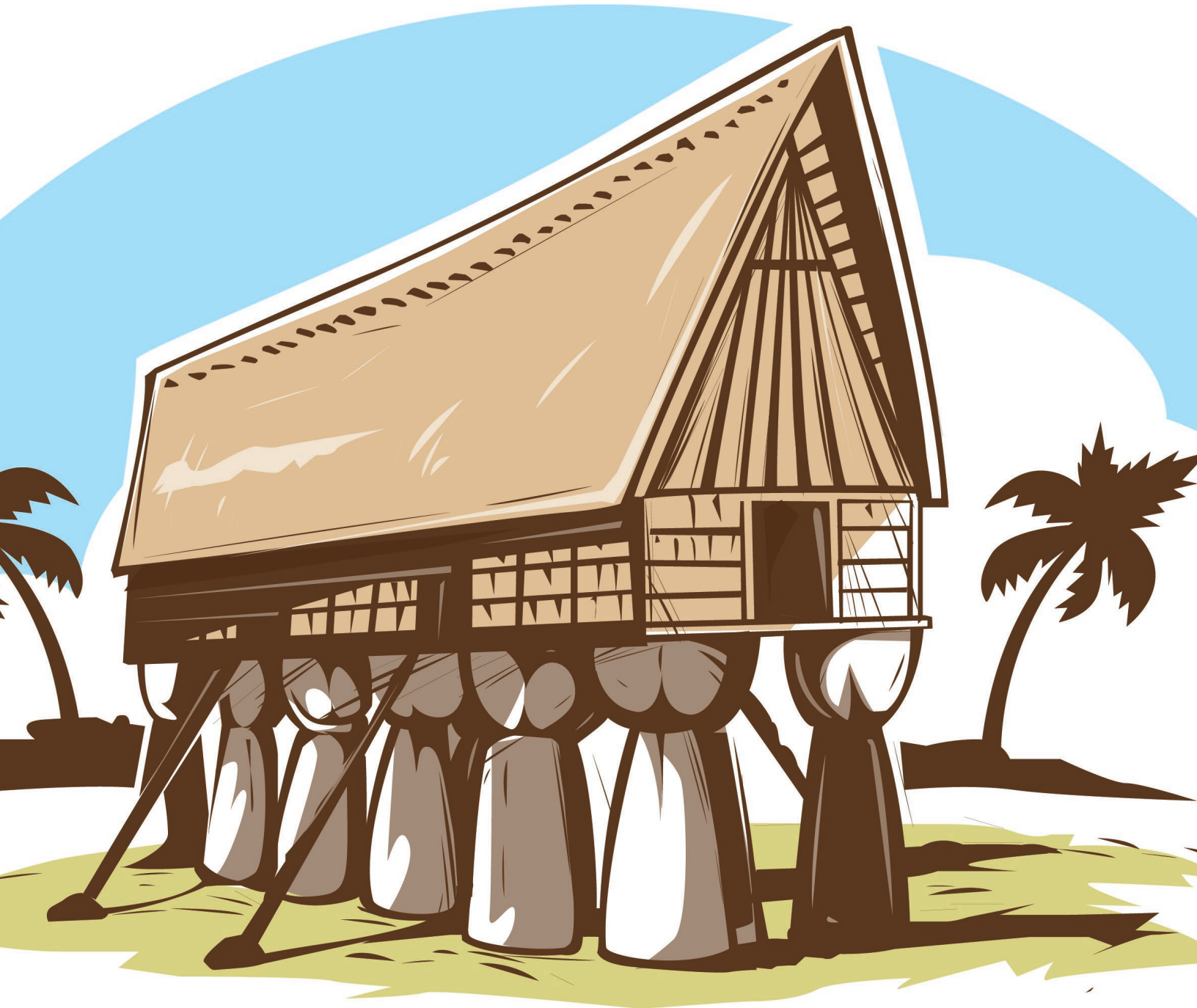
APIPA2019 CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF APIPA!

Association of Pacific Island Public Auditors

30th Annual Conference

Guam / August 26-30, 2019

Conference Report



Association of Pacific Island Public Auditors

30th Annual Conference
Guam
August 26-30, 2019

I. Background

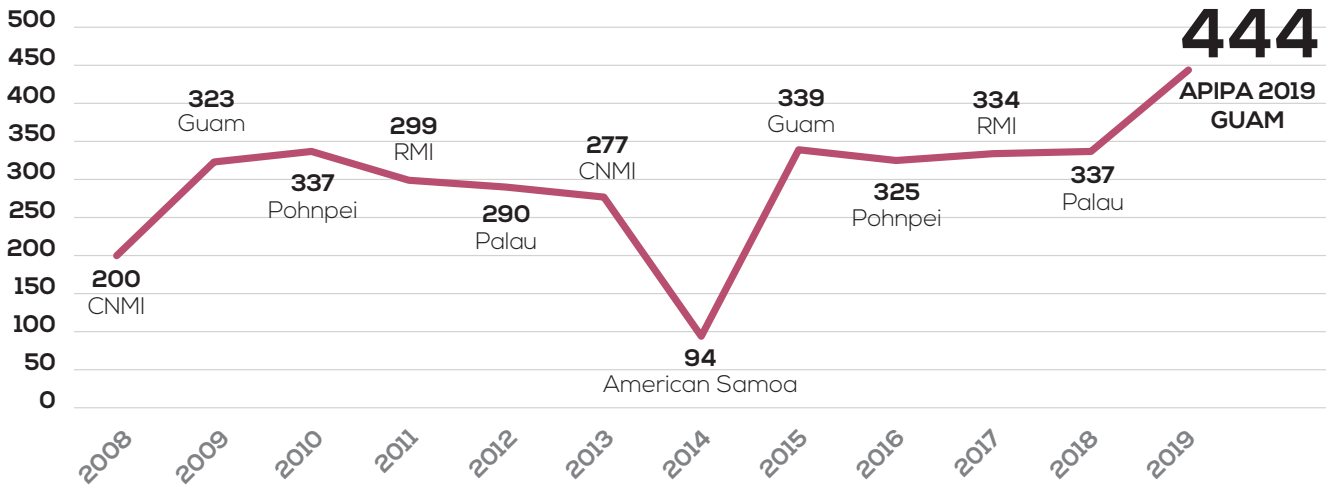
The Association of Pacific Island Public Auditors (APIPA) held its 30th annual conference on Guam, August 26-30, 2019. The conference was hosted by Guam's Office of Public Accountability (OPA). The Graduate School USA provided training and logistical support to the conference through its Pacific Islands Training Initiative (PITI), providing conference participants the opportunity to receive up to 40 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) credit. The week's courses were held at the Dusit Thani Hotel's Guam Conference Center.

II. Participants

Four hundred and forty-four (444) participants attended this year's conference. This total was 31.7% more than the 337 participants who attended last year's conference in Palau. Participation in recent years is shown in the table below:

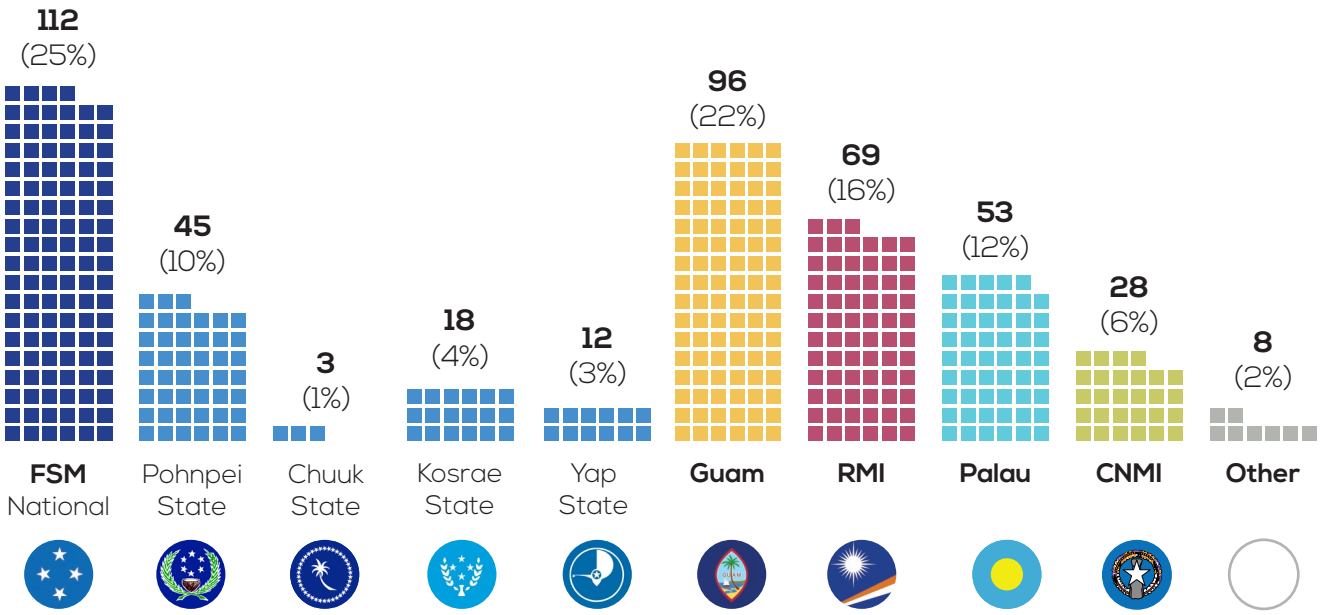
Year	Location	# of Participants
2004	Majuro, RMI	--
2005	Koror, Palau	--
2006	Pohnpei, FSM National Office	--
2007	American Samoa	111
2008	Saipan, CNMI	200
2009	Guam	323
2010	Pohnpei State, FSM	337
2011	Majuro, RMI	299

Year	Location	# of Participants
2012	Koror, Republic of Palau	290
2013	Saipan, CNMI	277
2014	American Samoa	94
2015	Guam	339
2016	Pohnpei State, FSM	325
2017	Majuro, RMI	334
2018	Koror, Republic of Palau	337
2019	Guam	444

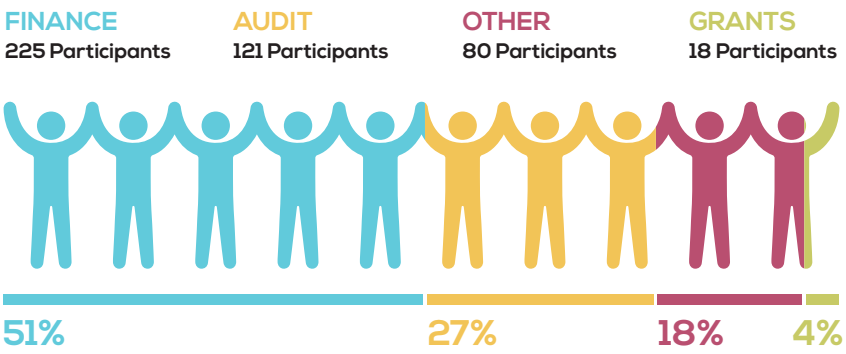


(Attendance in 2014 and 2007 was lower than other years primarily because most potential participants find it significantly more time consuming and expensive to travel to American Samoa compared to the other conference sites.)

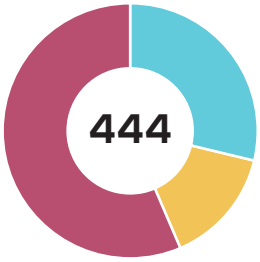
APIPA 2019 participants came from American Samoa, Australia, Chuuk, Colorado, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Fiji, Guam, Kosrae, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Pohnpei, Samoa, Washington DC and Yap. The largest delegation came from the FSM National Government, followed by Guam, RMI and Palau, respectively.



While 27 percent of participants came from audit offices, the remaining 73 percent represented finance offices, grants management offices, or other offices.



Conference Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of Participants	164	89	63	39	24	10	10	5	7	33



57% 1st or 2nd APIPA Conference
253 Participants

28% 3rd to 5th APIPA Conference
126 Participants

15% 6th to 10th APIPA Conference
65 Participants

Importantly, 253 conference participants (57 percent) indicated this was their first or second APIPA Conference, confirming the need to continue to offer introductory courses in finance and audit. Only 65 participants (15 percent) indicated they had attended more than five APIPA Conferences.

Colorado State Auditor Dianne Ray delivers the opening plenary presentation.

III. Plenary Sessions and Keynote Instructors

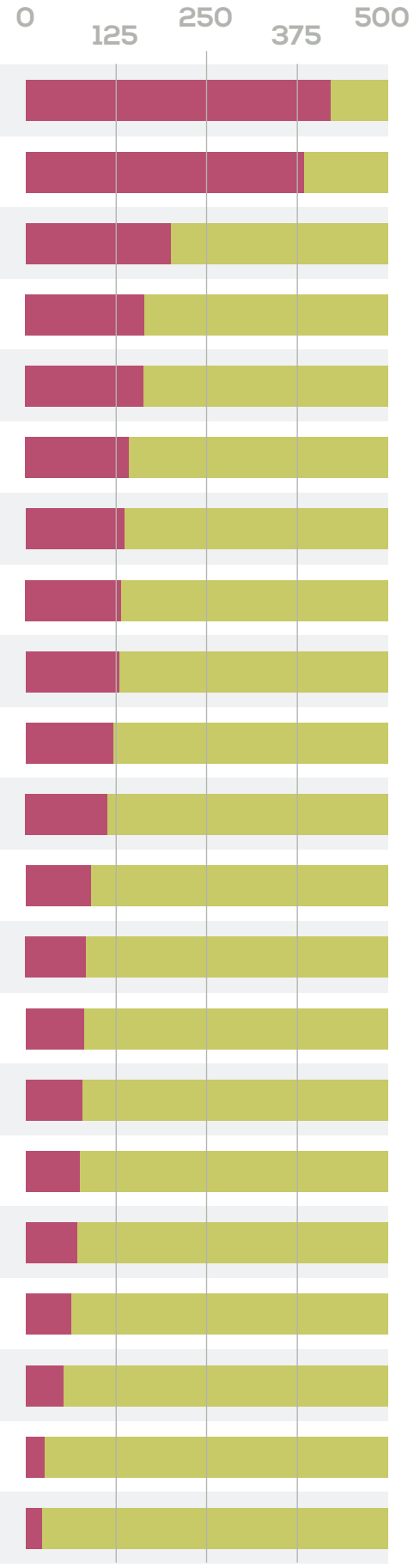
The opening plenary session and keynote address featured Colorado State Auditor Dianne Ray, who delivered a session highlighting "Opportunities in an Evolving Audit Environment." Ms. Ray emphasized ways in which audit offices can present results to improve accountability. The closing plenary focused on recent audits by eight island governments, presented by fourteen public auditors and staff. These audits included important oversight work by insular offices on topics ranging from the performance of street paving projects to contract and grant audits.

IV. Instructors and Courses

Six instructors led training sessions throughout the week: Diane Arakaki, Michael Binder, Frank Crawford, Drummond Kahn, Dianne Ray, and Jeanne Yamamura. Twenty (21) courses were provided during the conference in four training tracks: Audit, Audit Supervisory, Finance, and Advanced Finance and Management. The instructors, course titles and number of participants attending each course are shown in the table below.

APIPA 2019 instructors with Guam Public Auditor Benjamin J.F. Cruz

#	Course Title	Participants
1	Opening Plenary: Opportunities in an Evolving Audit Environment (Ray)	421
2	Closing Plenary: Accountability and Transparency in the Pacific: Successes in Our Islands (APIPA Principals and Staff)	381
3	ABCs of Governmental Finance (Yamamura)	200
4	Presentation Techniques: Using the Power of Persuasion (Binder)	160
5	Full-Cost Accounting and Recovery of Government Services (Arakaki)	159
6	Difficult Bosses: Are You One? How to Work with One (Arakaki)	140
7	Strategic Project Management and Managing Project Risks: Beyond the Planned Scope, Schedule and Budget (Arakaki)	135
8	Contract and Procurement Fraud Auditing (Kahn)	131
9	Practical Ethics for Government Employees (Yamamura)	128
10	Regional Issues in Accounting and Financial Reporting (Deloitte)	121
11	Basic Auditing (Crawford)	113
12	Leadership, Motivation & Accountability for High Performance Audit Teams & Organizations (Binder)	90
13	GASB Update: The Never-Ending Story, Including GASB 75, OPEB and Deja Vu (Crawford)	84
14	Streamlining the Audit Process, New Techniques (Crawford)	81
15	Performance Auditing: Findings, Evidence, and Reporting (Kahn)	79
16	Maintaining Integrity When Faced with Conflict (Ray)	75
17	Creative and Critical Thinking for Auditors (Binder)	71
18	The Infamous ERP Project: How to Improve Your Chances for Success (Arakaki)	63
19	Artificial Intelligence (Yamamura)	54
20	Selecting, Planning and Measuring Audits for Return on Investment (Binder)	26
21	APIPA Principals Meeting, Peer Review and Yellow Book Update (Kahn)	21



In all, a total of 2,733 course certificates were awarded for 16,884 hours of CPE credit.

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V. APIPA Executive Meeting

An APIPA Executive Meeting was held on Wednesday, August 28th. Attendees included all the principals or their proxies and other contributing staff members from the various Pacific island public auditor offices, other key Guam OPA staff, PITI Program Manager Jason Aubuchon, a representative of the US Department of Interior's Office of the Inspector General, and the Controller and Auditor General from Samoa's Audit Office. While the complete minutes from that meeting will be made available through the APIPA secretariat, a few issues discussed at the meeting are worth mentioning:

- Each of the APIPA Principals provided a brief update on recent activities with their offices.
- Jason Aubuchon provided a PITI-VITI program overview and a specific overview of the APIPA 2019 conference, with disaggregated participant information by government, sector, and frequency of attendance.
- Agnes Aruwafu of the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI), and Stephen Hardgrove, the Chief of Staff to the Inspector General, also provide program updates to the APIPA Principals.

VI. Notes and Observations

The APIPA website (http://apipa2019.org) was a key tool for planning, organizing and administering the conference. Complete course schedules were offered on the website, as well as online conference registration, course descriptions, and background information about the instructors.

This year's conference was eco-friendly (almost entirely paperless for the first time, following the pioneering example of last year's conference in Palau). The participants received course materials digitally prior to the conference, resulting in a substantial reduction in hard copies printed in Honolulu and shipped to Guam.

The staff of Guam's Office of Public Accountability devoted many hours of work to make the conference a success. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. Special thanks also to the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs for funding the training element of the program via the Pacific Islands Training Initiative (PITI).

Guam Acting Governor Joshua Tenorio welcomes APIPA participants to Guam

VII. Course Evaluations

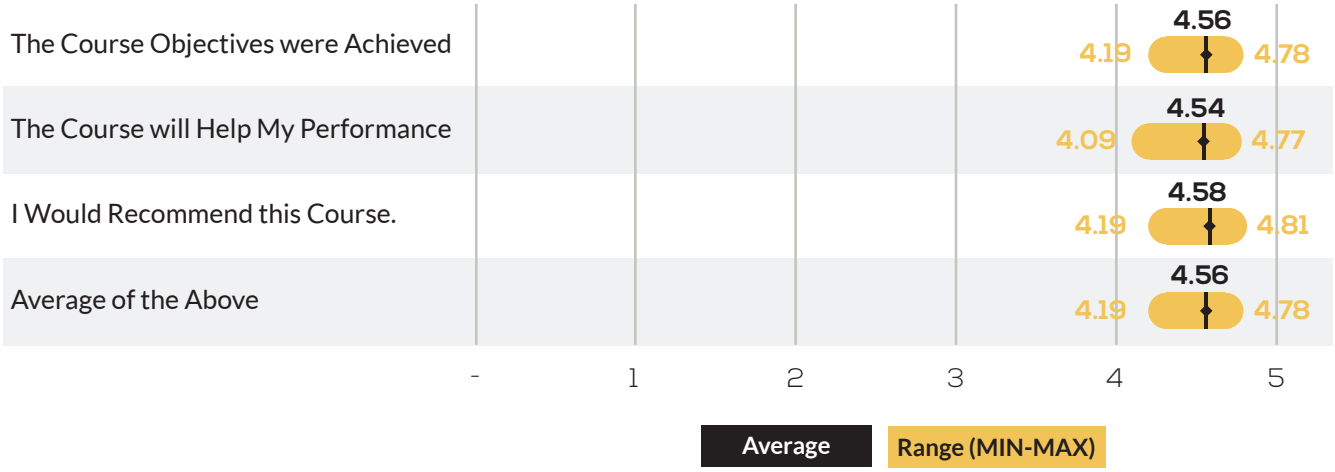
The Graduate School USA routinely surveys participants to monitor and improve training quality. Following each course, conference participants were asked to complete a course evaluation. Participants rated course content, the instructor, and the facilities. Participants were also asked to assess their knowledge of course materials before and after the course.

The APIPA Secretariat select three representative questions:

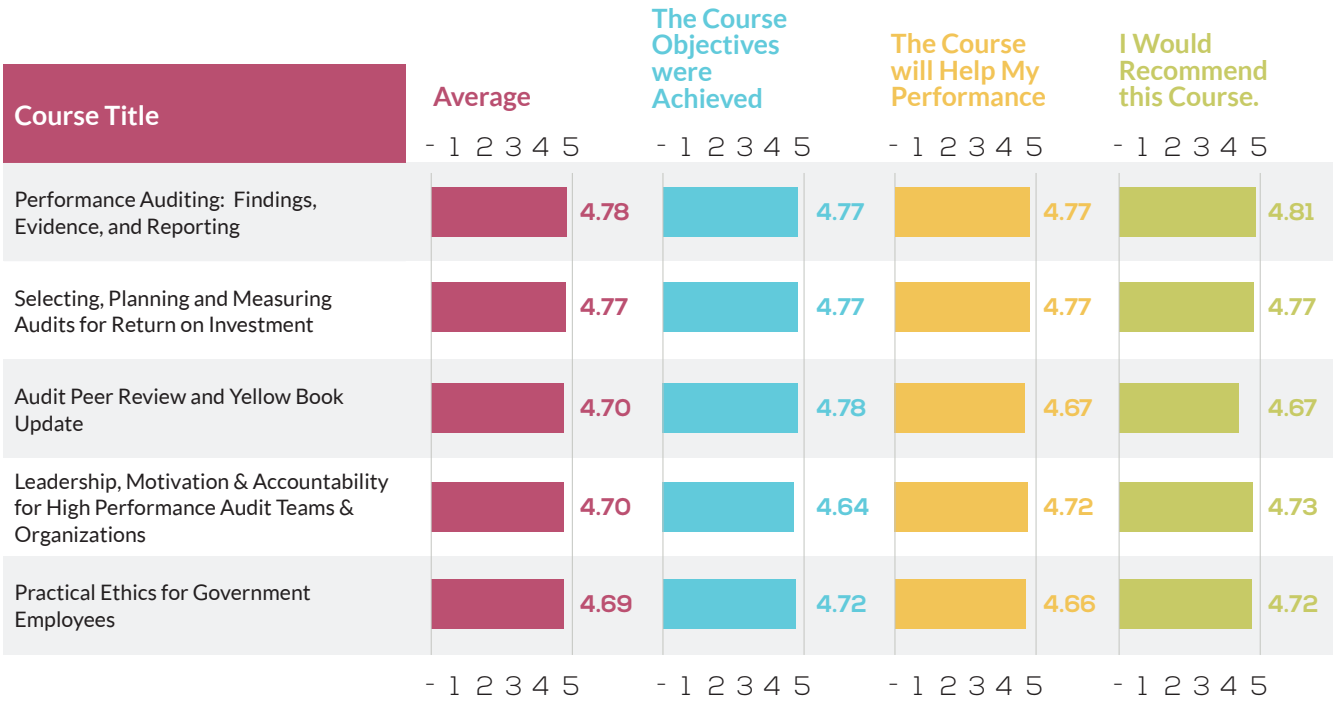
1. The course objectives were achieved.
2. The course will help me improve my current/future job performance.
3. I would recommend this course to others.

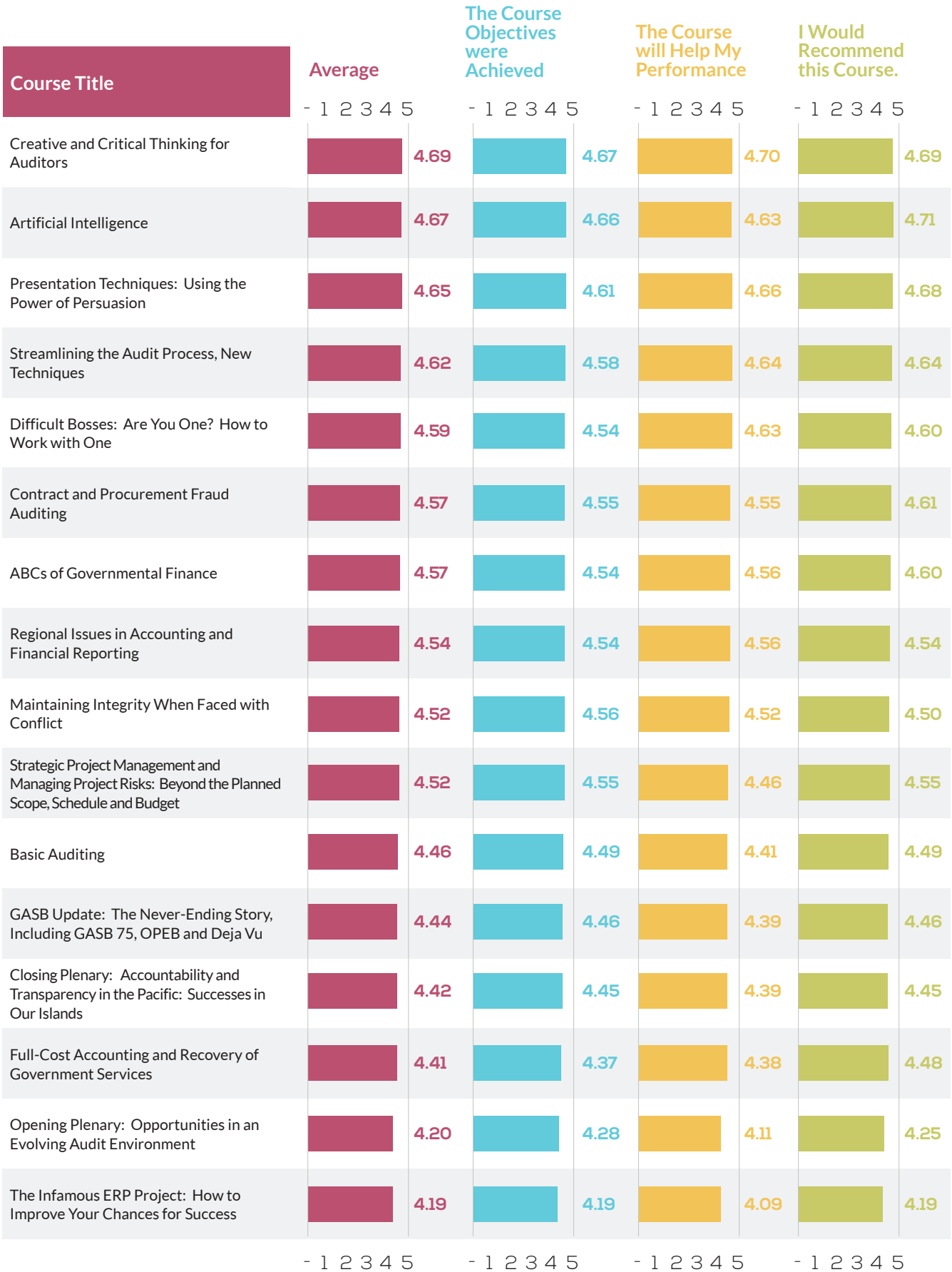
21 total courses were offered at APIPA 2019. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree", respondents rated the 2019 courses highly, ranging from 4.2 to 4.8, with an average of 4.6. Overall ratings were consistent with prior years, with vast majorities of participants recommending APIPA to colleagues and planning to attend future conferences.

Course evaluations will be shared with APIPA Principals and the APIPA 2020 Planning Committee to inform future conferences.



A breakdown of the individual course scores for each of the 21 courses can be found below.




Course Title
Average
The Course Objectives were Achieved
The Course will Help My Performance
I Would Recommend this Course.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Creative and Critical Thinking for Auditors 4.69 4.67 4.70 4.69
Artificial Intelligence 4.67 4.66 4.63 4.71
Presentation Techniques: Using the Power of Persuasion 4.65 4.61 4.66 4.68
Streamlining the Audit Process, New Techniques 4.62 4.58 4.64 4.64
Difficult Bosses: Are You One? How to Work with One 4.59 4.54 4.63 4.60
Contract and Procurement Fraud Auditing 4.57 4.55 4.55 4.61
ABCs of Governmental Finance 4.57 4.54 4.56 4.60
Regional Issues in Accounting and Financial Reporting 4.54 4.54 4.56 4.54
Maintaining Integrity When Faced with Conflict 4.52 4.56 4.52 4.50
Strategic Project Management and Managing Project Risks: Beyond the Planned Scope, Schedule and Budget 4.52 4.55 4.46 4.55
Basic Auditing 4.46 4.49 4.41 4.49
GASB Update: The Never-Ending Story, Including GASB 75, OPEB and Deja Vu 4.44 4.46 4.39 4.46
Closing Plenary: Accountability and Transparency in the Pacific: Successes in Our Islands 4.42 4.45 4.39 4.45
Full-Cost Accounting and Recovery of Government Services 4.41 4.37 4.38 4.48
Opening Plenary: Opportunities in an Evolving Audit Environment 4.20 4.28 4.11 4.25
The Infamous ERP Project: How to Improve Your Chances for Success 4.19 4.19 4.09 4.19

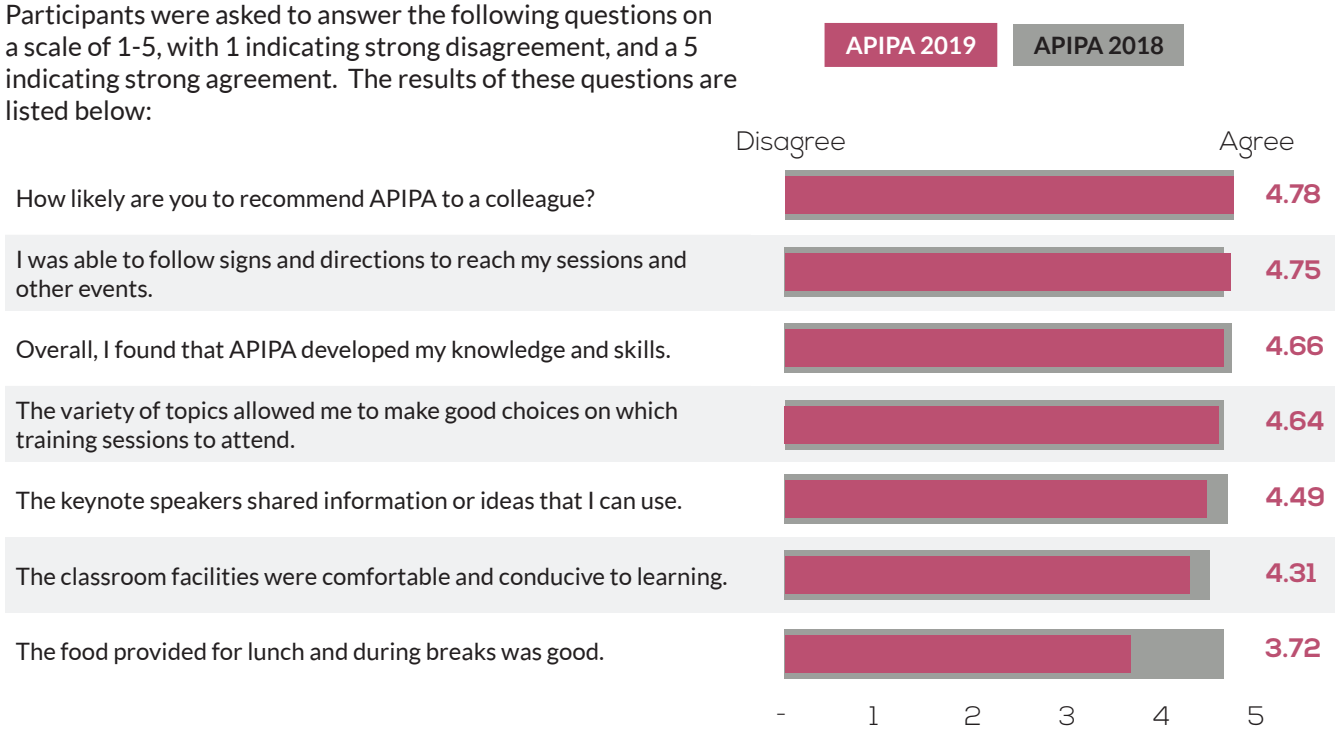
VIII. Conference Evaluation Feedback

Following the 2019 APIPA Conference, participants were invited to complete an optional electronic survey to provide feedback on the APIPA Conference as a whole. This marks the second year that overall conference feedback was solicited from participants. 176 participants completed the survey, representing 40 percent of APIPA Conference participants. Survey participation was largely consistent with overall conference registration numbers, as the table below demonstrates. In general, the geographical distribution of survey respondents aligns very closely to the geographical distribution of overall conference participation (although Guam was slightly overrepresented, and the FSM National Government slightly underrepresented.)

Variance Between Registered APIPA 2019 Participants and Survey Completion Percentages

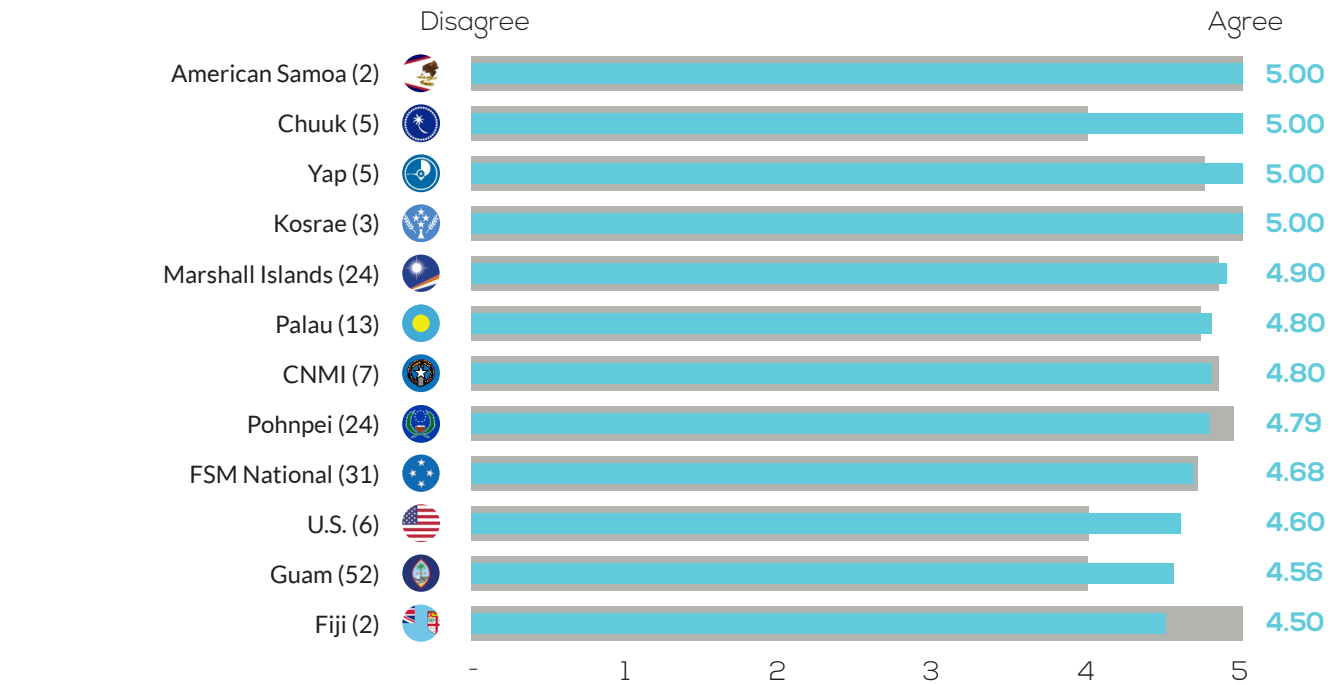
	Total Registered		Total Surveyed		Variance
FSMNG	112	25%	31	18%	8%
Guam	96	22%	54	31%	-9%
RMI	69	16%	24	14%	2%
Palau	53	12%	13	7%	5%
Pohnpei	45	10%	24	14%	-4%
CNMI	28	6%	7	4%	2%
Kosrae	18	4%	3	2%	2%
Yap	12	3%	5	3%	0%
Other	8	2%	4	2%	0%
Chuuk	3	1%	5	3%	-2%
US	2	0%	6	3%	-3%
TOTAL	**444**		**176**		

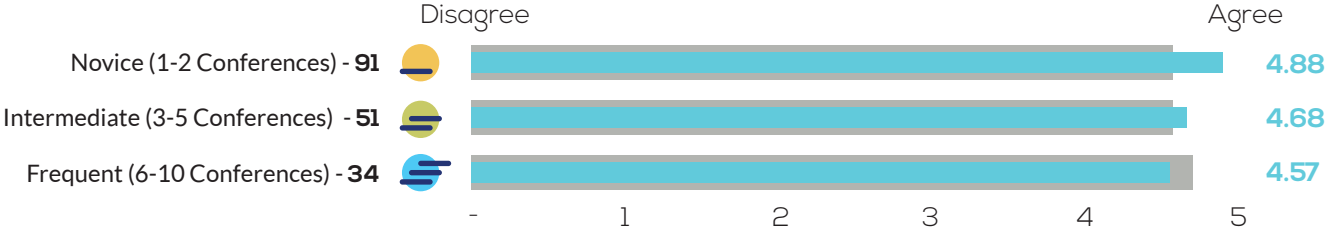
Participants were asked to answer the following questions on a scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating strong disagreement, and a 5 indicating strong agreement. The results of these questions are listed below:



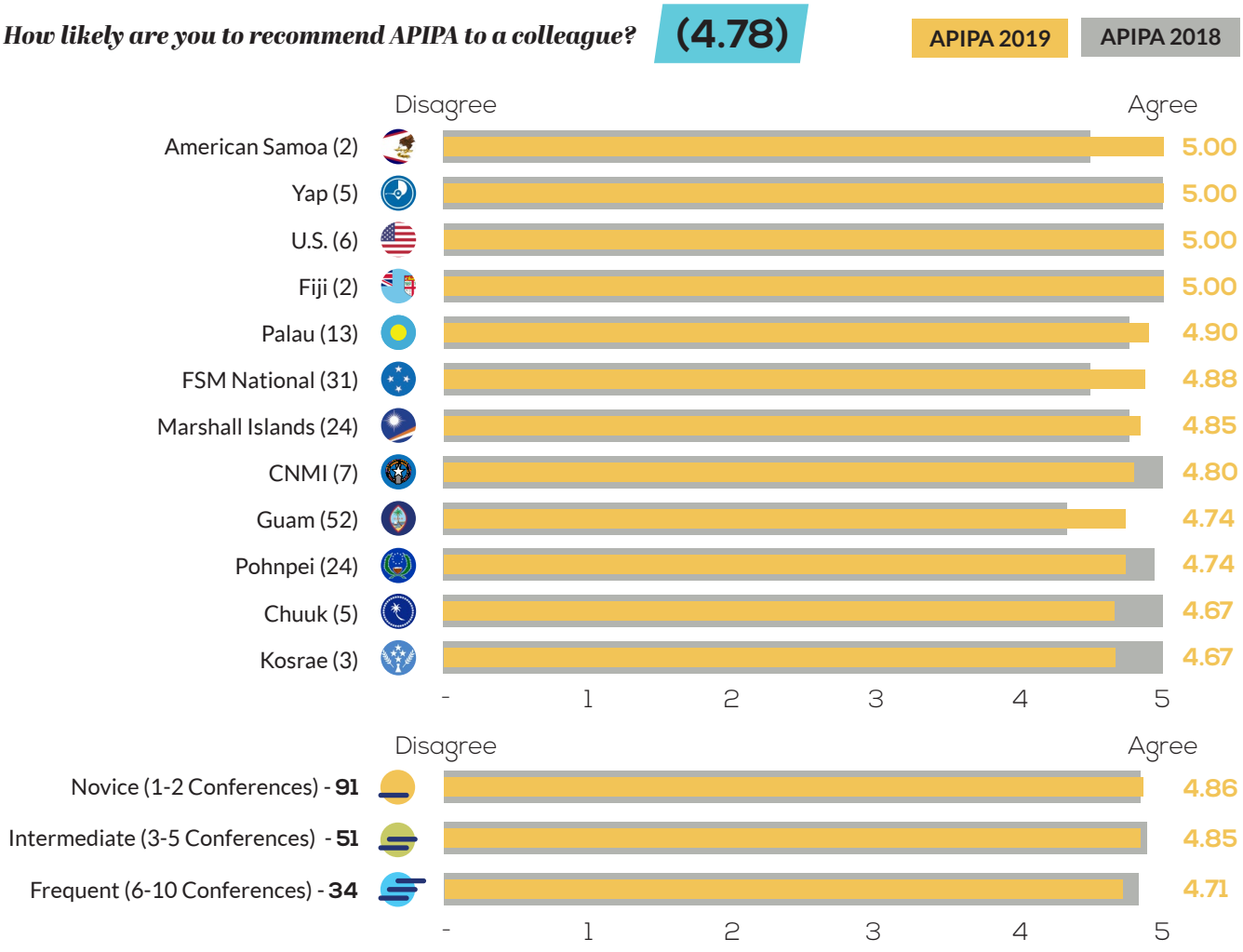
Two survey questions are representative of the overall APIPA experience: "Overall, I found that APIPA developed my knowledge and skills," and "How likely are you to recommend APIPA to a colleague?" These two questions have been disaggregated by insular government jurisdiction and by frequency of conference attendance to yield the following results:

Overall, I found that APIPA developed my knowledge and skills. **(4.67)** APIPA 2019 APIPA 2018





How likely are you to recommend APIPA to a colleague? **(4.78)**



Finally, participants were asked to comment on two questions: "How can we improve the classroom facilities?" and "Do you have any other comments or feedback to help the APIPA Secretariat improve future conferences?" Responses to each of these questions have been summarized below.

How can we improve the classroom facilities?

Participant feedback on the classroom facilities can be broadly summarized as follows:

- The temperature of the training rooms were too cold.
- Lighting in many of the training rooms—and especially the larger ballrooms—was too dim.
- Participants require better access to electrical outlets to facilitate a "paperless" conference.
- One of the classrooms was awkwardly shaped and created challenges to learning.
- One of the classrooms had a skylight that leaked during a heavy rain.
- There were some occasional issues with the sound system (volume) and with a/v projectors.
- Many participants shared overall positive comments with no suggestions for improvement.

Participant responses have been sorted by category and are included as an appendix to this report.

Do you have any other comments or feedback to help the APIPA Secretariat improve future conferences?

Participant feedback and suggestions to improve future APIPA Conferences can be broadly summarized as follows:

- There could have been more variety with food/snacks, and healthier options could have been made available.
- Courses duration could be shortened (i.e. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.);, and some courses (especially soft skills) could be shortened to a half-day.
- APIPA staff and volunteers should have provided more in-class assistance—i.e. monitoring sign-in sheets and distributing documents.
- The quality of the participants should be actively managed by the APIPA Secretariat, especially since registration closed in advance of the conference and many qualified participants were not able to join.
- Class participation should be actively monitored by the APIPA Secretariat. Participants should not be allowed to linger in the hallways outside of class.
- Wi-Fi should be offered to all participants.
- On-site registration space should be larger to allow for more comfort.
- The quality/accuracy of course descriptions could be improved.
- Many participants felt the conference went well and shared their appreciation.

APPENDIX 1: Participant Comments Sorted by Category

How can we improve the classroom facilities?

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

I liked it as it was.
All good.
I thought the facilities at the Dusit Thani were good. I am not sure about other facilities as this was my first time to attend the APIPA conference.
No improvement needed.
Everything is just as perfect as the location and very comfortable.
The classroom facilities are well organized.
It was all perfect, no comment.
I liked the setup.
No comment - it was execellent.
It was perfect as is.
Every classroom was great.
The classrooms are good and comfortable.
Excellent.
Everything was good.
I thought they were good. There were a few electronic problems which probably could be remeded.
Everything worked out perfectly.
Everything was great. There's nothing to improve.
Everything is perfect, no need to improve.
They were great.
Good.
No comments on the facilities... classes were exellent.
The setup was perfect.
I don't have a problem with the classroom facilities.
Everything is good.
All classrooms were conductive to learning, no discomfort in the classrooms.
I believe the facilities were great!
The ballroom was great - big enough to accommodate such an event, but the classrooms were not enough space - need bigger rooms.
Facilities are perfect!!

ROOM TEMPERATURE

Too cold.
Too cold, even though I wore a sweater. It was really cold!
Just the temperature of the rooms. It was too cold during my first class session.

Too cold… the A/C was so strong that I had to step out for a few minutes to get warmed up.
Classroom temp and lighting need adjustments. Aside from that, all was great!
Classrooms were very organized, but temperature inside the rooms was very cool.
Room's AC too high and strong… so cold I got sick…
Please, make sure the room temperature is comfortable. All the session rooms, especially the main room was so cold that we had to ask numerous times to turn the a/c up to make it warmer. We're all from the Pacific (majority of us, that is), so warm weather is what we're used to. The cold temperature made us have second thoughts about attending the sessions because it was that bad.
It was too cold, need to adjust the air conditioner temprature.
We all come from the tropics, and not Alaska... We couldn't sit for a long time in sections where the A/C was blowing. Perhaps adjust it before classes start, as Ms. Arakaki did in her classes.
The facility was too cold.
Too cold for me.
Too cold.
Dusit Thani was too cold and the rooms were too dim/dark. Better lighting needed for future APIPA classroom facilities.
The classrooms were way too cold, so please make sure to improve next time… I couldn't really concentrate on the lessons due to the coldness of the classroom. Thank you!
Too cold.
Regulate the room temperature.
Lower the air-conditioner, it's too cold.
Too cold in the rooms.
Classrooms were very cold. Other than that, the facilities were wonderful.
AC was a little too low for us islanders.
Too cold for me.
Not too cold and not to warm...
Lower the temperature.
The AC was too cold in the classrooms.
The classroom facilities are perfect, only it was really cold and I did not bring a sweater.
The classroom facilities are good but the AC is too cold.
The space is not a problem but it gets very chilly inside the classrooms causing participants to be in and out. I suggest that the classrooms be comfortable and warm, not too cold, so that we can stay focused and not fall asleep.
Why is the temperature in the rooms extremely cold?
(Again) room temperature needed to be considered.
Lower the AC

ACCESS TO ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Plug ins inside the classroom.
Provide plugs to each table to make it more convenient.
Provide outlets for laptops and adjust the AC to be comfortable for everyone.
Seats to have ports to charge electronic devices.
Provide a lot of outlets to plug in computer chargers.

Provide more plugs. Extension cords with power strips for each table. Since all the materials were digital, my laptop would die fast.
Electrical Plugs (for our laptops), Air con was too high (it was lowered later, thank you), Wifi.
Provide outlets for computers.
Provide charging hubs.
Have more charging stations and wifi connectivity.
Provide extension cords at each table so we don't have to charge our laptop elsewhere in the facility.
Charging my labtop was one problem for me, but overall I think the preparation and setup were great.
Have more charging stations.
Outlet accessibility needed during the sessions.
Since it's a paperless conference, all participant have their electronic devices, and there were not enough areas to plug or charge laptops and phones.
More outlets to charge laptops.
I think all in all everything was good, but again if we are trying to be paperless, maybe next time provide more outlets for charging laptops, tablets and other devices that we use for the conference.
Please provide more cords to charge laptops

LIGHTING

Lighting was not really good, it made people sleepy.
Due to unavoidable lighting issue, participants had difficulty focusing on the subject matter being discussed.
Make the light brighter instead of dim lights that make us sleepy.
The lighting was very low and access to outlets were limited. There was no wifi and the projector didn't work in a few classes.
I don't mean to sound all negative, just based on my experience :) the slides were not as clear. I'm not sure if it has to do with the lighting, or the projector, or my eyes were just blurry. I don't use glasses but in some of the courses, i strained my eyes.
More lights and a little cooler.
Good lightning and arrange seating to all face the front instead of round tables.
More lighting - the lighting for the bigger courses was too dim.
The lights were too dim.
Facilities were too dark for training and the projector screen was blurred.
Improve on lighting, sound and room temperature.
Brighter lighting.
Lighting needed to be better.
Brighter lighting in some ballrooms.
Provide better lighting, larger screens, focused displays, and power strips. For plenary sessions that do not require group discussions, a classroom-style layout with long tables might be more helpful so that all can comfortably face forward.
Better lighting.
Better lighting, tables arranged for better view of speaker, provide wifi and power cords since its paperless
Needs more lightnings and projector's that they use wasn't clear but it;s alright because i had iPad with me

FACILITIES

Some classes might have been over-filled. Very little space to work with in some classes. I think it was because the topics were interesting.
I attended one session in a room that had a pretty bad leak and the floor got wet, requiring us to shift our table. That room was also a bit too cold to focus. Otherwise, the instructor handled the situation very well and made it work for us.
Visual aids and technology was lacking and oftentimes did not work properly.
It was a very nice building, but it was not good when it rained. The rain came through from the celling to the floor.
Don't use classrooms divided in half like one room was.
Better view of the projector screens - the Salon room was not the right size and shape. The others were okay.
Spacing is more important and convenient.
Just keep the sound system and AC working.
The facilities are good, but on my 1st day session the speaker was really having a hard time seeing all the participants while she was talking because it was a 2-sectioned classroom.
More screens to be placed around the rooms.
There wasn't much time to get to know the order attendees. I felt that the restroom facilities weren't sufficient for the number of attendees.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

There were no fruits the entire week.
Lessen the class length to 4 hours and provide more variety of courses. 8 hours for courses was too long.
Offer more courses and reduce the number of hours of courses to at least 4 hours per course.
The setup is excellent but the participants should be equally divided for the group discussion and should consist of different countries to promote friendly environment among participants.
Provide laptops or ipads.
More exercise at all presentations.

APPENDIX 2: Participant Comments Sorted by Category

Do you have any other comments or feedback to help the APIPA Secretariat improve future conferences?

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Great hosting GUAM OPA.
I have no comments, but to keep up the great work.
Thank you.
You all did great as far as overall presentation of materials for our purposes. Maybe 444 is too big for this kind of conference though.
THANK YOU FOR THE WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE!
Overall, I thought it was a very good conference.
Nothing. Everything was ok.
None for me, thank you Guam for hosting.
Very enjoyable APIPA conference. Venue was very accommodating and beautiful. There were few classes to choose from, but very educational.
It was all perfect and well organized.
Overall, the conference was a good experience.
There are just minor things I think could improve the next APIPA. Overall, it was a great learning experience and I learned a lot. I especially liked how the group photo was organized. It was quick and well arranged.
Thank you OPA Guam for your hospitality and patience in hosting such a number of participants. For me personally, I cannot fathom the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes, but you guys pulled it off and hats off to you all for delivering a wonderful conference, and with the array of speakers, that certainly added value to my personal and professional development.
It was a great event to acknowledge other hard working peers from different island nations.
I was very impressed with the apipa 2019. i could relate to courses i took, they often use examples from our pacific region which really made it easy to relate and understand it better
For me the class room facilities are prepared well
APIPA is well prepared
Beautiful layout.
It was a very informative conference for me as a first timer.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Please provide fruits for snacks and if the lunch menu can also be different, please.
I would suggest to have a different variety on the morning and afternoon refreshments instead of 2 kinds of pastries in the morning and 2 kinds of cookies every afternoon. Fruits can be substitutes with one in the morning or afternoon… Overall, I think it's a great conference!

This was my 4th APIPA conference and the best one I have attended so far. The main criticism I have is the lack of fruits or healthier options for the morning and afternoon snacks. It was basically the same thing every day. That is so minor, though, that it should not have any impact on the great job the Guam OPA and Graduate School did with providing us islanders an avenue to obtain continuing professional education credits and networking with our fellow auditors, accountants, and financial managers from the islands. I am looking forward to the next APIPA, wherever it is being held. Thank you!

I liked the courses and there was no question about it because I learned a lot. Except the food... I hope the next APIPA has lots of different foods. This APIPA 2019, we had the same foods every day, and we never had any fruits. The registration fee is enough to cover better food for the participants. Thank you.

If one nation is hosting APIPA, food is very important because it's part of our culture. Please provide local foods (at least.) No need for fancy hotel if local food is not there.

The APIPA was great but the facilities are really cold and I wasn't satisfied with the snacks, I prefer fruits.

For registration to be $400, the food was not satisfying.

We need to improve refreshments to be healthy in the morning, lunch, and afternoon snack.

I didn't like the snacks... too much sweet and no fruit.

Overall fine... It's the food that needs improvement though.

We all are promoting healthy eating, so fruits would've been great if they were served during lunch or break times. Lunch throughout the week was good but was very bland.

INSTRUCTORS & COURSE CONTENT

I liked how instructors shared their work experience. I also liked the interaction between participants.

Include investigative trainings for the upcoming conferences.

I would like to see a young professional round table type class, where young professionals can assist seasoned professionals with improving the work place. For example: using data mining and data analytics to improve current procedures. Just because we have been doing it the same way for 15 years does not mean it is efficient anymore. (Some employees still use an abacus at work.)

Please consider reviewing course descriptions to ensure they accurately describe the actual content of the course. For two of Frank Crawford's classes attended, the description did not accurately portray actual course content. "Basic Auditing" could have been more accurately described as "Government Auditing Standards - 2018 Yellow Book Update" and the "GASB Update" made reference to GASB 75 OPEB whereas actual course content referred to new GASB statements, including GASB 84 and GASB 87. GASB 75 was not discussed. There were a number of individuals who did not attend either class purely because of the course description when, in fact, they would have greatly benefited from attendance.

Printing out a few hard copies of course book and materials for those who prefer hard copies. Encourage questions throughout each lecture.

Thank you very much for what I've learned from the courses I took. I started to apply this at my job, especially "Difficult Bosses." I shared with my Boss what I learned from 2019 APIPA. Thank you and God bless.

Have instructors provide questions related to each session emailed to participants to answer and email back so instructors can include that in their lectures. Each country has different problems and because of the language barrier, some participants want to, but are reluctant to ask questions during the sessions.

Provide opportunities for more fellow Islanders to participate and do presentations alongside the regular instructors during the conference (similar to the presentations conducted during the closing plenary session). This is an excellent means to show case real situations/experiences in the Micronesian region.

Examples used in the conference should be related to the region.

I thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Binder's sessions. He has so much knowledge and I loved listening and learning about what he was sharing. Apart from his sessions, his positivity and aura was just welcoming and admirable. Such a leader and captures the attention of his audience. I would love to listen to him more on the critical thinking and strategizing audits for ROI.

Presentations and training materials should be structured to address all participants' level of exposures, experiences, knowledge and skill in auditing (seasoned vs. new auditors).

COURSE DURATION, BREAKS AND TIMING

My instructors provided a sufficient amount of breaks, unlike in the past APIPAs. I think a ten minute break should be provided every hour or an hour and a half. The breaks enabled me to mentally recap what was taught and re-energize for the next series of thought.

It would be great if the sessions would at least start at 9 am.

10-15 minutes breaks every hour.

To be really honest, for a large group like this I wasn't able to learn some of the things I should be learning. I recommend that the number of participants should be decreased in the future. In addition to that, the training hours were too long. Instead of making it 8am-5pm, why not 8am-4pm or 9am-4pm? The hours are too long.

I feel that the soft skills classes like "Presentation Techniques" and "Difficult Bosses" are sessions should be half-day courses only.

CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Assistants to instructors in passing out sign-up sheets and other forms so that they will be able to focus on the training completely and not be bothered if sign-up sheets haven't been passed around.

Sign in sheets should be at a front table by last name alphabetically for everyone to sign before the conference begins. That means every participant should sign in 10 minutes early.

I guess we NEED MORE SIGN-IN SHEETS!!! Y'all did great. For a room of about 450+, you all did well. God Bless.

Have the APIPA staff wear uniforms or something that participants can identify quickly when assistance is needed.

ATTENDANCE & NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Maybe provide better monitoring around the classes. I saw quite a few people sitting or sleeping outside the classrooms. Maybe we should put back the screening that was in place some years back. Otherwise, good job Guam and USDA/PITI.

Cap the number of participants per class.

I understand that about 40% of the participants in this year's conference were new. I think in preparing the presentations, the Secretariat should be mindful of how to structure and cater to the needs of participants, both seasoned and especially fairly new to the profession.

Need to monitor people who do not attend class but stay outside.

Please consider the relevance of the attending audience as there were a number of individuals that I personally know who attended that probably should not be there, especially knowing that public funds are being spent. Two of the pillars that APIPA stands for is to promote accountability and efficiency. With the cost of registration, air fares, and per diems, the dollar amount of public funds being spent on these attendees can add up to a significant amount and could be considered waste and abuse.

Throughout the conference week, some attendees would sign in and leave the course to lounge or "hangout" out in the hallways for the remainder of the day; others would be talking to colleagues loudly throughout the entire course making it difficult to hear the instructors. I find it discouraging to send attendees who are not serious about the training opportunity provided given the amount of time and money spent to make APIPA a success.

WIFI INTERNET ACCESS

Wifi access should be provided throughout the conference because participants need to communicate to their home office.

Provide free WiFi by APIPA staff entering the password into each individual's laptops/devices.

ONSITE REGISTRATION PROCESS

The registration should've been done in a bigger room or the hallway instead of being in the small room. It was mentioned in the email that giveaways were for first come first serve basis, so everyone was in a hurry to register. The layout of the registration tables and the giveaway tables were not conducive as well. Participants had to fight through the crowd after getting their badges to get their bags and t-shirts. IF the smaller room had to be used for registration, it could've been done/organized differently, like, have each delegation register one at a time or something - this could've avoided the chaos in the room. I don't want to sound mean, but the obesity in the Pacific Region ranges from 35% to 50%.

The registration area was too small- need to have more space and to be more organized.

Cut off of registration- need to consider venue capacity to avoid registration cancellation.

Accurate contact/email addresses, if possible, provide also the organization or agency.

Registration suggestions: 1) No payments will be received from waitlist applicants, until they are confirmed; 2) Cut off of cancellation of registration- consider appropriate date of cancellations which are no longer entitled to refunds; Non-attendance/non-appearance during the conference dates without prior advise should not be entitled to refunds.

MISCELLANEOUS FEEDBACK

The first day was so exhausting that most participants were too tired to attend the welcoming reception. Maybe have opening session separate from actual lecture time.

Give participants ample time to do some sightseeing and shopping.

Offer sightseeing trips for participants.

I think the availability of emergency medicines and medical personnel in the event to provide immediate health-care service to participants who will be injured during the event will be more appreciated.

Give out more drinks tickets for the receptions. LOL..

Insular government representatives participating in the closing plenary panel discussion.

The APIPA 2019 Principals and Special Guests, with Guam Acting Governor Tenorio.

Graduate School USA Instructor Drummond Kahn at APIPA 2019.

APIPA2019

Conference Report

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