The University of Akron
University Council Satisfaction Survey Report
June 25, 2014

Summary:

The University Council Satisfaction Survey was distributed to University Council and Standing Committee members on April 25, 2014. Survey responses were anonymous.

There were 113 University Council and Standing Committee members at the time the survey was distributed. The University Steering Committee received 45 responses for a response rate of 40%. Twenty seven respondents were Standing Committee members, nine respondents were University Council members (35 member group) and nine respondents served both as a member on University Council and on one of the Standing Committees.

Executive Summary:

For the question, "University Council has been productive during the 2013-14 University Council year (May 1, 2013 – April 30, 2014)," 31.71% of respondents strongly agree or agree that UC has been productive and 36.6% are neutral, followed by 22% who strongly disagree or disagree (page 2).

For the question, "Standing Committees have been productive during the 2013-14 University Council year (May 1, 2013 – April 30, 2014)," 58.2% of respondents strongly agree or agree that UC has been productive and 20.9% are neutral, followed by 18.7% who strongly disagree or disagree (page 4).

For open-ended questions, responses were organized into the following categories: attendance, communication, constituency representation, goals/priorities, meeting structure, operations, and other (pages 3 – 7).

Complete Survey Results:

I am a member of:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
University Council (35 member group)	20.0%	9
Standing Committee	60.0%	27
Both University Council and a Standing Committee	20.0%	9
answered question		45
skipped question		0

University Council has been productive during the 2013-14 year. (e.g. 35 member group, previously led by Tim Lillie, currently led by Stacey Moore)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1 Strongly Disagree	9.8%	4
2 Disagree	12.2%	5
3 Neutral	36.6%	15
4 Agree	24.4%	10
5 Strongly Agree	7.3%	3
Not Applicable	9.8%	4
	answered question	41
	skipped question	4
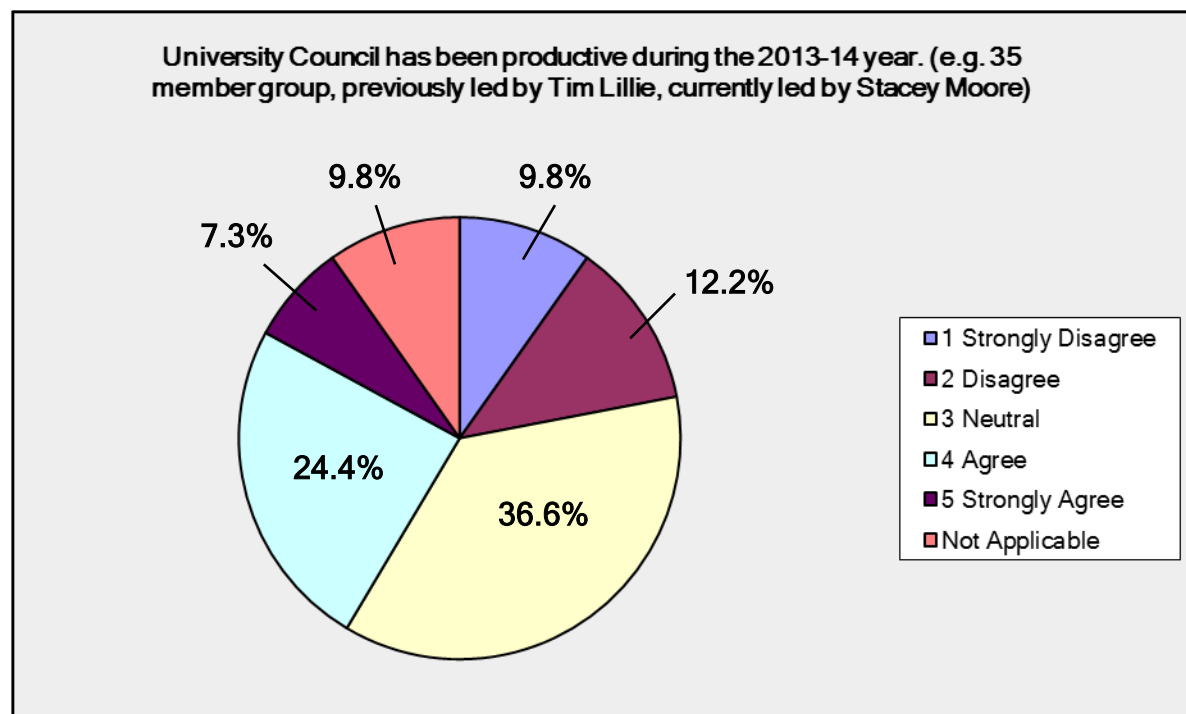
Do you have suggestions to make the work of the University Council more effective?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1.	100.0%	10
2.	50.0%	5
3.	40.0%	4
	answered question	10
	skipped question	35

Responses:
(Categories are listed by the number of responses received)

Operations

1. Complete the bylaws, as they were written, then revise using a process.
2. Written reports.
3. Training for all on Roberts Rules of Order.
4. Finalize the rules and charge of the UC - much effort has been spent on this process that could have been spent on the work of the committee.
5. Ensure that the UC is publicly endorsed as a policy recommending body, with the right to be involved in this area.
6. Let UC have access to high level discussion and be part of the planning of new programs ... Not cc'd o. The rollout of change. Be there on the onset.
7. Having to continually redefine itself for the second time - which took the entire academic year again.

Meeting Structure

8. Limit discussion of grammatical points to 10 minutes - if further discussion is needed, it should be submitted via email to be fully discussed at the next meeting.
9. It hasn't been the leadership - Tim and especially Stacey were up against some difficult situations.
10. Limit discussions and debate.
11. An opportunity for each constituency to provide a written or oral report during UC main.
12. Ensure there is an understanding that exchanges are to be thoughtful and respectful at all times.
13. Smaller room - perhaps a circle set up so people have to look at each other.

Communication

14. Communicate what Council is doing. I only know a few items because of personal contacts, no real announcements etc.

15. Run a PR campaign so people on campus understand what we do, and why we do it, especially for students.

Constituency Representations

16. Constituency groups need to understand the work of the Council to ensure they are sending the appropriate representation.
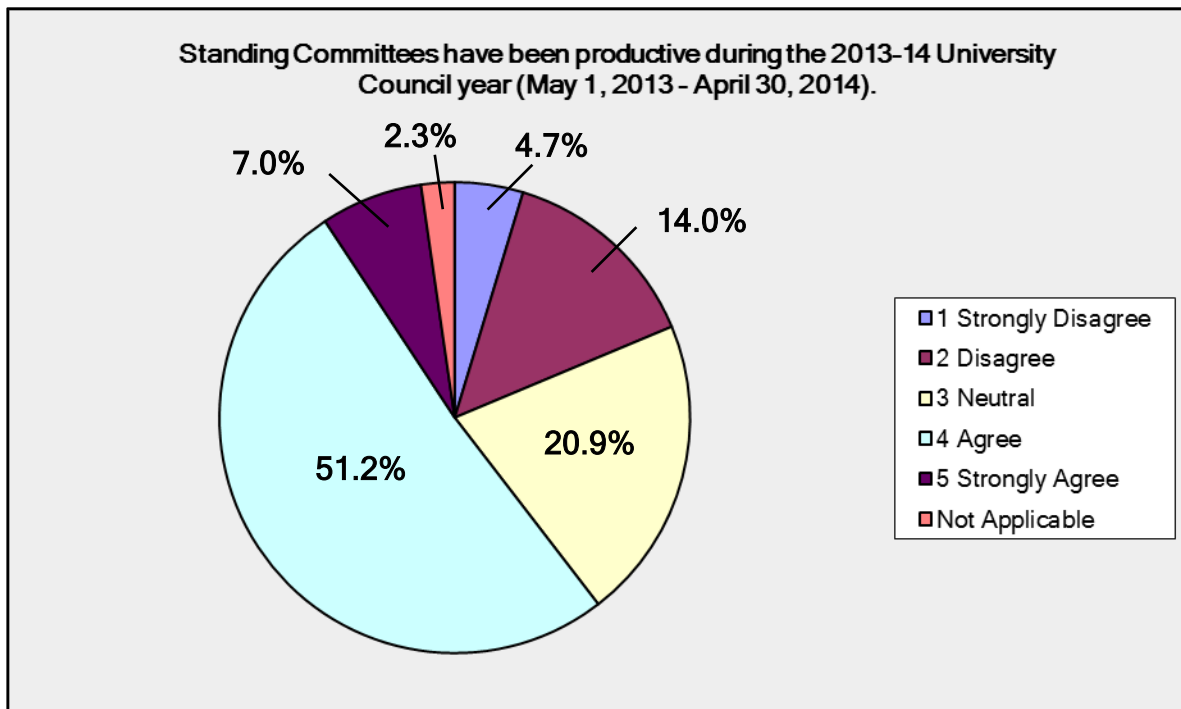
Other

17. No because they have no power and limited expertise and time is being devoted to them.

18. Unsure. Seems hamstrung by the overwhelming top-down bureaucracy of the University administration.

19. The problems with UC stem back to the committees taking a real shared governance stance.

Standing Committees have been productive during the 2013-14 University Council year (May 1, 2013 - April 30, 2014).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1 Strongly Disagree	4.7%	2
2 Disagree	14.0%	6
3 Neutral	20.9%	9
4 Agree	51.2%	22
5 Strongly Agree	7.0%	3
Not Applicable	2.3%	1
	answered question	43
	skipped question	2

Standing Committees have been productive during the 2013-14 University Council year (May 1, 2013 - April 30, 2014).

2.3% 4.7% 7.0% 14.0% 20.9% 51.2%

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree
- Not Applicable

Do you have suggestions to make the work of the standing committees more effective?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1.	100.0%	18
2.	50.0%	9
3.	38.9%	6
	answered question	18
	skipped question	27

Responses:
(Categories are listed by the number of responses received)

Operations

1. Return to pre-2011 principles for committees: appointed by Steering Committee.

2. So far my experience has been hearing reports from committees somewhat after decisions have been made.

3. Require WRITTEN reports for UC main to create a history of work and accountability.

4. Make it more student friendly.

5. Access to data, to make data driven recommendations.

6. Ensure that they meet monthly.

7. Focus on faculty/student driven initiatives instead of allowing VPs to set the agenda.

8. Ensure that the President and Trustees PUBLICLY endorse the policy recommendation role of the UC.

9. Being more proactive in matters.

10. Require agendas, minutes, and reports be updated FREQUENTLY on SharePoint.

11. Set expectations for each member of the committee.

12. Get the Provost off the Steering Committee and other committees as a regular appointee.

13. Get in the field information from employees and students involved in each respective area. (Get in the trenches)

14. Receive more interaction and feedback from Council.

Goals/Priorities

15. I think giving the committees annual goals and explicit reporting dates during the year is a good start.

16. Possibly have executive committee meet with chairs to help with goal setting and meeting recommendations.

17. Goals should be defined during the summer or at the end of the previous year.

18. Assign projects to the committee in addition to self-generated goals and topics.

19. It was a good idea this year to ask for goals for the committees, but that was not done until the spring semester. It would have been more productive to establish goals at the beginning of the fall.

20. Clearly set goals for the committees.

21. Have 1 operational purpose, responsible for one event, program, review, or project.

22. Ensure focus on goals and objectives.

23. Make the charges clearer.

24. Spend more time on real projects/programs and less on discussing governance procedures.

Meeting Structure

25. Scheduling meeting times that work with everyone's schedules.

26. Meetings should be bi-monthly.

27. Make the dates and times of committees available from the BEGINNING of the term.

Attendance

28. Focus on attendance by membership and if there is inconsistencies replace representatives.

29. Expect a reasonable attendance record from each member of the committee.

Communication

30. Would like more communication with University community. I know what my Committee did, but not others. Perhaps more effective use of the Digest?

Constituency Representation

31. Committee members with expertise on the subject matter of the committee is more important than representation of all areas of campus.

Other

32. This isn't shared governance - it is semi-responsible reporting. UC Committees should make policy not just react to it.

33. No because they have no power and there is limited expertise and time available.

Additional comments:	
Answer Options	Response Count
	4
answered question	4
skipped question	41

Responses:

1. The UC started out with great promise, being a laboriously-constructed effort of inclusion in governance of bodies not previously included. However, from the first, the greatest flaw has been (as promised by some) that only the faculty with tenure feel secure enough to speak out about issues and procedures. If the administration and the Board wish to completely neutralize any role for the UC other than that of "we'll ask you for your opinions when and if we want to", then it should be clear about that. It's been a colossal waste of time and resources, which is unfortunate: if the UC, now, were what it was intended to be all along, we (at UA) would have a committed, trained, cadre of people at all levels working to improve the function of the University. As it is, it is now simply a place where some talking and venting occurs, but despite try after try, it remains an informal body, operating under bylaws that have specifically been not approved by the Board, and where the Provost and administration are not only dominant but contemptuously so. The leaders have been systematically starved of resources (except if administrators) and have been actively opposed by the administrators who profess to be in favor of shared governance.

2. While I feel a lot is discussed and recommended by UC and it's various committees, it can be hard to get a sense of whether much gets accomplished without spending a great deal of time on the SharePoint site. Perhaps a quarterly or biannual summary presentation of UC accomplishments or recommendations could be presented during a few UC meetings during the year.

3. UC is a noble effort, and so many years in the making. I've often gotten the feeling that it wasn't being taken seriously by the administration. It remains to be seen whether or not it will succeed. It is an excellent example of what the academic community could do if it has the political and social will.

4. I was on two committees, Recreation & Wellness and Communications. Neither was very productive, but Recreation & Wellness was poorly organized and highly ineffective. Also, important departments were left out. For example, health services was not represented on the Wellness committee.