

SBL Member Profile
Data Collection Year: 2014

The Society has had roughly a year to employ data from its expanded member profile in service of its members and its mission to foster biblical scholarship. In [letters encouraging them to fill out their profiles](#), members were told that the more the Society knows about its membership, the more effective it will be in its mission to support the field: advocacy, meetings, programs, publishing, grant writing, scholarships and awards, fundraising, and professional resources. The Society, moreover, would be better positioned to develop programs and services that strengthen the field and give new opportunities to biblical scholars, to see trends and respond to them, and to allocate SBL resources more effectively. Following are a number of ways that we think these claims are already starting to take shape.

- We have utilized member fields of study to identify Bible Odyssey contributors and chairs of new program units.
- Almost one-third of individuals with student membership claimed an occupation other than student, indicating perhaps that some are no longer students but likely also that many work in other capacities in addition to being a student. Such data is provided to committees such as the Student Advisory Board so that the Society might determine how best to serve these members
- We have begun work on assessing the representation of fields of study among members. This work will become more dynamic with the tagging functionality that is under development for the Annual and International Meeting programs, which will enable members to more dynamically search and therefore navigate the meeting program, assist program units in their efforts to collaborate, and enable more granular tracking of the ebb and flow of our field in terms of specialization.
- Now being able to identify such members broadly, we have started working with members for whom impairments affect their participation in SBL activities to find ways to mitigate obstacles.

Profile data have also demonstrated various issues related to representation, which coupled with other staff reports ([here](#), [here](#)) have stimulated conversations with committees such as the Status of Women in the Profession and Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession and informed the [reflections of others](#). These conversations continue to produce new insights about ways the Society can address [the network of related issues](#). Indeed, these data are provided to Council and committees of Council to do the work specific to their responsibilities. Should you have a question about certain data or cross-tabulations (included below or not), please feel free to contact Charlie Haws, Director of Programs, at charles.haws@sbl-site.org. The data are at your service.

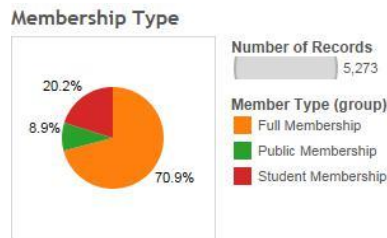
Data collection and analysis have also shown that some questions and/or answer options were inadequate. First, for example, the Society's Council debated the value of ethnicity/race data. It was decided that the value of such data was primarily limited to issues of diversity in higher education and grantmaking within the United States. Changes have therefore been made to limit the ethnicity/race question to respondents who mark the United States as their country of birth. Second, answer options for the question "What is your current employment status?" under the occupation Faculty were found to be subject to multiple interpretations. The option of "Full-time non-tenured" could be interpreted to mean full-time tenure-track faculty who had not yet achieved tenure or perhaps full-time nontenure-track faculty. The option "Full-time tenured" could be interpreted to mean full-time tenure-track faculty who had achieved tenure or perhaps full-time tenure-track faculty whether or not they had yet achieved tenure. Combined, moreover, the two questions might seem to limit faculty employment status concerns to tenure-track faculty—in the first option, those who had not yet achieved tenure and, in the second option, those who had achieved tenure. To resolve these issues, the first option will be changed to "Full-time nontenure-track faculty" and the second option to "Full-time tenure-track or tenured faculty." Third, questions related to graduate study will be revised to enable the Society to answer several more questions, including how much inactive time has elapsed since entry into a program (e.g., do women have more inactive time than men?), and construct more dynamic cohorts based on entry and exit years.

As these revisions are made and data are regularly provided and updated, the promise to transform the data into member support will gain momentum and impact, especially because so many of these data will be most informative in longitudinal perspective.

[Data visualizations were created with Tableau and are interactive. They do not require you to download any software. Simply click within the visualization to interact with it and, in some cases, filter the visualization based on options provided.]

An Overview of 2014 Data

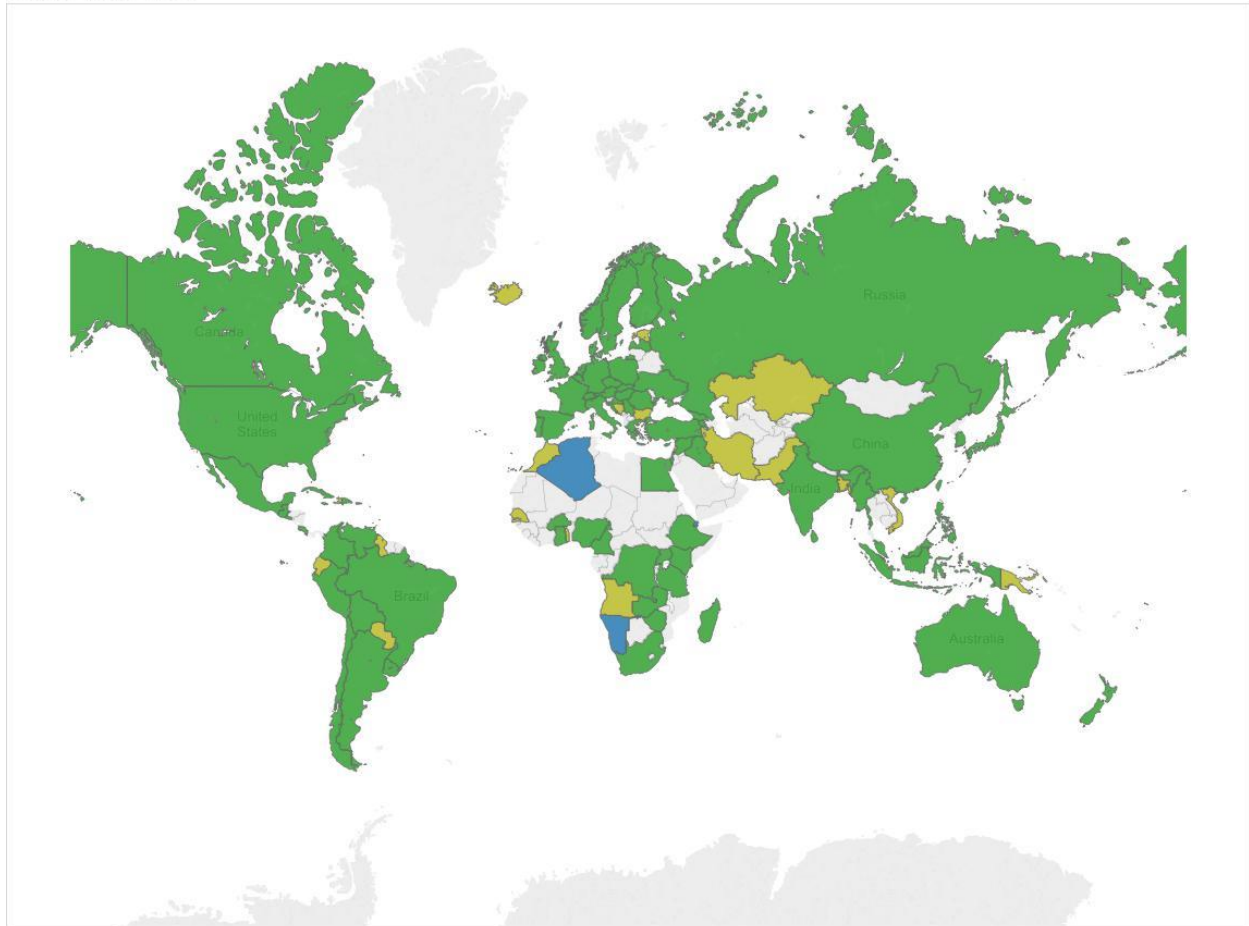
By January 8, 2015 a total of 5,273 members responded to at least one member profile question. Respondents were mostly full members (70.9% as the visualization below shows). Response rates by membership type varied: 61.9% of public members responded to the member profile, 55.1% of student members, and 68.8% of full members. The chart below shows the distribution of respondents by membership type.



Locality

Members remain concentrated in North America and northwestern Europe, but the organization continues to grow in terms of the number of countries represented among its members. Last year's member profile report noted that the Society's members represent 94 countries; the 8,129 members with current membership on January 8 represented 97 countries. These countries represent countries of residence or employment. Those members also claimed 105 countries of birth and 85 countries of citizenship, which collectively total 108 unique countries.

Countries Represented



Type
 ■ Both
 ■ Country of Birth only
 ■ Country of Citizenship only

Using designations from the United Nations, we classified countries of birth and citizenship by region and subregion. In terms of country of birth, Africa represents almost 4% of members across 16 countries. The Americas represent 71.2% of members' countries of birth across 23 countries: Canada and the United States account for the vast majority here (68.3%), while the Caribbean and Central and South America account for 2.9%. Asia represents 6.1% of members across 24 countries. Europe represents 15.5% of members across 29 countries. Oceania represents 3.3% of members across 4 countries.

The distribution of members across the globe can be visualized based on country of birth and country of citizenship data. The 108 unique countries that members represent between the two categories of data account for over half of the nearly 200 countries that currently exist.

Demographics

A plurality of members is 31-50 years of age. Fewer than one in ten members is 30 years of age or younger, likely indicating that most individuals who obtain membership do so well into their pursuit of a professional career in the field. About one in six members is over 65 years of age. While individuals may not obtain membership early in life, a great many continue it late in life.

Nearly one-fourth of members is female, while 76.2% of members is male. Transgender records number 3 and account for 0.1% of membership.

The representation of gender by age group varies significantly between female and male. Over half (51.4%) of males are aged 51 or older, while only 45.6% of females are of similar age. Conversely, a larger majority of females (54.4%) are 50 years or younger, while 48.6% of males are of similar age.

As mentioned above, upcoming changes to the member profile will limit ethnicity/race questions to members who select the United States as their country of citizenship. 85% of members who claim to be United States citizens are of European descent. 3.8% are multi-ethnic, and 3.4% are of African descent. Members of Asian descent account for 2.3%, Latina/o descent totals 1.7%, and Native American, Alaska Native, or First Nation descent is 0.2%.



Occupation-related Information

A majority of members is employed as faculty (54.7%), while nearly one in six members is a student (14.9%). Nearly 10% of members claim an occupation that is not listed. The write-in field for many of these records indicates an occupation that could be identified as one of the listed occupations, but it is also includes healthcare professionals, IT professionals, lawyers, translators, and other business professionals.

Employment Status

Currently employed faculty account for 91.4% of members who are faculty. The remaining 8.6% of faculty are either retired (8.1%) or unemployed (0.4%). Of faculty who are currently employed, 1.6% are in postdoctoral research and/or teaching positions, 6.9% are employed part-time, 54.1% are full-time tenured, 30.8% are full-time non-tenured, and 6.6% are in adjunct positions. As indicated in last year's report and above, the options for determining faculty tenure status are unclear. These ambiguities have been addressed in recent changes to the member profile but should be considered with any employment status variables in this year's report, especially since they would potentially mean a 30 percentage point swing in our reporting on contingent positions relative to tenure-track positions.

What seems clear from the data is that both gender and ethnicity play a role in tenure status. If we consider only the unambiguous category of contingent (adjunct), for example, we find a significantly higher percentage of females (8.1%) than males (5.3%) with this employment status.

Regarding ethnicity, members of African descent have the highest representation of contingent faculty at 9.5% and the lowest representation of full-time tenured faculty at 47.4%, while those of Latina/o descent have the lowest representation of contingent faculty at 3.4% and the highest representation of full-time tenured faculty at 53.4%. Of those of Caucasian/European descent, 5.9% are contingently employed and 49.4% are employed as full-time tenured.

At 1.5% members of Asian descent have the highest representation of unemployed faculty, while 1.1% of members with employment status and ethnicity data are of African descent. No Latina/o members or members of multiple ethnicities claim to be unemployed.

Department

Positions in Biblical Studies departments remain the most common among members, accounting for 30.2% of departments identified. Department of Religion or Religious Studies account for 14.3% and Theology or Theological Studies 13.8%. Area studies departments are among the least common.

Department

Department	Number of Records	% of Total Number of Records
Biblical Studies	1,637	30.2%
Religion or Religious Studies	777	14.3%
Theology or Theological Studies	748	13.8%
Hebrew	355	6.5%
Greek	295	5.4%
Early Christian Studies	194	3.6%
Divinity	185	3.4%
Jewish (Judaic) Studies	171	3.2%
Other	148	2.7%
Classics and/or Classical Civilizations	123	2.3%
Humanities	121	2.2%
Near Eastern Studies (Ancient or Modern)	117	2.2%
History	112	2.1%
Philosophy	85	1.6%
Interdisciplinary Studies	69	1.3%
Archaeology	57	1.1%
Women's Studies	44	0.8%
Linguistics	44	0.8%
Literature/Comparative Literature	40	0.7%
Pastoral Counseling	26	0.5%
African Studies	20	0.4%
Arab/c Studies and/or Islamic Studies	18	0.3%
Anthropology	17	0.3%
Asian Studies	9	0.2%
Sacred Music	4	0.1%
Latin American Studies	4	0.1%
Grand Total	5,420	100.0%

Of the ten most represented departments for which student level data were available, all indicated that at least two levels of students were taught in the department (e.g., undergraduate and Master's students or Master's and doctoral students). The highest representation of its kind, 52.1% of members in departments of Religion or Religious Studies indicated that they taught only undergraduate students, while members in departments of Divinity reported the lowest representation of such instruction at 6.0%. Departments of Divinity also had the lowest representation of doctoral-only students (2.2%), the highest representation of multiple levels of students (61.5%), and the highest representation of Master's students (30.2%). Departments of Near Eastern Studies (Ancient or Modern) showed the highest representation of doctoral-only students (10.6%).

Course Load

Course load varies across a number of factors. Employment status impacts course load significantly. Full-time non-tenured faculty report the highest median annual course load of six courses. Contingent and part-time faculty report a median annual course load of four. Women report a lower median annual course load (four) than men (five). Faculty in departments of Biblical Studies, Religion or Religious Studies, Theology or Theological Studies, and multiple departments report the highest median annual course load of five. Departments with the lowest course load of four include Classics and/or Classical Civilizations, Divinity, Early Christian Studies, Hebrew, History, Jewish (Judaic) Studies, Near Eastern Studies (Ancient or Modern), and Other. Only departments with at least ten records were included in these calculations.