

AY 2014-15 Common Reading Faculty Lecture Assessment
Karen Weathermon, Ph.D., Co-Chair Common Reading Program
A Program of the Office of Undergraduate Education
Washington State University

This year, our eighth year of the Common Reading Program, was another full year of programming. The Common Reading Program sponsored 15 events plus the author lecture, and we partnered with other units and departments on campus to offer another 19 affiliated events. Attendance at the CR-sponsored events totaled just over 4,000, with 3000 for the lecture and film series and another 1000 at Humes's October lecture. With the affiliated events—some of which had very large attendance by CR students—the total is *well* over 4,000. Average attendance was again larger in the fall (250) than in spring (110).

The majority of students who attended events were freshmen (62%) who attended because of a course assignment or for extra credit (96%), with History 105 again being the course sending the largest percentage of students (63%). Other courses that regularly sent students were Fine Arts 101, Geology 101, English 101 and 108, SDC 100 and 140, Environmental Science 101, and Science 101. Some of the courses that sent students did not use the book as required reading, and many others used only a portion of the book. These facts influence, in part, what we know about students' actual interaction with the text. On average 55% of those attending events had read at least part of the book: 7% had read all of it, 18% had read half or more, 30% had read less than half, and 45% had read none. Encouraging more students to read at least part of the book is an area for more improvement—though students also seem to benefit from attending events, even if they have not read any of the book.

We ask three assessment questions on our event evaluation form, and again those results were strong, particularly for the level of interest students reported in the events.

"I found this event interesting": 67% of attendees responded positively ("agree" or "strongly agree") while 7% responded negatively ("disagree" or "strongly disagree")

"I'm interested to learn more about this event": 43% responded positively, while 18% responded negatively

"This event furthered my understanding of an issue in the book": 52% responded positively, while 17% responded negatively

This year we ran more films than we have in the past, and students responded very positively to them, which we'll keep in mind as we program for next year. We also ran more hands-on opportunities, which we would like to continue, and also developed new collaborative relationships with the facilities and operations areas of the university (especially Waste Management and Environmental Health & Safety) as well as Dining Services, University Recreation, and Athletics. Huge thanks to all who spoke as part of the series, contributing your time and expertise to the year-long conversation about waste!

I especially want to thank the units and departments who partnered to provide additional programming: The Foley Institute, the Visiting Writers Program, CCGRS, Residence Life, WSU Performing Arts, Waste Management, Native American Programs, the Entomology Department,

the Global Case Competition, EARTHs, the Environmental Science Club, and the ASWSU Sustainability Alliance. You extended our programming far beyond our own program's resources and connections! For making this a richer and broader conversation we are sincerely grateful.