

# Evaluation of the Senate 2016



**Michigan  
Technological  
University**<sup>®</sup>

Senate APC Committee

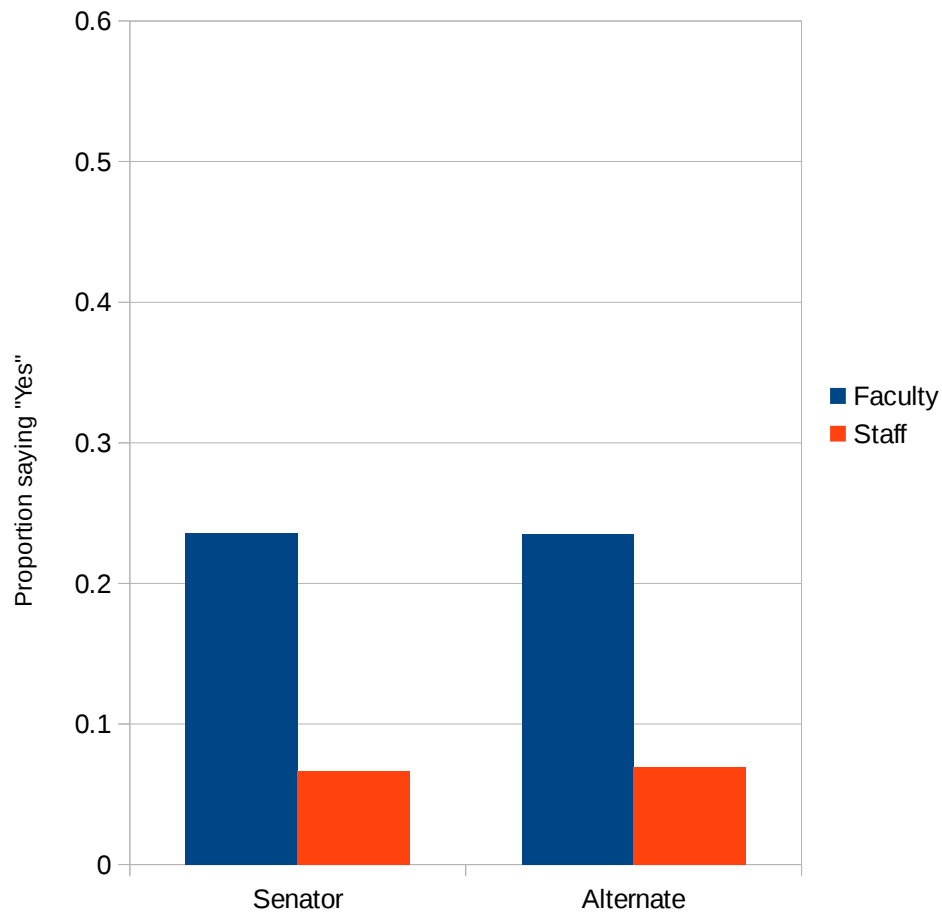
# Methods

- On-line anonymous questionnaire
- Available for ~1 week in October
- 585 staff and 443 faculty invited
- 201 staff and 148 faculty responded (34%/33%)
- 15 Scaled Questions

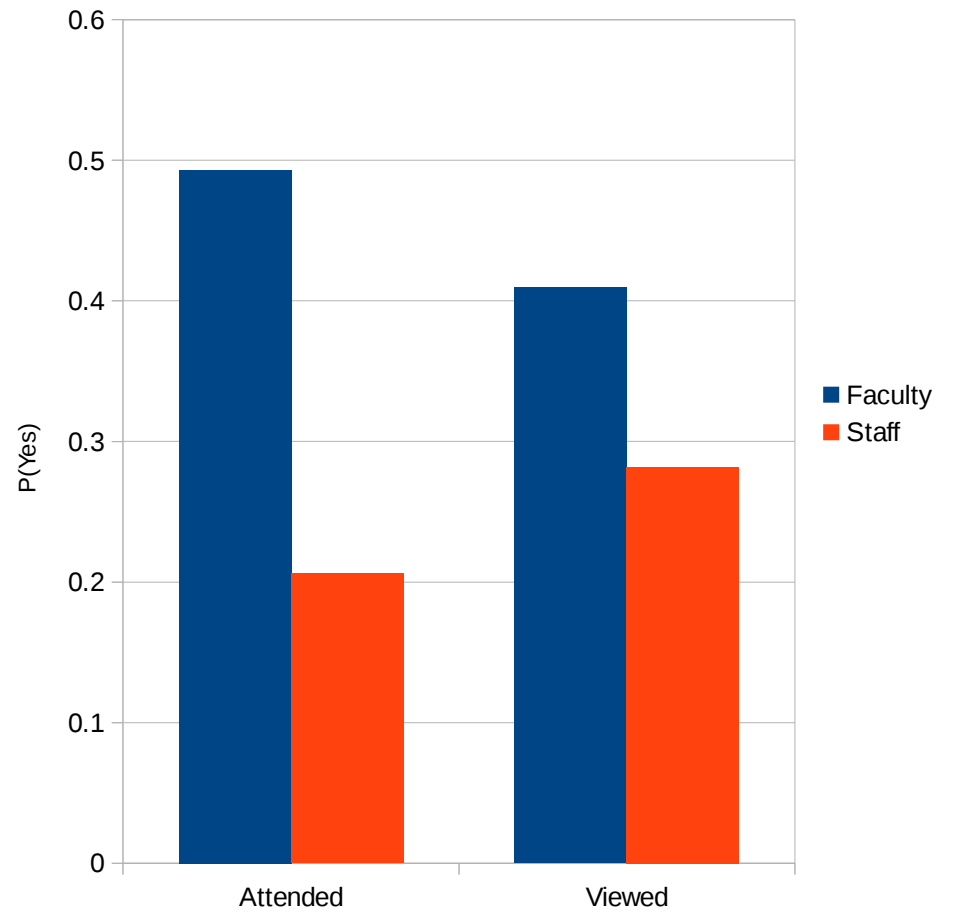
	1-6 years	7-12 years	13-20 years	More than 21 years
Staff	57	37	31	21
Faculty	90	44	32	35

# Engagement

Have you served in the senate?



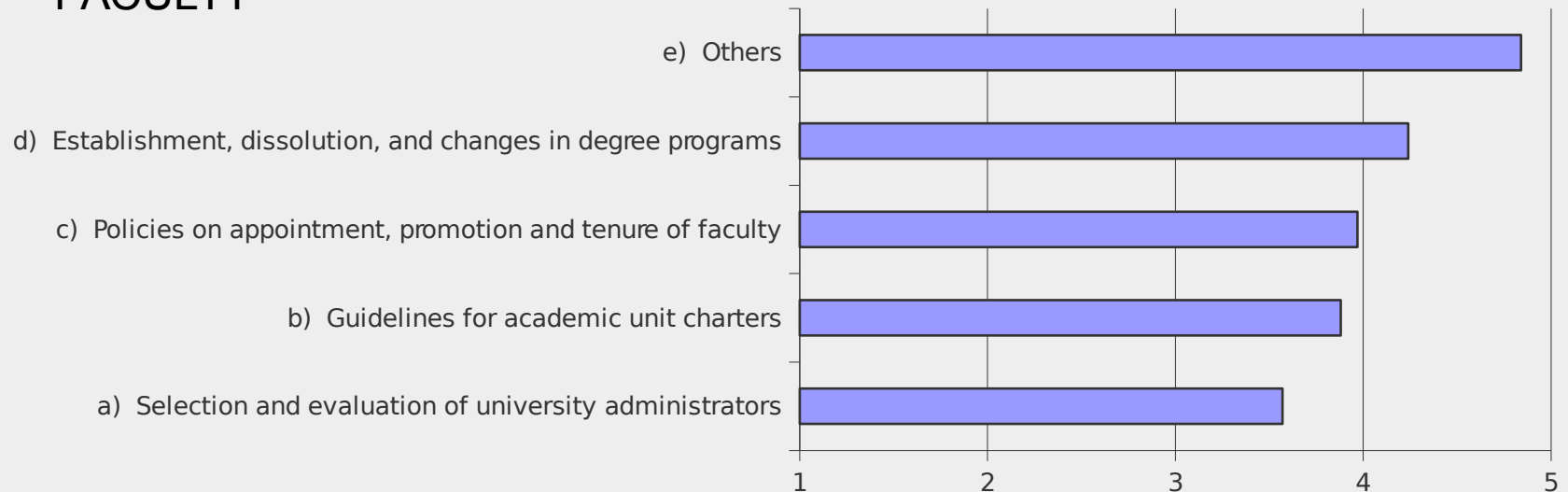
Have you attended or viewed



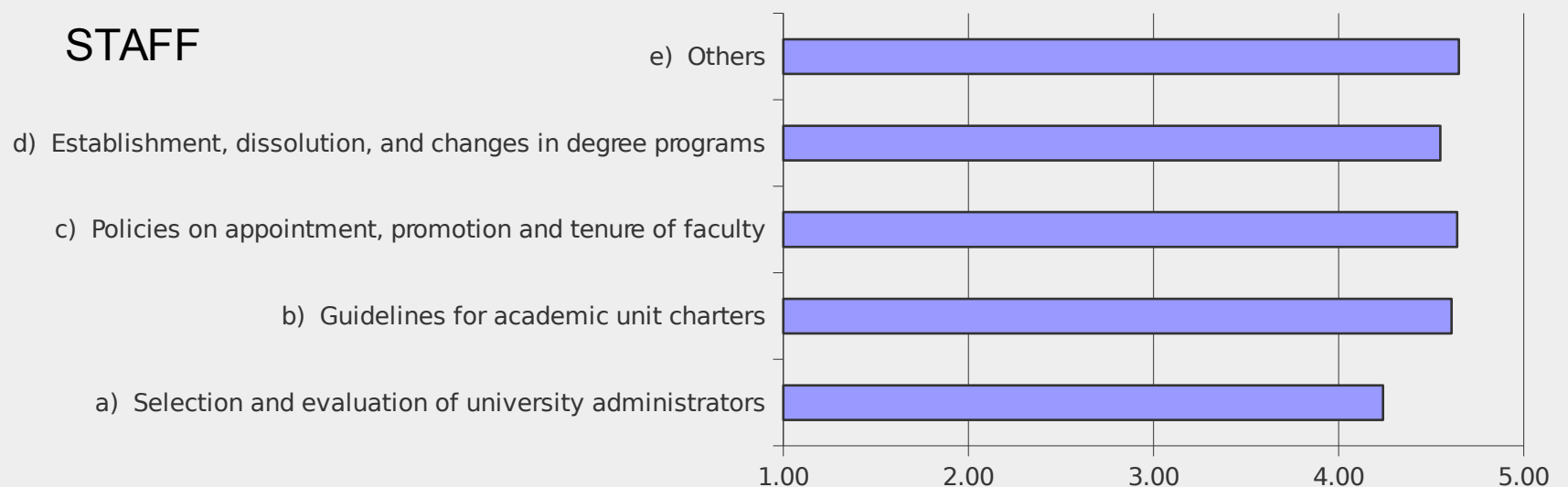
# Q4: Senate Effectiveness

The Senate has been effective in developing shared governance policies and procedures in the following a

## FACULTY

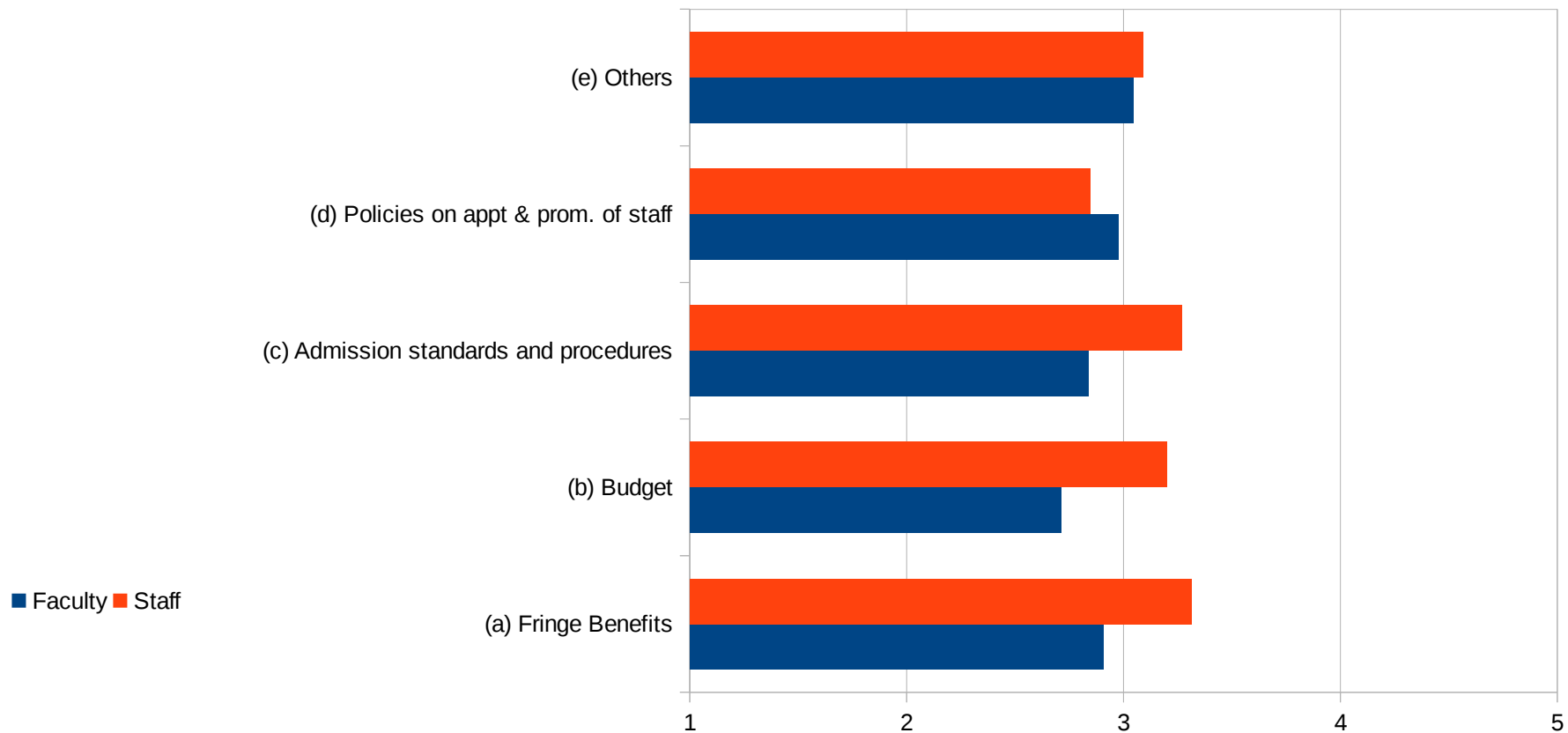


## STAFF



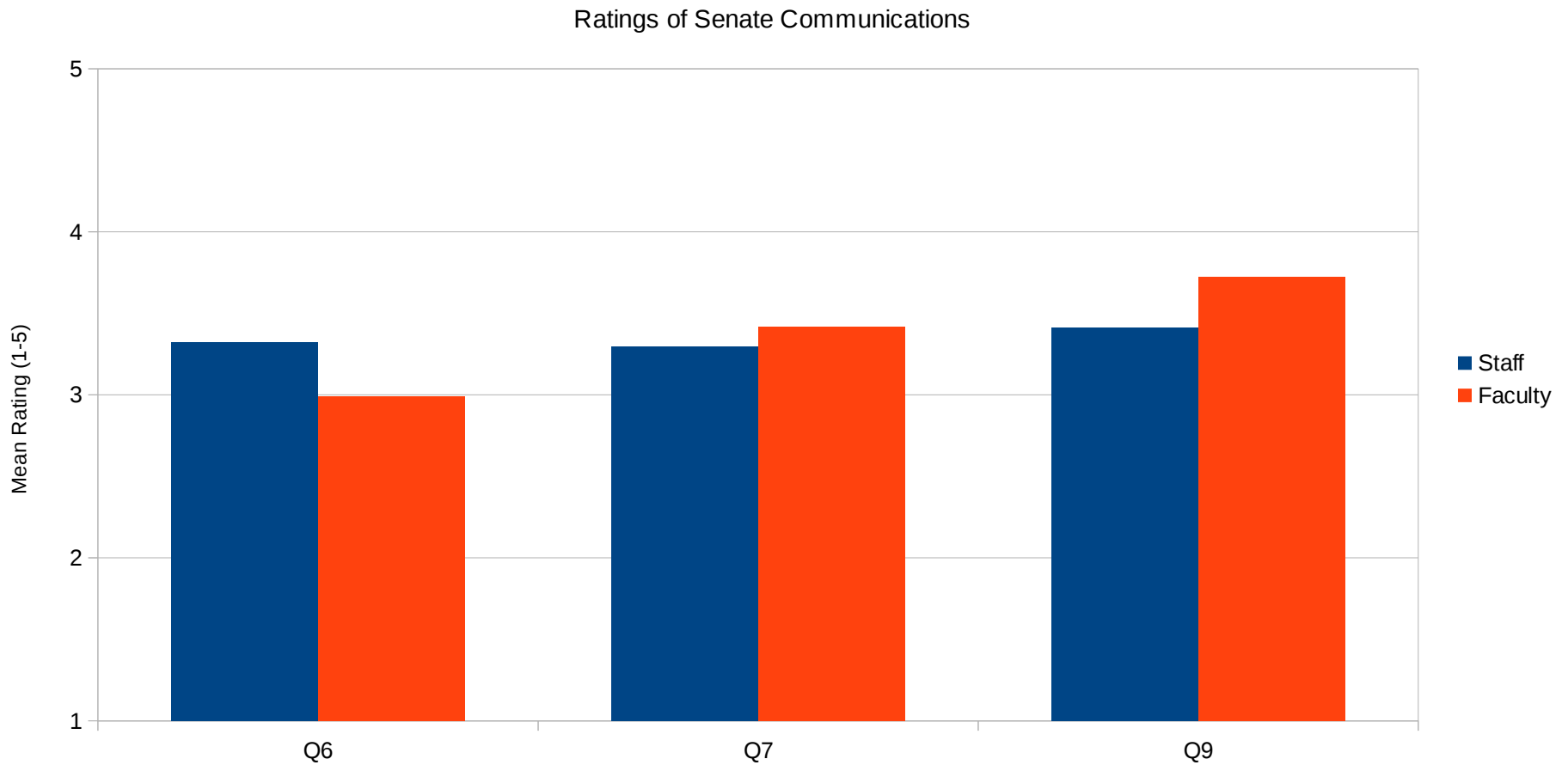
# Q5: Senate is effective at reflecting your concerns regarding...

Senate is effective regarding...



# Communication

- Q6. The Senate has been effective in communicating with you the issues that impact you.  
Q7. Senate provided appropriate input to your unit regarding proposals submitted to it.  
Q9. Your senator keeps you informed about the issues considered by the Senate.



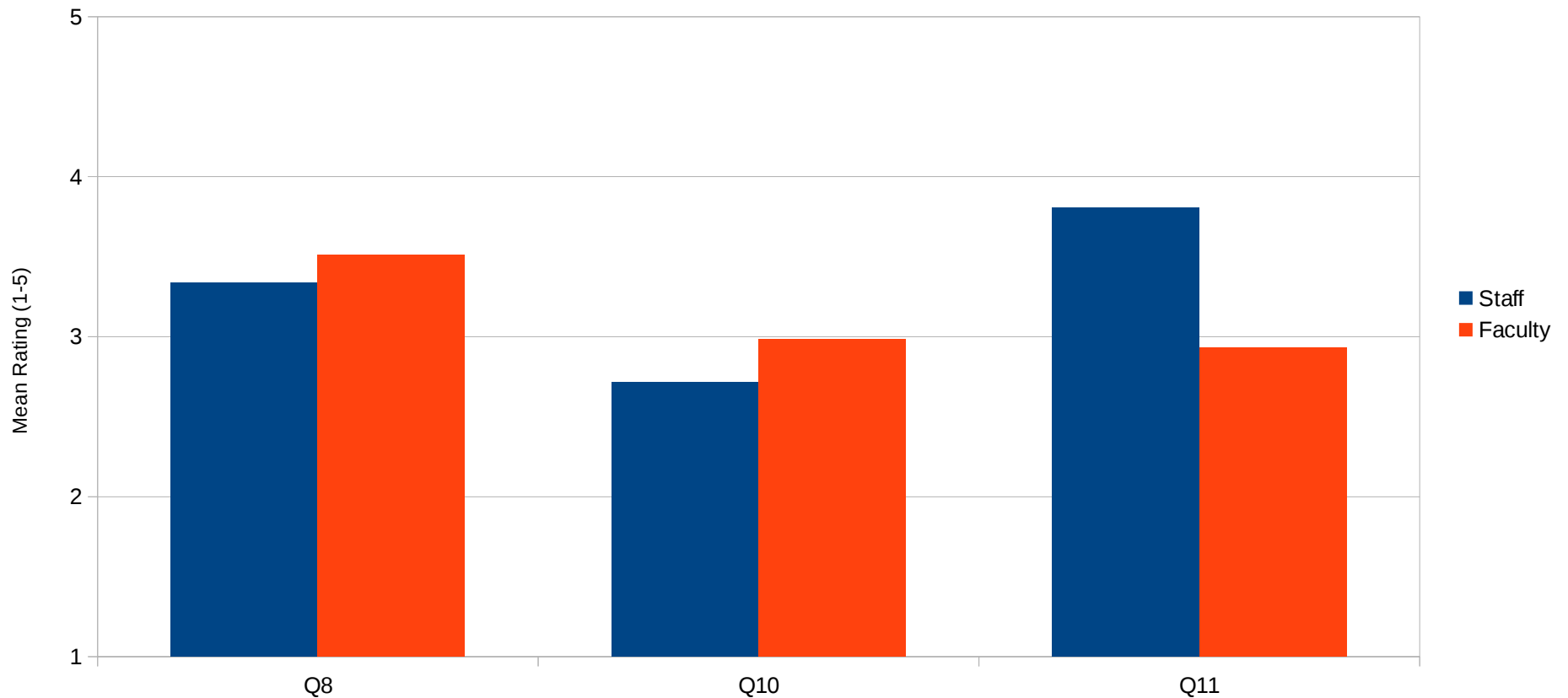
# Effectiveness

**Q8: The Senate has acted in a timely manner on proposals submitted by your unit.**

**Q10: The Senate is an effective body in representing professional staff.**

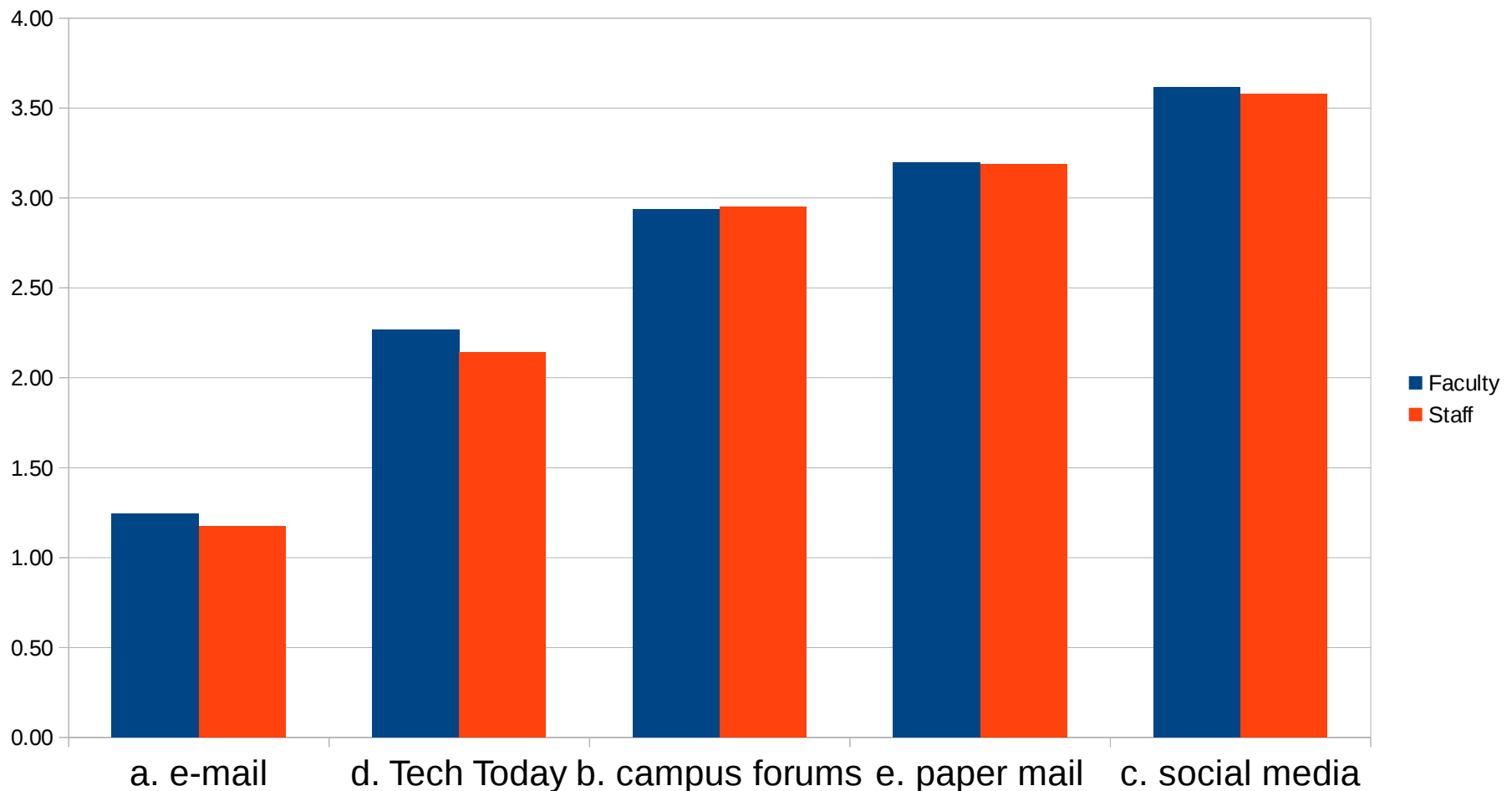
**Q11: The Senate is an effective body for representing faculty**

Questions on Senate Effectiveness



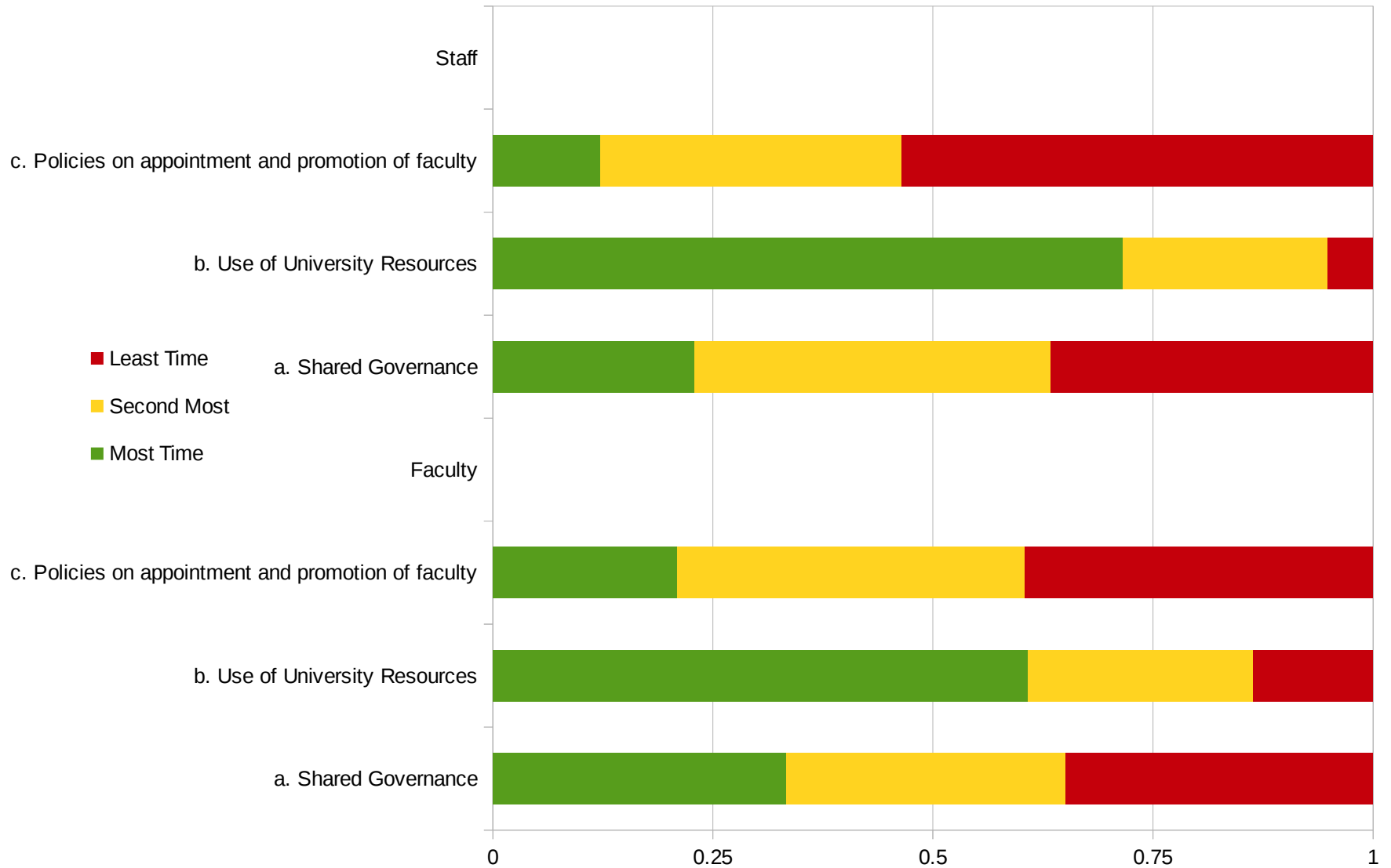
# Preferred Communication Methods

- Mean rank order; lower is more preferred





# Priority of Proposals



# Overall response rates

- In addition to 33% response rate, many questions typically had 30%-50% no-response + “Don't Know” answers.
- Acted timely on proposals submitted to your unit: 54%
- Faculty at representing staff 61%; staff at representing faculty 43%.
- These appear to highlight lack of knowledge among constituencies about what the senate is doing.

# Open-ended Question

“How can the senate better meet your needs”

Attached are detailed comments (5 pages of comments) to be published along with the results here on senate evaluation archive.

Summary:

1. staff are less certain about the role of the Senate are more worried about pay and healthcare issues.
2. The faculty are concerned about the shared governance or lack thereof. They like the Senate to "assert itself to the degree that the administration cannot simply turn back its decisions."

## How can the Senate better meet your needs?

### Responses from faculty

The Senate is ineffective. The proposals that come out of it are unclear. Not particularly useful when needed

"Hosting or co-hosting subject matter experts in various areas: compensation, benefits, academic program areas.

Also, regular notifications in Tech Today and EDS as well as MTU website regarding Senate meetings, forums, presentations"

I am very new to Michigan Tech (1 year). I will definitely provide some suggestions after gaining more experience in Michigan Tech and becoming more familiar with the Senate's functions and responsibilities.

The senate needs to start working for the university community and stop simply working for themselves and their own petty interests.

Keep voicing the expectations of faculty and staff regardless of the negative feedback from administrators that has historically occurred.

I don't understand why the Senate has to meet in the evening. My department has a hard time getting someone to serve as Senator because of the 5:30 - 7:30 pm meeting time. I see no reason why Senators should have to give up evenings in order to serve on the Senate. I think it would be workable to set a meeting time during the normal work day and it would make it easier to find people willing to serve on the Senate.

more communication from senate president directly to faculty

Work to alleviate the adversarial relationship with the administration and seek support from the Board of Trustees for more engagement with the administration on both strategic goals and operations of the institution.

The administrative budget is running higher and higher with so many directors, associate directors, assistant directors... This has degraded the budget to support faculty. IS there a way senate can gain some control for the faculty? Absolutely NO so far.

A brief \*summary\* of Senate meetings might be provided so that Senators can share that with their constituency. The minutes are too cumbersome to shift through. My department has had Senators who were very active making sure the faculty was aware of Senate business, and others who were not.

Be much more proactive. My perception is that the senate is very reactive. My senator says that the administration no longer has much respect for the senate. From what I see, that's in a big part the Senate's fault since most things that are done are reactive.

The current Provost needs prompt, critical feedback from the faculty. Taking 1/3 of the salary raise pool, now two years in a row, and using it in a completely non-transparent way? Many of us consider that

contrary to the open manner in which MTU has operated in recent years. The Senate is the most effective organization for keeping rogue administrators in check.

Revisit, clarify, and communicate the University Food Policy to faculty, enterprises and student groups.

Demonstrate influence on University Administration. Executive Team and Board of Control seem to make decisions without consulting with the faculty (Senate).

The Senate can become more involved in Dual Career committees and policies on this campus.

I would prefer going back to the old "Faculty Senate".

Coming from years at another university, I see the biggest problem with regards to governance is that we are not represented by a union with a clearly defined contract. The so-called "shared" governance of this university is merely a diversionary tactic. At a unit level, we are always wasting time debating and voting on inconsequential matters, in the mean time, the powers that be (I don't even know who exactly "they" are" seem to make all the important decisions in secret.

Stop meeting after hours when people with kids can't participate.

not sure what you really do, so... perhaps a nice diagram with what the senate does, what its responsibilities are and what its 'power' is compared to the administration.

More accountability for administration to the faculty and senate.

Senators need to have more direct communication with their constituents to tell them about the issues.

Improve communication with very succinct notes

Fight to keep the PPO option for healthcare.

improve communication about the role and achievements of the senate. I know they do many things, but I am not sure exactly what and I am not sure how the administration reacts to their representation of employees.

More summaries and aggregated information. The information overload is ineffective.

better transfer faculty voice to admin

The Senate needs to be better in communicating with its constituents. The Senate needs to be more effective in guaranteeing transparency between the University Administration and University employees. Too many decisions related to salary, benefits, and University policy in general are made without consultation or discussion. The Administration "rules" by fiat.

I cannot envision a world where our Senate is anything other than a silly waste of time that attracts people who have too much time on their hands because they aren't very productive with regard to research.

Less senate bureaucracy.

Truly be a player in shared governance. It is not happening now as Senate has no power or influence.

By being more involved in important university decisions

Senate needs to assert itself to the degree that the administration cannot simply turn back its decisions. In most sensitive issues, the administration never gave in. I remember many examples of legitimate decisions by the Senate turned over by the administration, particularly about those which are on the Senate's B list. The Senate should work to change the A and B lists, shrinking the size of B list to the extend possible and extending A.

I would like senate to evaluate David Reed. The president was evaluated a couple of times at least but don't remember evaluation of David Reed.

senate should stop being a rubber stamp. Policies have to be established to hold administrators accountable. We have a VP of admin who evaluations are very poor and there is nothing the senate can do.

"The Senate needs to be more proactive in taking a bigger stake in shared governance. One way of doing this is to seek out more experienced and senior faculty who can do a better advocacy on behalf of the faculty and staff to stand for the Senate. I am troubled by the number of junior faculty who are asked to stand for the Senate who have little voice in raising the issues on behalf of their constituents.

Minutes should be available faster. The "civility" document is still a mystery after the minutes are available. The Senate appears to view some constituencies over others (more vocal SJWs) and it feels like the rest of us have to live with bad decisions made after the fact. Witness the UN "sustainable, just and prosperous" wording that crept into our mission.

### **Responses from professional staff**

Keep the Senate website updated.

I think I need more information on what the senate IS and what it DOES. This has never been clearly communicated to me.

I had not realized that the senate was trying to meet the needs of professional staff. I thought they only weighed in on academic, university and faculty issues.

Get more information out there. Most of the questions asked in this survey I have no idea about what the senate does or how it completes its tasks.

Salary increases are predicated on percentages but health care deductibles are straight lined across the board. \$ 3,500 family deductible is creating hardship for a \$ 35,000 salaried employee as that's 10 % of their income, \$ 100,000 salary equates to 3.5% of their income.

Better education on what it can do for non-academic professionals

Find a way to actually have effective SHARED governance enforced by the Board of Control (Trustees, etc). Administration get away with not respecting the Senate as a partner. But also don't fight for the sake of fighting as was the case with the tobacco-free campus issue.

Keep up the good work.

More communication would be good. I have no idea who my senator is and I have no idea who they'd know what my needs are, because they have never asked.

Help communicate to professional staff what the Senate does for them.

The emails that I've received so far, as a new employee, have been helpful. Maybe explain the Senate and the importance for new professionals

more information - in advance - about changes being considered that will impact employees' fringe benefits AND more targeted questioning as to how rates are being calculated for 1) the value reported on an employee's W-2 for the university's cost of providing that employee with health care insurance, and 2) fringe benefit costs to the university in general and specifically regarding both the university cost of the health insurance and the university cost of retirement benefits (as both of these have a direct impact on how much of a raise employees receive if they are not in 'upper echelon'). There was talk that the settlement recd from St of Mich for past MPSEER contribs would fund all future MPSEERS contribs but then the future MPSEERS contribs again seemed to be added into those annual costs)

Increase funding for minority recruitment/retention and broaden the scope of degree programs to attract more minority students. Also, produce and hire more diverse faculty.

Too new an employee to judge.

The senate is and always will be centered on Faculty 80% of the time. Staff is an afterthought..

I am a new employee at Michigan Tech and I wish I had a better understanding of what the Senate is and how it effects me.

I don't think it can. Even if it weren't widely considered the 'Faculty Senate', there's very little that the powerless Senate can do for professional staff.

"Do you have a web site? Where can I find a description of the senate and its responsibilities or goals? How and why does the Senate ""represent"" me? I can't answer this question unless I know the answers to these questions."

How can the Senate effectively provide representation for professional staff when it never specifically brings professional staff into debates or discussion, as in, "How are professional staff affected?" "What can professional staff contribute to this effort?" "What role do professional staff play in academic units?" "Could that role be leveraged more effectively?" "Should the professional staff who teach be reclassified?"

Perhaps a monthly update of current issues and/or resolutions.

Be more available for question and comment.

Stand up for soft money positions. We are people, we have families, we pay taxes, we contribute to the local economy, we contribute to society, but we are treated as seconds from the administration. We need better representation.

Directly communicate to the professional staff regarding issues that relate to this group.

Emails that are sent out are long and confusing. Most of the information I hear pertains to faculty and academics, not staff/administrative departments.

I do not have a solution, however I feel the policies instituted by the Senate which affect staff are implemented with minimal staff input.

Provide better education as to what it provides/does for professional staff members.

I marked neutral for how the Senate evaluates the administration not as a criticism of the Senate but as a criticism of the level of seriousness the administration attaches to these evaluations. I stopped doing them because nothing ever changed. Any time Senate constituents' concerns were mentioned, those concerns were brushed aside with, "There's always someone who wants to complain." Wrong! When enough people voice a concern, it's not complaining! There really is a problem!