

USE OF BEST PRACTICES IN THE HIGHER
EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION
Report on Best Practices Survey
October 2017



Use of Best Practices in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission

This report presents results of a survey of members of the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) that was conducted in September 2017 to assess their use of best practices. The questions were designed as part of the HECC agency's Annual Performance Progress Report (APPR), which summarizes the agency's 16 key performance measures (KPMs) for the Legislature. The results of the Commissioner survey inform KPM 16, the percentage of board or commission best practices met by the HECC Commission.

The survey included 24 rated questions, each reflecting a best practice, and four open-ended questions that allowed for additional reflection. The KPM measure included the 24 rated questions and summarized the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission used that practice. This report provides a complete description of the survey results, including answers to the open-ended questions not included in the KPM measure.

The survey was sent to all 13 Commissioners serving on the Commission at the time of the survey, nine of whom responded. All nine respondents answered 19 of the 24 rated questions, and eight of the nine respondents answered the remaining five rated questions. All nine respondents answered each of the four open-ended questions.

The rated questions were:

Question

As an Individual Commissioner:

- 1 I am able to devote the time and energy necessary to actively participate in Commission meetings.
- 2 The amount of time expected of commissioners to prepare and participate in Commission meetings is reasonable.
- 3 The amount of time expected of commissioners outside of Commission meetings is reasonable.
- 4 The Commission is effectively utilizing my skills and expertise.
- 5 I can speak candidly at Commission meetings.
- 6 I can participate in subcommittee meetings in which I am not a subcommittee member.
- 7 Serving on this Commission is satisfying.

As a Commission:

- 8 The Commission as a whole has a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities.
- 9 The Commission understands and respects the distinction between its responsibilities and those of management.
- 10 Commissioners actively participate in discussions
- 11 The Commission has diversity of representation (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, vocation, etc.).
- 12 Commissioners listen to and value each other's comments.
- 13 The leadership of the Commission is effective.
- 14 Public comment during the public comment section of the meeting and during action items is a valuable opportunity to gather input.

- 15 The Commission ... Provides insight and guidance to the HECC's strategic direction.
 - 16 The Commission ... Ensures the agency's fiscal integrity by monitoring the agency's financial policies and operating performance and by submitting the agency's biennial budgets.
 - 17 The Commission ... Assesses the performance of the Executive Director on an annual basis
 - 18 The Commission ... Follows the highest standards of fiduciary duty and avoids conflict of interest in decision-making
 - 19 The Commission ... Operates in a transparent and open fashion.
- Commission meetings...
- 20 Have agendas and materials that are distributed far enough in advance to give them adequate consideration.
 - 21 Rely on written and presentation materials that provide the right type and amount of information and are clearly written.
 - 22 Cover the right combination of information-sharing, discussion, decision-making, and board education.
 - 23 Allow enough time for the exchange of ideas and thoughtful deliberation.
 - 24 Strike the right balance between long-range, strategic matters and routine matters of oversight.

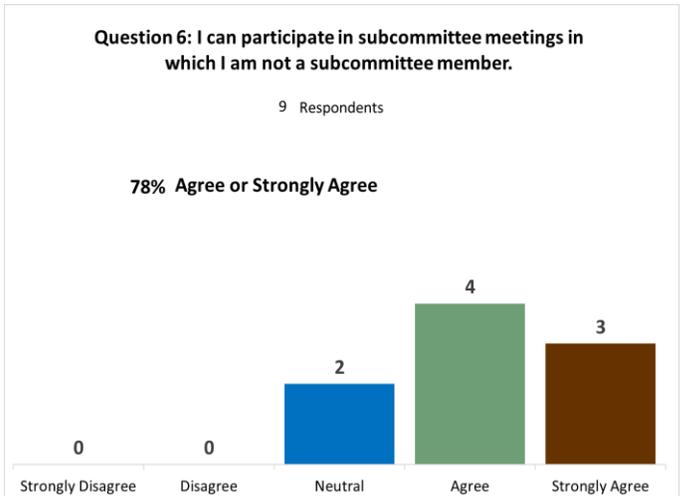
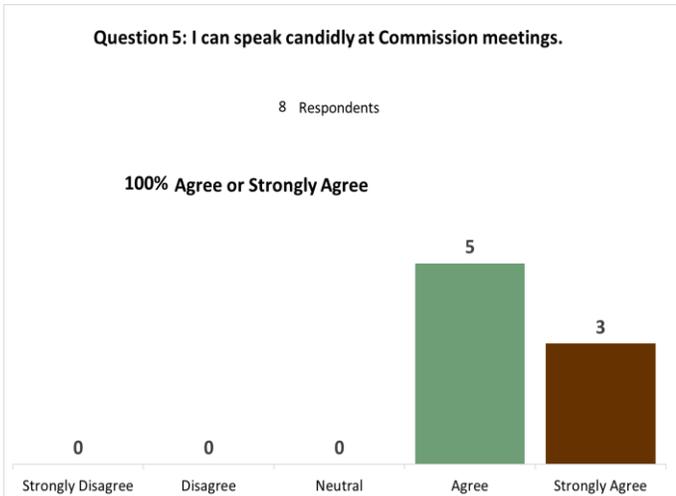
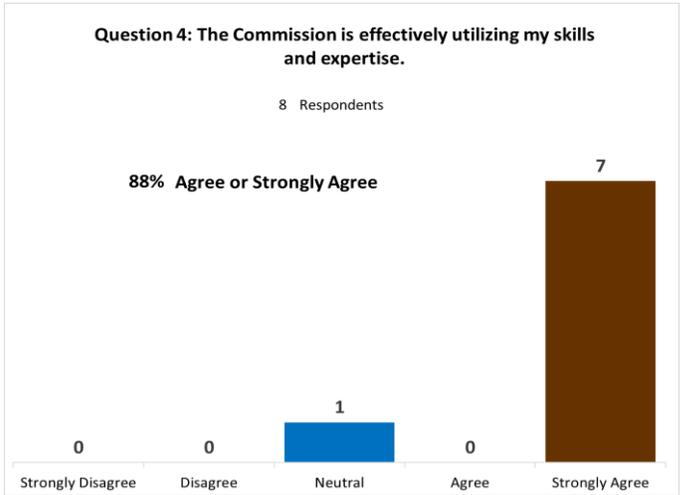
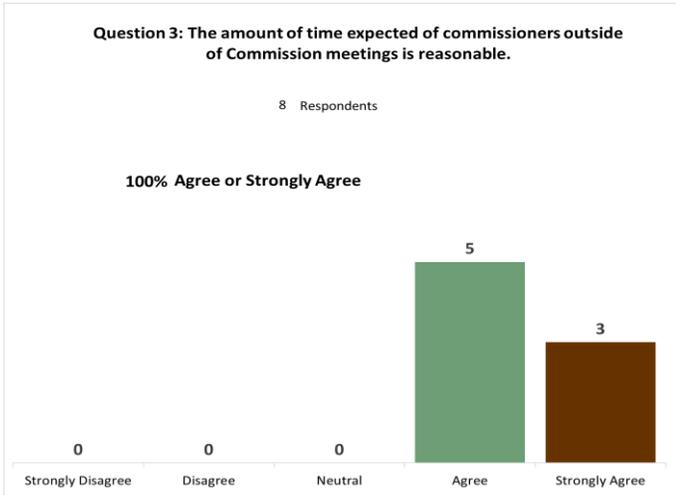
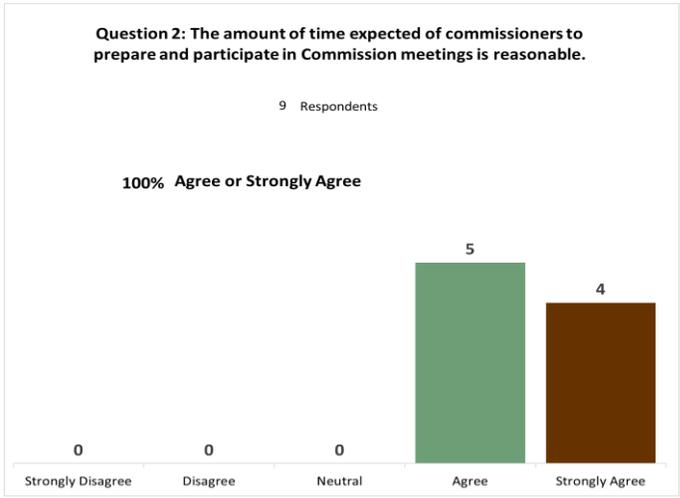
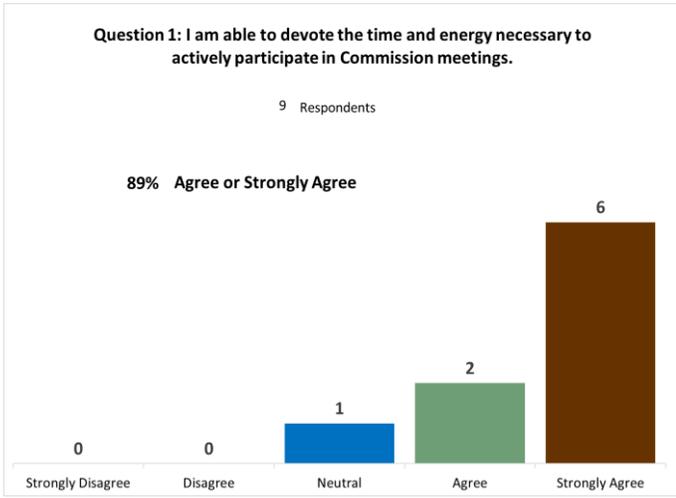
The rated questions had possible answers of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. Across the rated questions, 90 percent of Commissioners who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they and the Commission followed the best practices described. For 10 of the 24 rated questions, 100 percent of Commissioners agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission followed the best practice. For eight of the 24 rated questions, more than 85 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission followed the best practice. For the remaining six of the measures, less than 85 percent of Commissioners agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission followed the best practice. Detailed results for each question are shown in the subsequent pages.

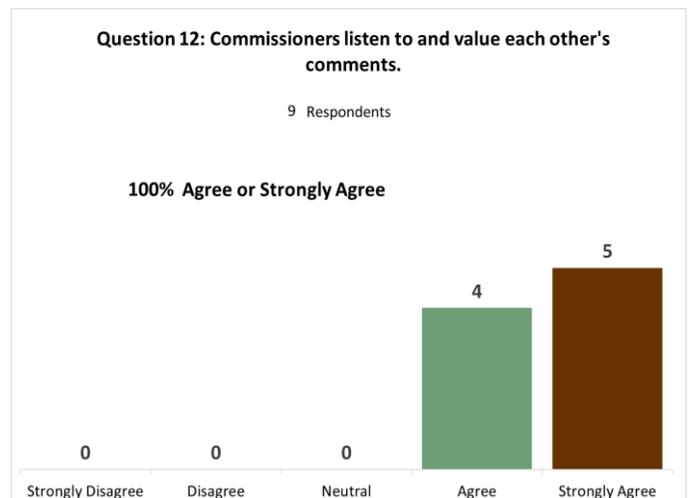
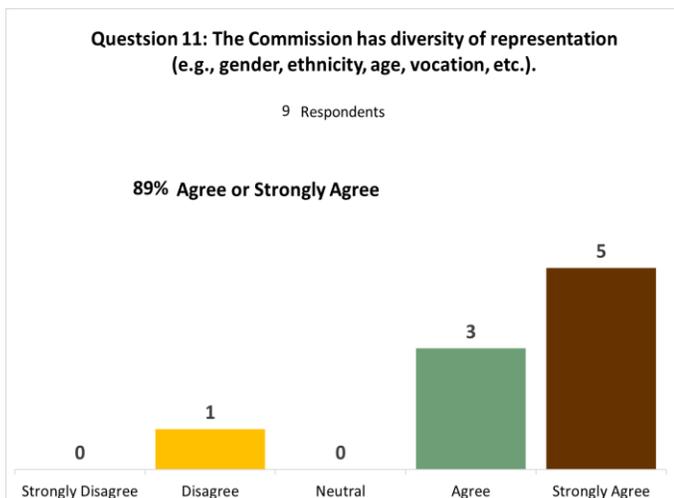
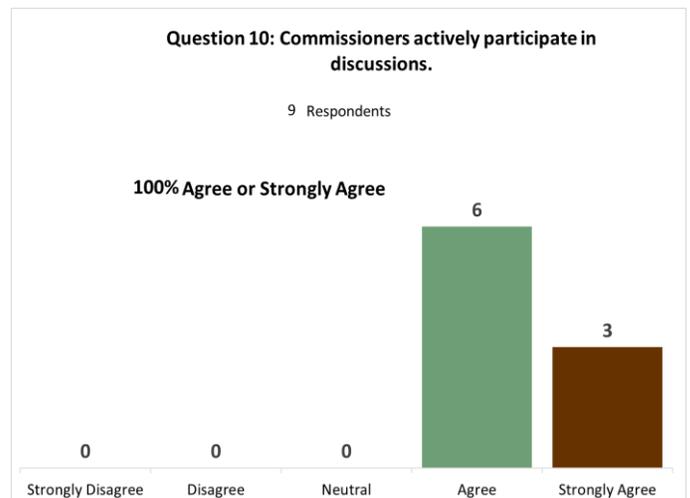
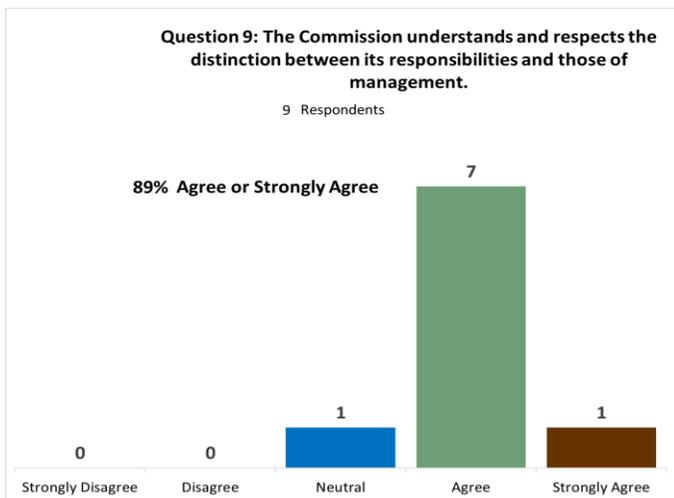
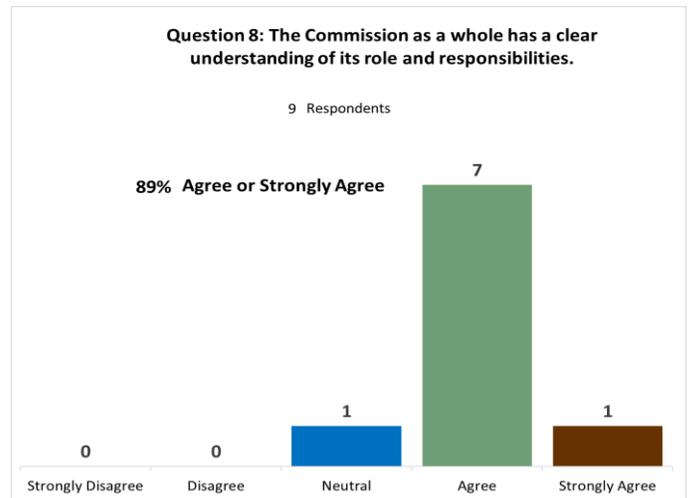
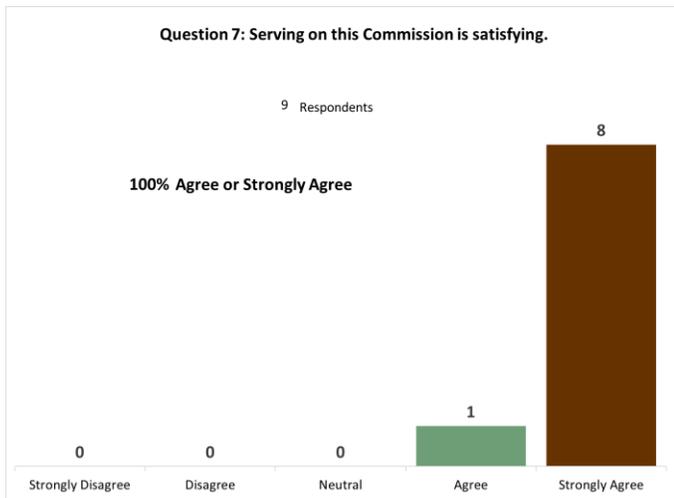
The open-ended questions were:

Question

- 25 What do you find most satisfying in your role as a Commissioner?
- 26 What do you find least satisfying in your role as a Commissioner?
- 27 What can HECC staff do to enable you to serve more effectively or with greater satisfaction?
- 28 In the future, I would like to see the Commission ...

Commissioners' answers to these questions reveal broad satisfaction and gratitude for the work and development of the Commission, for their work as individual Commissioners, and for HECC agency staff. In addition, some Commissioners expressed a desire to more deeply engage in the long-term issues facing higher education, including affordability and the work to accomplish 40-40-20, and to increase stakeholder involvement across the state. All responses to these questions can be found at the end of this report.

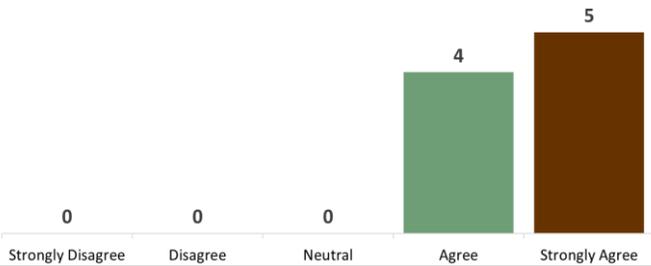




Question 13: The leadership of the Commission is effective.

9 Respondents

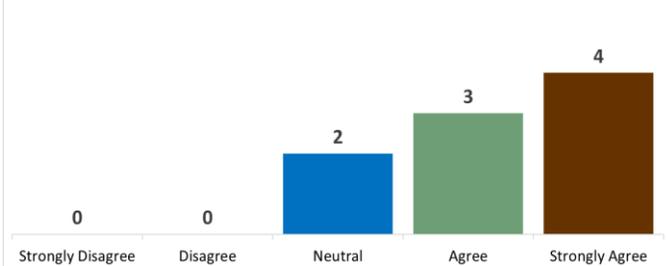
100% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 14: Public comment during the public comment section of the meeting and during action items is a valuable opportunity to gather input.

9 Respondents

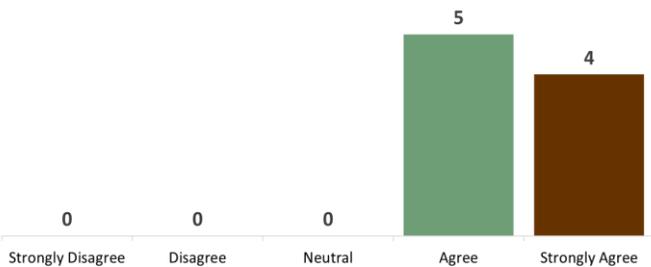
78% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 15: The Commission provides insight and guidance to the HECC's strategic direction.

9 Respondents

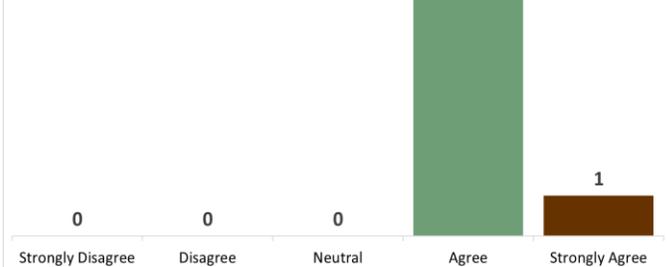
100% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 16: The Commission ensures the agency's fiscal integrity by monitoring the agency's financial policies and operating performance and by submitting the agency's biennial budgets.

9 Respondents

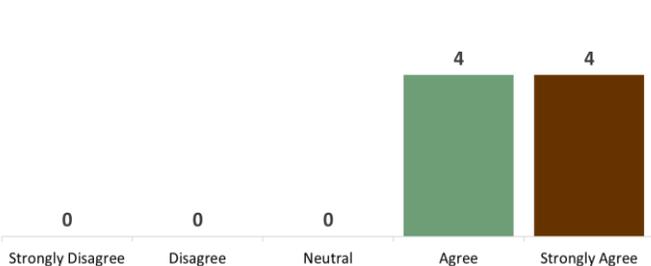
100% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 17: The Commission assesses the performance of the Executive Director on an annual basis

8 Respondents

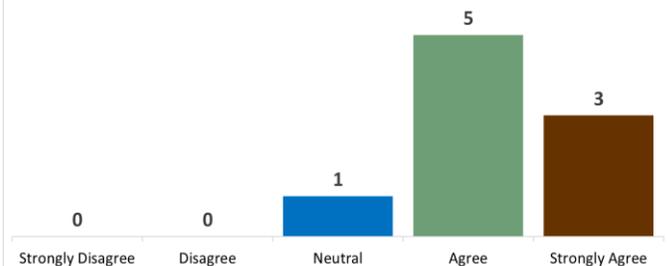
100% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 18: The Commission follows the highest standards of fiduciary duty and avoids conflict of interest in decision-making.

9 Respondents

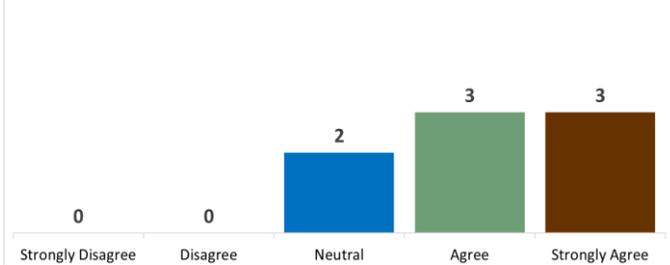
89% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 19: The Commission operates in a transparent and open fashion.

8 Respondents

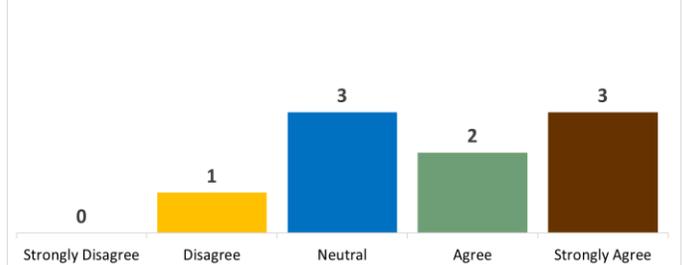
75% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 20: Commission meetings have agendas and materials that are distributed far enough in advance to give them adequate consideration.

9 Respondents

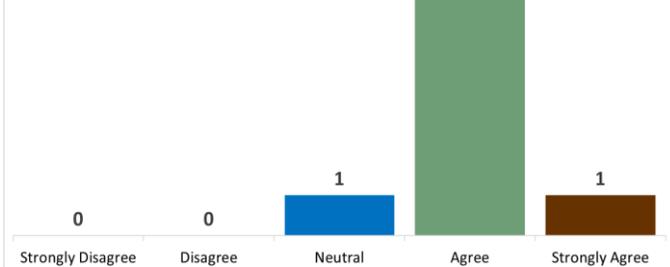
56% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 21: Commission meetings rely on written and presentation materials that provide the right type and amount of information and are clearly written.

9 Respondents

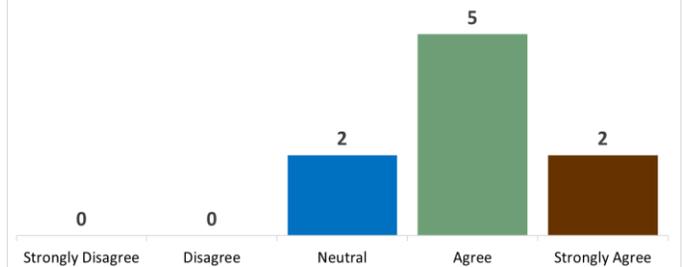
89% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 22: Commission meetings cover the right combination of information-sharing, discussion, decision-making, and board education.

9 Respondents

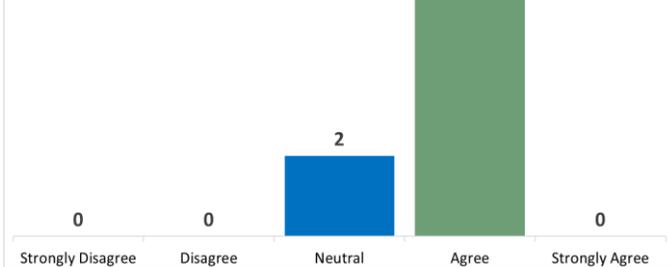
78% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 23: Commission meetings allow enough time for the exchange of ideas and thoughtful deliberation.

9 Respondents

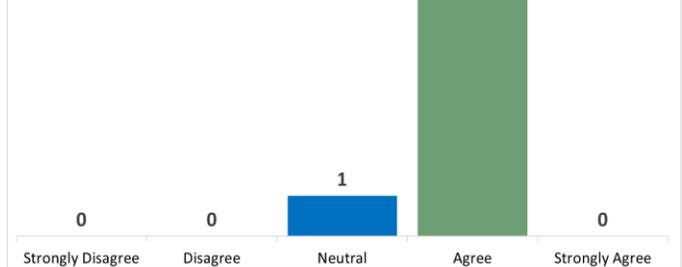
78% Agree or Strongly Agree



Question 24: Commission meetings strike the right balance between long-range, strategic matters and routine matters of oversight.

9 Respondents

89% Agree or Strongly Agree



Q25: What do you find most satisfying in your role as a Commissioner?

1. Being part of a commission that is implementing policy in a way that aims to be student centered, and uses data and gathers input from different stakeholders
2. Being strategic and requiring outcomes.
3. Interactions between Commissioners and Higher Ed officials
4. Making a difference to all students and provide a vision for Oregon students and educators.
5. Working into the strategic plan and connecting our mission and vision. The Commission examines the difficult aspects of higher education as well as what's working.
6. Thinking, discussing, deliberating. Helping spark change that support students.
7. The ability to drill deep on the issues facing students and universities to able to offer solutions
8. The ability to think and work with others to respond to the evolving needs of colleges and universities and participate in complex problem solving. Being part of a committed team.
9. Professional development, i.e., learning and serving.

Q26: What do you find least satisfying in your role as a Commissioner?

1. Cannot possibly be involved in every issue myself
2. The travel and time
3. Apparently low involvement of some Commissioners
4. That we don't have enough time to discuss all the educational issues.
5. Nothing--I truly enjoy every aspect of this position.
6. Nothing really -- sometimes routine items get a bit boring, but I love the work
7. None
8. Not being able to address some of the longstanding systemic issues facing higher education- funding, infrastructure, student aid, collaboration...
9. Even though my time outside of the commission meetings is respected by staff et al, I wouldn't mind more information distributed and staff's plans & analysis in the days and weeks between commission meetings.

Q27: What can HECC staff do to enable you to serve more effectively or with greater satisfaction?

1. Good question! The few times I have contacted staff they have been very helpful. I think we may be limited by a dearth of data and insufficient number of staff that could serve to inform us better.
2. Not much. Receiving materials earlier would help. Being more candid about potential issues or problems.
3. Prompt (earlier) notification of meeting place, time, agenda and support material
4. Provide more updates of the projects we approve or the recommendations we make.
5. Sometimes the reimbursement gets months behind, and that can be a little daunting keeping track of what has been paid and what is outstanding.
6. Great staff -- I like the policy framing and development most. Need to keep us focused on the big questions regarding our goals and what it will take to achieve them.
7. The HECC staff is great. Anytime I needed information they provided to me.
8. This year has been a personally challenging year for me, which has affected my participation. I am very committed to the work of HECC and feel that the staff is extremely supportive and effective.
9. Continue regular communication and involvement with individual commissioners (of course without violating public meeting laws, i.e., not conducting business by phone, email, or in person).

Q28: In the future, I would like to see the Commission ...

1. Continue our in-depth discussion of strategic plan issues. Look at some of the answers and comments in the Executive Director's evaluation that also apply to the commission as a whole.
2. More representation from outside of the valley and a business person who hires graduates.
3. Especially the Chair, make sure (by asking their opinion?) that all members are involved.
4. Engage with educators that are not faculty or administrators. But professionals who help students with the financial aid process, advising, admissions, counselors etc.
5. Move beyond the Salem and Portland preference for meetings. Although very difficult when Session is occurring, going to the various campuses to make everyone feel there is an opportunity to connect
6. Come up with a fiscal plan and funding structure to ensure that every Oregonian has access to a 2 or 4 year degree. 2. Lead the alignment of high school, community colleges and universities to ensure that 40-40-20 is reached. 3. Identify and promote new education delivery models that are effective and provide high quality, engaging learning experiences at a reasonable cost.
7. Tackle the issue of funding not only higher education but education overall in the state. In my opinion we need to get more resources.
8. Continue to evolve in the sophistication of our approach. I really appreciate the direction in which our leadership culture is growing. I would like to see us continue to pay attention to the design for our meetings and create opportunities for shared learning. I would also like to see us be more attentive to balancing roles as commissioners and any advocacy responsibilities we may feel individually.
9. Grow in stature through its respect from, and respect of, the institutions, students, and stakeholders it serves
10. (Comment submitted as a separate follow-up) I think it would be of value for the Commissioners to have an open conversation, in a retreat setting, regarding how we can differentiate between our personal (privately held) perspectives and our leadership perspectives. I believe at time these dynamics become muddled. I believe our integrity and credibility as a leadership body will be influenced by the degree to which we manage looking at issues based on the charge we have been given by the State. I think such a conversation will at least allow us to explore the challenges we face as leaders in our Commissioner roles and advocacy responsibilities that we might feel in other spheres.

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