 3: Professional and Leadership Development

Strategic Priority	Objective
3. Professional and Leadership Development Support and encourage networking and engagement of developing leaders to sustain long-term JASO engagement, communication, and leadership	a. Increase and formalize mentoring programs
	b. Increase and formalize internship program(s)

Strategic Priority 4: Connectivity and Collaboration



Strategic Priority	Objective
4. Connectivity and Collaboration Connect JASO communities internally and externally through collaborative programming	a. Build relationships with external Japan-related organizations for collaborative programs or other initiatives
	b. Build relationships and shared understanding among internal committees for collaborative programs or other initiatives

Conclusion: Implementing This Plan

This 2022-2027 Strategic Plan focuses on the areas that JASO will pursue as a way to deliver on our vision for our members and the larger community.

While implementing this 2022-2027 Plan will take the energy of the entire organization, there are unique tasks for committees and the organization overall. The Strategic Priorities and Objectives serve as a guidepost for JASO to develop implementation tools through work plans, reporting, and measurement.

Committees each play a role in the Plan implementation where their unique contributions can be reflected in the overall direction of the organization. Annual work plans are a tool for committees to develop the JASO Strategic Priorities and Objectives into concrete and actionable tasks and timelines. Reporting should periodically assess those critical tasks set out in an annual work plan.

At the organizational level, aligning objectives, outcomes, and measures are an important tool to track strategic plan progress. Table 3, below, aligns the objectives with outcomes, and measures. An annual evaluation and assessment of objectives within each area will facilitate a continued focus on strategic priorities. Longer term outcomes are expected as JASO continues to implement this Plan. The measures describe the means to assess objectives. Early in Plan implementation, these measures will serve as points of observation. As the Plan matures, JASO may refine these measures or develop new ways to monitor progress toward its strategic priorities.

Table 3: Objectives & Outcomes

Objective	Outcome
Increase corporate and individual membership(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership growth
Increase member and non-member access to programs focused on strengthening Japan-US relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased networking opportunities
Support and enhance opportunities for business, education, and cultural networking	
Increase administrative and organizational capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational sustainability
Develop internal communication strategies that enhance understanding between and among members and committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased communication and engagement
Develop external engagement programs and content to connect to key audiences	
Increase and formalize mentoring programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced professional development and long-term leadership
Increase and formalize internship program(s)	
Build relationships with external Japan-related organizations for collaborative programs or other initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and sustained partnerships with thriving programs
Build relationships and shared understanding among internal committees for collaborative programs or other initiatives	

To pursue our vision and achieve our mission, JASO relies upon our great people and our outstanding partners that will work together to continue to strengthen relationships between Japan and Oregon and Southwest Washington.



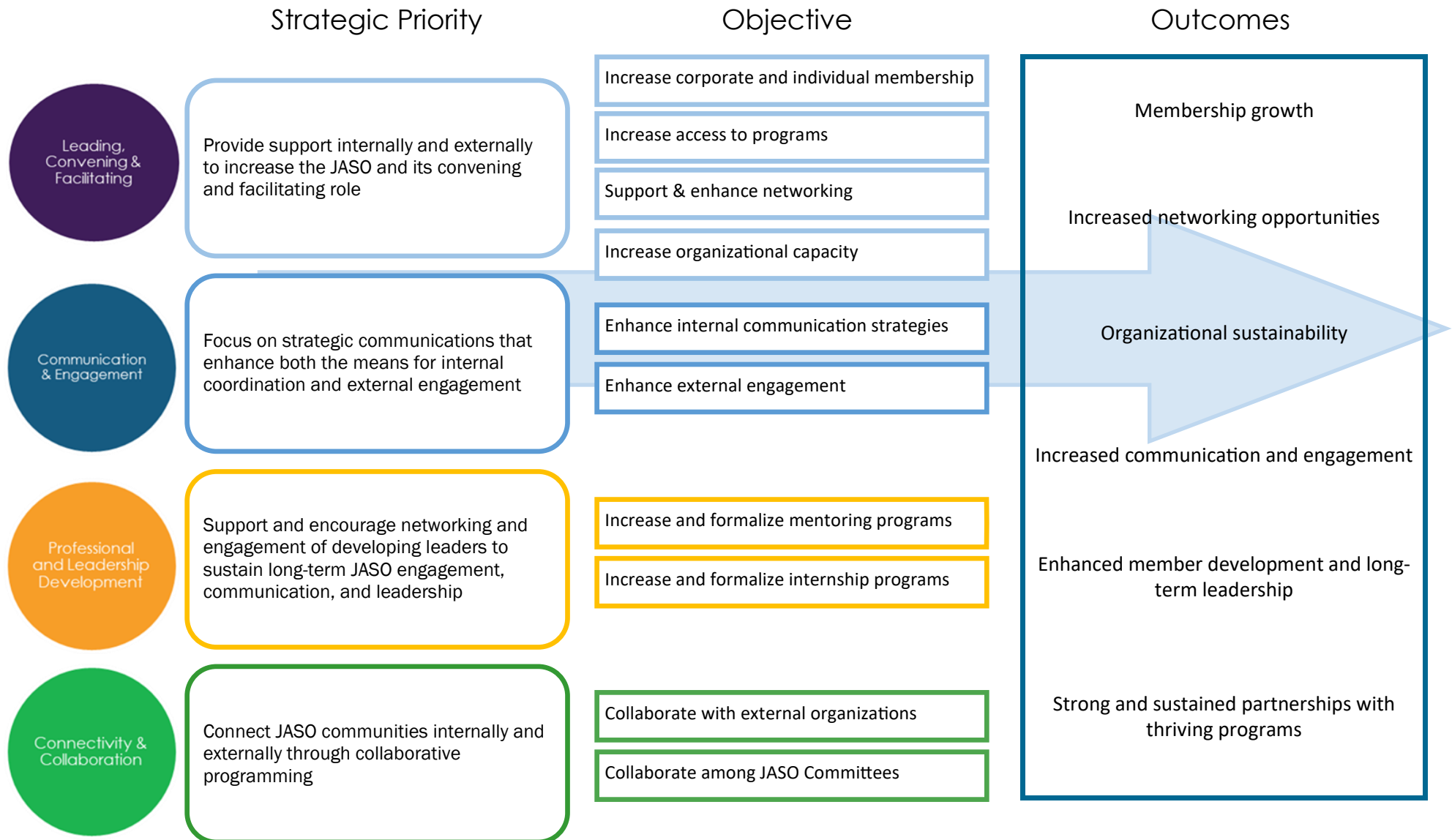
**JASO STRATEGIC PLAN
SINGLE-PAGE SUMMARY**



JASO Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Vision: A vibrant, flourishing relationship with Japan based on mutually beneficial relationships and connectivity, with JASO as: a central resource to connect business, education, and cultural programs that facilitate U.S. and Japan relationships; the hub for networking and inter-generational engagement; and an inclusive and diverse community that embraces all those who hold Japan close to their hearts

Mission: To support business and develop community by strengthening the US-Japan relationship. *We work in Oregon and Southwest Washington.*



APPENDIX 1
MEMBER & COMMUNITY SURVEY
RESULTS

JASO Survey Summary

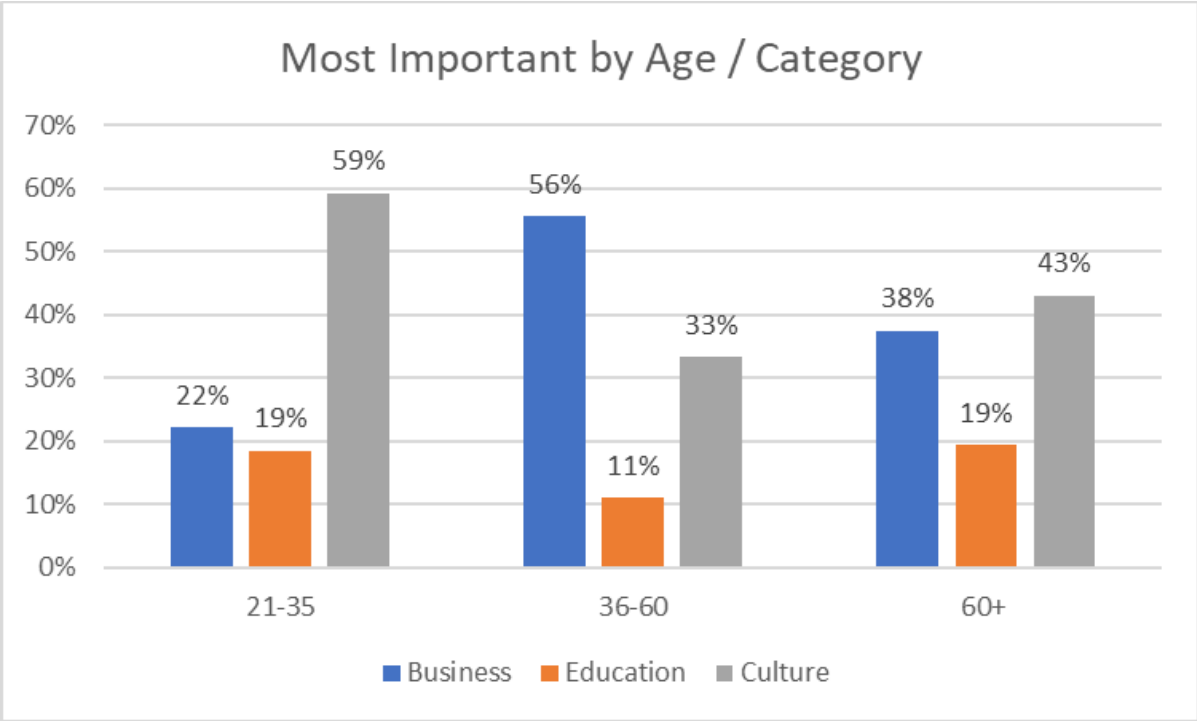
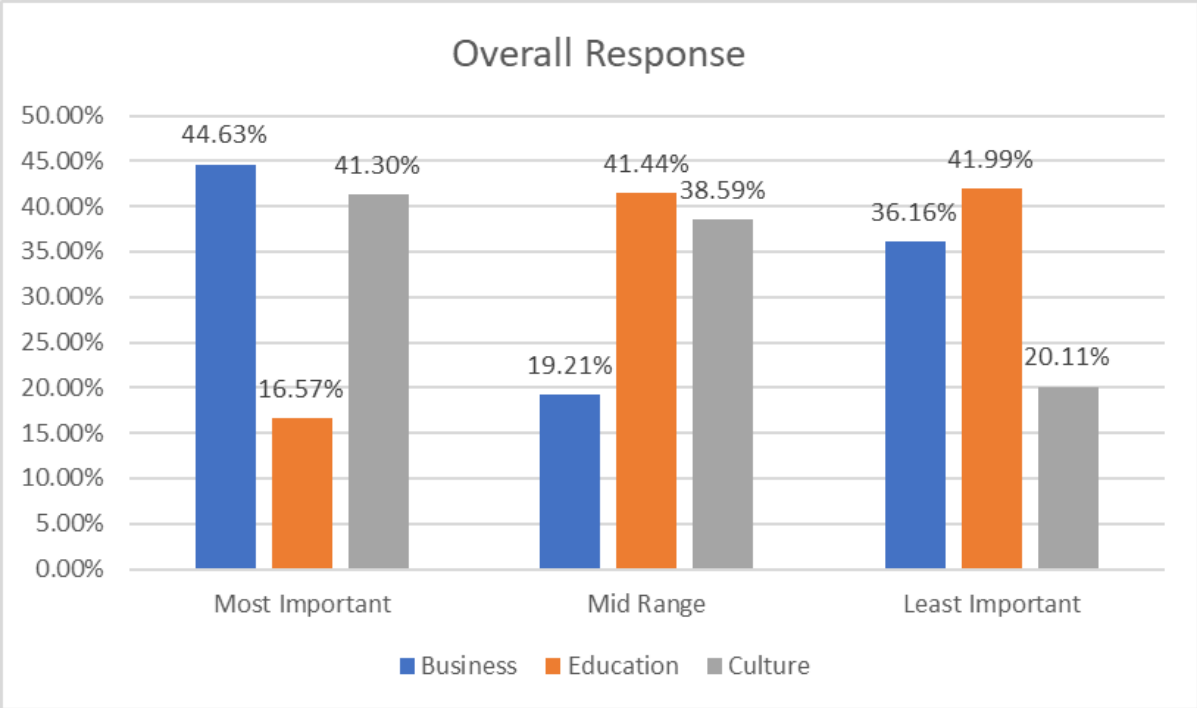
Survey Administration Dates:

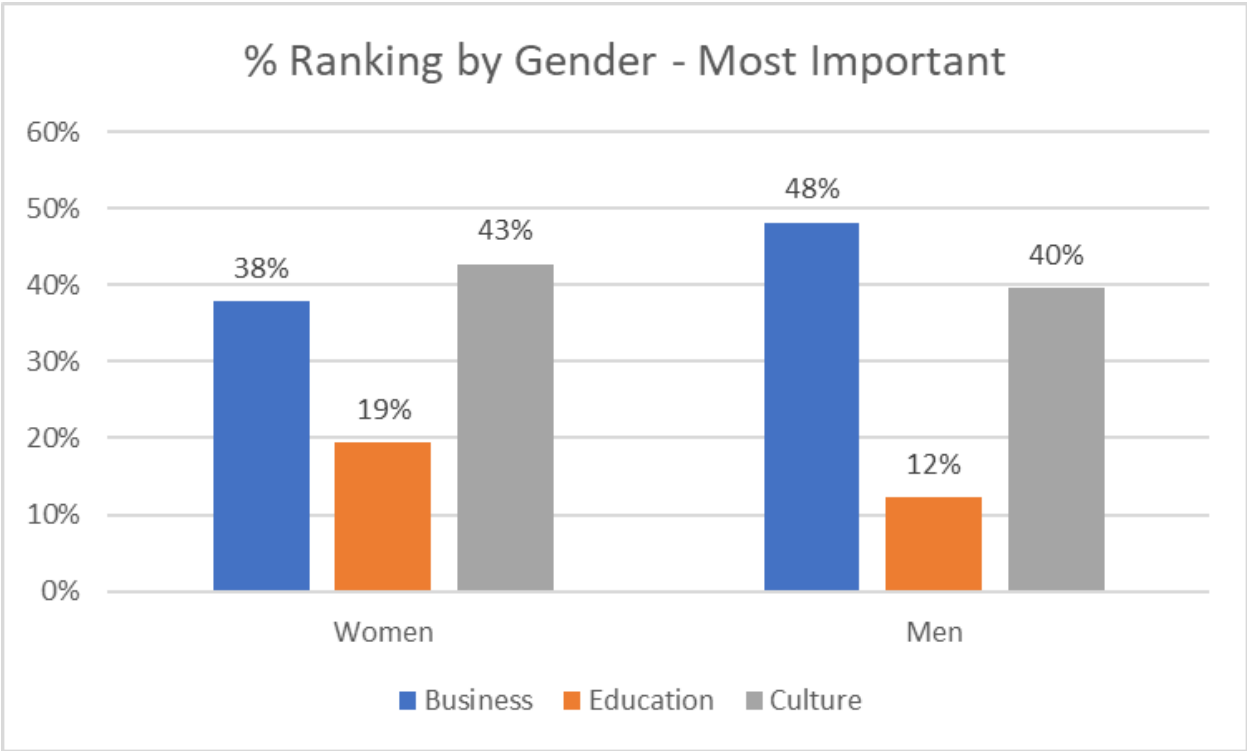
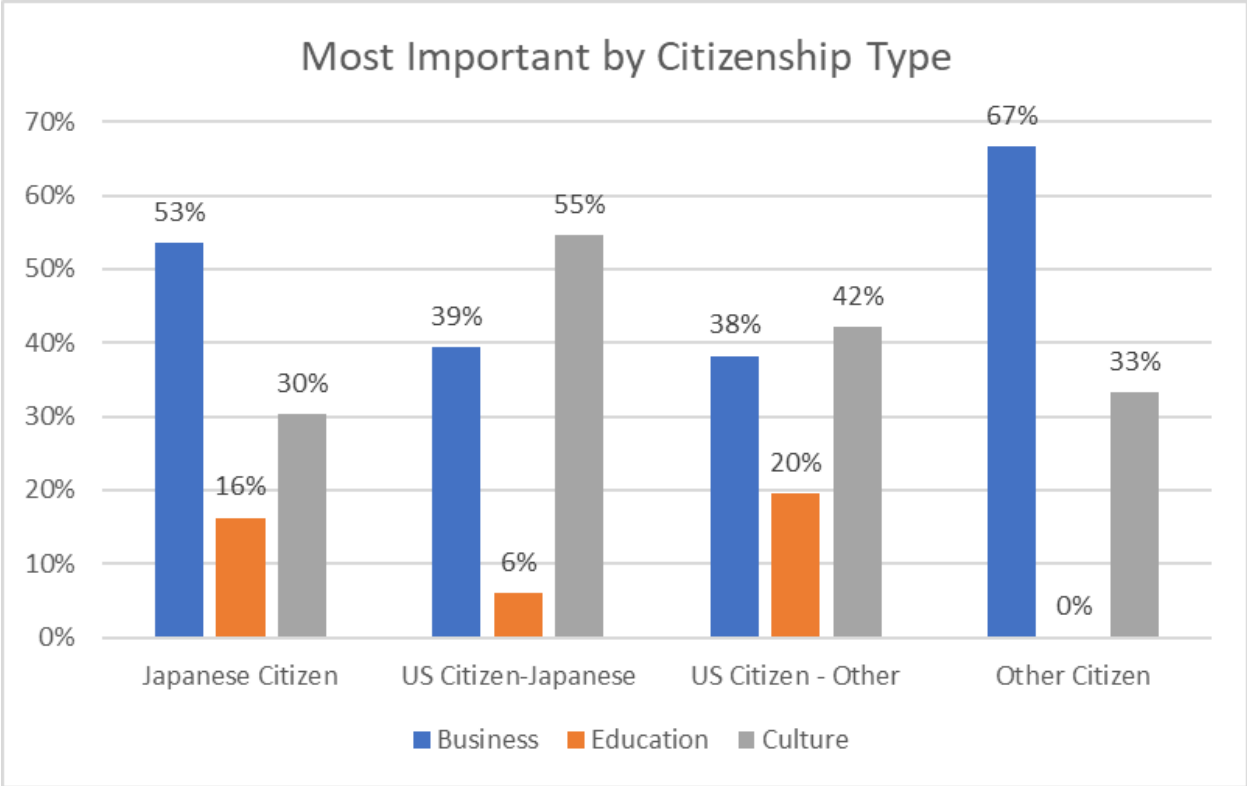
2/28/22 – 3/30/22

Overall Responses

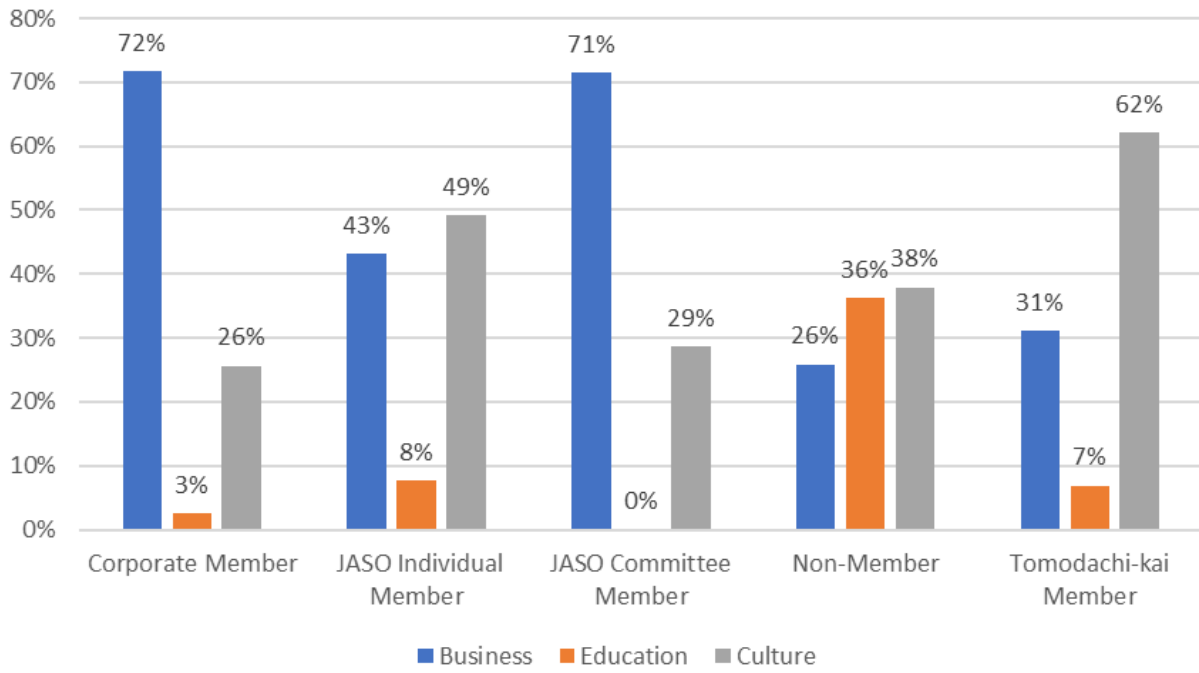
- 190 Responses
- Gender
 - 107 Female
 - 82 Male
 - 1 Other
- Citizenship
 - Japanese Citizen: 44
 - US Citizen- Japanese Heritage: 34
 - US Citizen- All Other Heritages: 104
 - Other Citizen: 6
- Age Group
 - Under 21: 3
 - 21-35: 27
 - 36-60: 84
 - 61+: 74
- Membership Type
 - JASO Corporate Member: 40
 - JASO Individual Member: 66
 - JASO Committee Member: 7
 - Non-Member: 60
 - Tomodachi-kai Member: 30

Question 1: Rank the following three activity areas based on how you see it as important to JASO. Choose 1 for the most important, and 3 for the least important. (Business, Education, Culture)

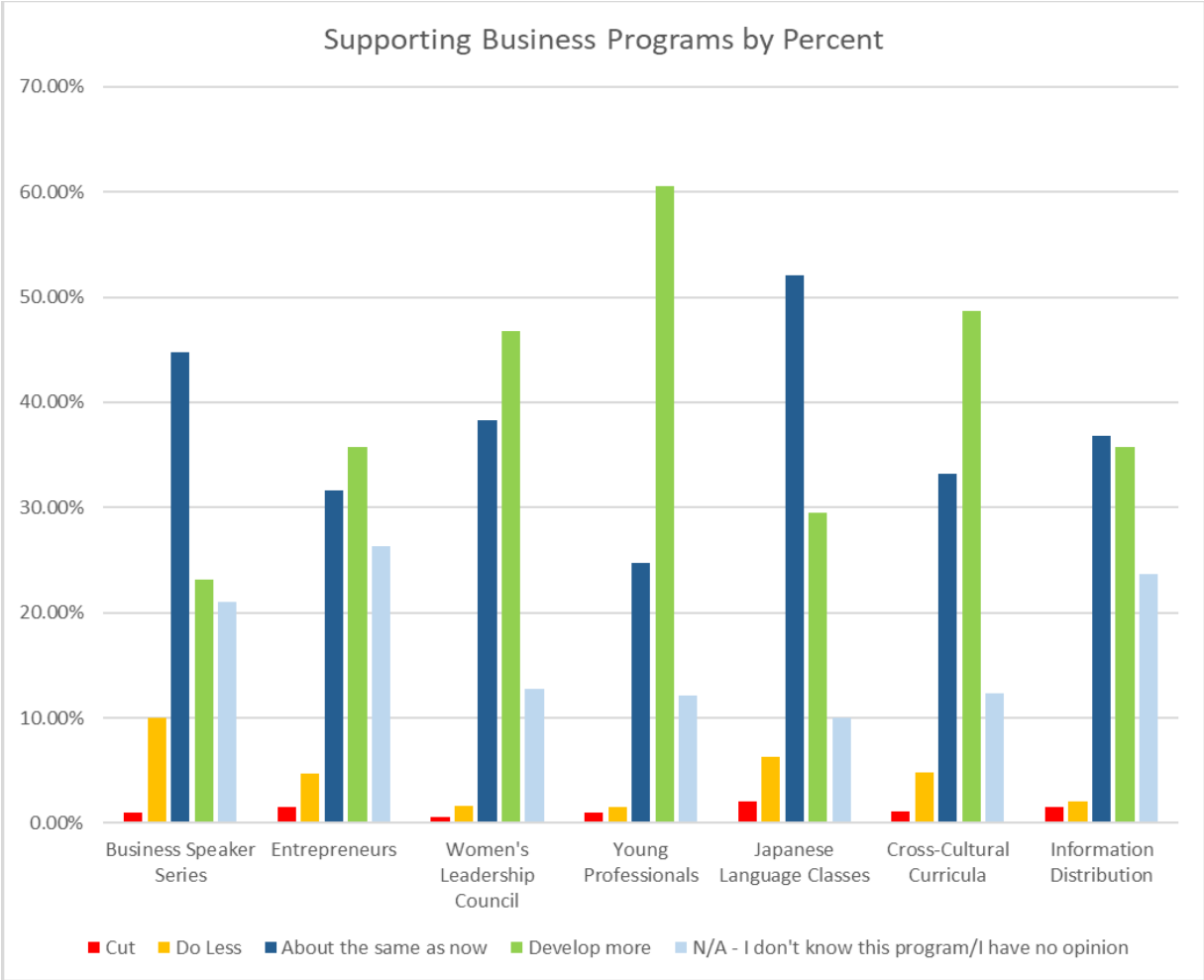




Most Important by Membership Status



Question 2: SUPPORTING BUSINESS is a mainstay of JASO’s mission. It has developed these current programs. What actions do you think we should take with each over the next 3 years? Should it be "Cut", "Do less", "About the same", or "Develop more", or you don't know the program at all and have no opinion?



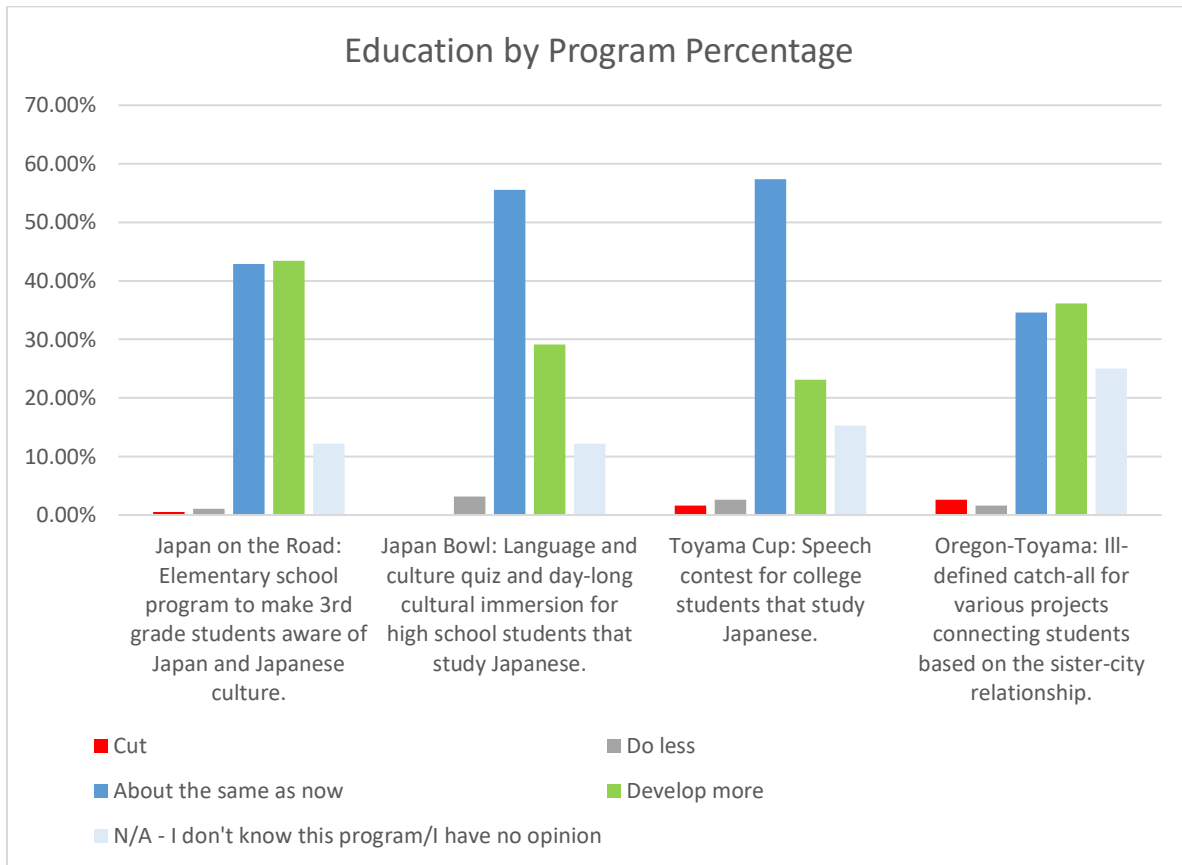
Question 3: Is there one specific area of work under the business umbrella that we do not currently engage in that you believe we should offer? Why?

Business networking was identified as a beneficial activity. Related to this was the desire to learn about Japanese business culture in terms of communication and corporate structure. Many respondents suggested exploring a US-Japan business exchange program to support young professionals and those looking to get involved in Japanese business.

Respondents also believed there’s space to teach about Japanese culture and support Japanese immigrants acclimate to Oregon. Respondents also commented that they’d like to see more social engagement opportunities outside of business networking.

Respondents pointed to the need to pay attention to diversity in programming by encouraging young professionals and women to be more involved.

Question 4: JASO sees STUDENT EDUCATION as supporting business (developing the next generation of workers) and developing community (developing the next generation of leaders). JASO also considers the Japan on the Road program as diversity education work. What actions do you think we should take with each over the next 3 years? Should it be "Cut", "Do less", "About the same", "Develop more", or "You don't know the program at all and have no opinion?"



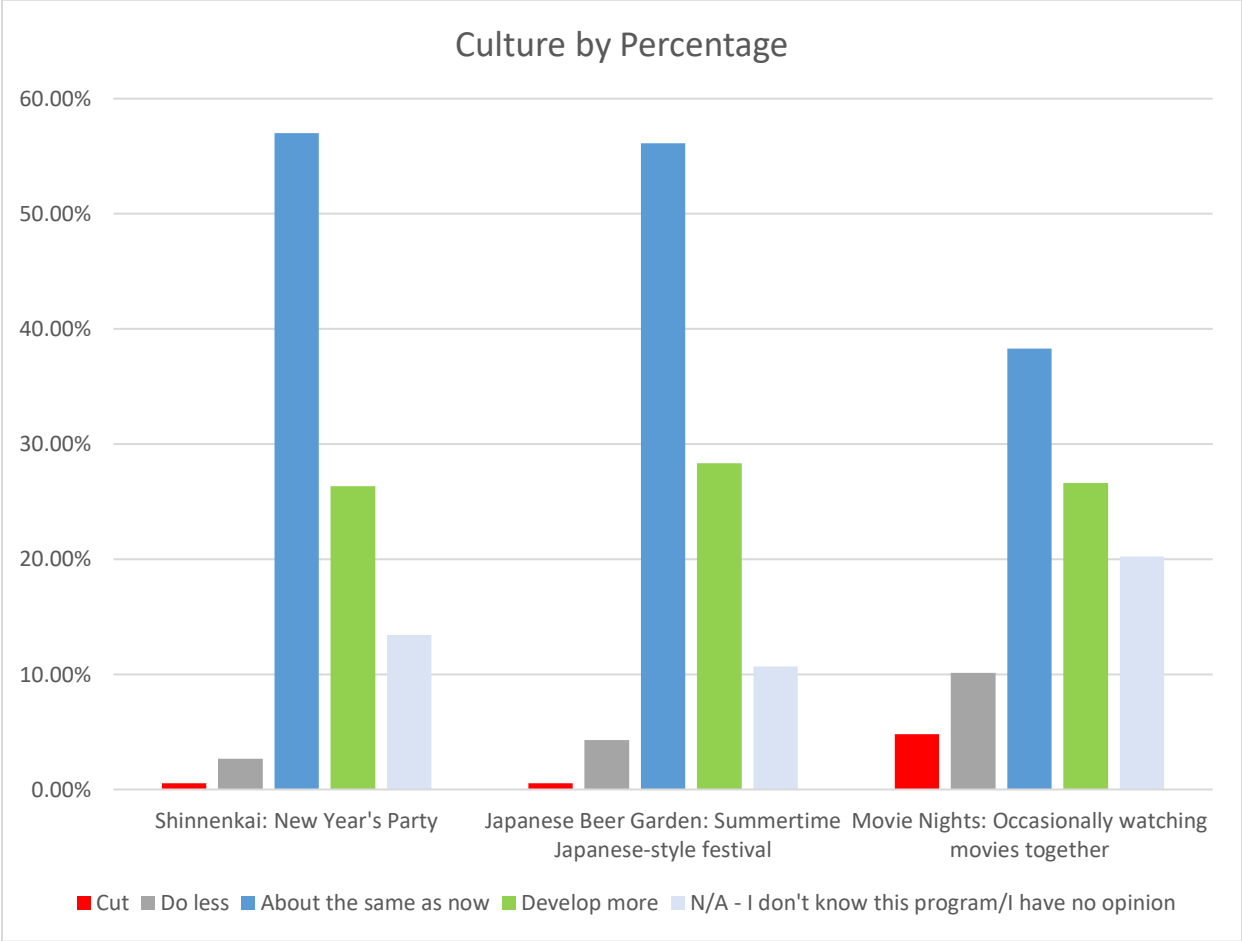
Question 5: Is there one specific area of work under the education umbrella that we do not currently engage in, that you believe we should offer? Why?

Many respondents stated that cultural education related to Japan can start early in public school, with many specifying the middle school and junior high aged populations as potential targets of outreach via programming, cultural events, and integration in social studies curriculum. Others suggested expanding and strengthening sister city relationships as sources of this education.

Student exchanges were suggested at both the college and high school levels.

The suggestion of offering more Japanese language education and speaking opportunities was also frequently mentioned.

Question 6: Developing community is the main focus on CULTURE-RELATED programming, where all can come together and enjoy, celebrate and experience authentic Japan. What actions do you think we should take with each over the next 3 years? Should it be "Cut", "Do less", "About the same", or "Develop more", or you don't know the program at all and have no opinion?

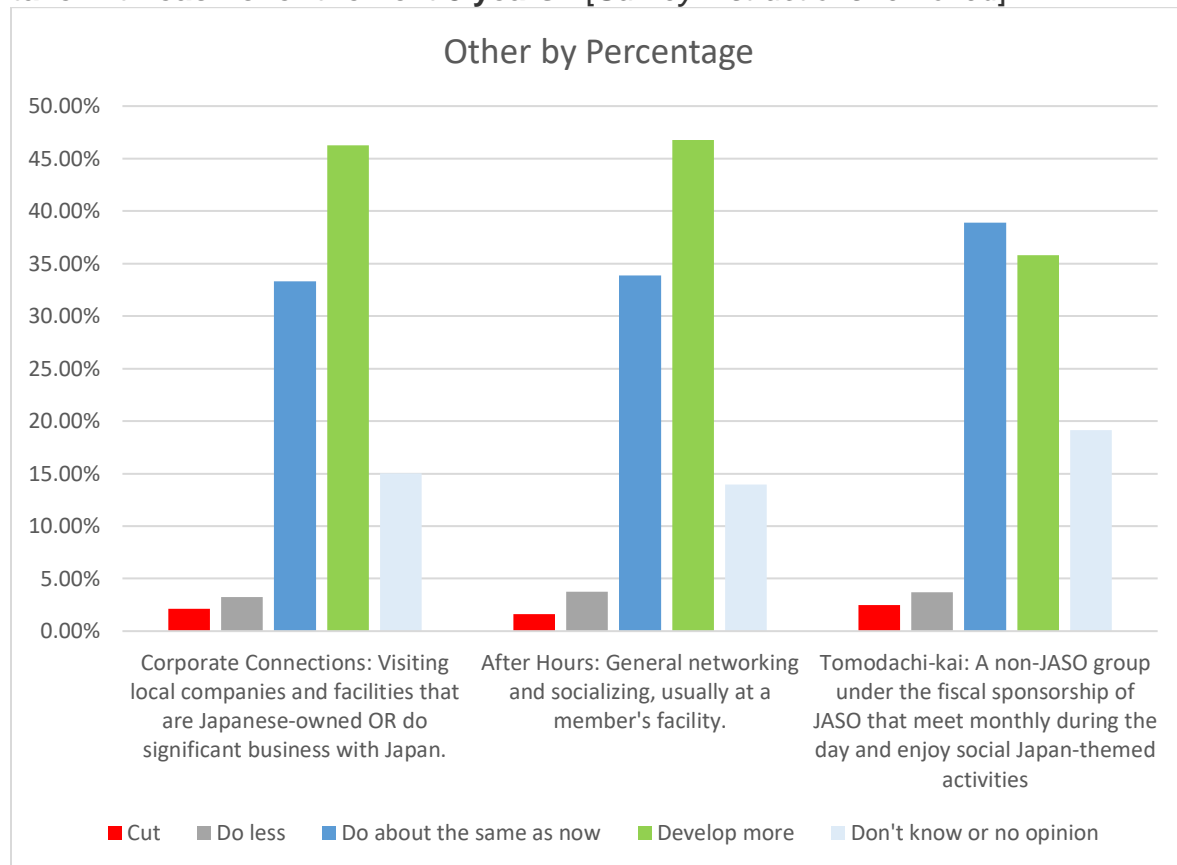


Question 7: Is there one specific area of work under the cultural umbrella that we do not currently engage in, that you believe we should offer? Why?

Many respondents discussed that they would like to see more culturally-focused events that align with Japanese holidays, events of cultural importance, and festivals. Some expressed the desire to see more regional holidays celebrated. Other event suggested included those that expose others to Japanese popular culture such as film, music, arts, crafts, and other media. The desire for a food experience/cooking class was present. Others expressed a desire to return to in-person events.

Some respondents would like to see a reduced emphasis on business relationships and others noted that supporting the Japanese community in Oregon could be a focus. There were suggestions that partnering with other culturally specific organizations could make events more robust.

Question 8: A couple of programs blur the lines between specific sections, mainly because of their focus on NETWORKING. What actions do you think we should take with each over the next 3 years? [Survey instructions removed]



Question 9: Is there anything that you feel doesn't fit into a specific category and that we are not currently engaged in, that you believe we should offer? Why?

Respondents involved with Tomodachi-kai expressed that the relationship with JASO could be strengthened and leveraged to promote events. Others suggested the need to strengthen existing collaborative relationships. Respondents also suggested that JASO committees could strengthen their connections to each other.

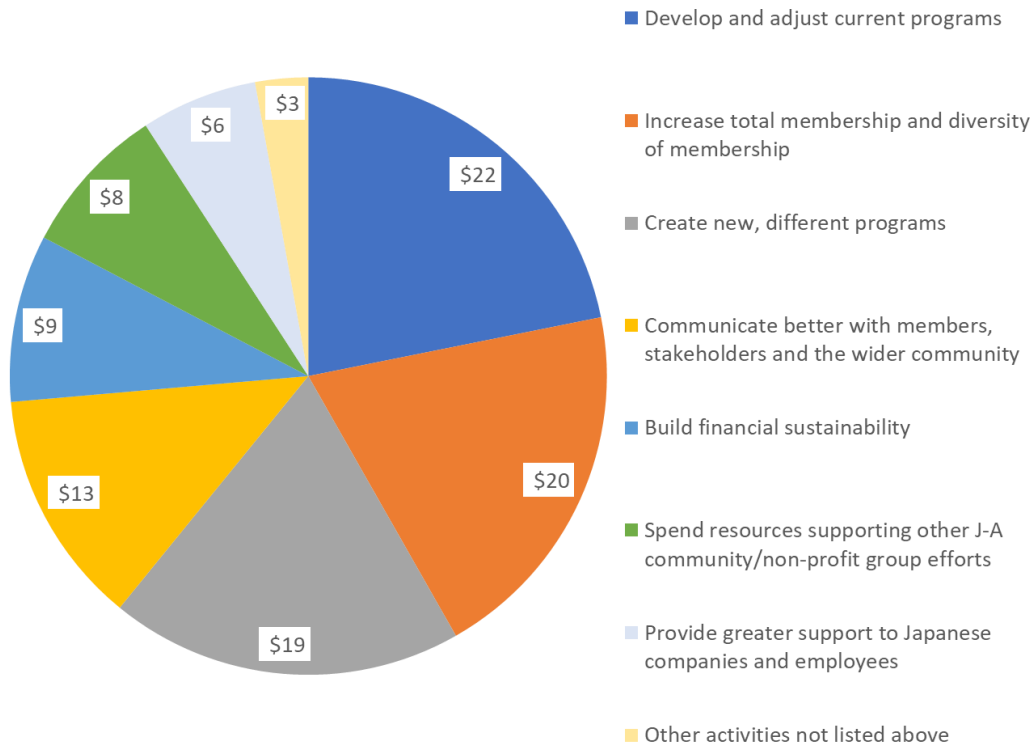
The themes of offering more cultural events and language-exchange opportunities continued to emerge in this question. People responding to this question expressed interest in travel and sports. Others would like to see women-focused events like leadership talks.

There was emphasis in the responses on the importance of building community within JASO and the Japanese community in Oregon at-large. Respondents suggested that enhancing marketing efforts and increasing access to JASO would benefit the organization.

The topic of strengthening connections between US and Japanese business was reiterated in this question.

Question 10: Imagine that you are given \$100 to spend on JASO. How would you allocate the money among areas of work below? [Survey instructions removed]

Average Dollar Amount Allocated



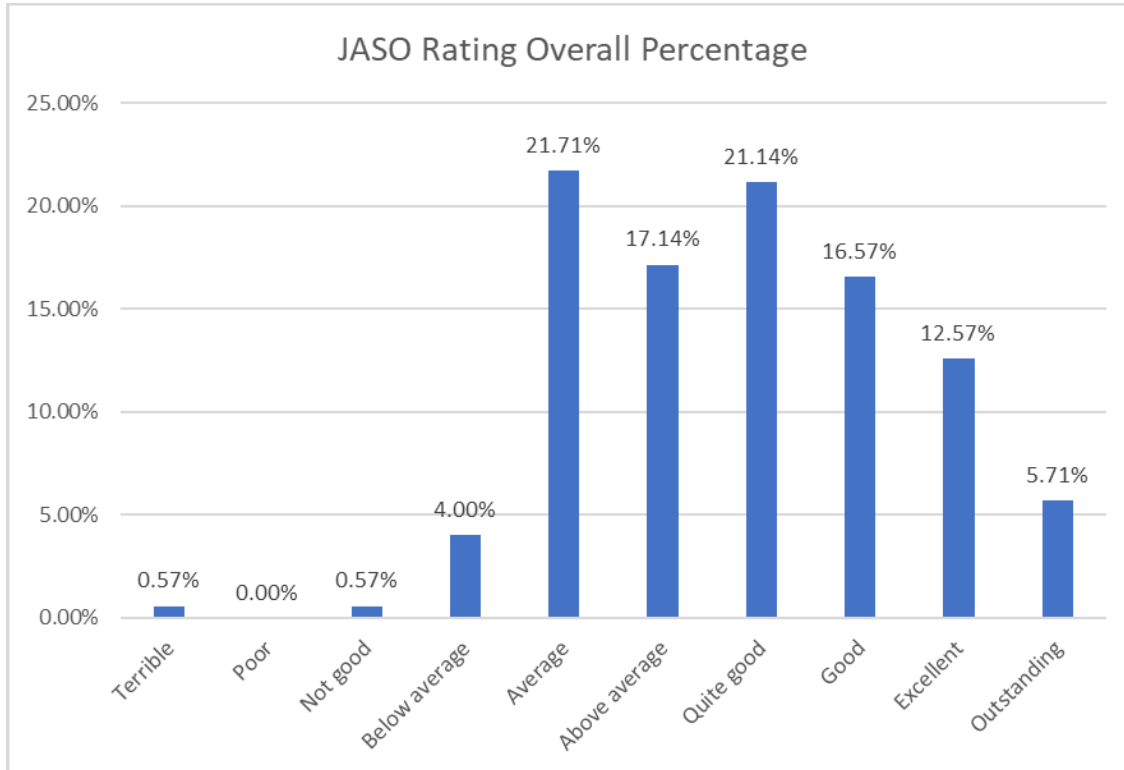
Question 11: Considering the area that you spent most money. Why did you choose it and are there specific priorities would you focus on? Why? If you listed Other Activities, please explain.

Many respondents expressed that they would like to see JASO prioritize enhancing current outreach efforts and increase membership. The topic of recruiting younger members emerged. Suggestions to enhance outreach efforts include diversifying the online presence by joining other social media platforms. Suggestions to build relationships with other culturally specific organizations also emerged in this question.

Respondents expressed that generating funding should be a priority to strengthen the foundation of JASO, with many suggesting this is connected to the overall success of JASO programming. Suggestions to generate funding included recruiting a larger membership base and establishing corporate sponsorships.

Many expressed that updating and strengthening current programming is the best use of resources at this time, with some warning that quality will suffer if too many things are happening.

Question 12: How do you rate JASO in strengthening the US-Japan relationship in our community through its work currently?



Question 13: What could JASO do to better strengthen the US-Japan relationship in our community?

The majority of responses in this question echoed the same sentiments as previous questions. Notable topics include:

- Supporting Japanese community members in Oregon
- Building community
- Strengthening US-Japan business partnerships
- Reduce focus on business in programming
- Balance culture and business in programming
- Promote travel
- Enhance outreach
- Explore sponsorships
- Collaborate with other organizations