



Staff Council Assessment Report
2017-18 academic year

May 24, 2018

Communications & Assessment Committee

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Executive Summary:

Staff Council conducted three major assessments in Spring 2018:

1. Three 1-hour listening sessions were held with staff during April-May 2018. They were attended by approximately 50 staff members. Quantitative questionnaires were collected from 40 participants along with robust qualitative responses.
2. An anonymous survey was distributed by email to all staff via Staff Council Newsletter in May 2018. It received 106 responses over the course of 1 week (26% response rate).
3. The Staff Council Communications & Assessment Committee conducted a self-assessment of Staff Council's stated priorities and objectives for the 2017-18 academic year.

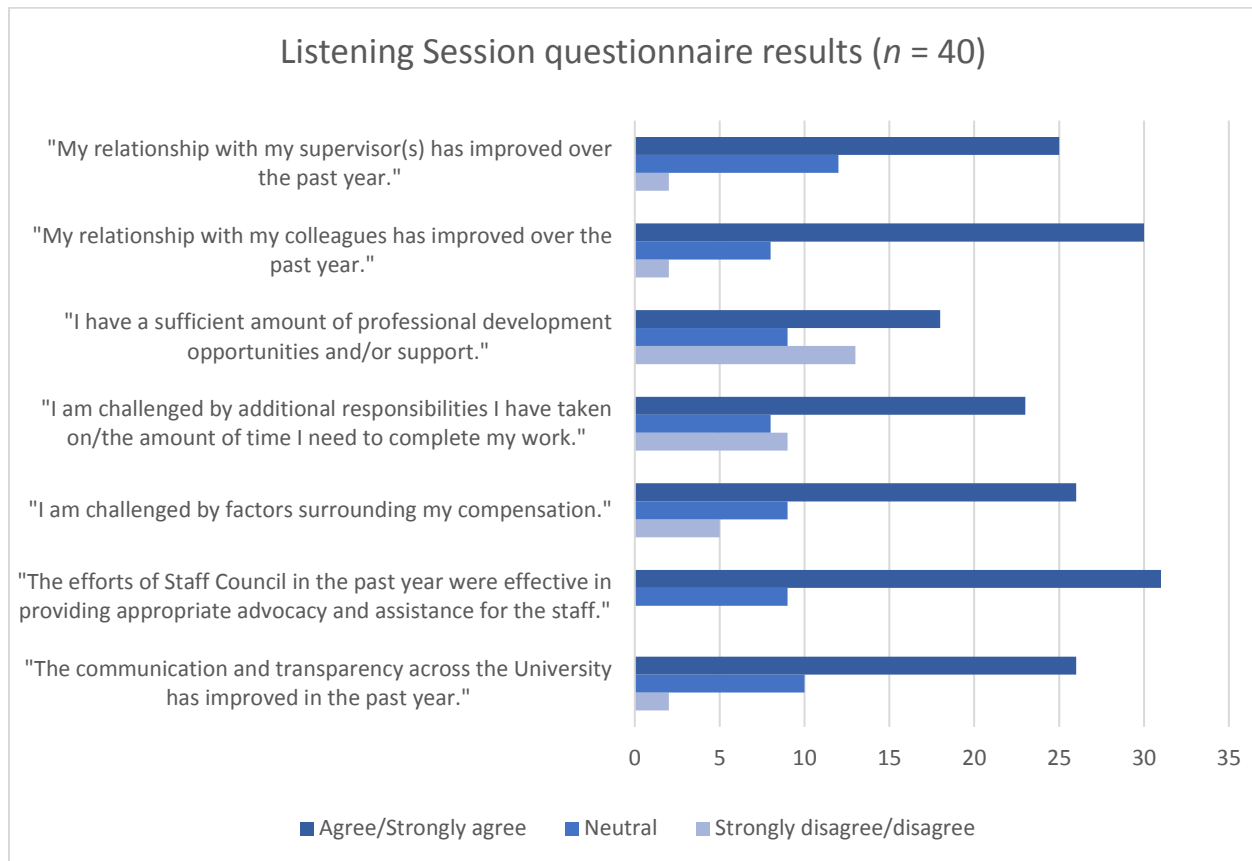
We have drawn the following primary conclusions from these assessments:

1. **Staff Council's efforts to improve morale appear to be making an impact.**
 - A large majority of staff surveyed report that Staff Council's efforts help them feel more supported by and connected to their colleagues. This is supported by similar strong response in listening sessions.
 - Staff members have expressed strong positive support of new Staff Council initiatives this year, especially the expanded calendar of social events programming, new Employee Resource Groups, the Mission & Advocacy Committee's Listening Sessions, and Staff Council's participation on university committees.
 - Many staff members report that morale overall seems to have improved this year, though it is clear from these results that this is not equally true in all divisions; there is still much work to be done in this area.
2. **Staff Council needs to communicate our advocacy and leadership role more clearly to staff.**
 - While most staff acknowledge Staff Council's role in producing morale-building and social events and keeping staff informed, most do not appear to think of Staff Council as a primary point of contact for institutional problem-solving or advocacy to SLT. We recommend a more intentional focus next year on closing the communication loop so that Staff Council's advocacy for staff needs and concerns might be made clearer to staff. The process of submitting questions/concerns up to leadership, and getting a response back to staff, needs to be more transparent, and our effectiveness in this area should be promoted.
3. **Staff across the institution are still struggling and need our support.**
 - Listening session results indicate that many staff members continue to experience heavy increases in workload and hours and deep dissatisfaction with compensation, even as they report high levels of satisfaction with direct supervisors and respect/appreciation for colleagues.
 - Because of Staff Council's role in promoting collegiality, support and community, we can play a key role in employee retention by promoting these positive aspects of our community while also advocating for institutional attention to the areas where our colleagues are struggling.

The following were Staff Council's top strengths and areas for growth, as identified by staff survey respondents:

<u>Staff Council's strengths:</u>	<u>Staff Council's areas for growth:</u>
<p>Variety and type of events/programming was a clear strength – people love these events.</p>	<p>Better inclusion of part-time employees when planning events; some desire for more substantial programming than social events.</p>
<p>New (<1 year) employees were very positive about Staff Council.</p>	<p>Employees here 1-5 years still largely positive about Staff Council, but less so than newer/older employees.</p>
<p>Most (77%) reported that supervisors were supportive of their participation in Staff Council programs.</p>	<p>23% of respondents still indicated a less-than-supportive supervisor when it came to the staff member attending SC events/meetings.</p>
<p>Staff Council is seen as “fun” – and respondents largely report that they are likely to come to Staff Council with “great ideas that would make JCU a better place to work”</p>	<p>Many do not consider Staff Council as a primary point of contact for institutional problem-solving or advocacy. Lack of transparency about how this advocacy does/would happen.</p>
<p>Increased communication is noted and valued – many stated that they have noted improvements in this area.</p>	<p>There is a desire for more fun, meaningful and useful content on Staff Council newsletters and website.</p>

Part I: Listening Sessions



Of note in the questionnaire results:

4. Most staff members report that their relationships with supervisors and colleagues have improved over the past year, along with communication and transparency generally.
5. On the questionnaire, concerns emerged in three main areas:
 - 33% report a lack of professional development opportunities and support,
 - 58% report challenges juggling new/additional responsibilities in the wake of restructuring, and
 - 65% express concern about ongoing inadequacy of compensation.

The following themes emerged in the listening session discussion notes:

Workload:

- Expectations/demands continue to grow even outside of restructuring – mission creep, new projects (8)
- Staff have been given significant additional responsibilities due to restructuring, with little or no institutional acknowledgment of increase through extra compensation or job description revision (7)
- Need for better work/life balance – too many hours/burnout/inflexible schedules. (7)
- Extra work and hours – often unrecognized and uncompensated (5)
- Additional job pressures, role confusion, excessive stress (5)

- Serious understaffing in some areas (5)
- Work/life balance and flexibility are good (3)
- Some new employees are replacing more than one person without those duties being reduced (2)

Expectations, Promotion, Retention:

- Job descriptions need to be updated/revised – need more appropriate job titles and descriptions based on duties assigned (7)
- I am satisfied with my job; my expectations are in line with my job/role (7)
- No clear path here for career advancement – no explanation of growth opportunities (5)
- As an administrative assistant I am not treated with respect (3)
- Concerns about future job stability/sustainability – is more restructuring coming? (2)

Compensation:

- Compensation is inadequate, inequitable, uncompetitive with other institutions (9)
- Benefits are good (4)
- Lack of transparency about job classifications/pay range when applying internally for open positions (2)

Professional development and training

- Good opportunities for professional development (4)
- Professional development is not available (4)
- More training is needed esp. for computer/software knowledge (4)
- We need much better, lengthier training for new staff members (4)
- Heavy reliance for training/onboarding on too few colleagues/supervisors, who are too busy to do it properly (2)

Department leadership:

- Great, supportive direct supervisor(s) – flexible, receptive, respectful, available (20)
- Supervisor and team dynamics are a challenge (4)
- Effects of restructuring have been particularly visible on leaders/supervisors (3)

Staff and Faculty

- I feel my professional expertise/voice is often ignored by faculty (5)
- I am staff but have teaching responsibilities; feels like straddling two worlds (2)

President/SLT/institutional leadership:

- Solid improvements in transparency and communication especially from SLT (12)
- Major transitions in SLT/Presidency:
 - o make everyone feel uncertain (8)
 - o are hopeful for positive change (3)
- Institutional/historic problems take time to clear up; male dominated group here does not help

Communication

- Communication is still lacking at lower levels of institution and within departments (8)
- Need better communication and definition of relationships between CAS/Boler, faculty/staff, old job duties/restructured job duties (5)
- Policies need to be clarified, communicated, and enforced equitably (5)

- Need more clarity/consistency of communication across the institution, especially with hiring procedures, onboarding new employees (4)
- Appreciation of new community forum model for communication with SLT/President (3)
- Communication doesn't always get a response – “like sending things into the void” (2)

Collaboration

- Supportive professional and personal peer relationships between staff are valuable & work well (18)
- Silos remain a consistent problem – not enough collaboration/patience across departments (9)
- Work team dynamic is positive and supportive (8)
- Easy to communicate and request help from other departments. (6)
- Need to close the gap between faculty and staff (4)
- Isolation makes it hard for some to meet other staff (3)
- Work with students is great (3)
- Lack of adequate support from IT, website/directory information (3)
- Lack of support/cohesion within department (2)

Transition and change

- Loss of significant numbers of faculty and staff has led to lack of quality experience for students (6)
- Uncertainty in the face of so many transitions; some functions stalled by unfilled positions (4)
- Concerns about recent lack of responsiveness and support from Human Resources (4)
- Transition of institutional knowledge/procedures has been inconsistent with people leaving and long delays in hiring their replacements (2)
- Condition of our grounds has worsened since losing full time grounds staff. (2)
- Loss of administrative support roles has been a challenge (2)
- Changing chairs of a department is like starting a whole new job (2)

Morale

- Staff Council has made a huge positive difference; helps me feel supported in my position; sense of community; gives us a voice (12)
- Morale is still a challenge; varies greatly among divisions (8)
- Working at JCU provides abundant opportunities to develop professionally and personally, expand knowledge, participate in a larger community beyond day-to-day job (6)
- Morale is improved (5)
- Positive environment and culture – value of learning goals, Ignatian heritage, collaborative and kind people (4)
- JCU FIT program was excellent! Keep it going! (2)

Institutional Priorities

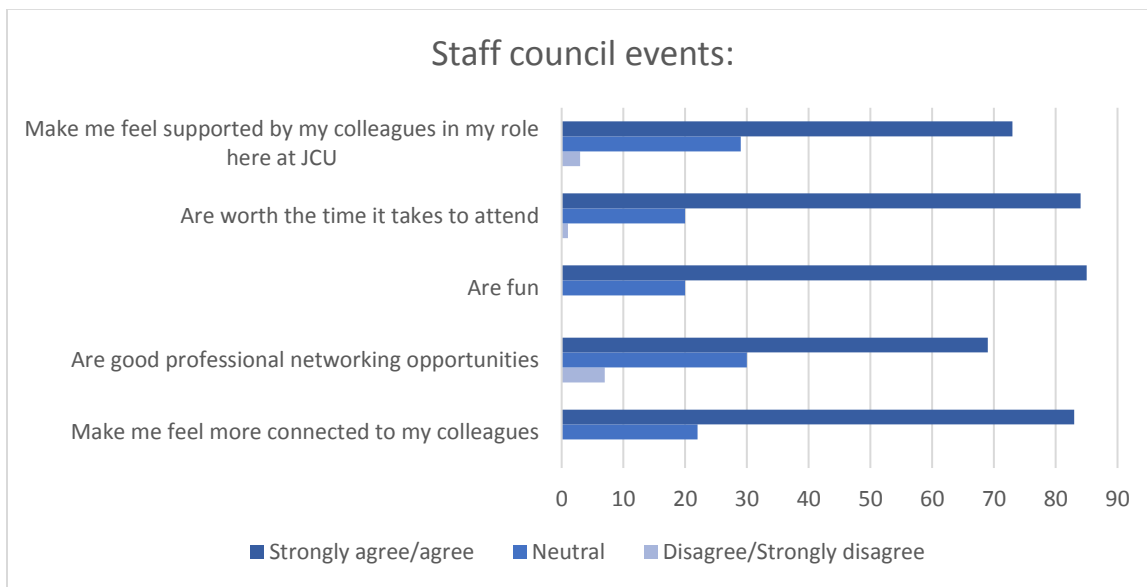
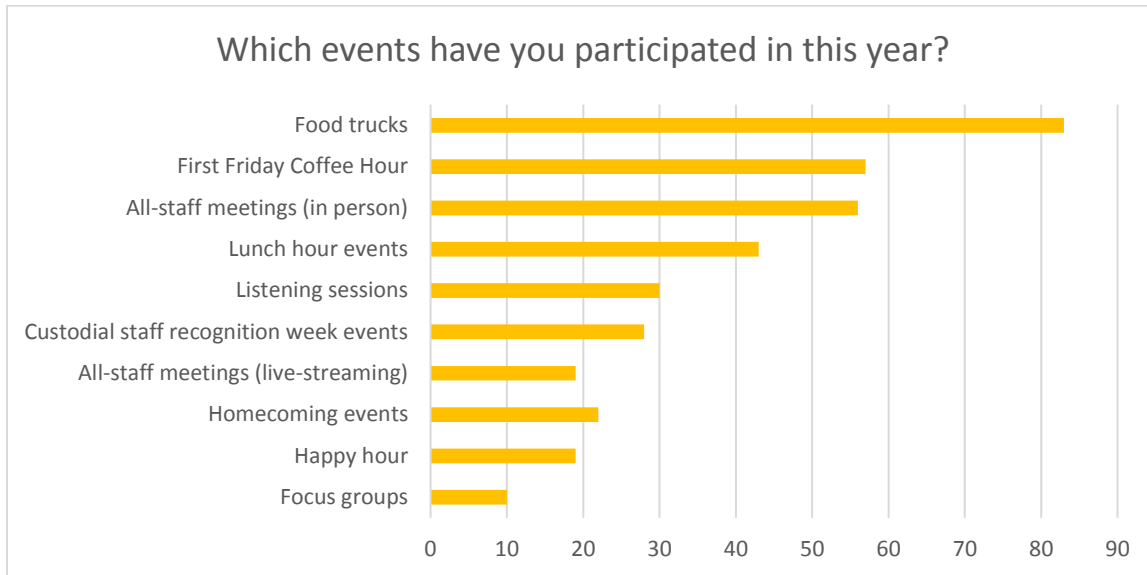
- Budget limitations make things harder on everyone; seem to be moving toward valuing technical knowledge over institutional knowledge (7)
- My department's work is not adequately understood, valued, prioritized or recognized (6)
- Institutional changes have been positive and widely accepted: physical plant, programs, designs, ways of doing things (assessment, policy review, etc.) (4)
- Positives: improved facilities and programs: marketing, new College of Business (3)
- Major funding challenges: improvements to residence halls, funds for resident ministers comparable to other Catholic schools, better student gathering spaces. (3)

- Diversity is a major challenge here (2)
- limited resources to fund initiatives that will provide/promote growth

Specific suggestions:

- Offer regular cross-training sessions for administrative assistants to share knowledge/expertise with each other.
- Online directory doesn't include room numbers for new staff/faculty. HR was aware a while ago but not updated yet.
- Assign GA's to support academic affairs staff.

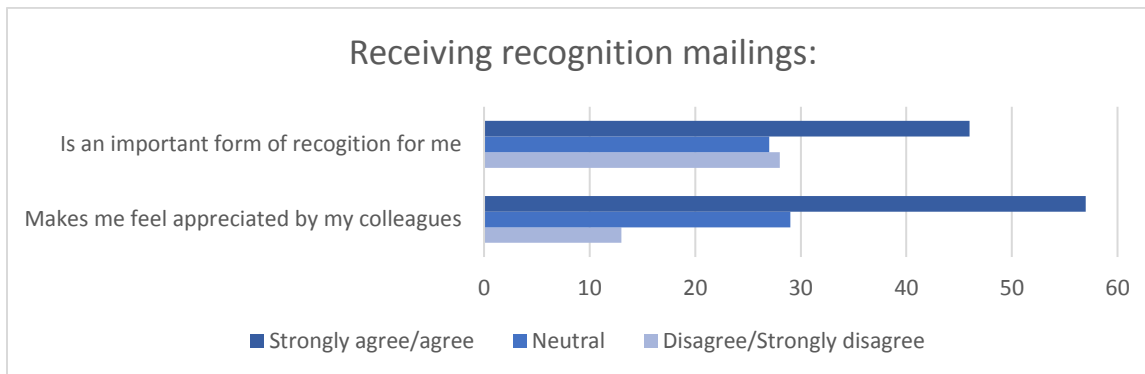
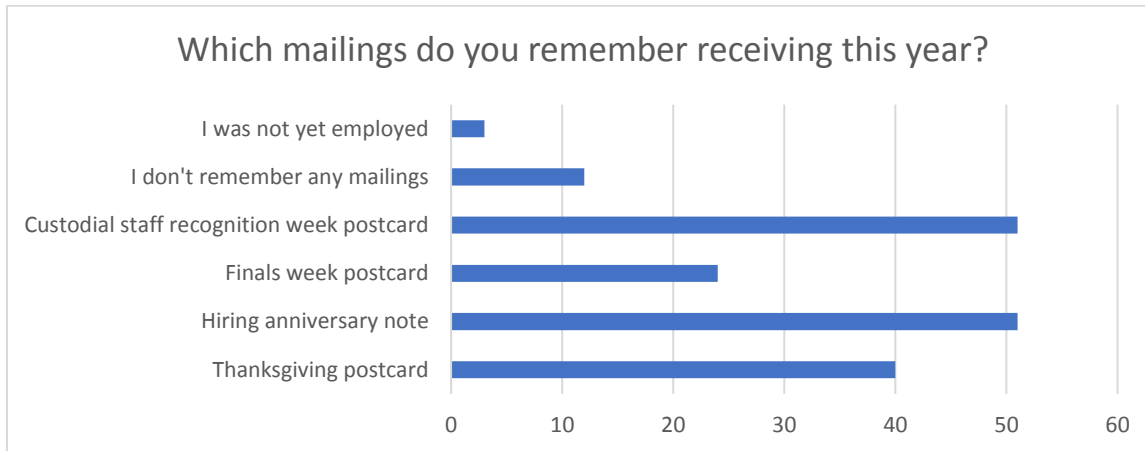
Part II: Survey - Events



Sampling of suggestions for ways to improve events and programming:

- Host a themed discussion series over the course of a year, utilizing campus content experts
- Incorporate an “on ramp” to all-staff meetings to contextualize committees, issues for new staff
- Force people to meet and mingle with others they don’t know by assigning small tasks or designing other structured activities (2)
- Reach out more to part-time employees who don’t feel as connected (3)
- Vary the days they are scheduled/hours they start for those with different schedules (4)
- More potlucks
- Better advertising
- Increase giveaways for attendance/engagement

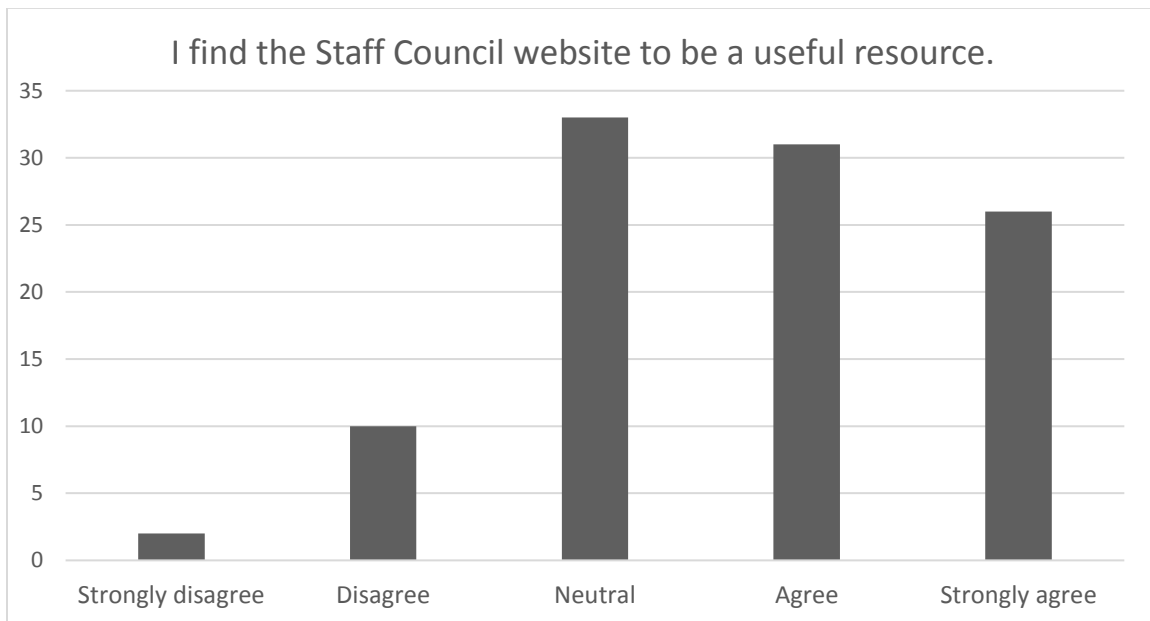
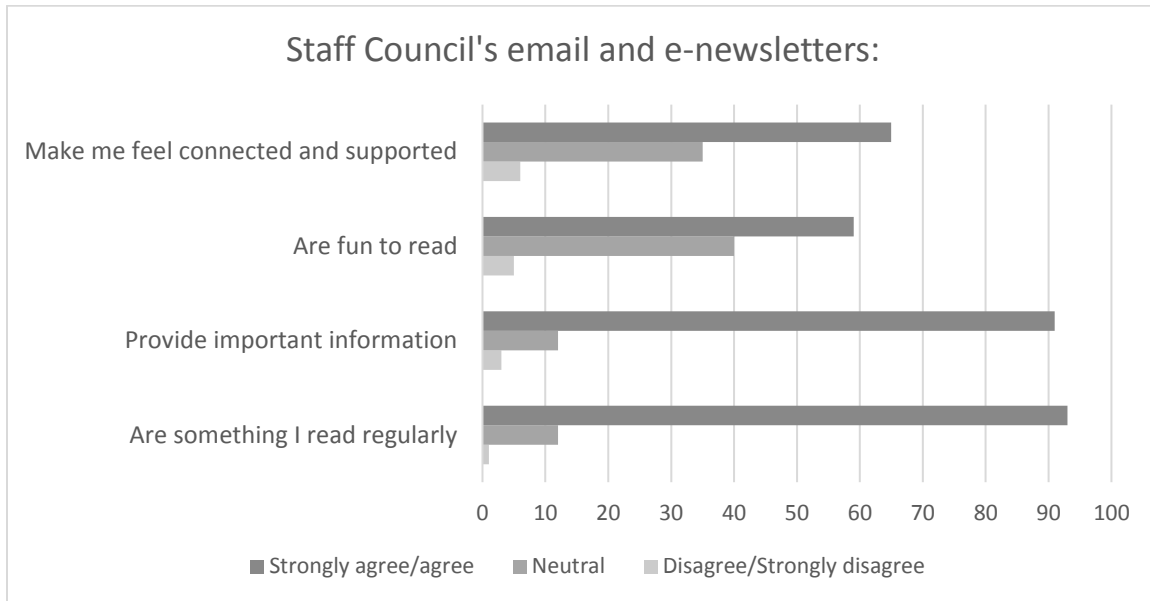
Part II: Survey - Recognition



Sample of suggestions for improving recognition:

- Promote staff recognition among faculty and students
- Give Staff Member of the Year a reserved parking space
- Do a monthly Staff Member spotlight feature in newsletter (2)
- Reach out to each department individually to solicit nominations for staff awards (2)
- Make nomination process easier
- Prevent gaps in recognition mailings (2)
- Special recognition of milestone anniversaries
- Gift cards or JCU swag
- Reach out personally to staff to provide face-to-face recognition
- Promote other programs like the Carroll STAR that allow private recognition

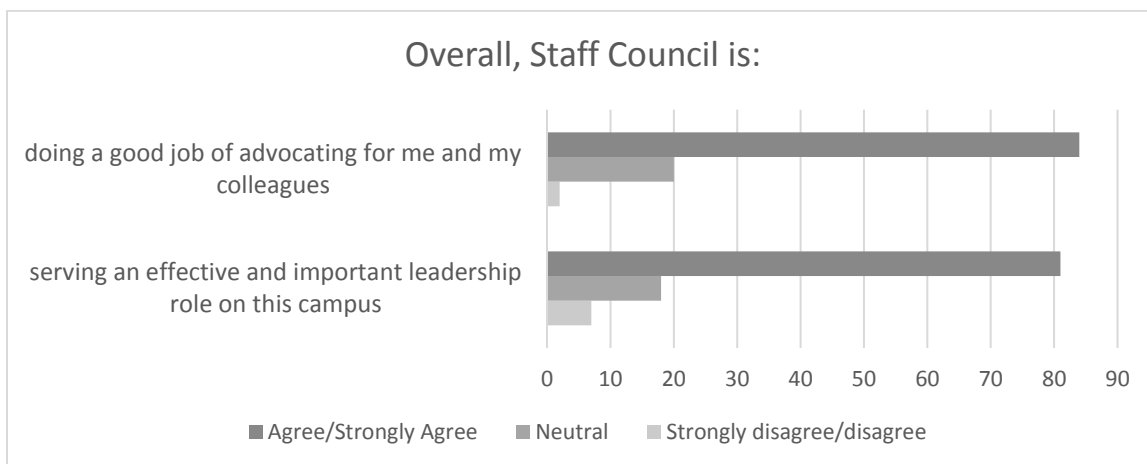
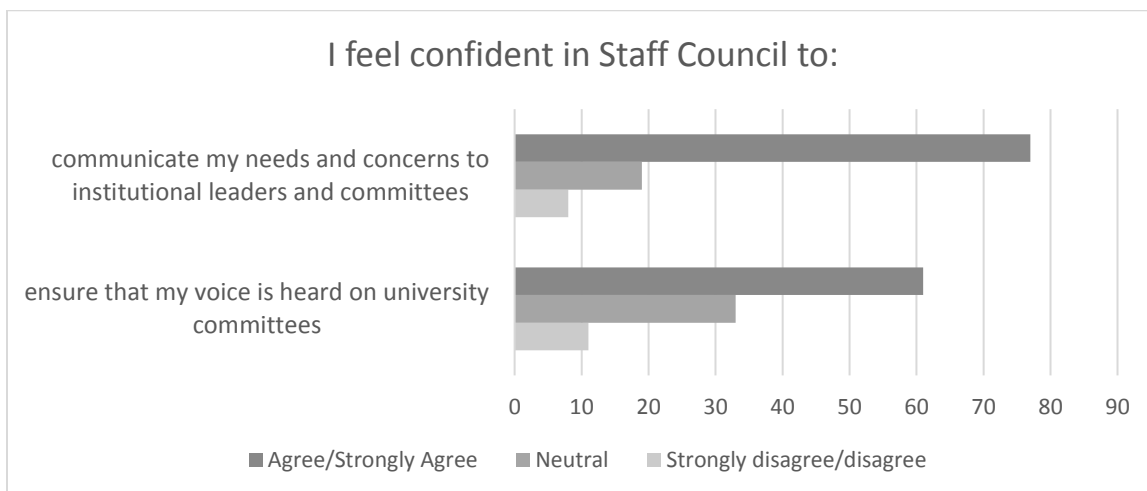
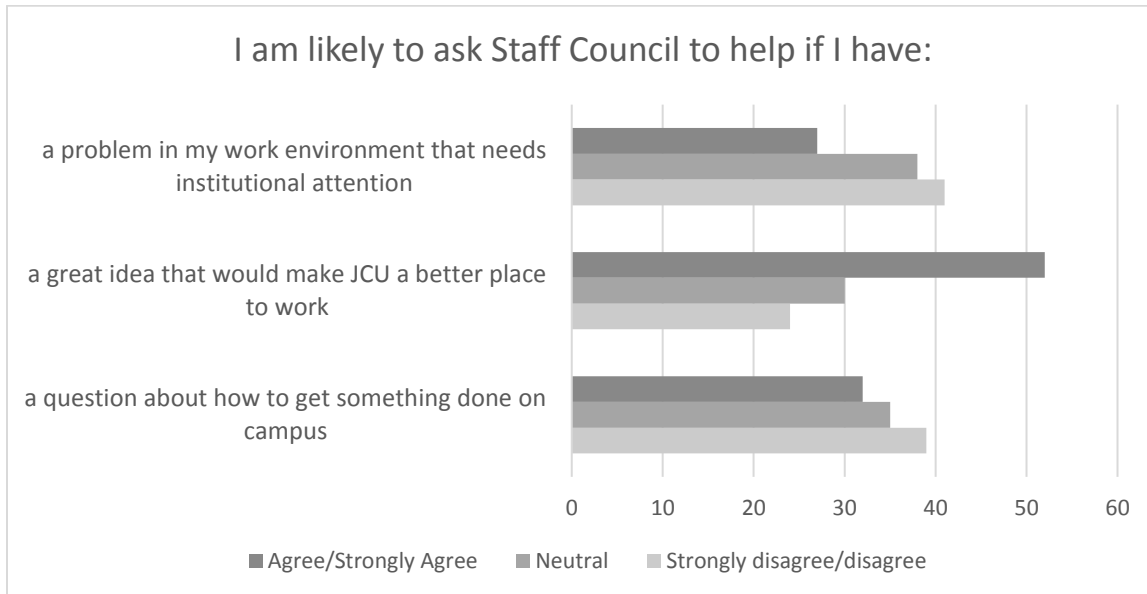
Part III. Survey - Communication



Suggestions for improvements to communication:

- Let people know when webpage is updated
- More updates/more information about what SC is working on (3)
- More timely notice of events
- Give staff members a place to share personal news/events
- Better branding so it's clearer what events are sponsored by Staff Council
- Would prefer more frequent emails with less information in each one (11)
- Would prefer less frequent emails with more/"meatier" information in each one (8)
- Email frequency is about right (87)

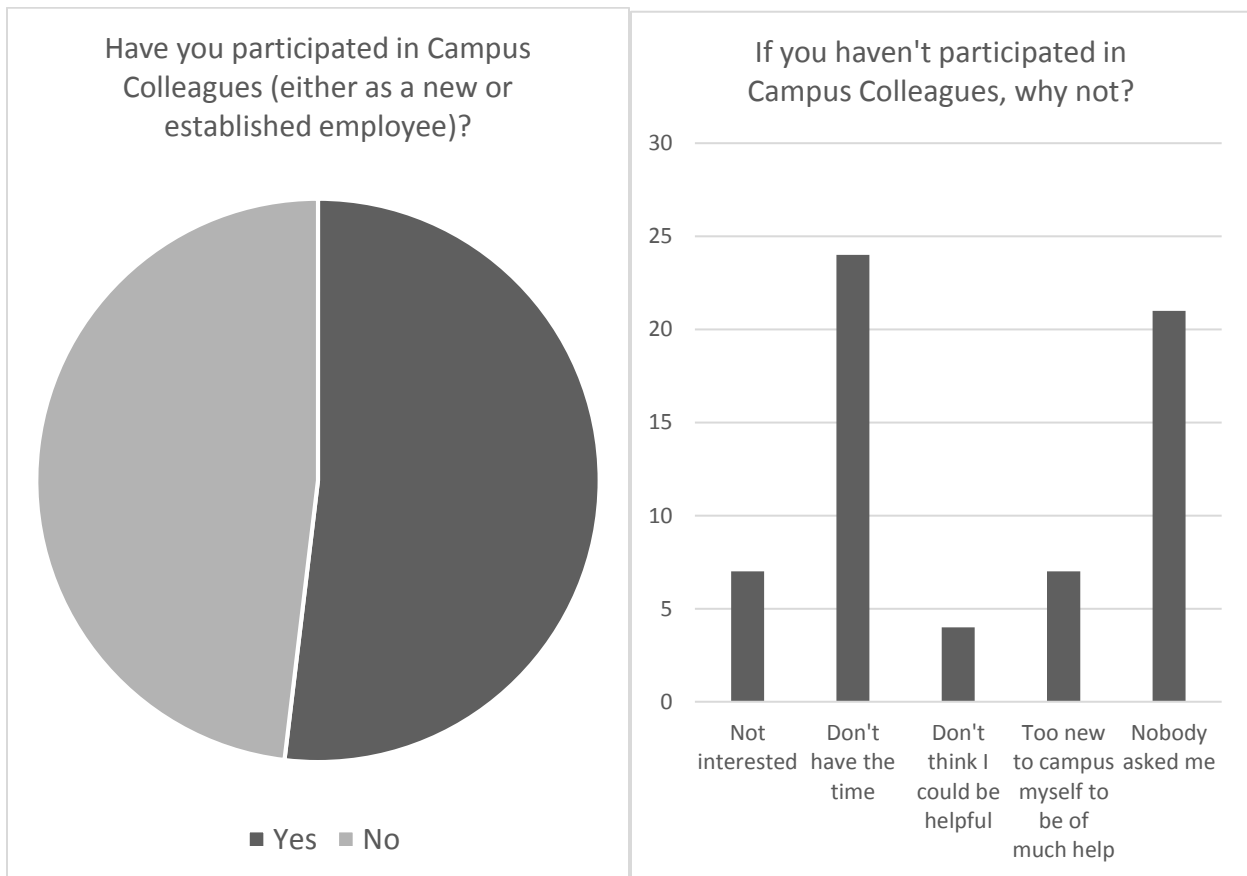
Part IV. Advocacy and Leadership



Suggestions for improvements to advocacy and leadership:

- Increase transparency: explain/promote the kinds of actions Staff Council takes to respond when/if an issue is raised by a staff member (3)
- Staff Council should have a regular presence with SLT and Board (2)
- I'm just now becoming aware of Staff Council's advocacy work (2)
- Greater advocacy for staff in academic affairs.
- Advocate for an ombudsperson – some things are beyond Staff Council's scope
- Incorporate a more thorough orientation to Staff Council in new employee onboarding
- More frequent listening sessions – these were a great idea
- Promote the virtual "suggestion box"
- Publicize JCU average salaries by job category
- Clarify when an issue would be appropriate for HR v. Staff Council
- Make Staff Council representatives sitting on committees more broadly representative of all staff on campus

Part V. Campus Colleagues



Part VI. What is Staff Council doing well?

- Fun activities, social events, and community building (30)
 - o Great opportunities for networking
 - o Variety and frequency of events is great
 - o Multiple mentions here of happy hour and food trucks
 - o Fostering social bonds between co-workers
 - o Building a more engaged campus/bringing us together
- Communications (15)
 - o Nice to know about comings/goings of staff
 - o Communication was lacking on campus before – big improvement
 - o We hope for more positive news as the university's fortunes improve
 - o Full staff meetings are a great thing
- Leadership and advocacy (14)
 - o Enhanced by the fact that the group works well together
 - o Many value having representation on committees
 - o "Articulated a wonderful response to the layoffs"
 - o Professionalism in interactions with SLT
- Inclusive attitude/welcome/equal representation (7)
- Morale (5)
 - o "The listening groups were great because staff members left the gathering actually feeling heard. The interaction with others was also very helpful to re-build a positive attitude towards JCU."
 - o "I feel that staff input is being shared, appreciated, and valued more than it has ever been."
 - o "SC is a wonderful asset for the staff."
- ERG's (4)
- It has made us feel like we have support in place if we need it. (4)
 - o listening sessions especially valuable
- Campus Colleagues program
- "Keep up the good work. Staff Council is doing a fantastic job!"
- Staff Council's "very existence and continuance" is important
- Positive energy

Part VII. Where does Staff Council have room for improvement?

Welcome/inclusiveness/engagement:

- Try to be more welcoming to part-time employees (3)
- Continue working for more staff participation
- Better targeting of what staff wants (“which I think is the point of this survey!”)
- Better selection/closer matching of Campus Colleagues
- Getting new faces to join in on activities/events/staff council leadership (4)

Events/programs:

- Offer programming for staff that is more tangible/educational than socials (4)
- More frequent and varied ERG meetings/events
- Create more opportunities for people to get to know others across departments/divisions
 - o academic affairs staff feel particularly left out/feel like second-class citizens
- Change up dates/times of activities more

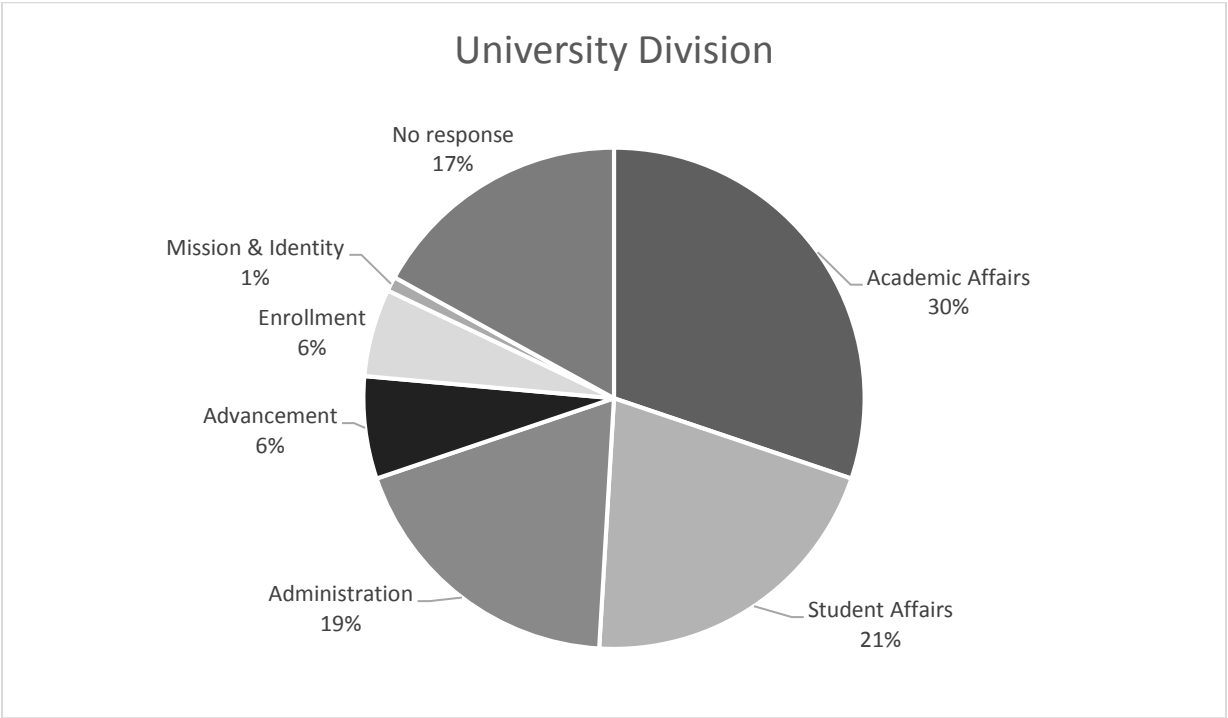
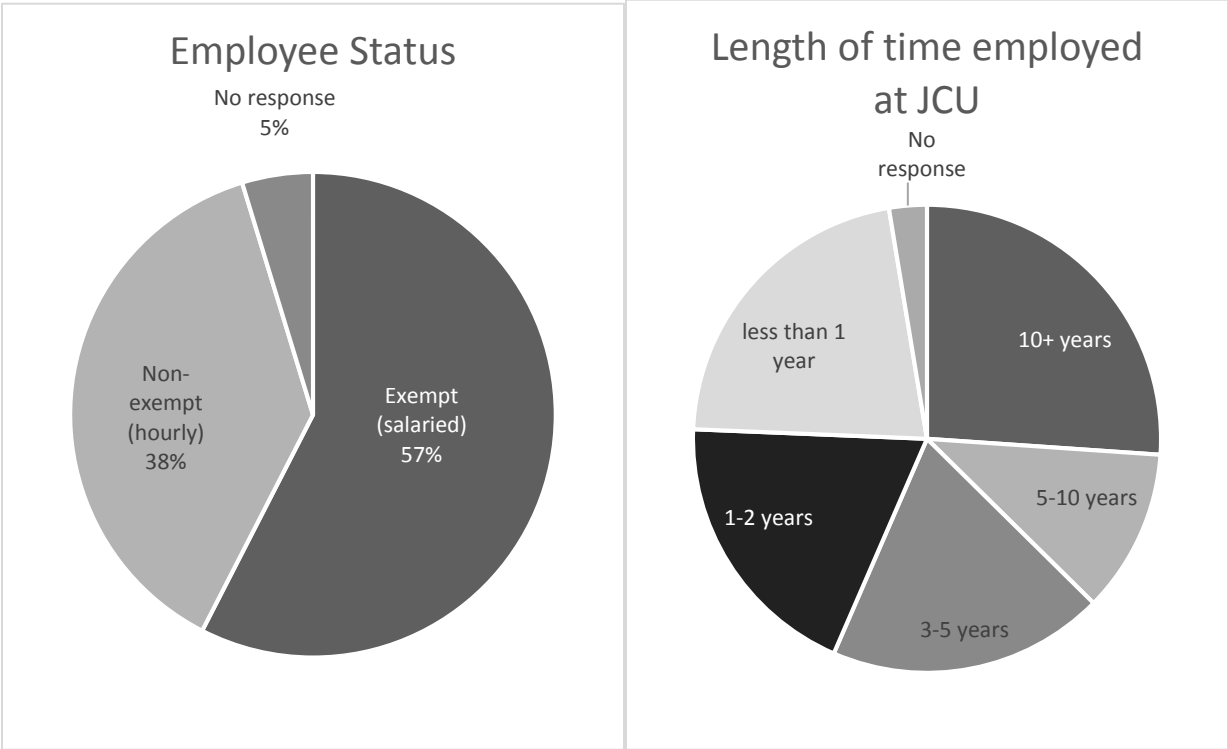
Communication:

- More frequent/better/more thorough communication (7)
 - o Better marketing of SC sponsored programs
 - o More frequent notice of staffing changes
 - o Weekly ‘staff profile’ to help people put new names/faces together
 - o Please pass along (in an email) what is learned on the various university committees

Advocacy:

- More transparency and focus about advocacy with leadership for staff (3)
- Educate the leadership on the council’s purpose and activities (more than a “social group.”)
- Staff Council should release more position statements, similar to the statement released on the issue of operational excellence. It was beautifully written, and I think that it is important for staff members to openly see Staff Council advocating on their behalf when it comes to important issues.
- “The university would benefit from recognizing and legitimizing the committee in a fundamental, institutional manner.”
- “Staff Council should no longer be utilized as a device to share bad news with the staff in order to soften the blow and keep the rank and file calm. The council continues to be the only real voice the staff has on campus.”

Part VIII. Respondent Demographics



Part IX. Rough analysis of some data points:

Non-exempt employees give us higher marks across the board.

On measures of Staff Council's effectiveness in advocacy, community-building and morale-building, non-exempt employees gave, on average, 20% higher scores than exempt employees. Scores from this category of employees were higher on every measure. This may suggest that those who hold less formal institutional power see Staff Council more positively than those who have other forms of access or formal authority.

Our newest and oldest employees give us higher scores than the group in the middle.

On the same measures as above, the newest hires gave Staff Council the highest scores, while the lowest scores came from the group hired between 3 and 5 years ago.

- 10+ years = 0.4% higher scores than average
- 5-10 years = 9.4% higher scores than average
- 3-5 years = 11.7% lower scores than average
- 1-3 years = 9.7% lower scores than average
- Less than 1 year = 15.8% higher scores than average

These numbers suggest that Staff Council is viewed less positively by those employees whose term of employment at JCU has been defined by a period of institutional accreditation and budget crisis. These numbers may reflect overall morale among this group of employees. It is worth comparing with morale measures in the Great Colleges survey to see if this is consistent.

Student Affairs scores us a little lower than do other divisions.

On the same measures, the lowest scores came from those staff members who chose not to self-identify by division (31% lower than average scores). This was the question on the survey with the lowest response rate – fully 17% of respondents chose not to self-identify by division, perhaps due to a desire for greater anonymity.

Mission & Identity, Enrollment and Advancement divisions, whose scores overall were generally positive, also had very few respondents who self-identified on the survey as members of those divisions. Of the three divisions with large respondent pools, the measures of Staff Council's advocacy, community-building and morale-building were as follows:

- Academic Affairs (32) = 3.98% higher scores than average
- Administration (20) = 10.97% higher scores than average
- Student Affairs (22) = 9.28% lower scores than average