



2023 Member Online Survey

Presentation of Results July 2023

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2023 Member Research Overview

The 2023 NCMPR Member Research Program consisted of two related components:

Member Online Survey

- A customized online survey was created by GradComm to obtain input and ideas from NCMPR members. The survey was used to gain insights about their specific college and department, understand their experience with NCMPR, and gauge their involvement with other professional organizations.
- Fieldwork occurred off and on from late March through mid June of 2023. A survey link was initially provided to members during the National Conference. Additional invitations to take the survey were sent via email in the succeeding weeks.
- The survey consisted of 47 questions and took an average of 17 minutes to complete. A total of 265 surveys were initiated with 199 fully completed (75% completion rate).

Member Individual Interviews

- Between May 22 and June 28, 2023, GradComm's CEO and Director of Client Services interviewed ten (10) NCMPR members who completed the survey and indicated that they a.) were open to being interviewed and b.) had a lower level of engagement with NCMPR than desired. There was at least one interviewee from each NCMPR district, with two members interviewed from districts 1, 2, and 7.

Member Online Survey

General Member Information

Survey Sample Overview

- This year's survey participants again skewed highly female (74%) and White/Anglo (84%), with no more than 5% of any other ethnicity.
- The sample also skewed older, led by members aged 51 to 60 (35%) and 41 to 50 (30%).
- The sample has strong educational credentials with 54% having achieved a Bachelor's degree and 42% an advanced degree.
- Survey respondents are much more likely to work for an individual college (91%) than a system/district office (9%).
- Affiliation with NCMPR was varied across the sample, including those who have been members for less than 2 years (20%), 2 to 5 years (29%), 6 to 10 years (27%) and more than 10 years (24%).

Position & Longevity

Job titles are varied, though one third of members are Director level.

Job Title/Position	
Director	34%
Manager	13
Coordinator/Administrator	10
Executive Director	9
Other (various specialists, strategists)	9
Graphic Designer	7
Chief Marketing Officer	5
Writer	4
Vice President/Chancellor	4
Assoc./Asst. VP/Chancellor	4

Members have a broad range of experience in their current position.

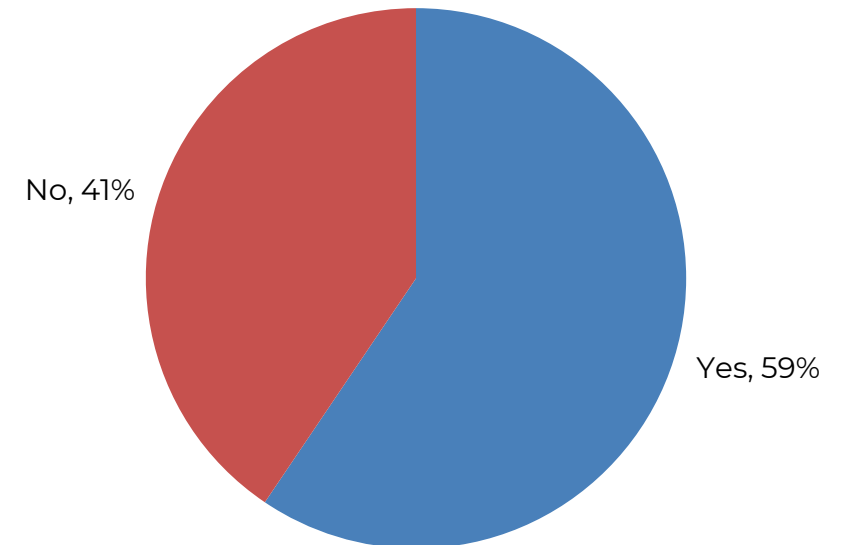
Time in Current Position	
Less than 2 years	25%
2 to 5 years	29
6 to 10 years	23
More than 10 years	23

Department & Leadership

Three-fourths of members are based in the marketing/communications department.

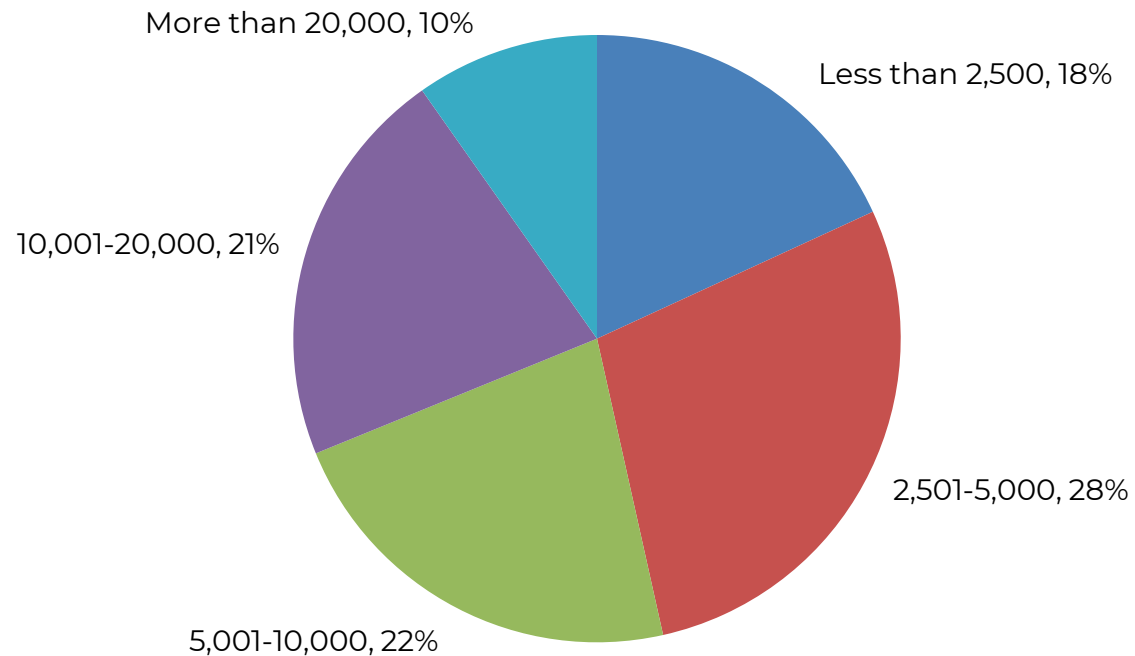
Department/Division	
Marketing/Communications/PR	75%
President's Office	9
Advancement/Effectiveness	8
Administration	4
Other (admissions, enrollment)	2
Student Services	1

The head of their department is cabinet-level for more than half of members.



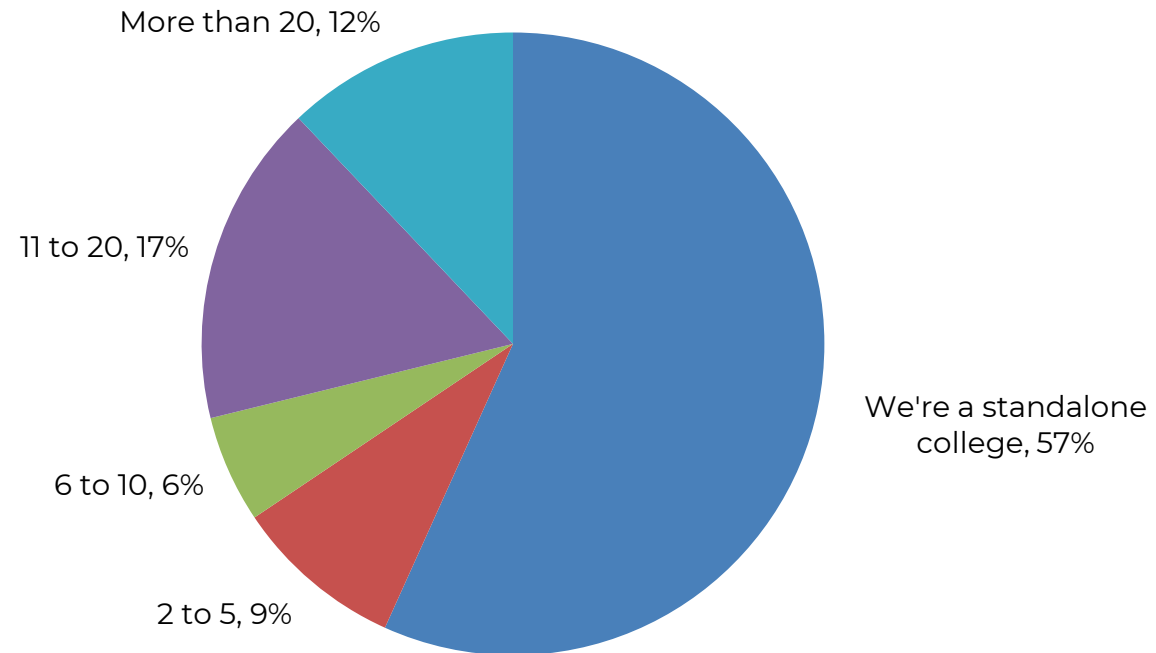
College Size

There is broad representation across the sample, with half the members from colleges with an enrollment of 2,501 to 10,000 students.



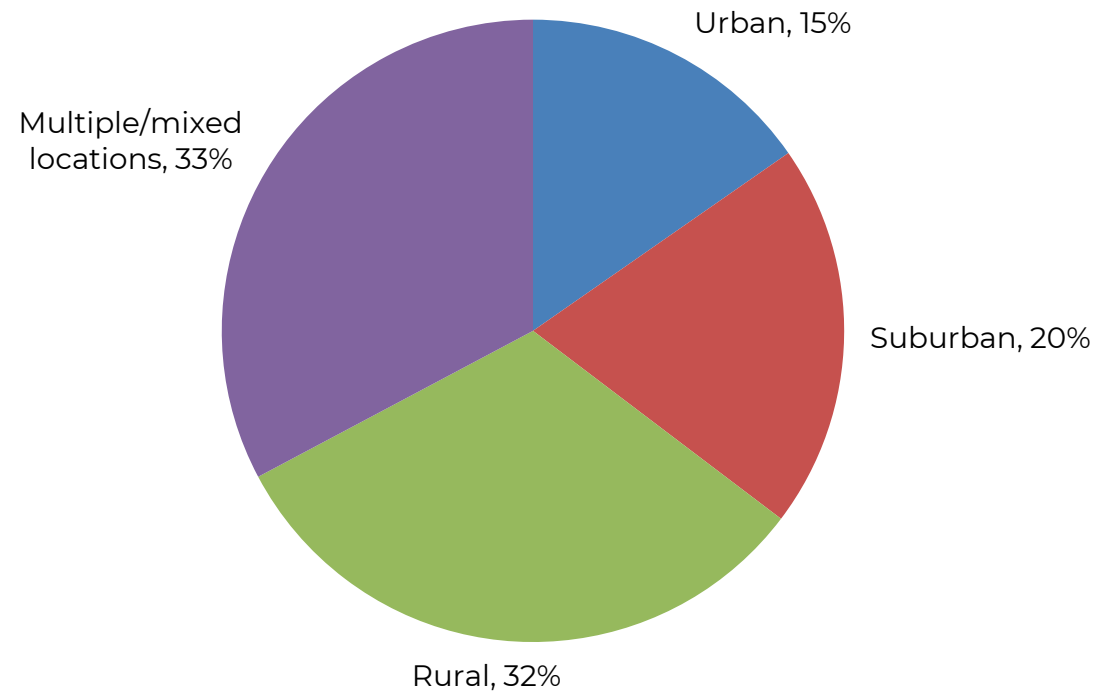
Colleges in System/District

More than half of members are employed by a standalone college.



College Location(s)

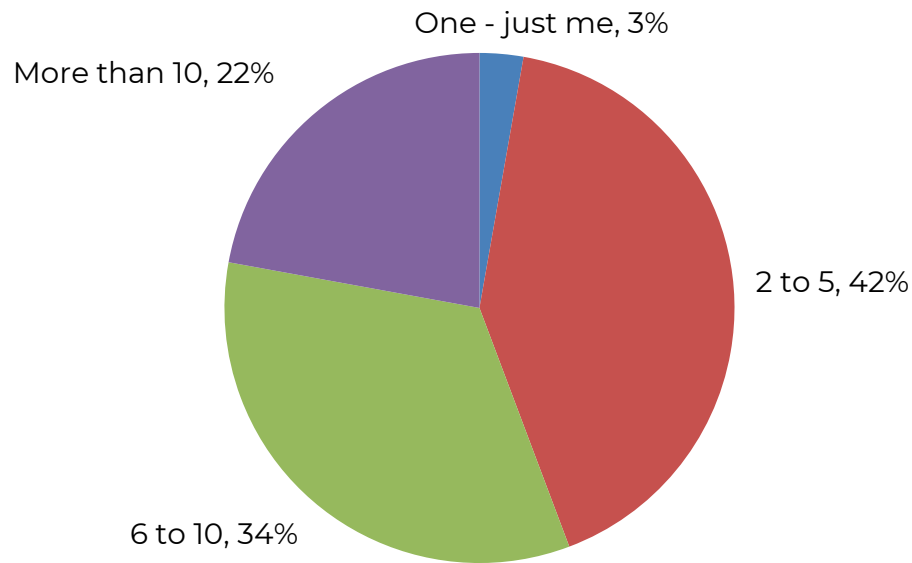
Member colleges are most likely to be in either multiple/mixed locations or in a rural area.



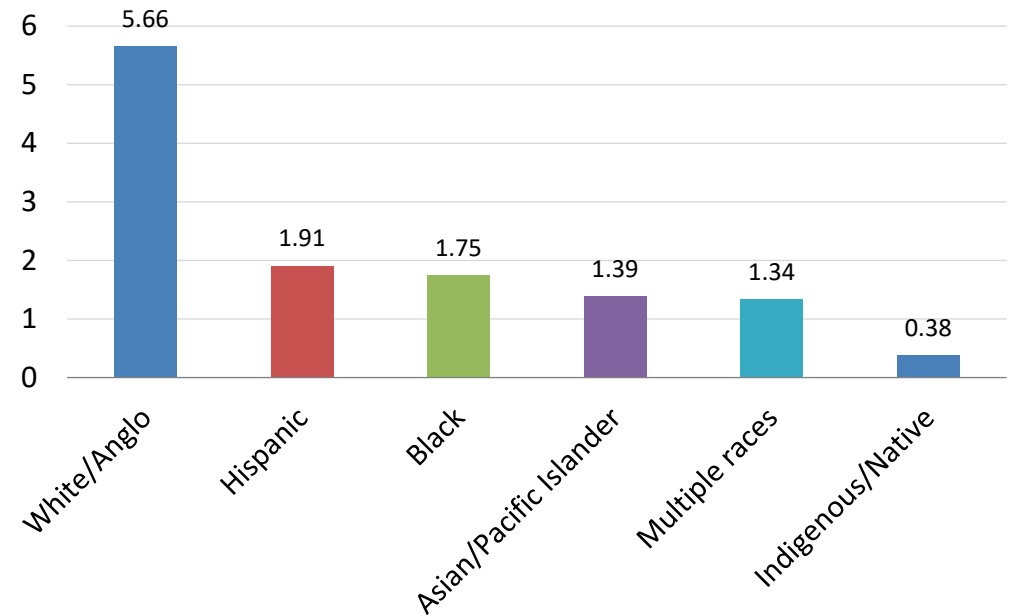
Department Insights & Priorities

Department Size & Ethnic Diversity

Three-fourths of members have a total staff size of between 2 and 10 in their department.



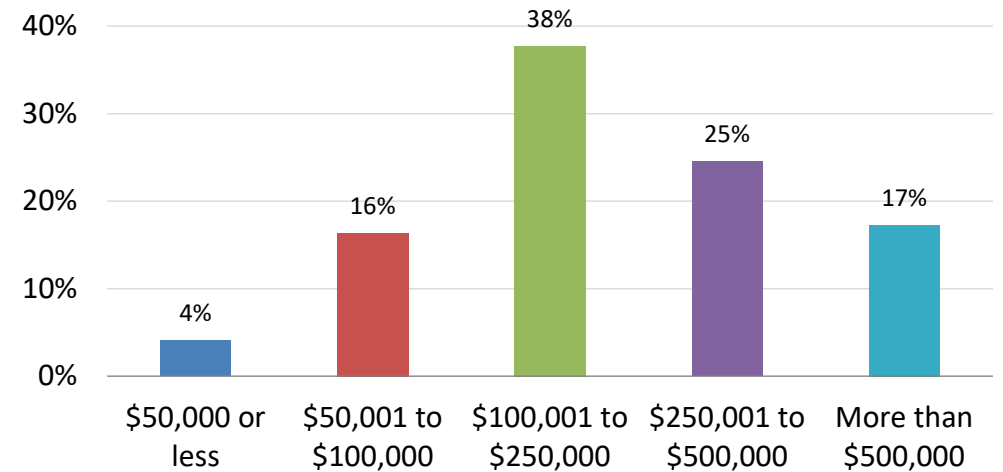
The ethnicity of department members skews heavily white/Anglo.



Department Budget

- Members are most likely to have an annual marketing budget of \$100-\$250K (38%).
- Roughly 40% of members have an annual budget above \$250K.
- However, 20% of members have a smaller budget of \$100K or less.

Total annual marketing budget
(including vendor costs and media buys, but not staff salaries)



Department Priorities

- Increasing staff capabilities and size is the most common priority, ranked first by almost half of members and in the top three for nearly all respondents.
- Increasing the department's budget is also a shared priority, ranked first by a quarter of the sample and in the top three for three-fourths of members.
- Increasing visibility on campus and improving professional development are of secondary importance, with improved access to senior leadership far behind.

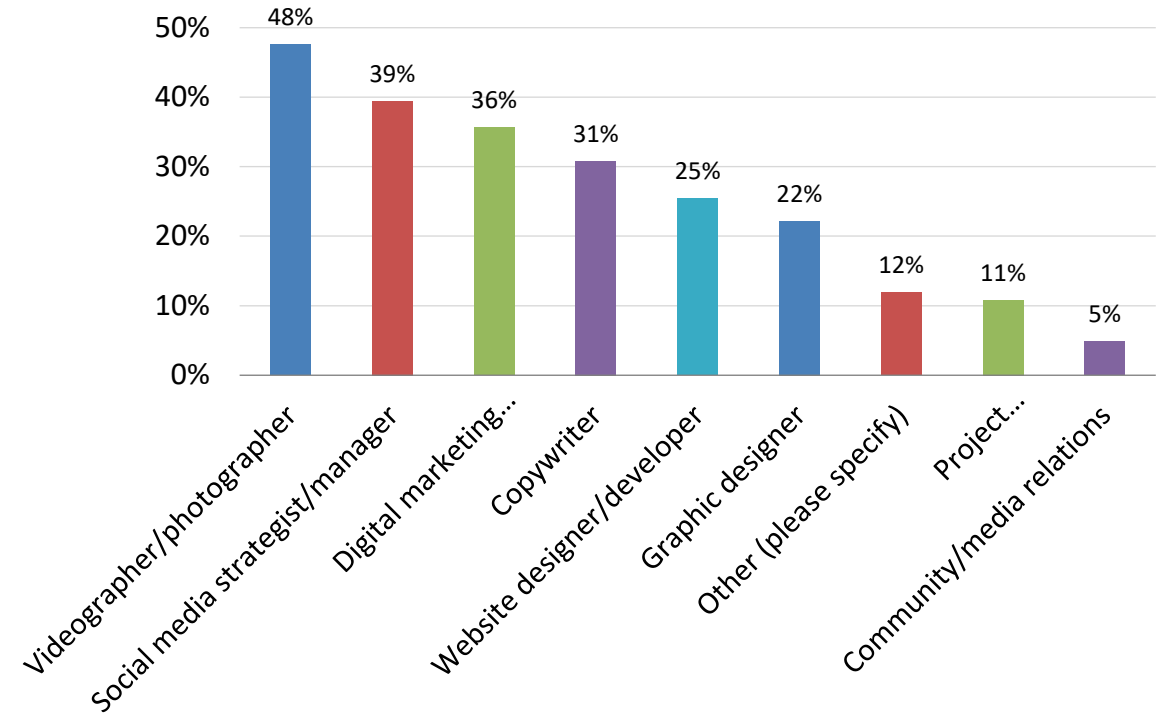
	% ranked first	% ranked in top three
Increase the department's staff capabilities/size	47%	85%
Increase the department's budget	25	78
Increase visibility on campus	12	55
Improve professional development	10	54
Improve access to senior leadership	6	29

Note: respondents were asked to rank their top 3 priorities from the list above.

Department Staffing Needs

- Nearly half of members (48%) indicate a need for a videographer and/or photographer.
- Social media and digital marketing experts are also a critical need for many members (39% and 36% respectively).
- The need for additional production support is also common including a copywriter (31%), website designer/developer (25%), and graphic designer (22%).

Roles/positions that need to be added or filled in department

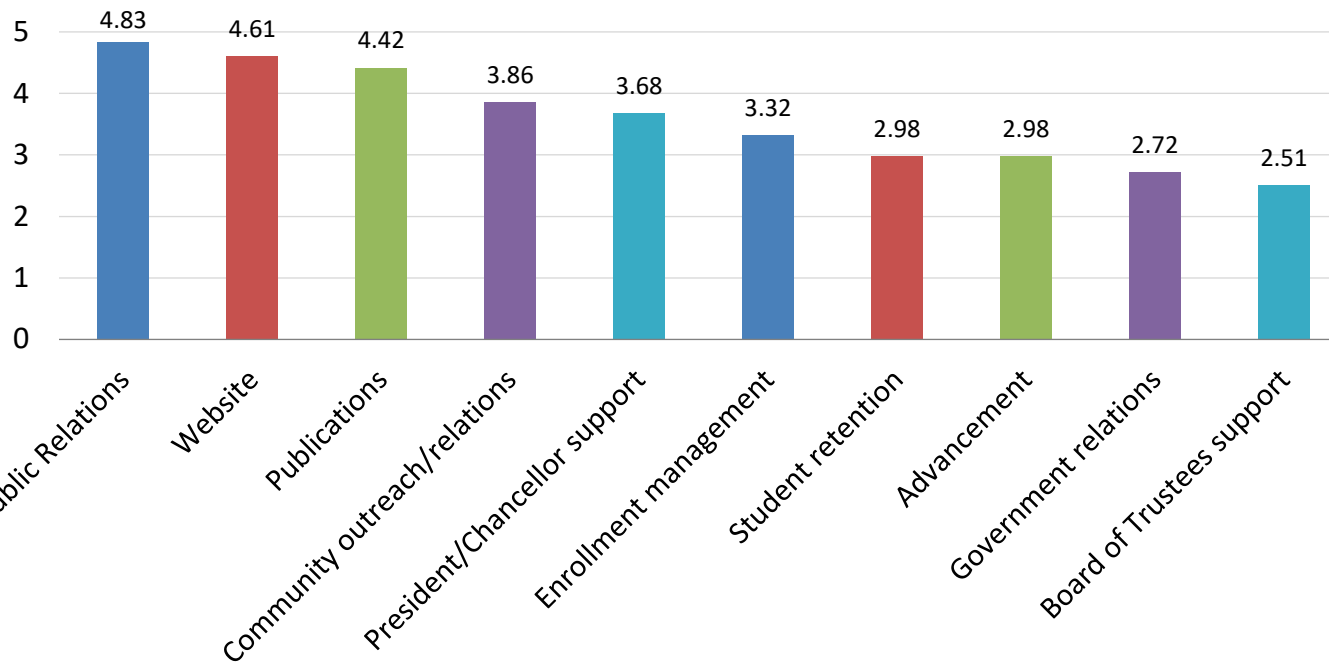


Note: multiple responses accepted.

Department Impact

Members feel that their department has the greatest impact in their college's communications led by marketing/PR, website, and publications.

Impact of department in various roles/functions



Note: each role rated from "1" = currently have no impact to "5" = currently have great impact.

Department Challenges

- Increasing student enrollment is the most common challenge for members, ranked first by roughly a third and in the top three for nearly two-thirds of respondents.
- Facing unrealistic expectations given limited resources is also a shared challenge, ranked first by a quarter of members and in the top three by more than half of the sample.
- Effectively reaching multiple student audiences and educating others about the importance of marketing/branding are also commonly cited challenges.

	% ranked first	% ranked in top three
Increasing student enrollment	34%	64%
Facing unrealistically high expectations given limited resources	26	52
Effectively reaching multiple student audiences	10	46
Educating others about the importance of marketing and brand building	8	40
Not being appreciated for the value and sophistication of our contributions	8	28
Not being involved in key decision-making	7	22
Improving/expanding digital initiatives	4	29
Being solely responsible for college reputation management	4	17

Note: respondents were asked to rank their top 5 challenges from the list above.

Most Successful Marketing Programs/Tactics (Verbatims)

Many members cite the value and effectiveness of targeted digital advertising and social media campaigns. Other achievements include improved coordination across college departments or featuring more personalized, relatable content and success stories.

"Made it Mondays - a social media campaign in which we highlight the story of an alum each Monday. We strive to get alums doing well but not too far along in their career so students and prospects can see themselves in the campaign."

"Redesign of college website in conjunction with new ad campaign. Good mix of digital/analog advertising tactics."

"Our digital enrollment pushes in the fall and spring have accounted for nearly 50,000 clicks to our website, which has seen an increase in total visits for the last several years despite community college challenges nationwide."

"Moving to digital advertising and making data-informed decisions. When I started this position, we were still relying heavily on print advertising and spending a fortune."

"Video, video, video - doesn't even have to be professionally produced. Video has outperformed any other medium."

"Working with our Admissions team to focus our digital ads on populations or areas that have the highest potential of reaching prospective students."

"A successful tactic has been surveying our students about our marketing campaigns before we run them. It gives us real data on what our students connect with."

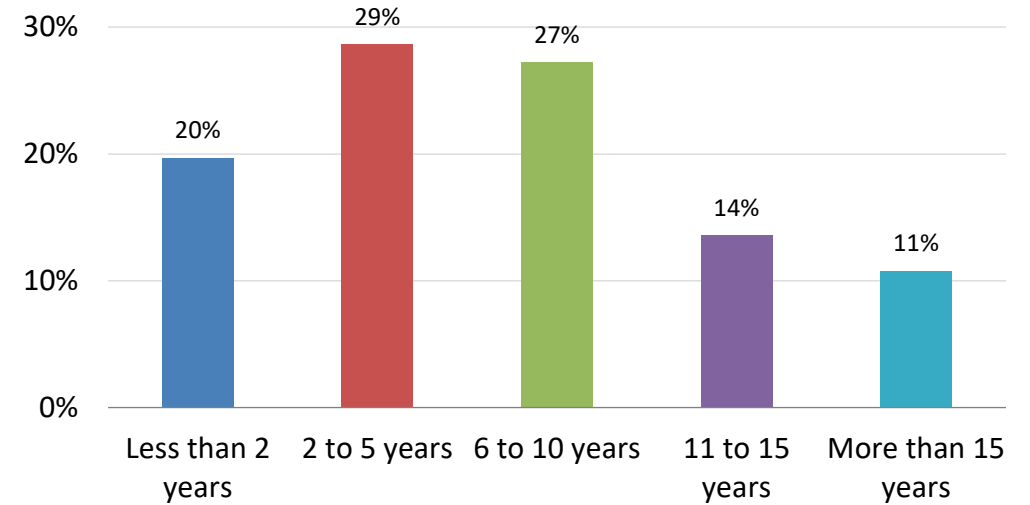
"Our most successful marketing programs always take place when we get consistent buy-in across the college, from many different departments and constituents. Involving folks from different areas of the college to back the same initiative or event goes further than our department speaking alone."

NCMPR Membership Experience

Membership History

- More than half of the survey sample have been NCMPR members from 2 to 10 years (56%).
- A minority of members (16%) have had a break in their membership, typically due to:
 - Budget cuts/limitations
 - COVID-19
 - Changes in management/personnel
 - Administrative delays/lapses
 - Switched institutions or temporarily left higher education

Total years as NCMPR member

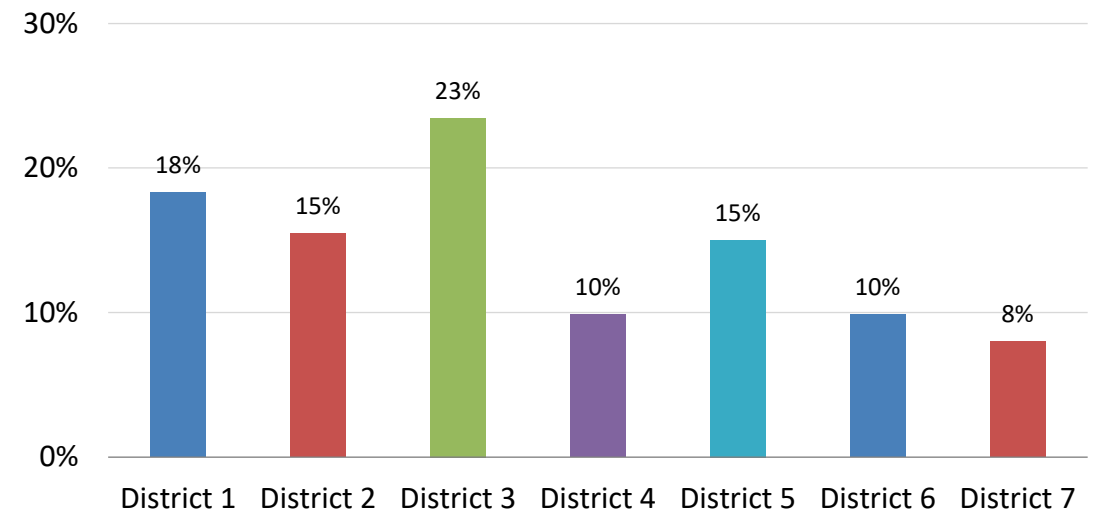


District Representation

- Survey respondents are most likely to be from District 3.
- Districts 1, 2 and 5 also have good representation in the sample.
- Districts 6 and 7 are among the least common. When these members were asked about combining the two districts:
 - Nearly half (42%) don't have a preference
 - Roughly a third (34%) prefer to keep the Districts separate
 - About a quarter (24%) are in favor of combining the two Districts

**Low sample size (n=38).*

District to which college belongs



Importance of Events/Resources

- The National and District Conferences are considered most valuable, with both ranked first and/or in the top three most often by members.
- Webinars and Podcasts follow the Conferences in terms of their perceived importance.
- The Email Listserv and Paragons and Medallions are also considered important benefits of membership.

	% ranked first	% ranked in top three
National Conference	22%	47%
District Conferences	21	58
Webinars and Podcasts	17	43
Email Listserv	11	34
Paragons and Medallions	9	36
General Website Resources	5	18
Community Discussion and Blog	6	16
Counsel Magazine	4	7
Leadership Institute	3	9
Ongoing Research Studies	2	15
Social Media Initiatives	2	9

Note: respondents were asked to rank their top 5 events/resources from the list above.

Membership Benefits

- Professional development is most often considered the leading benefit of NCMPR membership and in the top three for three-fourths of respondents.
- Learning best practices is a close second and among the top three for nearly three in four members.
- Opportunities to network and make connections is also an important benefit for many members.
- Professional recognition/awards and resource referrals are also valuable to some members.
- Other potential membership benefits lag far behind.

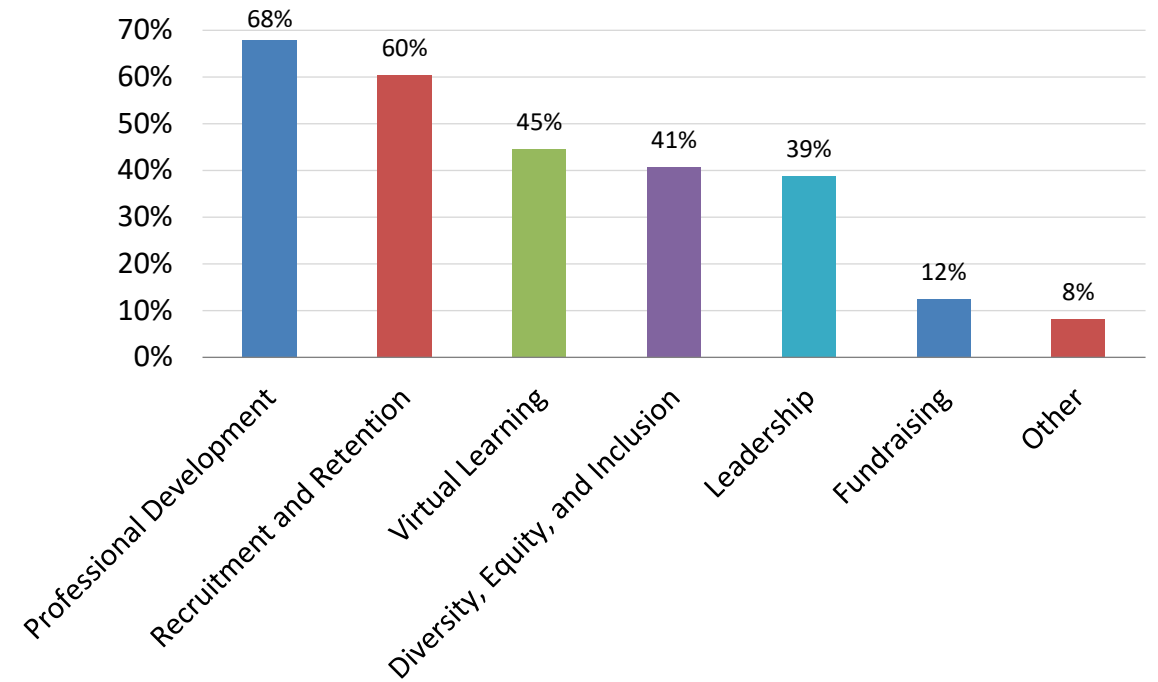
	% ranked first	% ranked in top three
Professional development	34%	76%
Learning best practices	27	72
Networking, camaraderie, and connections	23	64
Professional recognition (Medallions, Paragons, etc.)	9	36
Resource referrals	3	32
Serving on Board/committee(s)	2	10
New career opportunities	1	8
Volunteer opportunities	0	3

Note: respondents were asked to rank their top 5 benefits from the list above.

New/Expanded Resources

- Additional resources related to Professional Development are most frequently sought by members.
- Recruitment and Retention is also a priority area of interest.
- Virtual Learning, DEI and Leadership are secondary areas of importance.

Desire for increased programs/resources

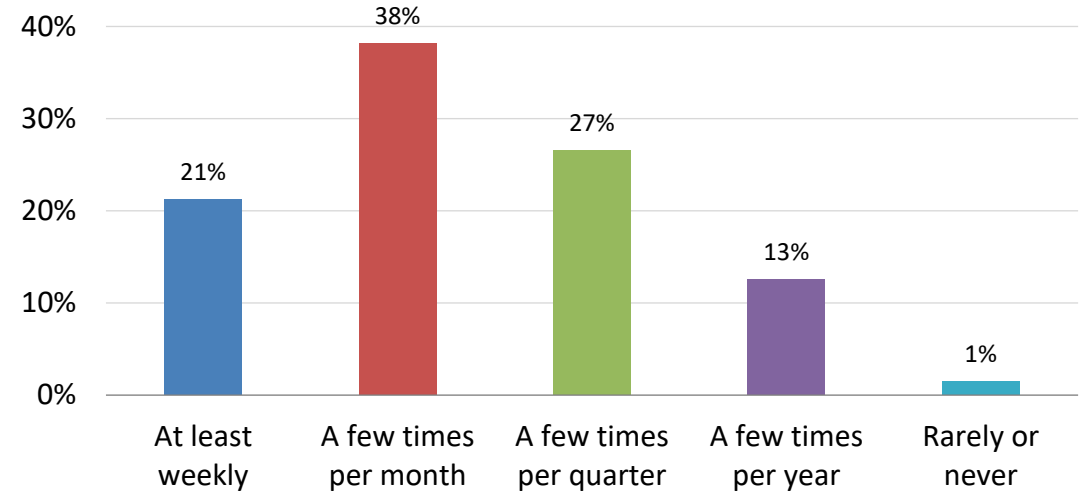


Note: multiple responses accepted.

Member Participation

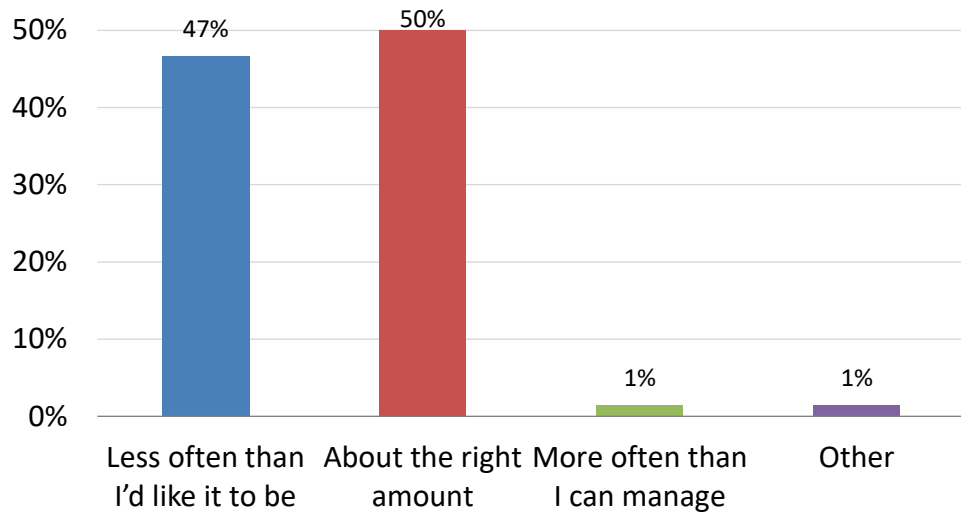
- Members are most likely to access or engage with NCMPR resources a few times per month (38%).
- More than one-fourth of members (27%) access resources only a few times per quarter.
- One in five members (21%) engage with NCMPR at least weekly.

Frequency of participating with NCMPR

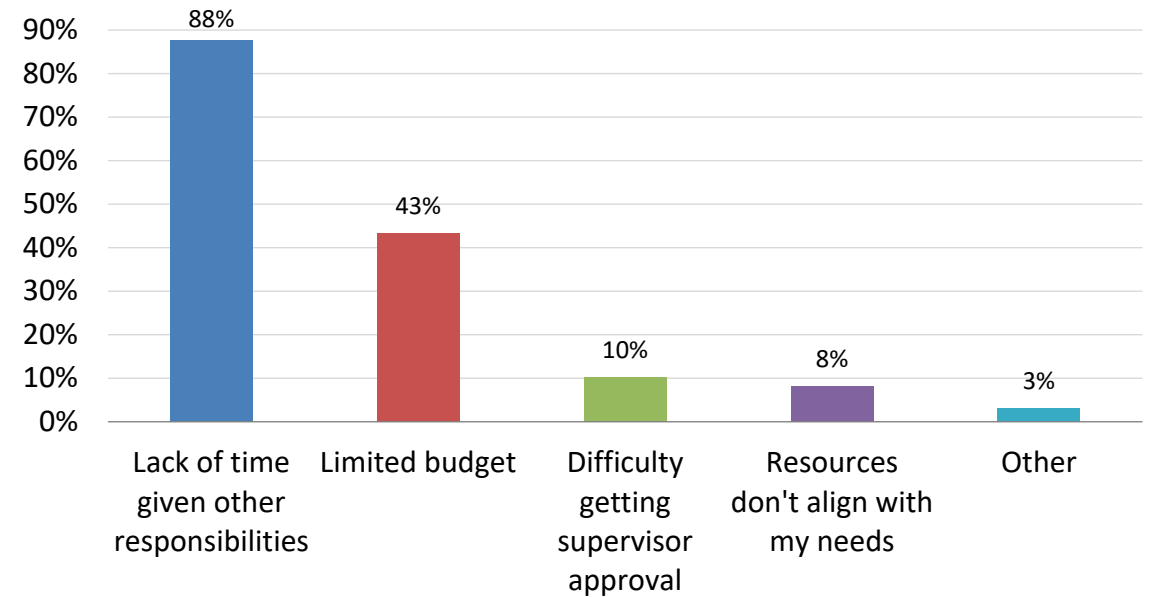


Member Engagement & Barriers

Members are split nearly evenly between being satisfied with their current NCMPR engagement and wishing for more.



A lack of time is the most significant barrier to greater engagement with NCMPR, followed by budget limitations.

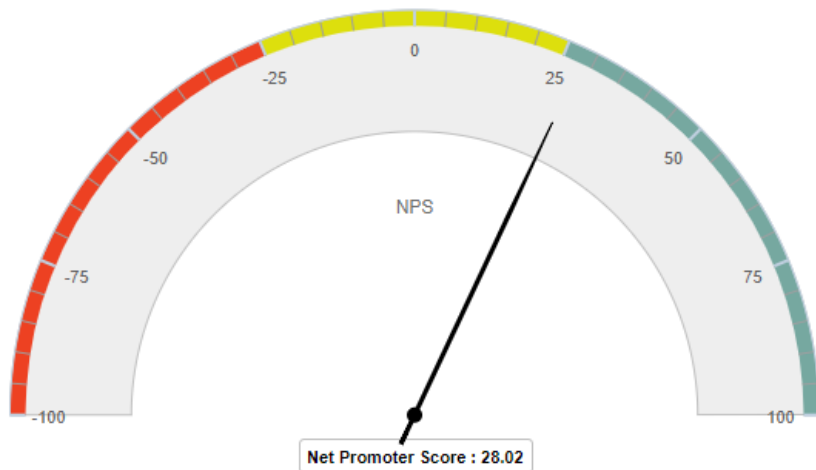


Note: asked only among members who indicate they engage with NCMPR less often than they would like.

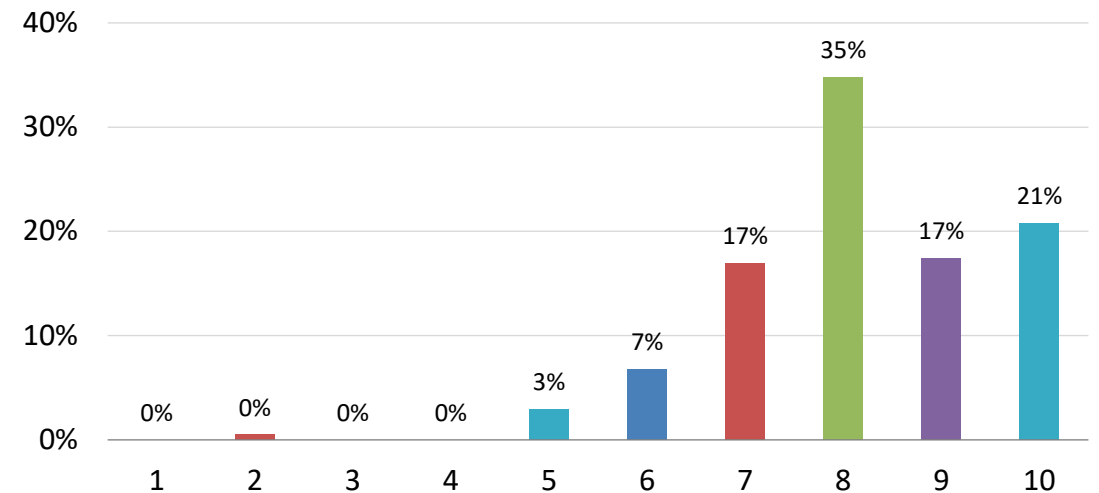
Overall Satisfaction with NCMPR

Member satisfaction with NCMPR is reasonably high, with 38% of the sample considered to be “promoters” (top 2 box ratings).

- More members are classified as “passive” enthusiasts (52%) with ratings of “7” or “8.”
- Only one-tenth of members (10%) are considered “detractors,” with ratings of “6” or lower.



Satisfaction with NCMPR membership experience
(“1” = not at all satisfied to “10” = extremely satisfied)



Reasons for Satisfaction Rating (Verbatims)

Many members cite the value of NCMPR's resources and the meaningful opportunities for professional development and connecting with colleagues. Others criticize the high costs of events and activities, as well as the increasingly unwelcome exposure to vendors.

"NCMPR is a great resource for our team and for me personally. Getting to know our colleagues around the country, their challenges and successes (and even failures) is both helpful and cathartic."

"Professional development has provided me with additional skills that I can use to do my job better."

"It's a great organization and I love the networking. It does at times feel like a clique. I would like to see more of a coordinated effort for weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly email communication to members reminding us about the multiple resources, webinars, etc. (like a newsletter)."

"NCMPR has been a fantastic resource for me and my team. We have learned so much from our colleagues across the nation. The awards have helped us demonstrate our abilities to internal audiences. The conferences are among the very best I've attended. I'm proud to be a member. I'm grateful for all you do!"

"I'd like more free resources. I have a very limited budget. I really appreciated being able to register for the lower-cost virtual version of the national conference. I'm a one-person department and it's hard to get away without projects piling up."

"The engagement seems to be migrating from providing information, best practices, and how-to's, to a channel for vendors to access us."

"Nothing is perfect, so I didn't give a perfect 10 ranking. I did give a 9 though because I feel like most of my interaction with NCMPR is positive though I rarely can afford many of the offerings."

"Conference sessions are more often sales presentations from vendors, instead of peer-to-peer presentations about pertinent challenges that lead to discussions of how ongoing efforts may be improved. Instead, there is a parade of magicians who espouse that they can solve every problem we have with their magic wands. I'd like to hear more from my peers, industry experts and government leaders about our industry and its challenges. And less from vendors who often over-promise and under-deliver."

General Membership Organizations

Criteria for Participation

Members cite a variety of factors when choosing to participate in professional development events and activities:

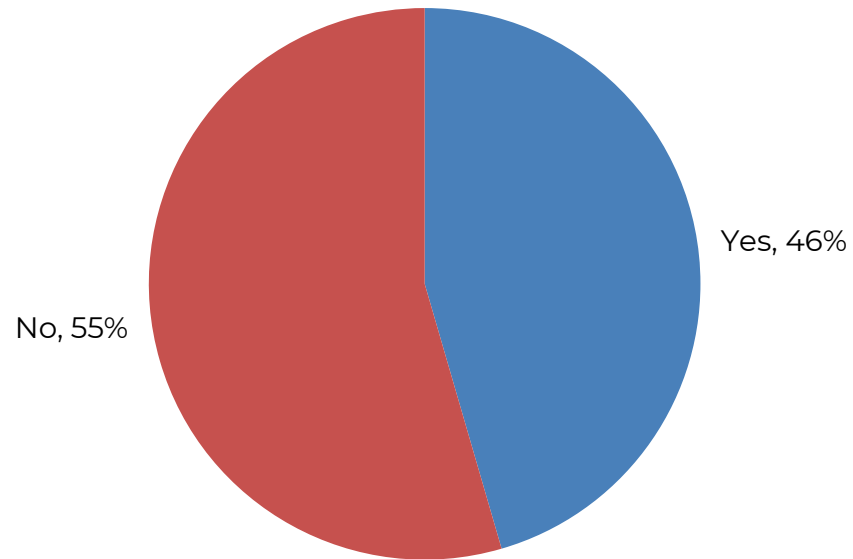
- Having an immediate impact and the overall cost are the leading criteria, and both in the top three for nearly two-thirds of members.
- Convenient timing and duration is another important consideration and commonly ranked in the top three.
- Though other criteria are of secondary importance, they are all still relevant to at least some members.

	% ranked first	% ranked in top three
Immediate impact (i.e., solves an urgent issue or skills need)	26%	62%
Overall cost	23	63
Convenient timing and duration	19	65
Featured presenter(s)/ facilitator(s)	12	37
Long-term return on investment	12	33
Desirable location	9	41

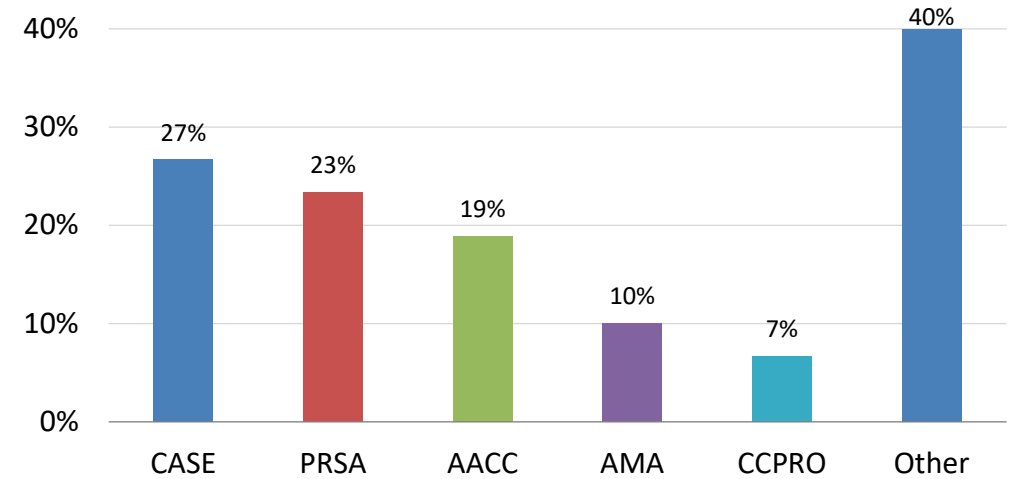
Note: respondents were asked to rank their top 3 criteria from the list above.

Other Memberships

Slightly less than half of respondents are also members of another professional organization or association.



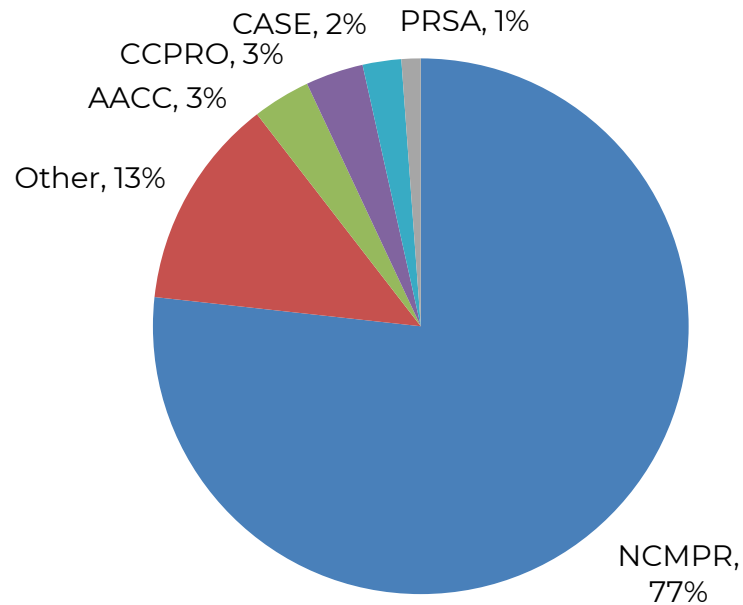
Respondents are most likely to also be members of CASE, PRSA, or “other” various local, state, regional associations.



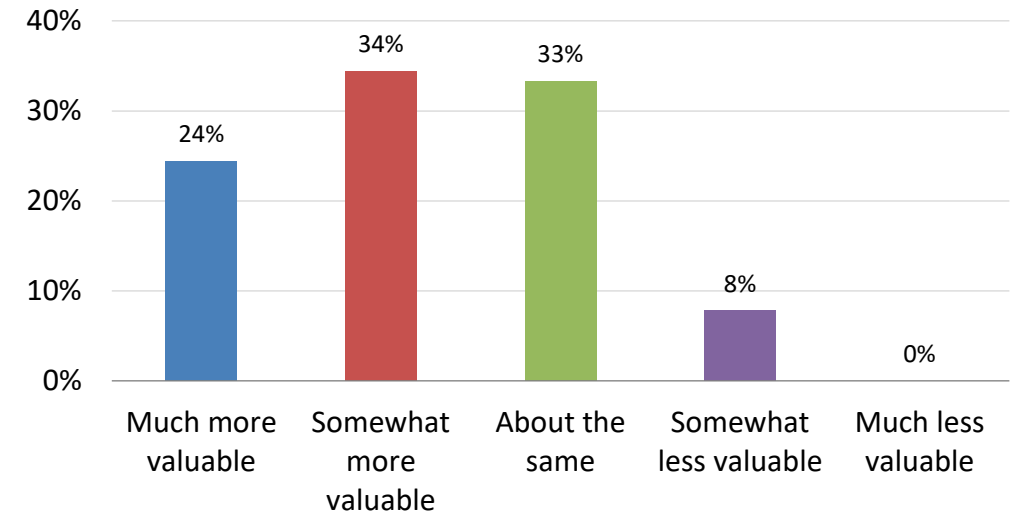
Note: asked only among members who indicate membership in other professional organizations.

Membership Activity & Value

Roughly three quarters of respondents with multiple memberships are most active with NCMPR.



More than half of respondents (58%) consider their NCMPR membership to be more valuable than other organizations.



Note: asked only among members who indicate membership in other professional organizations.

Reasons for NCMPR Value Assessment (Verbatims)

Many members find greater value in their NCMPR membership due to the abundance of resources tailored to the needs of two-year colleges. A few mention the more localized focus and/or lower cost benefits available from other organizations.

"The state organization is dominated by universities. NCMPR's focus on two-year colleges makes it more likely to apply to the unique challenges we face."

"It's the only organization that offers professional recognition via awards specifically for our industry."

"I feel that NCMPR is more valuable because it's specific to community colleges. Other organizations are much more broad and so aren't as applicable to my everyday work."

"PRSA does a better job of maintaining online resources, examples, on demand webinars, etc. that are free to members."

"NCMPR offers more opportunities to engage with other members and share concepts than UPAA."

"I am extremely active in my state organization. ACCSPRA provides a lot of information, support and resources that directly involve activities occurring at Alabama colleges; therefore, I benefit more from the organization than I do from NCMPR."

"NCMPR can help my entire team with trainings, etc., whereas AACC is more specific to my role as a VP."

"It's not even close. The resources NCMPR provides are outstanding. Not a day goes by when I don't touch upon something I learned from a colleague, heard at a conference, or purchased from a conference exhibitor."

NCMPR New Member Recruitment Ideas (Verbatims)

Respondents recommend offering no/low-cost ways for potential members to initially experience the many valuable resources offered by NCMPR. Other suggestions include featuring member testimonials, providing incentives for peer-to-peer recruiting, as well as targeting other key college stakeholders to promote the ROI for their marketing effectiveness.

“Often, I think people don't join because of limited budgets. Maybe offering a first-year discounted membership price so that they could get their foot in the door and see for themselves the value of a NCMPR membership.”

“Targeting communication to administration that would help support funds needed for membership.”

“Peer-to-peer outreach and member testimonials that communicate the benefits and attempt to address potential objections.”

“Collaboration social posts with current members. Discounted invites to district conferences.”

“Offer a free webinar. Offer current members a referral discount for recruiting other colleges..”

“I would position NCMPR as THE resource for 2-year college communicators. It's an invaluable resource to share knowledge, learn from others and come together to celebrate the best in the industry.”

“Promote the networking and professional development opportunities, specifically at the national conference.”

“Focus on messaging around all the ways NCMPR can make a 2-year college marketing professional's life easier. Offer regular free resources as a taste of all the resources available: downloadable planning tools, 15-minute webinars, etc. to show the value. Tell your story - who is NCMPR? It is about the people and how we all are working hard to support our small schools!”

2022 vs. 2023 Key Comparisons

2022 vs. 2023 Key Comparisons

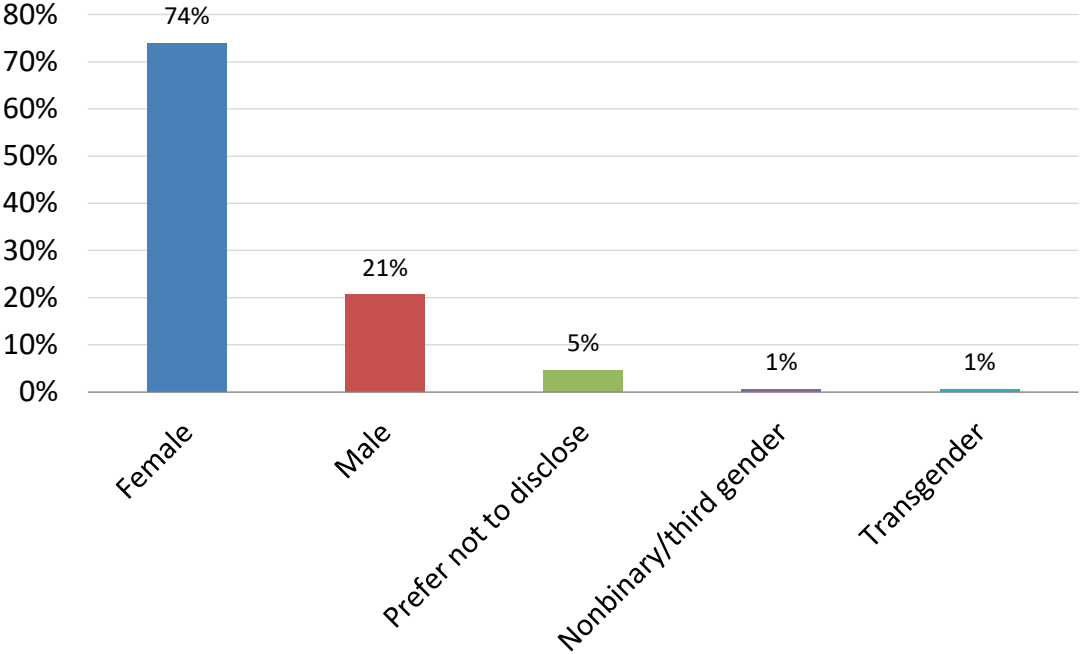
Major changes were made to the 2023 online survey in terms of the specific topics covered, as well as how individual questions and answer choices were presented. Consequently, there are only limited comparisons that can be made between the two surveys. Of note:

- **Department budget:** There is a shift to somewhat higher marketing funds in 2023, with far fewer members having budgets of less than \$100K (32% vs. 20%) and a larger number with budgets of more than \$500K (12% vs. 17%).
- **Department staffing needs:** These questions differ between the two surveys and can't be directly compared, but the high-priority roles needed are consistent such as videographer/ photographer, social media and digital marketing specialists, copywriter, and web designer.
- **Department responsibilities/impact:** This topic was probed in a new way, though members in this year's survey feel that their department makes the most impact in the same areas most commonly responsible for in the 2022 survey, such as Marketing/PR, website, and publications.
- **Importance of NCMPR Events/Resources:** The 2023 survey included additional events/resources to be ranked, though the top three are consistent between surveys, including the National Conference, district conferences, and webinars and podcasts.
- **NCMPR Membership Benefits:** The 2023 survey included additional benefits and members ranked their top 5 rather than top 3 in 2022. Learning best practices and networking/making connections remain the most popular across both surveys. (The leading 2023 benefit Professional Development was not included in 2022.)
- **New/Expanded NCMPR Resources:** The question approach and answer choices differed between the two surveys, though the desired for additional Recruitment & Retention programming remains a very high priority. (again, Professional Development not included in 2022).

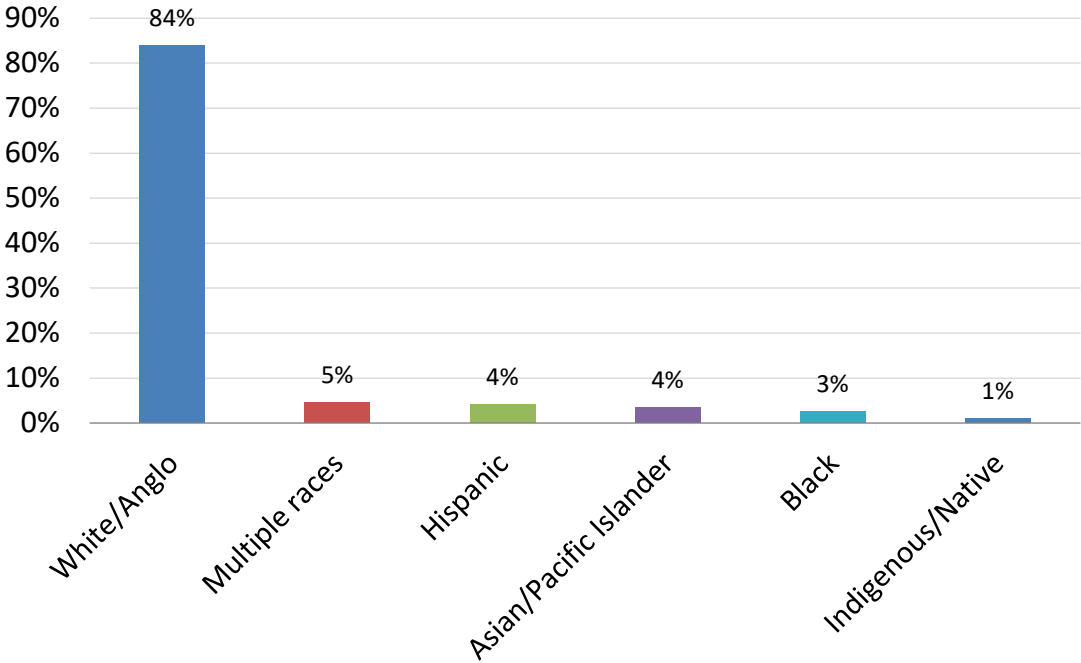
Survey Sample Demographics

Survey Sample Demographics

Gender

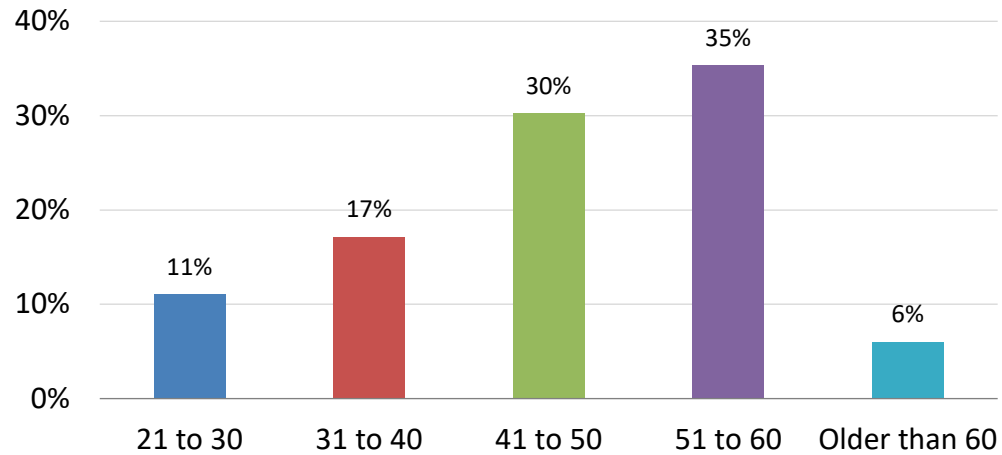


Ethnicity

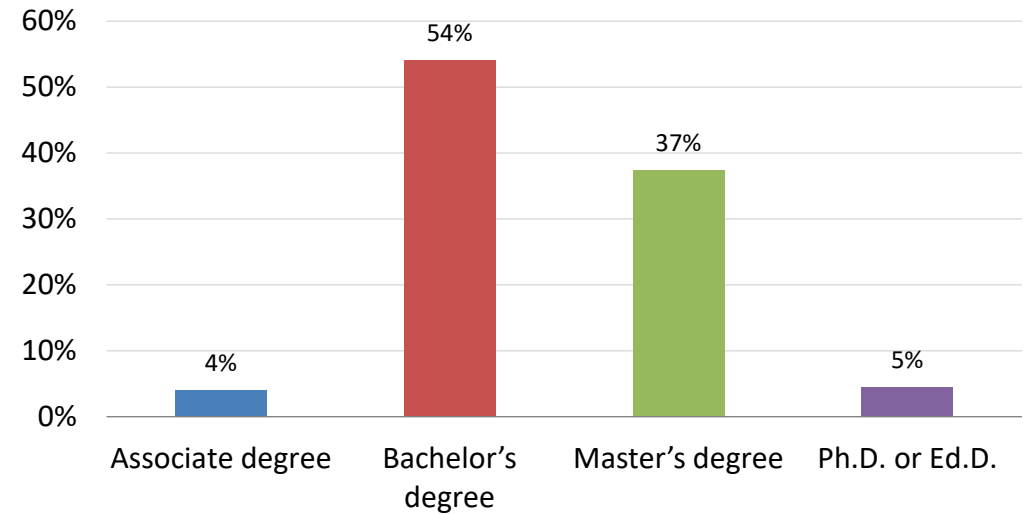


Survey Sample Demographics*

Age



Education



**Note: the survey sample includes no veterans and only 6% with a self-identified disability.*

Member Individual Interviews

Reasons for Lower than Desired Engagement with NCMPR

- Budgetary constraints, particularly when choosing to attend the National Conference. Members report choosing between the national and district conferences, with travel costs playing a significant role in deciding which to attend. Several interviewees emphasized the importance of scholarships.
- Several participants mentioned that they do not know what their membership includes. They are unaware of the actual value of membership outside of conferences.
- When new leadership joins the college, they are frequently unaware of NCMPR and do not understand the organization's value, making travel requests to attend conferences difficult.

Suggested NCMPR Changes/Improvements

- More opportunities for “in the trenches” type of discussions between members at colleges who are not in leadership positions.
- Oftentimes programming is too “insular”. This interviewee would like to hear from experts outside of higher education to learn about new ideas and trends. Bring in “more outside-the-box speakers on bigger topics.”
- There is a lot of value on the general website, but some members note that some featured resources aren’t being regularly updated.
- Could you include more content about how to run a department, be a leader, resolve conflict, etc.?
- State representatives should be more involved in recruiting new members.
- Since NCMPR has eliminated paper submissions for Medallions and Awards, can the organization encourage people to bring/share their work at conferences and have a dedicated section (perhaps in the vendor area) for people to view other colleges’ work?
- Several interviewees suggested that NCMPR create more “hands-on” workshops such as the cell phone photography workshop at the National Conference. For example, one participant suggested a workshop in which designers are asked to bring their computers and are led by an instructor on how to make an animated GIF for social media. Perhaps even recruit community college faculty members to teach a workshop like this? Or, make a video on your phone and use AI to change the video in real time.

New Ideas/Considerations for NCMPR

- Are there opportunities for less formal connections?
- Create a directory of individual NCMPR members that other members could search to make connections, particularly when job searching (if this exists, promote it more regularly).
- Create a conference track or webinar focusing exclusively on small, rural colleges and their unique challenges.
- More networking opportunities at the National Conference. For example, an AMA activity includes a game in which you get your badge and collect colors from other people to get to know everyone.
- Is a “trial” membership possible to reengage colleges whose membership has lapsed or to encourage new members?
- Could NCMPR create templates that colleges could use to make their job “easier”?
- Colleges love awards; is there a toolkit to help colleges show off their awards?
- One member would love to see more “best practices” shared via social media, newsletters, etc.
- A participant suggested a mentorship program through which more senior members could mentor those new to their roles or NCMPR.
- Several interviewees mentioned finding a way to get NCMPR marketing materials into the hands of other employees at the college. One idea is to identify members who could “upsell”? Perhaps a member college that has a membership for only one or two people could add another member for free if they refer another college?
- NCMPR should reach out directly to new marketing directors to tell them about the organization.

Current NCMPR Resources that are Highly Valued

- Webinars were mentioned frequently as an essential membership resource.
- Interviewees liked the size and excitement of the National Conference but also enjoy the more intimate connections and friendships at the district conferences.
- Interviewees mentioned the Listserv as a valuable resource.
- One interviewee loved the change to conference tracks – separating into beginner/intermediate/advanced – and suggested additional designations for small/medium/large colleges.
- The NCMPR Awards programs.

Implications & Opportunities

Implications & Opportunities

In general, most participating NCMPR members remain pleased with and active in the organization.

- More than half have been members for 6+ years and nearly three-quarters of the sample rate their overall satisfaction as an “8,” “9,” or “10.”
- More than half participate in some way at least a few times per month, and three-quarters of those with other professional memberships are most active with NCMPR.
- Nearly half of those surveyed would prefer to engage with the organization more often than they currently do, primarily due to a lack of time and other responsibilities.

Members greatly appreciate NCMPR’s unique opportunities and resources to connect with and learn from their peers.

- The National and District Conferences are particularly popular events for networking and to share/learn best practices with other college marketing professionals.
- NCMPR’s webinars/podcasts, email listserv, and Medallion/Paragon awards are also considered important resources for ongoing professional development and recognition.

Implications & Opportunities

Much remains to be done to improve the diversity of NCMPR's member base and the college marketing discipline more generally.

- NCMPR should consider amplifying and extending its dedicated recruiting efforts and incentives to reach a more diverse, likely younger audience.
- Additional resources and best practices that help members to diversify their own departments would be useful, particularly when recruiting high-need experts in videographer, social media, digital marketing, etc. (presumably making them more representative of their student body).

NCMPR should proactively address the primary criticisms about high costs, perceived value, and excessive vendor exposure.

- Consider lower-cost entry memberships and/or scholarships, particularly to entice younger and more diverse prospects.
- Continue to push programming and solutions that have an “immediate impact,” the key criteria for participating in professional development activities/events (followed by cost and convenience).
- Ensure that conferences and other events remain focused on peer-to-peer relationship-building and idea exchanging rather than becoming a marketplace for external vendors.

Implications & Opportunities

Expanding NCMPR's portfolio of tools and resources to address common challenges and pain points would help to increase the impact and value of membership.

- Most members feel that they are fulfilling their core marketing/communications role but are lagging in other key areas such as student enrollment/retention and institutional advancement.
- Ideas and initiatives to improve operational/financial efficiency would be helpful given that most have many responsibilities without adequate budgets, staff and resources to achieve them all.
- There is a common need for recommendations and programming to improve student recruitment and retention since that is often a primary metric of their success.
- Other key need areas include ideas for reaching diverse student audiences and tangible evidence that could help persuade others about the importance of the college brand and marketing.
- Members offer many sincere and thoughtful suggestions in the survey verbatim comments and interview notes – these should be seriously considered and introduced whenever feasible (ideally, with credit given to the specific member(s) who authored the idea).



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