**The University of Akron**
**University Council Satisfaction Survey Report**
**April 20, 2015**

**Summary:**

The University Council Satisfaction Survey was distributed to University Council and Standing Committee members on March 31, 2015. Survey responses were anonymous.

There were 109 University Council and Standing Committee members at the time the survey was distributed.  The University Council Steering Committee received 51 responses for a response rate of 47%. Thirty-seven respondents were Standing Committee members, nine respondents were University Council members (35 member group) and five respondents served both as a member on University Council and on one of the Standing Committees.

For the question, "Standing Committees have been focused on their goals during the 2014-15 University Council year (May 1, 2014 – April 30, 2015)," 41% of respondents said standing committees have been somewhat focused on their goals, 35% said they have been very focused, 4% said they have not at all been focused and 20% didn't know (page 2).

For the question, "Standing Committees that I have served on have been focused on their goals during the 2014-15 University Council year (May 1, 2014 – April 30, 2015)," 57% of respondents said their standing committee has been very focused, 27% said it has been somewhat focused, 14% said it has not at all been focused and 2% of respondents did not serve on a standing committee (page 2).

For the question, "University Council has been productive during the 2014-15 University Council year (May 1, 2014 – April 30, 2015)," 55% of respondents said UC has been somewhat productive, 12% said it has been very productive, 8% said it has not at all been productive and 25% didn't know (page 4).

For open-ended questions, responses were organized into the following categories:  attendance, communication, goals/priorities, meeting structure, operations, and other (pages 2 – 6).

**Complete Survey Results:**

**I am a member of:**

| Answer | | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| University Council (35 member group, currently led by Stacey Moore) | | 9 | 18% |
| Standing Committee | | 37 | 73% |
| Both University Council and a Standing Committee | | 5 | 10% |
| Total | | **51** | **100%** |

**Standing Committees have been focused on their goals during the 2014-15 University Council year. (May 1, 2014 – April 30, 2015)**

| Answer | | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Not at all focused on their goals | | 2 | 4% |
| Somewhat focused on their goals | | 21 | 41% |
| Very focused on their goals | | 18 | 35% |
| I don't know | | 10 | 20% |
| Total | | **51** | **100%** |

**Standing Committees I have served on have been focused on their goals during the 2014-15 University Council year. (May 1, 2014 – April 30, 2015)**

| Answer | | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Not applicable (I did not serve on a standing committee) | | 7 | 14% |
| Not at all focused on their goals | | 1 | 2% |
| Somewhat focused on their goals | | 14 | 27% |
| Very focused on their goals | | 29 | 57% |
| Total | | **51** | **100%** |

**Do you have suggestions to make the work of the standing committees more effective?**
(Categories are listed by the number of responses received)

Goals/Priorities

1. Defined goals.

2. Develop two or three specific, concrete goals for the academic year.

3. The Standing Committee chairs need to hold control over the committee goals and agenda. I've heard from constituent members that some committee agendas are controlled by the VP/Appointee. In some cases these agendas fall within the subject matter of the committee but not necessarily tied to an actionable committee goal.

4. Clearer goals and responsibilities.

5. Clarify the charges to the committees and the reporting structure.

6. The effectiveness of standing committees (SC) and their role within University Council can be increased by assigning concrete projects with priority on certain goals established by UC main or the chair of the SC. However, in order to accomplish something like this, SC need to have more than a "recommending role" status. Meetings are always very informative about updates and plans in different areas in the university.

7. What specific type things should they be working on? The by-laws are very vague.

## Operations

8. Having UC leadership attend occasional meetings would be helpful for direction and oversight.

9. Being able to get assistance from those in administration.

10. As an undergraduate student representative it's unclear what my role is in the committee. No forms of rapport are requested by Undergraduate Student Government. I have a hard time understanding why this position exists within all standing committees. The position would be more valuable to a student if they had some form of responsibility within the standing committee. Either given some kind of task by the standing committee or requested to attend meetings with USG would make the position more meaningful to USG appointed members.

11. Standing committees need to be focused on representing the needs of their constituency groups. The committees are not intended to further the initiatives of the sitting VP or individual committee members.

12. More direction from the administration, President, Board of Trustees and University Council on purpose and processes and goals. More interaction with other standing committees. More involvement by students. More involvement by community - The City of Akron - political leaders - Mayor, City Council and social service agencies. More involvement by employers.

13. Ensure that they are taken seriously and that all planning policy is routed through them.

## Meeting Structure

14. Every meeting should not focus on the same agenda item month after month. A brief report would serve the purpose so the whole meeting was not centered around one topic, the same topic every month.

15. Perhaps meet more often.

16. Meet regularly. Prioritize tasks for a single academic year.

## Attendance

17. It would be helpful to have committee members who would actually like to attend the committee meetings. We had several members who did not show up or notify us of their absence. This was reported to the UC Leadership, but no action was taken. We need to do a better job of selecting individuals to serve and then holding them accountable for their actions.

## Communication

18. Responding to opportunity briefs can help make the work of standing committees more effective. Better "advertising" for UC and the brief submissions would provide better input from the university community.

## Other

19. Dr. Erickson is very task oriented... appreciate her hard work!!

20. Not at this time. My committee works very well with respect to the tasks at hand.

**University Council has been productive during the 2014-15 year. (35 member group, currently led by Stacey Moore)**

| Answer | | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Not at all productive | | 4 | 8% |
| Somewhat productive | | 28 | 55% |
| Very productive | | 6 | 12% |
| I don't know | | 13 | 25% |
| Total | | **51** | **100%** |

**Do you have suggestions to make the work of University Council more effective?**
(Categories are listed by the number of responses received)

Operations

1. Include the standing committees more.

2. Unfortunately the process sometimes trumps the goal or topic being presented.

3. Clearly establish a purpose (given that bylaws are pending). It is difficult to feel as though the work UC does is meaningful when the mission of the body is somewhat unclear.

4. The position would be more valuable to a student if they had some form of responsibility within the standing committee. Either given some kind of task by the standing committee or requested to attend meetings with USG would make the position more meaningful to USG appointed members.

5. Clarify the charge, define the scope, and solidify the reporting structure.

6. Ensure that it has serious work, and support, to achieve that work.

7. What is the commitment from the main UC members? Represent their respective constituencies and attend meetings? How much are they contributing to the effectiveness of this group? Do they have any specific role?

Communication

8. More frequent communications in Email Digest would help the campus community be aware of current projects and issues.

9. • The SharePoint site doesn't always give a clear picture towards the current functions of UC. While all of the documents are housed in one location, it can take some effort to find documents for a particular committee or a particular timeframe. Use of various views on the library might help tremendously.
   • It might also help to create a subpage for each UC SC (i.e. of www.uakron.edu/uc/tdhr ) where the goals, contact info and progress can be showcased (linking to a committee specific view of the SP library).
   • If a policy recommendation is accepted by the President, a letter to campus from Dr. Scarborough would be a visible boost in the arm for UC.

10. More communication and interaction - More direction from the administration, President, Board of Trustees and University Council on purpose and processes and goals. More interaction with other standing committees. More involvement by students. More involvement by community - The City of Akron - political leaders - Mayor, City Council and social service agencies. More involvement by employers.

## Meeting Structure

11. Consistent grandstanding by the same few individuals delay the work of UC and cause a great deal of dysfunction. The negativity and lengthy pontification by a few are inexcusable and should be stopped. Please consider allowing only one response per individual with a two or three minute timed comment period. Subsequent concerns can be addressed in writing to the chair or committee for further consideration. This may not be the correct remedy, but another approach is needed. This small number of individuals either need to be respectful of time and others or please leave the committee as they are harming more than helping. There is much important work to be accomplished together.

12. • Members of the Council need to leave their personal agendas at the door and focus on the greater good that the Council is striving to achieve.
    • This continued nonsense of repeating the past 10 years or so of history at every meeting serves no purpose other than to inflame some members and disgust others.
    • This body is working towards common goals and that includes all constituency groups, including Administration. The constant references to past behaviors or perceived wrongs done by specific groups or members of Council also need to cease as no good is served except to malign members' opinion of the Council itself.
    • Members who cannot focus on the business at hand need to remove themselves from the Council and enable others to serve who wish to further Shared Governance at UA.

13. I think we could get a lot more accomplished if we didn't get bogged down so much with useless discussions involving protocol for doing something. I realize that we need to have rules and order, but we often spent long periods of time on whether or not we were following the correct procedure for something vs. debating the actual issue itself. There has got to be a better way of doing things. Maybe we need to replace Roberts Rules of Order with common sense.

## Goals/Priorities

14. Submitting goals at the beginning of the calendar year and check up to see how the committees are staying on track with said goals.

## Other

15. As we come to understand our role, the council is becoming more effective.

16. Maybe there is great added value, but I don't see it.

**Additional Comments:**

1. More connection to USG and GSG.

2. The UC is and has been essentially a Potemkin village: a facade without substance. There are ways to create and empower a body that could make substantive policy recommendations to the President, Provost and through them the Board of Trustees, but the Board and administration must agree to both the creation and nurturance of such a body.  There have been some information sharing via the UC that is helpful, but that's possible without having a UC.

3. Much appreciation and thanks to Stacey Moore, Suzanne Testerman, and Kim Haverkamp for their great work and leadership on UC.  They have made thoughtful and positive improvements.  We are very fortunate to have them engaged in such a meaningful way here at UA.

4. I question whether we need it.

5. I believe UC has made great progress in the last couple years, but I fear the effort will be seen in vain if some of the more significant recommendations aren't put forth for implementation in a timely fashion.

6. I have never attended a UC meeting so I have no right to criticize.  But, as a member of a standing committee and other councils on campus I have heard that UC is more of a debating society than an effective means of getting things done.  In the future, I would hope that the members could leave their personal agendas and need to argue for argument's sake at the door.

7. I suggest term limits on officers to encourage others to become more involved.

8. It's a shame to waste the opportunity for true shared governance by really committing to making UC work well and have a real decision-making role.  Either disband it or find someone with leadership skills and courage (like Bill Rich has in the Senate) to lead it.

9. I have enjoyed my involvement with UC and my standing committee and look forward to serving another year.  Thank you for the opportunity to be involved and to make a difference.

10. I never had the chance to attend the University Council Committee meeting I was assigned to because the times never worked with my schedule. It is very important for students to have the opportunity to sit in on these meetings so it should be made a priority that they are able to attend. Classes take priority for me, as for most students, and I was not willing to skip class to attend the meeting.  Moving forward, when students fill out the Doodles or forms with their availability, it would be nice to see a priority put on the students' schedule.