

Member Online Survey Presentation of Results

June 2022

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Study Overview

Methodology

- An online survey was created by Graduate Communications using the Question Pro platform with a corresponding link sent via email to NCMPR members (multiple times).
- The survey consisted of 44 questions and nearly all were completed from December 2021 through February 2022.
- A total of 288 surveys were initiated with 205 fully completed (71% completion rate). The average time to complete the survey was 17 minutes.

Respondent Profile

- The sample is skewed highly female (82%) and non-Hispanic white/Anglo (83%) with 5% or less of any other ethnicity.
- Respondents are well represented across age groups with most being 31-40 (27%), 41-50 (29%) or 51-60 (27%).
- The sample has strong educational credentials with 48% having achieved a bachelor's degree and 45% an advanced degree.
- Respondents are much more likely to work for an individual college (91%) than a system/district office (9%).

Position/Department Information

Current Position & Direct Report

Job titles are varied, though more than a third of members are Director level.

Job Title/Position	
Director	38%
Other (various specialists, coordinators, etc.)	17%
Manager	12%
Executive Director	9%
Graphic Designer	7%
Writer	6%
Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)	5%
Vice President/Vice Chancellor	4%

Nearly all members report to their President, Director, VP, or Executive Director.

Direct Report	
President	24%
Director	23%
Vice President	19%
Executive Director	16%
Other (CMO, Associate VP, etc.)	7%
Vice Chancellor	4%
Manager	3%

Department & Longevity

Nearly three-fourths of members are based in the communications and/or marketing department.

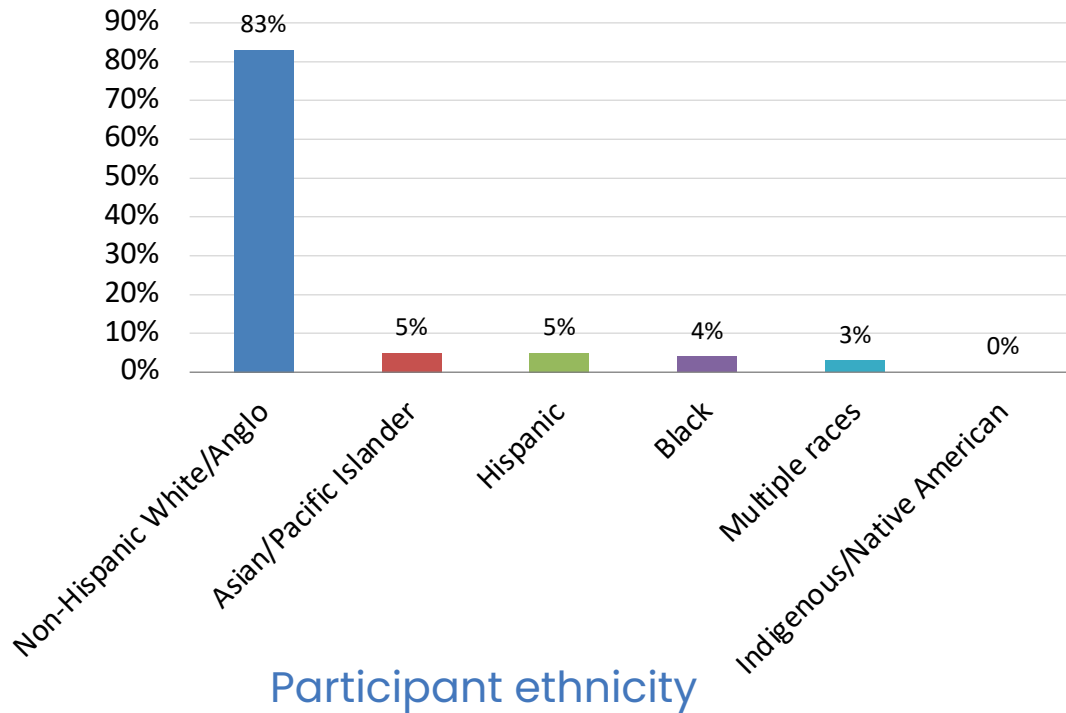
Department/Division	
Communications/Marketing	72%
Advancement	11%
Other (President's Office, PR, etc.)	9%
Administration	5%
Student Services	3%

Most members have been in their current position for 2 to 10 years and skew slightly longer in the field overall.

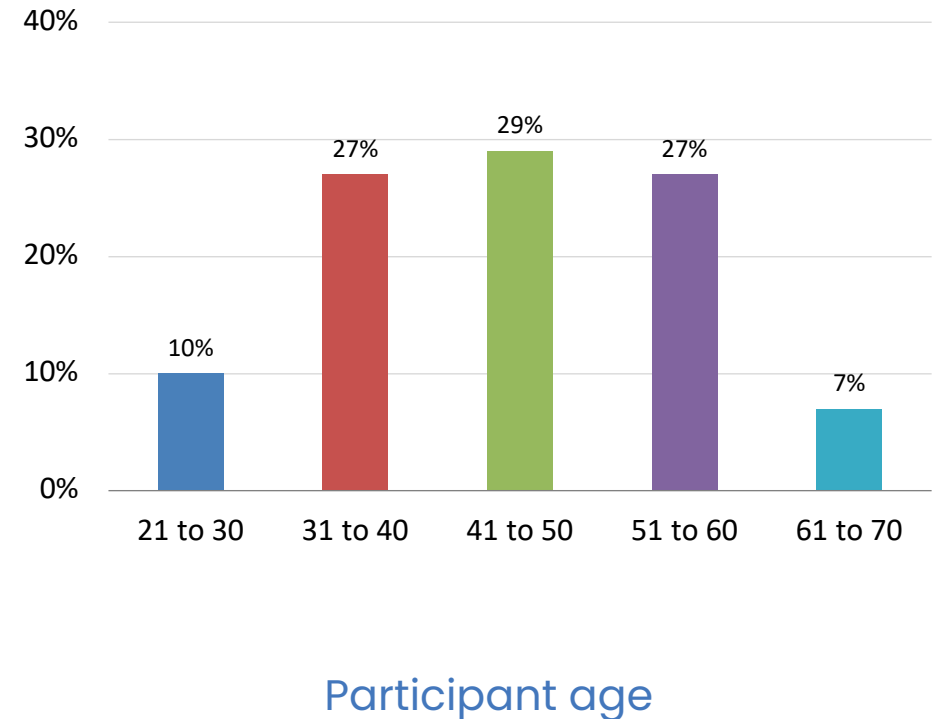
	Current Position	Higher Ed Comm/Mktg
Less than 2 years	19%	9%
2 to 5 years	32%	21%
6 to 10 years	23%	27%
11 to 15 years	11%	15%
16 to 20 years	5%	11%
More than 20 years	10%	17%

Participant Ethnicity & Age

Survey respondents are heavily skewed White/Anglo.

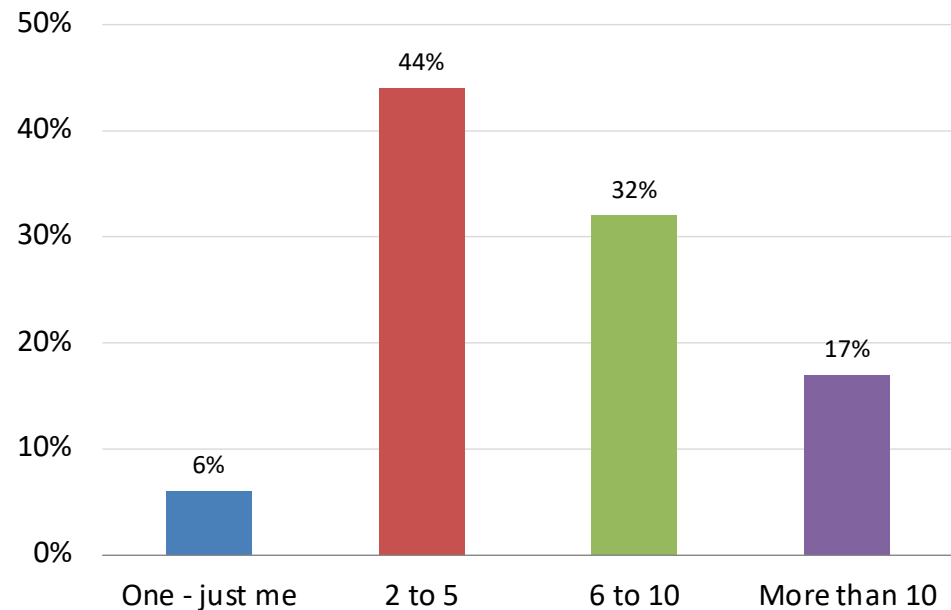


The sample is well-represented across age groups.



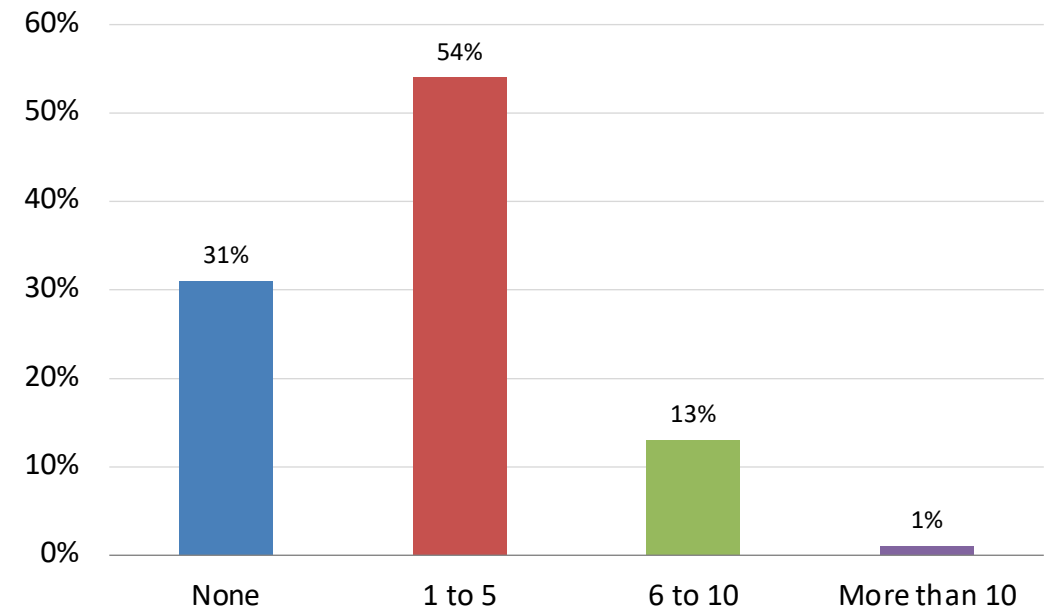
Department Size & Supervision

Most departments typically have a staff of between 2 and 10 people.



Total staff in department (full & part time)

Most members oversee a staff of 1 to 5 people, though nearly a third have no supervisory role.

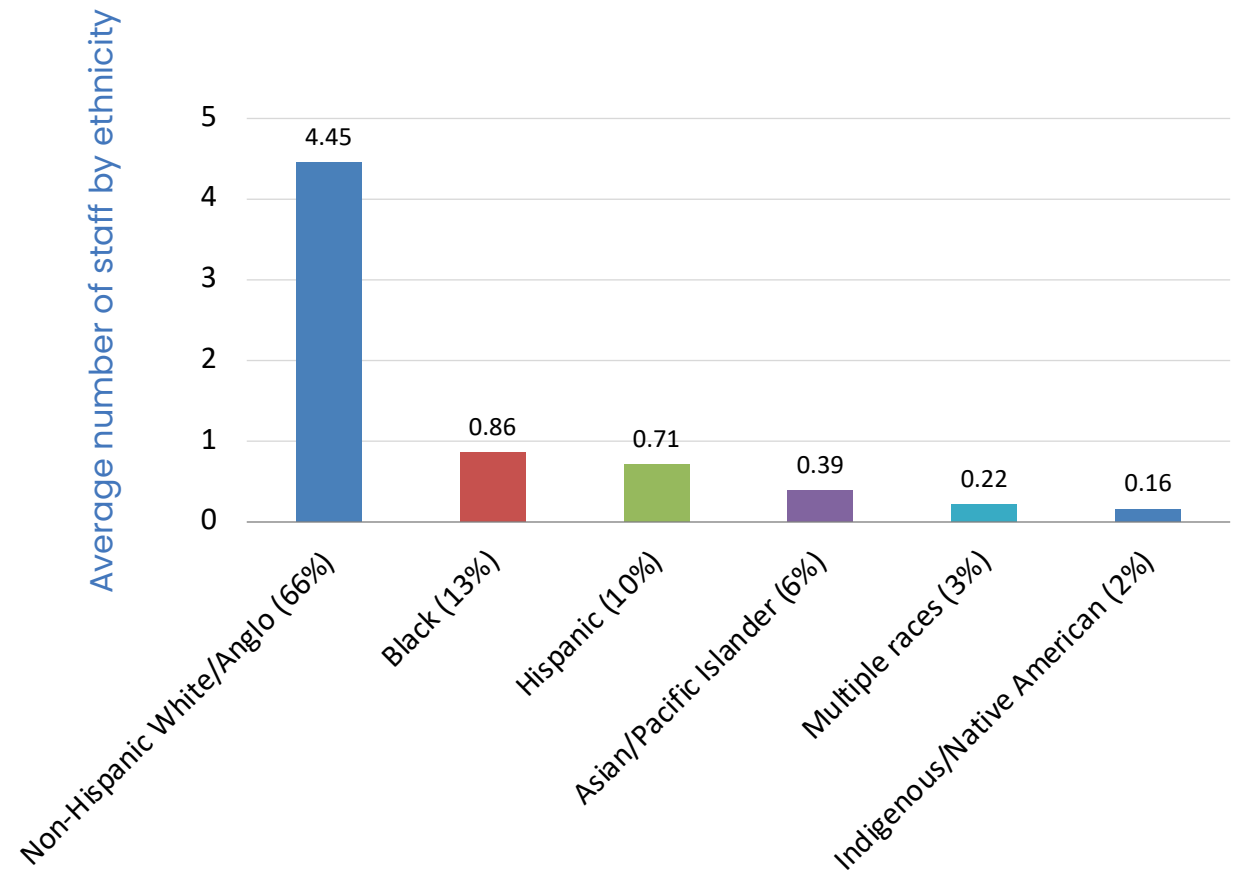


Staff personally supervise (full & part time)

Department Ethnic Representation

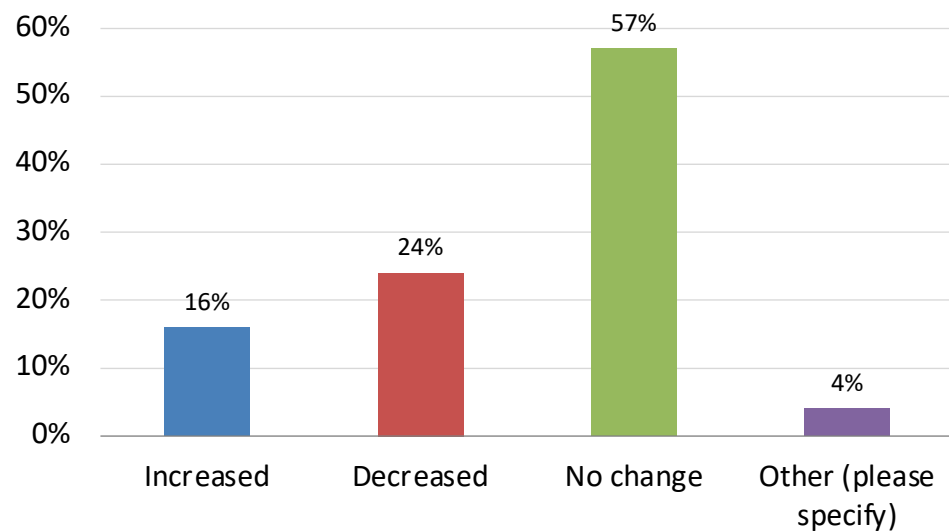
Most departments are predominantly white/Anglo with an average of less than one staff person of any other ethnicity.

- Nearly two-thirds of members (66%) have white colleagues in their department, averaging between 4 and 5 in total.
- Only 13% and 10% of departments include any black and Hispanic staff members, respectively.
- Asian, multiracial and indigenous staff are even less common at only 6%, 3% and 2% of all departments.



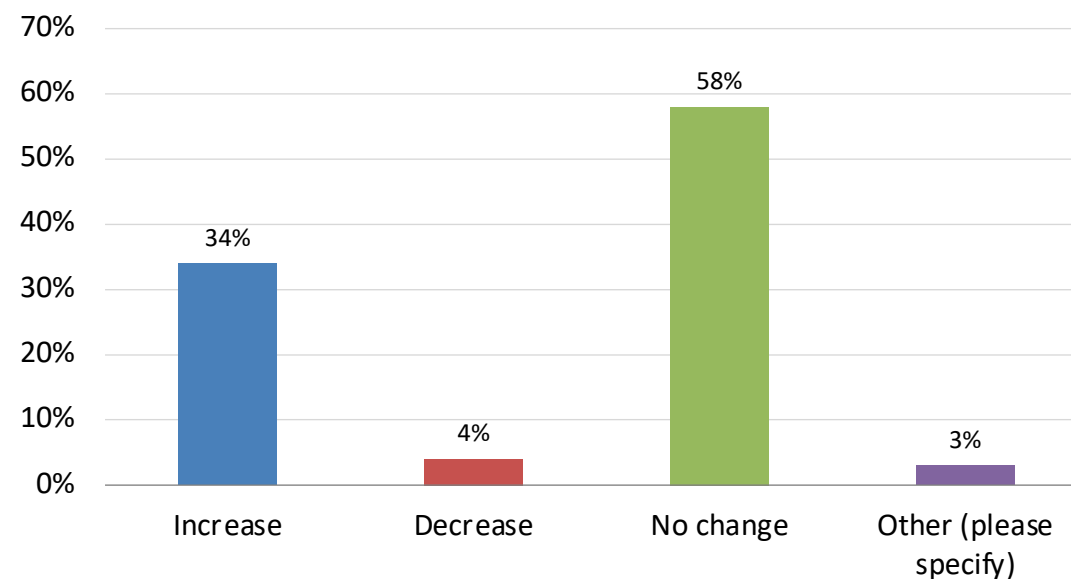
Department Staffing Trends

Most departments remained the same size during the pandemic, though slightly more likely to have decreased than increased.



Change in staff during past 18 months

More than a third of departments expect to grow during the next 18 months, slightly skewed to those with more staff currently.



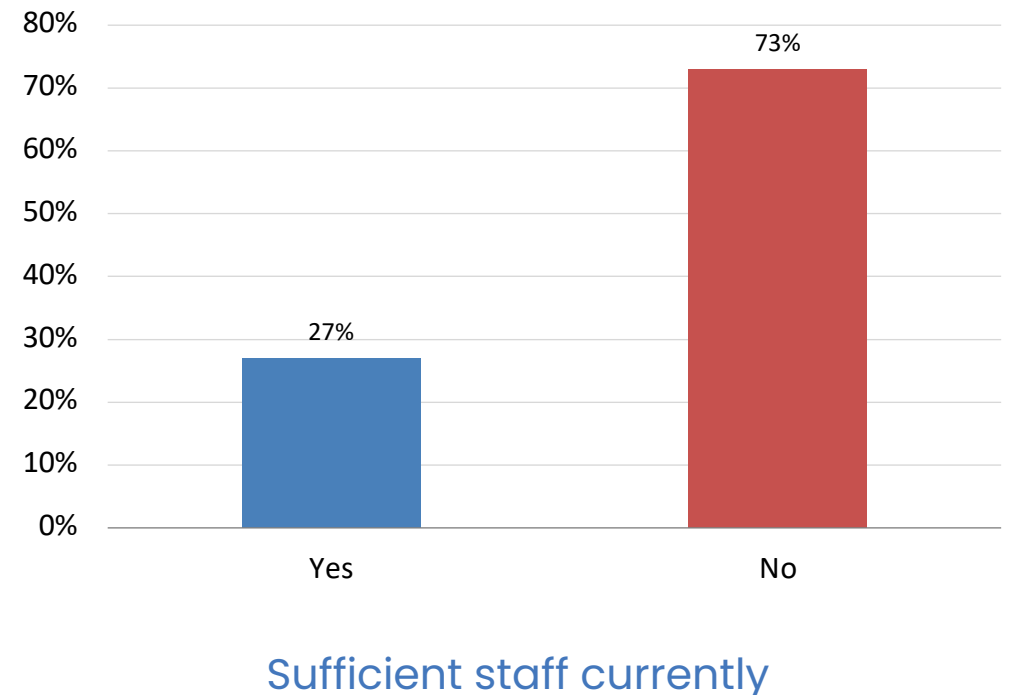
Anticipated staff change in next 18 months

Department Staffing Needs

Nearly three-fourths of members feel that their department is not sufficiently staffed currently, often those with fewer people.

Commonly needed roles include:

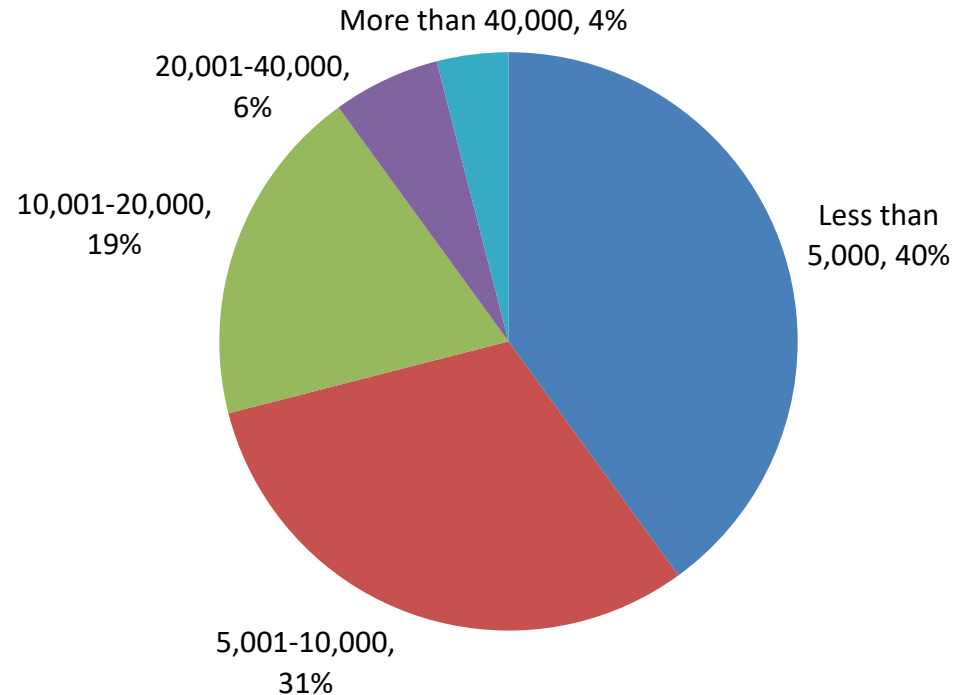
- Videographer/photographer
- Graphic designer
- Copywriter
- Digital marketing specialist
- Social media strategist/manager
- Website designer/developer



College Size (College Employed)

91% of respondents work for an individual college, with the majority (57%) at a standalone college.

Most members work at colleges with an enrollment of 10,000 students or less.

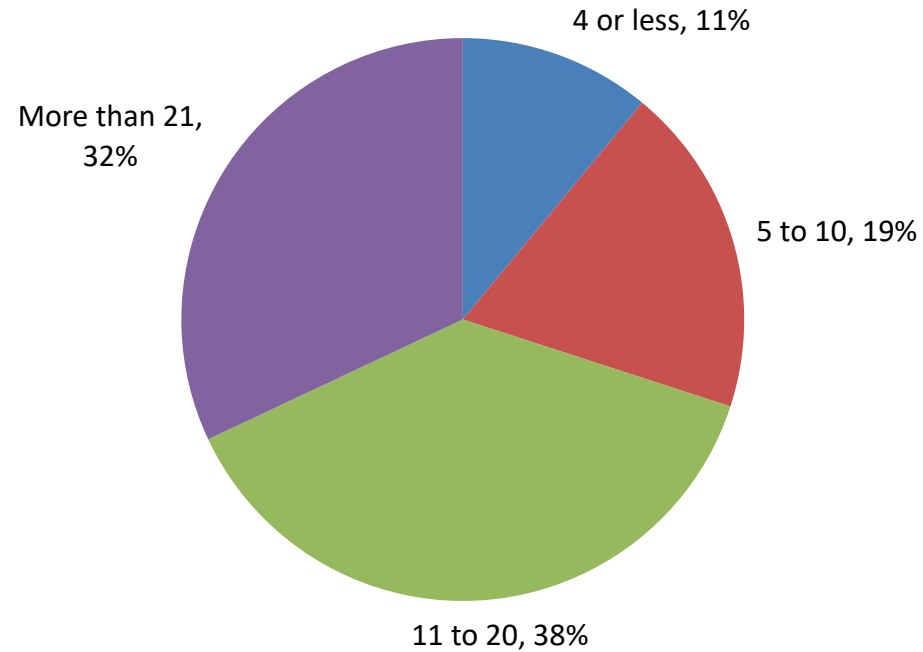


Total number of students (credit & non-credit)

System Size (College Employed)

91% of respondents work for an individual college, with 43% of those part of a larger system (n=97).

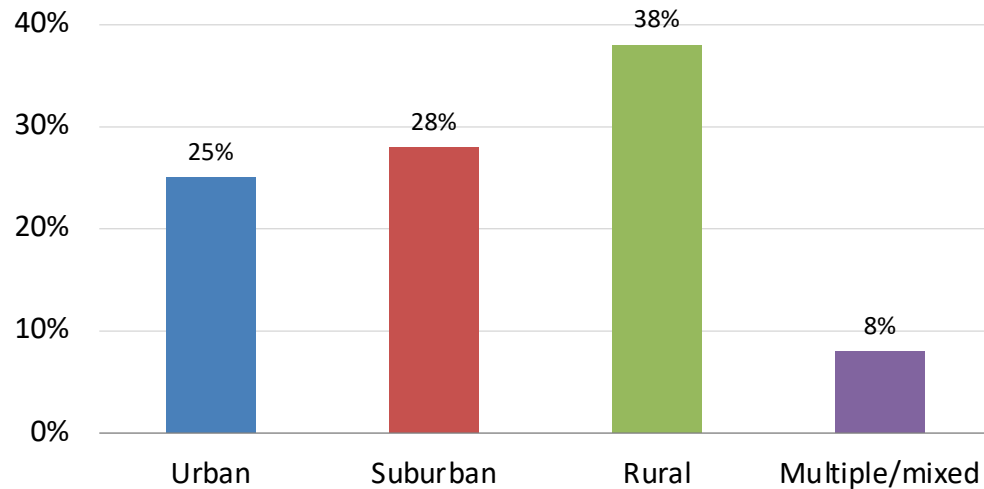
Those in a system typically have 10 or more sister colleges.



Number of colleges in system/district

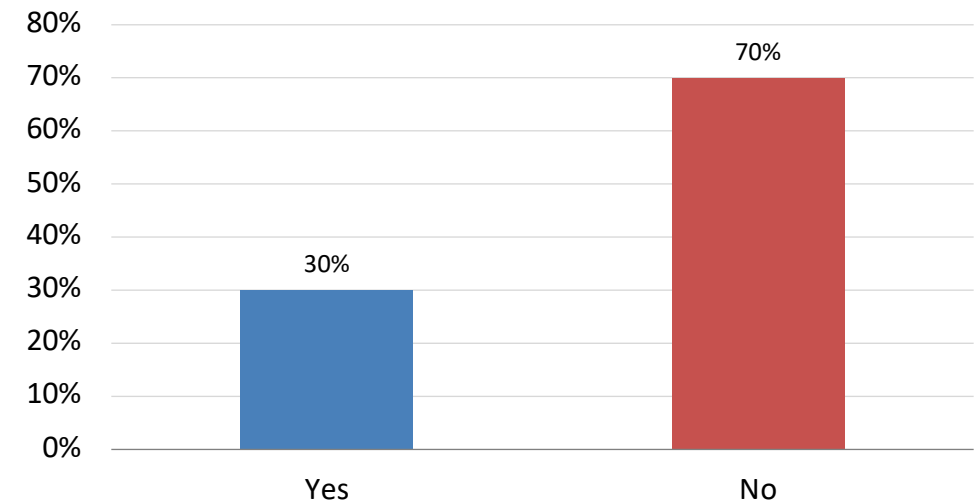
College Location & Student Housing

Members represent colleges/systems across a broad variety of geographies.



Location of college/system office

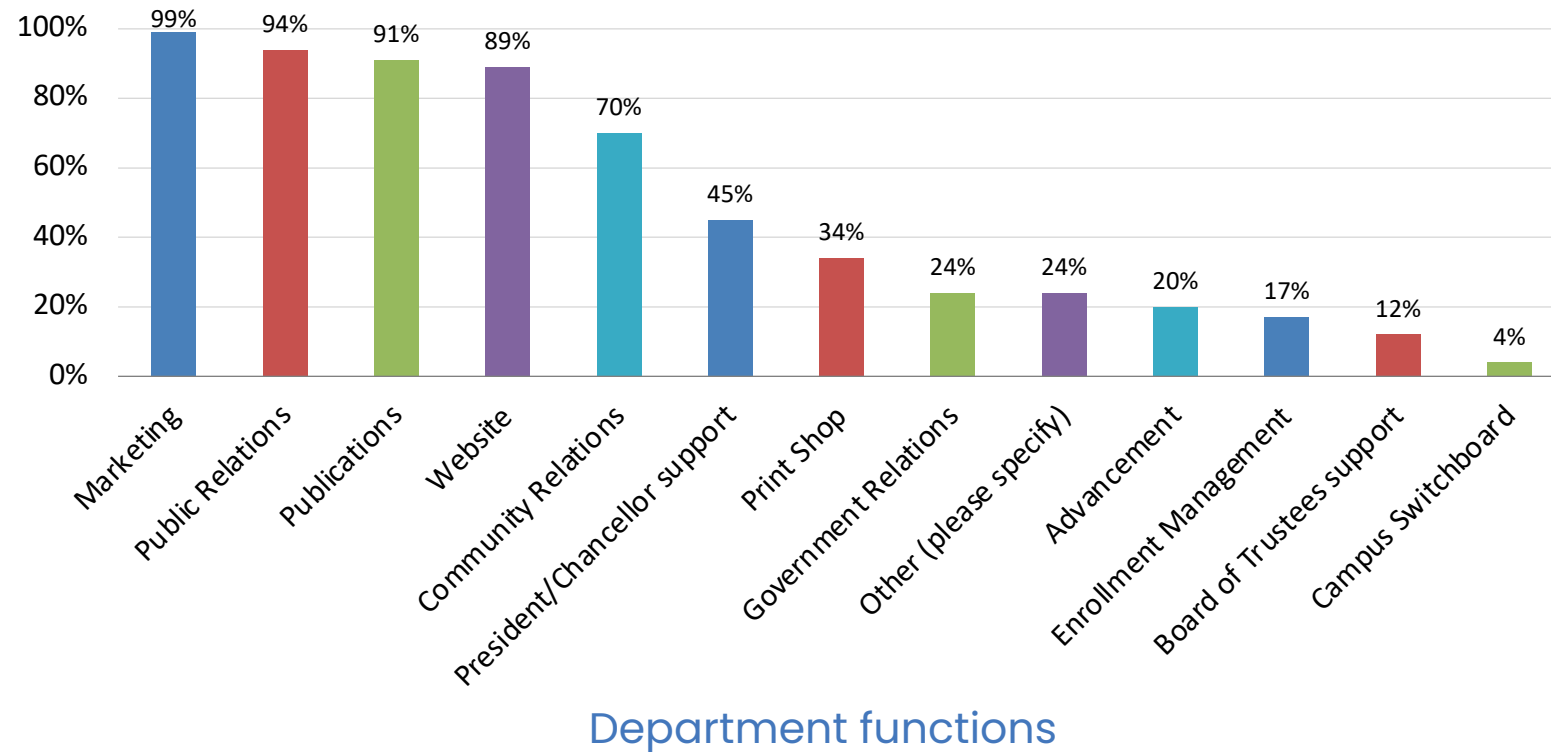
Only about a third of colleges/systems offer student housing or dormitories.



Availability of student housing

Department Responsibilities

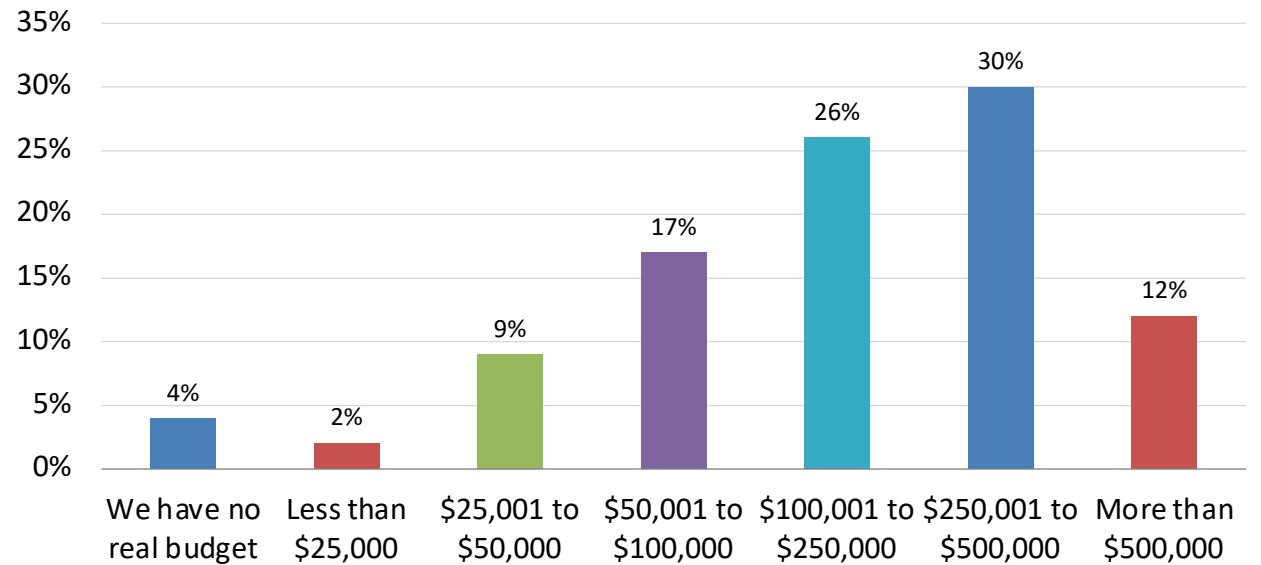
Most departments oversee multiple functions with nearly all responsible for marketing, PR, publications and the website.



Department Budget

Most members have an annual marketing budget of \$100K to \$500K with which to operate (excluding salaries).

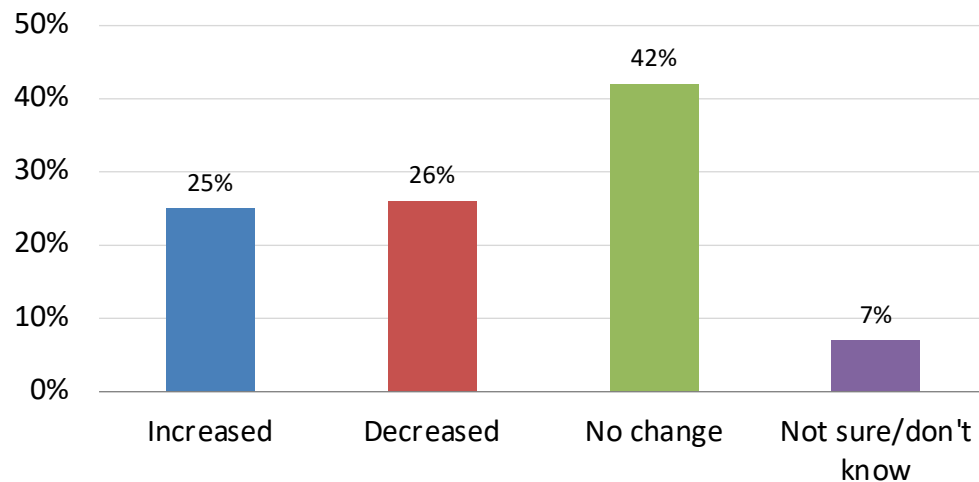
- As expected, larger departments have higher budgets – 60% of those with 6+ people have a budget of \$250K or more.
- Similarly, a slight majority of those located in an urban or suburban area have a total budget of \$250K or more.



Total annual marketing budget (excluding salaries)

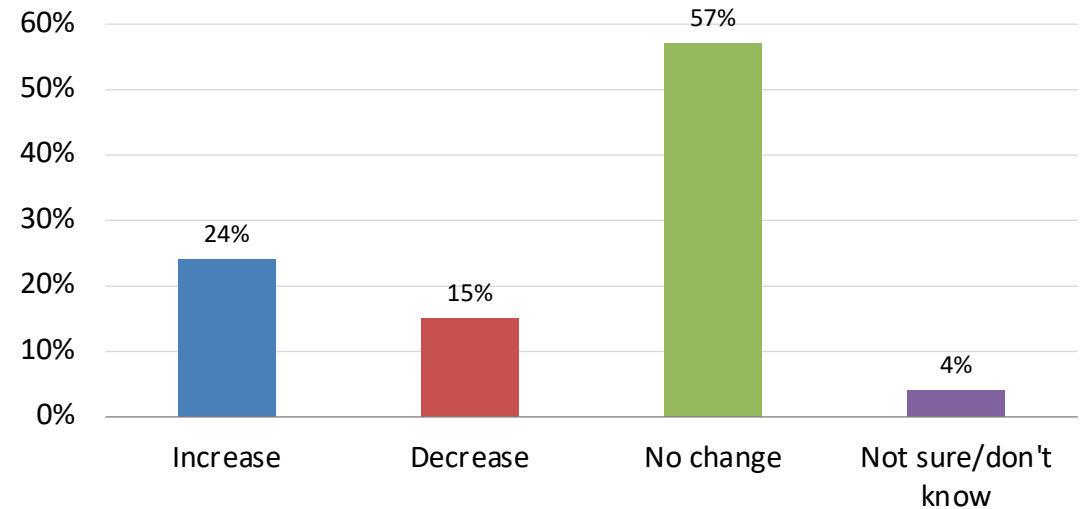
Department Budget Trends

Though many department budgets didn't change during the pandemic, about half either increased or decreased.



Change in budget during past 18 months

Only a quarter of members predict a rising budget, often those who increased in past 18 months. There is no skew by current budget size, number of students or location.



Expected budget change in next 18 months

Greatest Marketing Challenges

Many members are faced with unrealistically high expectations given their limited resources. Other common challenges include increasing enrollment and effectively reaching multiple student audiences (adult, HS grad, etc.), improving digital initiatives and educating others at their college about the value of marketing and building the brand.

“Aligning expectations with staffing numbers - expectation to produce more work than we have people to do it.”

“Our greatest challenge is brand rehabilitation.”

“Keeping up with high demands and not having the capacity to implement awesome project requests.”

“Reaching adult market and finding out where our traditional HS market is going - or IF they are going to college.”

“Our challenges are BOTH marketing and PR. For marketing, it's diversifying our marketing mix to touch all parts of the enrollment funnel, not just broad awareness and interested prospects. It is also measuring our work and adapting more quickly to the market. For PR, it's developing a community engagement strategic to build our partnerships and connect with our community.”

“Our greatest marketing challenge is connecting with those in low socioeconomic areas and removing their barriers to enrolling in college.”

“Enrollment declines due, in part, to the pandemic. How to get students to enroll when they aren't going to college at all (as opposed to trying to get them to choose our school over other schools).”

“We are understaffed and lack the equipment we need to complete all the items on our strategic plan. We are a small but mighty group but are currently very tired.”

Greatest Marketing Misperceptions

Many members feel underappreciated for the value and sophistication of their work. Colleagues can view their role as “fun and easy,” with little regard for their limited resources or the complexities of marketing. They often feel solely and directly responsible for college reputation management and enrollment outcomes.

“That we have a huge team and can do all sorts of things that larger universities do.”

“That we do not do anything, we just go and annoy others while they do their jobs. Social Media is easy and cannot possibly take up a whole job.”

“That we're SOLELY responsible for enrollment growth.”

“One of the greatest misperceptions is that everything we do is easy. In reality, design/writing/advertising takes time and thoughtful consideration.”

“That we have endless resources (people and money). We also get blamed for the downturn in enrollment we're not always part of those discussions or invited to be part of the process.”

“The belief is that we are the fun department that gets what they want and spends all the money we are bringing in from enrollment.”

“That we are a print shop and that we have to design every single flyer for them! Also, that because members of the top administration don't typically see our digital ads, they assume we are not advertising, and they are simply just not our target audience!”

“That projects take too long when usually it's their lack of preparedness and inability to get final approval that drags out the process.”

Most Successful Marketing Programs/Tactics

Common achievements include improved coordination across departments or the introduction of more effective targeted marketing efforts (typically digital). Other members cite upgraded brand standards and the value of featuring more personalized content and student success stories.

“Initiatives where enrollment services, marketing and public relations campaigns are coordinated.”

“Targeted digital marketing campaigns, because we can reach people who are interested in what we're marketing to them.”

“Social media. We work closely with student orgs and drive a cohesive message.”

“When I arrived here, there were no standards, no brand standards, no consistent logo usage and the website was a mess. I think creating a consistent look and feel has been our biggest accomplishment. We have been bleeding enrollment since Fall of 20 - like many community colleges.”

“The most successful marketing technique we've found is personal driven. We put together "student spotlight videos" that interview a student close to completion to highlight a program at our college. The engagement and inquiries of those programs we've highlighted have increased!”

“We have developed an Acceptance Package program for use by Admissions. This program has helped push conversion and increase brand preference in our area.”

“Our digital initiatives are one of our strongest campaigns. We put a lot of our budget into digital initiatives: Google ads/smart ads, all social platforms, streaming tv, geofencing, Spotify, etc. We track everything and meet monthly and can clearly see trends to tie with admissions.”

“Direct mail (yes, really), to dual-enrolled student. The postcard "invitation" yielded at 20% return (applications/inquiries).”

Additional Resources Desired

The primary need for many members is additional funding to increase their staff and expand in-house resources and equipment. Others would like to feel greater trust and perceived value from their college leadership and to be more fully supported and included in key decision-making.

“Better communication/transparency regarding priorities and initiatives.”

“I think unifying the college to the goals of retention and enrollment. Everyone has a role, it isn't just marketing, advising, and outreach.”

“Getting a seat at the table when decisions are made.”

“Money is the biggest issue. Whether it's funding for department-specific marketing, student recruitment events, student retainment efforts, printing of recruitment materials, purchasing of recruitment supplies, or any other materials/supplies necessary for success, we need more support and less ‘there's no money for that.’”

“We are in desperate need of more staff and resources in order to be successful. There is an unrealistic amount of pressure placed on us and we're not always included in the conversation so we're a bit limited in how we can make a difference. It would also be nice to have more support at the top instead of just getting blamed for things!”

“Funding to invest in technology/software to streamline everything that connects in the department.”

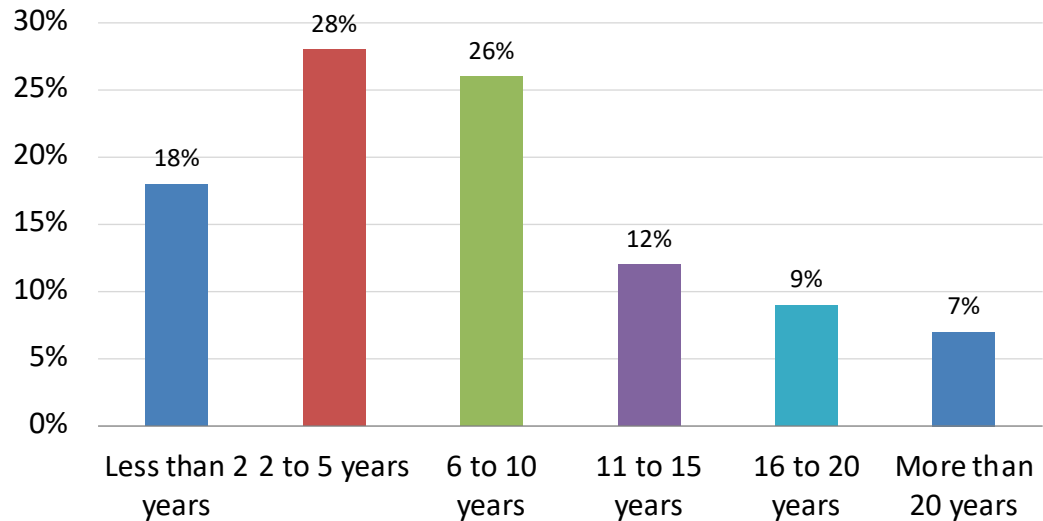
“Our leadership is amazing and we have some things in process that will help our team tremendously. The most noticeable area of need at the moment is the need for a web/digital media specialist.”

“Funding for new positions, trust in marketing insights and leadership.”

NCMPR Membership

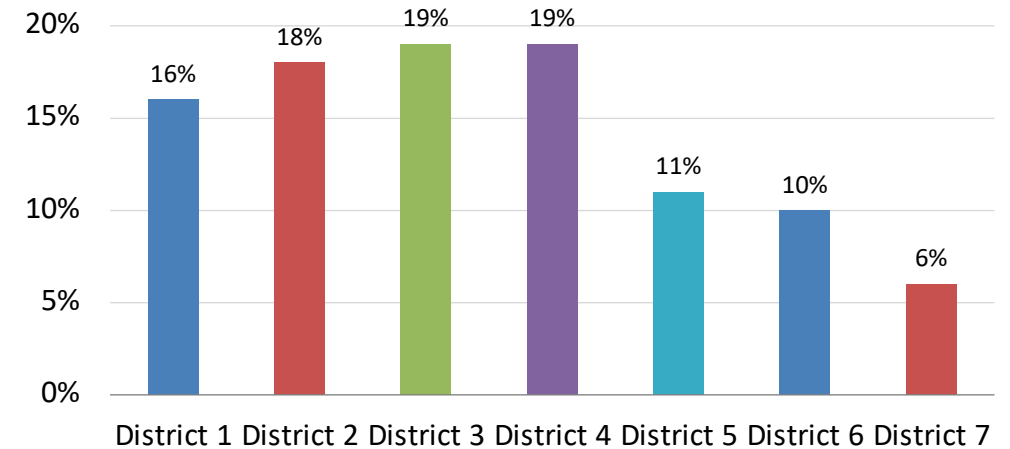
Membership Details

The majority of respondents have been NCMPR members for 2 to 10 years.



Years as NCMPR member

Respondents' colleges are well dispersed across NCMPR Districts, particularly 1 through 4.

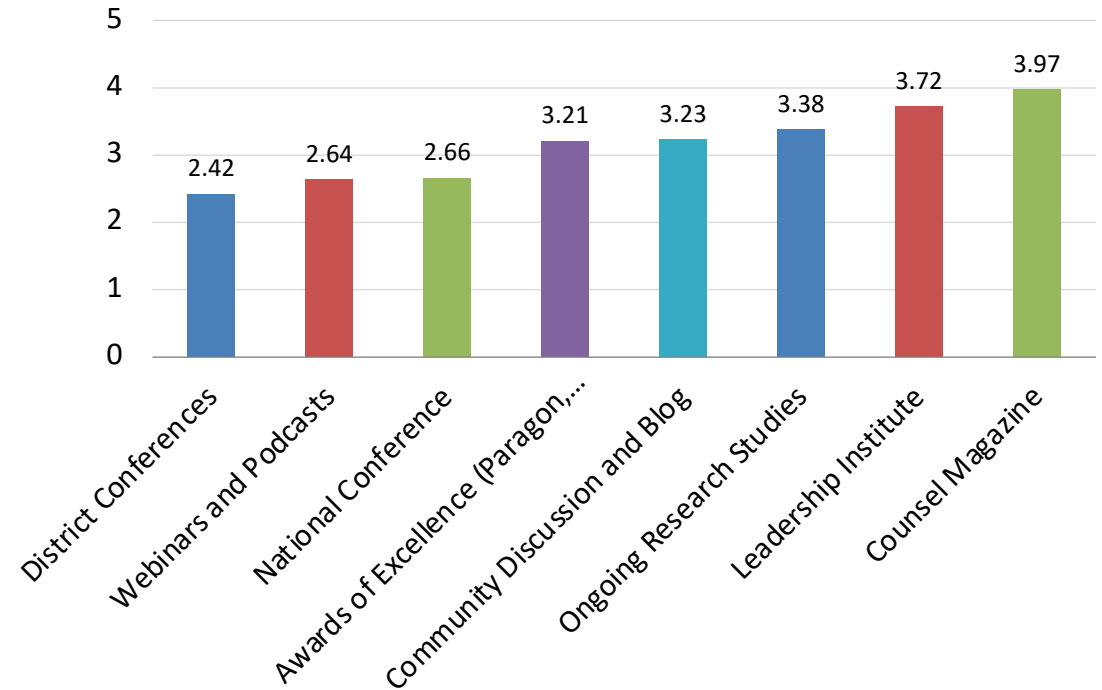


District affiliation

NCMPR Events & Resources

- NCMPR's District Conferences, webinars/podcasts and National Conference are considered most valuable.
- Awards of Excellence, Community discussion/blog, and ongoing research studies are of secondary importance.
- The Leadership Institute and Counsel Magazine are generally ranked lower.
- A few members also cited the value of NCMPR's networking opportunities, website resources, email listserv, and social media initiatives.

Q: Below are some events and resources available to NCMPR members. Please rank the top five in order of importance to you, using numbers from "1" to "5," with "1" being the most important, "2" being the second most important, etc.

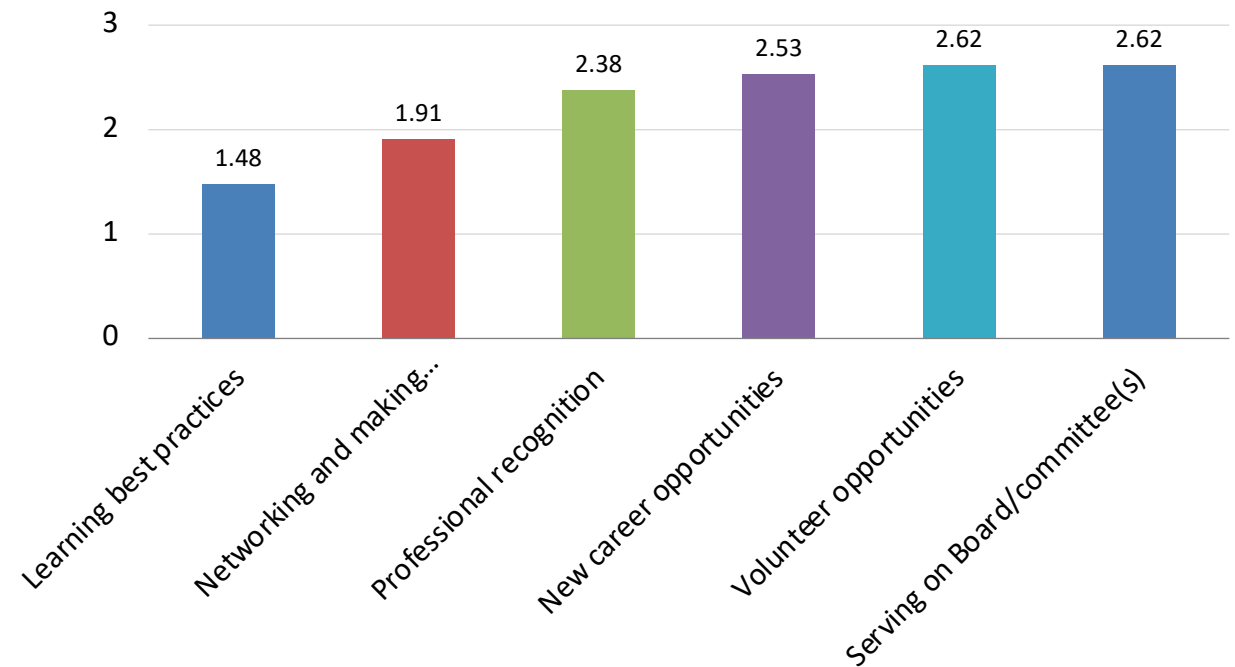


Average ranking across alternatives
(1 = first choice, 2 = second choice, etc.)

NCMPR Benefits

- Learning best practices is considered the greatest membership benefit followed by opportunities for networking and making connections.
- Professional recognition and new career opportunities are supplemental benefits.
- Opportunities to volunteer and serve on various NCMPR bodies are generally ranked lower.

Q: Below are some possible benefits from your NCMPR membership. Please rank the top three in order of their importance to you, using a "1," "2," or "3."



Average ranking across alternatives
(1 = first choice, 2 = second choice, etc.)

Additional Benefits of Membership

A few members also cited professional development, resource referrals, creative inspiration and general camaraderie and support as benefits of membership.

“NCMPR has been a great way for me to meet other community college professionals and see what others are doing and learn about best practices.”

“The email list serv is great - I often am reminded I'm not alone in the challenges I'm facing.”

“I found the pandemic-related topics such as crisis communications, virtual graduations, pivoting to virtual learning, etc. extremely helpful the past two years.”

“Successful marketing strategies and stories to share.”

“Opportunities to present at conferences, etc., or write articles.”

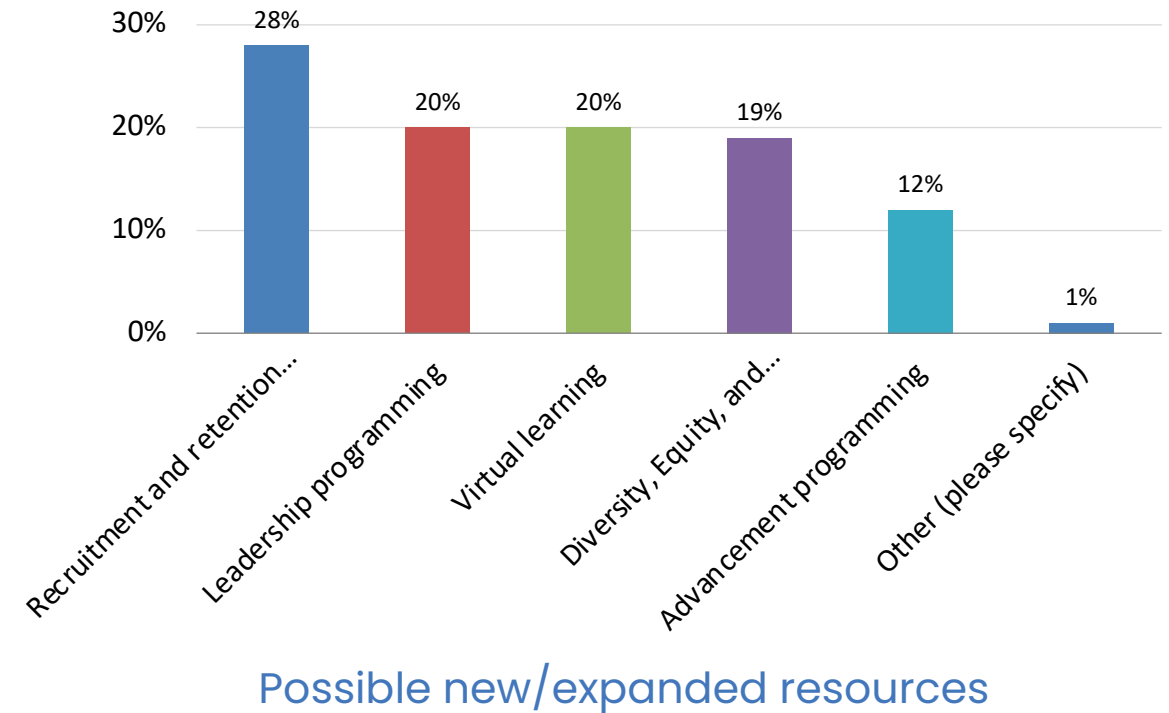
“Participating in a national organization focused on two-year college marketing and communications speaks volumes to the administration at our institution. It signals that you - as an employee - are willing to keep growing and learning professionally and provide mentorship and leadership in your field of expertise. All of these facts reflect positively on annual evaluations.”

“Nationwide advice on companies/firms that can be contracted for various marketing support.”

“Networking and best practice sharing are the key!”

NCMPR New/Expanded Resources

- More than a quarter of members would like NCMPR to offer additional programming related recruitment and retention.
- Other desired resources include leadership programming, virtual learning and DEI resources.



Implications & Opportunities

Implications & Opportunities

In general, participating NCMPR members are extremely pleased with and committed to the organization.

- More than half have been members for 6+ years and verbatim comments reinforce the perceived value and many benefits of membership.
- Nearly 3/4 are interested in the survey results and 2/3 are willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview.

Members greatly appreciate the unique opportunities offered by NCMPR to connect with and learn from their peers.

- Sharing best practices and networking events (conferences, webinars) are particularly important benefits.
- The sense of camaraderie and mutual support is crucial since many feel somewhat detached from or misunderstood by their academic colleagues.

Implications & Opportunities

Expanding NCMPR's portfolio of tangible resources would further increase the value of membership.

- Ideas and solutions to improve operational/financial efficiency would be helpful given that most have many responsibilities and limited budgets, staff and resources.
- The most common desire is for additional resources to improve student recruitment and retention since that is often a primary metric of their "success."

Improving the diversity of NCMPR's member base could be an influential indicator for the college marketing discipline more generally.

- The organization may want to consider more dedicated recruiting efforts and incentives to reach a more diverse, likely younger audience.
- Programming around how to recruit and retain ethnically diverse staff could be an area that NCMPR explores to support its members in diversifying their departments (presumably making them more representative of their student body).

Implications & Opportunities

NCMPR has an opportunity to use its platform to better educate college leadership about the role of marketing.

- Many members feel underappreciated for the value and sophistication of their work. They often feel solely and directly responsible for college reputation management and enrollment outcomes.
- NCMPR's national presence and stature could be used to explore these themes through thought leadership pieces, articles in CEO and leadership publications, and speaking opportunities at leadership conferences.
- "A day in the life of a college CMO" series might offer an entertaining and insightful look at the value and importance of the role.

NCMPR could explore formulating recommendations around optimal department size and budget.

- There is currently broad disparity between the budgets and size of departments. What should the size of marketing department be? What should the budget for paid media be?
- Conducting additional research to gauge the effectiveness of various budget/staff levels could result in a set of guidelines for CEOs and marketing departments to target.

Implications & Opportunities

The many college marketing successes should be celebrated...and shared.

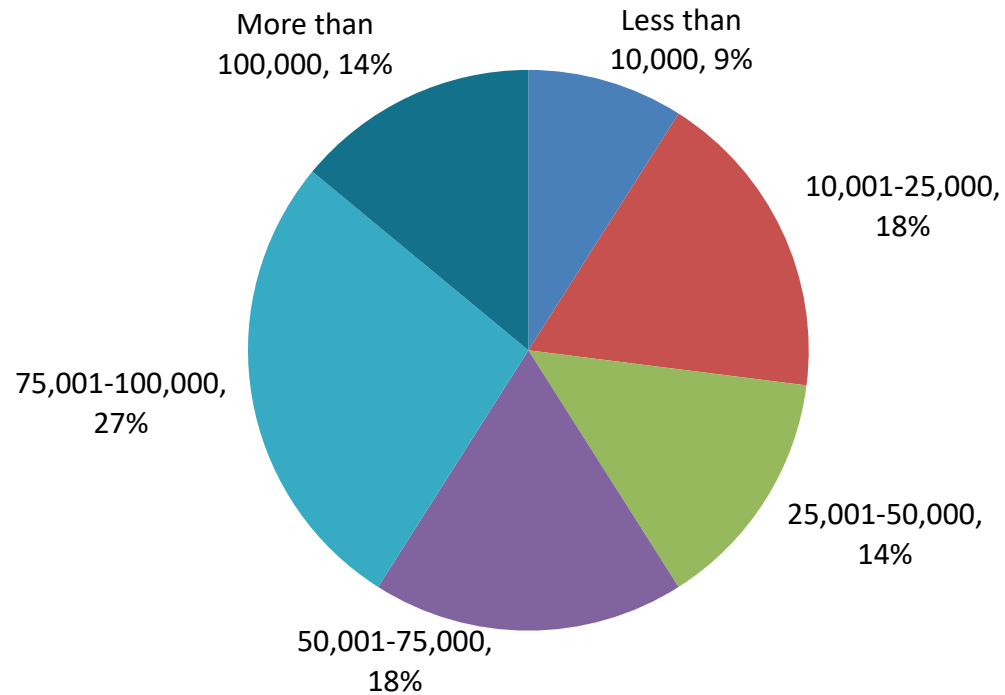
- NCMPR already does a great job of recognizing success through the Medallion and Paragon awards. Survey respondents shared dozens of individual marketing accomplishments which could be shared via the NCMPR platform to inspire their colleagues.
- Consider extending the Paragon program by conducting a 2 to 3-minute zoom interview with award winners. They can explain their campaign/publication/etc., what it took to get there, and the successful outcome to be repurposed through NCMPR's social and outreach channels.
- By offering even greater acknowledgement, NCMPR could help to "fill the void" often experienced at the college-level.

Appendix

System Size (System Employed)

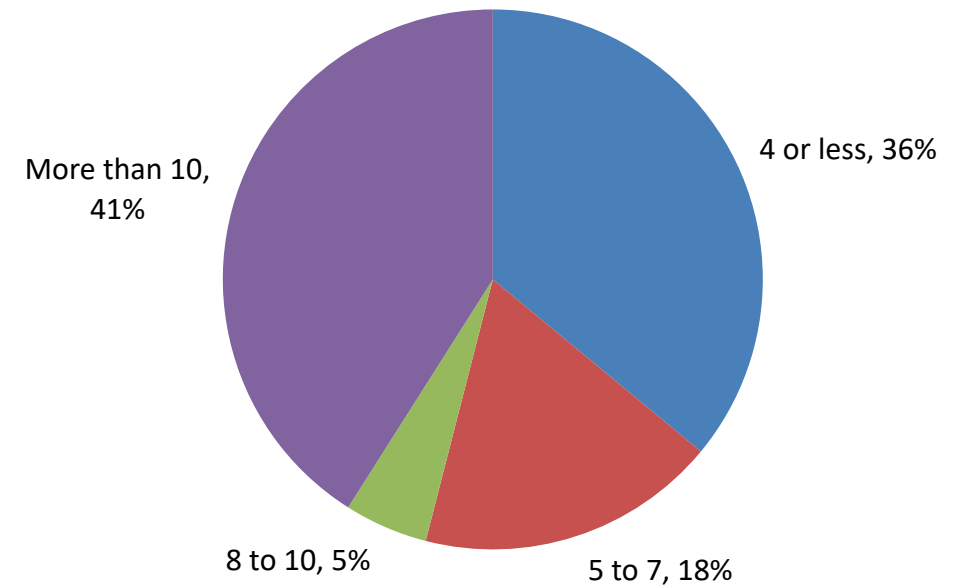
Small sample size: only 9% of respondents work at a system or district office (n=22).

The system-wide student population is quite varied.



Total number of students (credit & non-credit)

Systems tend to include either a few colleges or more than 10.



Number of colleges in system/district



Thank You!