Voice of the Patrons – Summer 2026 Assessment Results

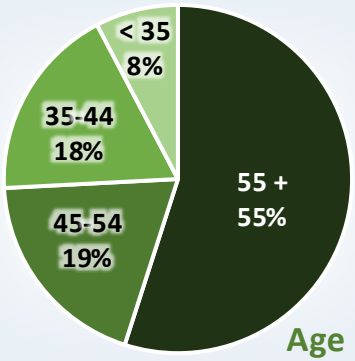
As Delaware Shakespeare prepares for the next few years, the Board of Directors determined that it was a good moment to see what you, our stakeholders, thought about our work, our plans, and our approach – so we asked you! And you answered, with detail and specificity that warmed our hearts and gave us plenty to think about.

It is always a challenge to ask for feedback and then to take it to heart, however we believe that hearing so eloquently from you, our patrons and supporters, has helped us to chart a course for the next years that will meet your needs, and help us to meet your ideals as well. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for taking the time to help us renew Delaware Shakespeare for you!

Stakeholders Responding

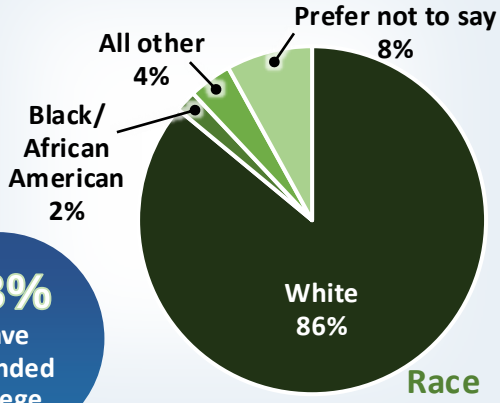
Stakeholder group	Total sent	Response %
Patrons	5,221	3%
Donors	196	7%
Board/Committee Members/Staff	15	40%
Community Partners	40	10%
Teacher Connections (no response)	40	0%
Sponsors (no interviews were done)	6	0%
Totals	**5,518**	**3.2%**

Respondent Demographics



Age

88% Have attended college



Race

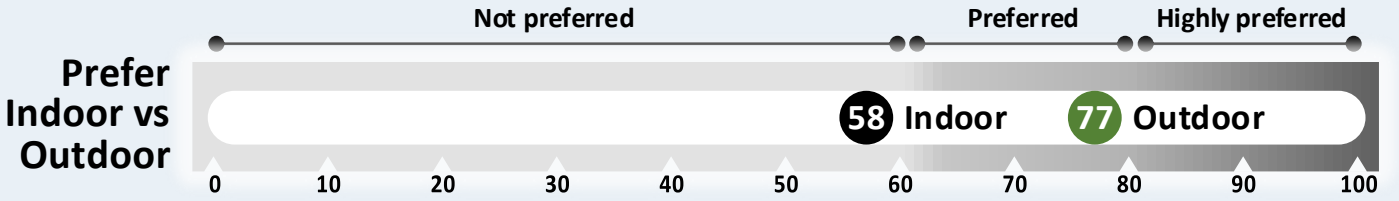
Themes

- You love us!
- You want more of us!
- You want us to find ways to connect in both formal and informal situations
- You love outdoor performances
- You don't like it when it is hot or rains!
- You want more Shakespeare
- More performances across Delaware would be appreciated

Observations

- DelShakes patrons love and value what we do, enough to spend real time talking to us through this survey. A great situation for Delaware Shakespeare! Thank you!
- More than 70% of patron respondents are 45 years old or older, more than half are 55+; 65% are women; 86% are white; 88% are college educated.
- These demographics do not represent our full stakeholder community – we need to do more to reach out to you.
- You value the Rockwood Summer Festival experience and strongly associate it with Delaware Shakespeare.
- There is support for innovation and "pushing the envelope" in the performances, alongside a desire for traditional Shakespeare content.
- Email and snail mail are the best ways to reach people, although all avenues help.

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85%

of Patrons have attended the Rockwood Summer Festival

81%

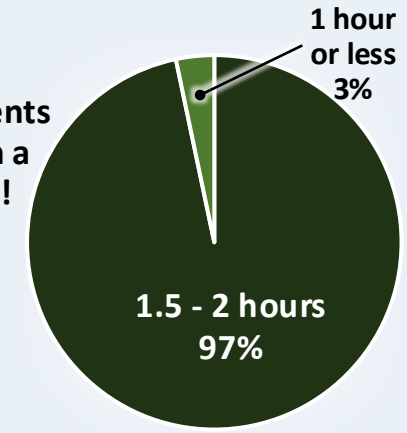
of Patrons value the Summer Festival experience

Patrons enjoyed events such as Shakesbeer and "Shakespeare Poe, and Fiends," the overwhelming preference is for

Full-Length Shakespeare Plays

Preference for Length of Performances

Respondents want to watch a full-length play!



Things you would like to see

- Consistent programming that is well-promoted
- Traditional Shakespeare performances along with the innovative ones
- Get us more involved – reading groups, scene study, audience education on Shakesperean language, and background information
- Patrons care about youth involvement and education, engagement with young actors and playwrights
- Lower-commitment events such as brunch pairings, Valentine's events, First Friday appearances, and casual talks to bring in new attendees
- Patron affection for Delaware Shakespeare was evident in the responses!

Making it easier to come

- Advance notice of events, a public and well-distributed calendar, and emailed/texted reminders
- Consistent annual rhythm of performances, especially full-length plays
- Geographic expansion to downstate locations
- Resituate outdoor performances so they are in less hot times of year
- Improve accessibility for people with mobility issues
- Events to bring in new audiences
- Many respondents noted that the company is doing "everything right" and concerns are with reach and access, not dissatisfaction with quality

Barriers to attendance

- Many patrons live in Sussex and Kent County and suggest more events closer to where they live (Lewes, Milford, Milton, Cape Henlopen, Dover)
- Not knowing when events would be held
- Heat and unpredictable weather for outdoor events
- Advance notice/marketing across every avenue (email, social media, text if opted in, etc.)
- Support for mobility
- Thoughtful pricing
- Non-traditional performances
- Improve audio for outdoor performances

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