

SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT OF THE

COUNCIL *on* FOUNDATIONS

Career Pathways Program: The First Three Years



SUMMARY

The Council on Foundations created the Career Pathways Program to support greater senior leadership diversity among member organizations. The program offers individuals in philanthropy from diverse backgrounds that demonstrate senior leadership potential an opportunity to hone their skills while building professional networks in order to attain an executive role in the field. Over the course of a year, program participants work with a coach, attend four multi-day structured learning sessions, complete reading and reflection assignments, explore an organizational change case, and practice newly learned leadership skills. Between 2010 and 2013, the Career Pathways Program graduated 37 diverse leaders from 33 institutions.

The Council on Foundations launched the program as a three year pilot followed by a pause in the program in order to study the initial impact and structure of the program. In 2013, the Council enlisted OMG Center, a Philadelphia-based national evaluation firm, to evaluate the first three years of the program. This report contains the findings from OMG's six-month summative evaluation.



STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

The Council on Foundations was formed to promote responsible and effective philanthropy. The mission requires a commitment to inclusiveness as a fundamental operating principle. It also calls for an active and ongoing process that affirms human diversity in its many forms, encompassing but not limited to: ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and identification, age, economic circumstance, class, disability, geography, and philosophy. We seek diversity to ensure that a range of perspectives, opinions, and experiences are recognized and acted upon in achieving the Council's mission. The Council also asks members to make a similar commitment to inclusiveness to better enhance their abilities to contribute to the common good of our changing society. As a national voice of philanthropy, the Council is committed to promoting diversity. We are equally committed to including a wide range of perspectives, opinions, and experiences as we work to achieve our mission. Similarly, we ask Council members to commit to diversity and inclusiveness to enhance their own work. To that end, we provide them with the tools, educational programs, and opportunities they require to more effectively serve the common good.



2012 - 2013 Career Pathways Cohort. Back (L – R): Christopher Nanni, Maggie Gunther Osborn, Lita Pardi, Aleesha Towns-Bain, Lisette O. Islas | Front (L – R): Brandee Butler, Angela K. Frusciante, Leslie A. Ito, Satonya C. Fair, Dee Dee Nguyen

CAREER PATHWAYS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Council Board of Directors

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KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

PROGRAM IMPACT ON NEW PATHWAY PROGRAM LEADERS

As a result of enhanced leadership skills, graduates pursued career advancements and an impressive majority secured promotions in or outside of their original home institutions. Two-thirds reported that their program experience was a very significant contributing factor to this advancement.

Participants often noted the program enabled them to identify and chart their own career pathways leading to C-level leadership by cultivating a better understanding of their own leadership styles and ability to find environments that best fit their skills. The participants often cited the Career Pathways Program learning sessions and executive coaches as the two primary resources that put them on the road to success.

The most powerful benefits for participants were learning about different styles of leadership by seeing those styles manifest in other cohort members and philanthropic field leaders through the program; and identifying, reflecting, and growing into their own leadership style.

The program was tailored each year to recognize the unique needs of each cohort and focus on individual leadership, organizational leadership, and leadership in the field of philanthropy. It created safe learning spaces for participants and enabled them to practice new leadership skills and behaviors throughout the year—ultimately building confidence in their abilities.



PROGRAM IMPACT ON HOME INSTITUTIONS

Home institutions often reported that as a result of the program, participants led important changes in their foundation, such as shifts in their grant-making, internal organizational policies, and organization-grantee relationships. Home institutions attributed the changes to the participants’ newly established leadership skills, and were often impressed with how well the program graduates navigated organizational political arenas to advance the home institution’s agenda.

Home institutions noted that the Career Pathways Program could serve as a talent retention tool for diverse staff, but also noted that it could act as a lever for participants to leave since participants sometimes learned that their home institutions were not able to offer them promotion

opportunities when they were ready. Nonetheless, the majority of home institutions were not deterred from participating in the program by the possibility of losing a staff person.

Both, the foundations that hosted the program’s trainees and field leaders, believe the Career Pathways Program is an excellent professional development opportunity for those who are ready to advance to a senior leadership role. Foundation and field leaders particularly valued the program as a means to retain diverse staff with potential, and stated that the program provided professional development on behalf of foundations that would otherwise be limited by budget constraints.



L – R: Satonya C. Fair, Lisette O. Islas, Angela K. Frusciante, Leslie A. Ito, 2012 - 2013 Cohorts.

PROGRAM IMPACT ON THE PHILANTHROPIC FIELD

Field leaders had different opinions about the program’s long-term influence on creating a diverse leadership pipeline. Some field leaders noted that diverse leaders have always existed, but attributed the lack of diverse talent advancement to foundations’ organizational, cultural, and values barriers. This group acknowledged that focusing on a pipeline, without addressing the organizational issues, is ultimately not as effective. Retaining diverse talent is often a more pressing issue. Others stressed that the Career Pathways Program is contributing to creating that pipeline by providing diverse talent with necessary tools to maneuver across barriers. All agreed that shining a brighter light on diverse senior leadership is necessary for hiring in philanthropy.

THE CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAM

CONTEXT

The Council on Foundations commissioned research in 2009 and 2010 to learn about diverse population representation within philanthropic leadership. The research included surveys of 440 foundation CEOs and executive directors as well as interviews with 50 foundation CEOs, trustees, foundation executives, and other colleagues. Research findings included:

- Well over three-quarters of foundation CEOs and executive directors were external appointments to their current foundation
- More than two-thirds came from non-foundations
- More than 90 percent were white

Diversity and inclusion are core values of the Council on Foundations. Given current leadership disparities and the changing demographics of the United States, varied perspectives are becoming more critical for organizational success. In an effort to better promote diversity and inclusion, the Council developed the Career Pathways Program as a philanthropic leadership “pipeline expansion program.”

The primary goal of the program is to increase the number of candidates from diverse backgrounds in the leadership pipeline who are considered for, appointed to, and retained in senior and executive positions in philanthropic organizations. The program assumes that establishing diverse leadership will ultimately foster inclusion and excellence in philanthropic leadership for mid-career professionals and increase the demand for diverse leaders.

The Career Pathways Program focuses primarily on changes at the individual leader level, and secondarily on changes at the home institutions (the organizational level). The program also aims to increase participants’ knowledge about the field of philanthropy.

PROGRAM DESIGN

During its first three years, the Career Pathways Program broadly defined diversity as encompassing but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and identification, age, economic circumstance, class, disability, geography, and philosophy.

The program selected middle- and upper-level leaders employed by philanthropic organizations. Conceptualized as an intensive year-long theory and practice learning experience, the program was designed around four multi-day structured learning sessions interspersed throughout the year. As a program designer noted, “learning sessions allowed the participants to explore various leadership models and styles, to prepare for leadership roles and competencies, and to articulate their own leadership vision and styles.

The learning sessions required prior reading and reflection assignments, and participants were expected to practice newly learned leadership skills in between sessions. The learning sessions’ curriculum centered on three dimensions of a philanthropic leader’s role: individual leadership, organizational or foundation leadership, and philanthropic field leadership. Program designers, Council on Foundations staff, and participants noted that learning sessions were revised each year to respond to the different cohorts’ needs and character.

Session activities included presentations by the participants, the workshop designers, expert speakers, search firm representatives, and panelists of diverse individuals currently holding philanthropic leadership positions across many different foundation functions. Also, participants practiced job interviewing with search firm representatives. Videotaping participants' was also used as an aspect of the self-assessment and feedback process.

Field leaders who participated in the 2009 and 2010 research attributed their own leadership success to being exposed to and supported by individuals whom they considered their "champions," "mentors," or "major decision-makers." This made a strong evidence-based case for introducing the next generation of philanthropic professionals to mentors or coaches earlier in their careers. Accordingly, program participants were assigned an executive coach with whom they worked throughout the year, communicating largely through monthly phone conversations while working on individually tailored goals and work plans. The program also connected approximately six participants with a philanthropic mentor. Each participant was required to pursue, outside of his/her everyday work responsibilities, a case study in which they tackled a critical issue related to their home institution.

As a capstone to the program, participants presented their home institution case study, thus demonstrating their skills in newly learned leadership roles. Peer learning across the cohort enhanced the experience by offering windows into different foundation environments, functions, types of leadership, and problem-solving opportunities and challenges.

One half-time leadership development officer who is part of the Council on Foundations' staff managed the Career Pathways Program. She was supported by a part-time administrator. The Council on Foundations' managing director of professional development oversaw the program at about quarter time. Two external consultants worked closely with Council staff to design the program. These consultants also designed, directed, and facilitated each of the learning sessions. Two coaches were also hired, and each participant was assigned one of the two coaches while in the program.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Participants generally learned about the Career Pathways Program through Council on Foundations email announcements, their supervisor, or their organization's president. With an intensive application review process, the candidate selection was rigorous. In addition to meeting the program's eligibility requirements, the Council aimed to identify applicants who would be ready for personal senior level leadership growth, and who could also commit to the substantial time requirement. The detailed application required significant personal reflection about current leadership skills and leadership gaps.

A total of 37 leaders comprising three cohorts were selected to participate in the program (from which they graduated) (Table 1). Based on a review of applications to the program, participants uniformly sought entry to strengthen their executive leadership skills. Participants framed the impact of this skill gain in terms of how it could advance their career path and improve their leadership in the philanthropic sector. Smaller groups of participants noted the relationship between personal skill growth and strengthening the quality of work that their foundation could produce; while others connected skills growth to a more direct impact on the communities and populations their foundations serve. Participants cited reasons for applying to the program included a range of considerations from the chance to expand their professional network and learn from peers with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, to the potential to be exposed to new job opportunities; as well as assistance in forming connections with other foundations.

Table 1. Cohort Participation Rates

	Cohort 1 (2010-11)	Cohort 2 (2011-12)	Cohort 3 (2012-13)	Total
Number of Participants	15	11	11	37

The majority of participants in the Career Pathways Program were female (73 %), between 40 to 55 years old, and included individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds (Table 2). More than a third of participants (35 %) were African American, a little under a quarter were white (24 %) or Asian American (22 %), 11 percent were Latino, and 5 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native. Racial and ethnic makeup varied from one cohort to the next, however these specified minority groups composed the largest proportion of each cohort -- 67% of Cohort 1, 90% of Cohort 2, and 72% of Cohort 3. While some may question the number of white participants in a diversity program (7), this group represented the majority (60 %) of individuals self-identifying as part of the LGBT community (14 % of the total participants were LGBT). In terms of racial and ethnic diversity, African Americans and Asian Americans were equally represented by male and female participants. Latinos, however, were not extensively represented among cohorts, and no Latino males have participated in the program to date.

Table 2. Participant Demographics

		Cohort 1 (2010-11)	Cohort 2 (2011-12)	Cohort 3 (2012-13)	Overall
Gender	Female	73%	64%	82%	73%
	Male	27%	36%	18%	27%
Race/Ethnicity	African American	40%	45%	18%	35%
	Arab American	--	--	--	--
	Asian American/Pacific Islander	13%	27%	27%	22%
	Caucasian/White	33%	9%	27%	24%
	Latino(a)/Hispanic	7%	9%	18%	11%
	American Indian/Alaska Native	--	9%	9%	5%
	Other	7%	--	--	3%
Age	25-30	--	--	--	--
	31-39	40%	36%	55%	43%
	40-49	60%	45%	45%	51%
	50-55	--	18%	--	5%
	56+	--	--	--	--
LGBT	Yes	27%	9%	--	14%
	No	73%	73%	73%	73%
	No response	--	18%	27%	14%

¹ The participation rates cited throughout the report capture the number of individuals who participated and successfully completed (graduated from) the program.

When we look at the breakdown of race/ethnicity by gender (Table 3), the diversity of participant racial and ethnic backgrounds can be seen clearly among the female participants, where less than a fifth of past participants have been White women. While the number of men who participated in the program was much smaller (10 male participants versus 27 female participants), the proportion of Asian American and African American male participants has been in keeping with the diversity of their female counterparts and the program overall. The only notable difference, as mentioned above, is the lack of male Latino participation.

Table 3. Participant Race and Ethnicity by Gender

Race/Ethnicity	Female	Male	Overall
African American	33%	40%	35%
Arab American	--	--	--
Asian American/Pacific Islander	22%	20%	22%
Caucasian/White	19%	40%	24%
Latino(a)/Hispanic	15%	--	11%
American Indian/Alaska Native	7%	--	5%
Other	4%	--	3%

Participants came from across the country and represented a variety of foundation and organization types (Table 4). The southern region of the U.S. had the lowest representation of participants, with no individuals from the South in the first Cohort. Independent or private foundations were the most represented organizational type; nearly half of participants across the three cohorts worked in those settings when they entered the Career Pathways Program. Smaller proportions of participants hailed from community, corporate, and family foundations.

Most participants were well-established within their home institutions. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of the participants had been with their home institution between three and 10 years, and another 16 percent of participants had been with their institution for more than 10 years when they began the Career Pathways Program. Only 19 percent of participants had been with their organization for less than three years at program entry. Tenure at home institutions varied somewhat across cohorts, with the 2012 cohort showing an uptick in participants (36%) who had been with their home institution for a short time (three years or less).



HOME INSTITUTIONS

The program referred to the Council on Foundations member organizations that employed leaders-in-training as the home institutions. Thirty-three institutions participated during the program’s first three years. A complete list of home institutions is provided in the Appendix. A profile of the participating institutions is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Home Institution Makeup

		Cohort 1 (2010-11)	Cohort 2 (2011-12)	Cohort 3 (2012-13)	Overall
Region	Midwest	27%	36%	18%	27%
	Northeast	47%	18%	9%	27%
	South	--	18%	27%	14%
	West	27%	27%	45%	32%
Foundation/ Organization	Community	13%	9%	45%	22%
	Corporate	13%	18%	9%	14%
	Family	7%	9%	18%	11%
	Health	7%	--	--	3%
	Independent	53%	55%	27%	46%
	Operating	--	--	--	--
	Public Charity	--	9%	--	3%
	Government	--	--	--	--
	Non-profit	--	--	--	--
	Governmental Charity	--	--	--	--
	Regional Association	7%	--	8%	3%
	Affinity Group	--	--	--	--
	Other	--	--	--	--
Tenure at Home Institution	3 years or less	13%	9%	36%	19%
	More than 3 to 7 years	53%	55%	27%	46%
	More than 7 to 10 years	20%	18%	18%	19%
	More than 10 years	13%	18%	18%	16%

“I had always thought about leadership as a characteristic of an extrovert. And that is just not me, so I wrote [senior leadership] off as a possibility for myself. The program really helped me get comfortable with more analytic, introverted approaches — my type of leadership. Now I can imagine a realistic leadership pathway for me!” – Participant

PROGRAM IMPACTS

OMG Center investigated the effectiveness of the Career Pathways Program’s elements and operations, the program network and relationships, overall program strategy, program participant demographics, and early impacts on participants.

OMG conducted the evaluation using a mixed-methods approach with in-person and phone interviews, surveys, a network analysis, a cost analysis, and document reviews of materials including program applications and learning session materials to triangulate evaluation findings.

PROGRAM IMPACT ON NEW PATHWAYS LEADERS

The program benefit most cited by participants was the opportunity to reflect on and gain comfort with their own unique leadership styles. Participants noted that the Career Pathways Program exposed them to many different types of philanthropic leadership styles, which created opportunities for talented people to begin to identify and shape individualized career pathways to their unique leadership disposition and set of skills. Much of this was accomplished through iterative self-assessments as well as observation and reflection.

Of those participants completing the survey, 89 percent reported that the program had a “very strong” or “strong” effect on their leadership self-awareness (knowledge of leadership style, strengths, and areas for growth) and career goals and vision, affirming their career aspirations. Seventy-one percent of home institutions agreed with this as well.

“The program opened space for the development of individual leadership style. Because many participants were in the same organization their whole career and had not seen other styles, they were able to ask ‘what is my personal leadership style?’” – Field Leader



2011-2012 Cohort. Back (L – R): Alandra L. Washington, Barbara H. McAllister, Darrell L. Tucci, Belen Vargas, Amita Nagaraja | Front (L – R): Angela Brown, Earl Lui, Ken Jones, Sharmila Rao Thakkar, David A. Harris, Sara A. Boyd

New program participants, frequently identify “extroverted” and “charismatic” as leadership characteristics. Yet, the literature and practice note a great variety of leadership style categorizations: “autocratic,” “bureaucratic,” “charismatic,” “participative,” “laissez faire,” “collaborative,” “serving,” “task-oriented,” “transactional,” and “transformational.” By learning about their own preferences, and the pros and cons of each style in a variety of settings, program participants began to understand their own strengths and areas for growth, which they would address through the year.

Participants often cited increased confidence to pursue new leadership opportunities as an outcome.

Participants attributed this confidence to new personal knowledge, the program’s safe learning space, the ability to practice new leadership behaviors, and receiving “honest and direct” feedback from facilitators and coaches.

Almost all (96%) of participants reported that the program had a “very strong” or “strong” effect in increasing their confidence to pursue new leadership opportunities. Furthermore, all participants reported applying the new knowledge and skills they learned in the program to their work, with a strong majority (74%) having either applied a “significant” or a “very significant” amount of this personal knowledge during the program and afterwards.

“We were able to get to the point where we could talk about significant and deep topics with people who were strangers; we made sure that we could say what we wanted to say and be comfortable and not worry about it getting back to our home institution.” – Participant



Participants also shared how they applied their new leadership behaviors at their home institutions, with one reflecting: “I shared a lot of the articles with fellow senior management team members, as well as the conversations and the perspectives that I brought back, and discussed how it led to dialogue between leaders and decisions that were made.”

As a result of understanding their styles, participants noted that they could identify environments (either their home institutions or other institutions) that would allow their own leadership styles to flourish. Participants learned that they did not have to change their leadership style, but instead could better “understand the challenges and opportunities that came with that style.” Participants spoke of feeling like they had previously been “pushed by their home institution into a specific mold of what a leader should be.”

Well over three-quarters (85%) of participants reported that the program had a “very strong” or “strong” effect on their awareness of their career goals and vision, including positions and types of organizations in which they aspired to work. With new knowledge of personal leadership style, better-fit environments, and an increased understanding of the philanthropic field as a whole, participants learned how to develop their career plans and lay a foundation for their future.

“The individual feedback coming from my peers, my mentor, and the coaches was very helpful. I received feedback on the things that I was good at, on the environment I would work best in, and the supports and space that I would need [to be successful].” – Participant

“I was thinking about leaving the foundation for my own reasons, but the program helped me uncover what it was that I wanted to do and eliminated what I didn’t want to do, and that helped me see what types of roles I wanted in philanthropy.” – Participant

Many participants (70%) said that the program had a “very strong” or “strong” effect on increasing their understanding of the philanthropic field, current issues facing the field, and opportunities and challenges. Participants heard new and different perspectives about leadership, and learned about different types of foundations, particularly the different roles, functions, and expectations within those organizations. Participants reported finding cohort diversity an important aspect in their own learning and noted the benefits of having a “deep” dialogue with individuals from “other kinds of philanthropy.”

“I had the opportunity to have candid discussions and hear about challenges in philanthropy through others’ lenses, whether from a minority or non-minority background. My peers’ different voices and perspectives were a resource to me.” – Participant

Understanding their unique leadership pathways, graduates tended to plan and use new leadership resources and tools to continue to help them grow. Participants shifted their focus from seeking out jobs in philanthropy to seeking out careers in philanthropy. They reported that the program helped them become more conscious about career pathway development:

“I had to take responsibility for my career development, and there are resources out there like getting a coach or working with a headhunter, and I hadn’t paid attention to those resources before.” –Participant

Since participants began the Career Pathways Program, an impressive majority (two-thirds) have sought out and taken new positions in or outside of their original home institutions. In examining where graduates have moved since participating in the program, a little under a third are still in the same positions. However, almost a third has been promoted internally, and a little over a third (35%) have left their original home institution or have been promoted externally in a new organization. Survey responses reveal that 86 percent considered the change in their position/organization a promotion, and two-thirds reported that their program experience was a very significant contributing factor in this advancement. Conversely, there were a few graduates who anticipated getting a promotion as a result of participating in the program, but had not yet received one at their home institution. Several participants noted that they were “frustrated” by this.

Although participants graduated from the program with a new sense of their leadership potential and career pathway, evidence indicates they did not leave the program with a clearer or deeper understanding of their value as a diverse leader in philanthropy. Of participant survey respondents, only 37 percent reported a “very strong” or “strong” effect on their ability to articulate the linkage between diversity, inclusiveness, and effectiveness in foundation practices. Participants spoke of the personal story-telling skills they honed as a way to introduce and offer themselves professionally as individuals with unique experiences. However, with a few exceptions, participants could not articulate the implications of their diversity in philanthropic leadership roles. Well over three-quarters (88%) of participants reported a “strong” or “very strong” effect on their ability to communicate effectively with philanthropic stakeholders, and their ability to tell their story about why they are the best candidate for the job to which they aspire. However, participants repeatedly noted they would have liked to see the topic of diversity more explicitly interwoven in the learning sessions. Participants noted how important it was to directly explore their own diverse identity as it relates to their leadership, as well as to openly discuss the structural and cultural barriers to their advancement in their home institutions, which were typically represented by mainstream, privileged cultures.

Table 5. Benefits of Career Pathways Participation

How did participation in the Career Pathways Program...	Home Institutions	Participants
Enhance understanding of the senior/executive appointment process?	3.5	4.6
Increase confidence to pursue new leadership opportunities?	4.2	4.5
Increase awareness of career goals and vision, including positions and organizations that they aspire to work in?	4.0	4.4
Enhance leadership self-awareness (knowledge of their leadership style, strengths, and areas for growth)?	4.2	4.3
Enhance ability to “tell their story” and articulate why they are best candidate for the job they aspire to?	3.7	4.1
Enhance professional network?	4.6	4.0
Enhance knowledge of the philanthropic field and current issues, opportunities, and challenges therein?	3.9	3.9
Increase ability to manage change and lead through difficult transitions and situations?	3.9	3.9
Increase ability to communicate effectively with philanthropic stakeholders (staff, board, grantees, media, peers in field, etc.)?	3.6	3.8
Enhance ability to apply critical thinking and a systems thinking approach to their work?	3.6	3.7
Enhance ability to have difficult conversations with team members?	3.8	3.5
Increase visibility in the field?	4.1	3.4
Increase ability to articulate the linkage between diversity, inclusiveness, and effectiveness in foundation practices?	3.6	3.3

(5-point scale where 5=Very Strong Effect and 1=No Effect)

“We had a diversity session [during one of the Learning Sessions], and that really fell flat. I was disappointed, and didn’t know why there was one session on it, rather than the topic being interwoven throughout.” – Participant

Overall, home institutions and participants reported general agreement on the numerous program benefits (Table 5). Both considered awareness of career goals, enhancing personal leadership, and increasing participants’ confidence to seek new leadership opportunities as benefits. The largest disparity in perception was over the extent to which the program increased knowledge of the senior/executive appointment process. Participants rated this more highly than home institutions (4.6 on a 5-point scale compared with 3.5 for nominators).

Nominators identified participant engagement with a professional network as the most important benefit (see Table 5 above). Most participants were in agreement, with 74 percent of participants reporting that the program had a “strong” or “very strong” effect on enhancing their professional network. Participants described their respective cohort as a tightknit group that contributed to mutual learning and networking opportunities.

There was a general desire to have more formal and structured opportunities to stay connected with the program network. Past participants and leaders in the field identified the need to have ongoing, follow-up learning opportunities to continue to develop leadership skills and to stay connected to the graduate network. Graduates noted the difficulty in dedicating their own time and resources to maintain an active network without a purpose and focus.

“If they could find forums or other ways to get us together more often, I think it is important to continue cementing the bond [developed while in the program] and to continue the conversation and thinking.” – Participant

Field leaders suggested expanding the network beyond Career Pathways Program graduates as a means to provide leadership learning opportunities to a broader group of participants. One field leader said: *“This is a problem we face. There are other people in philanthropy, those that were not in the Pathways Program, and they want to continue to grow and move up and how do you provide the support for those folks as well?”*

The program has created opportunities for the participants to make connections across cohorts and across geographic lines. Based on survey responses, graduates sustained a number of relationships both within and across their cohorts. There are no graduates who, at some capacity, have not remained connected to at least one person. Cohort 1 members tended to have a more central role in the network, versus those from Cohort 3. Members of Cohorts 2 and 3 tended to be more isolated within the network, reporting more intra-cohort relationships than inter-cohort relationships. Network analysis centrality measures reveal that the most central participants in the network are from Cohort 1. This is not surprising, as it takes time to develop relationships, and Cohort 1 graduates have had the most time, and, therefore, the most post-program opportunities to develop relationships with other graduates. Additionally, the Council on Foundations used Cohort 1 members in subsequent years as interviewers, as referrals for new cohort members, and as learning session panelists and speakers.

Graduates developed connections with key program-related experts. Participants from Cohorts 2 and 3 identified search firm consultants as individuals with whom they remained connected. This supports many of the field leader interview responses that speakers and panelists did not maintain additional contact with graduates after presenting at a learning session. However, the responses overall illustrate that participants saw the value of staying in touch with search firms to look for their next leadership job.

“I am a very social being, but I don’t necessarily gravitate toward networking. The program impressed upon me the importance of networking, and built my confidence for networking and with job searching. This is how I am approaching looking for a new job.” – Participant

PROGRAM IMPACT ON HOME INSTITUTIONS

Participants overwhelmingly reported that their home institutions were supportive of their rigorous involvement in the Career Pathways Program. Of the 27 survey respondents, only one reported that her supervisor was “a little bit” supportive; one reported his supervisor was “moderately” supportive; and 25 reported their supervisors were either “significantly” or “very significantly” supportive of their participation over the program year.

Home institutions, often presidents, stated that even though they were supportive of their participating employees, they wanted to receive regular participant progress updates. Home institutions respected the confidentiality of much of the participant growth experience. Nonetheless, home institutions requested personal and email contact so that they could keep informed about the current participant curricula focus. Several noted that they desired more discussions with their participant to reinforce ideas, and that this was a missed relationship-building opportunity on part of the Council on Foundations.

Home institutions and field leaders noted that Career Pathways Program is an excellent “no-cost” professional development opportunity. Many interviewees valued that the program was free, since few foundations have budget line items dedicated to any professional development. Many also noted that if the program were not free, they would likely not have participated. Nominators noted that the program was a human capital investment, and it developed talent for new senior leadership openings. One retiring CEO noted: *“Our participants have progressed in their own way. One is a finalist for a leadership position here. A year ago, there is no way an inside candidate had a chance, but now for a variety of factors, she has a really good chance of getting this job.”* Incidentally, this graduate was recently appointed CEO of this major foundation. The graduate is the first African American woman to hold this position.

An impressive majority of home institutions (85%) reported that having a staff member participate in the Career Pathways Program led to changes in their institution. Ninety-three percent of participants agreed with this. More than half (52% and 59%, respectively) of the home institutions indicated individuals participating in the program led to changes in their organization’s grant-making and in internal organizational policies.

“The foundation has been exploring how to apply a much more explicit racial justice framework to the issues it is addressing. The Career Pathways graduate has played a critical role in helping the trustees and staff learn about what this could mean, and in developing an initial strategy to address specific racial disparities in a more purposeful way. This focus on racial equity will now become a major theme in the foundation’s upcoming strategic planning process, and will continue to have major implications for our work.” – Home Institution Staff Member

Interviews suggest that the Career Pathways Program often served as a retention tool; but the program was also a lever for the participants to leave, since they sometimes learned that their home institutions were not able to offer them promotion opportunities when they were ready. Yet, only 20 percent of nominators reported being worried about participant departures. They noted that their concerns arose from the possibility that growth and skill advancement for these individuals might mean taking a position outside of the organization, rather than fostering leadership within their current organization.



Foundation leaders discussed how they nominated individuals whom they thought were ready to move into a more senior executive position within their foundations, and in some cases, of how these individuals would replace the nominators as they retired. Nominators also acknowledged that as a result of the program, participants may look for other opportunities. One nominator shared: *“For me as an executive director, there is always this concern in having one of my staff members participate in such a leadership program, but I would want that for all my staff to learn and grow, so I had to ask myself, ‘Would I want to lose her yet?’”*

PROGRAM IMPACT ON THE PHILANTHROPY FIELD

All interviewed philanthropic leaders reported value in the Career Pathways Program; although most agreed determining effectiveness would take more than 37 graduates and three years, as the three cohort participants were still progressing toward more senior leadership positions. Past participants could speak of the value the program added for them on an individual level, but noted it was hard to identify larger field impact.

“I have benefitted greatly, and by me benefitting, hopefully my community is benefitting similarly. It’s hard because it is such a small group, and it is going to take time to affect philanthropy. But, each one of us has a network to which we can bring our thinking and leadership attributes back. Hopefully there is a snowball effect.” – Participant

Some participants believed they were still in the mid-career stage of professional life and had at least five years before seeking CEO or “C-suite” positions.

“In a relatively short period of time, there have been participants who have been promoted to positions of leadership, so this is very positive and encouraging. However, it will take time to see exactly what influence these individuals will have in their organizations, as well as to the field of philanthropy.” – Field Leader

Interviewees had different opinions about the program’s contribution toward creating a diverse leader pipeline.

As noted earlier, some field leaders believed diverse leaders always existed, but that most foundation boards, cultures, and organizational environments neither encourage nor support their advancement. Whether or not this leadership existed before, many noted that the program began to shine a light on the issue of leadership diversity, but that the light could be brighter. Others who had questioned the existence of prior diverse leadership noted that the Career Pathways Program illustrated *“without a doubt”* that the pipeline exists.

“The program, whether intentionally or not, has put a stake in the ground, saying, ‘we believe there is a qualified talent pool, and with a little support and skill building, they are ready and able to become the future leaders,’ and this is totally different from anything else in professional development. Philanthropy is a distinct enough skill that it needs special attention and skill building.” – Field Leader

A number of field leaders believed that building a supportive foundation culture, which nurtured diverse leadership, was the other part of the equation for increasing the pipeline of diverse leaders. One field leader shared: *“The other side of the supply side is whether there is a demand, and a culture that wants to support and*

² The report cited above from the Research Center for Leadership in Action also notes that while smaller scale leadership development programs allow for more learning for participants, “it is difficult to see how the leadership development field will achieve transformative change in the diversity agenda when individual programs operate at such small scale.”

develop and hire diverse talent.” Without institutional culture and value support, diverse leadership will not be retained. It is critical that a home institution is able to foster and support diverse talent, as there are many cultural roadblocks and systemic barriers in place that prevent movement even for a strong, diverse leader.

Participants and home institutions were generally unclear about what effect the Career Pathways Program has had on encouraging the demand for diversity and inclusion in philanthropy. Fourteen percent of home institutions and 19 percent of participants were not sure what effect the program has had on the field. The remaining respondents indicated they thought the program has had a “moderate” effect in this area. No one reported that the program has had no effect at all. A significant group of respondents, however, questioned the impact of the program on the field at large. A third of nominators and a fifth of participants noted the focus of the program was on increasing participants’ skills; while all saw value in this endeavor, they questioned the extent to which increasing this pool of talent was driving demand from the field itself.² Several interviewees clearly stated that to increase foundation demand and stimulate the retention of current diverse talent, board policies and organizational norms and cultures must shift to actually align with stated diversity values and intention.

“This is a long-term journey of tough self-examination, reflection and change... We have all heard from our Boards about how hard it is to find diverse talent... well, that’s just not true; we have diverse talent under our own roofs... we have to start asking ourselves the question, why do we look outside and often look beyond them?” – Field Leader

Through prior reports, the Council on Foundations has positioned itself as a leader in a national dialogue, and could serve as a leader committed to diversifying philanthropy. One leader noted: *“If the Council can keep the conversations growing and the success stories of what those qualified candidates can bring, this would increase people’s understanding that there are different leadership strengths with different kinds of folks.”* Field leaders saw a *“huge willingness for foundations to embrace diversity,”* but cautioned that foundations may not know how to do this. The Council on Foundations indicated it may be able to leverage its work and strengthen the impact of the Career Pathways Program through collaborations.



2010 - 2011 Cohort. Back (L – R): Latonya Slack, Craig Drinkard, Jeffrey Malloy, E. Thomas Brewer, Dale Robinson Anglin, Valerie Raines | Middle (L – R): Caroline J. Merenda, Tonya Allen, Julie Walther, Debra Joy Pérez Front (L –R): Fatima Angeles, La June Montgomery Tabron, Heidi Williamson, Praveen Prasad, Jason McGill

Many interviewees noted that increased attention by the Council on Foundations was needed to enhance philanthropic demand for more diverse senior executive leaders. All interviewees were aware of the “silver tsunami” of current philanthropic leaders retiring in the next decade. This wave of retirements, coupled with minorities becoming the majority in the U.S. over the next few decades, creates a “theoretical” opportunity for the diverse pipeline. Despite being well-meaning, current majority populated philanthropic board leadership, values, culture, and a general limited articulation of value-added to programming too often remained as barriers to hiring and retaining diverse talent. Field leaders and past participants thought the Council could take a more aggressive role in helping to create stronger demand for diverse and inclusive leadership. Participants and field leaders provided some suggestions:

“[Having] some level of board participation would give another level of visibility of the candidate going through the program, because as I think about the demand and supply sides, some participants are in organizations where they want to move up in, and any time you have more face-time with board members the better.” – Participant

“There might need to be more intentional conversations about leadership needs and where there will be openings and gaps, so [foundation and grant-making leaders, including board members] can be compelled to be as inclusive in their searches as possible.” – Field Leader

“Perhaps the Council could offer more professional development on how [grant making institutions] can better support people of color. In our region, there is a peer learning group that has brought trainings and trainers on integrating organizational work with diversity.” – Field Leader

On the other hand, field leaders did not view the Council on Foundations as the sole player in this effort, and cited other initiatives, such as the D5 Coalition and regional affinity groups, as critical partners for this work. Field leaders also noted that foundations are competing with other sectors for talented people of color, and ought to recognize that there has to be support for talented, diverse people to be attracted to, placed, and retained in philanthropic organizations.

“There are numerous examples throughout the field of individual foundations [increasing their diversity and inclusion], and regional consortiums have been working diligently on these issues. But, if we are honest about it, it is an awful lot of effort with few outcomes. Organizational change is very difficult, and is a journey across a number of years. The status quo has its defenders.” – Field Leader

The Career Pathways Program can have a positive effect on the Council on Foundations if the program can communicate more about its graduates. Field leaders and past participants offered various ideas about how program graduates can be better publicized. These ideas included: sharing the lists and accomplishments of participants with professional search firms; asking former participants to write blog posts for the Council; keeping the Career Pathways Program website updated with relevant readings and articles to share with the broader community; and maintaining the network of alumni. Field leaders also suggested that the Council put past participants on its committees.

Survey responses affirmed the need for improved strategic communications and championing of participants.

“Marketing and communications have been a huge trouble spot. How are you creating a platform for candidates to be seen? How are you marketing the program to attract more resources and time, including getting more CEOs to speak and participate?” – Field Leader

Foundation dollars supported an impressive 47 percent of the program’s start-up phase; and the Council on Foundations’ commitment to the Career Pathways Program is irrefutable, as illustrated by the fact that it covered 53 percent of all costs. At about \$54,496 per participant during this start-up period, the cost per participant is on par with one of the most esteemed international leadership development programs. The program is likely to incur some redesign costs annually; however, this ought to be minimal, resulting in a reduced per participant cost.

STRENGTHENING THE CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAM

Based on the evaluation findings, the Council on Foundations will consider the following in any future implementation of the Career Pathways Program. These recommendations are relevant to any organization with a diversity leadership program and to any organization that intends to launch a diversity leadership program:

- SHARPEN THE DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
- CONSIDER A TIERED LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
- INCREASE THE INTENTIONALITY OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS
- MAINTAIN STRONG HOME INSTITUTION RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES
- TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROGRAM ALUMNI NETWORK
- INCLUDE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TOPICS IN FORMAL LEARNING SESSIONS
- INCREASE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING TO AMPLIFY IMPACT
- ENSURE PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH A COMBINATION OF FOUNDATION GRANT SUPPORT AND PARTICIPANT FEES

The Council has taken these recommendations as well as feedback from key stakeholders throughout the field into full consideration. While the points referenced are directed toward strengthening the Career Pathways program, aspects will be utilized in developing a framework in the implementation and expansion of future professional development programming offered by the Council.

Specific to Career Pathways however, the Council has begun to explore ways in which to again offer members the opportunity to participate in this important leadership pipeline program. Core to the Council’s work is the commitment to growing and supporting the next generation of foundation leaders, maintaining the legacy of strong leadership at the highest level of foundations. Moving forward, we intend to create a sustainable program that continues the rich learning experience participants so value while ensuring that the next iteration engages and grows cohorts of participants, a strong alumni network and ongoing evaluation, all which will bring long term success.

APPENDIX

HOME INSTITUTIONS

FIRST COHORT (2010-2011)

The Skillman Foundation
The California Wellness Foundation
Victoria Foundation
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Victoria Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
Arcus Foundation
CFLeads
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
TrustAfrica
KeyBank Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
The Brinson Foundation
Berks County Community Foundation

SECOND COHORT (2011-2012)

The Omaha Community Foundation
The Hyams Foundation
Iowa West Foundation
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
The California Wellness Foundation
Intel Foundation
The McGraw-Hill Companies
The Siragusa Foundation
Desert AIDS Project
Weingart Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

THIRD COHORT (2012-2013)

Levi Strauss Foundation
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation
Japanese American Cultural and Community Center
Minnesota Philanthropy Partners
Community Foundation of St. Joseph County
Marin Community Foundation
Florida Philanthropic Network
The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta
Rasmuson Foundation