

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

REPORT 2025





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Executive Summary



Purpose

This report presents insights from NASPAA's 2025 Professional Development Survey, which explores faculty and administrator needs, barriers, and priorities for professional development (PD).



Methodology

The 2025 Professional Development Survey collected responses from 61 faculty members and administrators through an online questionnaire. The survey included multiple-choice, and open-ended questions, covering key areas such as the importance of professional development, teaching and research needs, institutional support, barriers, and NASPAA's potential role in improving PD opportunities.

"Funding, travel, and structured opportunities are the biggest needs."

Key Highlights



49% consider PD critical for personal growth



82% prioritize student engagement & motivation



73% want AI and technology integration



Top barriers: Lack of time and funding



85% open to NASPAA-issued certifications

Respondent Snapshot



Respondents: 61



Faculty: 81%



Public Institutions: 88%

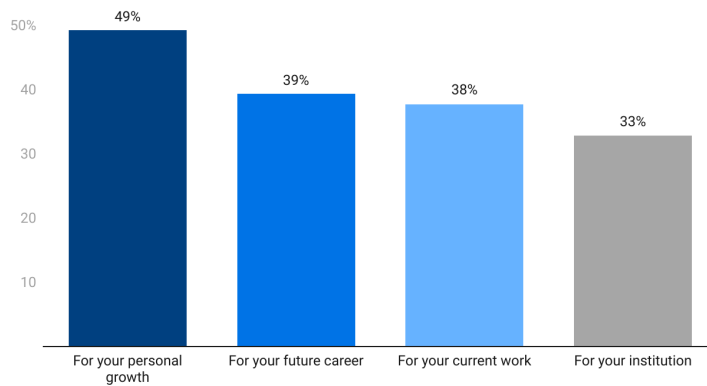


Experience: 50% have 10+ years in education

Importance and Access



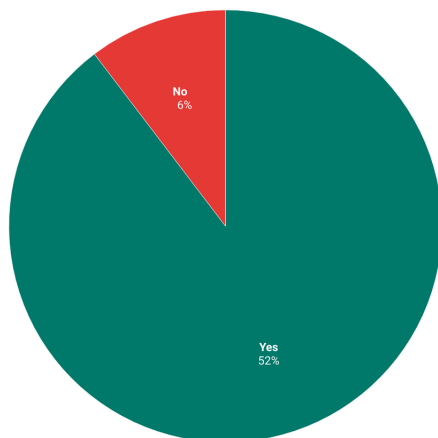
Importance of Professional Development (Very Important)



Q1: How important is professional development to you?

- 49%:** very important for personal growth
- 39%:** very important for future career
- 38%:** very important for current work
- 0%:** Rated PD as unimportant for the first three categories

Participation in Professional Development in the Past Three Years

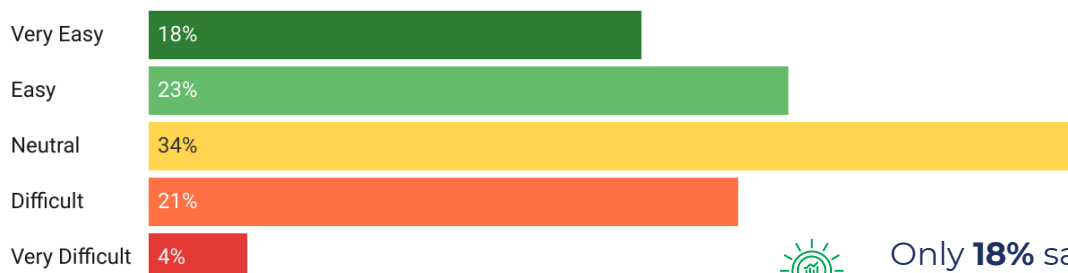


Based on 58 responses.

Q14: Have you participated in professional development in the past 3 years?

- ✓ **52%** participated in at least one PD activity during the past three years.

Ease of Accessing Professional Development Opportunities



Based on 56 responses.

Q15: How easy is it to access professional development opportunities?



Only **18%** say PD is “**very easy**” to access, while **25%** report it as **difficult**.

Professional Development Needs

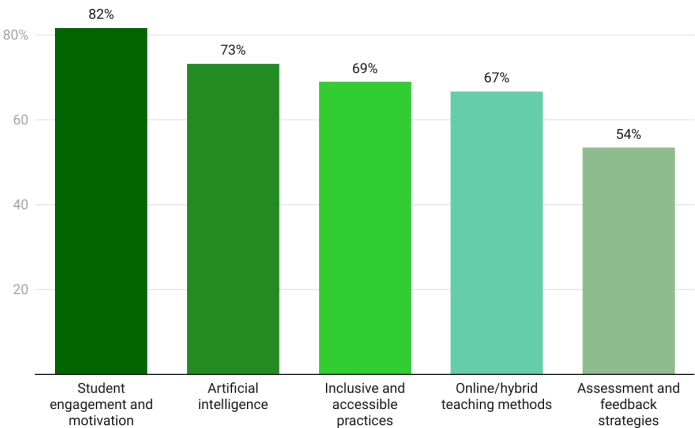
Q2: Which areas of teaching should be a focus for professional development?



“Faculty want better engagement strategies and AI integration in teaching.”

Teaching-Related Professional Development Priorities

Percentage of respondents selecting “Yes” for each topic

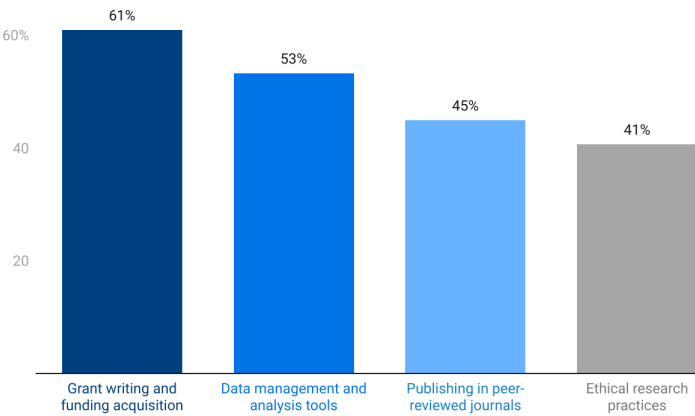


Q3: Which areas of research should be prioritized for professional development?



“Grant writing and data management skills dominate research PD needs.”

Research-Related Professional Development Priorities



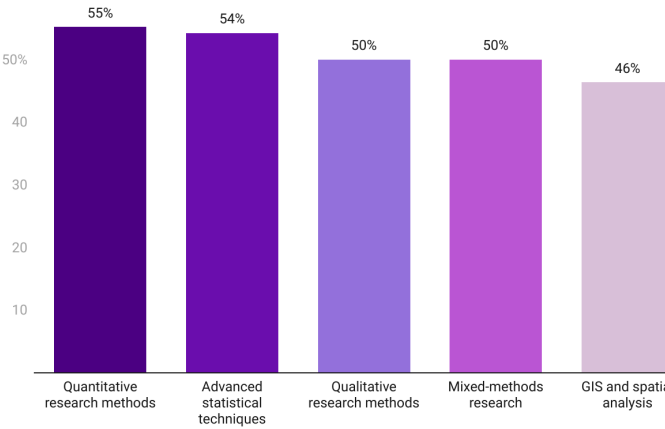
Percentages are based on 59–60 responses

Q4: Which methodological skills should be included in professional development?



“Faculty seek quantitative and advanced statistical research expertise.”

Methodological Skills for Professional Development



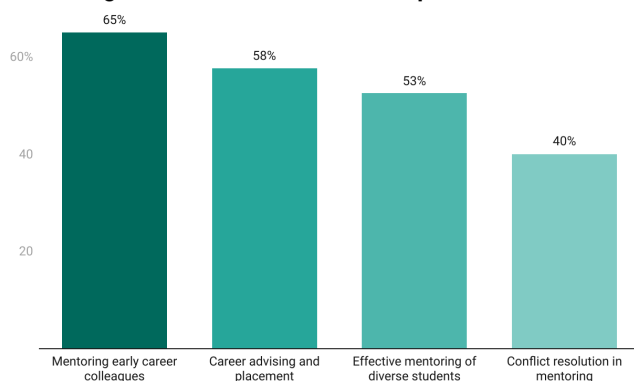
Percentages are based on 56–59 responses

Professional Development Needs



Q5: Do you want professional development opportunities related to mentoring?

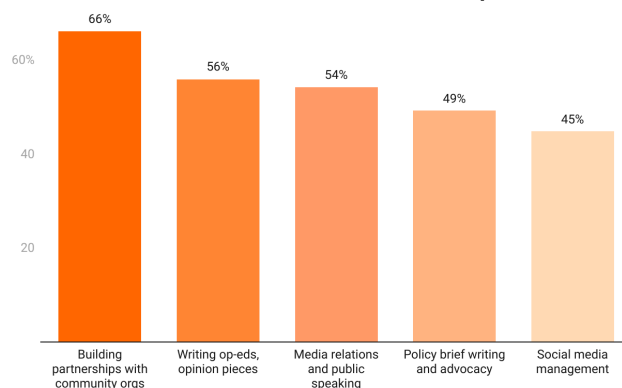
Mentoring-Related Professional Development Priorities



Percentages are based on 59–60 responses

Q6 Should PD focus on communication with External Stakeholders?

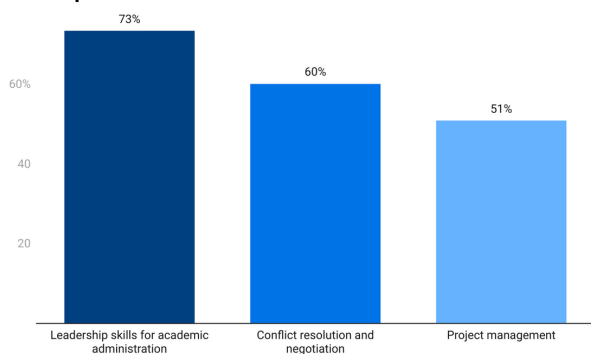
Communication Skills for Professional Development



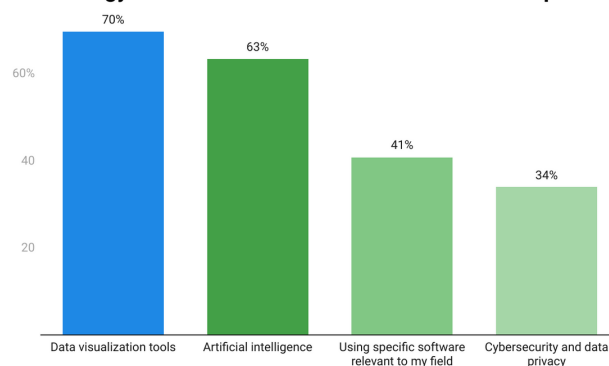
Percentages are based on 58–59 responses

Q7: Which leadership and management areas should be a focus for professional development?

Leadership and Management Skills for Professional Development



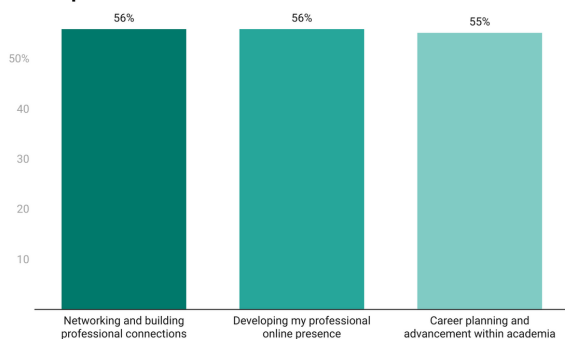
Technology & Software Skills for Professional Development



Percentages are based on 59–60 responses

Q9: Which career advancement areas should be a focus for professional development?

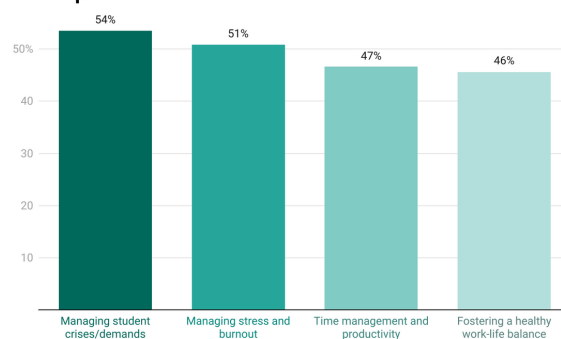
Career Advancement Priorities for Professional Development



Percentages are based on 58–59 responses

Q10: Which well-being and work-life balance areas should be a focus for professional development?

Well-being and Work-Life Balance Priorities for Professional Development



Percentages are based on 57–59 responses

Professional Development Needs

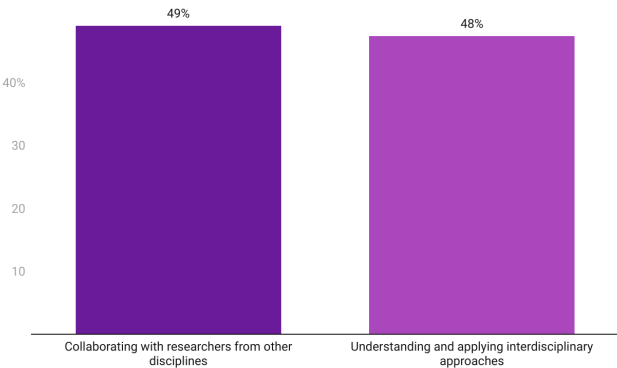


Q11: Which interdisciplinary skills should be a focus for professional development?



- 49.1% (28 out of 57): Collaborating with researchers from other disciplines
- 47.5% (28 out of 59): Understanding and applying interdisciplinary approaches

Interdisciplinary Skills for Professional Development



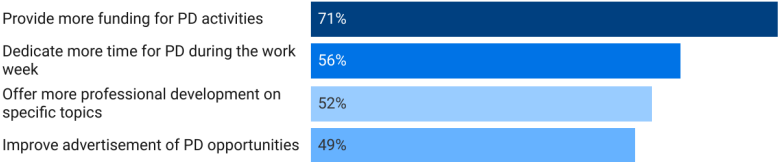
Percentages are based on 57–59 responses

Q12: For your main employer, do you think the institution should take the following actions?



“Financial support is the top institutional priority, followed by time allocation and better access.”

Institutional Needs for Professional Development



Percentages are based on 58–59 responses

Q13 Please add any comments if you selected others

“These initiatives should include more participants from the global south.”

“I encourage NASPAA to provide PD opportunities that are distinct to the higher education in public service context.”

PD Activities, Delivery Method and Obstacles

Q16: For each of the following professional development activities, please indicate how beneficial you found it.

Top 5 Most Beneficial Professional Development Activities



“Workshops (especially free or institution-hosted) rank as the most beneficial activities.”

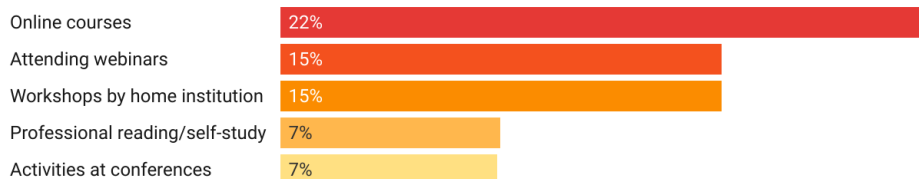


Conference-based sessions are highly valued.

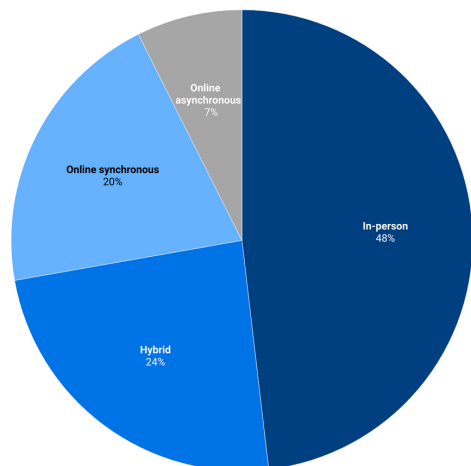


“Activities relying on self-direction, such as online courses or webinars, receive lower ratings, indicating a preference for traditional formats”

Top 5 Activities Rated Not Very Beneficial



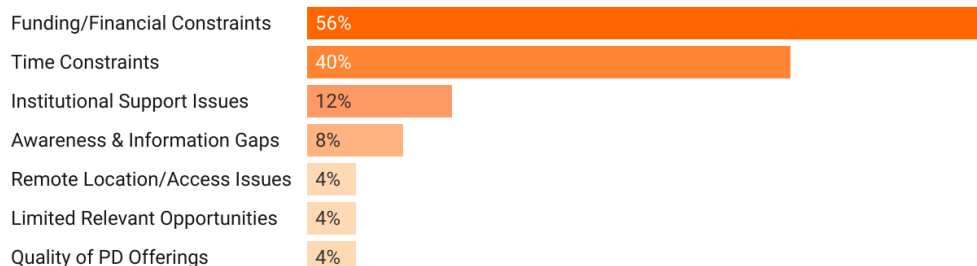
Preferred Delivery Method for Professional Development



Q22: What type of delivery method do you prefer for professional development?

“Professional development programs should prioritize in-person and hybrid models, while offering synchronous virtual options for accessibility.”

Barriers to Accessing Professional Development Opportunities



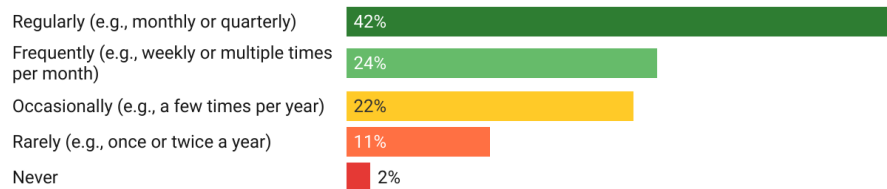
Q21: What challenges have you faced in accessing PD opportunities?)

“Time and funding are the most significant obstacles limiting participation in PD.”

Institutional Role

Q17: How frequently does your institution (your main employer) offer professional development opportunities?

Frequency of Institutional Professional Development Opportunities



“Most institutions provide PD consistently, with nearly two-thirds offering it regularly or frequently, suggesting a strong culture of professional development within many organizations

Q18: How satisfied are you with your institution’s PD opportunities?

Satisfaction with Professional Development Programs Received

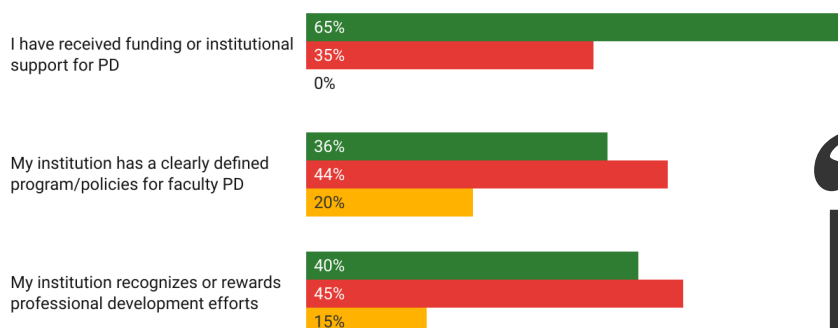


“While a majority of respondents are generally satisfied, very few are highly satisfied, and a significant proportion remains neutral, indicating an opportunity to improve program quality and engagement”

Q19: Please indicate whether your institution provides the following support for professional development:

Institutional Support and Policies for Professional Development

Yes No I Don't Know



While financial support is somewhat common, formal policies and recognition are lacking.

Q20: Suggestions for Improvement (Open-Ended)

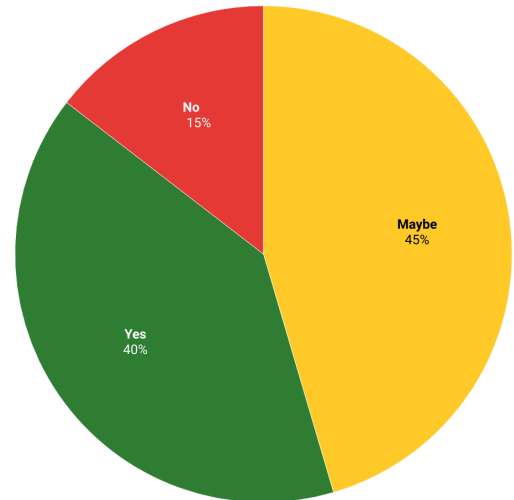
- Increase funding for PD activities
- Allocate time during the workweek for PD
- Centralize PD information to improve visibility
- Broader calls for equity, DEI integration, and global inclusion

NASPAA's Role in Professional Development

NASPAA's Role in Facilitating Professional Development (Q24)

Respondents strongly emphasized NASPAA's role in offering skill-focused training programs that align with emerging trends such as artificial intelligence, research methodology, and policy-focused competencies. There is a clear preference for interactive delivery formats, including webinars, workshops, and certification-based programs, as these are perceived to enhance engagement and participation. Additionally, members called for structured mentorship and leadership coaching initiatives, as well as opportunities to build peer-learning networks across institutions. Many respondents suggested NASPAA introduce certifications and micro-credentials to formally recognize achievements and support career progression.

Interest in NASPAA Certifications or Credentials



"85% of respondents expressed definite or potential interest in NASPAA-issued certifications."

Advocacy and Leadership Role for NASPAA (Q25)

Survey responses indicate that NASPAA is seen as a trusted body that should actively advocate for professional development to become an institutional priority. Members recommended that NASPAA push for PD integration into accreditation standards and develop leadership development initiatives for early-career faculty, program directors, and administrators. Several comments highlighted NASPAA's credibility in influencing public policy education and called for expanding its global visibility, particularly in the Global South. Respondents also suggested NASPAA create structured spaces for collaboration and knowledge-sharing among institutions and practitioners.

Feedback and Future Recommendations (Q26)

Further feedback from participants reinforced the need for broader access to NASPAA-led PD opportunities and stronger institutional partnerships. Respondents requested a centralized hub for PD resources to reduce barriers, especially for international faculty. Emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as a core priority was frequently mentioned, along with the need for tailored programs that address career-stage differences. Faculty expressed interest in specialized training areas, including AI integration, policy communication, and student services. Overall, respondents envision NASPAA as a proactive leader in shaping PD standards, delivering structured programs, and advocating for systemic change across the field.

Who participated in the survey?



Respondents: 61



Male: 39%



Female: 60%

Roles:



Faculty: 81%



Administrator: 31%

Institution Type:



Public Institutions: 88%



Private non-profit: 11%

Public

88%

Private nonprofit

12%

Private for-profit

0%

Experience Levels:



Experience: 50% have 10+ years in education

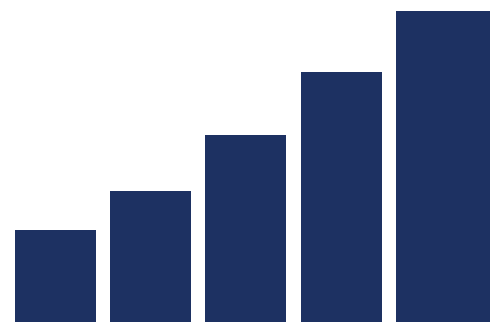
Geographic Distribution:



Majority from U.S.-based programs



3 respondents represent international institutions





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