University Professional and Continuing Education Association

2013 Professional Development Survey from Leadership and Strategy Network
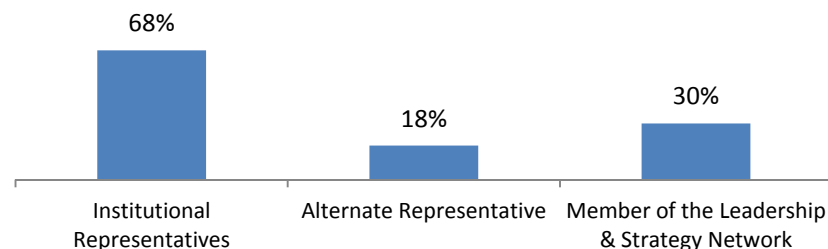

February 2013

The UPCEA Leadership and Strategy Network sent out a survey to nearly four hundred institutional representatives, alternate representatives, or members of the network. An institutional representative can also be a member of the network. The survey was conducted in January and February 2013 and had approximately a 30% response rate.

Most of the 112 respondents labeled themselves as institutional representatives (68%), and about 30% are members of the Leadership & Strategy Network.
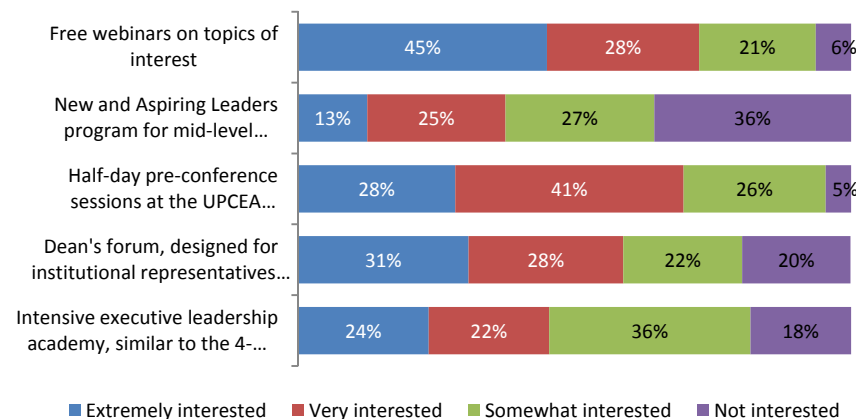
Interest in all programs was very strong, with the possible exception of the New and Aspiring Leaders program. This may, however, reflect the fact that most respondents were experienced leaders.   The greatest interest was in free webinars (almost three-quarters of representatives report being very or extremely interested), half-day pre-conference sessions (69%)   the Dean's forum (almost 60%), and an executive leadership academy (46%).

Interest in certification was surprisingly strong, with a slight preference for modules in specific areas of expertise as opposed to a basic overview of professional, continuing, and online education.
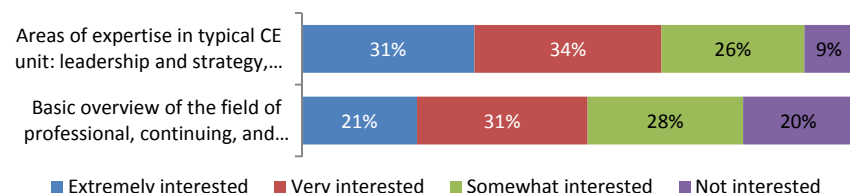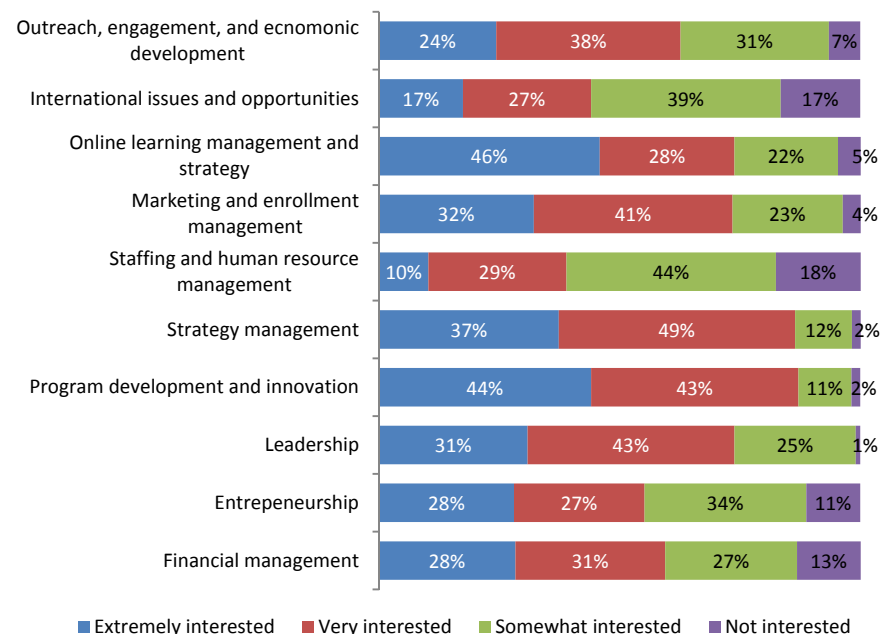
Respondents (n=112)

68%	18%	30%
Institutional Representatives	Alternate Representative	Member of the Leadership & Strategy Network

Program Interest

	Extremely interested	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Not interested
Free webinars on topics of interest	45%	28%	21%	6%
New and Aspiring Leaders program for mid-level…	13%	25%	27%	36%
Half-day pre-conference sessions at the UPCEA…	28%	41%	26%	5%
Dean's forum, designed for institutional representatives…	31%	28%	22%	20%
Intensive executive leadership academy, similar to the 4-…	24%	22%	36%	18%

■ Extremely interested ■ Very interested ■ Somewhat interested ■ Not interested

Interest in Modules for Certification

	Extremely interested	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Not interested
Areas of expertise in typical CE unit: leadership and strategy,…	31%	34%	26%	9%
Basic overview of the field of professional, continuing, and…	21%	31%	28%	20%

■ Extremely interested ■ Very interested ■ Somewhat interested ■ Not interested
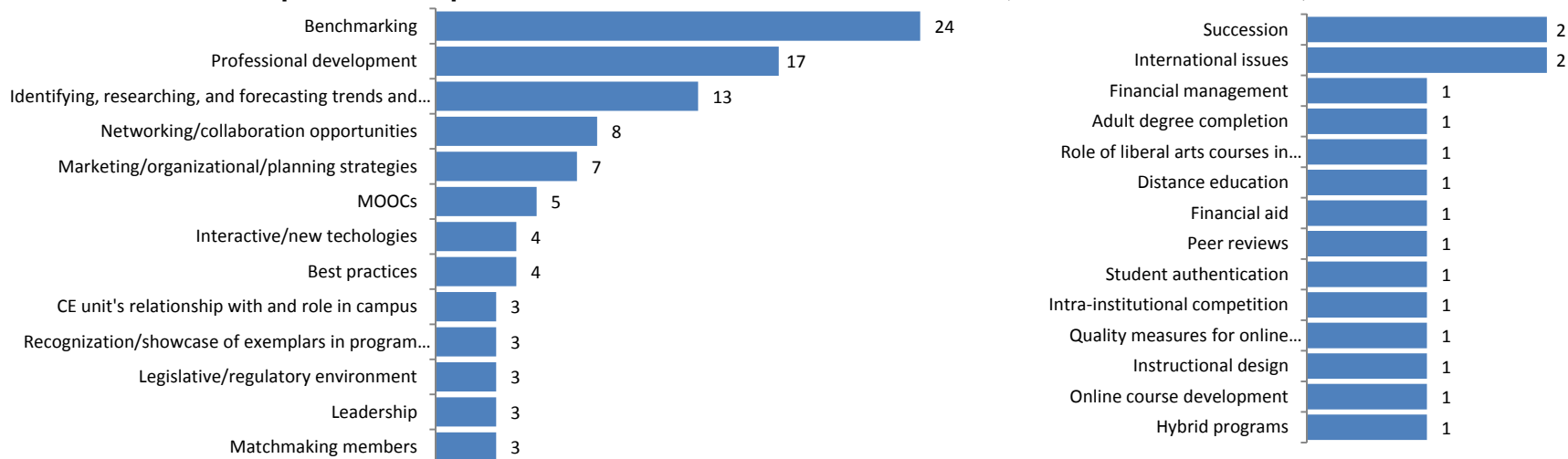
When shown a list of topics and issues upon which they would like UPCEA to focus more attention and resources, the topics drawing most interest are Online Learning Management (74%), Strategy Management (86%) and Program Development and Innovation (87%). The topic attracting the least interest is Staffing and Human Resource Management, with 18% having no interest and just 10% expressing extreme interest.

When asked "unaided: or verbatim style questions, there were many areas to which representatives believe UPCEA should allocate more resources. Benchmarking, professional development, trends, networking/collaboration, and strategic planning were mentioned the most by respondents. The charts below show the wide range of responses. A few select verbatim responses can be seen on the page that follows.

Topic Interest (Aided List)

Topic	Extremely interested	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Not interested
Outreach, engagement, and ecnomonic development	24%	38%	31%	7%
International issues and opportunities	17%	27%	39%	17%
Online learning management and strategy	46%	28%	22%	5%
Marketing and enrollment management	32%	41%	23%	4%
Staffing and human resource management	10%	29%	44%	18%
Strategy management	37%	49%	12%	2%
Program development and innovation	44%	43%	11%	2%
Leadership	31%	43%	25%	1%
Entrepeneurship	28%	27%	34%	11%
Financial management	28%	31%	27%	13%

■ Extremely interested ■ Very interested ■ Somewhat interested ■ Not interested

Topics that Require Greater UPCEA Resources, Unaided (# of times mentioned)

Topic	Count
Benchmarking	24
Professional development	17
Identifying, researching, and forecasting trends and…	13
Networking/collaboration opportunities	8
Marketing/organizational/planning strategies	7
MOOCs	5
Interactive/new techologies	4
Best practices	4
CE unit's relationship with and role in campus	3
Recognization/showcase of exemplars in program…	3
Legislative/regulatory environment	3
Leadership	3
Matchmaking members	3

Topic	Count
Succession	2
International issues	2
Financial management	1
Adult degree completion	1
Role of liberal arts courses in…	1
Distance education	1
Financial aid	1
Peer reviews	1
Student authentication	1
Intra-institutional competition	1
Quality measures for online…	1
Instructional design	1
Online course development	1
Hybrid programs	1

When asked "As a leader in the field, what issues and topics do you believe require greater resources from UPCEA"," verbatim responses suggest that representatives are very much interested in allocating resources to research and programs that will enable leaders to keep up to date on current and future needs of professional, continuing, and online education. This may include professional development, forecasting trends, expanding benchmark data, exposing members to new and innovative practices, and providing opportunities for "like" institutions to collaborate and network. Representatives would like to keep well-informed of emerging and cutting-edge topics, as well as keep benchmarking numbers and "best practices" guidelines, so as to successfully lead and create effective strategies to grow and maintain their units.

"Professional development—specifically developing adaptive leaders who can lead and serve in an environment of continuing change and instability."

"The current focus on creating/expanding benchmarking data is a great direction for UPCEA. Face-to-face networking opportunities (Deans Forum and conference) are more likely to get attendance than webinars."

"Benchmarking and metrics for conversion rates and matriculation rates for nontraditional learners. Best practices in program development, student services, technology and online learning for adults."

"1) Repository of whitepapers and benchmarking information that all my staff can access; 2) Membership information related to the type of CE, noncredit or for-credit information so we can more easily contact schools in like situations to ours."

"Provide membership with some type of document detailing significant innovative programs/new directions that have been successfully implemented from around the country."

"Regularly published data on the impact of CE, education and training in higher ed trends, and specific topics of immediate importance (MOOCs, assessments, student authentication, etc.)"
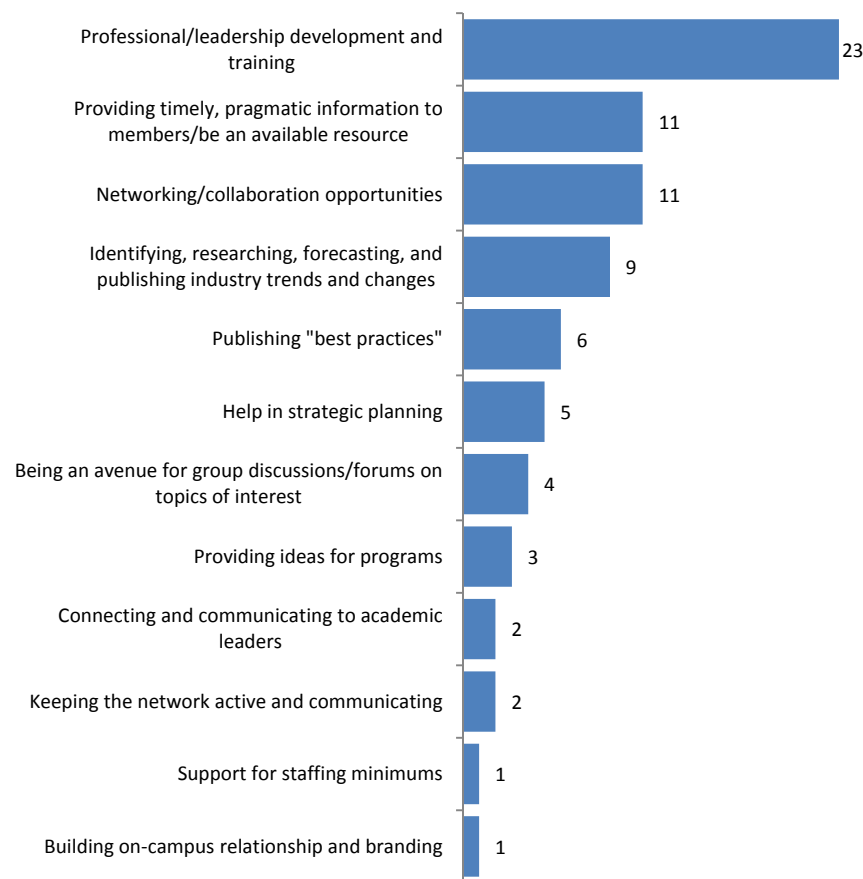
"As I theoretically at least know the basics of leading an active unit, I am interested in the cutting edge topics: things I need to learn about distance learning and new technologies, likewise with very up to date marketing, interactive technologies, accessibility, and the like."

"Keep helping me see what changes are coming down the road, what seismic shifts are underway, what new ideas are surfacing here and there. That's the value for me: taking that info home where I can translate it into new strategies for my university."

In an open-ended question about the single most important service or role that the Leadership and Strategy Network can play, survey respondents identify professional/leadership development and training as the top focus for the Leadership and Strategy Network. Other services/roles mentioned by representatives include providing relevant information, creating networking opportunities, and keeping abreast of industry changes. The chart to the right shows all responses and their number of mentions.

The verbatim responses (next page) suggest that the Leadership and Strategy Network should take an active role in supporting its members and their units, providing them with resources that will allow them to share and develop strategies, and in communicating the information to them. This may include a focus on professional/leadership training, "best practices" publication, benchmark maintenance, networking and collaboration, or researching and communicating industry trends. Representatives would like to see this group as an active and collaborative community, with ample training opportunities for leadership and professionals on all levels, and readily-available resources in industry research and analysis.

Single Most Important Service or Role that the Leadership and Strategy Network can Play

Category	Mentions
Professional/leadership development and training	23
Providing timely, pragmatic information to members/be an available resource	11
Networking/collaboration opportunities	11
Identifying, researching, forecasting, and publishing industry trends and changes	9
Publishing "best practices"	6
Help in strategic planning	5
Being an avenue for group discussions/forums on topics of interest	4
Providing ideas for programs	3
Connecting and communicating to academic leaders	2
Keeping the network active and communicating	2
Support for staffing minimums	1
Building on-campus relationship and branding	1

"Facilitate discussions about how the changing world of higher education impacts our continuing and professional education strategy."

"Provide ideas for opportunities to build new revenue-generating programs."

"Strategies which involve the use of data analytics to develop, implement, and evaluate distance education programs that are flexible, competitively priced, and support the goal of degree-completion."

"Providing current information on relevant trends in continuing education programming in a manner that is accessible, regardless of the size or configuration of the CE unit. Because UPCEA's strength and depth is its membership, I think this means finding efficient ways of harvesting information and sharing it."

"Connect to chief academic officers and others on campuses to further educate them of the value of CE. They are largely uninformed, have antiquated views and ignore CE [which leads to a] loss of value and innovative capacity."

"Specific trainings for rising leaders: strategic thinking, financial thinking and doing, assessment, accessibility, becoming a leader and champion of CE rather than a manager. There is precious little good training available for young folks who are serious about this field."

"Mechanism to stay on top of best practices of peer institutions. It may also be used to facilitate group purchasing of services, such as market research, e-marketing applications, etc."

"Seek to provide a variety of levels of professional development that support new, developing, and mature staff as well as multiple types of institutional size, cultures and organizational structures."

"Provide an easy-access and effective network that allows all-group, small group and one-on-one opportunities to share information, expertise and strategy."