

The University of Akron
2016-17 University Council Satisfaction Survey Report
May 9, 2017

Summary:

The University Council Satisfaction Survey was distributed to University Council and Standing Committee members on April 20, 2017. Survey responses were anonymous.

There were 107 University Council and Standing Committee members at the time the survey was distributed. The University Council Steering Committee received 54 responses for a response rate of 51%. Thirty-six respondents were Standing Committee members, six respondents were University Council members (27 member group) and twelve respondents served both as a member on University Council and on one of the Standing Committees.

For the question, “Standing Committees that I have **not** served on have been focused on their goals during the 2016-17 University Council year (May 1, 2016 – April 30, 2017),” 35 respondents said they didn’t know, 10 said standing committees have been somewhat focused on their goals, 9 said they have been very focused, and 0 said they have not at all been focused (page 2).

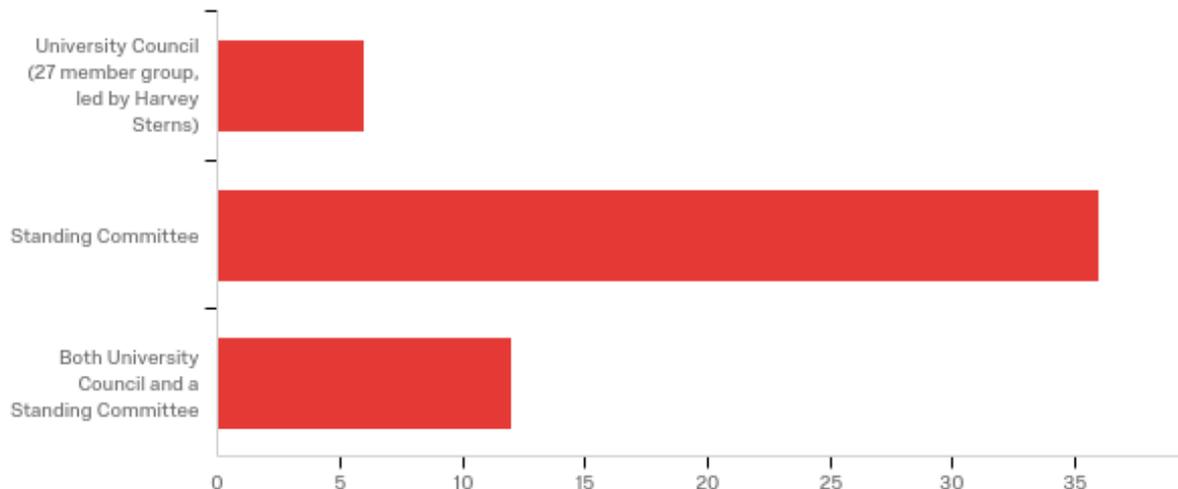
For the question, “Standing Committees that I have served on have been focused on their goals during the 2016-17 University Council year (May 1, 2016 – April 30, 2017),” 30 respondents said their standing committee has been very focused, 16 said it has been somewhat focused, 3 said it has not at all been focused, and 5 respondents did not serve on a standing committee (page 2).

For the question, “University Council has been productive during the 2016-17 University Council year (27 member group, led by Harvey Sterns),” 23 respondents said UC has been somewhat productive, 16 said they didn’t know, 13 said it has been very productive, and 2 said it has not at all been productive (page 4).

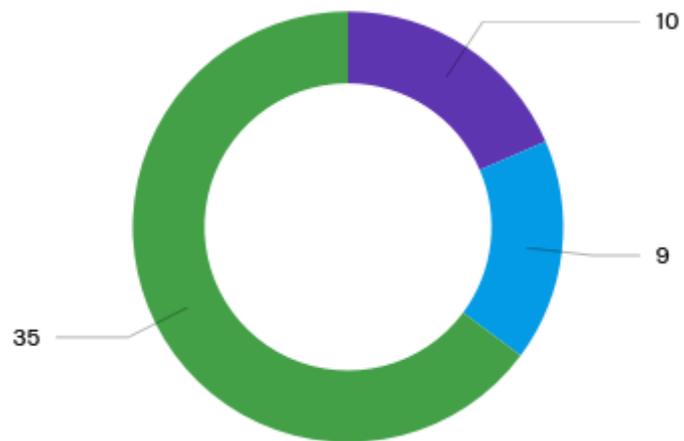
For open-ended questions, responses were organized into the following categories: communication, goals/priorities, meeting structure, membership, operations, and other (pages 3 – 6).

Complete Survey Results:

I am a member of:

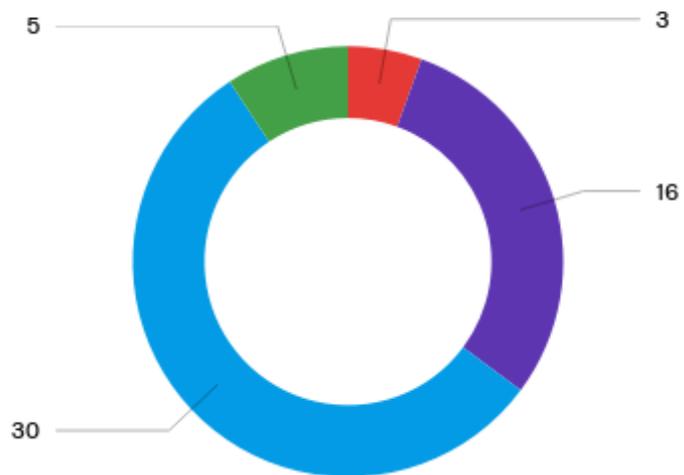


Standing Committees that I have not served on been focused on their goals during the 2016-17 University Council year. (May 1, 2016 – April 30, 2017)



- Not at all focused on their goals
- Somewhat focused on their goals
- Very focused on their goals
- I don't know

Standing Committees that I have served on have been focused on their goals during the 2016-17 University Council year. (May 1, 2016 – April 30, 2017)



- Not at all focused on their goals
- Somewhat focused on their goals
- Very focused on their goals
- Not applicable (I did not serve on a standing committee)

Do you have suggestions to make the work of the standing committees more effective?

(Categories are listed by the number of responses received)

Operations

1	Just having the upper administration seriously consider suggestions and ideas brought forth by these hard working committees.
2	If UC actually listened to the standing committees, that would be helpful.
3	Appoint people who actually care about the issues. Give the committees power to make actual decisions and not just talk about a lot of ideas that never happen.
4	Focus on the easiest solution to the problem, make more of an effort to reach out to constituency groups to make sure we understand how to best serve them.
5	Many of the opinions stated during committee meetings are said with the intent to benefit the speaker, not edify the group. If this changed, our meetings would be more effective.
6	We spend too much time updating and exposing goals every year to new members. Is there a way to streamline this process.

Meeting Structure

7	Meetings should be structured with clearly defined goals and objectives.
8	Ensure that chairs actually set up and hold meetings.
9	Committees should meet at least once a month otherwise there is no momentum and projects lag.
10	Make sure they actually meet. One committee I'm on met only once this semester.
11	Better scheduling of meetings.

Membership

12	Constituency groups need to do a better job at appointing members and holding members accountable for attending meetings.
13	Ensure that the membership to each committee is assigned so that there is a full contingent of representatives.
14	As noted previously, membership on the Communications committee has been erratic...vacancies not filled, member turnover, etc. That makes it difficult to have consistent, focused work accomplished.
15	Yes, standing committees need to have all of their seats filled. If a person leaves, the committee needs to get a replacement quickly. It might also be helpful if the bodies who appoint committee members stressed a two year commitment to individuals interested. / / It would also be helpful if the bodies who made the appointments would consider whether or not particular knowledge is useful/needed to be on the committee, and if so, attempt to find persons with the background necessary (i.e. budget and finance, etc.).

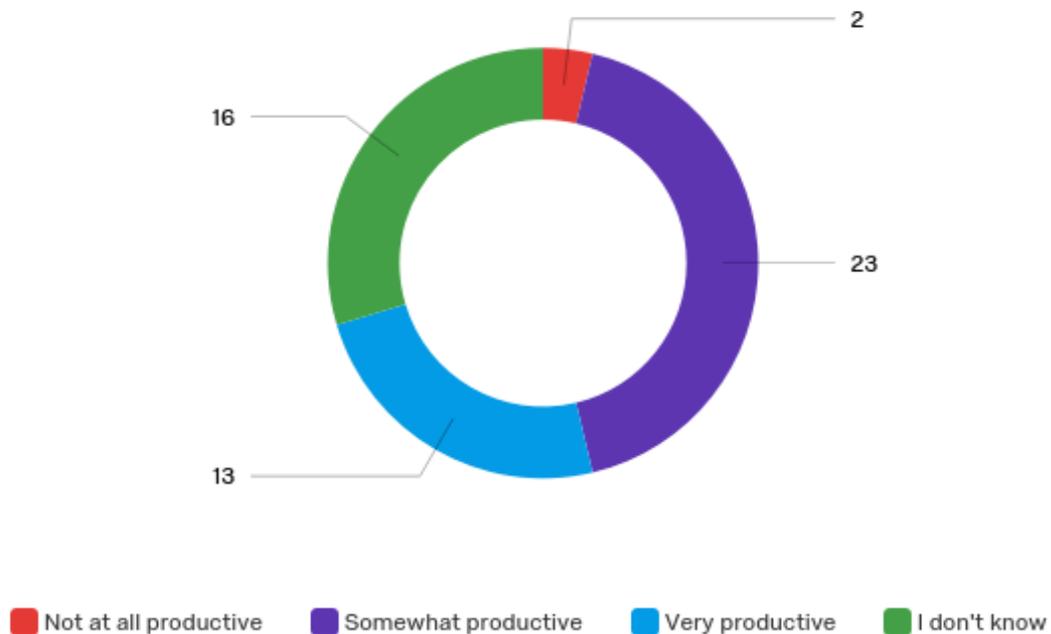
Communication

16	I served on ad-hoc committees this year. I believe these serve an important role in allowing at-large reps the opportunity to serve in a greater capacity. There could be improvements to the charges provided the ad-hoc committees that would help their work be more meaningful to the university. A chair should be determined prior to the first work meeting. This would help ensure structure and focus on goals from the start. Better communication between all committees in between UC meetings should be a goal so that those who have overlapping initiatives are on the same page.
17	Submit brief reports at the end of each semester to the campus community on the outcomes of the work of the standing committees.

Goals/Priorities

18	Need defined, achievable goals
19	I think it may need to be clear what the work of the committees are to be. It is my understanding it is to consider broad policy and areas for improvement. It appears that committees have become involved at the micro-operational level. There have been items which are purely operational which council has acted upon as it were within its purview. The role and purview need to be made clear.

University Council has been productive during the 2016-17 year. (27 member group, currently led by Harvey Sterns)



Do you have suggestions to make the work of University Council more effective?

(Categories are listed by the number of responses received)

Operations

1	Meetings need to led for the betterment of all groups (UA as a whole). This body cannot afford to lose focus because a few faculty members want to push through their personal agenda.
2	The council works hard and the sub-committees but the upper administration doesn't seem to listen to what is being done and said within these groups until after the fact.
3	Is there a mechanism to know if the work done by UC is effective? A system of evaluation, other than this survey, or feedback from others who are affected by the decisions UC makes? I think that would help answer this and the previous question.
4	I think the focus should be on UC being a policy advisory group and not get caught up in issues/discussions about administrative or management issues.
5	Sometimes it's not clear what the role of the council or the particular committees are. Sometimes it feels like a body that's being asked to rubber stamp things that we are not given time to research or fully understand. To me, that's not an effective use of the body.

Communications

6	A more efficient communication of met goals to the whole community would be beneficial. It would motivate committees to reach their goals, as they have an obligation to report back to the community, and it would show the community the hard work that the Council performs.
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Meeting Structure

7	The council and new members need to be made clear of their roles, focus and purpose. UC should also be clear on the appropriate rules of communication and who has voice in the meetings and when.
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Other

8	This is my first year on UC, so I have limited experience with effectiveness of the group. However, I felt that this was a good use of my time and that good work was being done for the university at the meetings. In particular, the work to formalize our budgeting process was very productive and will help long-term at UA.
9	Disband the University Council. It has no power and it dilutes the crucial role of faculty.
10	Eliminate the UC. It is a farce that has no real power.

Additional Comments:

1	I had to stop attending most of the meetings due to a change in work schedule, and my committee continues to meet while I overview the notes. I don't see much progress in the notes.
2	Having the president speak at each meeting has been a wonderful addition to the agenda. It's great to hear straight from him and Rex on university concerns. It might be a good idea to invite other VPs to discuss their areas in more depth on a rotating basis, one per meeting for 10-15 minutes. I was surprised when I joined UC there was no connection with Athletics through this body. It might be worth looking at how the area can be represented, either through the A.D. attending the meetings or having an at-large member to be on UC.
3	It may be appropriate to have council members rotate in and out of terms frequently.
4	Compare the work of the Faculty Senate and the UC this year. The FS has accomplished far more because it is a faculty body not under the control of the administration. Look at the University Council Information Technology Committee (UCIT). It simply approves the work done by the FS technology committee. The UCIT can do nothing because the CIO is a member. The push for real technology change cannot come from the UCIT. The UCIT didn't do laptop replacement, it didn't do updating the LMS, etc. Too many administrators are on the UCIT. The same goes for the rest of the UC. The UC is a fake work body.