Mission College
Organizational Structure Review
Summary of Survey Results

Spring 2011

Prepared by the Mission College Office of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
**Purpose**

In Academic Year 2009-2010, Mission College began to implement organizational changes approved by College governance bodies and supported by District staff. This first phase focused on the realigning of all instructional divisions, assigning Dean support for each division while retaining the established Division Chair and Department Chair structure. The purpose of this survey was to provide an opportunity for all college members to reflect on their experience over the last year, and to provide feedback on what they have experienced to inform future planning and improve organizational effectiveness.

**Background**

Mission College initiated a review of its organizational structure following receipt of the Accrediting Commission’s recommendations based on the 2007 Self-Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Accreditation Team Visit. Specifically, Recommendation 7 stated, “The team recommends that the college develop organizational structures and strategies to effectively provide administrative support and oversight necessary to accomplish the institution’s mission and purpose.” As part of this review, the College and District commissioned the California Collegiate Brain Trust to conduct an evaluation and make recommendations in this area as well as on other practices.

A number of recommendations came out of the Brain Trust report and subsequent discussions within college participatory governance groups. Although areas were identified across the college, the primary focus for the revised structure was within the area of Instruction. Instruction was noted as having a particularly unwieldy structure with too many direct reports to the Vice President of Instruction, leading to inefficiencies in operation and unrealistic expectations of oversight. The Brain Trust further identified that Mission College was not meeting typical enrollment efficiencies and was spending more on non-contractual release time than was typical for similar colleges.

Shifting of some administrative functions from a release-time method to full-time administrators was proposed to provide increased oversight and accountability with regards to legislative and legal mandates, enrollment management, and a streamlined flow of communication within the Office of Instruction. Use of full-time administrators for these functions would provide twelve-month coverage for administrative duties. Further, reductions in faculty release time were seen as an opportunity for skilled full-time faculty members to work with students in the classroom and maintain continuity of their programs. As outlined in Academic Senate minutes (4/23/09), the revised structure was also intended to improve transparency, provide more ‘checks and balances,’ and address shortcomings with the “peer-to-peer” system of Division Chairs. Finally, the revised structure was proposed to better align departments within instructional divisions.

As part of the discussions, college participatory governance groups reviewed multiple proposals before adopting the final proposal. The adopted proposal was selected as a balance of addressing identified needs with minimal financial impact. Financial data provided indicated that the recommended
reorganization would result in cost savings. While cost savings were not the primary motivation for the restructuring, the College moved forward with this proposal with an expectation of reduced costs and improved efficiency.

**Survey Implementation**

The survey was administered online in late Spring 2011 and announced via email to subscribers of the All Mission College email distribution list. Participants were asked to describe their affiliation with the College, however all responses were submitted anonymously. An initial announcement was followed by a reminder part-way into the survey period. In total, 98 people responded, including 44 full-time faculty, 27 classified staff, 18 administrators/managers/supervisors, and 9 associate faculty. Including full-time and associate faculty, faculty represent 54% of all respondents. Participants mostly came from instructional areas (58%), with approximately half as many participants, 25%, from student services, and 17% from other areas. Over three-quarters of all survey participants (79%) have been with Mission College for more than five years.

**Summary of Recurring Themes**

A number of recurring themes emerge from the survey responses. These themes are observable across the different questions, but do not reflect the entirety of responses. The feedback provided demonstrates a high level of variation, but even with that variation, certain themes are identifiable.

**Theme: Unclear roles and responsibilities**

**Summary**

Responses repeatedly show that there is confusion and ambiguity about the roles and responsibilities within the updated organizational structure. Survey respondents indicate a lack of understanding as to the distinction of responsibilities between Department Chairs, Division Chairs and Deans—particularly indicating a lack of understanding of the activities and responsibilities of the Deans. This confusion is further noted at the classified staff level, as the updated structure has created confusion as to which staff are assigned to support which areas.

A related concern is that the “additional layers” have led to more complicated and time-consuming processes; other respondents, however, felt that processes have become more streamlined and effective.
Discussion

It is not clear from the written responses whether the concerns raised are due to the actual structures themselves, or due to a lack of communication regarding the revised structures. In simple terms, is this a problem on paper, or a problem in practice? Although Deans and Division Chairs have revised Job Descriptions, it may be the case that these descriptions do not adequately describe or delineate daily operational duties. Alternatively, it may be the case that existing documents are sufficient, but communication and subsequent understanding are lacking. Further, a lack of understanding of administrative and managerial roles and responsibilities may well have preceded the revision of the organizational structure rather than emerging as a result of the new organizational structure.

Theme: Concerns with implementing the reorganization at a time of workforce reductions

Summary

Several responses highlighted concerns that this phase of the reorganization was occurring at the same time as workforce reductions. More specifically, several respondents questioned the initiation of updated high-level managerial positions at the same time as losses in classified staff. The perception is that administration was growing while positions which interact most with students and faculty were being reduced.

Combining these concerns with the confusion over roles and responsibilities, some respondents further questioned whether all of the levels of administrative functions (Department Chairs, Division Chairs, and Deans) were necessary and whether these “layers” improved or hindered functionality.

Discussion

Whereas the changes from the structural reorganization and the reductions in workforce were completely separate processes, survey respondents perceive the two processes as linked.

The reorganization was initiated due to issues identified in the Accrediting Commission Recommendations and subsequent recommendations from the California Collegiate Brain Trust. Structural changes were made as a response to these recommendations and approved by the College and District.

These changes included the replacement or revision of existing positions into higher level positions with increased areas of responsibility and consolidated administrative functions within the Office of Instruction.

Alternatively, reductions in workforce were identified by the College due to reduced funding at the State level and were part of an overall District effort to reduce total budget. Although these processes were distinct, they did occur in a similar timeframe and many respondents voiced concern that some positions were being created just as other positions were being identified for elimination. These
concerns may also be a product of the stated confusion on roles and responsibilities, as it is hard to identify the benefits of unknown activities. In contrast, positions that were lost as a part of reductions were known quantities.

Theme: Concern that workloads have become overwhelming at all levels

Summary

Another repeated theme is that workloads have become overwhelming. This concern is not limited to any one group—as it was noted for classified staff, staff in support roles to managers, instructional faculty, Department and Division Chairs, and Deans. Several respondents indicated the need for additional staffing at the classified and support levels, including SOCs and the Office of Instruction staffing.

Discussion

While there was a strong recurring theme of increased workloads, the reasons cited for the overwhelming workloads varied. In some cases, survey respondents identified that there are fewer staff to do the same amount of work, thus resulting in increased workloads. In the case of Area Deans, it was noted that the persons in these positions already had full workloads before the revision, and that these individuals now had significant additional responsibilities. Similarly, some respondents felt that Divisions have become too large for the Deans, Division Chairs, or administrative support staff (including SOCs) to effectively manage all assigned tasks.

Some survey participants referenced additional change as a result of new leadership in the position of College President. Although these comments did not attribute increased workloads to this change, such a change brings with it new directions and activities that may have contributed to the feeling across the campus of burgeoning workloads.

Theme: Need for cost-savings financial information

Summary

While less common than the above themes, a recurring concern was the lack of sharing of financial cost-savings information prior to the release of the survey. Some respondents expressed doubt as to whether there have been any cost-savings, while others expressed frustration at being asked to provide evaluation without the financial data at hand.

Discussion

Although the purpose behind the revisions to the organizational structure were in response to recommendations from the Accrediting Commission, and not primarily designed as a cost-savings
measure, these changes were adopted with the understanding that there would be limited cost savings. Cost-savings information has been shared through the Governance and Planning Committee (GAP), however survey responses show that few individual are aware of such documents.

One point of confusion may revolve around the source of the cost reductions which allowed for the implementation of Area Deans within the revised structure. Costs for the revised administrative positions, as well as overall cost savings within the Office of Instruction, are a result of reductions in release time to faculty for performance of administrative functions. Reductions in release time, primarily from Department and Division Chairs, allowed for the revision of administrative positions into Area Deans. Under this change, administrative duties formerly carried out by faculty using release time would now be assumed by Deans. These costs and the related cost savings are distinct from budget reductions and cost savings which led to the elimination of positions.

**Summary Results by Question:**

The following section summarizes the survey responses by question. Where survey respondents provided open-ended responses, these are categorized into categories indicating the tenor of the response (positive/negative) or by common content. Selected responses are included to illustrate typical responses. It is important to note that responses for all questions were extremely varied. While there were some recurring themes as described in the executive summary, there were also wide ranges in both tone and content. Even among “negative” or “positive” responses, there were typically varying reasons behind that negative or positive response. As an example, in the case of changes in release time for faculty, some respondents felt that the reduction has resulted in too little release time being available to meet college needs, while other respondents felt there is still too much release time given for non-essential purposes. In both cases the responses where “negative,” but the reasoning behind the negative responses are nearly in opposition to each other. We have attempted to provide a valid summary of responses, however readers are encouraged to read the comprehensive report of full responses included in the appendix.
Question 1: Please indicate your status at Mission College:

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<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classified Staff</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Faculty</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-Time Faculty</strong></td>
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<td>Administrator, Manager or Supervisor</td>
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answered question 98
skipped question 0

Question 2: Is your primary assignment within:

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<td>(Does not apply)</td>
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answered question 98
skipped question 0

Question 3: Approximately how many years have you been at Mission College:

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<td>One year or less</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to three years</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to five years</td>
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<td><strong>Over five years</strong></td>
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<td><strong>77</strong></td>
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</table>

answered question 98
skipped question 0
Question 4: One of these recommendations states, "Selected staff reductions that can be made without significantly impacting the organization and which bring expenditures in line with comparable districts, including reduction of "management" costs for academic, student affairs, and administrative service organizations within the colleges (from the department chairs through the vice presidents)" In your opinion, do you feel the reorganization has achieved cost reductions without significantly impacting the organization? Why or why not?

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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>7.4%</td>
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Recurring Themes for Question 4:
- Increased workload across the board, particularly for Classified in support roles
- Reductions at levels closest to faculty and students while upper management increased
- Cost savings data has not been shared, so unable to see savings

Selected Responses for Question 4

“No. The reduction impacted the organization -- it moved extra duties to those left behind.”

“No. Classified staff reductions have taken place, we are feeling the strain, while management positions have been (in)creased along with their span of control. Remaining classified staff workload has increased due to the managers span of control.”

“No. I think there has been a big impact on the "organization" and the service it provides to those who supposedly are our mission, the students. It was done without any thought to the training that would be necessary to shift people around to essentially "new" positions and I'm sure that the loss of productivity with these position shifts is not in the calculations of "savings" achieved for the district.”

“Because of the nature of the review -- looking at the fiscal aspect separately -- the question can't be answered as financial data is so far unavailable.”

Question 5: One of these recommendations states, "Enrollment Management. The colleges have a number of procedures and practices in place that make it difficult to achieve and sustain efficiency. These must be examined and revised if the institutions are to improve WSCH/FTEF." In your opinion, do you feel the reorganization has improved enrollment management? Why or why not?
Selected Responses for Question 5

“I believe that a significant start has occurred, but we aren't as far down the road as one would hope. More time is needed for this...”

“I don't know, however, I personally have listened to an increasing number of students that complain about not being able to get into the core classes they need. In some cases, to remain full time students, they are forced to take classes they do not want or need. I have heard complaints that this is done so the school can get money out of them.”

“Not at all. Registration screw-ups continue to plague the district.”

“I do not think the reorganization played a large role in enrollment management for my division. The processes at the college have a much greater impact that the overall reorganization. Also enrollment management is an ongoing process, so it needs constant improvement and attention.”

“no. the new division chair structure is too minimal in number and can’t see the larger picture of the college as a whole.”

“Not really. I think each dept. working with the DC has allowed increase in efficiency. Having a dean has not made this happen.”

Recurring Themes for Question 5:

• Improved, but still a long way to go
• Student complaints due to lack of classes or services
• Processes are not effective (difficult to collaborate, difficult to make decisions, difficult to get reliable information)
Question 6: One of these recommendations states, “The District should review reassigned time for non-department head and division chair functions to determine if some faculty currently released could be returned to teaching duties.” In your opinion, do you feel the changes in release time been positive, neutral, or negative? Please explain.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recurring Themes for Question 6:
- More work expected with less release time
- Unclear what benefit has come from new structure
- Reduced time is positive/Still too much release time or non-teaching time

Selected Responses for Question 6

“Neutral. Overall this has work okay, but some areas such as SLO and Staff Development have been impacted by not having a person partially assigned to these functions.”

“Negative. There are some department chairs that have more responsibilities then to just the college; ie maintaining state regulations to a board. There doesn't seem to be enough time allotted to do this.”

“Positive... I think that we've been completing more, general-college responsibilities, despite the reduction in release time.”

“Job Descriptions are really not clear at any of the levels. No one is certain about who does what. Everyone is a Dean or a Mgr. There is a great deal of work and one does not know who does what.”

“Negative, reduction of division chairs (fewer division chairs) with additional responsibilities (more departments) has decreased timely communication to the faculty and staff, created more bureaucracy, and a hierarchical structure. To discuss any matter with the division chair, an appointment needs to made weeks in advance. If the VP has an important initiative it will take even more time to communicate via the division chair structure to faculty and front line staff. The change has helped administration because they have less reports. It has hurt our college and we will not be able to be creative and innovative in our course offering to stay attractive to younger students!”
**Selected Responses for Question 7**

“DCs are overloaded with way too much work. Deans that had full time jobs before now have way too many responsibilities and their previous responsibilities have become neglected. Some Deans are not adapting to the new structure very well; for example--The dean of technology was doing well as the dean of technology but does not have the desire or the aptitude as an academic dean. Training could be a factor as well.”

“The new Deans assigned to each department can sometimes not know the department so that are not of much help in mitigating problems within that department. Also it appears to be more costly!”

“Division chairs responsible for so many more departments - have little time to focus much attention on specific problems.”

“Ambiguity in roles and expectations at all levels. Processes are not clear and too cumbersome. There is duplication of effort, yet, it does not prevent failures in the systems or processes. Deans and department chairs do not work closely. Everyone is being asked to do too much and there is lack of sense of priorities, cohesion leading to an inability for folks to be effective with core responsibilities.”

“Lack of clarity as to which dean to go to for specific situations/problems.”

“Lack of clarity and understanding in the roles and responsibilities for all parties within the revised structure. Also, I feel not everyone is truly held accountable.”

“Lack of transparencies. We were suppose to "work together", "collaborate" and "share" the
burden of the organizational change but only classified had reduction in staffing and NO ONE else.”

“Too top heavy. Less support for the work that is done closest to the students. Smallier locus of control and therefore less span of responsibility - meaning that the college community feels less inclined to take responsibility for the work of the college as they feel that the managers will/should do it all. Lessening of voices heard.”

**Question 8: What do you feel have been strengths of the new organizational structure? Please explain.**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>35.5%</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>6.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Recurring Themes for Question 8:**
- Improved communication
- Streamlined processes
- Improved accountability
- Nothing improved

**Selected Responses for Question 8**

“Better integration of administration within instructional programs. Deans have better understanding of the needs and challenges of faculty, departments and programs”

“A more streamlined organization.”

“Better chain of communication; improved abilities to share process changes and collect input.”

“I don’t think there are any strengths to the structure. The big improvement has been in the individuals at the Dept., Division and Dean levels.”

“Improved communication to Departments since fewer are involved. Increased awareness of Departmental needs since communication is streamlined and Dean can play a greater role in the Division needs”

“Change with new people as division chairs and department chairs, new energy.”
Selected Responses for Question 9

“One thing that concerns me is the transition faculty make to positions of responsibility. I’m pretty new at this; so maybe I don’t understand it as well as I ought to, but I think it IS difficult to learn the ins and outs of governing and the expectations when one steps into a Dept Chair or Div Chair position. The college should have structures designed to assist with these transitions.”

“My comments would be to provide more time for analysis, perhaps, a second year; it seems too early to comment on greater revision, at the moment.”

“I would like to see the Deans have time to do more of what they used to do. For example, I believe that more could be done with Community Services. There are opportunities and the opportunity for fees to be generated. As it is now, this doesn’t seem possible.”

“1. Have enough staff to adequately perform tasks. 2. Create “floating” staff support that could be used during peak times to perform duties common to most areas and departments. 3. Provide training and clear guidelines for tasks that must be completed by all departments. 4. Create desk manuals for positions so they do not become so “person” dependent. 5. Team building that sets the tone for cooperative work relationships and not adversarial ones. 6. Team approach to staff support for departments across both campuses.”

“I would not do anything until the state budget improves. Do not reorganize again. One problem at a time please....”

“Return the instructional deans to their original positions. Alternatively utilize them for their original purpose: to assist the divisions. This would relieve a lot of the work placed on the dean of instruction (and could possibly lead to the elimination of this position).”
“Given the structure we now have in place, I would suggest immense professional development for administrators (including DCs and Dept. chairs) on effective management techniques and improved communication techniques.”

Selected Responses for Question 10

Still confusing on the distribution of responsibilities--have had a difficult time finding out who is responsible for load sheets for some p/t faculty.”

“The SOC's are overwhelmed with their duties and responsibilities.”

“Students are no longer a priority and it shows, Sending everyone to the welcome center is not the answer.”
“Further refinement is needed. Multiple SOC’s still support a single division. This can lead to confusion.”

“Workload is uneven. Processes differ greatly from individual to individual. Use of floating staff to help during peak times for contracts, load sheets, schedule changes could be implemented. There needs to be a reset of expectations of the position.”

“Not enough SOCs, so some have too much work. Every division has different needs, so it is hard to divide up the duties by division alone.”

| Question 11: How have each of the following changed with the new organizational structure. Would you say that things have improved, stayed about the same, or declined? |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Answer Options                             | Improved | Stayed the Same | Declined | Unsure / No Opinion | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Usefulness of communication                 | 14       | 20              | 17       | 8                | 2.06            | 59              |
| Access to information                       | 9        | 24              | 21       | 5                | 2.22            | 59              |
| Understanding of policies and procedures    | 8        | 21              | 23       | 7                | 2.29            | 59              |
| Planning for the future                     | 14       | 17              | 17       | 11               | 2.06            | 59              |
| Collaboration within your division or area  | 11       | 19              | 20       | 9                | 2.18            | 59              |
| Collaboration with other divisions or areas | 8        | 20              | 23       | 8                | 2.29            | 59              |

Analysis of Question 11

The overall response to Question 11 is extremely varied. Although survey respondents are more likely to indicate that each of the listed areas has declined, nearly the same amount or more indicate that things have stayed the same, and a sizable minority suggest that the listed areas have seen improvement.
Question 12: For each of the following items, indicate what aspects need immediate improvement. If you are unsure or are unable to think of anything, please write "unsure."

Recurring Themes for Question 12:
- Need for written out policies and procedures
- Divisions too large/are silos/need to know what others are doing
- More updates/communication
- Improved information availability; use of website for information
- Conflicting/unclear information
- Need for more consistent meetings; all divisions have meeting schedule
- Need for training

Access to Information

Selected Responses for Access to Information

“There needs to be a consistent way to communicate with Associate Faculty at the DC and Dean level.”

“Simplify the path.”

“Clear directions set and communicated consistently.”

“It comes too late.”

“conflicting information is given.”

Understanding of Policies and Procedures

Selected Responses for Policies and Procedures

“A greater level of training”

“More training needed to highlight policies and procedures used in individual areas. New employees should be made aware of them, while continuing staff should be updated regularly.”

“Difficult to do, but clear policies and processes for common tasks.”

“More policies and procedures need to be written out.”

“They are changing rapidly, and need to be codified.”
Communication Within Your Division or Area

Selected Responses for Communication Within

“dean-department chair communication channel”

“increase divisional meetings.”

“Consistent meeting times.”

“we don’t meet as a division with all faculty and staff together”

“Lack of communications from the Division Chair.”

Collaboration Within Your Division or Area

Selected Responses for Collaboration Within

“dean-department chair collaboration; collaboration around new initiatives, curriculum, programs, etc.”

“We put the "dys" in dysfunction. We are not encouraged to voice our opinions because people get too offended when you do.”

“Meetings are so large that we only discuss compliance items and have little discussion on substantive issues.”

Collaboration With Other Divisions or Areas

Selected Responses for Collaboration With Others

“knowing what other divisions are doing.”

“projects across disciplines”

“This is very frustrating for me. There are many overlapping areas of concern and interest between my area and the college. But I am seldom if ever asked to collaborate outside my area.”

“Fight over resources does not promote collaboration. Students must become the focus and collaboration for their benefit should be the goal.”
“The divisions are still silos, operating better with the new organizational structure within themselves. Work needs to be done to communicate across those silos. Larger meetings (ugh, more meetings)? I don't have a real good answer for this.”

“not sure what other divisions are doing.”

**Question 13:** Thinking of the amount of communication you receive, for each of the following areas, please indicate whether the amount of communication is too much, just right, or not enough. Think of the amount of communication you receive from:

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<th>Just right</th>
<th>Not enough</th>
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answered question 59
skipped question 39
Analysis of Question 13

When taken together, few survey participants felt that there has been too much communication—college-wide emails were the only area to receive significant response that there may be too much. In most cases, responses were split between the amount of communication being “just right” and being “not enough.” Participants as a whole indicated that there is not enough communication from the Office of Instruction, Office of Administrative Services.

Question 14: Thinking over the last year, how often have you personally interacted with the following, either over the phone or in person? (If the answer does not apply to you, please select "Not Applicable")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Almost Every Week</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collegeaues within your department or area</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues within your division</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Department Chair</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Division Chair</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Area Dean</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 57
skipped question 41

Analysis of Question 14

Participants who answered this question indicate that they have frequent or almost-weekly interaction with colleagues in their own areas or divisions. In contrast, more survey respondents indicate rare interaction with their Deans than any other option while interaction with Department Chairs and Division Chairs vary considerably.
**Analysis of Question 15**

Although several participants skipped this question, those who responded indicate moderate to significant interest in online opportunities for discussion. Nearly all categories indicate more interest than non-interest.