

NELD Graduate Survey Results

Participant Perspectives from 16 cohorts
1992-present

Scott Chazdon and Lisa Hinz



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

Driven to DiscoverSM

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

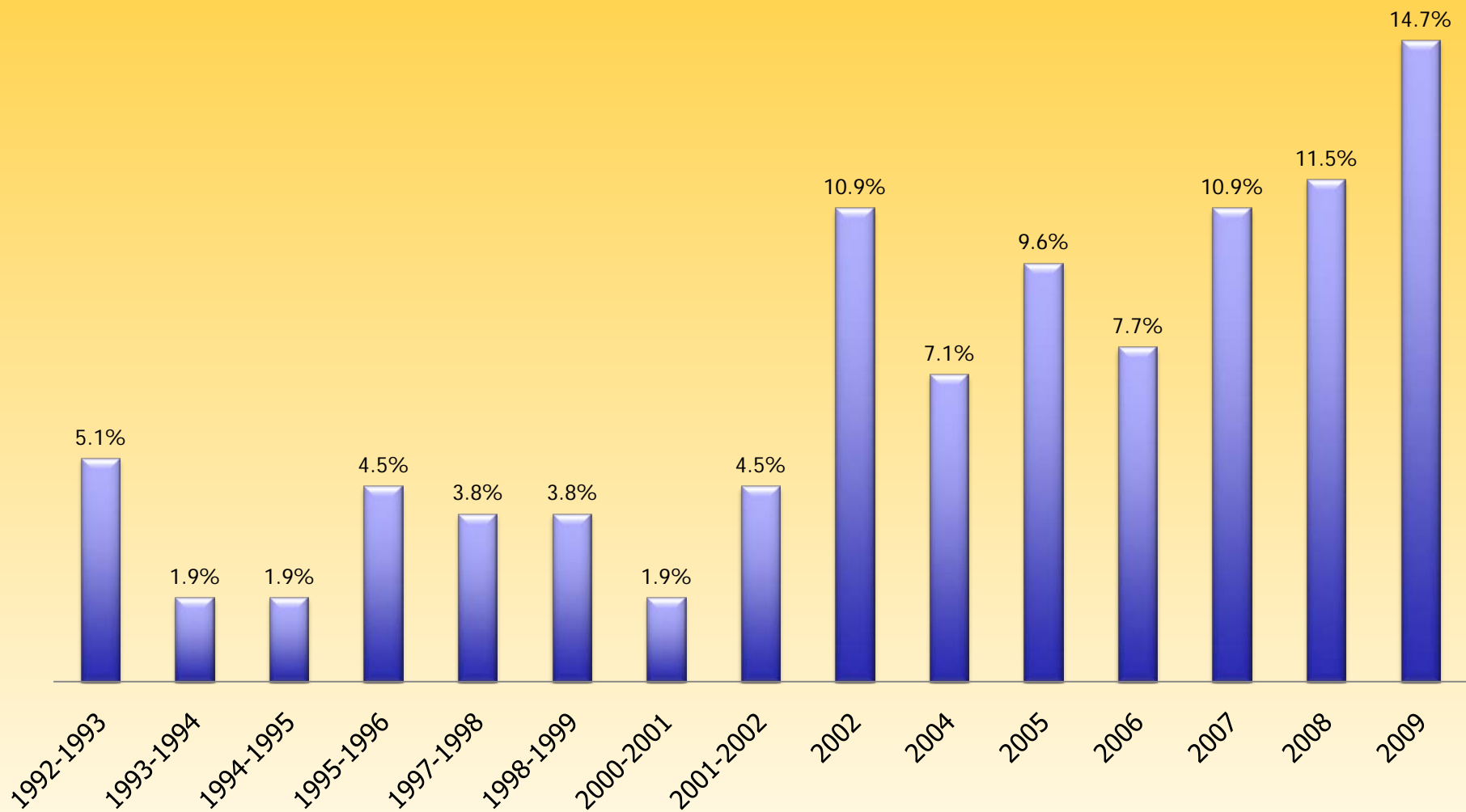
- Conducted March 2010
- Online survey received by 358 of the 521 total graduates
 - 358 graduates had valid email addresses
- 172 of the 358 responded = 48% response rate
- 16 responses from 2010 thrown out (experience too recent)



Quantitative Results

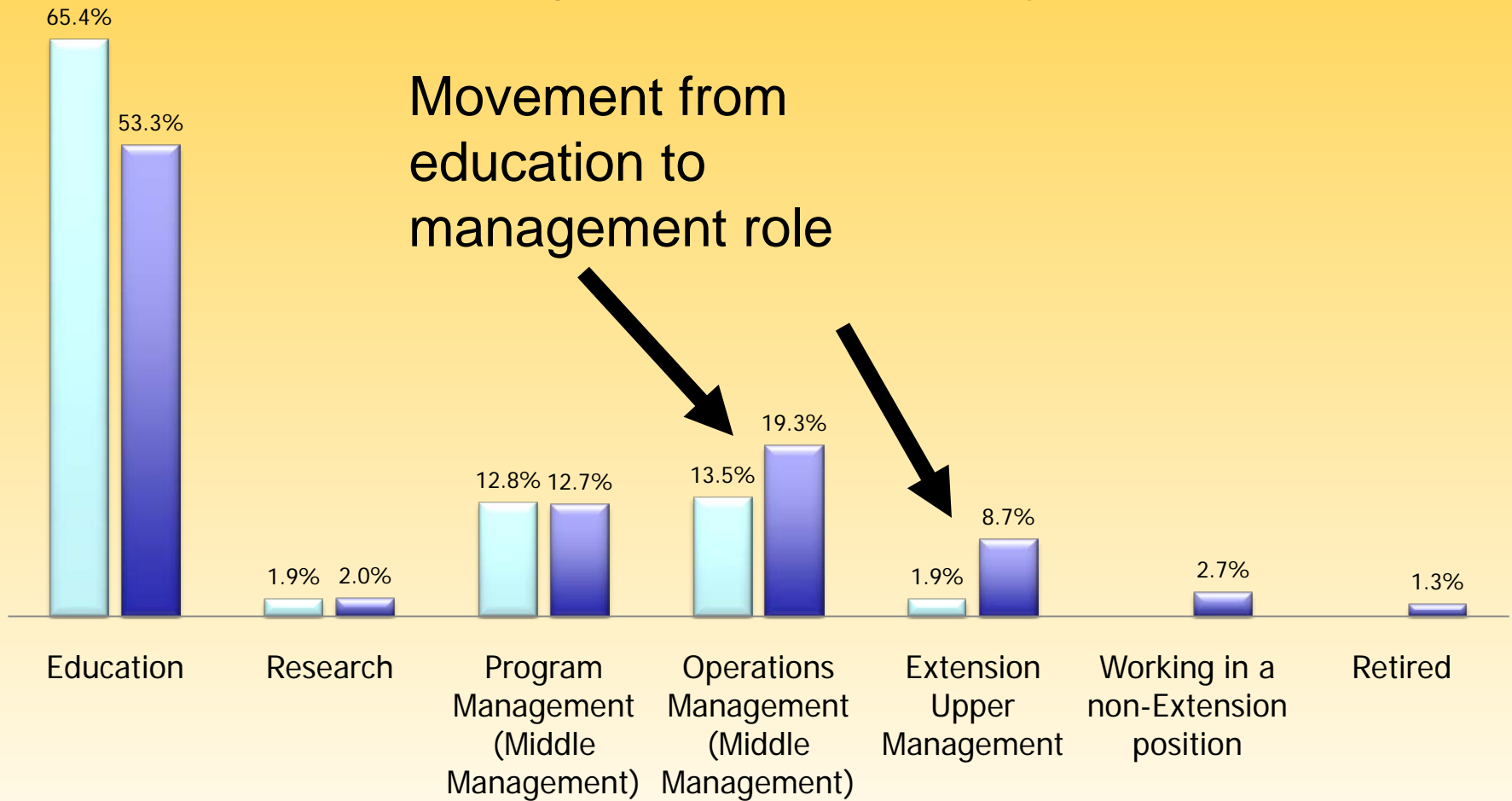


Percent of respondents from each program year (n=156)



Respondent Roles in Extension, during NELD and Today

■ During NELD (n=149) ■ Today (n=150)



Leadership outcomes

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

Program-related outcomes

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

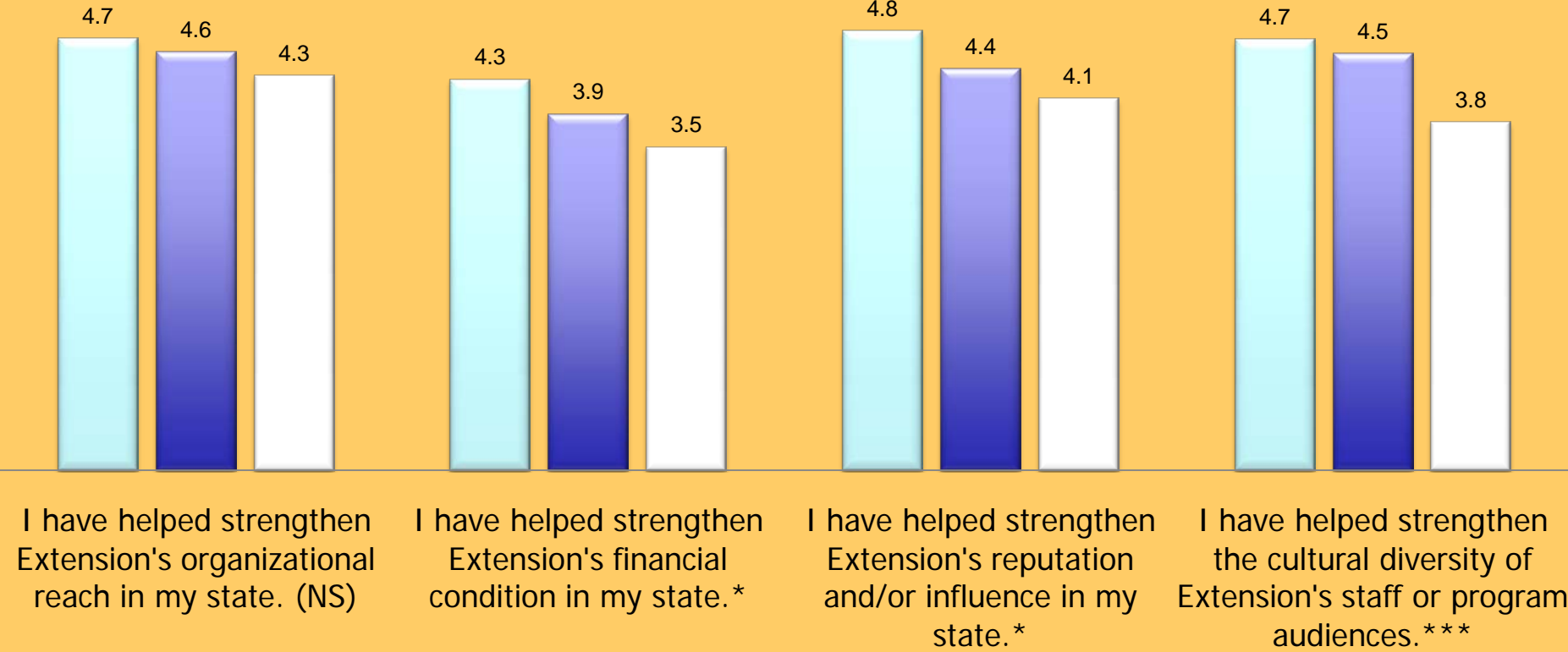
Program impacts

Self-reported contributions to program impacts as a result of NELD participation (n=156)	Mean (on a Scale of 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree)
I have helped strengthen Extension's organizational reach in my state (e.g. broader or deeper connections to audiences).	5.0
I have helped strengthen Extension's reputation and/or influence in my state (e.g. through public policy advice or other activity).	5.0
I have helped strengthen the cultural diversity of Extension's staff or program audiences (e.g. people of different ages, ethnic or class backgrounds).	4.9
I have helped strengthen Extension's financial condition in my state (e.g. through public policy advice, grant writing, program fee structure, etc.).	4.8

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)



(NS) Differences in means not statistically significant; *Differences significant at p<.05 level; *** Differences significant at p<.001 level

Qualitative Results



Participant's Voices on Skills & Insights

*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



Skills & Insights Gained, Applied

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



Suggestions for Improvement

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



NELD Graduate Survey Results

Participant Perspectives from 16 cohorts
1992-present

Scott Chazdon and Lisa Hinz

Thank you for your interest and attention!



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

Driven to DiscoverSM