To all who contributed to making our recent nonprofit management conference such a success, please accept my sincere gratitude.

The conference was targeted at promising junior scholars, providing them with an opportunity to present their research and receive focused comments and feedback from a distinguished group of senior scholars. Our goal was to advance scholarship on nonprofit management by examining how nonprofit relationships with the government and private, for-profit sectors vary across the diverse fields in which nonprofits operate. This is especially timely because nonprofits face profound and widespread challenges in the wake of the Great Recession, but challenges faced by human service nonprofits differ from those faced by nonprofits in the arts and culture, environment, or international fields. We wanted to explore the why and how of these differences. We also wanted to lay the groundwork for developing better data and methodological approaches for examining these dynamics.

When we first envisioned this conference, we really didn’t know whether our focus or how we organized the conference would attract nonprofit scholars, so these numbers are especially heartening:

- 20 scholarly presentations were made by 34 authors and co-authors in six sessions – almost all were junior scholars
- 7 senior scholars served as discussants and plenary presenters
- 40 proposals came from non-IU junior scholars
- 26 academic institutions were represented on the programs
- 90 registered for the conference

In a post-conference survey, participants were nearly unanimous in their praise for the organization of the conference, the mix of junior and senior scholars, the subjects discussed and the logistics. Here is a sample of those comments:

“It was refreshing to be exposed to unfamiliar scholars and topics and to make new connections.”

“The collegiality was really nice. As a junior scholar, having a chance to meet with other scholars at a similar stage, as well as discuss my research with senior faculty was a highlight.”

“It was great to hear from senior scholars about how they view the state of the field, and the big theoretical and practical questions.”

“It was the highest quality of nonprofit research I have ever seen presented at a conference.”

“I really liked that this was a smaller conference with limited participation. The quality of the papers and presentations was much higher on average than those at most conferences, which was also nice. The conference planning and logistics were absolutely excellent.”

Again, thanks to all the participants and all from SPEA who helped make the conference so successful. Quite a few of our guests said they hoped we would do it again next year. We’re not ready to commit to that but that is certainly the kind of feedback you hope for when so much effort goes into a conference.