

Survey Assessment of the Participatory Governance System Academic Year 2012–2013

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July 2013

Executive Summary

Chairs' Assessment of College Council

- 8 responses (66.7%) of chairs
- The majority of responses indicated agrees or strongly agrees for each item.
- Areas of Strength:
 - understanding meeting outcomes
 - encouragement from the College Chair to give input
 - decisions by consensus,
 - feeling that their contributions were important and valid.
- Areas for Growth:
 - consistently following bylaws
 - recommendations receiving a timely response from other councils
 - recommendations receiving a timely response from the President
 - relevance of governance training.

Council Members' Assessment of Councils

- 75 responses (50%) of council members
- Responses: The majority of responses selected agrees or strongly agrees for each item.
- Areas of Strength
 - agendas, minutes, and materials provided prior to meetings
 - member attendance
 - decisions by consensus
 - encouragement from chairs to give input
- Areas for Growth
 - having their opinions and values respected
 - recommendations receiving a timely response from other councils
 - recommendations receiving a timely response from the President
 - relevance of governance training.

College Community's Assessment of Engagement, Governance, and Specific Councils

- 149 responses
- The response rate for administrators was more than double the response rate of faculty and staff. No students responded to the survey.
- Areas of Strength
 - The majority of responses about the governance system were agrees or strongly agrees for each item.
 - The majority indicated that they were reading minutes and agendas, checking the governance website and discussing governance with colleagues.
 - Positive comments indicated significance of hearing multiple perspectives on issues and “having a voice” at the table.
- Areas for Growth
 - Open-ended comments about governance and specific councils were mixed suggesting need for more communication and clarity about the relevance of and utilizing of governance.

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Survey Assessment of the Participatory Governance System Academic Year 2012-2013

To evaluate the inaugural year of the participatory governance system, Montgomery College distributed three surveys : (1) a survey of the College Council by Council chairs, (2) a survey of the councils by councilmembers, and (3) a survey of the governance system and councils by the College community. The online survey took place in May, with responses collected and tallied by Simply Voting. This report describes the findings of each survey.

Chairs' Assessment of College Council

Survey Description

Chairs received a survey with 21 items. Items 1–3 asked the chairs to identify their constituency role as administrator, faculty, staff, or student, their employment or student status as full-time or part-time, and the council they represented. The remaining items asked about the operation of the College Council and the governance system. Respondents selected the appropriate response for each item from these choices: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. No respondents selected strongly disagree for any item on the survey.

Survey Results

Eight out of twelve chairs responded to the survey (66.7% participation). Of the respondents, three were administrators, two were faculty, and three were staff. All respondents were full-time employees of the College. The results by item are shown in Table 1, with the most frequent answer in **bold** text.

The chairs of the Faculty Council, Rockville Council, Staff Council, and Student Council did not complete the survey.

Table 1. Items 4-21. Response Frequencies

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Agendas, minutes, and materials were provided prior to meetings	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0
I understood meeting outcomes	6 (75.0%)	2 (37.5%)	0
Discussion followed agenda	4 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)	0
Follow-up timelines were assigned by chair	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0
Chair was effective at managing meetings	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0
Discussion was driven by data and evidence	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0
I was given appropriate information to make informed decisions	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0
Members attended meetings regularly	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0
Chair encouraged all members to provide input into decisions and recommendations	6 (75.0%)	2 (25.0%)	0
We made decisions by consensus	6 (75.0%)	2 (25.0%)	0
I feel that my participation was important and valuable to the College	6 (75.0%)	2 (25.0%)	0
My opinions and values were respected	4 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)	0
I understood the council's charge and responsibilities	4 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)	0
Our council worked effectively	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0
Bylaws were consistently followed	3 (37.5%)	4 (50.0%)	1(12.5%)
Recommendations to other councils received a timely response	2 (25.0%)	6 (75.0%)	
After our recommendations moved through the governance system, our council received a timely response from the President	2 (25.0%)	4 (50.0%)	2 (25.0%)
The governance training was helpful	4 (50.0%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)

The survey results can be further quantified by assigning a point value to each possible response, such as with a Likert-type rating scale (e.g., strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1 point). Finding the sum of the response for each Item divided by eight responses allows an average score to be calculated (See Table 2). The **four highest scores are bolded** and the *four lowest scores are italicized*. This average score for each item also allows us to determine a baseline of comparison for future yearly assessments.

Table 2. Average Item Score

Item	Average Score (Key: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1)
Agendas, minutes, and materials were provided prior to meetings	3.38
I understood meeting outcomes	3.75
Discussion followed agenda	3.50
Follow-up timelines were assigned by chair	3.38
Chair was effective at managing meetings	3.38
Discussion was driven by data and evidence	3.38
I was given appropriate information to make informed decisions	3.38
Members attended meetings regularly	3.38
Chair encouraged all members to provide input into decisions and recommendations	3.75
We made decisions by consensus	3.75
I feel that my participation was important and valuable to the College	3.75
My opinions and values were respected	3.50
I understood the council's charge and responsibilities	3.50
Our council worked effectively	3.63
<i>Bylaws were consistently followed</i>	3.25
<i>Recommendations to other councils received a timely response</i>	3.25

<i>After our recommendations moved through the governance system, our council received a timely response from the President</i>	3.00
<i>The governance training was helpful</i>	3.00

Areas of Strength

The chairs identified these areas as most successful: (a) understanding meeting outcomes, (b) encouragement from the College Chair to give input, (c) making decisions by consensus, and (d) feeling that their contributions were important and valid.

Areas for Growth

The chairs identified these areas as most in need of improvement: (a) consistently following bylaws, (b) recommendations receiving a timely response from other councils, (c) recommendations receiving a timely response from the president, (d) relevance of governance training.

Council Members’ Assessment of Councils

Survey Description

Council members were presented with the same survey, described above, that was given to chairs for evaluating the College Council.

Survey Results

Of the 150 council members, 75 completed the survey (50.0% participation). Of the respondents, 16 were administrators, 24 were faculty, 23 were staff, and 12 were students. Seventy-one of the respondents were full-time employees or students (94.7%) and 4 were part-time employees or students (5.3%). Survey participants identified the councils they were evaluating as shown in Table 3. Highest number is marked in **bold** and lowest number is indicated by *italics*.

Table 3. Council Representation in Survey

Council	Number (% of Total Responses)
Academic Services and Success	6 (8.0%)
Administrator	4 (5.3%)
Employee Services	5 (6.7%)
Faculty	11 (14.7%)
Germantown Campus	8 (10.7%)
Operational Services	9 (12.0%)
Rockville Campus	5 (6.7%)
Staff	7 (9.3%)
<i>Student</i>	<i>3 (4.0%)</i>
Student Services and Success	4 (5.3%)
Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus	7 (9.3%)

Workforce Development & Continuing Education	6 (8.0%)
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The results by Item are shown in Table 4, with the most frequent answer in **bold** text.

Table 4. Evaluation of Councils

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Agendas, minutes, and materials were provided prior to meetings	48 (64.0%)	26 (34.7%)	1 (1.3%)	0
I understood meeting outcomes	43 (57.3%)	30 (40.0%)	2 (2.7%)	0
Discussion followed agenda	39 (52.0%)	36 (48.0%)	0	0
Follow-up timelines were assigned by chair	35 (46.7%)	34 (45.3%)	5 (6.7%)	1 (1.3%)
Chair was effective at managing meetings	48 (64.0%)	26 (34.7%)	0	1 (1.3%)
Discussion was driven by data and evidence	25(33.3%)	43 (57.3%)	6 (8.0%)	1 (1.3%)
I was given appropriate information to make informed decisions	36 (48.0%)	32 (42.7%)	6 (8.0%)	1 (1.3%)
Members attended meetings regularly	53 (70.7%)	16 (21.3%)	6 (8.0%)	0
Chair encouraged all members to provide input into decisions and recommendations	55 (73.3%)	19 (25.3%)	1 (1.3%)	0
We made decisions by consensus	53 (70.7%)	21 (28.0%)	1 (1.3%)	0
I feel that my participation was important and valuable to the College	27 (36.0%)	39 (52.0%)	9 (12.0%)	1 (1.3%)
My opinions and values were respected	45 (60.0%)	28 (37.3%)	2 (2.7%)	0
I understood the council’s charge and responsibilities	27 (36.0%)	41 (54.7%)	5 (6.7%)	2 (2.7%)
Our council worked effectively	33 (44.0%)	37 (49.4%)	4 (5.4%)	1 (1.3%)
Bylaws were consistently followed	37 (49.4%)	33 (44.0%)	5 (6.7%)	0
	12 (16.0%)	57 (76.0%)	6 (8.0%)	0

Recommendations to other councils received a timely response				
After our recommendations moved through the governance system, our council received a timely response from the president	12 (16.0%)	47 (62.7%)	13 (17.3%)	3 (4.0%)
The governance training was helpful	20 (26.7%)	46 (61.3%)	7 (9.3%)	2 (2.7%)

The survey results can be further analyzed by calculating the average score of each item using the method described in the Chairs’ Assessment above. Table 5 shows the average scores. The **four highest scores are bolded** and the *four lowest scores are italicized*. (Key: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1)

Table 5. Average Item Score

Item	Average Score
Agendas, minutes, and materials were provided prior to meetings	3.63
I understood meeting outcomes	3.55
Discussion followed agenda	3.52
Follow-up timelines were assigned by chair	3.37
Chair was effective at managing meetings	3.61
Discussion was driven by data and evidence	3.23
I was given appropriate information to make informed decisions	3.4
Members attended meetings regularly	3.63
Chair encouraged all members to provide input into decisions and recommendations	3.72
We made decisions by consensus	3.69
I feel that my participation was important and valuable to the College	3.25
<i>My opinions and values were respected</i>	<i>3.17</i>
I understood the council’s charge and responsibilities	3.24
Our council worked effectively	3.36
Bylaws were consistently followed	3.43

<i>Recommendations to other councils received a timely response</i>	3.08
<i>After our recommendations moved through the governance system, our council received a timely response from the president</i>	2.91
<i>The governance training was helpful</i>	3.12

Areas of Strength

Council members identified these areas as most successful: (a) agendas, minutes, and materials provided prior to meetings, (b) member attendance, (c) making decisions by consensus, and (d) encouragement from chairs to give input.

Areas for Growth

The council members identified these areas as most in need of improvement: (a) having their opinions and values respected, (b) recommendations receiving a timely response from other councils, (c) recommendations receiving a timely response from the president, (d) relevance of governance training.

College Community Assessment of Governance/Councils

Survey Description

Members of the College community completed a 15-item survey to assess the governance system and specific councils. Items 1 and 2 asked participants to identify as student, staff, faculty, or administrator and to indicate whether they had full-time or part-time status. Items 3–7 measured community engagement with the governance system by asking participants to indicate whether they took certain actions to get information or advocate regarding the system. Items 8–13 asked for feedback on the success of the system. Items 8–11 used the Likert-type ratings scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Participants were also able to select no opinion on these items. Items 12 and 13 provided an opportunity to give open-ended comments about the system. Items 14 and 15 allowed participants to provide open-ended feedback about a specific council.

Survey Results

The survey received 149 responses: 15 administrators, 65 faculty, 68 staff, no students, and one who did not select a category who responded to the survey. Administrators had the highest response rate, with about 18% of all administrators responding. Faculty and staff response rates were less than 9% of respective populations. Of the survey participants, 128 were full-time (86%) and 21 were part-time (14%) employees. Table 6 shows the responses for Items 3–7. Subtotals by constituency as well as employment status are provided.

Table 6. Items 3-7: College Community Engagement

Item	Response	Total	Administrator	Faculty	Staff	Full-Time	Part-Time
3. Did you attend council meetings?	Yes	60	9 (15.00%)	20 (33.33%)	31 (51.67%)	58 (96.67%)	2 (3.33%)
	No	94	6 (6.38%)	49 (52.13%)	39 (41.49%)	75 (79.79%)	19 (20.21%)
4. Did you email council representatives or chairs?	Yes	75	9 (12.00%)	36 (48.00%)	30 (40.00%)	73 (97.33%)	2 (2.67%)
	No	79	6 (7.59%)	33 (41.77%)	40 (50.63%)	60 (75.95%)	19 (24.05%)
5. Did you read council agendas, minutes, and/or ancillary materials?	Yes	134	14 (10.45%)	61 (45.52%)	59 (44.03%)	120 (89.55%)	14 (10.45%)
	No	20	1 (5.00%)	8 (40.00%)	11 (55.00%)	13 (65.00%)	7 (35.00%)
6. Did you visit the governance website?	Yes	99	10 (10.10%)	39 (39.39%)	50 (50.51%)	91 (91.92%)	8 (8.08%)
	No	55	5 (9.09%)	30 (54.55%)	20 (36.36%)	42 (76.36%)	13 (23.64%)
7. Did you discuss governance issues with colleagues?	Yes	120	13 (10.83%)	59 (49.17%)	48 (40.00%)	107 (89.17%)	13 (10.83%)
	No	34	2 (5.88%)	10 (29.41%)	22 (64.71%)	26 (76.47%)	8 (23.53%)

A limitation of this portion of the survey is that it does not allow us to determine the number of times a person engaged in these behaviors. For example, a faculty member who attended multiple council meetings is reflected in the data identically to someone who attends one meeting. It is likely that someone who was interested enough to attend multiple meetings would also discuss governance with colleagues or engage in other behaviors. Therefore, the data does allow us to roughly estimate the level of engagement for each constituency.

One of the ways that community engagement can be considered is by assigning point values to the different behaviors based on the amount of engagement. Basic behaviors to stay informed would be counted as one point. Intermediate engagement could be counted as two points, such as attending a council meeting. Advanced behaviors focus on advocacy and sharing information such as e-mailing a council representative or discussing governance issues with colleagues, and could be counted as three points (See Table 7).

Table 7. Behaviors by Level of Engagement

Basic (1 point)

- Did you read council agendas, minutes, and/or ancillary materials?
- Did you visit the governance website?

Intermediate (2 points)

- Did you attend council meetings?

Advanced (3 points)

- Did you discuss governance issues with colleagues?
- Did you email council representatives or chairs?

Based on this metric, figure 1 shows the average engagement levels by constituency.

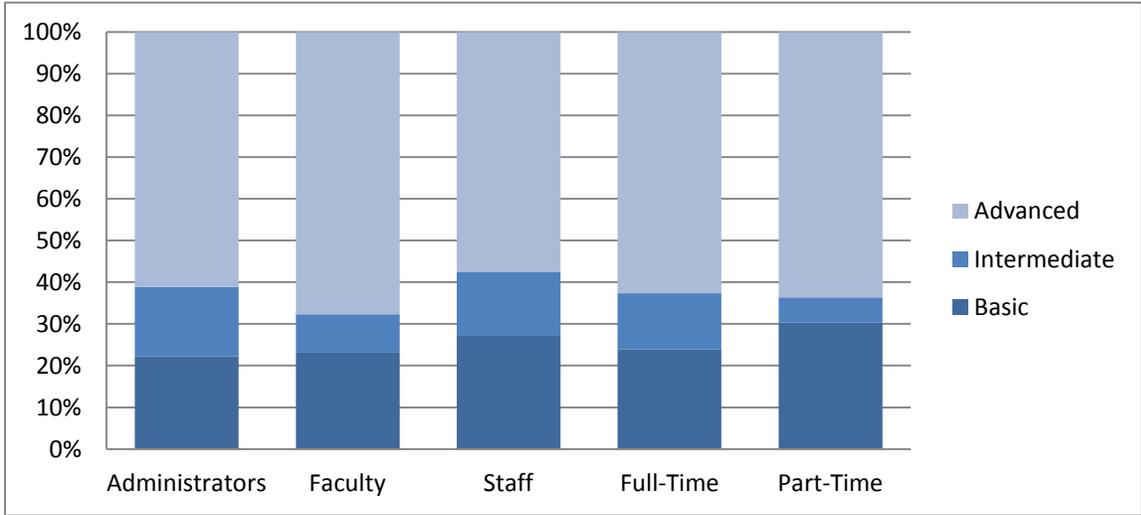


Figure 1. Average level of engagement with governance by constituency groups and employment status.

Table 8 shows the responses to items used to rate the governance system.

Table 8. Items 8-11: System by Constituency (% of Total Responses)

Item	Response	Total	Admin	Faculty	Staff	Full-Time	Part-Time
8. The nomination and election process was clearly articulated.	Strongly Agree	29	3 (10.34%)	13 (44.83%)	13 (44.83%)	25 (86.21%)	4 (13.79%)
	Agree	75	10 (13.33%)	27 (36.00%)	38 (50.67%)	67 (89.33%)	8 (10.67%)
	Disagree	21	2 (9.52%)	12 (57.14%)	7 (33.33%)	19 (90.48%)	2 (9.52%)
	Strongly Disagree	6	0 (0.00%)	3 (50.00%)	3 (50.00%)	6 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)
	No Opinion	21	0 (0.00%)	13 (61.90%)	8 (38.10%)	14 (66.67%)	7 (33.33%)
9. Agendas, minutes, and ancillary materials were made publically available and council meetings, times, and locations were clearly communicated in advance.	Strongly Agree	30	3 (10.00%)	14 (46.67%)	13 (43.33%)	24 (80.00%)	6 (20.00%)
	Agree	88	11 (12.50%)	41 (46.59%)	36 (40.91%)	76 (86.36%)	12 (13.64%)
	Disagree	12	1 (8.33%)	6 (50.00%)	5 (41.67%)	12 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)
	Strongly Disagree	3	0 (0.00%)	1 (33.33%)	2 (66.67%)	3 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)
	No Opinion	19	0 (0.00%)	6 (31.58%)	13 (68.42%)	16 (84.21%)	3 (15.79%)
10. I was provided with adequate opportunities for providing input either at meetings or to council members.	Strongly Agree	30	2 (6.67%)	12 (40.00%)	16 (53.33%)	27 (90.00%)	3 (10.00%)
	Agree	65	10 (15.38%)	25 (38.46%)	30 (46.15%)	57 (87.69%)	8 (12.31%)
	Disagree	15	1 (6.67%)	9 (60.00%)	5 (33.33%)	13 (86.67%)	2 (13.33%)
	Strongly Disagree	6	0 (0.00%)	4 (66.67%)	2 (33.33%)	6 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)

	No Opinion	36	2 (5.56%)	18 (50.00%)	16 (44.44%)	28 (77.78%)	8 (22.22%)
11. Governance system decisions and recommendations were clearly communicated and in a timely and effective manner.	Strongly Agree	18	0 (0.00%)	7 (38.89%)	11 (61.11%)	15 (83.33%)	3 (16.67%)
	Agree	68	9 (13.24%)	26 (38.24%)	33 (48.53%)	59 (86.76%)	9 (13.24%)
	Disagree	23	3 (13.04%)	12 (52.17%)	8 (34.78%)	22 (95.65%)	1 (4.35%)
	Strongly Disagree	9	0 (0.00%)	7 (77.78%)	2 (22.22%)	9 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)
	No Opinion	32	3 (9.38%)	14 (43.75%)	15 (46.88%)	24 (75.00%)	8 (25.00%)

The majority of participants indicated that they agreed with each item about the governance system.

Tables 9 and 10 show samples of comments about the governance system and specific councils.

Table 9. Items 12–13: Sample Comments by Constituency

Item	Administrator	Faculty	Staff
<p>12. Please describe what you liked about the Participatory Governance System</p>	<p>The concept of working together</p> <p>Better integration among other campus groups</p>	<p>Provides greater access to decision making and gives more people chance to participate</p> <p>Providing a voice to previously overlooked groups</p> <p>Undetermined</p> <p>It was nice to hear and see so many non-faculty members commit to it</p> <p>Networking opportunity</p> <p>Ease of voting online for representatives</p> <p>Cross-pollination of ideas across councils</p> <p>Working with administrators in a different way...as team members</p>	<p>Equal representation</p> <p>Organized</p> <p>Multiple perspectives heard at the table</p>

<p>13. Feel free to suggest ways that we can improve the Participatory Governance System.</p>	<p>So many meetings are at RV, and so many people must participate, that governance is occupying unreasonable amounts of time</p>	<p>More faculty presence is needed. Voice has been too diluted</p>	<p>Nomination's name may not be the name that people are used to, so someone may not be selected as a result of this confusion</p>
	<p>Too many councils</p>	<p>Supervisors should encourage subordinates to participate</p>	<p>Newsletter</p>
	<p>Too little time to give input on decisions</p>	<p>Clarity about roles/process</p>	<p>Clerical support for governance/governance coordinator</p>
		<p>More awareness of who is on the various councils</p>	<p>Create more standards for what is vetted through the council and whether everyone needs to discuss and provide feedback or whether they should just be made aware of the situation</p>
		<p>Clerical support to councils</p>	<p>Consider qualifications rather than popularity</p>
			<p>Clarity about roles/process</p>
			<p>Level of formality is unnecessary and excludes people</p>

Table 10. Items 14–15: Sample Comments on Specific Councils

Council	Item 14: Please describe what you liked	Item 15: Suggestions for improvement
Academic Services	<p>Dedicated colleagues on council</p> <p>Focus on academics</p> <p>Representative membership</p> <p>Timely communication</p>	<p>All the councils seem to be structured for minimum influence from the faculty</p> <p>Too much overlap with student services and faculty councils</p>
Administrator	<p>Meetings open to the public</p> <p>Allowed constituents an opportunity to bring forth issues</p>	<p>Cancel meetings when nothing worth putting on agenda</p> <p>Administrators already have decision-making power outside of governance</p>
College	<p>Administrative leaders shared information about issues, making the meetings informative</p> <p>Good about communicating about policies but unclear about substantive issues.</p>	<p>Support materials for the meeting should be posted on the website, which includes the reports from other councils. This will maximize the time for issue discussion</p> <p>Be more 'decision-making' or a 'recommendation-making' oriented rather than a time for 'report-and-listen'</p> <p>Podcast available so people who cannot attend can still hear the details</p> <p>So many changes that no one has time to digest or consider appropriately, such as the special meetings called without much notice</p>

Employee Services	The meeting I attended (via Polycomm) was well run, and anyone who wished to speak was able to give input. I appreciated being able to hear from outside presenters (HRDE).	Ensure that those who are nominated to be a member, and then accept the nomination, realize the time commitment and adhere to this
Faculty	<p>Make it easy for faculty to "see something, say something." Perhaps establish a central web point with a form such as this one for faculty to give ideas, suggestions, observations about what doesn't work and praise for what does. Right now, it's too unclear how anyone can provide input that would make a difference</p> <p>An opportunity to hear about issues affecting the faculty at college at large but not enough time to discuss issues</p>	A list of accomplishments that includes benefit to students
Germantown	<p>I was in class most of the time when the meetings were, but what I heard from colleagues was good and the e-mails we received were clear</p> <p>Casual, friendly atmosphere where everyone is encouraged to share their view or ask questions</p> <p>Liked the it follows the Campus Coffee/Meet and Greet</p>	Periodically hold meetings late afternoon or early evening so that part-time faculty can attend
Operational Services		Give us issues and let us give feedback

Rockville	Broad membership	Not sure about this council representing Central Services employees Output from this council is not clearly available
Staff	<p>Effort was made to have meetings at all sites, but that fact wasn't publicized very well.</p> <p>This council offered an opportunity to broaden individual's view and get educated and to be involved in areas to observe and understand the operation/processes/policies in specific areas of the College.</p> <p>Meetings and agendas were/are clearly communicated to the community. Even if I do not participate, I still feel a part of the council decision process.</p>	<p>Minutes did not reflect resolution of issues and concerns brought to the council</p> <p>We talked about the respect and equality but, in few meetings, I found respect toward some individuals were tested.</p>
Student Council	Students received “counsel” and “advice” on conducting meetings	Better communication from/to Student Council and other councils
Student Services and Success	<p>Clear elections for students</p> <p>Clearly for Student Services personnel</p> <p>E-mails kept us in touch between meetings</p>	<p>Redundancy with other councils</p> <p>Need more student participation</p> <p>Too narrow definition of student success</p> <p>Electronic course evaluations should also seek information about students’ investment in course, not simply instructor performance</p>

Takoma
Park Silver
Spring

Comfortable quality of members

Workforce
Development &
Continuing
Education

Worked very well together

Meetings should be scheduled around work that needs to take place at those meetings, rather than scheduling work around meetings

Too much reliance on chair to provide communication

Areas of Strength

The majority of respondents indicated that they had been engaged with governance by reading council agendas and minutes, visiting the website, or discussing governance issues with colleagues. However, they did not attend council meetings or e-mail council representatives or chairs. The majority of respondents rated each item about the governance system as agree or strongly agree.

Areas for Growth

Given the size of the College community, getting additional people to participate in the survey would better represent the views of the community. The comments about the governance system and the councils were mixed, suggesting need for more clarity about relevance of system and how to utilize it.