



National Career Development Association

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National Career Development Association Leadership Academy Project Summary

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Leadership Academy Class: LA VII, 2012-2013

Project Title: Fortifying NCDA for the Next 100 Years via Positive Conference Experiences: Utilizing Our Past (Jessie Czerwonka), Present (Sarah Backes-Diaz), and Future (Samara Reynolds)
PAST- Investigation of the Past NCDA Location Trends

Project Description:

Due to the high attendance rate of the Atlanta Georgia NCDA 2012 Conference (largest attendance in the history of NCDA), I analyzed the past four NCDA Conferences and surveyed current NCDA members investigating the possible correlation between attendance rates and conference locations.

Summary/Conclusion:

Survey: All 352 respondents were current NCDA members from all across the world and opinions varied from never attending a conference before to being a regular/frequent attendee. There were ten questions in total with a combination of multiple choice and text box choices. Below lists the summary of survey findings with rating averages.

Survey Questions	Top Answers	Rating Average
• What factors are the most important when determining to attend an NCDA Annual Conference? (Rate 1-5, 1 very important, 5 not important at all)	1. Cost 2. Location	58.9%, 49.9%
• Where ideally would you like to see the conference located?	Interesting, inexpensive city with good/warm weather and easy accessibility	
• Location impacts my conference experience? If yes, why?	Yes Expenses	76.9%
• What makes an ideal conference location? (provided 7 different options)	1. Easy Airport Access 2. Safety	74.6% 52.3%
• How have the conference locations met your expectations? (expectation options)	1. Met Expectations 2. Exceeded Expectations	70.5% 21.4%
• I have been satisfied with past hotel accommodations.	Yes	89.2%
• I am more likely to attend an NCDA conference at this time of year:	June July	36.0% 26.4%
• Choose your favorite past conference location within the last 5 years (please answer even if you were not in attendance):	1. San Francisco, CA 2010 2. Washington, DC 2008	31.3% 27.2%
• Additional comments for NCDA to improve future conference locations:	(+)Rotating location (-) Additional expenses and conference themes politically charged	

Past Data: Past data findings indicate that the state the NCDA Annual Conference is located has the highest number of attendees. Below lists approximate top 10 estimates of attendees based off of location for the last four conferences:

2012 NCDA Global Conference

Atlanta, GA

1.	GA	115
2.	CA	73
3.	FL	69
4.	VA	57
5.	NY	53
6.	TX	51
7.	NC (7a)	41
8.	SC (7b)	41
9.	MD	33
10.	IL	32

2011 NCDA Global Conference

San Antonio, TX

1.	TX	114
2.	CA	59
3.	NY	43
4.	FL	42
5.	IL	35
6.	VA	31
7.	LA	27
8.	MD (8a)	26
9.	MI (8b)	26
10.	OH	25

2010 NCDA Global Conference

San Francisco, CA

1.	CA	340
2.	VA	43
3.	TX	42
4.	PA	33
5.	IL	30
6.	NY	27
7.	OR	26
8.	CO	21
9.	MD (9a)	20
10.	WI (9b)	20

2009 NCDA Global Conference

St. Louis, MO

1.	IL	70
2.	MO	69
3.	TX	37
4.	CA	36
5.	CO (5a)	33
6.	VA (5b)	33
7.	FL	28
8.	MD (8a)	27
9.	MI (8b)	27
10.	NY	24

The past data conference quick counts (which are listed above) are consistent with my survey findings in terms the most influential factor when considering attending an upcoming NCDA conference, cost is the largest factor in determining commitment to attend or not. This leads me to conclude that the lowest cost for an attendee is when the conference is located in or near the attendees' state of residence. For example, the NCDA 2009 Global Conference was located in Missouri and the top two attendee states are Illinois (70) and Missouri (69).

Results/Recommendations:

Through investigating the past four conferences as well as surveying current NCDA members, I determined overall that conference location is a factor when choosing to attend a conference, however the overarching opinion is that conference cost is the largest determining factor when attending NCDA conferences. Results also brought up some positives about past conference locations, 91.9% of survey participants indicated that past conference locations either exceeded or met expectations, 89.2% of survey participants indicated being satisfied with past hotel accommodations, and 56.4% of survey participants are more likely to attend a conference in June or July which is consistent with NCDA Annual conference past dates. *"Thanks for your hard work", "Your group has done a great job delivering a quality conference experience", and "I have only good things to say about my conference experiences and I am looking forward to Boston!"* are just some of the positive comments collected in this survey. Therefore, overall I conclude that throughout the years NCDA has established a positive reputation within the career counseling community and takes NCDA members into consideration when planning for upcoming conferences.

My recommendation is to continue to rotate conference location from east, west, and middle regions, however I encourage conference committee planners to look into lower cost hotels as an option for future conferences as well as factoring in safety as a consideration when choosing the next venue.