

**Evaluation of NALEO Higher Education Leadership Initiative**

**Dawn R. Person, Independent Evaluator**

**Christopher Paek, Assistant**

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## **Evaluation of the NALEO Higher Education Leadership Initiative Executive Summary**

The NALEO Educational Fund has hosted annual Institutes targeting four states, California, New Mexico, Texas and Florida. The first of these Institutes was held in June 2006 in Dallas, Texas and the Institutes have continued to run through 2008, the most recent one being held in April 2008 in Miami, Florida.

Through NELI, elected and appointed Latino officials were invited to these annual Educational Institutes that provided them with information focused on issues of higher education access and success specific to the Latino community. At these Institutes, Latino elected officials had the opportunity to learn from experts, network with other officials from across the region and country, and participate in strategy sessions to discuss problems and solutions. To this end, the following evaluation was conducted and the findings from the process are reported for the purpose of measuring program effectiveness in meeting the aforementioned goals and for program improvement.

### **Methodology**

The evaluation of the NALEO Education Leadership Initiative consisted of both qualitative and quantitative data originating from telephone interviews conducted with program participants and interviews with NALEO leadership/staff and Institute evaluation surveys completed by participants sometime after they attended an Institute and provided by NALEO staff. The scope of this evaluation consisted of participants from 8 sites (San Diego, Manhattan Beach, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Dallas, Austin, Miami, and Tampa) who represented at least one of the following roles: Participant, Presenter, Policy Partner, or NALEO Staff.

Evaluation forms from 7 out of the 8 Institutes were analyzed and consisted of 133, and 10% of the total roster of participants in the Institutes were selected for interviews via random sampling. A total of 23 participants, 3 presenters, and 4 policy partners were interviewed from the forty randomly selected for a 75% return. Four members of the staff were interviewed in person.

This report is a summary of the analysis of the interview data presented through emergent themes and reflective exemplars. The quantitative data is analyzed providing descriptive frequency of responses, leading to a discussion and recommendations for program improvements.

### **Summation of Findings**

#### **Quantitative Results**

Participants got involved in this program based on the fact that NALEO's organizational goals were aligned with their professional and personal goals. Other reasons for involvement included common shared agendas and the reputation of NALEO as a national organization.

#### **Program Participants found:**

- Workshop content was relevant and central to their work.
- Most participants reported that the type of information covered was just right.
- Presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared.
- Presentation methods seemed appropriate for the content.
- All respondents agreed that they would apply the knowledge gained to their work.
- There were enough opportunities for the audience to interact with presenters.
- There were ample opportunities to network and to form relationships for future collaborations.

- All respondents agreed that they would recommend this Institute to others.
- The majority felt the program was balanced just right between listening to speakers and breakout sessions.
- Breakout sessions were very helpful.
- Almost all participants reported that their expectations were met.

**Outcomes:**

**Impact on Participants:**

- 25% felt they were aware of the issues.
- 46% believed they could educate others about the issues.
- 57% felt they knew enough that they could take further action beyond that of educating others

**Action orientation:**

- 74% expected to interact with other elected officials after the Institute.
- 63% percent reported that they would likely network and collaborate with other participants.
- 50% thought they would collaborate or network with panelists.
- 20% expected to interact with sponsors.

**Impact on policy implementation:**

- 80% of participants felt this program had significant impact on their ability to implement higher education policy in their community.
- 20% believed it would have limited impact

In summary, the quantitative data indicates that Institute participants, regardless of region they attended, had an overall positive response to the program in terms of design, content,

expectations, and outcomes. Participants took action since the Institute and applied what they learned to improving educational access and success for Latinos, and networked effectively, particularly with other elected officials. No major negative trends emerged from the data.

### **Summation of Qualitative Findings**

The qualitative data reveal that Institute participants and the NALEO leadership are pleased with the development, implementation and outcomes of the program. Tremendous differences have been made in the lives of these elected and appointed officials. There is a genuine appreciation for what has been offered and gained through this project, and almost all involved have benefited and attribute their success in influencing policy relative to Latino educational access and success to the networking, information sharing and sense of community gained through the Institute.

### **Conclusion**

In almost all cases the quantitative and qualitative data reveal that Institute participants ranging from presenter to policy partners, to attendees were all positively affected by the NALEO Higher Education Initiative. They believe that the program is needed, effective, and contributed to their ability to successfully negotiate the challenges of their role as elected and appointed officials, specific to Latino educational access and success in education.

Presenters were positive in their ability to contribute to the Institute and believed that participants were responsive and invested in the materials. The leadership of NALEO perceives this program as effective and meeting the needs of their constituents. They made a significant investment of time, energy and effort in developing, implementing and evaluating this program.

The program impact was clearly seen in the evaluations and reinforced in the interviews in that participants expected to: 1) network and they did with elected officials at many different

levels; 2) use information shared at the Institute in their daily work and they did as evidence by the number of participants who influenced agendas and shared information once they returned to their communities; 3) take action by making others more aware, educating others, and taking action on policy issues and strategies to influence educational access and success which was reported by many of the participants as they helped bring about change in the schools through safety, health programs, curriculum, teacher training, language access programs, etc.

Another factor related to program outcomes is the impact that participants have in their local communities and state-wide in influencing educational policy. Reported impact included influencing policy by helping to set the agenda, influencing the direction of discussions, and using information and strategies learned through NALEO to assist them in their work. It is the conclusion of this evaluator that this is exactly what the program would want and expect from participants.

Almost all interviewees felt confirmed in their commitment to Latino issues and appreciated that there was a larger community invested in them and their success. This aspect of community was one of the strongest elements that emerged in this study. The dedication and commitment that permeates all involved in the NALEO Institute was a phenomenon in and of itself.

To this end, it is clear that while there are some small changes that this organization may want to consider, such as critical follow-up activities and training session for participants on the use of data, this evaluation would indicate that the Institute's goals have been realized and that the program is effective.

## **Introduction**

In an effort to address some of the educational issues facing the Latino community, the NALEO Educational Fund launched the NALEO Education Leadership Initiative (NELI), an agenda sponsored by the Lumina Foundation for Education and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. As part of this initiative, the NALEO Educational Fund has hosted annual Institutes targeting four states, California, New Mexico, Texas and Florida. The first of these Institutes was held in June 2006 in Dallas, Texas and the Institutes have continued to run through 2008, the most recent one being held in April 2008 in Miami, Florida.

Through NELI, elected Latino officials were invited to these annual Educational Institutes that provided them with information focused on issues of higher education access and success specific to the Latino community. At these Institutes, Latino elected officials had the opportunity to learn from experts, network with other officials from across the region and country, and participate in strategy sessions to discuss problems and solutions. The aim of these activities and of NELI as a whole was to empower policy makers in their efforts to advance education reform through improved practices and strategies, to disseminate relevant and up to date information, and to mobilize Latino leadership through networking and collaboration **(NALEO National Office Communication)**. To this end, the following evaluation was conducted and the findings from the process are reported for the purpose of measuring program effectiveness in meeting the aforementioned goals and for program improvement.

## **Methodology**

The evaluation of the NALEO Education Leadership Initiative focused on gathering qualitative data primarily via telephone interviews and interviews with NALEO leadership/staff

and analyzing Institute evaluation surveys completed by participants and provided by NALEO staff. Four states- California, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida were targeted, and within each state, two cities which hosted previous NALEO Institutes were included. Both the scope of this evaluation (8 host cities in all- San Diego, Manhattan Beach, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Dallas, Austin, Miami, and Tampa) and the type of interviewees contacted (Participant, Presenter, Policy Partner, or Staff) were elements of the evaluation that were agreed upon by NALEO staff and the evaluator.

The first phase of the evaluation was a quantitative analysis of evaluation forms which were administered at the time each Institute was held. NALEO staff provided the evaluator with the evaluation forms from 7 out of the 8 Institutes. In Austin, 31 forms were collected out of the 50 participants who attended (62%). In San Diego, it was 21 of 60 (35%), in Santa Fe it was 8 of 44 (18%), in Tampa it was 11 out of 16 (68%), Albuquerque had 16 of 36 (44%), Dallas had 10 of 19(52%) and Manhattan Beach collected 36 out of the 64 participants (56%). The forms from Miami were not available. All of these forms were gathered to provide quantitative data which measured the overall effectiveness of each Institute. This data was entered into an SPSS data base for analysis.

The second phase of the evaluation involved a qualitative approach through interviews with participants, presenters, policy partners and staff. The evaluator designed four separate interview protocols which varied depending on the type of interviewee contacted. These protocols, with the exception of the one intended for the Staff, were reviewed and approved by NALEO staff. The NALEO staff provided the evaluator with participant rosters from each of the 8 cities, which included pertinent contact information. The staff also provided the evaluator with a list of presenters and policy partners whose feedback would also be included in the evaluation.

For each host city, 10% of the total roster was selected for interviews via random sampling. The selected participants were contacted with an email protocol requesting their participation in the telephone interview, about 20-30 minutes in length. Those who did not respond to the email were contacted by phone to schedule the telephone interview. In all, 32 participants were contacted (5 that attended Austin, 5 Santa Fe, 2 Miami, 6 San Diego, 4 Albuquerque, 1 Tampa, 2 Dallas, and 7 Manhattan Beach).

Along with the Institute participants, 4 presenters (one each from Miami, Albuquerque, Austin, and Manhattan Beach) and 4 policy partners (1 each from Tampa, San Diego, Austin, and Santa Fe) were randomly selected and invited to interview. They were sent an email protocol to elicit their participation.

After many follow-up telephone calls and e-mails, in all, 23 participants, 3 presenters, and 4 policy partners were interviewed from the 40 randomly selected for a 75% participation response. The telephone interviews were administered by the principal investigator or the research assistant during the months of November and December and followed the appropriate protocol (see Appendix B).

NALEO staff members were also interviewed as part of the evaluation. Four members of the staff were interviewed in person by the principal investigator and the research assistant. Three staff members, who interviewed as a team, were direct overseers of the program and one interview was held with the Executive Director of NALEO. In total, 34 interviews were conducted in this evaluation, spanning participants, presenters, policy partners and NALEO staff members.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data sets were reviewed, analyzed and synthesized by the evaluator. Based on this, the final report was constructed, which consists of a report of the findings, summation of emergent themes and recommendations for program improvements.

### **Quantitative Findings**

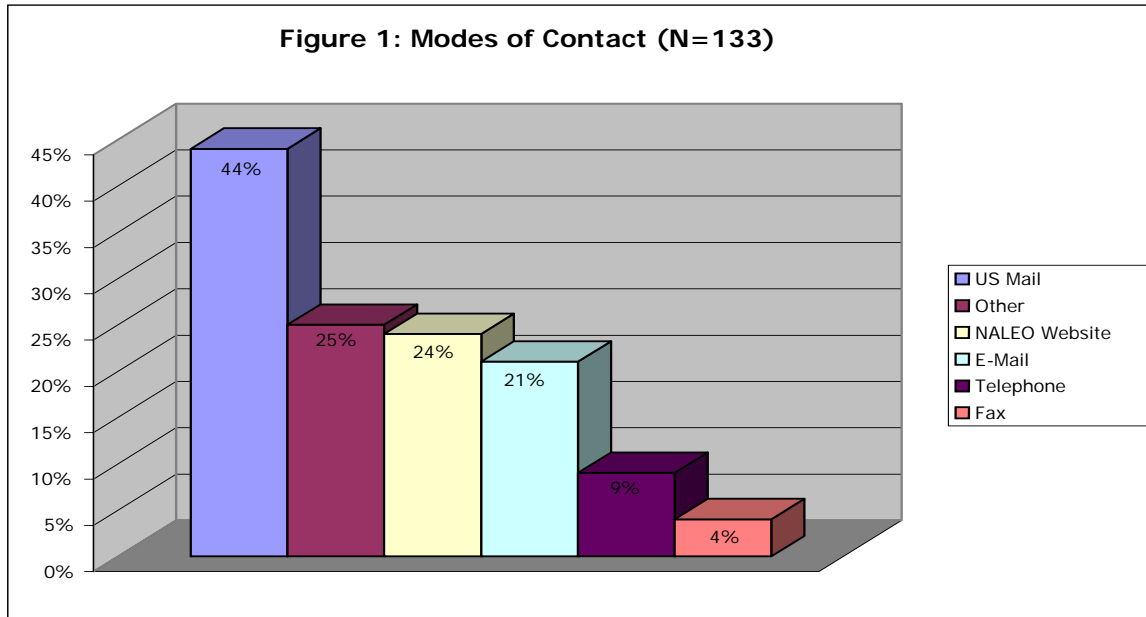
Eight Institutes are covered in this evaluation period. Eleven responses were gathered from participants in Tampa, 10 from Dallas, and 31 from Austin. Albuquerque had 16 responses, and 21 participants from San Diego. Manhattan Beach in California had 36 respondents, and Santa Fe gathered 8. Data from Miami was not available. A total of 133 responses were completed for this project. What follows is a summary of the evaluation surveys first presented considering all respondents across Institutes and then broken down by Institute and region of the country.

### **Cumulative Findings**

After participating in the NALEO Educational Institutes, participants were asked to complete a survey to report on their experiences and level of involvement with the program. Survey questions asked participants to share how they came to know of the Institute for higher education. They were asked to share their perceptions of program effectiveness, to assess program content and format, and to consider presenters' knowledge of subject matter. Additionally, participants were asked questions regarding their perceptions of program impact specific to their awareness of Hispanic issues in higher education and their confidence level as a leader on Hispanic higher education policy issues, particularly in their community.

There were many possible modes of communication used by NALEO to contact participants for the Institute including mailings, e-mails, the website, fax and telephone. The

most likely mechanism for participants to have learned of this Institute was through the US mail (44%), followed by other means (25%) not listed on the evaluation form such as direct referrals by previous participants. The next likely method was through the website (24%) followed by e-mail (21%), telephone (9%), and fax (4%) (See Figure 1).



Participants reported in interviews how they came to learn of NALEO and the Institute.

It varied but was primarily through mailings and personal contacts:

*“I was contacted by NALEO to participate by mail.”*

*“I was invited through a personal contact.”*

*“Another elected official who was involved invited me.”*

*“A Policy Partner invited me to participate.”*

*“It was like an honor to participate; the way they went about it, I was one of 2500 invited.”*

When participants were asked what motivated them to get involved in this project, many reported that NALEO goals aligned with their professional and personal goals. Other reasons for

involvement included common shared agendas and the reputation of NALEO as a national organization:

*"It has to do with Latino education issues."*

*"Anything for Latinos I am for – equal opportunity for students of all backgrounds."*

*"Agenda that I wanted to advocate for was the same as NALEO"*

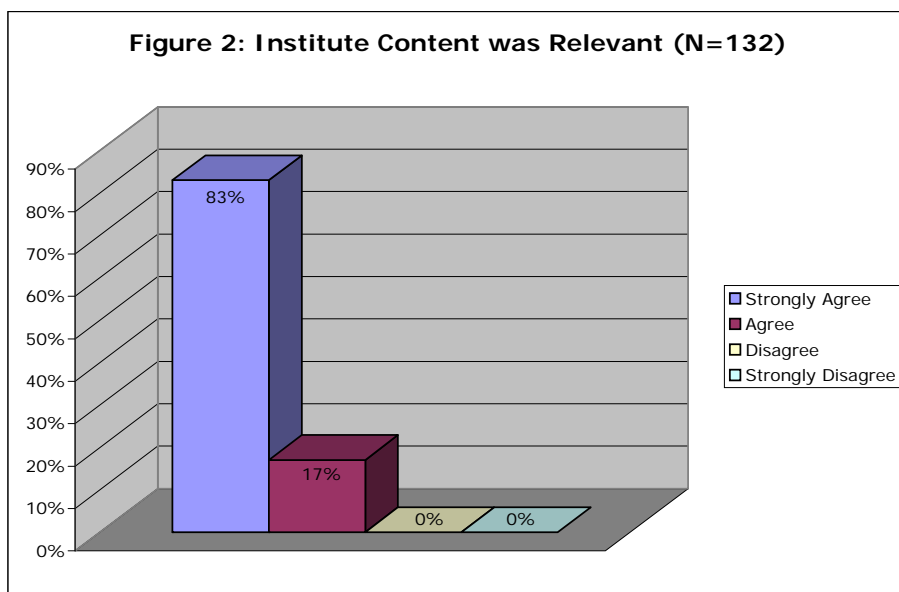
*"National reach."*

*"Camaraderie and support from other elected Latino officials."*

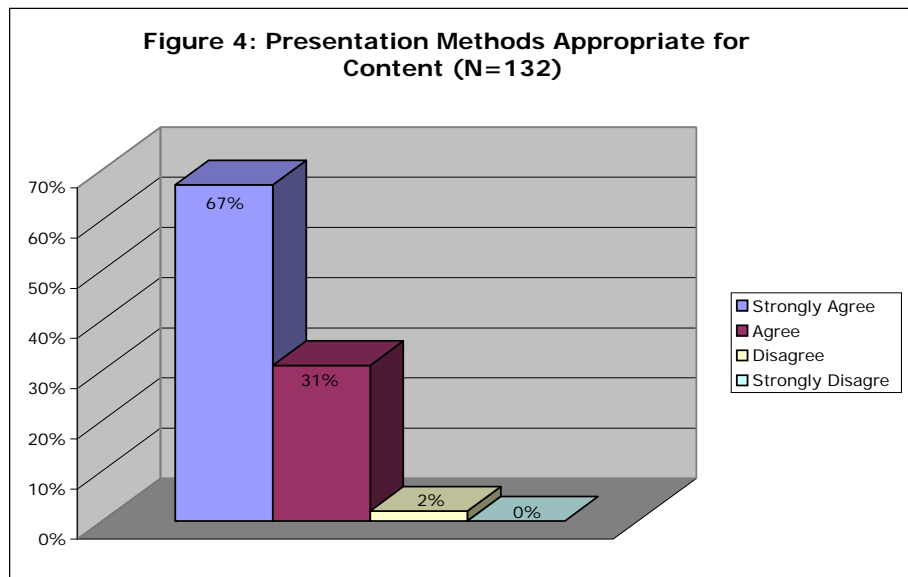
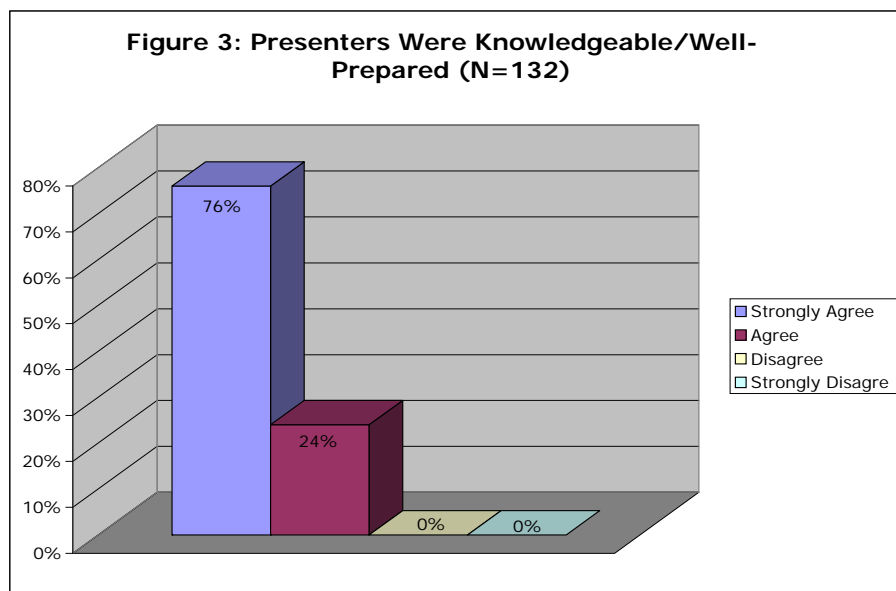
*"Looking for help with a particular issue such as managing the media."*

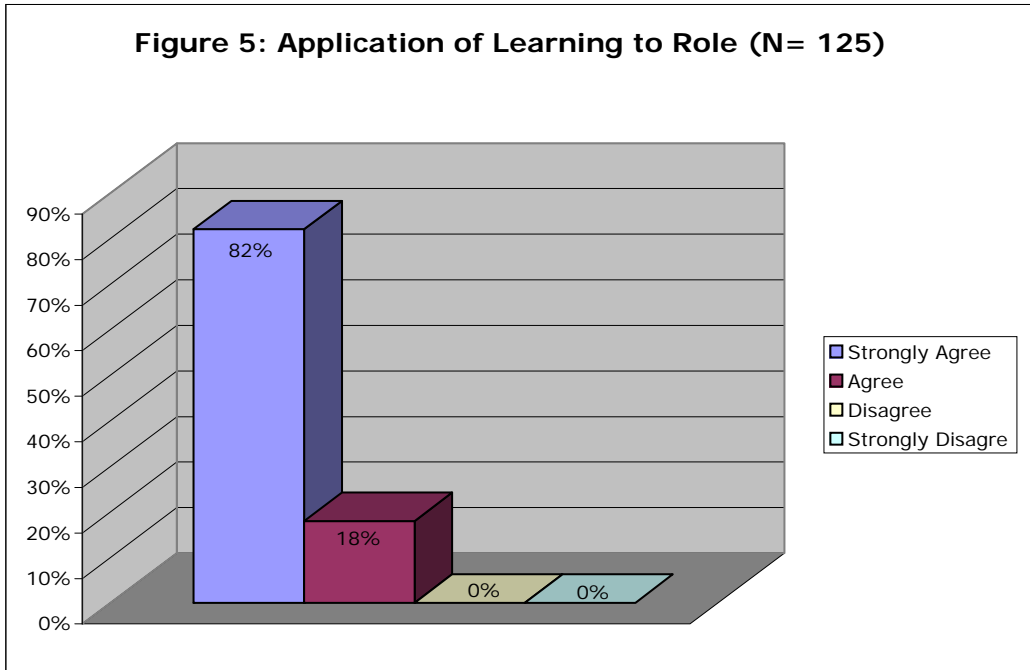
*"Workshops and discussions offered – content motivational for continued involvement."*

After completing the Institute, participants shared their perceptions of program content. In terms of relevance of workshop content, 83% strongly agreed that the content presented was relevant and 17% agreed for a total of all respondents feeling that workshop content was indeed relevant to the issues that they as elected and appointed officials believed to be central to their work (See Figure 2).

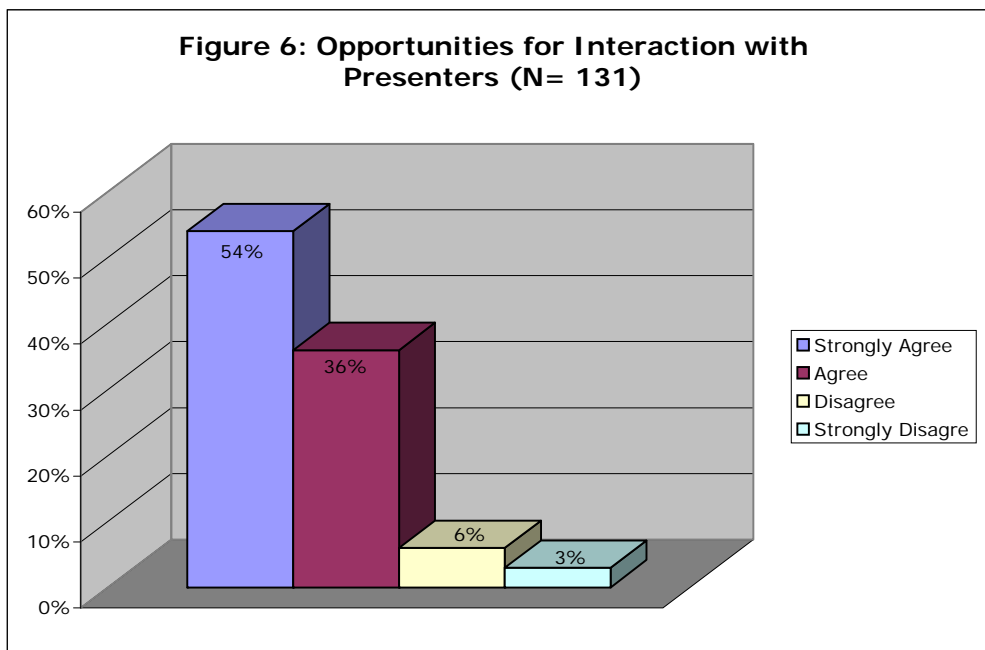


All participants agreed (24%) and strongly agreed (76%) that presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared (See Figure 3). Almost all respondents agreed (31%) and strongly agreed (67%) that the presentation methods seemed appropriate for the content. Only 2% of respondents felt that the method of presentation was not appropriate for the content (See Figure 4). All respondents agreed (18%) or strongly agreed (82%) that they would apply the knowledge gained from the Institute to their work (See Figure 5).

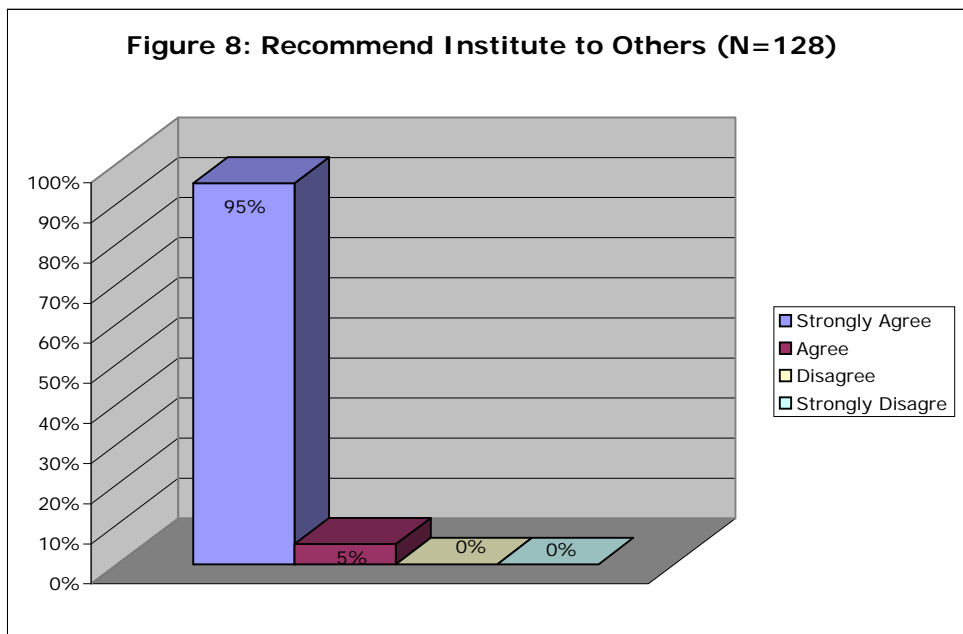
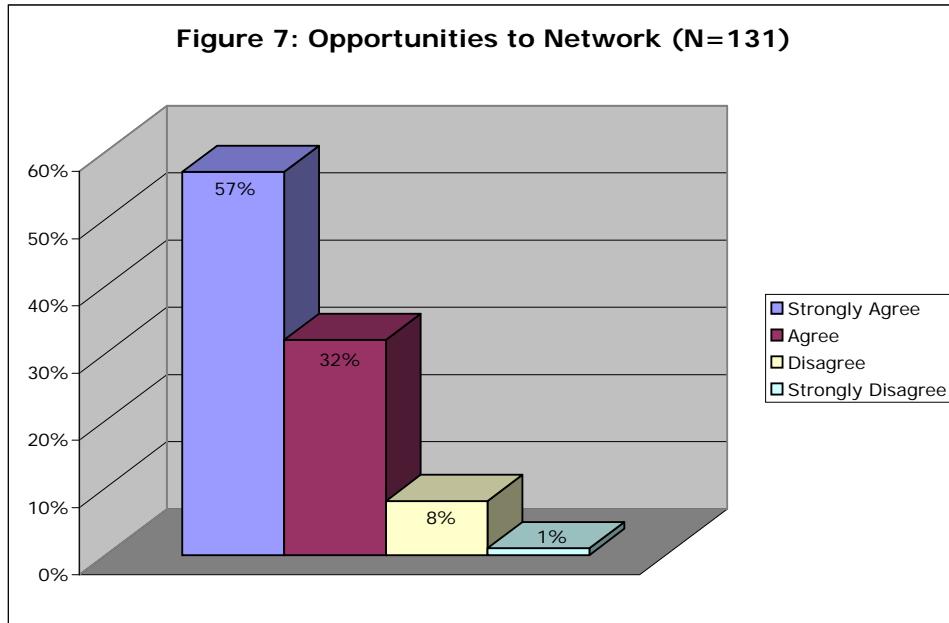




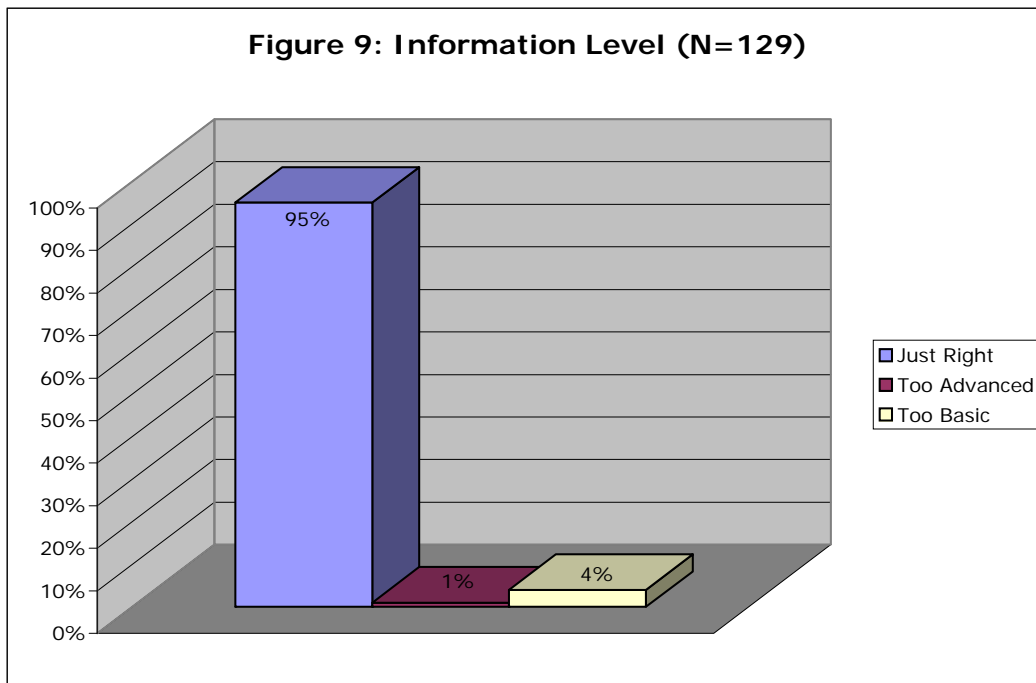
Thirty-six percent of participants felt that there were enough opportunities for the audience to interact with presenters while 54% strongly agreed. Nine percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had enough opportunities to interact with presenters (*See Figure 6*).



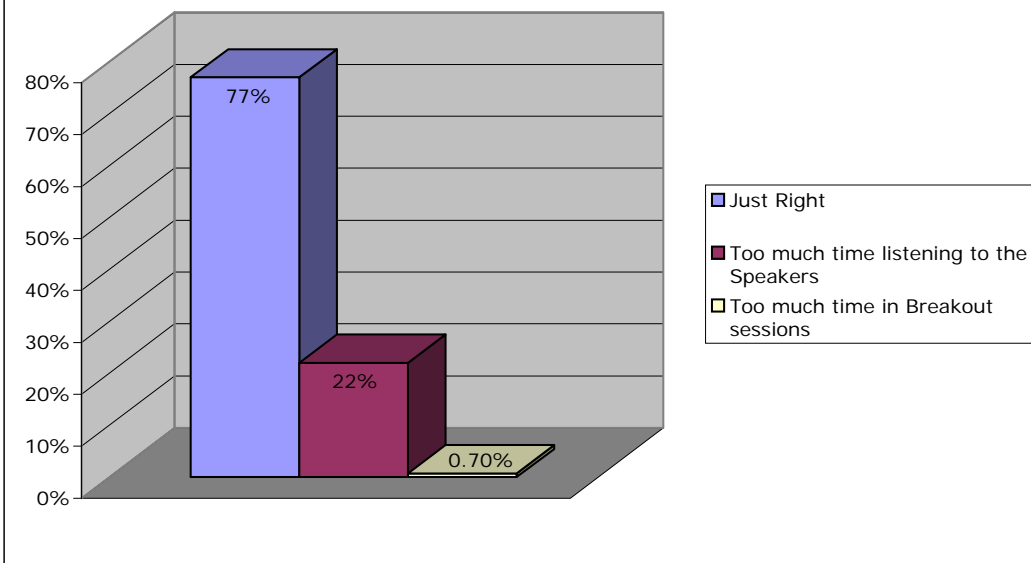
In terms of opportunities to network and to form relationships for future collaborations, 32% of participants agreed they had opportunities to do so and 57% strongly agreed. Only 9% felt they did not (*See Figure 7*). All respondents agreed (5%) or strongly agreed (95%) that they would recommend this Institute to others (*See Figure 8*).



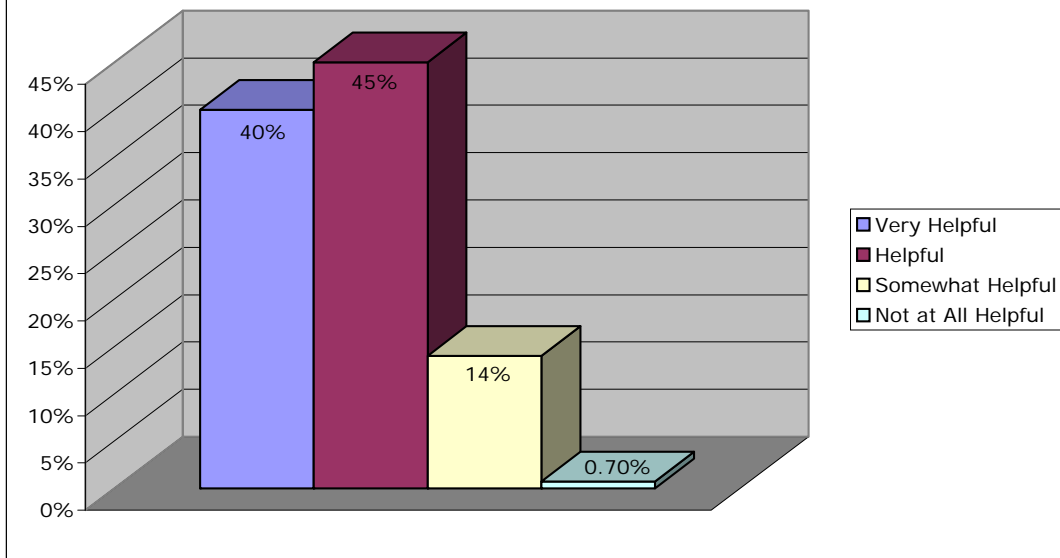
Most participants reported that the type of information covered was just right (95%) while 1% thought it was too advanced and 4% believed it was too basic (See Figure 9). Twenty-two percent of participants felt that there was too much time listening to speakers versus breakout sessions in terms of program balance, however, less than 1% felt there was too much time in breakout sessions. The majority of respondents (77%) felt the program was balanced just right between listening to speakers and breakout sessions (See Figure 10). Participants found the breakout sessions to be very helpful (40%), helpful (45%), and somewhat helpful (14%) with less than 1% feeling that the sessions were not at all helpful (See Figure 11). In terms of expectations, 94% of participants reported that their expectations were met while 6% indicated that their expectations were not met (See Figure 12).

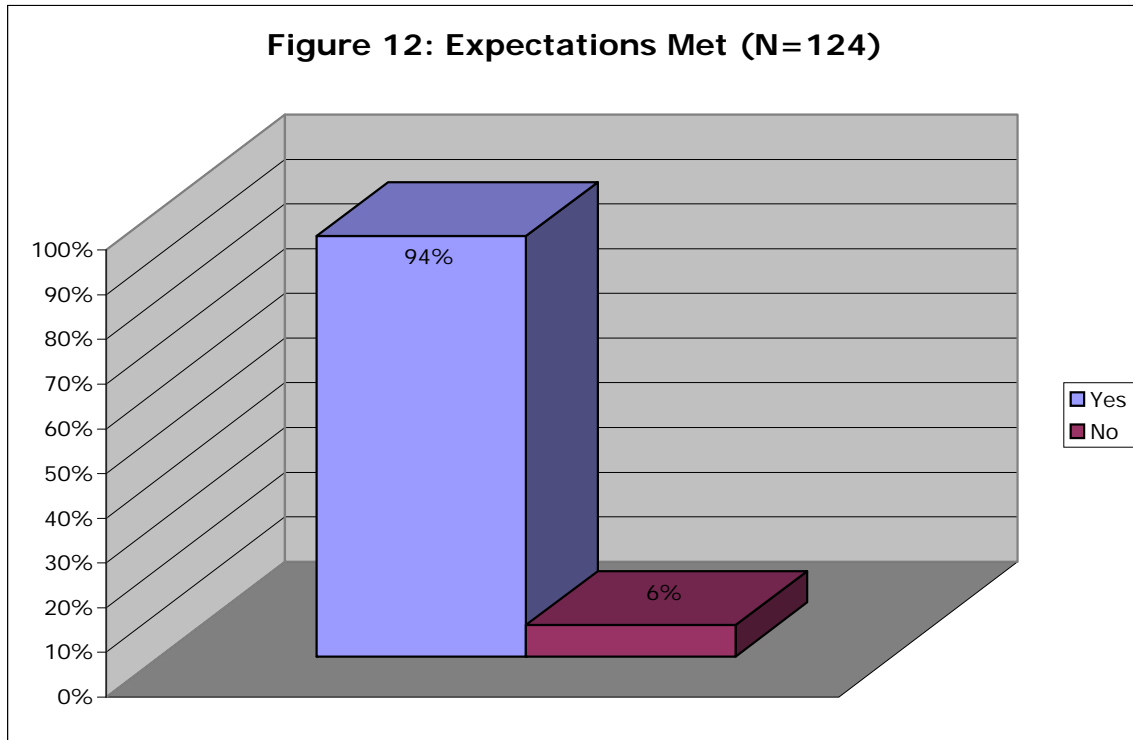


**Figure 10: Balance of Time (N=127)**

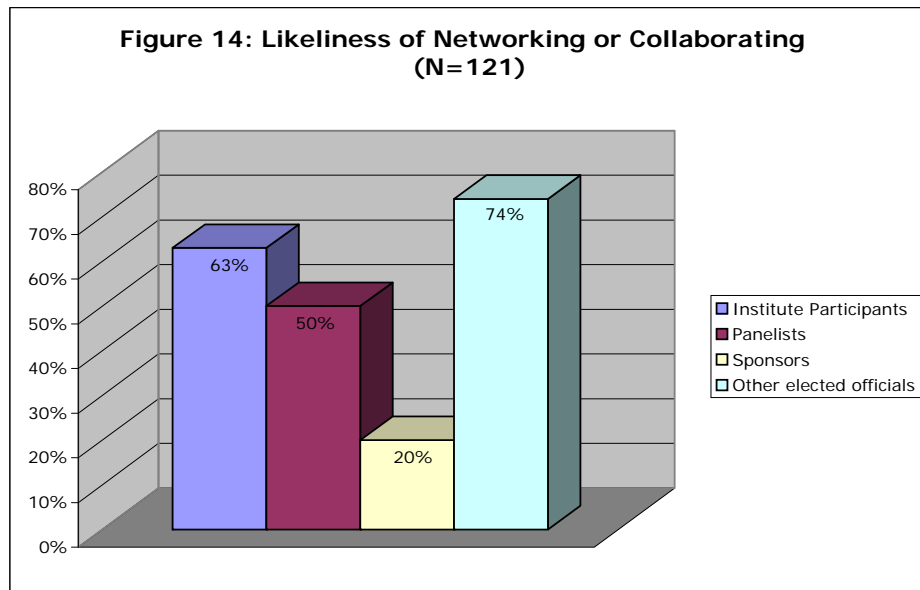
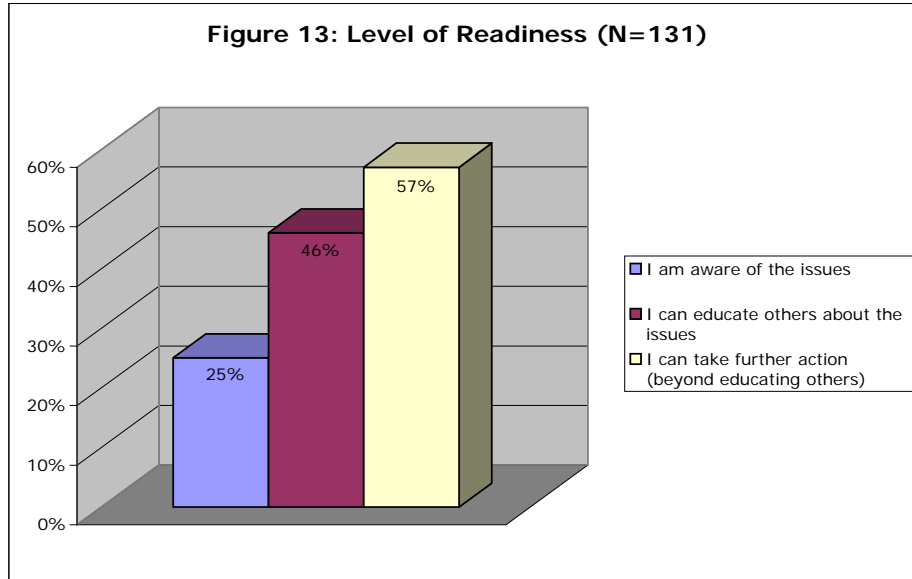


**Figure 11: Helpfulness of Strategy Breakout Sessions (N=130)**



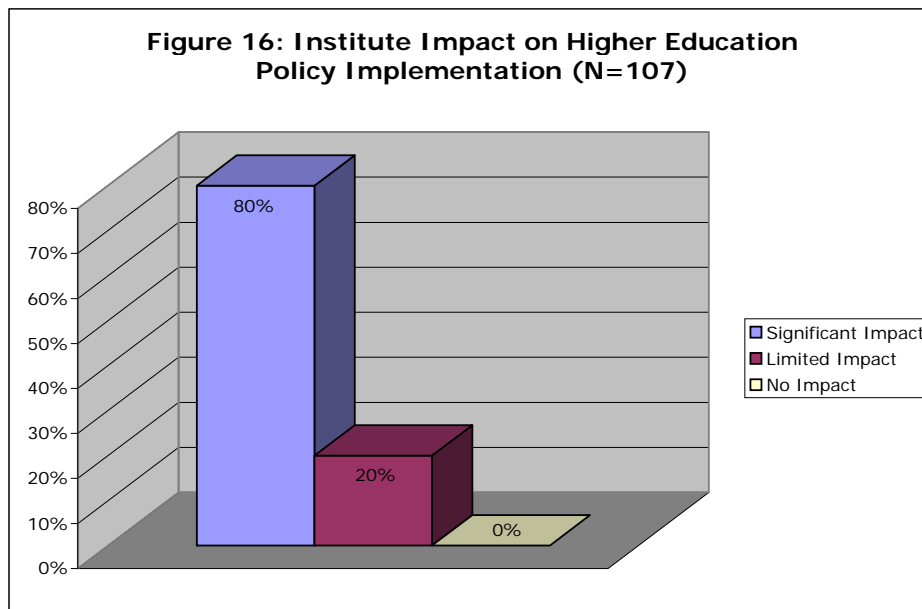
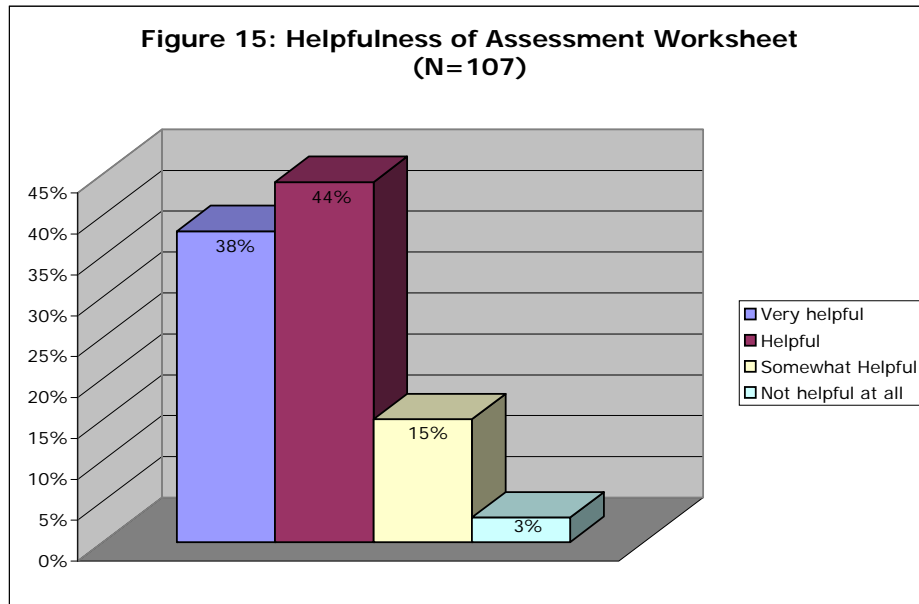


After completing the Institute, participants were asked their level of readiness on the topic specific to higher education and access for Hispanic students in their region. About 25% felt they were aware of the issues, 46% believed they could educate others about the issues, and 57% felt they knew enough that they could take further action beyond that of educating others (*See Figure 13*). Respondents were asked how likely it would be that they would network or collaborate with others involved in the program from other participants, panelists, sponsors, and other elected officials. Sixty-three percent reported that they would likely network and collaborate with other participants, and 50% thought they would collaborate or network with panelists, with only about 20% expecting to interact with sponsors, yet, 74% expected to interact with other elected officials after the Institute (*See Figure 14*).



Workshop participants from five of the Institutes (Tampa, Santa Fe, Manhattan Beach, San Diego, and Austin) were asked to share their perceptions of how helpful the Assessment Worksheet was in preparing and strategizing for the breakout sessions and program impact on their ability to implement higher education policy in their community. Of the 107 respondents to these two questions, almost all of the respondents found the Assessment Worksheet to be very helpful (38%) and helpful (44%). Fifteen percent thought that it was somewhat helpful and 3%

found it not to be helpful at all (See Figure 15). Almost all participants (80%) felt this program had significant impact on their ability to implement higher education policy in their community, and 20% believed it would have limited impact (See Figure 16).



Evaluation results from each Institute will be presented by region based on survey data completed by Institute participants. The information below is disaggregated from data

previously presented that will allow for a closer look by region and Institute. The presentation of findings begins with Florida, then Texas, followed by New Mexico and finally California.

### Florida-Tampa

Tampa participants reported that they were made aware of the Institute through a variety of different mechanisms beyond the traditional modes of mail, e-mail, website, fax, and telephone. Sixty percent indicated that they were informed through interactions with presenters, policy partners, and co-workers. Ten percent were invited through a telephone contact, 20% via e-mail, and 20% based on the NALEO website.

Eighty-two percent of participants in Tampa strongly agreed and 18% agreed that the content of the Institute was relevant, and the same was reported about presenters being knowledgeable and well prepared. All of the participants strongly agreed that they would recommend the Institute to others.

Most participants (73%) reported strongly agreeing with the statement that there were enough opportunities for the audience to interact with the presenters and the remaining 27% agreed that they had enough opportunity for interaction. The same response was offered for the presentation methods being appropriate for the content.

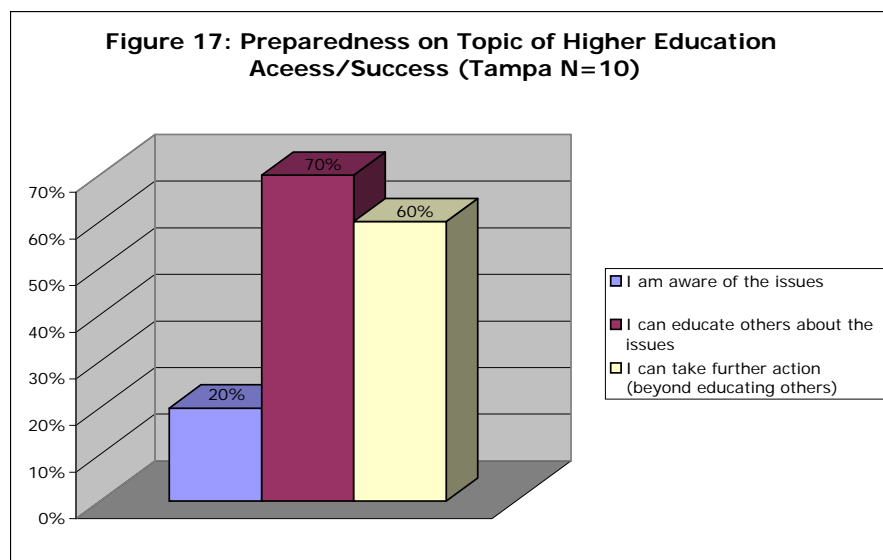
In terms of networking opportunities that led to future collaborations, all participants agreed (40%) or strongly agreed (60%) that there were enough opportunities for networking.

Forty-five percent of the participants responded to the question of how likely they would be to apply Institute materials and strategies learned to their work. All strongly agreed that they would apply what they had learned in their role as an elected official at their home base. It should be noted that 55% of the participants did not respond to the question.

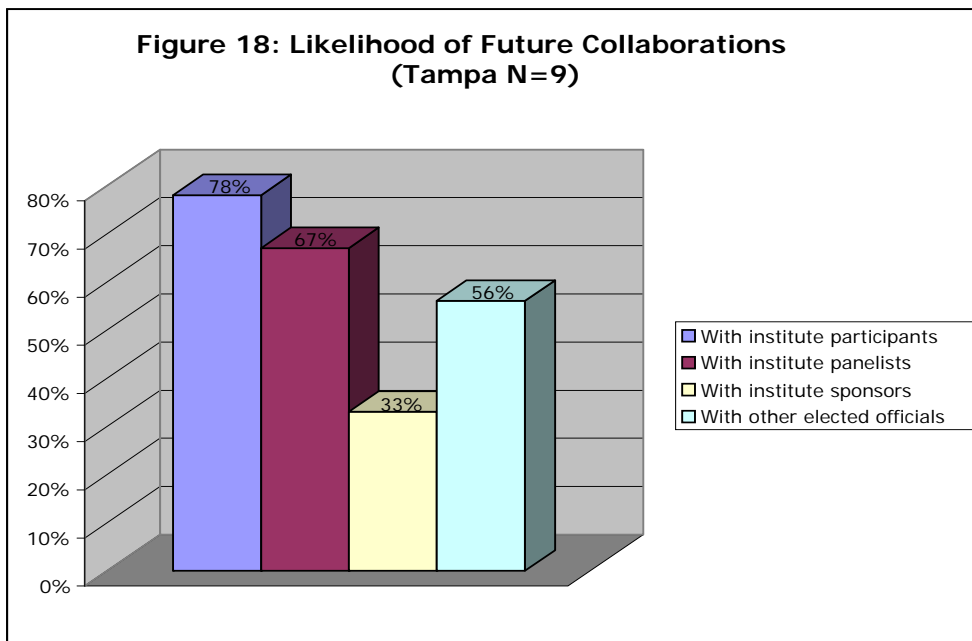
Participants felt that the type of information presented was just right, and 80% believed

that the balance between the amounts of time listening to speakers versus breakout sessions was just right. Twenty percent felt that too much time was spent listening to speakers. Everyone in this group of respondents felt that the breakout session activities and format were helpful, but there were varying degrees of helpfulness identified within the group. About half of the participants found the activities and format to be very helpful, and 30% indicated that they were helpful while 20% found them somewhat helpful. Forty-three percent of the participants reported that the Assessment worksheet was very helpful and the same percentage found it helpful in assisting in their preparation for strategizing in breakout sessions. Fourteen percent found the Assessment worksheet to be somewhat helpful in this regard.

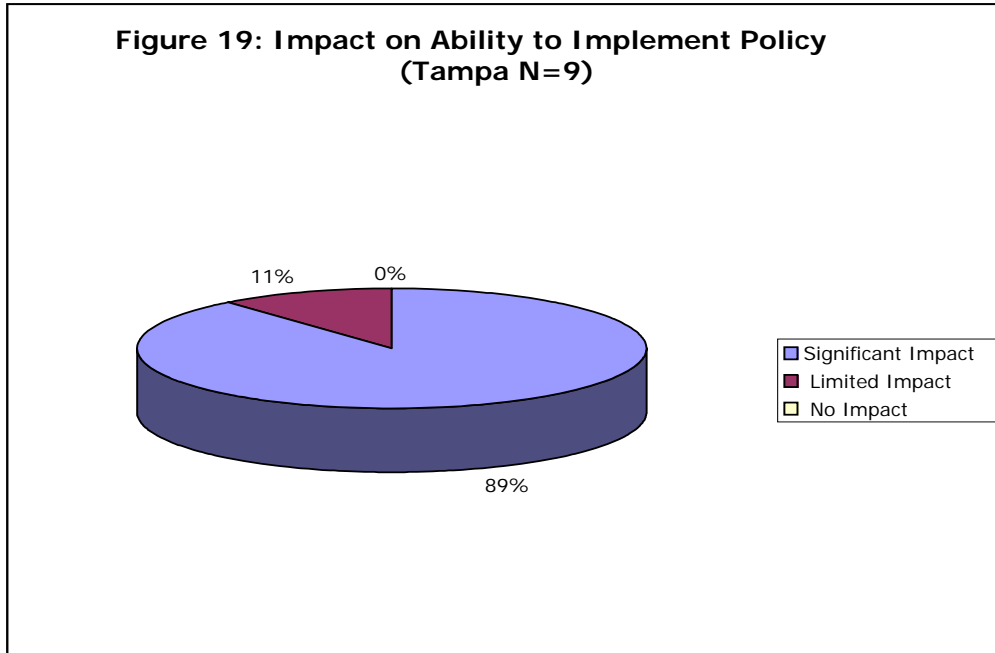
In terms of Institute participants' preparedness relative to higher education access and success issues for Hispanic students in Florida, 20% of respondents felt they were aware of the issues, while 70% felt they could educate others, and 60% also believed that they could take further action beyond educating others after participating in the Institute. Even though participants were asked to select only one category of response to this question, many selected more than one, resulting in a cumulative percentage beyond 100% (See Figure 17).



In response to an action-oriented approach to their work, elected and appointed officials were asked to indicate how likely they were to network and collaborate with various constituents that participated in the Institute. These constituents included other Institute participants, panelists, sponsors, and elected officials. Seventy-eight percent believed that they would network or interact with other participants after the Institute. There were 67% who expected to network or collaborate with panelists, 33% with sponsors, and 56% with elected officials (*See Figure 18*).



After completing the Institute, 89% of Tampa participants felt that the Institute would have a significant impact on their ability to implement higher education policy in their community, while 11% believed that the impact was limited (*See Figure 19*). All respondents reported that their expectations of the Policy Institute were met.



Texas - Dallas and Austin

There were two Institutes held in Texas, one in Dallas in 2006 and then in Austin the following year. Dallas had ten participants who completed the evaluation survey and thirty-one participants from Austin responded.

Dallas respondents indicated that 63% of them learned of the Institute through the mail as was true for 62% of Austin participants. For Dallas respondents, all other forms of communications were mentioned at a rate of 20%, while Austin, reported 23% became aware through the website and all other forms of possible communication was at 20%.

All participants in both Texas Institutes believed that program content was relevant. Dallas participants strongly agreed (70%) and agreed (30%) while Austin participants strongly agreed (77%) and agreed (23%) that the content was relevant. Additionally, almost all participants strongly agreed (90% - Dallas and 81% - Austin) and agreed (10% - Dallas and 19% - Austin) that presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared. Almost all of the participants

strongly agreed (80% - Dallas and 94% - Austin) that they would recommend the Institute to others, while the remaining responders agreed. There were no participants across both Institutes that would not recommend the Institute to others.

About half of the Dallas participants (50%) reported strongly agreeing with the statement that there were enough opportunities for the audience to interact with the presenters and 40% agreed while 10 % disagreed. Ten percent in Austin also disagreed (3%) or strongly disagreed (7%) with this statement while 36% agreed and 55% strongly agreed that there were ample opportunities for audience interaction with presenters. All Dallas participants reported that the presentation methods used were appropriate for the content (70% agreed and 30% strongly agreed), and all but 3% of Austin Institute attendees strongly agreed (61%) and agreed (36%) that presentation methods were appropriate.

Thirty percent of Dallas attendees did not feel that they had enough opportunities for networking; however, 70% did. Twenty percent agreed and 50% strongly agreed that there were enough opportunities to network and form relationships for future collaborations. Fifty eight percent of Austin attendees strongly agreed and 32% agreed that they had enough opportunities for networking, while 3% disagreed.

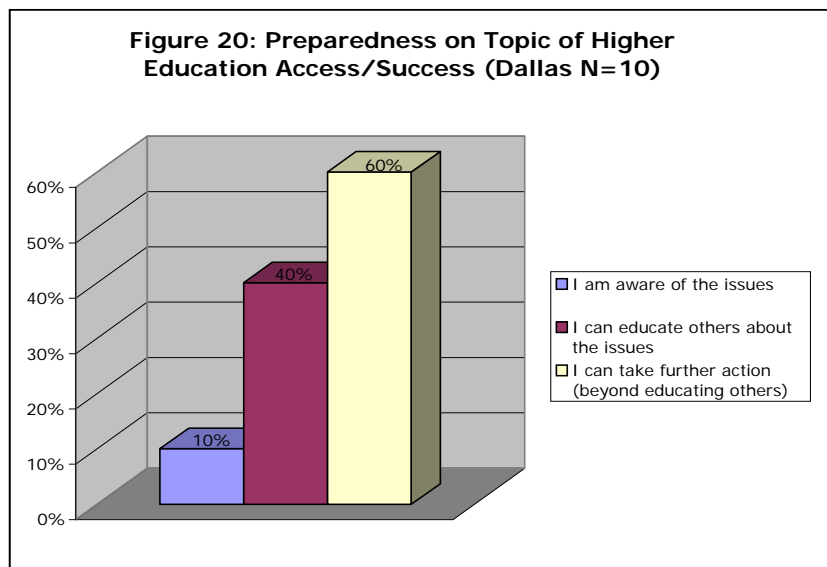
All participants agreed (40%) and strongly agreed (60%) that they would likely apply what they had learned to their work at home. All Austin respondents expected to apply what they had learned as well. Twenty-six percent agreed and 74% strongly agreed.

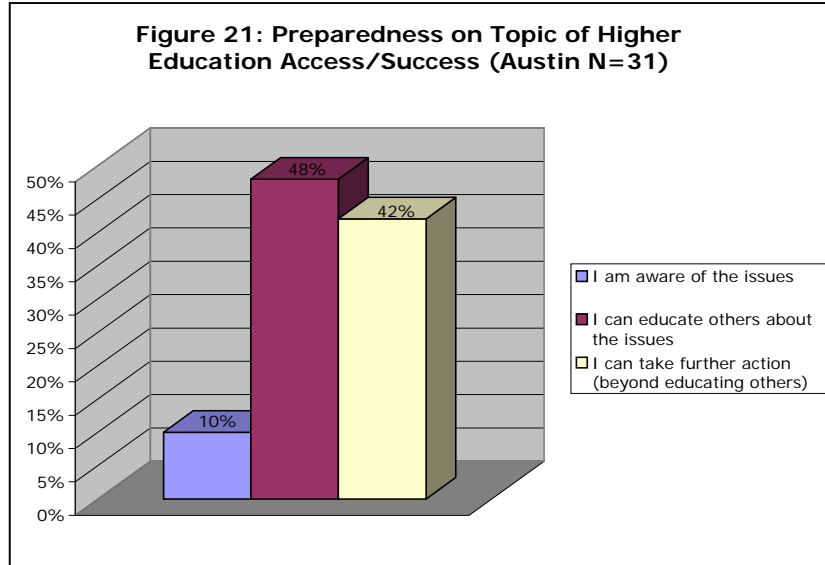
Dallas participants reported that the materials presented at the Institute were just right and almost all Austin participants agreed that the material was just right (87%), however, 13% reported that information presented was too basic. The majority of attendees at both sites believed that the balance between listening to speakers and breakout sessions was just right (80%

-Dallas and 76% - Austin). No one reported too much time in breakout sessions. Almost all participants found the breakout sessions helpful (Dallas-60%; Austin- 36%) and very helpful (Dallas-30%; Austin -32%) while few in Dallas (10%) found them somewhat helpful and some in Austin (32%) reported the same. No one reported these sessions as not at all helpful.

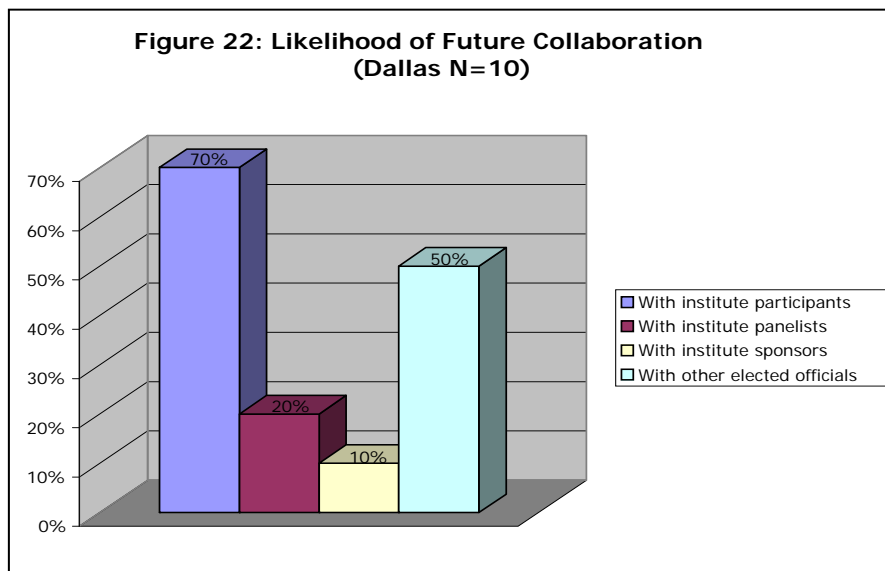
An Assessment worksheet was used in Austin where 28% of participants found the worksheet to be very helpful and 45% helpful with 24% feeling that it was somewhat helpful and 3% found it not at all helpful. This worksheet was used to help participants prepare for strategy planning in breakout sessions.

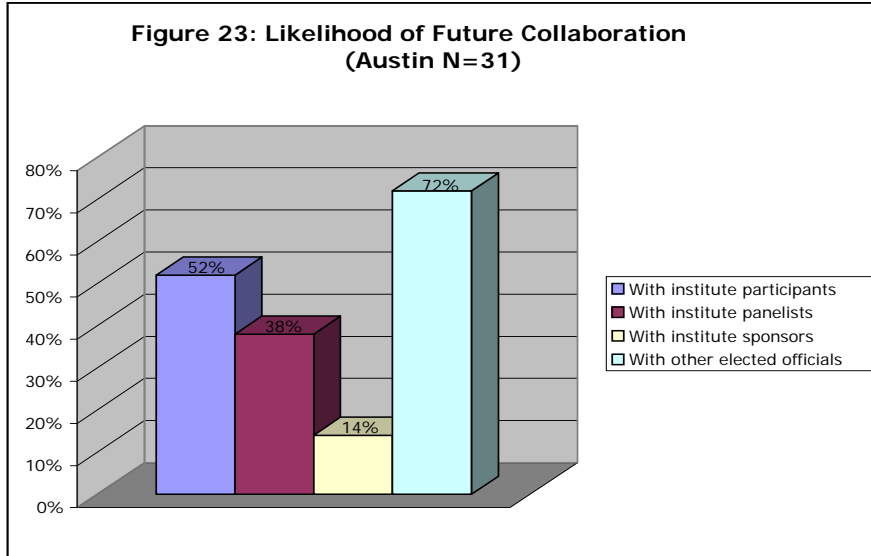
In Dallas, 10% of Institute participants felt that they were aware of the issues relative to higher education access and success for Hispanic students in Texas, 40% felt they could educate others, and 60% believed that they could take further action beyond educating others. Ten percent of Austin Institute attendees reported that they were aware of the issues, 48% could educate others, and 42% felt prepared to take action. Again, while participants were asked to select only one category of response to this question, many selected more than one, resulting in a cumulative percentage beyond 100% (See Figures 20 and 21).



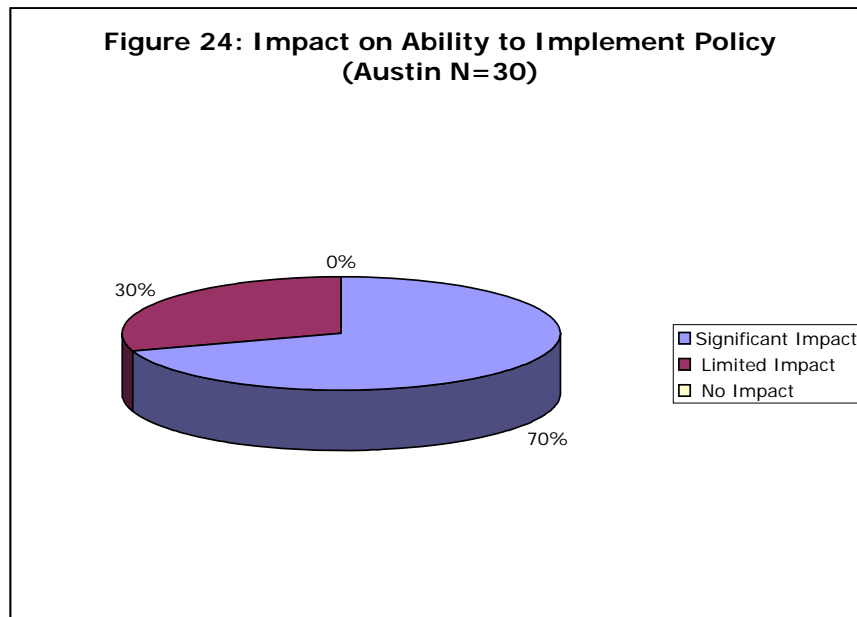


As reported above, 60% of Dallas participants reported that they would likely take action beyond the Institute. Participants indicated they would network with other participants (70%), panelists (20%), sponsors (10%), and elected officials (50%). Although less than half of Austin participants indicated that they were prepared to take action, 52% believed they would interact with other participants after the Institute, and 38% indicated they would interact with panelists, 14% with sponsors, and 72% with other elected and appointed officials (*See Figures 22 and 23*).





Austin participants were asked how much of an impact the Institute would have on their ability to implement higher education policy in their community. Seventy percent felt the impact was significant and 30% indicated that it had limited impact (*See Figure 24*). Dallas participants were not asked this question. Ninety-six percent of participants reported that their expectations had been met and all Dallas participants' expectations were met.



## New Mexico - Albuquerque and Santa Fe

There were sixteen evaluations completed by Albuquerque participants and eight by Santa Fe participants. Most Albuquerque participants were made aware of the Institute via e-mail (44%) followed by the NALEO website (25%) and 18% by both mail and telephone. Santa Fe respondents were mostly made aware through the mail (67%) followed by the NALEO website, with a few (17%) by telephone.

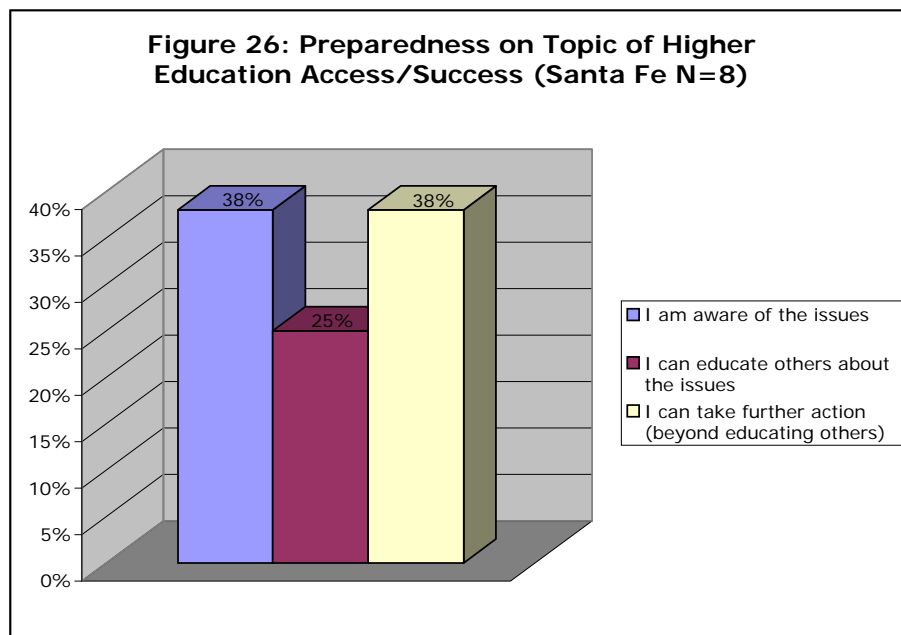
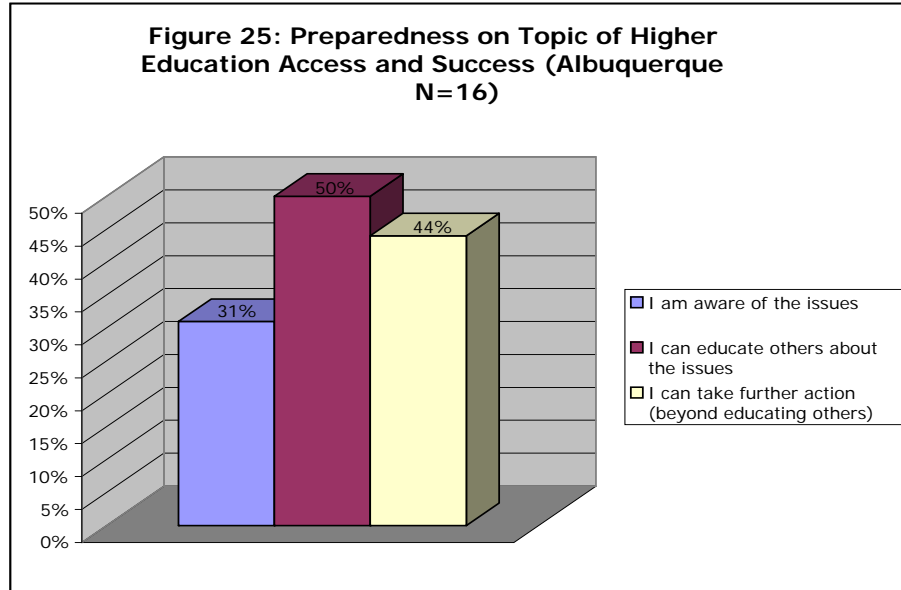
Almost all Albuquerque participants (94%) and 88% of Santa Fe's strongly agreed that the content of the Institute was relevant and all agreed (Albuquerque - 19%; Santa Fe - 13% ) or strongly agreed (Albuquerque - 81%; Santa Fe - 88%) that the presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared.

On the topic of opportunities for participants to interact with presenters, Albuquerque respondents primarily felt they had ample opportunities (44% agreed and 50% strongly agreed), while Santa Fe participants all agreed (25%) and strongly agreed (75%). Presentation methods used were favorably received as well by all participants in the region (Albuquerque - strongly agreed -81%, agreed - 19%; Santa Fe - strongly agreed - 75%, agreed - 25%). Networking was a critical dimension to Institute goals and in this region, participants were very pleased with networking opportunities. Albuquerque participants strongly agreed (69%) and agreed (31%) that there were networking opportunities that would lead to future collaboration possibilities. Santa Fe members reported similar responses with 25% agreeing and 75% strongly agreeing that the networking avenues were such that future collaborative efforts would be possible. All participants from both Institutes would recommend this program to others.

All participants believed the information presented was just right and for the most part, participants felt that there was a good balance between sessions with speakers and breakout

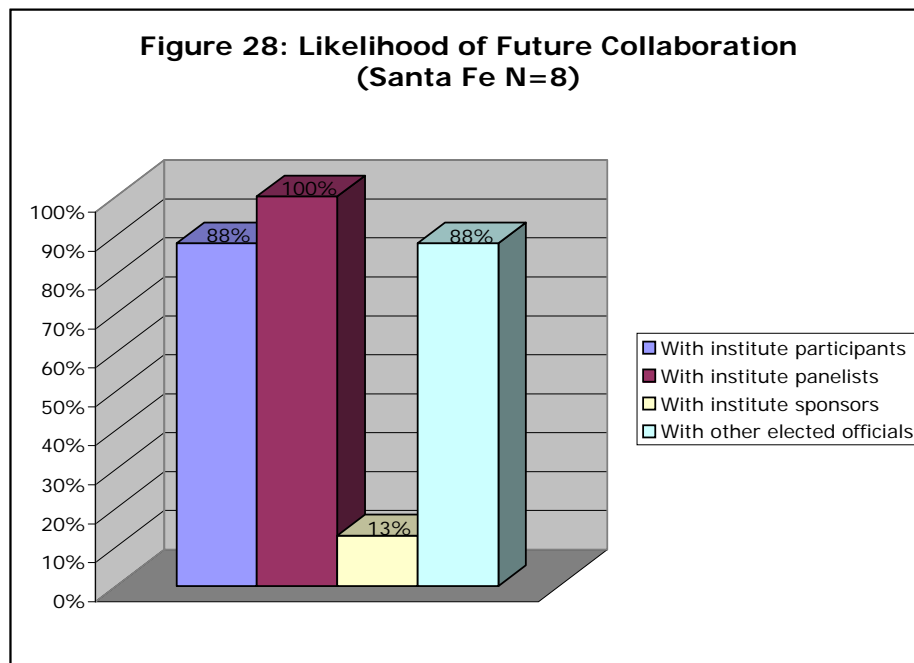
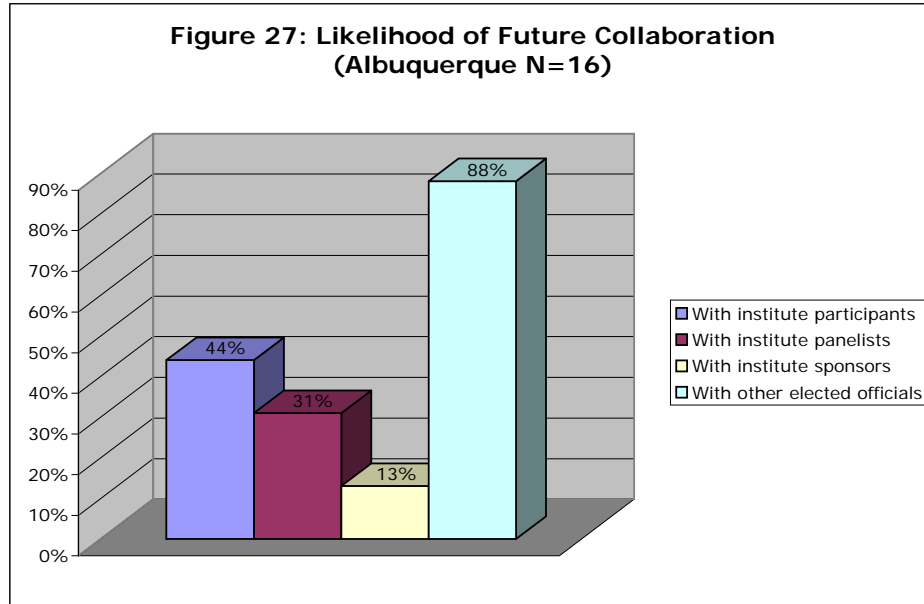
sessions. Considering both sites, only 19% of respondents felt that there was too much time listening to speakers, however, all others reported that the program was just right (Albuquerque- 94% and Santa Fe - 88%). Even the format and activities Involved in the breakout sessions were helpful and very helpful for all participants in both Institutes. Fifty-six percent of Albuquerque participants found breakout sessions to be helpful and 88% of Santa Fe respondents reported that the sessions were helpful. All others found the session and activities to be helpful, supporting this approach to Institute curricula design.

Major outcomes for this Institute were: 1) raising awareness of educational access and success for Hispanics in higher education, 2) increasing their confidence level in educating others and 3) helping them take action in their home environment to bring about change in support of Hispanic educational issues. While participants were asked to select one of these identifiers, many chose multiple responses; therefore, the full pool of responses exceeds 100%. About a third of Albuquerque participants (31%) and 38% of Santa Fe responders felt more aware of Hispanic issues of access and success in higher education. Half of Albuquerque participants felt they could educate others as did 25% of Santa Fe responders. Forty-four percent of Albuquerque members felt prepared to take action as did 38% of Santa Fe members (*See Figures 25 and 26*).



The kind of action that might be taken by participants included that of collaborating with others after the Institute. Participants were asked who they might network and collaborate with beyond that day. Albuquerque members indicated that most (88%) were planning to interact with other elected officials and 44% with other participants. Fewer perceived themselves as likely to interact with panelists (31%) and even fewer with sponsors (13%). Santa Fe respondents

were most likely to interact with panelists (100%), other participants and officials (88%), with only 13% planning to interact with sponsors (*See Figures 27 and 28*).



All Albuquerque participants indicated that their expectations of this Institute were met.

Almost all, (88%) of Santa Fe responders felt their expectations were met while 13% did not.

Overall, almost all participants' expectations were met.

#### California- San Diego and Manhattan Beach

San Diego participants primarily learned about the Institute through e-mail (50%) and mailings (44%), while 28% visited the NALEO website. Another form of communication occurred for 11% of the participants by fax and 6% by telephone. Twelve percent of the recipients received information through other vehicles such as personal invitations or through other elected officials. Just as many of the Manhattan Beach Institute participants reported the mail (47%) as a source of information about the Institute as "other" avenues. Both the fax and telephone were reported by 7% of the respondents and 23% used the website as their information source.

All San Diego participants strongly agreed (90%) and agreed (10%) that the program content for the Institute was relevant; 70% strongly agreed and 30% agreed that presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared. Almost all of the participants strongly agreed (95%) and the other 5% agreed that they would recommend the Institute to others.

All Manhattan Beach site participants agreed (17%) and strongly agreed (83%) that Institute content was relevant. They all agreed (36%) and strongly agreed (64%) that presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared. Almost all participants (97%) would recommend the Institute to others.

The majority of the San Diego participants strongly agreed (55%) that there were enough opportunities for the audience to interact with the presenters. Many others (35%) agreed with this position while 5% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed. All participants agreed (15%) or strongly agreed (85%) that the methods employed for presentations were appropriate for the content offered. Manhattan Beach members felt that the method of presentation was appropriate

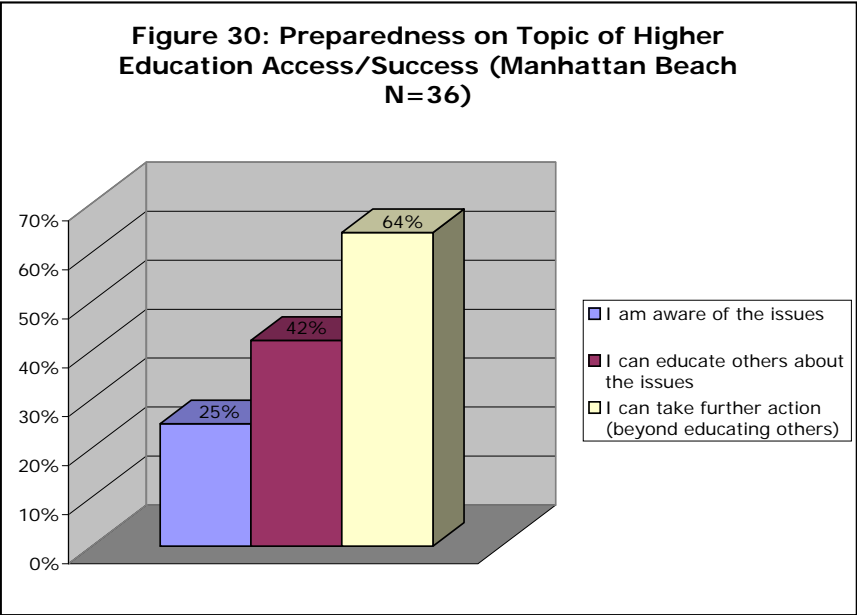
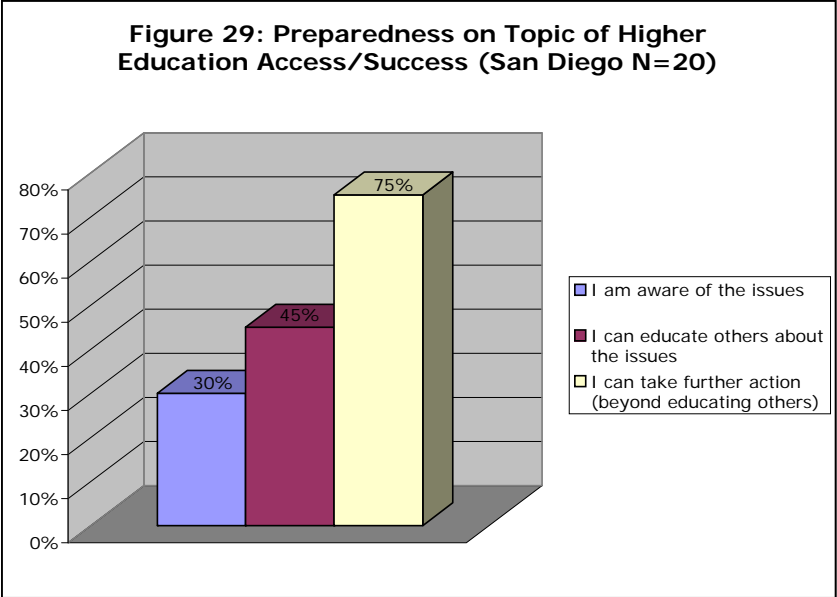
in that 33% agreed and 64% strongly agreed while only 3% disagreed. Only three percent of Manhattan Beach respondents strongly disagreed and 11% disagreed with the statement that there were enough opportunities for interaction with presenters, while most, (40% agreed and 46% strongly agreed) shared a favorable response to opportunities for interactions.

All California participants agreed (20% and 5%) and strongly agreed (80% and 95%) that they would apply what they learned at the Institute in their daily work. All participants overwhelmingly agreed and strongly agreed that they would recommend the Institute to others.

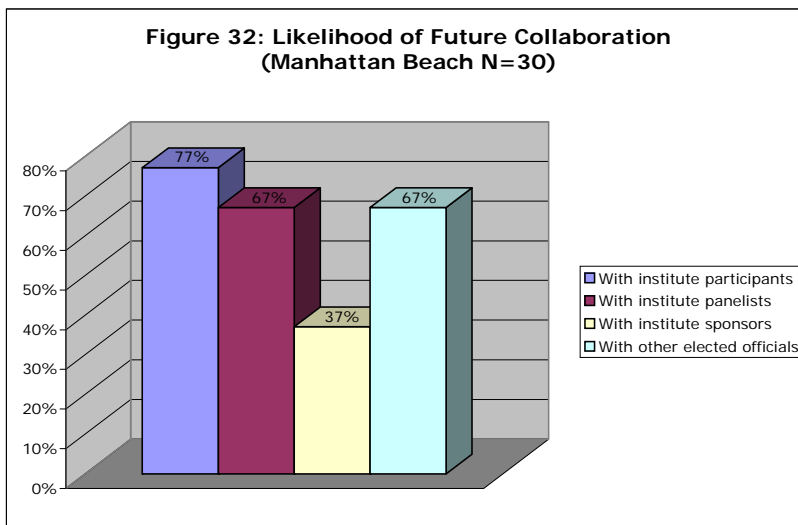
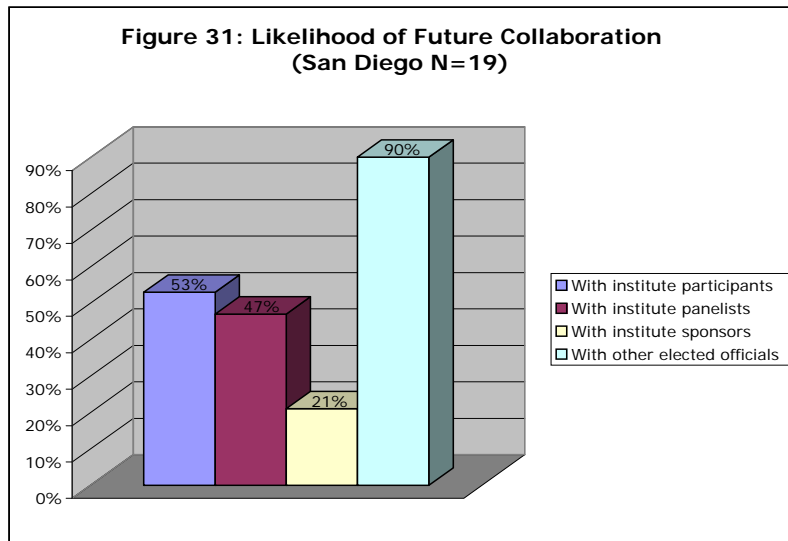
In San Diego, Institute participants felt that the information presented was just right (90%) for the most part with only 10% reporting that it was either too advanced or too basic. Manhattan Beach participants echoed similar responses with 97% feeling that the information presented was just right and only 3% reporting it as too basic. In terms of balance between listening to speakers and breakout sessions, 74% of San Diego members felt that the balance was just right, while 21% felt too much time was spent listening to speakers and 5% reported too much time in breakout sessions.

Manhattan Beach responders mostly felt that the session balance was just right (69%), however, 31% did feel that too much time was spent listening to speakers. Only 3% of all participants from California thought the breakout sessions were not at all helpful; all others from both Institutes found the breakout sessions to be very helpful (San Diego- 45% and Manhattan Beach - 46%); helpful (San Diego - 50%; Manhattan Beach - 40%). About 5% of San Diego participants and 11% of Manhattan Beach found the breakout sessions to be somewhat helpful. San Diego participants were asked about the usefulness of the Assessment worksheet. Fifty-three percent found it to be very helpful and 47% reported that it was helpful in preparing for the Institute breakout sessions.

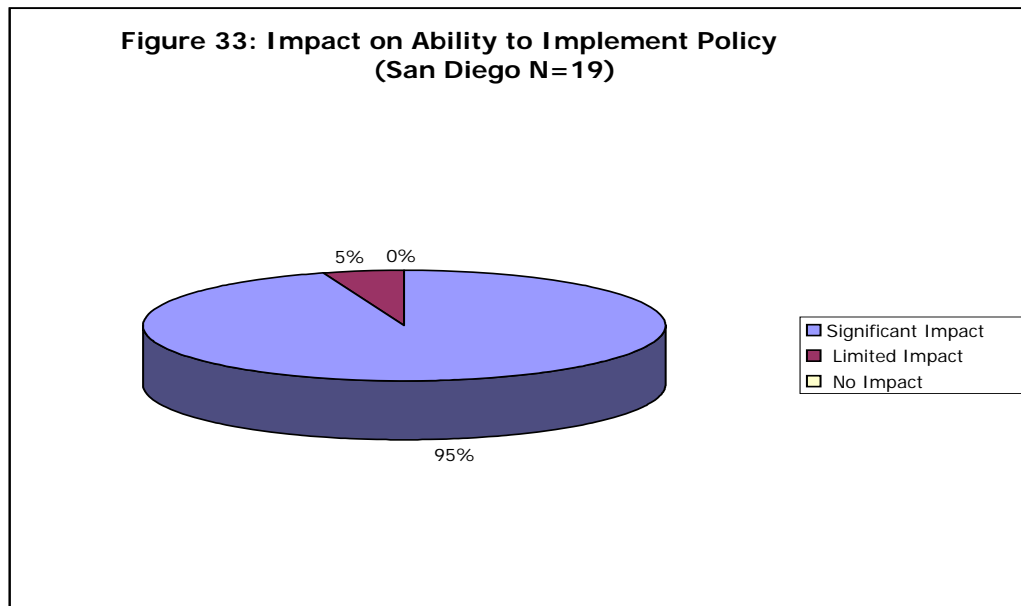
California participants reported that they felt confident in their awareness level of educational access and success issues for Hispanics in higher education as an outcome of this program at the level of 30% for San Diego and 25% for Manhattan Beach. Forty-five percent of San Diego participants believed that they could educate others as did 42% of Manhattan Beach members. Seventy-five percent of San Diego Institute members felt prepared to take action as did 64% of Manhattan Beach participants (*See Figures 29 and 30*).



After completing the Institute, participants were asked to share what they expected to do in terms of action related to collaborating with Institute participants. Fifty-three San Diego participants expected to collaborate with other participants, and 47% anticipated interacting with panelists, while 21% felt they would connect with sponsors. Ninety percent expected to collaborate with officials. Manhattan Beach participants expected to interact with other participants for the purpose of collaboration at a rate of 77%. They anticipated collaborating with panelists at about 67% and sponsors at 37%. Elected official collaboration rate was at 67%. All anticipated collaboration rates from these two Institutes were high (See Figures 31 and 32).



San Diego participants reported that the Institute had a significant impact on them (95%) while 5% reported that the impact was limited (See Figure 33). Eighty-six percent of Manhattan Beach and 94% of San Diego reported that their expectations were met.



In summary, the quantitative data indicates an overall positive reaction from those who participated at the various Educational Institutes. No major negative trends emerged from the data. This fact is best summarized in the survey question that asked participants if they would recommend the Institute to others (Figure 8) and if their expectations were met (Figure 12). The cumulative data shows that a large percent (95%) of participants strongly agreed that they would in fact recommend future Institutes to others and an equivalently high percentage (94%) said that their expectations were met. Across the board, participants generally approved of the content, knowledge that they gained from these panelists and their presentations, and the strategy breakout sessions. Attributing the Institutes, a majority of participants (74%) also indicated that they would become more involved in future collaborations with other elected officials in regards

to issues of higher education access and success within the Latino community.

The data also indicates that the best and most effective way of contacting prospective participants is through mail, e-mail, and other methods, most likely through personal contacts and word of mouth (*See Appendix A, Figure A1*). Though this question was included in the survey to indicate how participants became aware of NALEO's Institute, it may point to the most efficient methods of conducting follow-ups with past participants and the possibilities for future collaborations.

Finally, there were no significant differences between states on any of the outcome variables such as readiness, application of knowledge, and action after Institute with the exception of interaction with sponsors. Manhattan Beach participants were significantly more likely to interact with sponsors than were any other Institute site participants ( $p < .05$ ).

## Qualitative Findings

### **Institute Participants**

The interviewees for this study represented the four regions and were cooperative and eagerly spoke of their experiences with NALEO. Participants were asked to describe their insights, gains, opportunities to discuss strategies, and impact of Institute participation on their daily practice. They were also asked to describe the benefits of NALEO and what next steps would be beneficial from their perspective as elected and appointed Latino officials. Finally, participants were asked to suggest or recommend program improvements. What follows is an analysis of the interview data gathered identifying emerging themes and exemplars reflective of prominent themes.

### Participant gains and insights on educational issues:

Through the Institute, participants reported that they were able to gain direct insight into information about educational access issues primarily through the speakers and panelists, and other attendees. They became knowledgeable of available resources, issues of educational access and learned of others whom they could consult with who had similar and different problems related to education and the Latino community.

*“I got to learn about other people’s problems, this was very important. Other people had some problems the same and some different from ours and I got to see how they handled each case. And I was very impressed by how NALEO organized such a large amount of people. It helped me because I got to go out there and just be a participant and if you had problems or concerns, I had the opportunity to ask other people and get my problems out there.”* (School Board Member)

*“There was a direct link between NALEO and educational access issues addressed; – It was encouraging that they considered culture of student and open access.”* (School Board Member)

*“NALEO helped me get information and data needed to assist in educational access grants that my community needed for program development.” (Educator)*

*“It was interesting to consider state and country similarities and differences; especially those similarities that were common across different environments and locations.” (Educator)*

*“I enjoyed the opportunities to discuss strategies.” (County Officer)*

### The Breakout sessions

The Breakout sessions offered participants an opportunity to interact with others beyond their local communities. In these Breakout sessions, the participants were able to share strategies and discuss similar issues. Insights on issues and opportunities to connect with and hear from the experts were cited as a positive aspect of the breakout sessions by almost all interviewees. Some also commented about the opportunity to hear about “best practices” as being helpful.

*“Also the Breakout sessions were very helpful. The individuals that they had spearheading the breakout sessions were phenomenal. They really made you feel like you were a part of it. They were successful in relaying information, and answering many of the questions we had.” (School Board Member)*

*“Knowing that you could be effective based on what others had done and hearing them share how they did it was very helpful.” (School Board Member)*

*“Specific issues of ESL were discussed and I gained a lot in terms of strategies for this issue that changed our programs from 4 yrs to 1-2 yrs for example.” (Teacher)*

Others commented on the positive atmosphere that was created to support interaction.

*“There was an atmosphere that allowed interaction and discussions on a state and national level. In the group activities you could begin conversations and breaks allowed you to talk with others.” (Board Member)*

A few participants did not find the breakout sessions useful because of time constraints and limited action-oriented discussions.

*“Yes but muted. We discussed them in small sessions and there were plans of action when we got back but without the national umbrella no one pays attention. We do not have time to talk with the panelist. There is not enough time to dialogue at a round table with the experts that are brought in for different topics. This is what I mean by muted. We do not have time to discuss details.”*(Board of Education)

Some thought that follow-up is necessary. In the sessions, plans were made to engage in activities to enhance Latino education access efforts. However, it was unclear as to what the outcome was.

*“I am not sure if we executed the plan. We may have, but I do not know for sure.”*  
(Teacher)

The Assessment worksheet was favorably mentioned by many participants as a good preparation tool for the Institute.

*“Preparation for the conference was helpful and allowed me to learn from others as they shared their responses.”*

One participant was frustrated that the sessions were not used to educate and advocate for Latino concerns with speakers who needed to understand more than what they demonstrated about Latino educational issues.

*“They did not take advantage of the opportunity to advocate Latino concerns to leadership who needed more understanding of the issues particularly speakers who are in important positions to bring change.”*

Finally, the breakout session helped some participants understand what all is entailed in bringing about change, and recognizing the layers, factors and particularly the element of time.

*“Patience. Changes take time and are not as quick as I wanted.”* (Mayor)

### Strategies used to execute role

Participants pointed out the support and leadership of NALEO in bringing units together for a collaborative effort with a number of different levels interacting and supporting community-based initiative and demonstrating how to use resources and materials. Examples of strategies developed through the support of NALEO and learned through the Institute or developed with NALEO leadership were described. Such examples included an ESL program initiative and networking with legislators.

*“Yes, as a school board member. ...people do not understand or know what it is like to be an Hispanic – ELL; I talked with the super and the board members to help them know what is needed for NCLB and other laws and discussed accountability. This knowledge and information changed the way we handled this issue.”* (School Board Member)

*“I was able to get in touch with people that I would not normally have gotten in touch with. Networking was great. It was good to bring it back to the teachers. I used it in the classroom and as a school board member. With ESL and bilingual there was someone that knew what was going on and could explain it to the board member.”* (School Board Member)

*“I refer to those books on a pretty regular basis. I have five of them here, and the others are home. The ideas that are presented at NALEO, I mark them. I’m using the information I learned at NALEO to help form my positions in policy. I’m always the one person saying things like successful communities have diversity in them. Things like this I learned from NALEO. These opportunities with NALEO can help me see how to be a better administrator, because I strive to be in an executive role. I also speak a lot, so I refer to this information.”* (City Council Member)

*“The scope of picture of work is bigger as a result of involvement with NALEO I collaborated with others beyond my local community by email asking questions and sharing information.”*

*“I used the training offered by NALEO to influence high school educational policy.”*  
(School Board Member)

Participants observed that it was helpful to see what others were doing in other states with their state legislators, and that the Institute assisted them in keeping focused and on track. Many reported that they became informed and aware of information and knew where to go to get information, readings, websites etc...

*“For one, I brought back this information to my board and I have had some opportunities to discuss some of the issues of advocacy. We’ve been having the local legislators visit our local board meetings to talk to us directly. That was one of the benefits of being there to remind us how important it is to communicate with the legislators. Since that meeting, the legislators have come to visit us three times.”* (School Board Member)

*“It’s been very inspirational. It lights the fire under me by seeing people involved with NALEO, seeing them advancing Hispanic opportunities. Even though we are small and very rural, we do make a difference, starting with individuals such as myself, and seeing other people who are passionate about work that I do...it lights the fire under me”.* (School Board Member)

Finally, another aspect pointed out was that of having access to information from others concerning funding and partnerships formed to support educational access efforts were very helpful.

*“The data was very useful ... we used articles and the binders, the websites for updated information that provided critical information.”* (County Superintendent)

A few participants reported that they did not use what they learned at the Institute on a daily basis. However, they commented on how they gained from the interactions by connecting with others at different levels. Still others reinforced the importance of feeling a sense of community and seeing the big picture of Latino issues broadly and locally.

*“It was reinforcement and inspirational and helps with the daily grind by seeing others involved in NALEO advancing Hispanic opportunities.”* (School Board Member)

*“I got immediate feedback from people – colleagues and the national office of NALEO for work that I was doing. It was very helpful.”*

## Influence educational policy in their state

When prompted, participants pondered how they might have influenced educational policy in their state or community. Most could not point to a specific issue but commented on strategies employed as a result of their NALEO Institute involvement. Many commented on collaborative efforts where they engaged stakeholders from many different levels and served as a resource person providing information for colleagues that helped influence policy. Others commented on how they influenced colleagues by helping them understand issues specific to Latino education and access including influencing a legislator in the decision making process through discussions.

*“I brought about a small change in school safety.”*

*“I was involved in a healthy foods change in the schools.”*

*“It is hard to know how I am influencing policy; it is like a mustard seed. You have to keep in mind that we are here for the kids.”*

*“Recommending policy initiatives.”*

*“Sanctioned schools for not meeting goals (ESL).”* (School Board Member)

*“As a member of our school board, before NALEO, I was never really involved in the legislative process. But through their coaching and participation, we started getting involved in the legislative process, and I’ve got to see how the legislative process is beneficial for us. To me it’s been very beneficial because it’s opened my eyes that I can make a difference as an individual.”* (School Board Member)

All interviewees agreed that NALEO – provided important information for their work. One participant echoed what was said by all. *“Without a doubt.”* This was done through offering needed information in the Institute sessions, keeping the participants up to date with state and federal issues, giving them basic tools for leadership effectiveness, and the office staff

was available to assist participants both in and outside of the Institute. Additionally, participants felt that they were in a safe environment to ask questions, share information, and support each other.

*“They gave us information on how to help with citizenship and the importance of this.”  
(Mayor)*

*“NALEO taught to know how to act as a leader and provided you with the nuts and bolts of leadership.”*

#### What was missing/needed?

Participants were asked to specifically share what was missing or needed to strengthen the Institute. It was often difficult for participants to offer specifics as they were reluctant to be critical of a program that has given them so much. With a little prodding, the interviewer was able to identify certain themes: more insight on local implications for national issues, more depth to Institute information, and mentorship opportunities.

*“The conference materials could have been stronger.” (Former Trustee)*

One interviewee sadly stated that NALEO should allow elected officials who lose their office to continue to attend.

*“When I lost my office my heart did not go out with it. I wanted to attend as an educator. I do not want to let go and I wish they would make exceptions ... if you move into a role that is of benefit.”*

*“Have mentorship from outgoing elected officials for incoming elected officials and more participation by the experienced officials so that the new officials can learn from them.”*

## Next steps for NALEO

There were some suggestions offered for good next steps for NALEO to take to further the work begun. The responses ranged from content specific issues to increasing the number of participations as newly elected officials, as well as issues that NALEO should consider in terms of program format and direction.

Some additional issues raised included the following:

- Immigration issues for border states considering the complexities that are social, economic and political.
- More resources for successful ELL student programs nationally
- Prepare school board members to have a better knowledge of Robert Rules of Order and nuts and bolts of the basic “how to’s” along with advanced leadership knowledge such as how to get and keep power.
- Need to know what to expect from the new national leadership and how to work with a different administration.
- Opportunities for participants to interact with national figures who serve as speakers to inform them of issue and challenges facing the Latino community and perhaps influencing their thinking and policy making.
- Participants suggested that there may be some ways in which NALEO as an organization may want to outreach to the communities and local agencies, perhaps by reps visiting local communities and serving as role models for kids in the community.

*“There are a lot of things. There’s the health issue first of all. In California we’re 46<sup>th</sup> in the country in terms of funding. We’re hoping that NALEO will help us get our fair share of tax money from the Feds. I don’t know if they’d want to get involved in that stuff, but we’re tired of coming in 46<sup>th</sup>. We’re supposed to be the ideal state, and we can’t even pay our teachers with the money they’re giving us. They can help us in those issues, for state and Feds...because they’re mandating many things but not giving us the money to succeed. I’d like to see NALEO take more of an advocacy role.” (School Board Member)*

Program specific recommendations were offered concerning workshop format, program

delivery, and financial support for participants. The following are a summary of recommendations from participants.

Workshop format:

- Have workshops in summer.
- Have localized and regionalize conferences.
- Come to the Rocky Mountain region.
- More in-depth sessions beyond the surface specific to different groups by region, program, topic, etc.
- More time with panelist to dialogue.
- Go to the next level by inviting teams from a school board 2-3 people and superintendents too.
- More follow-up and more personalized.
- Keep providing scholarships because my district will not be able fund me.

The last set of items focused on technology and applying technology to the process, and media relations.

- Create a Website Clearinghouse on educational policy.
- Blog
- How to roll out policy, messaging, and media.

When participants were asked to share what NALEO offers or gives that other professional associations do not, the response was overwhelmingly camaraderie, focus on Latino community, and insight into the issues affecting this community. People also commented on the solution-focused approach and training offered by NALEO.

*“They make you feel like you are part of a family.”*

*“I do not feel as comfortable as I do at NALEO.”*

Participants offered that they gained in depth insight into Hispanic problems and issues at a local and national level and were able to use data from presenters on Latinos while other conferences do not focus on this. They get general information at best. Others commented that NALEO was better because it was smaller and focused on Latino issues in education.

*“NALEO pushes resolutions. They show us how to put together resolutions and gain the support of legislators. I don’t think that anyone else does that.”*

On another level, participants feel that they can ask for help from the NALEO office to support them in their work.

*“They help you and give you support if you need it – Washington and Sacramento.”*  
(School Board)

One participant summed it all up by saying NALEO *“Gives me all I need.”*

#### What other organizations offer

Generally, participants talked about other organizations offering general educational information about students, or information specific to a particular elected position. The other organizations had programs where there was more networking and global presentations from presenters. Some participants attended intensive leadership training with follow-up activities. Others commented on other organizations offering more choices of sessions.

One participant commented that there was a celebration of Hispanic educational achievement and recognition of accomplishments of educational leaders in the Hispanic community would be a nice addition to NALEO like some other organizations.

### Participant recommendations for improving the Institute

When asked to offer recommendations to improve the Institute, most participants took a while to respond. The responses offered primarily focused around fine tuning the process, and follow-up activities. One participant suggested that the staff should send out a list of participants ahead of time so that they could carpool/travel to and from the Institute together and begin the process of coming together before we arrived at the conference. Many wanted to see conferences in their community and more visibility of NALEO locally. One participant felt that the Institute would be better with stronger participants, and few commented that it was not clear that folks did their preparation ahead of time. These two comments were from the same Institute and region.

A few attendees thought that the curriculum could be more innovative and that there should be Power Points on how to use the data as well as the data itself. And, the most mentioned suggestion for improving the Institute was to have more personalized follow-up and follow-up after six months. Finally, a few participants mentioned the Institute sponsors and how much they appreciate the support they offer.

*“Without people like this we would not be able to go given the budget deficit in our districts.”* (School Board Member)

### **Policy Partners**

Four policy partners contributed to the findings in this section of the report. Each was eager to share their perspectives and insights specific to NALEO and the Higher Education

Institutes. The policy makers had a clear understanding of their role and involvement with NALEO as a collaborative partner. Each reported that their organizations' involvement with NALEO strengthened each and aided in supporting the common goals that they embrace. The partners included members of educational governing boards and systems, community-based programs, and legal entities of society. Shared concerns included immigration reform and advocacy, family engagement in the educational enterprise. One policy maker indicated having been in multiple roles as a presenter, partner, and participant in Institutes.

Policy Partners had varying reasons for their motivation to become involved with NALEO from contact and interactions with other organizations and funding sources in support of shared common issues such as Latino education concerns, health and legal issues. Additionally, others were asked to specifically get involved due to their personal and professional commitment to improving the condition of Latinos.

*“Through the ENLACE and Kellogg NALEO was a strong partner.”*

*“Natural connection with advocacy work and legislative goals/state –wide partnerships to defeat legislative acts that are barriers to the Latino community.”*

*“I was approached by my supervisor to get involved because of my involvement with diversity and Latino students.”*

*“I heard about it from other elected officials.”*

Partners discussed the benefits or gains from their involvement with NALEO as being of mutual benefit to all parties involved in meeting the shared goals of the organizations, and an opportunity to work with various constituents.

*“Unifying effort of helping us focus our energies regarding access and success .... – Look at data and draw from expertise of other NALEO experts from other states and move forward with policies.”*

*“We benefitted by working on the ground with school board members. We were able to exchange our work with the constituency.”*

*“Worked with legislators and testified about upcoming bills.”*

For NALEO, the benefits reported were equally substantial. Interviewees felt that the association gained insights about local issues and concerns, broader perspective of the work being done, and the opportunity to network from a broader and deeper perspective.

*“NALEO brought a whole other perspective about the students from a geographical area.”*

*“Gaining a broader perspective of the work.”*

*“Network with other organizations like ENLACE is a part of –access to higher education.”*

Policy partners all agreed that the partnership is at the initial stages in the area of influencing educational policy. Most agreed that it will take time to bring about change and see visible results of that change through the partnership. One partner reported that steps in the right direction are occurring in terms of building a foundation.

*“We are at the beginning stages, ... have not gained a lot of traction as yet, but the fact that we are still engaged in conversation we are hopeful of moving forward.”*

*“Advocacy work. Policy papers that have impact on issues at the state level; testifying before the state legislature and getting access to elected new officials.”*

*“Diversity of partnership.”*

Partners offered some areas for improvement as they reflected on the positive aspects far outweighing any concerns. Some offered areas of strength in response to areas of improvement and some offered specific recommendations for workshop format in terms of process and structure.

*“I feel good about contact we had but I want more.”*

*“ It’s too early to know what impact is in that there needs to be a connection between commitment of recourses and design and action based on explicit program and work.”*

*“We need on-going communication and localization of conferences and impact.”*

*“More time for strategy and improvement in breakout sessions.”*

When asked to describe what they perceive as good next steps in this partnership and collaboration, most felt that they could benefit from more specific support from NALEO staff. A recognition that the next steps involve tremendous time and resource commitments for change to occur was expressed with caution and appreciation of what has been accomplished and what is yet to be achieved.

*“I think that we are at a point where we will benefit most in small groups with NALEO staff. Maybe they could help us with data sharing and analysis.”*

*“More visibility with conferences in ones back yard.”*

*“Time and opportunity for questions and answers.”*

*“The next step is a huge commitment of time and resources – making change happen is ultimately our goal.”*

Partners echoed what was heard from program participants in that NALEO provides programs and services and a role that no one else does through its national perspective, local investment, and keeping track of elected Latino officials.

*“NALEO provides a national perspective which is valuable in pushing certain policies along.”*

*“.... With the complexity of the issues more can be done by supporting strategies to promote legislature for family/school engagement at the state level.”*

*“Identifying and keeping records of Latino officials is very helpful ....factual data available and useful to the Latino community.”*

Policy partners reported very positive responses to NALEO and the work of the organization. There were mutually beneficial outcomes as demonstrated in the expressed commitment to serve and support each other in improving Latino access and success. Partners recognize the resources, time commitment and effort needed to bring about change, and feel that they are well on their way to collaborative success in this domain. One aspect of support is to continue to serve the role of maintaining records of elected officials and emphasis emerged in planning and strategizing to leverage resources to benefit long term.

### **Presenters**

Three presenters from the four regions were interviewed and asked to share their experiences and perceptions of effectiveness specific to NALEO and their role with the organization as an Institute presenter. The presenters included educational leaders, teachers, a governing board representative, and an elected/appointed official. The presenters had all been involved in Latino access and success projects and were able to share information, insights, and model collaboration. Some had worked specifically in education while others were involved in governance issues. Their involvement with NALEO allowed them to advance their own work.

*“I had been involved with voter registration and election of Latino officials and this allowed me to advance that work.”*

*“I am an advocate for retention and access and talk about this at conferences, so NALEO asked me to come and participate.”*

*“I had been involved with the educational pipeline at the graduate level in terms of access, so I spoke about those issues.”*

Presenters were asked what tools and strategies they offered in session and most indicated that they engaged in presenting information that would “*allow policy makers and elected officials understand the importance of making critical issues for Latinos an essential part of their work.*” They offered educational goals and approaches to increase participation for success, mainly through relentlessness. They tried to provide information that was critical for Latinos such as drop-out rates and the educational achievement gap.

*“Latino policy makers have to make that an essential part of their work.”*

In terms of the content and time to present information, presenters reported that they did not present strategies or have time for discussion but offered more overview of the issues and data presentations with some questions after the formal presentation.

*“Discussion and strategies took place throughout the conference in networking settings etc.”*

*“Yes, there was time for question but not discussion.”*

*“I was able to give an overview and some data analysis to help participants understand what is going on in graduate education but did not have enough time for strategies and tools.”*

Some presenters commented that more time for strategic tools and discussion would be useful but difficult with the current format.

All presenters believed that NALEO Institute participants had high levels of readiness and they were very receptive to the information offered and opportunity presented through this Institute for networking and collaborating. When asked about presenters’ perceptions of participants’ level of engagement and readiness, one presenter responded, “*Yes, participants were open, receptive, attentive, and engaged.*”

When presenters were asked to comment on whether or not they believed the Institute helped further Latino educational achievement, most felt that it did, particularly short term.

*“Good in the session but I am concerned about long term sustainability and impact.”*

Most of the presenters echoed this concern and even though *“people seemed energized and locked together,”* the presenters were not clear or sure about long term effect/impact. One advantage for program effectiveness as cited by a presenter is the fact that there is *“the mix of audience members – teachers, legislators, budget and policy insiders; it was a wonderful job from the Hispanic perspective.”* Finally, the most pressing issue for presenters was that there seemed to be concern for long term impact and sustained change over time.

*“Minimally, not enough sustained support.”*

*“It is more sporadic than sustained support.”*

*“Not proactive enough.”*

In terms of next steps, presenters felt that NALEO should, *“Engage partner /collaborators with more ‘small group’ interactions and allow for follow up locally.”* One presenter suggested that NALEO should, *“Support initiatives by the legislature. There will be push back and people need to follow-up on the local level.”*

*“NALEO needs to support local initiatives proposed by the legislators.”*

Another issue for next steps was that NALEO should be more engaged with elected officials on an on-going basis in terms of communications and attend to issues of sustainability.

*“It is not proactive enough –not enough annual and quarterly events.”*

*“Need to keep people informed monthly/ regularly.”*

*“Must focus on sustainability in order to affect educational policy.”*

The overall recommendations from this constituent group interviewed was that NALEO should stay the course, take on more of an advocacy role, and increase small group interactions and include more attendees at each Institute.

*“Keep doing what you are doing- there was a genuine exchange between everyone. I feel that I received as much as I gave.”*

*“Take more of an advocacy role.”*

*“Boost attendance at the conferences –target audience; more small group interactions.”*

Overall, the presenters were impressed by the participants, program format and the level of content that they were able to cover given the time constraints. Most felt that more time was needed to explore strategies with any depth in large sessions similar to what is permitted in breakout sessions. Presenters reported that participants were engaged and responsive to the subject matter presented and all seemed eager to continue their relationship with NALEO.

### **NALEO Leadership**

The evaluator interviewed NALEO staff including the Executive Director and three program leader officers. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain the perceptions of the NALEO leadership specific to the Higher Education Leadership Institutes and the role of the Institutes in supporting the goals and objectives of the organization. It was also helpful to gain insight into the program officers and Executive Director’s vision of the Institutes and long term plans as well as perceptions of effectiveness and program impact on elected officials’ behaviors post Institute attendance and over time.

The Higher Education Leadership Institute came about as a result of the success experienced in the K-12 model on Latino education issues. NALEO leadership explained that the Kellogg Foundation was interested in their work and invited them to participate in the ENLACE Project. The plan was to follow the K-12 model but specifically target four states. Initially, they spent significant time establishing relationships with new elected officials.

The outcomes for the program are twofold. Participants engage, network and gain an appreciation that they are part of a larger community that can affect Latino educational access and success, and they are sustained by the interactions that occur. Both the program format and process supports favorable outcomes for participants and their communities.

*“I think that among the community in general, education is one of the top important issues.”*

*“It’s very intimate, about 30-40 people. They know they’re not going to be lost, they’re going to be heard, and that they’re going to learn from other people in an intimate setting.”*

*“We also give them a familial feeling. We give them a sense of family, a safe place that they really appreciate. They can be around peers and feel comfortable. “*

*“The Institute sessions are designed to encourage strategic thinking and to motivate participants to take action using the resources and people in their expanded network.”*

*“It’s an invigorating process. People come in saying that they were ready to resign, and now they want to keep going. There’s an organization to help them and they get to feel that.”*

*“We’ve created a pedagogy where there’s dialogue, strategizing, that they can take back with them.”*

*“ ... It’s not just data that’s thrown at them...there’s discussion.”*

Staff perceptions are that program goals are being realized and the program design is effective, mainly due to the time spent planning with presenters and the limitless opportunities for all involved.

*“When we put together these Institutes, we talk to these presenters and tell them that these are elected officials. They want solutions. We do a lot of prep work; these people are carefully chosen.”*

*“From the presenter side, they like coming back to NALEO Institute, because we give them the opportunity to present their message to elected officials. From elected officials’ perspective, there are Latino experts that really connect with the elected officials.”*

*“We were able to highlight experts that are also Latinos. We are hearing this from people in our community so there’s an affirmation there.”*

Developing the policy making skills and providing the resources were two major program goals.

*“...the policy making skills and bringing the resources. From the speaker and panelist level, we almost help them do their job. When we bring everyone together, they’re eager to connect with people. When they leave, those relationships still happen.”*

In terms of follow-up activities, program staff felt that there is still work to be done in terms of relationships and follow-up.

*“The last thing we continue to work on, I think we’re ambitious with this, is the follow-up. We could provide more specific engagement with these cohorts, with these relationships that were formed at the conferences.”*

Staff members were asked to share their perceptions of unanticipated program outcomes. A number of outcomes were described that were primarily related to elected official interactions and engagement, and collaboration efforts in support of the Institute.

*“We were surprised at how we were able to engage so many stakeholders, and how they took ownership over it.”*

*“... we’re surprised that we go to these meetings expecting like 2-3 people and we get like 20 people all listening to every word we say, and these are powerful people. That was part of what was unexpected, the energy, the willingness to participate.”*

*“We helped create relationships that we thought already existed.”*

*“Arizona wants us to do our work there and we didn’t anticipate other states coming to us asking us to work.”*

*“We were able to coordinate and bring together the framework of practice, policy and politics.”*

*“There was a willingness to see each other as assets in different level of governments. There was a willingness to engage each other cross-jurisdictions. They got each other up to par.”*

As an organization, NALEO has gained tremendously. The support that they reported from all levels, both internal to the organization and externally in terms of funding and interactions with partners and critical agents demonstrated their evidence of increased capacity and impact. Staff reported, *“NALEO is seen as a leader in this area and a player on the national scene needs to be brought in to deal with the second largest group in this country.”*

*“From the staffing side, it took us to a new level, bringing on Valerie has been beneficial to the organization.”*

*“The department has been very supportive of our work. At the very highest levels, they have all been very helpful. Some of the top officials and administrators have been very involved with us, and that’s been very helpful for us.”*

*“These four states got funding from other places like ..... we wouldn’t have expected to fund us. ”*

NALEO leadership described what they would or could do with more time and resources to support Institute participants beyond the Institute program itself. The ideas ranged from access to more information, additional training, and on-going communication/contact.

*“There was a sense that they wanted more access to information...It goes back to our membership activities, if we had more time, it would be beneficial to just call them once a quarter.”*

*“We might just need to teach them how to access these things. What we tried doing before is give the homework before they come. When they come to the meeting they’re focused from their perspective.”*

The staff described, after reflecting on their comments in the interview, what might be good next steps for the Institute and felt that the work continues regardless of leadership and the focus on education must remain intact.

*“I think that the issue is not going away, the challenge is to figure out what’s happening with our next administration. How can we insure that Latinos are getting into higher education? Focusing on the skills set of our elected officials.”*

*“We need to add a research piece.”*

*“The election has brought in new players. Re-establishing new relationships are going to be the big challenge in the first half of 09.”*

*“I think it’s great that we do state-focused work, but it’s a matter of sustainability, but if we can create a core of education champions, I think that’s key. Making sure that these people have short term goals, but as a cohort, that they have these long term goals, where they can have this buy-in and they can feel that they’ve accomplished something. Once they have these achievements, it can help them go forward.”*

*“But we have to remember that if funding stops, then this work stops. It’s not NALEO’s job to solve the problem, but it tries to empower people to tackle these problems. We’re always turning this into the pipeline.”*

The staff and leadership were optimistic, energetic, dedicated, and committed to the work of NALEO and the Institutes with the focus on higher education. They believe they are able to

provide opportunities to help elected and appointed officials learn how to effectively do their work and in so doing, NALEO accomplishes what it set out to achieve. Because other states are asking for NALEO to assist them in Latino access and success in education, there is hope that continued funding will allow for expansion into other states.

*“They want to do the best job they can in serving their constituents. They want to receive advice, mentorship, and guidance from colleagues of their own background because it provides them with a safe place for them to say they don’t know certain things and for them to learn.”*

*“It would be an unfortunate scenario if we’re not able to continue our work in these states. I would hope that we have the resources to continue this work and replicate this work in other states.”*

In summary, the qualitative data supports the quantitative findings. There were no discrepancies or inconsistencies. The qualitative data reveal that Institute participants and the NALEO leadership are pleased with the development, implementation and outcomes of the program. Tremendous differences have been made in the lives of these elected and appointed officials. There is a genuine appreciation for what has been offered and gained through this project, and almost all involved have benefited and attribute their success in influencing policy relative to Latino educational access and success to the networking, information sharing and sense of community gained through the Institute.

## Discussion

In almost all cases the quantitative and qualitative data reveal that Institute participants ranging from presenter to policy partners, to attendees were all positively affected by the NALEO Institute and believe that the program is needed, effective, and contributed to their ability to successfully negotiate the challenges of their role as elected and appointed officials, specific to Latino educational access and success in education. Presenters were positive in their ability to contribute to the Institute and believed that participants were responsive and invested in the materials. The leadership of NALEO perceives this program as effectively meeting the needs of the constituents and demonstrated significant investment of energy and effort in developing, implementing, and evaluating this program.

It should be noted that a limitation of the evaluation for the qualitative follow-up in the form of interviews was the amount of time that had passed for many of the participants between the Institute and the interview. Many participants had been involved in other professional development programs, and sometimes were less clear about what they had gained through a NALEO Institute in terms of strategies. However, almost all participants were able to clearly assign their commitment to educational policy issues, networking with other elected officials, and feeling a part of a larger community and not so isolated in their daily work to involvement with NALEO.

While data indicated that the time frame of the Institute and materials presented were acceptable, there was feedback that would suggest that both presenters and participants could use more time in discussions, strategy and networking sessions. There was speculation by a few participants about the presentations lacking some depth. A few participants felt they were ready to delve into materials with more depth and focus, particularly those challenged with specific

economic, immigration, and educational issues specific to English Language Learners. While these numbers were few, it is appropriate to consider their concerns as it relates to future programmatic developments.

The program impact was clearly seen in the evaluations and reinforced in the interviews in that participants expected to 1) network and they did with elected officials at many different levels; 2) use information shared at the Institute in their daily work and they did as evidenced by the number of participants who influenced agendas and shared information once they returned to their communities; 3) take action by making others more aware, educating others, and taking action on policy issues and strategies to influence educational access and success which was reported by many of the participants as they helped bring about change in the schools through safety, health programs, curriculum, teacher training, language access programs, etc.

Another factor related to program outcomes is the impact that participants have in their local communities and state-wide. It was difficult for many of the participants to pinpoint a specific example of how they influenced policy locally or in their state with the exception of those who were involved in a project or new initiative such as the Health Initiative. Those who did offer responses spoke primarily to influencing policy by helping to set the agenda, influencing the direction of discussions, and using information and strategies learned through NALEO to assist them in their work. It is the conclusion of this evaluator that this is exactly what the program would want and expect from participants.

Follow-up was mentioned often by participants. There seemed to be a void or dearth in participants' knowledge of what occurred from strategic breakout sessions after the Institute. Connecting accomplishments beyond the Institute from their home base to colleagues across the

region and country seemed important to many of them when questions of action and outcomes were raised.

To this end, it is clear that while there are some small changes that this organization may want to consider, the data from this evaluation would indicate that the Institute goals have been realized and that the program is effective.

Some participants would like to have more access to current data, especially after the Institute so as to stay current. There were hints from participants that they would use information from NALEO if it were more readily accessible. NALEO staff may find that responding to this issue could be cumbersome for staff to manage, so some consideration might be given to training sessions that help participants learn how to access and use national and local databases in education such as High School and Beyond or the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System. Additionally, databases specific to Latino communities such as HACU, Lumina, Hispanic Alliance in Education, etc. might also be helpful.

There were some participants that did not recognize the role of NALEO as a neutral entity and wanted very much to see the organization take a stand on issues. While this is a divergent theme, it is one that should be mentioned in that the organization may want to clarify reinforce its' role and goals as a national figure in the political and educational arenas.

Another issue that was discussed was that of attending to regional issues from the perspective of a national organization and helping participants grasp the connections between national concerns and regional issues. Some participants wanted to see this organization take more steps to make those connections and assist participants in the same from a regional to national perspective. It seems that some want NALEO to lead them as a national political advocacy group that manages educational policy issues on behalf of the regions.

Interestingly enough, there were few differences in responses across regions with the exception of what one might expect given the newness of efforts in Florida and more established connections in other regions. All regions wanted NALEO to be more visible in their backyards and all were very appreciative of the work and efforts underway. Almost all interviewees felt confirmed in their commitment to Latino issues and appreciated that there was a larger community invested in them and their success. This aspect of community was one of the strongest elements that emerged in this study. The dedication and commitment that permeates all involved in the NALEO Institute was a phenomenon in and of itself. NELI is unique and fulfills a specific need in the Latino community and beyond.

## Recommendations

The evaluation outcome was positive and there was substantial evidence that demonstrated program goals were realized. However, even with strong evidence of success, there are always possible changes and opportunities for improvement that should be considered specific to recommendations that emerged from the participants as well as observations from the evaluator. The following recommendations are provided for NALEO leadership to consider. Some recommendations are more feasible and viable than others, but none the less, should be given consideration.

### Participant Recommendations:

- Both presenters and participants suggested that more time in discussion sessions for strategy and networking would be helpful.
- In terms of follow-up, NALEO should consider methods to help Institute participants stay informed of progress and activities taking place as outcomes of the Institute.
- Additionally, follow-up activities related to data information sharing were mentioned as a desired expectation by participants. It seems that these officials wanted to know that they were connected with national issues of concern over time and that NALEO could provide that service for members.
- While there may be limitations for the national office to respond to the recommendation for access to data and updates of data for Institute participants, follow-up news briefs to participants should be considered as an option for support in terms of Institute follow-up.
- It is recommended that NALEO should consider technology as a vehicle and means for keeping Institute participants informed of data, news, and upcoming events since the website is a viable and accessible mechanism for all participants.
- Participants recommended that this organization assist participants in making connections of issues from a regional to a national perspective. NALEO should consider what role, if any, could be considered in galvanizing regional efforts in a global way.
- All regions want NALEO to be more visible in their backyards by hosting Institutes in their communities and other program efforts in that NALEO brings credibility and respect to the work of Latino educational access and success issues.

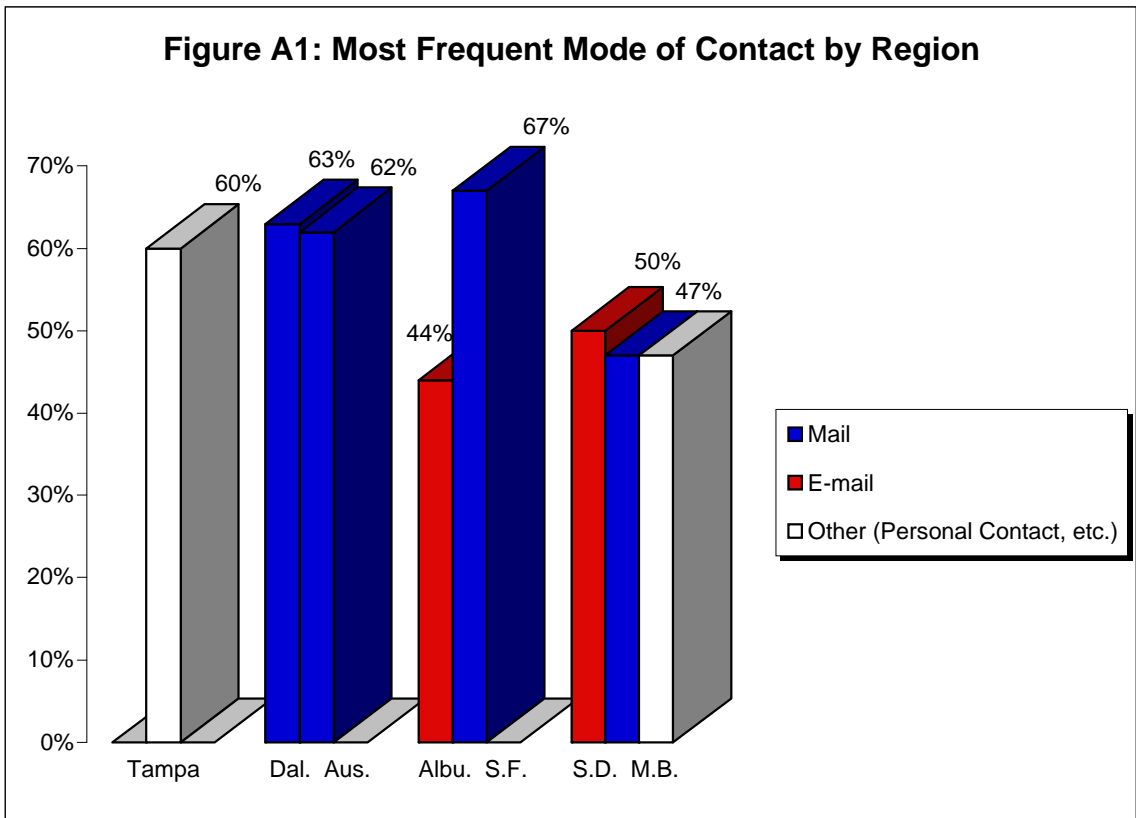
## Evaluator Recommendation

- Some feedback suggest that the potential for tracks in the Institute might be helpful in that those with less experience in a topic might be assigned to one group breakout session and more experienced or knowledgeable participants might sit in a strategy breakout session held at the same time. The Assessment worksheet could be designed in such a way to allow participants to determine which session might best meet their needs. This format could allow for more in-depth discussion and strategizing for those participants with more expertise or experience.
- While NALEO is clear about its role, function, and goals, continued clarification of neutrality should be an on-going focus and referral of participants to other agencies/policy partners to support or assist them in engaging in action outside of the scope of NALEO is critical.
- Follow-up with participants is critical and should be a high priority as it relates to this program. Incorporating alumni of the Institute beyond the role of presenters to mentors would aid in transition for new members and perpetuate a culture of support for elected Latino officials past and present.
- Follow-up regional workshops should be incorporated into this program using local regional Institute alumni as the brokers for these activities.
- A possible framework for managing regional follow-up could be through cluster advisory boards to the national office that are regionally based. Management of such a mechanism might be doable without too much strain on limited resources from the national office, or though additional funding to support sustainability in this process.
- The leadership should consider building on the Assessment sheet and using it not only for preparation but assessment as well. There should be a system put in place to assure that participants complete the work sheet before attending the Institute so that they benefit from the strategy sessions and other aspects of the program.
- It is recommended that breakout sessions be more directed and outcomes clearly stated so that expectations of participants before, during, and after the Institute are obvious and clear.
- There should be a mechanism in place to track Institute impact on participants long and short term that could be done through a blog or a follow-up survey 6, 12, and 24 months after the participating in an Institute.
- Development of a comprehensive follow-up plan should be given top priority and use technology as a major tool for monthly communications, annual mailing to contribute to sustainability. A mechanism for updates on policy partner activities, data, best practices identified by topic/issue, and other critical information would aid Institute participants, and encourage membership based on a much needed service.

- It is recommended that future evaluation survey questions for the Institute include an opportunity for respondents to check “no response” so that they are not forced to select an answer that may not be accurate, but the only option.

## **Appendix A**

**Figure A1: Most Frequent Mode of Contact by Region**



## **Appendix B-Protocols**

## **Interview Protocol #1 – Participants**

1. Which Institute(s) did you attend and what year?
2. What was your role at the Institute – Participant? Presenter? Observer? Partner?
3. What motivated you to become involved with this organization?
4. What did you gain from participation in the NALEO Ed. Leadership Initiative?
5. Did you have opportunities to discuss strategies that assisted you in affecting educational policy in your state? If so what and how?
6. In what ways, if any, did you gain insight into educational access issues?
7. What strategies were useful in helping you execute your role effectively as a policy maker?
8. How has your association with this organization influenced your daily work as a policy maker?
9. How, if at all did you influence educational policy in your state?
10. Do you feel that you contributed to furthering Latino educational achievement at the state level?
11. Do you believe that the NALEO provided you with information and resources to support and aid you in your role as an educational policy person? If so, how? If not, what was missing or needed?
12. What would be good next steps for NALEO to take to better support you in your work?
13. What could be done to improve the programs and support offered by NALEO?

## **Interview Protocol #2- NALEO Leadership**

1. What do you think motivates those who participate to participate in this organization? Why did you select the focused cities/states?
2. Do you feel that the program goals have been realized – what evidence do you have?
3. What are some of the unanticipated outcomes?
4. What has NALEO gained from sponsoring these Institutes?
5. Do you believe that Institutes provided opportunities for:  
Discussion of achievement issues?

Strategic planning?

Networking?

Other?

6. Do you believe that policy at the local and state level has been influenced through NALEO?
7. Do you feel that you contributed to furthering Latino educational achievement at the local, state and national levels?
8. What would be good next steps for NALEO to take to better support past participants? presenters, and partners?
9. What could be done to improve the programs and support offered by NALEO?
10. Other comments?

### **Interview Protocol #3– Policy Partner**

1. Please describe the nature and scope of your role with your primary organization.
2. How long have you been involved with NALEO?
3. Did you participate in an Institute? If so which one and in what capacity?– Participant? Presenter? Observer? Partner?
4. What motivated you to become involved with this organization?
5. What have you or your organization gained from involvement with NALEO?
6. In what ways do you believe NALEO has benefited from this partnership? Your organization?
7. What is your sense of how effective this partnership has been in influencing educational policy?
8. Describe an area of improvement that you believe NALEO should consider to strengthen its impact.
9. What would be good next steps for NALEO to take to better support you in your work?
10. Are there programs, services, or a role that NALEO fulfills that is not covered by other agencies/organizations? Please describe.
11. Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to offer?
12. If you were a presenter, did you find participants receptive during your session?
13. Do you feel you were able to achieve the goals of the session? What evidence would offer to support his response?

#### **Interview Protocol #4– Presenters**

1. What motivated you to become involved as a presenter with this organization?
2. At which Institute(s) did you present and on what topic?
3. What tools/strategies did you offer for participants that they could use in their daily practice?
4. Do you feel that enough time was allocated to allow for meaningful dialogue and discussion?
5. Do you believe that participants were ready and receptive to the information you presented?
6. Do you feel that the NALEO Institute contributed to furthering Latino educational achievement?
7. What would be good next steps for NALEO to take to follow-up on the materials and information you presented?
8. What recommendations do you have for future programs of this nature?