

DATE: 1/7/22

TO: Ajani Byrd, Dean Institutional Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

FROM: Doreen Finkelstein, Senior Research Analyst

RE: Admin Council Survey Results Fall 2021

Introduction:

Foothill College's Admin Council is composed of administrators and supervisors who meet to receive updates about the college, share information and expertise, receive leadership training, and forge connections between campus constituencies.

At the end of Fall 2021, Admin Council members were surveyed to learn about their experiences with the Admin Council and to discover potential areas of improvement. Members of the President's Cabinet were not included in the survey due to their leadership roles within the council. The appendices to this report show the survey instrument (Appendix A) and a summary of the survey responses (Appendix B).

Results Overview:

- 24 people responded to the survey, for a response rate of 71%.
- Respondents said they share information from Admin Council with their direct reports (71% agreed or strongly agreed), and that Admin Council meetings provide an opportunity to build community with other administrators and supervisors (63% agreed or strongly agreed).
- Respondents said they do not believe that Admin Council meetings facilitate their ability to
 accomplish their job responsibilities in an effective manner (79% disagreed or strongly
 disagreed), they do not believe that Admin Council meetings are generally a good use of their
 time (67% disagreed or strongly disagreed), and they do not hear critically important
 information at Admin Council meetings that they do not hear at other meetings (58% disagreed
 or strongly disagreed).
- Respondents did not agree that Admin Council meetings should always be held in person to be most effective (58% disagreed or strongly disagreed).
- The most frequent choices for scheduling Admin Council meetings were for them to be held once a month (46%) for 90 minutes (50%).
- The topics that respondents most frequently rated as "very important" to be brought to Admin Council this academic year were retention and enrollment strategies (58%), the Educational

Master Plan (42%), the Strategic Vision for Equity (42%), cross-unit collaboration (42%), and the accreditation process (38%).

- Valuable aspects of Admin Council meetings mentioned by respondents in the open-ended responses were sharing information, building relationships with other administrators and supervisors, and leveraging each other's expertise to solve problems.
- Suggestions for improving Admin Council given by respondents in the open-ended responses
 were making the meetings more efficient and focused, moving information-only items such as
 updates to email, circulating agendas and other material in advance of the meetings, and having
 clearer objectives and desired outcomes.

Results Detail:

All Admin Council members from Fall 2021 were sent an email invitation to take the survey with the exception of members of the President's Cabinet, who were excluded from the survey due to their leadership roles within the council.

The survey was sent to 34 Admin Council members and received 24 responses, for a response rate of 71%.

Current iteration of Admin Council meetings

Over half of survey respondents (n = 13, 54%) said they attended every Admin Council meeting over the past 12 months, and an additional 9 respondents (38%) said they attended most of the time. No respondents said they had not attended an Admin Council meeting within the past 12 months.

All survey respondents were next presented with a set of statements about the current iteration of Admin Council meetings, and asked to rate their level of agreement using "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree."

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they share information from Admin Council with their direct reports (n = 17, 71%), and that Admin Council meetings provide an opportunity to build community with other administrators and supervisors (n = 15, 63%).

However, when asked if Admin Council meetings facilitate their ability to accomplish their job responsibilities in an effective manner, a majority of respondents disagreed (n = 13, 54%), and an additional 6 respondents (25%) strongly disagreed. Furthermore, a majority of respondents either disagreed (n = 11, 46%) or strongly disagreed (n = 5, 21%) with the statement "Admin Council meetings are generally a good use of my time." Respondents also did not believe that they hear critically important information at Admin Council meetings that they do not hear at other meetings, with a majority disagreeing (n = 12, 50%) or strongly disagreeing (n = 2, 8%).

The last question in this section of the survey asked respondents whether they agreed that Admin Council meetings should always be held in person to be most effective. The majority of respondents disagreed (n = 10, 42%) or strongly disagreed (n = 4, 17%).

Scheduling of Admin Council meetings

Respondents were asked their general preference for how Admin Council meetings are scheduled: shorter meetings that meet more often, or longer meetings that meet less often. The majority of respondents (n = 13, 54%) said they prefer to have longer meetings that meet less often. Only 3 respondents (13%) said they prefer to have shorter meetings that meet more often. Write-in

responses to this question included having the schedule depend upon the context and needs of the college (n = 3, 13%), have shorter meetings that meet less often (n = 2, 8%) and meet once a month (n = 2, 8%) 1, 4%).

Respondents were next asked to indicate their top choices for how often Admin Council should meet and for the length of the meetings. Table 1 shows the breakdown of responses across the two questions. Respondents most preferred to meet once a month (n = 11, 46%) and to meet for 90 minutes (n = 12, 50%). When looking at the individual combinations of responses, meeting once a month for 90 minutes was the combination chosen most often (n = 6, 25%).

Table 1: Most Preferred Admin Council Schedule

	60 minutes	90 minutes	120 minutes	Other	Total for Meeting Frequency
Twice a month	0	1	0	0	1
Once a month	3	6	1	1	11
Twice a quarter	0	3	1	0	4
Once a quarter	3	2	0	0	5
Other	1	0	0	1	2
Total for Meeting Length	7	12	2	2	

Note: Totals add up to 23 because one respondent skipped these questions.

Respondents who chose "other" for these questions wanted the schedule to be driven by the purpose of the meetings:

- As needed. And no meetings if there are not items that need discussion via a meeting of large group. No meetings for the sake of holding meetings. The issues should drive if a meeting is needed or not. We should NOT be searching for items to discuss because we have a meeting scheduled . . . A meeting will last for whatever duration it is scheduled. So, need to think carefully about the topics in hand and decide meeting times based on that.
- It depends on the focus of the meetings. Again, if there are clearly stated outcomes and effective facilitation toward those outcomes, I do not mind meeting. I will note that when I came on board . . . I was not clear on the purpose of Admin Council, and I'm still not entirely clear - some meetings seemed to focus on leadership development while others seemed to focus on operational problem-solving. I did not find any of the professional development around leadership to be particularly useful. That time would have been better spent on formal on-boarding.

Importance of topics for this year's Admin Council

Respondents were next given a list of 13 topics, and asked to rate how important it is for each topic to be brought to Admin Council before the end of the academic year. Table 2 shows the number of respondents who rated each topic as "very important" or "important." The topics most frequently rated as very important were retention and enrollment strategies (n = 14, 58%), the Educational Master Plan (n = 10, 42%), the Strategic Vision for Equity (n = 10, 42%), cross-unit collaboration (n = 10, 42%), and the accreditation process (n = 9, 38%).

Table 2: Importance of Topics for Admin Council this Academic Year

	# Rated Very Important	# Rated Important	Total Very Important or Important
Retention and enrollment strategies	14	6	20
Educational Master Plan	10	10	20
Strategic Vision for Equity	10	8	18
Cross-unit collaboration	10	7	17
Accreditation process	9	11	20
Budget/finance updates	5	18	23
Leadership and management training	7	7	14
Guided Pathways	6	10	16
Instruction updates	2	15	17
Student support services updates	2	15	17
Budgeting training	5	3	8
College mission statement	2	6	8
Conflict resolution training	2	3	5

Respondents were also invited to write in any other topics they felt were very important to bring to Admin Council this academic year that were not listed. Two respondents (8%) said return to campus, while the following were each said by one person (4%): collective bargaining, shared governance, general issues that come up and have a large effect on the campus, and a clear understanding of our students and how best to actualize the college's mission, vision, and values.

Finally, two respondents gave longer responses on what they believe is very important to bring to Admin Council this academic year:

- 1) Discussion of major challenges we are trying to problem solve. 2) Discussion of what is working and what is not working at the college. 3) Strategies for campus collaboration. 4) Strategies for boosting campus morale. 5) Training on hiring and search process (not the EO training, but how to develop questions, interview format etc.) 6) Process improvements-identify processes/procedures that are not working and develop strategies for reworking them. 7) Training on how to run/lead meetings.
- For the topics above, I would like to see focused discussion on specific aspects of each item, with stated outcomes and deliverables. I.e., if we're talking about Guided Pathways, what specific aspect, what is the problem to be solved, what is the deliverable/outcome desired from the Admin Council? Same with things like the Strategic Vision for Equity.

Value of Admin Council meetings

Respondents were asked, "What do you value, if anything, about attending Admin Council meetings?" Aspects of Admin Council meetings that were commonly brought up as valuable were sharing information, building relationships with other administrators and supervisors, and leveraging each other's expertise to solve problems:

- Almost nothing. I used to enjoy meeting colleagues when we were in person. In the Zoom world- these meetings are a disaster. Most people don't have their cameras on. It is impossible to know who is engaged and not.
- Build relationships, share information.
- College-wide and Area updates and information.
- Honestly, I have not attended enough to know. My position is not so connected to the issues discussed, so I don't feel I get much out of these meetings.
- I do appreciate meeting and collaborating across units. I think there is great value in coming together to discuss, learn, solve problems, and identify opportunities. However, in the larger group settings, this has seemed very surface-level, with seemingly little follow-through. I also noticed that very few people do most of the talking, making the opportunities to really get to know our admin colleagues limited. Once we went to Zoom, most people would turn their videos off. Admin Council did not seem like a particularly safe space these past few years.
- I value the opportunity to interact and collaborate with coworkers.
- If there isn't a decision that is needed to be made, then there shouldn't be a need for a meeting.
- It is a form of community with administrators. We rarely get to see each other on campus.
- It's a good opportunity to hear what other areas are doing.
- Meeting other administrators and managers; knowing who they are and having the ability to network with them.
- Opportunity to share college-level information that affects all units. Opportunity to ask
 questions to better understand college-level context across issues.
- Opportunity to work with colleagues-get to know them to develop relationship skills and to network for all of our mutual benefits for students/programs.
- Receiving the context, information, and direction I need to advise and guide my team. Also, the opportunity to provide feedback to Admin Council about the work [of my team]. This feedback loop is crucial for everyone.
- Relationships, share info.
- The potential for community building. We just need to actually build in time to do so.
- The time to collaborate and leverage the expertise of each other in problem solving and improving systems to support students and colleagues.
- Value the times when we can troubleshoot a problem. Resources are sometimes available in another area and we would not know that unless brought up at these meetings.

Improving Admin Council

Respondents were asked, "If you could make changes to improve Admin Council, what changes would you make?" Common themes that came up in the open-ended responses were making the meetings more efficient and focused, moving information-only items such as updates to email, circulating agendas and other material in advance of the meetings, and having clearer objectives and desired outcomes:

- If possible, I would send out the agenda at least a few days in advance of a meeting so that there is time to prepare for the meeting and maximize the productiveness of the conversations held during the meetings.
- 1) Get every person in the room to contribute and participate. 2) If by Zoom, mandate that all cameras must be on. 3) Avoid Zoom meetings. 4) Only call meetings when there are topics needing the group. 5) Announce the agenda 72 hours prior and give people the option to attend or not depending on whether they feel they can contribute to the meeting or not. 6) Do not feel compelled to schedule meetings for duration that is a multiple of 30 minutes. If a meeting requires 45 minutes, that is ok. If a meeting needs 1 hour and 20 minutes, that is ok. 7) There is no point in having regularly scheduled meetings. If there are no items to discuss, we shouldn't be searching for topics. 8) Facilitation of the meeting should be rotated and shared by the entire council. 9) Need a shared file where people can add topics for future meetings. 10) Meeting notes need to be made available. The note taker role should also be rotated. 11) There should be concrete action items at the end of the meeting. 12) If there are any trainings scheduled, these need to be conducted by an expert in that field and not some random person.
- Better space, more room, more time, as meeting feels rushed every time.
- Discussion about topics more than only reporting out, but some reporting out is good. Most of the reporting could be done by e-mail.
- Make a decision, solve a problem, get feedback, reflect/generate ideas, etc. Have clear outcomes for each agenda item. Move from primarily information sharing to action items model for meetings.
- Make it meaningful.
- More focused meetings. Staying on agenda. Discussion about application of information shared. Clearer expectations about members' roles. Identify intended goals of Council.
- More opportunities for collaboration would be appreciated. I suspect returning to campus will help with this, but using some of the time to encourage collaboration among supervisors/managers/admins seems like a good use of everyone's time.
- More sharing out and updates from individual areas. Make the council for administrators only (not supervisors). Restrict conversation to high level discussions that aren't happening at other meetings. Right now with so many of us in so many of the same meetings, it feels we are talking about the same things multiple ways.
- No part of any meeting should be used for "updates." Unless there is a question to be
 answered or a problem to be discussed/solved, an email would probably suffice. I did not find
 the leadership trainings useful because they were too vague (e.g., red energy/black energy).
 What I really needed was training in specific management strategies, processes, practices, etc.

So I think leadership/management training can be very important and valuable if it really helps us do our work effectively . . . We need clear and focused agendas, with clearly stated discussion points and expected outcomes, sent out at least 48 hours ahead of the meetings. Any preparatory information should be sent out with the agenda. Understanding it can be hard to read things ahead of meetings, perhaps set aside the first 20-30 minutes of the meeting to read. (This would justify a meeting longer than 60 minutes.) If anyone has already read the information, they can show up after the reading time. I think there are some facilitation strategies that could be implemented to ensure a wider range of participation by all participants.

- Thought leadership such as when Thuy used Admin Council meetings to develop the Equity program.
- To move away from a report back but to elicit the voice of each member.
- Virtual meetings, especially for winter and spring.
- Would like to tackle more college problems and strategize how to move forward.

Other comments

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to make any other last comments that they wished to share about Admin Council:

- I have said this before and I will repeat: I could miss any of these meetings and really miss nothing. I would love to be in a situation where if I miss a meeting, I really need to be reading the meeting notes to catch up on things I missed. We should, please not be using meeting time for UPDATES. Updates can be sent prior to meetings via an email and a brief time allocated at the meeting for discussions or clarifications about the updates. Need to define the purpose of the council and what the council is trying to accomplish. Need to absolutely avoid duplication of content (as in- an item that was already discussed at another meeting) during council meetings.
- I would love to see more opportunities to simply break bread and socialize with my administrative colleagues. It builds the relationship foundation on which real collaborative work can occur.
- In general, there are too many meetings and not enough time to complete our work within business hours. Pressure to work evenings and weekends to stay on top of everything. Can updates be sent by email instead of meeting?
- There is a lot of potential for this space. While I often look forward to Admin Council, I sometimes leave wondering what I gained. I am also sometimes unsure of what can be shared with [my group] or if the information even impacts [my group]. There are ways we can invest attendees better and set up attendees for successful engagement by providing more preparation and clearer instructions on how they will participate. I wonder how this space can make us better leaders and a stronger advocates for the college.
- Would only have longer meetings that meet less often if there are appropriate agenda items to discuss.

Methodology:

The survey was administered online through Remark survey software. All 34 Admin Council members in Fall '21 who were not members of the President's Cabinet were sent an email invitation to take the survey. Non-respondents were sent two follow-up invitations. The survey ran from Dec. 8-17, 2021.

Appendix A — Survey Instrument:



President's Cabinet wants to understand how Admin Council members feel about Admin Council meetings in order to improve the experience. Given the membership size of Admin Council, we strongly encourage everyone to respond to this survey. This survey is confidential, and only Institutional Research & Planning will have access to individual survey responses. Only aggregate information will be shared out, and this information will only be used for improvement purposes.

Questions? Concerns? Contact Doreen Finkelstein, Senior Research Analyst, at finkelsteindoreen@fhda.edu

This survey contains fewer than 10 questions and should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your feedback!

1. In the last 12 months, how often did you attend Admin Council meetings? in order to proceed with the survey.)	(A response to this question is required
O Every time	
O Most of the time	
O Some of the time	
O None of the time	
Next	

FH IRP 12.06.21



1a. For the following, respond according to your experience with the current iteration of Admin Council meetings. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I hear critically important information at Admin Council meetings I do not hear at other meetings.	0	0	0	0
I share information from Admin Council meetings with my direct reports.	0	0	0	0
Admin Council meetings provide me an opportunity to build community with other administrators and supervisors.	0	0	0	0
Admin Council meetings facilitate my ability to accomplish my job responsibilities in an effective manner.	0	0	0	0
Admin Council meetings are generally a good use of my time.	0	0	0	0
Admin Council meetings should always be held in person to be most effective.	0	0	0	0
Next				

FH IRP 12.06.21



2. What is your general preference for how A	dmin Council meetings	are scheduled?		
O Have shorter meetings and meet more	often			
O Have longer meetings and meet less of				
O Other (please briefly describe):				
Indicate your top choice for how often Adn Once a quarter	nin Council should meet	::		
O Two times a quarter				
Once a month				
O Two times a month				
O Other (please briefly describe):				
 4. Indicate your top choice for how long Adm 60 minutes 90 minutes 120 minutes 	in Council should meet	each time:		
O Other (please briefly describe):				
5. In the table below, rate how important it is end of the academic year:		3 .	rought to Admin (Slightly	
	Very Important	Important	Important	Not Important
Accreditation process	0	0	0	0
Cross-unit collaboration	0	0	0	0
Retention and enrollment strategies	0	0	0	0
Guided Pathways	0	0	0	0
Strategic Vision for Equity	0	0	0	0
Educational Master Plan	0	0	0	0
College mission statement	0	0	0	0
Instruction updates	0	0	0	0
Student support services updates	0	0	0	0
Budget/finance updates	0	0	0	0
Conflict resolution training	0	0	0	0
Budgeting training	0	0	0	0
Leadership and management training	0	0	0	0
Are there any other topics not listed in the ta Council before the end of the academic year?			mportant" to be t	prought to Admin

6. What do you value, if anything, about attending Admin Council meetings?

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you could make changes to	improve Admin Council, what changes would you	ı make?
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ny other comments you wou	uld like to share about Admin Council?	<u> </u>

FH IRP 12.06.21

Appendix B —Summary of Survey Responses:

1. In the last 12 months, how often did you attend Admin Council meetings? (A response to this question is required in order to proceed with the survey.)

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 1.54
Every time	13	54.17	
Most of the time	9	37.50	
Some of the time	2	8.33	
None of the time	0	0.00	

I share information from Admin Council meetings with my direct reports.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.25
Strongly Agree	3	12.50	
Agree	14	58.33	
Disagree	5	20.83	
Strongly Disagree	2	8.33	

Admin Council meetings facilitate my ability to accomplish my job responsibilities in an effective manner.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 3.04
Strongly Agree	0	0.00	
Agree	5	20.83	
Disagree	13	54.17	
Strongly Disagree	6	25.00	

Admin Council meetings should always be held in person to be most effective.

Response	Frequency 0	Percen	t Mean: 2.78
Strongly Agree		0.00	
Agree	9	37.50	
Disagree	10	41.67	
Strongly Disagree	4	16.67	
Invalid	1	4.17	

I hear critically important information at Admin Council meetings I do not hear at other meetings.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.58
Strongly Agree	2	8.33	
Agree	8	33.33	
Disagree	12	50.00	
Strongly Disagree	2	8.33	

Admin Council meetings provide me an opportunity to build community with other administrators and supervisors.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.42
Strongly Agree	1	4.17	
Agree	14	58.33	
Disagree	7	29.17	
Strongly Disagree	2	8.33	

Admin Council meetings are generally a good use of my time.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.83
Strongly Agree	1	4.17	
Agree	7	29.17	
Disagree	11	45.83	
Strongly Disagree	5	20.83	

2. What is your general preference for how Admin Council meetings are scheduled?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.17
Have shorter meetings and meet more often	3	12.50	
Have longer meetings and meet less often	13	54.17	
Other please briefly describe:	7	29.17	
Invalid	1	4.17	

3. Indicate your top choice for how often Admin Council should meet:

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.61
Once a quarter	5	20.83	
Two times a quarter	4	16.67	
Once a month	11	45.83	
Two times a month	1	4.17	
Other please briefly describe:	2	8.33	
Invalid	1	4.17	

4. Indicate your top choice for how long Admin Council should meet each time:

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.04
60 minutes	7	29.17	
90 minutes	12	50.00	
120 minutes	2	8.33	
Other please briefly describe:	2	8.33	
Invalid	1	4.17	

Accreditation process

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 1.73
Very Important	9	37.50	
Important	11	45.83	
Slightly Important	1	4.17	
Not Important	1	4.17	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Cross-unit collaboration

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 1.77
Very Important	10	41.67	
Important	7	29.17	
Slightly Important	5	20.83	
Not Important	0	0.00	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Retention and enrollment strategies

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 1.50
Very Important	14	58.33	
Important	6	25.00	
Slightly Important	1	4.17	
Not Important	1	4.17	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Guided Pathways

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.18
Very Important	6	25.00	
Important	10	41.67	
Slightly Important	2	8.33	
Not Important	4	16.67	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Strategic Vision for Equity

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 1.82
Very Important	10	41.67	
Important	8	33.33	
Slightly Important	2	8.33	
Not Important	2	8.33	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Educational Master Plan

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 1.78
Very Important	10	41.67	
Important	10	41.67	
Slightly Important	1	4.17	
Not Important	2	8.33	
Invalid	1	4.17	

College mission statement

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.81
Very Important	2	8.33	
Important	6	25.00	
Slightly Important	7	29.17	
Not Important	6	25.00	
Invalid	3	12.50	

Instruction updates

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.27
Very Important	2	8.33	
Important	15	62.50	
Slightly Important	2	8.33	
Not Important	3	12.50	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Student support services updates

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.32
Very Important	2	8.33	
Important	15	62.50	
Slightly Important	1	4.17	
Not Important	4	16.67	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Conflict resolution training

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 3.05
Very Important	2	8.33	
Important	3	12.50	
Slightly Important	9	37.50	
Not Important	8	33.33	
Invalid	2	8.33	

Leadership and management training

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.17
Very Important	7	29.17	
Important	7	29.17	
Slightly Important	7	29.17	
Not Important	2	8.33	
Invalid	1	4.17	

Budget/finance updates

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 1.78
Very Important	5	20.83	
Important	18	75.00	
Slightly Important	0	0.00	
Not Important	0	0.00	
Invalid	1	4.17	

Budgeting training

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean: 2.57
Very Important	5	20.83	
Important	3	12.50	
Slightly Important	9	37.50	
Not Important	4	16.67	
Invalid	3	12.50	