



National Partnership for Educational Access *10th Annual Conference Evaluation Summary*

On April 11-13, 2018, the National Partnership for Educational Access held its 10th annual conference. Hosted in New Orleans, Louisiana, the conference included three keynote presentations from scholars including:

- Dorinda Carter Andrews, *Assistant Dean of Equity Outreach Initiatives, College of Education, and Associate Professor of Race, Culture, and Equity, Department of Teacher Education, Michigan State University*
- Anthony Abraham Jack, *Junior Fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows and Assistant Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education; and Shutzler Assistant Professor, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University*
- Vijay Pendakur, *Robert W. and Elizabeth C. Staley Dean of Students, Cornell University; and Editor, Closing the Opportunity Gap: Identity-Conscious Strategies for Retention and Student Success.*

In addition to the keynote presentations, the agenda also included an alumni and young professionals panel, more than 30 workshops and breakfast roundtable sessions, welcome and networking receptions, optional site visits, and a pre-conference workshop. The conference drew a national crowd of more than 375 education access professionals.

A comprehensive evaluation was administered at the conference and online following the conference to gauge participant experiences. As of June 2018, some 180 attendees completed the survey, representing 52 percent of those eligible to participate. Of the respondents, 64.2 percent were first-time conference attendees.

Satisfaction and Value:

A range of questions was presented to gauge participant satisfaction with the conference, including both the logistics and the quality/value of the conference. When asked how valuable they found the conference overall, 97.2 percent indicated they found it valuable or very valuable.

Of those who attended workshop sessions, 94.8 percent found them valuable or very valuable. Of those who attended the keynote general sessions, 99.4 percent found the keynotes overall valuable or very valuable, with over 99 percent noting the keynote sessions with Dorinda Carter Andrews and Anthony Abraham Jack as valuable or very valuable, and nearly 98 percent noting the keynote session with Vijay Pendakur as valuable or very valuable.

Other highly valued conference offerings include the range of topics covered at the conference (93 percent), time to network/exchange best practices with others (86 percent), and the opening session

with the alumni and young professionals panel (90 percent valuable or very valuable). For those who attended the pre-conference site visits to Tulane University and Loyola University New Orleans, some 92 percent indicated they were valuable or very valuable, and of those who participated in the pre-conference workshop on creating a college-going culture for young men of color, some 90 percent found it valuable or very valuable. The lowest percentages aligned with the Breakfast Roundtable Sessions, the Meet & Mingle, and the Welcome/Networking Receptions, though some 74-83 percent of attendees still found each of them valuable or very valuable.

All percentages in Table 2 on the following page reflect the value of conference offerings for all attendees for whom each item is applicable.

Table 2. Value of Conference Sessions and Offerings

How valuable did you find each of the following?				
	Not valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Valuable	Very Valuable
Conference overall	0% (0)	2.8% (5)	30.5% (54)	66.7% (118)
Conference offerings and range of topics covered	0% (0)	7.4% (13)	37.5% (66)	55.1% (97)
Time to network/exchange best practices with others	0% (0)	14% (24)	34.9% (60)	51.2% (88)
Workshop Sessions (75 minutes)	0% (0)	5.2% (9)	37.9% (66)	56.9% (99)
Breakfast Roundtable Sessions (45 minutes)	1.1% (1)	25% (22)	31.8% (28)	42% (37)
Pre-Conference Workshop (Wed.)	3.3% (1)	6.7% (2)	33.3% (10)	56.7% (17)
Pre-Conference Site Visits: Tulane & Loyola (Wed.)	0% (0)	7.7% (1)	30.8% (4)	61.5% (8)
Welcome Reception (Wed. P.M.)	3.5% (4)	16.8% (19)	42.5% (48)	37.2% (42)
Networking Reception (Thurs. P.M.)	1.9% (2)	15.1% (16)	47.2% (50)	35.8% (38)
Alumni & Young Professionals Panel (Thurs. A.M.)	0% (0)	10.3% (13)	30.2% (38)	59.5% (75)
Meet & Mingle (Thurs. P.M.)	3.8% (3)	15.4% (12)	50% (39)	30.8% (24)
Information Sessions (Thurs., during Meet & Mingle)	3.1% (2)	6.3% (4)	53.1% (34)	37.5% (24)
Keynote session with Dorinda Carter Andrews	0% (0)	0.6% (1)	23.6% (37)	75.8% (119)
Keynote session with Anthony Abraham Jack	0% (0)	0.7% (1)	28.8% (44)	70.6% (108)
Keynote session with Vijay Pendakur	0% (0)	2% (2)	33.7% (33)	64.3% (63)
Keynote speakers overall	0% (0)	0.6% (1)	24.4% (39)	75% (120)

When asked to specify two to three of the most valuable aspects of the conference, several (79) respondents referenced the keynote speakers, with several individuals referencing Dr. Dorinda Carter Andrews' keynote address in particular. Many others specified some of their most valuable aspects included conversations with others and networking opportunities in general (70 respondents), as well as workshop sessions (67 respondents). Still others strongly valued the theme of this year's conference, location in New Orleans, student panel, and pre-conference activities.

Qualitative Responses:

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, the survey included open-ended questions designed to capture participants' overall thoughts and impressions of the conference. In particular, two questions elicited helpful feedback when planning for next year's conference and thinking about the impact and next steps from this year's conference, including: "What are two action steps you will

commit to in order to improve your organization, school, university, or program practices and help address educational inequity for underserved students?” and “Do you have any speakers or topics you would like to hear at next year’s conference?”

When asked to share specific action steps, several overlapping trends emerged, including:

- Be a better advocate for students, show up for them, listen to student voice
- Reinforce network-building efforts, explore partnerships, widen our reach to partner more, outreach to programs and organizations
- View work through a racial equity lens, combat white supremacy, engage in race-based and critical discussions, more intentional use of language, talk about race and racism in a more critically informed and knowledgeable way
- Encourage and demonstrate more intentional use of language that’s empowering, intentional, considerate, inclusive
- Better use of data, data collection, and data gathering
- Bringing more information and practices learned back to organizations, schools, teams, and others in the field

Speaker/Topic Suggestions:

Among the many speaker suggestions, some include: Dr. David Stovall and/or Dr. Alfred Tatum (University of Illinois – Chicago), Sonya Douglas Horsford (Teachers College, Columbia University), Bryan Stevenson (Equal Justice Institute), Kimberly Bryant (Black Girls Code), Eve Ewing (University of Chicago), and Michelle Obama. Several former keynote speakers were requested as repeat keynotes, including Shaun Harper (University of Pennsylvania), Pedro Noguera (UCLA), Freeman Hrabowski (UMBC), Wes Moore (Robin Hood Foundation), and Christopher Emdin (Columbia University, For White Folks Who Teach In the Hood, Teachers College).

Among the topics suggested, some include: collaborating together to ensure students thrive throughout their journey, supporting students with average or low GPAs and test scores, social-emotional learning and/or building communication skills with students, addressing mental health and well-being of our students, the lack of diversity in philanthropy and the impact on program funding, teaching students to facilitate diversity discussions, parent/family engagement in the college application/acceptance process, non-traditional views of educational access and equity, navigating the new climate in our country, inclusive excellence and addressing learners from different backgrounds and experiences, implicit bias in college admissions, intersectionality and the interplay of privilege and oppression, and more.

Future Conference Going:

When asked about the likelihood of attending next year’s conference in Chicago, 68 percent of respondents indicated they are very likely or likely to attend. Another 16 percent of respondents are somewhat likely to attend next year. Some 10 percent indicated they were unsure if they would attend, and only a combined 7 percent of respondents are unlikely or very unlikely to attend.

As we dive into planning for NPEA’s 11th Annual Conference in Chicago, we look forward to thinking through how we might consider and incorporate some of the thoughts, feedback, and ideas shared through the evaluation. Thank you to all those who weighed in and offered suggestions!