

For UPEISU Executive Committee

REPORT on the outgoing council

By John Ployer, VPFA



Introduction

Given the general perception that the 2017-2018 year was damaging to the UPEISU's reputation, and given the need to constantly review and learn how to make the UPEISU experience enjoyable for those involved, I decided it would be appropriate to survey the 2017-2018 Council. The purpose of this survey was to learn the general feelings of Council, including areas which they feel the organization needs to further improve on, and to understand the council perspective on more specific issues relevant to our job as executives. Our job as executive is to listen to the concerns of other members of the organization and to address those concerns with action when reasonable.

The Exit Survey was written for the purpose of creating a report where recommendations could be made. My recommendations are based on my own opinion after reviewing the responses. Due to the confidential nature of the survey, I summarized and generalized written answers to the best of my abilities. Recommendations could be either specific changes, or general directions we as an executive should take.

Methods

In late May and early June of 2018, I wrote a survey to be sent out to all members of the 2017-2018 Council. This survey was written on Google Forms and circulated via our DOC, Sweta Daboo, who posted the survey of the 2017-2018 Council Facebook page. The survey was made available from the first week of June until the 26th of June when I began writing this report.

The survey itself consisted of twenty questions, covering a wide array of question formats and topics. Eleven of the questions were graded on a 1-5/strongly disagree-strongly agree scale, making for quick answers which gauge general feeling. Other formats used were a yes/no/maybe style, and several short and long answer questions which provided some in depth and interesting answers for us to consider.

Results

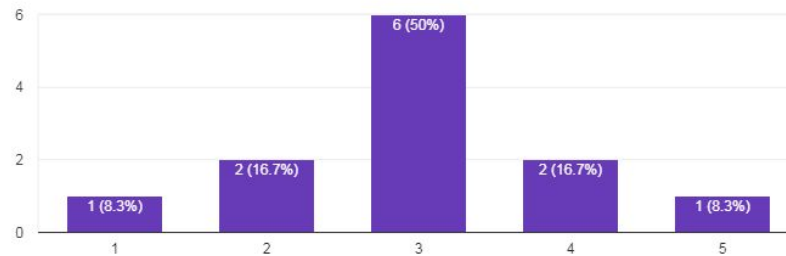
Over the course of the two weeks or so that the survey was made available in June of 2018 we had 12 responses, out of a total size of council in 2017-2018 of 27, which is a response rate of 44.4%. Given the small size of the total population and a difficulty getting high response rates of previous UPEISU surveys, I determined that 44.4% turnout is large enough to give us a reasonably accurate insight to the thoughts of the whole council.

Some questions could be neatly arranged by their relative similarity, as there were several sections devoted to a certain topic. Other questions really stood alone. For this section, I divided the results by topic. Some topics had many questions surrounding and some had only one, meaning the amount of results vary greatly.

Basics

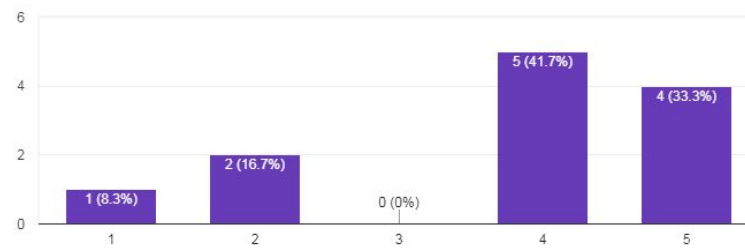
The amount of work I did was appropriate for that position.

12 responses



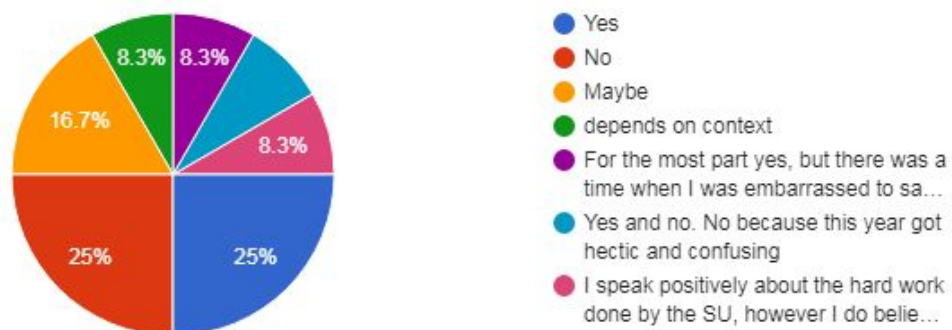
This position provided me with experience I feel will help me in the future.

12 responses



Do you speak positively about your experience at the SU to others?

12 responses



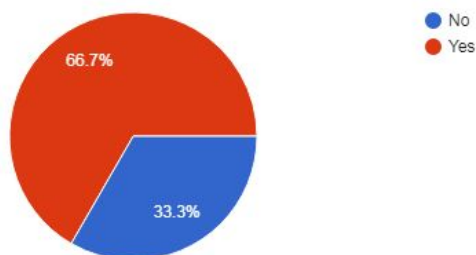
When asked whether they speak positively about their experiences at the SU, the results were more mixed with nearly half being a maybe or some personalized response which reflects mixed feelings.

Orientation

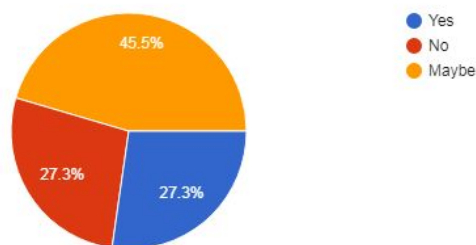
The third question, regarding orientation, was a multi choice checkbox type of question asking whether or not orientation educated them in various fields. This question in full can be found on Appendix 1. The three most common answers were how council meetings were conducted, the relationship between councillors and executives, and confidentiality.

Councillor Initiatives

Did you engage in a councillor initiative during your term
12 responses



Do you believe the initiative you did or the other initiatives you heard about were effective?
11 responses

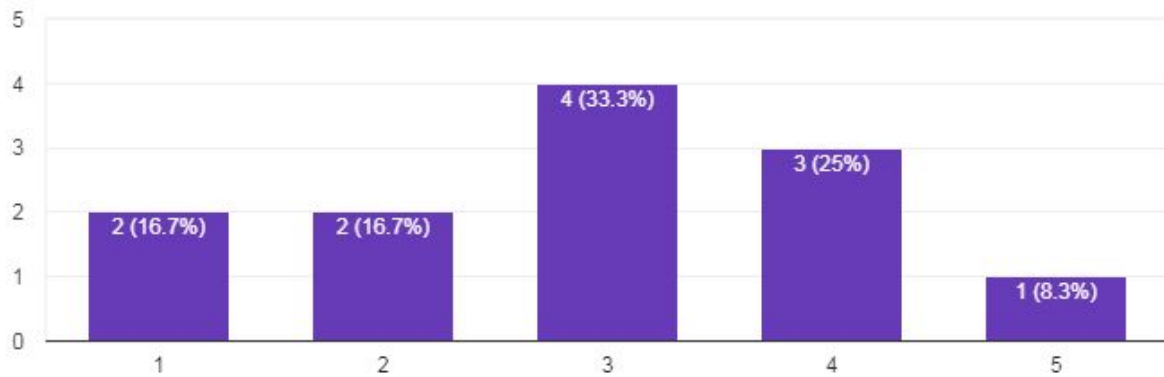


What I found most interesting about the Initiatives questions were the long answer sections. Here i received some interesting about how the respondents felt about initiatives. One person gave the opinion that if council and the executive inspire confidence in the individual members and promote a sense of purpose, then naturally more councillors will do initiatives. Another notable opinion was that the SU should do nothing because we should not have to tell someone to do their job. Finally it was noted that councillor initiatives might be more effective if the types of initiatives were more diverse, thus appealing to a wider range of students.

Colleagues

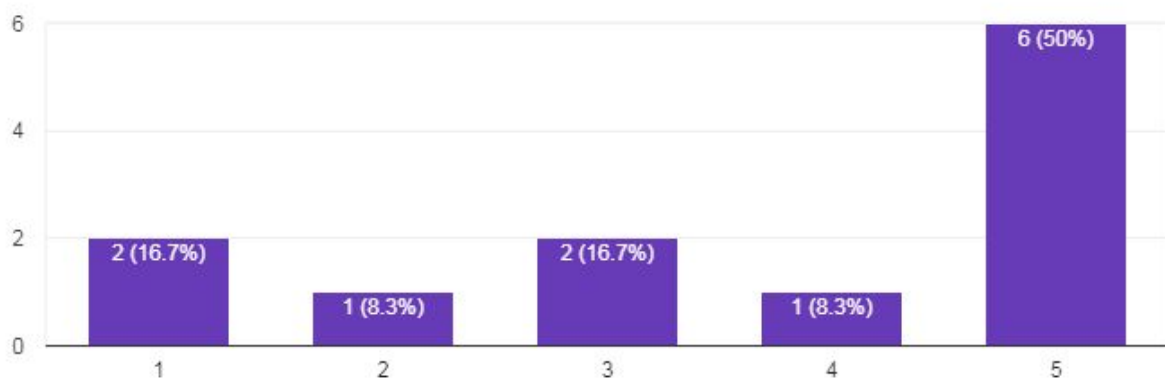
My colleagues made me feel safe and respected while at council activities.

12 responses



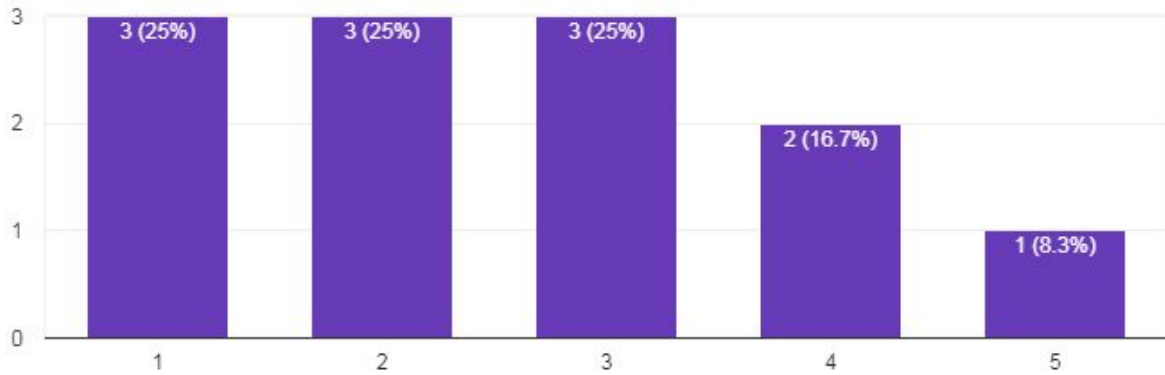
I made friends with my colleagues while I was employed by the SU.

12 responses



Any issues had between colleagues were resolved quickly if they occurred.

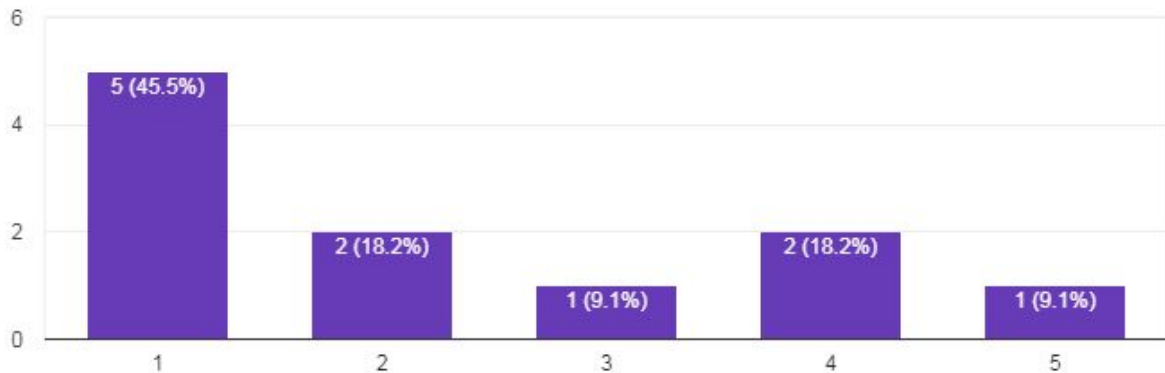
12 responses



When asked about whether or not issues were resolved quickly, the prevailing opinion was no. Out of the respondents, 9 out of the 12 were either unsatisfied or indifferent. The idea that issues are not resolved quickly or to the respondents' satisfaction is corroborated in the more detailed long answer questions.

The relationships between individuals Councilors had a positive result on the effectiveness of council.

11 responses



We receive another negative response in the following question regarding whether or not relationships between individuals Councilors had a positive result on the effectiveness of council.

When reading the comments about relationships within the SU a few trends start to appear. The word “clique” was used by more than one person to describe the ways and attitudes of a few students. When the word clique was not used, the major complaints councillors had about social interactions still seemed to stem from the fact that council was made up of cliques.

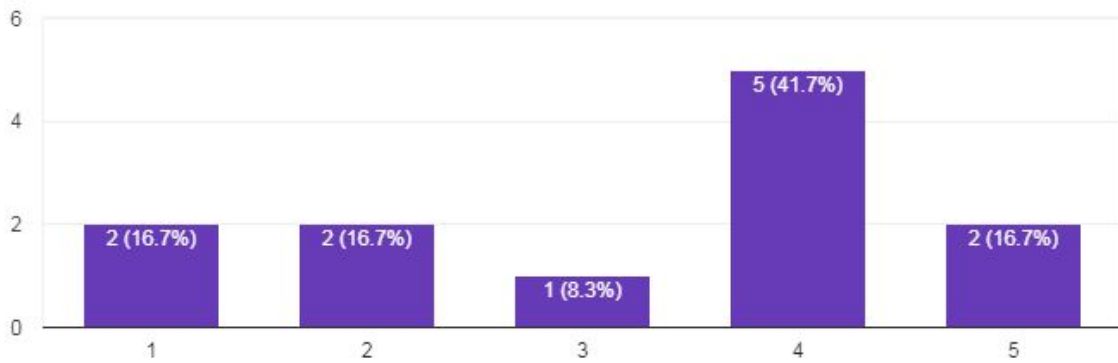
Another recurring concern brought up by respondents was that there appeared to be many conflicts of interests among council members, including personal and familiar relationships. These relationships created problems, were not recognized, and were never resolved during the year. All seven responses mentioned cliques or conflicts of interests as problems in one way or another.

Targeting particularly the executives, there were comments singling out the 2017-2018 executives as getting too involved in the “drama,” or as I see it the negative interactions between those within a certain clique and those who are not. Most worrying was the comment that executives had been both rude and disrespectful towards certain council members. Though without example, one comment was critical of the attitudes the executive at the time displayed towards certain councillors.

Management

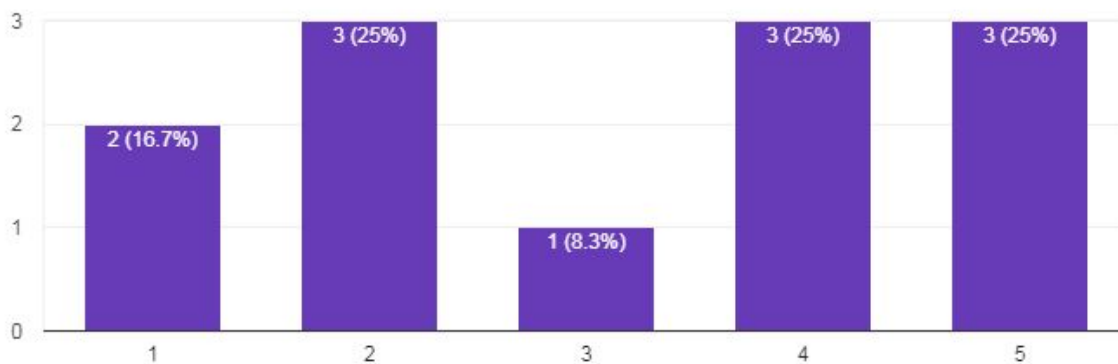
The chair was competent at their job.

12 responses



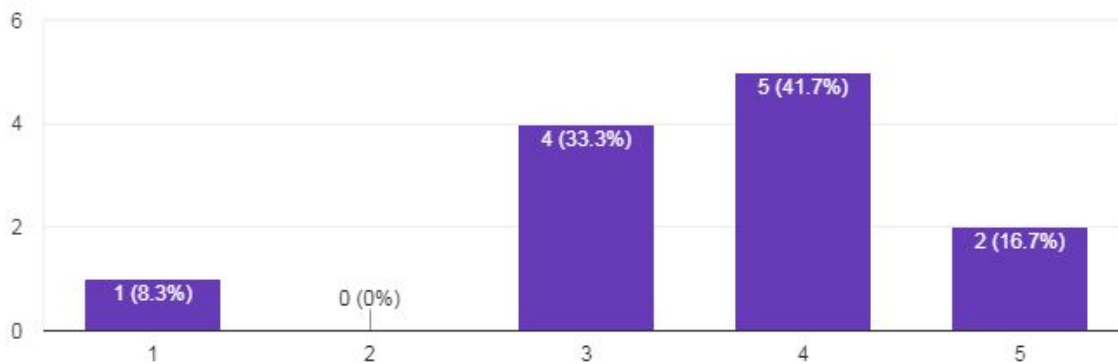
If I had any problem I felt safe going to someone else in the union for guidance.

12 responses



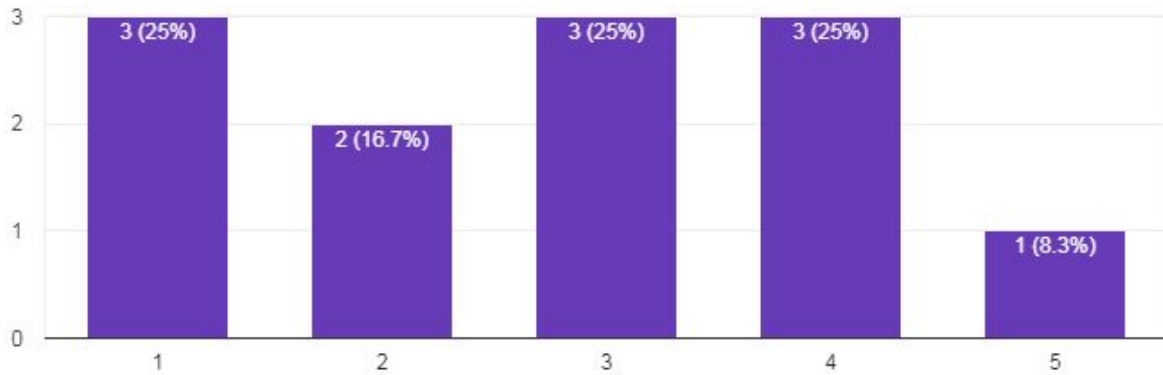
I felt committee chairs were competent.

12 responses



I was consulted about changes or decisions which affected my constituency by those proposing the changes, and felt listened to.

12 responses



The results on whether or not councillors felt consulted and listened to in regards to changes which affect their offices were mixed. Though this result might depend on how many changes actually occurred to certain offices throughout the year, the results still tell that a considerable number of councillors felt they were not listened to or consulted.

At the end of the management section we have much longer and open ended questions regarding the relationship between councillors and the executive. The answers provided were diverse and offer some items which could become actionable. To summarize quickly, these lengthy answers could be generalized as:

- Orientation needs to be improved to ensure better results in the future
- Do not lose sight of what the Union is trying to achieve
- Rethink the format of banquet, or executive behaviour at banquet: it could be seen as “cringy”
- Do not be so hard on ourselves, this year could be seen as a “bad year” and the hopes and expectations for the new council and executive are more positive than last

Recommendations

In this section I will recommend measure that the SU should undertake to recognize and address the results of this survey. I understand that twelve results may not define the exact feelings of all of council, especially with very diverse viewpoints, but I hope we can draw some useful conclusions which we can use to improve the morale of the 2018-2019 Council.

Basics

- Councillors should be taught early how much work should be expected of them, and in what forms.
- We should encourage, if not teach, our councillors to be spokespeople of the Union in their life outside of council and to the student body.

Orientation

- Based on the result of the orientation question found in appendix 1, most topics need to be taught better, but the worst performing: the roles of a councillor, SU policies, fiduciary duties, and SU services should be given special attention when planning orientation.

Councillor Initiatives

- The fact that many councillors do not know if initiatives are effective or not needs to be addressed in one way or another
- Diverse and creative forms of initiatives should be explored and encouraged
- How much help the executives can and should give a councillor trying to do an initiative should be discussed and decided on
- As an executive we must form a team the council can get behind and be proud of, assuming that this will make councillors want to do initiatives

Colleagues

- Treating others with respect should really be stressed, this includes both in council and elsewhere in SU life

-
- We have to look into conflict resolution between colleagues to ensure they are solved quickly and efficiently
 - The ethics of personal relationships between councillors should be touched on
 - Efforts need to be made to “break down the walls” and encourage friendship outside of cliques
 - As executives we need to be mindful of the role we have in relation to council, and at all times remain professional and respectful

Management

- It needs to be made clear that councillors have a place to go if they have a problem within the SU range
- The behaviour of executives needs to be kept in line just as much as it is in councillors, even minor unprofessional events can have a huge impact on the perception and morale of councillors
- Personal problems need to be put aside, how exactly that can be done i don't know much it is a major theme of the section
- Executive behaviour at the banquet was judged heavily and should be consider when at the next banquet

Conclusion

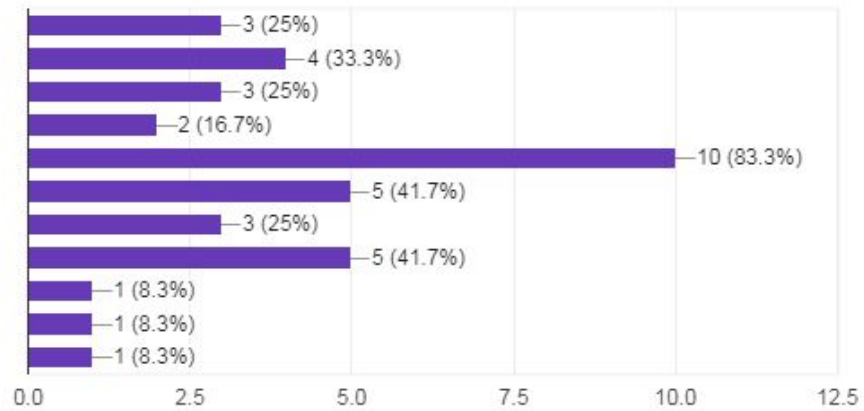
To conclude, the results in a lot of sections are very mixed which can make recommendations difficult. I believe we still found some important items within the councillor experience that we can work to improve, mostly centring around orientation and improving the social attitude of council. Feel free to take the results of the survey however you like.

Last year was really a bad year, so many answers felt more like rants. You could feel the frustration the councillors had with this year and I hope we can make this year much better by addressing their actionable concerns.

Appendix 1

Do you believe Orientation gave you enough information on these topics?
Select all which apply.

12 responses



Topics (top to bottom): my role as a councillor, the governance of the SU, the policies of the SU, my fiduciary duties, how council meetings are conducted, confidentiality, the services of the SU, the relationship between councillors and the executive, not enough information in any of these fields, i had to figure it out as i went along, I was not able to attend orientation.