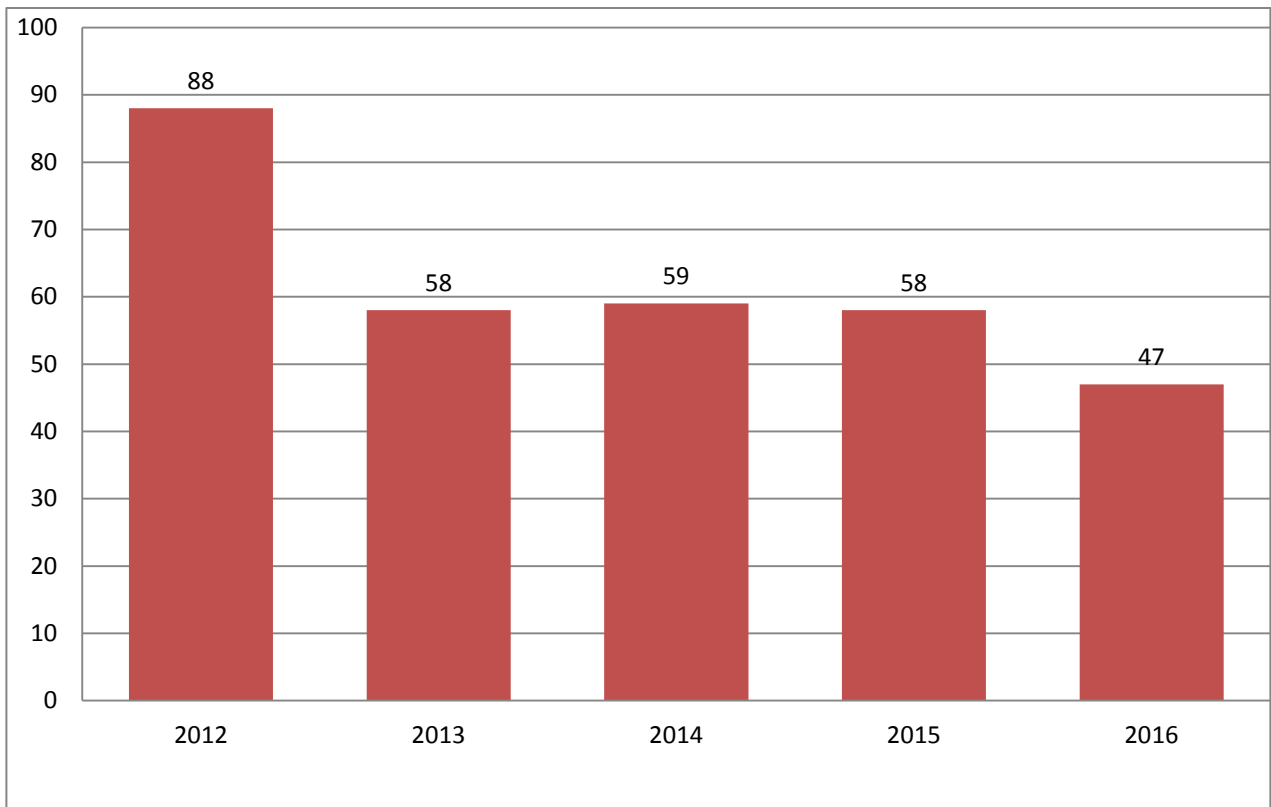


# Senator Survey 2016

A survey of Senators was conducted in June and July 2016. The results were broadly consistent with those of previous surveys but the number of participants fell.

**Survey Participation by Year  
2012-2016**



**Q1. If you attended all or most (6-9) Senate meetings this year... What factor most influenced your attendance?  
(Skipped question: 4)**

	<b>Per Cent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Interest	4.7	2
Duty	39.5	17
Learn about University developments and directions	46.5	20
Understand impact of Senate decisions	2.3	1
Raise issues and concerns	4.7	2
Other (see comments)	2.3	1

**Comments**

I am very involved and interested in university governance

Attended also out of interest. Duty is not enough to engage a colleague.

We must make Senate work - collegiality in decision making

And also duty

Actually, I attended Senate, influenced by all of the factors listed above.

Items 1-3 above all apply

I also have a strong interest in the diverse voices of the university community having the opportunity to be heard and impact the direction and decisions of Senate.

I attended Senate... I found attending Senate very rewarding as it provided me with a different context to view developments within my department and school.

**Q2. If you attend 5 or fewer meetings of Senate in 2015-2016... What factor most influenced your attendance?  
(Skipped question: 37)**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Other commitments interfered	80.0	8
Reviewed documents and had no concerns	-	-
Items not always interesting or too routine	-	-
Items not always relevant to my unit or group	-	-
Health	-	-
Other (see comments)	2	20.0

**Comments**

Attended more than 5 meeting

I think I attended all meetings and if I missed one when I was out of town

Administration would like to bring issues that must be discussed - yet Senate does not have a full discussion for Faculty. Senate leadership does not realize that faculty input is important.

Many of the above: routine business, Senate gets hijacked by personal interests....

I am guessing that I attended 6 or more but I'm not sure. Anyway, I was teaching on Thursdays in the winter term, otherwise I'd have been there more often.

I'm pretty sure I attended 6, but in case I missed more than I thought, I believe one absence was due to a work commitment, and another was due to a family emergency.

**Q3. Which of the following best describes your participation at Senate?  
(Skipped question: 0)**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Participated in discussions	23.4	11
Followed discussions with interest but did not feel my contributions were necessary	61.7	29
Did not always feel knowledgeable enough about items	2.1	1
Did not always feel confident enough to contributed	6.4	3
Felt unsure about rules or how to get on a speaker's list	-	-
Other	6.4	3

**Comments**

I think it is most important to hear from Deans and faculty colleagues. I consider my role to be one of figuring out how best to respond to concerns, issues, ideas.

Both for this and for attendance, I think if we can look at the organization of the agenda so that as much gets into the consent agenda as possible, and routine reports are minimized as far as possible, so that the maximum time (and as early in the meeting as possible) is spent on issues that do matter and need discussion. Perhaps a separate message with the consent agenda items to Senators would help, making it more likely that nothing that needed discussion would slip through the cracks, and so more could be added. In addition, routine matters could be moved to the end of the agenda, with major issues brought up front, so that we can ensure full discussion, and if we run out of time it is the routine that gets short shrift.

Again, no one response is accurate responses 1-4 inclusive all apply

Had considerable interest in some of the issues, others were more of a routine informative nature - however I like to speak only when I believe there is tangible value and impact to my words - there is too much 'noise' from people on Senate which I believe creates a certain apathy to those who may have important things to say.

**Q4. Do the documents provided by Committees and others convey the necessary and appropriate information to enable good governance and decision-making?  
(Skipped question: 1)**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Always	39.1	18
Usually	56.5	26
Seldom	4.4	2
Never	-	-
Not sure / No opinion	-	-

**Comments**

There is the usual potential for conflict between academic governance and BoG governance, as well as between Senate Executive's jurisdiction and Senate's jurisdiction. These are unlikely to ever go away, but as long as Senate is committed to its job it is unlikely to ever feel that the university is governed sufficiently collegially.

The level of detail could be moderated with no detriment to conveying substance accurately.

Documents earlier to really read and digest the issues for good governance

Just the volume of reading makes it challenging to be as prepared as I'd like

Here the problem is too much. We need access to this, but the agenda packages are so large that it is often difficult to work through and suddenly important things pop up. I don't know exactly how to deal with this, but perhaps a three layer, rather than two layer, agenda is the answer. At present we have a summary agenda on top, followed by the full agenda which usually runs to 100 pages or more. Perhaps (and I get this means more work for the Secretariat, sorry...) a short form agenda in the middle, that runs perhaps 10-20 pages with the important parts of the full agenda, linked to the full documentation in the appendices?

But only if you know how to read it. might be good to have synopsis of what might be contentious...

**Q5. I feel knowledgeable about the following  
(Skipped question: 1)**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure / No Opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>
Senate's relationship to other governing bodies	47.8 (22)	43.5 (20)	4.4 (2)	-	4.4 (2)	46
Academic resources and allocations	28.3 (13)	52.8 (24)	15.2 (7)	-	4.4 (2)	46
Postsecondary education policy	23.9 (11)	60.9 (28)	8.7 (4)	2.2 (1)	4.4 (2)	46
Senate's mandates and major responsibilities	52.2 (24)	43.5 (20)	2.2 (1)	-	2.2 (1)	46

It would be helpful to have one Senate session a year dedicated to the external PSE landscape.

My understanding is rooted in the observations made during the Senate meetings and through associated documentation provided...perhaps a 'somewhat agree' for many of these is more appropriate as I am not a full-time part of the university 'boots on the ground' community.

The categories permitted above for the responses are not relevant/reflective/representative of the questions asked

**Q6. The University Academic Plan is intended to guide academic planning and define academic priorities. How would you rate the following in terms of helping to understand and advanced UAP goals and monitor progress?  
(Skipped question: 1)**

	<b>Very helpful</b>	<b>Somewhat helpful</b>	<b>Not helpful</b>	<b>Not sure / No opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>
Committee reports	39.6 (17)	58.7 (27)	4.4 (2)	-	46
Faculty planning reports / APPRC overviews	28.3 (13)	60.8 (28)	8.7 (4)	2.2 (1)	46
Vice-Presidents' reports	50.0 (23)	37.0 (17)	13.0 (6)	-	46
Rationales in support of proposals	39.1 (18)	47.8 (22)	10.9 (5)	2.2 (1)	46
Final Assessment Reports for Cyclical Program Reviews	1.4 (8)	58.7 (27)	17.4 (8)	6.5 (3)	46

**Comments**

We always want and need more information about planning on the Markham campus, as well as about the allocation of both resources and decision-making between the Senate (academic) and the administrative sides of the university, among other examples.

Quality assurance does not seem to be a topic for discussion so it is difficult to know what Senate thinks.

Usually get information from other sources as well

Information about major planning initiatives (e.g. Markham campus) somewhat sparse.

There is insufficient time to discuss the more important issues and documentation rarely seems to deal with the repercussions in any detail - though these are likely often only poorly understood by anyone I would guess

They say these things, but language is slippery

Categories allowed for responses are not indicative of the questions asked

**Q7. It has been suggested that time be allotted at each meeting for discussion of University Academic Plan objectives and implementation. What other items of business – continuing or new -- should be prioritized in 2016-2017?  
(Skipped question: 25)**

Markham campus planning	9
Resource allocations / SHARP model	3
External PSE landscape / learning best practices in innovation from other institutions	2
Liberal arts (in crisis) / Value of Humanities and social justice	2
Quality assurance and learning outcomes / perceptions of (poor) academic quality	2
Research intensification / metrics / VPRI initiatives	2
Student initiatives / student experience	2
Academic governance	1
Admission standards (who / what drives them?)	1
Kudos	1
Presidential search	1
Strategic directions for York	1
UAP action plan	1



**We value your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to share your thoughts on any aspect of Senate and your experience as a Senator in the space below.**  
**(Skipped question: 33)**

## Comments

By comparison with many other institutions, our Senate has an important role and it is taken seriously by Senators. I believe that it should have an even more primary role, as the academic mission is the primary mission of the university. But in any case I am honored to be a part of it.

I sometimes wonder if we expect too much of Senate as the place for debate - there are other venues and should perhaps be more venues, reserving Senate as a more formal space to introduce new priorities, hear from committees and vote on motions, and receive and discuss updates from senior administration -

Senate Committees are even more Administration heavy than Senate (complaining Senators please note!). One should return to pre "restructuring" levels, with ex-Officio meaning "non voting". We should have another go on "perestroika"!

Let us have a more open Senate, transparent and have decisions made at Senate

Tension between protection of "collegial governance" and efficiency, need to move forward

Too much time is given to agendas of some Senators.

Senate meetings are always well conducted with materials being sent ahead in a very timely fashion. I appreciate the transparency of the information being shared.

Being a student senator has been a fantastic experience. I feel much more connected to the university as a whole and am honoured to have been able to contribute to the planning process.

It was disappointing/dispiriting that the same few people dominated the comments from the floor each time. Their comments did not reflect the diversity of views, and tended to be negative regardless of the issue at hand.

Some of the most important issues facing the university receive minimal time for discussion, the issue of academic freedom for example

It has been an interesting first year for me. I have learned a lot about how the university sets priorities related to academic planning. I have gained a new appreciation for the issues faced by many departments across the university.

I have enjoyed my time on Senate. I do feel that the loudest few voices on the Senate have negatively impacted the Senate's ability to have an inclusive and robust conversation about nearly any topic. While the floor is open to all members, there are those who truly appear that they just would like to be heard for the sake of hearing their own voice where the stated opinions are expected and repetitive. I believe there would be value in having a forum outside of the Senate (not the Listserv, but perhaps a closed online community or message board), that allows for a continuous discussion outside of scheduled meetings. This allows for real time clarification of issues, thought

gathering and fluent discussion about important matters without having to wait a month. Sometimes issues are quite pressing, or sometimes Senate meetings create the need for quick or continued response to issues - allowing such a forum would not only provide a space and time for all Senators to gather thoughts, provide opinion, and respond accordingly, but also would address any potential timidity or apprehension that Senators may have in speaking in the meetings. In theory, this would also allow the Chair to stick to predetermined schedules and end times for meetings where it appears an issue has a longer than expected slate of speakers. Perhaps there are reasons not to do this (who will moderate, create, manage?), but the potential worry about length rants that may or may not be deemed inappropriate should not be a reason not to do it - in fact, all the more reason to shift that content from the Senate floor to an online community. Just a thought. Beyond that, I am happy to feel like a contributing member of Senate, albeit often as an active listener and voter, and I intend to continue to represent York Alumni to the best of my ability in that seat which has been granted to me. Thanks for the opportunity to provide my feedback.

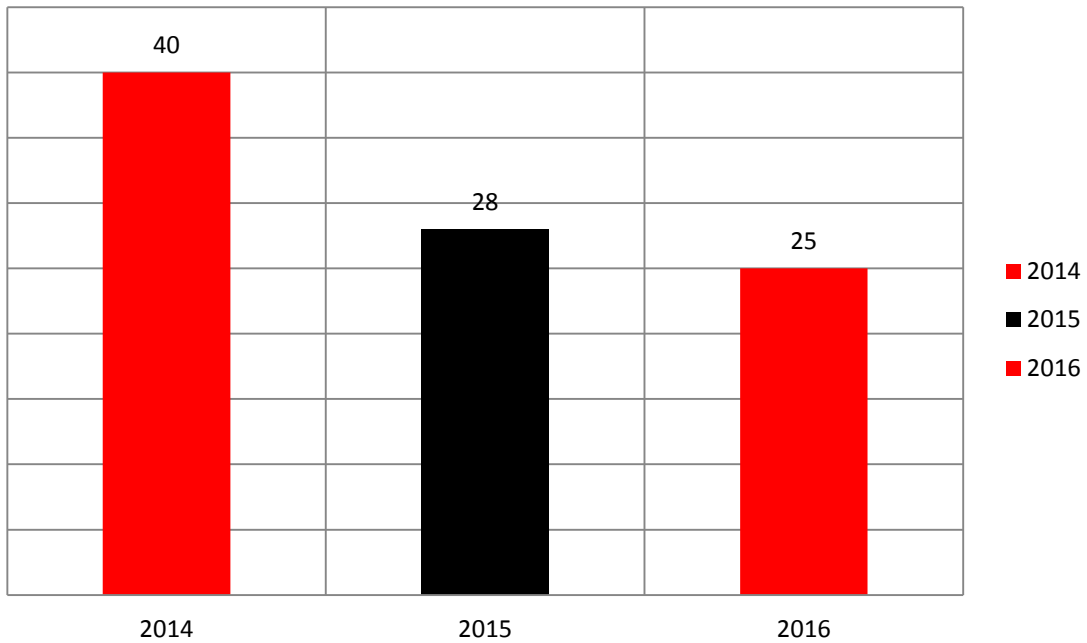
T&P unit standards not done as I recall -- needs Senate action. Senate committees should take the lead on the UAP and other items in #8.

I found my experience as a senator very rewarding and hope to contribute in the future.

# Senate Committee Survey 2016

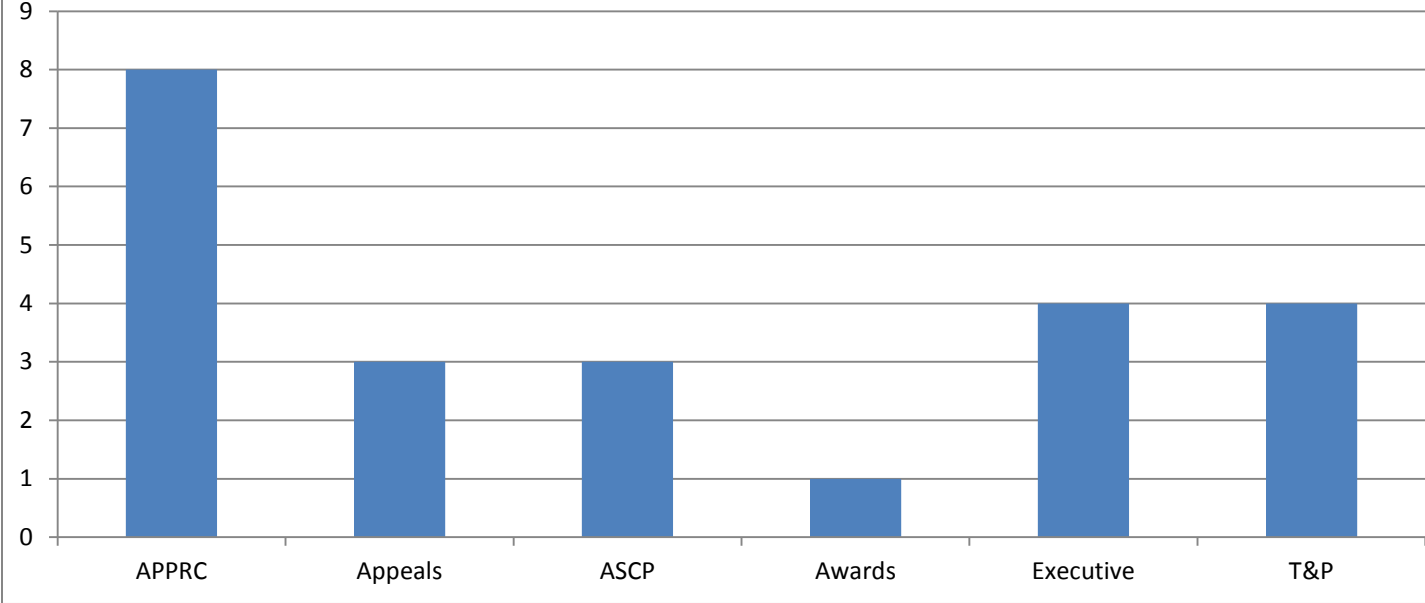
A survey of Senate committee members was conducted in late June and early July. Twenty-eight responses were received, down from 40 in 2014. Most responses were received from members of adjudicative committees.

Survey Participation by Year  
2014-2016



**Of which Committee were you a member in 2015-2016?  
(Skipped question: 1)**

**Table 2  
Survey Participants by Committee Membership**



**Q2. I feel knowledgeable about the following:  
(Skipped question: 0)**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Not sure / no opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>
The Committee's mandate and those of sub-committees	72.0 (18)	28.0 (7)	-	-	-	25
The Committee's relationship to Senate	64.0 (16)	32.0 (8)	4.0 (1)	-	-	25
Applicable policies and procedures that are relevant to decision-making	52.0 (13)	44.0 (11)	-	-	4.0 (1)	25
University academic trends and issues	64.0 (16)	32.0 (8)	-	-	4.0 (1)	35
Faculty-specific academic trends and issues	32.0 (8)	48.0 (12)	-	-	8.0 (2)	35

**Comments**

Faculty council often conflicted with other work-related meetings. Was not always up on faculty issues (Executive)

There is always more to learn (ASCP)

Highly committed committee members who, together, reflect comprehensive knowledge of university-wide policies and procedures and demonstrate a willingness to listen and learn and facilitate discourse among faculty, staff, and students. (APPRC)

Regarding adjudications of awards, there lacks a policy to specify when a committee member should recuse him/herself. (Awards)

**Q3 I feel well informed and prepared to participate in meetings  
(Skipped question: 0)**

Strongly agree	76.0 (19)
Somewhat agree	24.0 (6)
Somewhat disagree	-
Strongly disagree	-
Not sure / no opinion	-
Total	25

**Comments**

Units would often get information to us late, although it was better this year. Because of the amount of work reading files entails, getting them in advance was really critical to feeling fully prepared, especially since we still have our other responsibilities and deadlines. (T&P)

Documents are sent well in advance to read and review in time for scheduled meetings. (APPRC)

I was often not aware of faculty- and discipline-specific norms (outside of my own area of expertise). Also, it was hard to judge prestige of journal publications without knowing which of them use peer review and what their prestige/impact factor is. (Awards)

**Q4. Were your expectations met with regard to factors influencing your decision to serve as a member of the Committee?  
(Skipped question: 1)**

	<b>Fulfilled</b>	<b>Somewhat fulfilled</b>	<b>Not fulfilled</b>	<b>Not sure / no opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>
Duty	91.7 (22)	4.2 (1)	--	4.2 (1)	24
Interest	87.5 (21)	8.3 (2)	-	4.2 (1)	24
Learn about University developments and directions	83.3 (20)	12.5 (3)	-	4.2 (1)	24
Understand decision-making processes	87.5 (21)	8.3 (2)	-	4.2 (1)	24
Raise issues	66.7 (16)	29.2 (7)	-	4.2 (1)	24
Other (please specify in comments box)					

Best way to understand the structure of the university (Executive)

I don't think I would have agreed to do this position if I had realized the amount of work involved. I would have done it eventually, but not over these particular years because of the grants I had these past 2 years. But it is an important committee and I think that the value and relevance of our participation needs to be emphasized (T&P)

**Q5. The University Academic Plan 2010-2015 is intended to guide academic planning and define academic priorities. How would you rate the following in terms of helping to understand and advance UAP goals and to monitor progress?**

**(Skipped question: 0)**

	<b>Very helpful</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Somewhat helpful</b>	<b>Not helpful</b>	<b>Not sure / no opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>
Committee orientation	44.0 (11)	28.0 (7)	8.0 (2)	-	20.0 (5)	
Committee agenda	48.0 (12)	36.0 (9)	4.0 (1)	-	12.0 (3)	
Reports by administrators	36.0 (9)	36.0 (9)	16.0 (4)	-	12.0 (3)	
Faculty and department proposals	12.0 (3)	52.0 (13)	4.0 (1)	4.0 (1)	28.0 (7)	
Faculty planning submissions	12.0 (3)	48.0 (12)	12.0 (3)	4.0 (1)	24.0 (6)	
Other (please use comments box to identify)						

Committee work on policy development/change I say that some of the above were/are 'helpful' as opposed to 'very helpful' because the commitment to the UAP could often be more strongly represented (ASCP)

If "faculty submissions" refers to their guidelines for tenure I would say "helpful" (T&P)

There is very little discussion of UAP on SAC



**Q6. Committees establish their own priorities in the autumn or have a core work schedule. Do you feel that the Committee devoted appropriate time to priority items / core functions during the year?**  
**(Skipped question: 1)**

Always	64.0 (16)
Sometimes	24.0 (6)
Never	-
Not sure / no opinion	12.0 (3)
Total	25

The committee has ambitious priorities and devotes as much time as possible - and with very good success. However, curriculum approvals take up a lot of time. The curriculum changes are very detailed and thus focus attention on detail. Sometimes I would benefit from more attention paid to the big picture. (ASCP)

I'm not sure why committees don't run over the summer. Faculty get paid to work during the summer, so it doesn't make much sense. (APPRC)

I think it would be good to devote a little more time to formalizing a policy regarding some aspects of the adjudication process. (Awards)

**Q7. Are there items that should receive more attention from the Committee?**  
**Skipped Question: 20**

Degree complexity and definitions (ASCP)

UAP action plan (APPRC)

Increase participation/discussion in Senate (Executive)

External PSE context (APPRC)

A policy regarding the adjudication process (Awards)

Quality assurance (action on sub-committee reports) (APPRC)

**Q8. Please comment on logistical matters.**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
Documents were easily accessible from the Committee's Website	84.0 (21)	12.0 (3)	4.0 (1)	-	-	25
Documents were available with enough lead time before meetings	60.0 (15)	32.0 (8)	4.0 (1)	4.0 (1)	-	25
Documents were well-organized and clear	76.0 (19)	20.0 (5)	-	4.0 (1)	-	25
Items were given the appropriate amount of time	72.0 (18)	24.0 (6)	-	4.0 (1)	-	25
Items were considered within the Committee's mandate	88.0 (22)	12.0 (3)	-	-	-	25

Sometimes submissions would have benefited from better clarity, but they arrive late and want immediate attention (ASCP)

Sometimes the discussions seemed cursory or... without a proper sense of APPRC's role. Briefing notes were very helpful. (APPRC)

Were there were problems it was not at the level of the Senate committee but the committees sending information to us. But it was much better than it has been in the past (T&P)

I had a few issues with the APPRC website - it might help to have it on the usual York Online system. (APPRC)

The work of this committee was well organized. My only concern is that APPRC is presented as (and has been, in previous years) a Committee with a schedule published at the beginning of the academic year and consisting of fewer than 20 bi-weekly meetings through the year. This year, the Committee met 26 times (18 times in the Winter term) and the meetings were often scheduled or re-scheduled at short notice. In general, there seemed to be justification for this expanded workload on a meeting-by-meeting basis, but if it is to continue in coming years, colleagues considering serving should be advised to keep half a day each week from September through the end of June free for this purpose. (APPRC)

**Q9. We value your comments...**

**Skipped question: 22**

I worry that ASCP has too much in its mandate. I look forward to working with ASCP next year to sponsor some larger conversations about curriculum and the university! (ASCP)

Great learning experience, great way to connect with people. (APPRC)

I don't get the sense that many people actually have time to read and respond to the materials we are given (APPRC)