NELD Graduate Survey Results
Participant Perspectives from 16 cohorts 1992-present
Scott Chazdon and Lisa Hinz
Why the NELD Survey

Goal:
To inform the NELD Minnesota Design team on participant perspectives of the program’s
- outcomes
- impacts
- strengths
- suggestions for improvement
NELD Graduate Survey

- Conducted March 2010
- Online survey received by 358 of the 521 total graduates
  - 358 graduates had valid email addresses
- 172 of the 358 responded = 48% response rate
- 16 responses from 2010 thrown out (experience too recent)
Quantitative Results
Percent of respondents from each program year (n=156)
Respondent Roles in Extension, during NELD and Today

Movement from education to management role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>During NELD (n=149)</th>
<th>Today (n=150)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Management (Middle Management)</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Management (Middle Management)</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension Upper Management</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in a non-Extension position</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Leadership outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-reported changes in leadership skills</th>
<th>Mean (scale of 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have grown as a leader.</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I better know my own strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek to better understand the potential and limitations of others.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to work more effectively with those who are different than me.</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better able to build relationships with stakeholders inside and outside of my organization.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better able to build a team to accomplish tasks.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have gained a better understanding of my own values and culture.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken on higher levels of responsibility in Extension.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better able to encourage an emphasis on our organizational mission.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to seek out cross-cultural situations or learning opportunities.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better able to transform my organization to be more productive.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Program-related outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-reported contributions to program outcomes as a result of NELD participation</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Mean (Scale of 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>nutrition</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>community development</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>family development</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>youth</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>agricultural</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>natural resource/environmental</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>horticultural</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have strengthened <strong>energy</strong> program outcomes.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Program impacts

Self-reported contributions to program impacts as a result of NELD participation (n=156)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean (on a Scale of 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree)</th>
<th>Self-reported contributions to program impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>I have helped strengthen <strong>Extension's organizational reach</strong> in my state (e.g. broader or deeper connections to audiences).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>I have helped strengthen <strong>Extension's reputation and/or influence</strong> in my state (e.g. through public policy advice or other activity).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>I have helped <strong>strengthen the cultural diversity</strong> of Extension's staff or program audiences (e.g. people of different ages, ethnic or class backgrounds).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>I have helped <strong>strengthen Extension's financial condition</strong> in my state (e.g. through public policy advice, grant writing, program fee structure, etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differences in self-reported impacts based on length of time since NELD participation
(means on a scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree)

Participated 13 to 18 years ago (n=24)
Participated 6 to 12 years ago (n=43)
Participated 1 to 5 years ago (n=76)

I have helped strengthen Extension's organizational reach in my state. (NS)
I have helped strengthen Extension's financial condition in my state.*
I have helped strengthen Extension's reputation and/or influence in my state.*
I have helped strengthen the cultural diversity of Extension's staff or program audiences.***

(NS) Differences in means not statistically significant; *Differences significant at p<.05 level;
*** Differences significant at p<.001 level
Qualitative Results
I don't know that I would have "stepped out" if it had not been for NELD.
Participant’s Voices on Skills & Insights

It produced a cadre of deep thinkers in terms of leadership development, teamwork, and diversity. This better trained workforce has been taking on Department Head roles and mentoring younger faculty with a broader set of skills and experiences to draw from. Better trained faculty has allowed for a more savvy approach to program management, relations with decision-makers, and budget cuts.
Skills & Insights Gained, Applied

1) Self confidence increased
   Know what leadership is and own talents, preferences, philosophy
   More willing to take risks, step out of comfort zone, be more assertive
   Increased responsibilities – new roles, etc.

2) Greater appreciation for diversity, difference
   Less defensive
   Value others more
3) Know Extension better
   - Systems, programs, land grant mission
   - Networking, networking, networking

4) Teamwork/collaboration improved
   - Improved communication – listening, asking questions
   - Value others
   - In person & via distance technologies
Six Strengths of the Program
(in no particular order)

1) **Learning about diversity and difference**
   - Importance of immersion experiences, locations and activities that provoked discussion about privilege, more than “black and white”

2) **Self discovery**
   - Personal assessments, reflections, philosophy

3) **Networking experiences**
   - Built relationships with people in other states
Six Strengths of the Program
(in no particular order)

4) Team work
   Small group work – projects, discussion
   Tools for better teamwork (such as visioning)

5) Improved communication skills
   Listening, asking questions

6) Learning about Extension
   Understanding history, mission, programs
Suggestions for Improvement

1) Clear expectations
   what to do before coming, what to bring, plans for session

2) Quality Presenters
   quality, dynamic, content experts
   not just Extension
   local staff, even if just evening social time
   suggested speakers

3) Planning team engaged with participants, not off on own
4) More challenging/rigorous

*Make this experience richer with **hard questions about the future of Extension**. Not so much with the patting ourselves on the back; more with difficult questions about **who we are and whether we should stay here**. **Invite critique of the system and bring this critique into the NELD experience. Reveal Extension to itself by bringing in critics and competitors.** **We need future leaders in Extension who can think critically about the context we are in now...** **NELD is an opportunity to **SHAKE PEOPLE UP** so that they stand on firmer ground as they address issues in their state.*
Suggestions for Improvement

5) Tools/activities - balance lecture, action

- Use online tools
  Adobe, social media, between session connects
- Real issues, cases
  Variety of topics – environmental, social, economic, ag, etc.
- Use challenging Immersion activities

- Diversity session
  • when trust built - 3rd, not 2nd session?
  • Address power & privilege

- Reflection time wanted
  • + & - journaling

- Books
  • look for high quality, relevance
  • beware the “5th grade book report” feeling
Suggestions for Improvement

6) Increase participant interaction with each other
7) Get to know national Extension orgs – esp. NIFA
8) Locations
   Not just NC region
   In DC: stay near the action, not "off somewhere"
   Match content to local learning opportunities
9) Add post-NELD activities for grads
   they want to keep learning and connecting
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Thank you for your interest and attention!

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