



## CENTER FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

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### **2021 NEWL Alumni Survey Key Findings**

In this report, I will discuss the results of the Qualtrics survey I sent out to the Massachusetts undergraduate students who attended last summer's NEW Leadership (NEWL) conference. This summer session was virtually hosted over four days by Rutgers' Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) and UMass Boston's own Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy (CWPPP). CAWP developed NEW Leadership to educate college-age women in New England and nationwide to introduce them to the important role of politics in their lives, the political process, and to improve their overall confidence and leadership skills. Currently, there are 21 state-level programs sponsored by individual universities at the local level.

This survey aimed to poll participants' overall experience and determine what parts of the program were most significant for participants and why. Of the smaller pool of survey responses we received back, 3 of the respondents provided written responses, while the remaining two only answered the option box section of the survey.

#### **Sessions**

For the national virtual sessions, students rated "How to Get Involved: A Life in Politics" and "Networking Workshop with Sabeen Masih" most impactful. One participant elaborated on the networking theme, saying she "made a ton of new networking connections, learned about resources available to me as someone who is interested in politics, and got to hear first-hand experiences from women who work in this field." Another participant said she felt engaged during the panels and quizzes, which she found especially well-designed and full of important information. Panels in which students were able to talk to policymakers or community organizers such as "How to Get Involved: A Life in Politics" emerge as clear winners. They gave students a chance to hear about the theory of politics, along with "real-life stories and issues that [were] easy to connect with."

For Massachusetts State sessions, students chose "Panel with State Legislatures" and "How to Get Involved: Careers in Government (Panel)" as most personally impactful. Students commented that they enjoyed hearing political content relevant to the region they planned to live or work, that the facilitation of these sessions was great, and that the choice of guest speakers was great. One student commented that "[this] list was the most impactful because they explained different ways on how we could get involved and not solely about running for public office." Hearing from elected officials was the most important theme of the sessions, closely

followed by hearing from community or grassroots activists. At these sessions, Representative Mejia, Attorney Nguyen, and Mayor Siddiqui discussed specific challenges they faced to get where they needed to be, such as juggling family responsibilities, dealing with critics, and learning to build a network. These women in authority were able to frame the issues in a way that reached students.

### **Personal Impact**

Of the students who provided written responses, all three wrote that NEW Leadership impacted their career planning and motivated them to be more politically engaged. The top reasons provided were learning about previously unexplored career options and gaining confidence in themselves as women. In addition, most students said that the program had a strong or very strong impact on their interest in politics and public leadership.

### **Suggestions**

Suggestions for future programming included adding in-person networking events, team-building sessions/events, and state-based smaller group sessions. Additional suggestions were to meet with more types of state officials, including appointed positions, and to broaden the definitions of leadership to reflect a wider range of applications such as research or education.