



TEMC 2013 - Hobart

Making a virtue of the virtual: but are we actually reading?

Helen Match, Manager Academic Governance, September 2013



The Committee



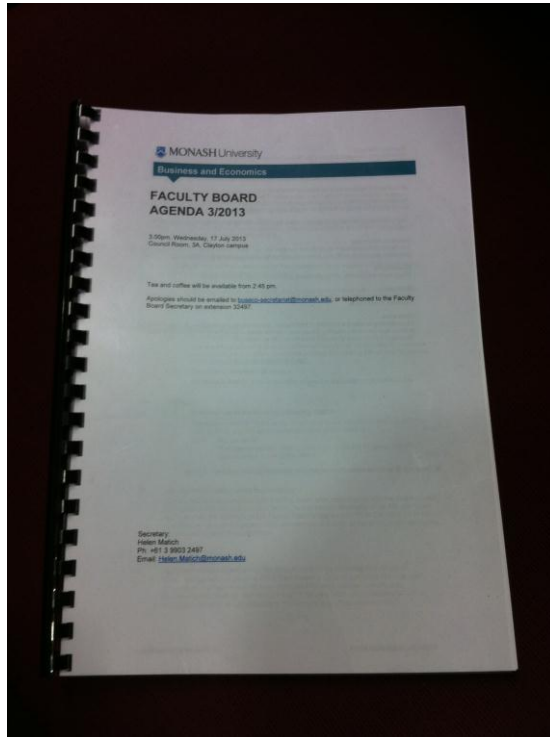
The seal of authority



An unavoidable administrative instrument



Save the trees (and grow Apples)



A paperless committee is a tidy committee



Assumptions

1. Committees are an enduring part of the decision-making framework of universities
2. ...as are reports and briefing papers, proposals and plans...
3. ...which members are expected to READ so that they can contribute to a collective informed decision.



Effectiveness of the Virtual Agenda

Have we accommodated the difference in reading on paper and reading on screen?



Does the more clicks we put between the information and the committee member have an impact on their preparedness for decision-making, or their sense of engagement with the material?

Are the materials securely maintained for archive purposes?



Faculty Board in 2013

Chaired by the Dean

Total membership 78 *Quorum 26 (one-third)*



36% Elected Members (*with proportional representation: 2 – 6 members*) from:

- six academic departments
- two research centres
- three schools at other campuses (incl Malaysia and South Africa)

28% Senior Leaders: Dean, Deputy Deans, Heads Of Department, Heads Of Schools, Associate Deans, Undergraduate Course Directors



10% Representatives of other Faculties and the Library

14% Students (Including one alumnus)

12% Professional Staff

The Survey

34 responses out of a possible 78 (we have a quorum!)



Respondents included:

23 Faculty of Business and Economics Staff

5 Other Faculty staff

6 Students

Length of service on Faculty Board:

14 respondents have <1 year of service

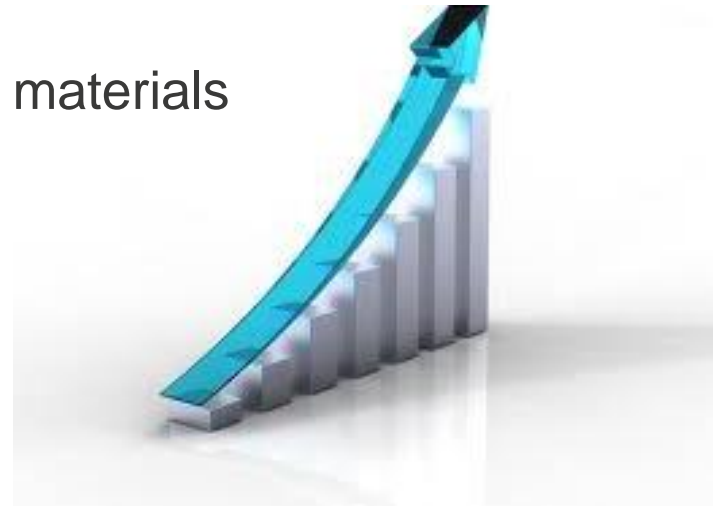
14 respondents have 2 – 3 years of service

6 respondents have >4 years of service



The survey questions

- Preferences for accessing the agenda
- Frequency of referring to the Committee website
- Preference for reading the agenda – vast majority on screen
- Ways of navigating through the agenda
- Closeness of reading
- Which parts of the agenda are most read
- Extent of engagement with the supporting materials



Agenda – three components



Agenda – a compiled pdf document contains the ‘order paper’ and all the documents for the main items
Works as a print document, but designed for click navigation



Curriculum Development Report –summary lists in categories, with database reference numbers linked to workflow databases.

The CDR operates as a stand-alone record of all course and unit changes for each meeting cycle.



e-Portfolio – includes all ‘for information’ or long reports. Printing discouraged.

Order of business



A – Preliminary business

B – Report of the Dean

C – University matters

D – Report of member portfolios not covered elsewhere (Schools, students)

E – Report from Education portfolio and standing committees

F - Report from Research portfolio and standing committees

G – External, international and social inclusion portfolios

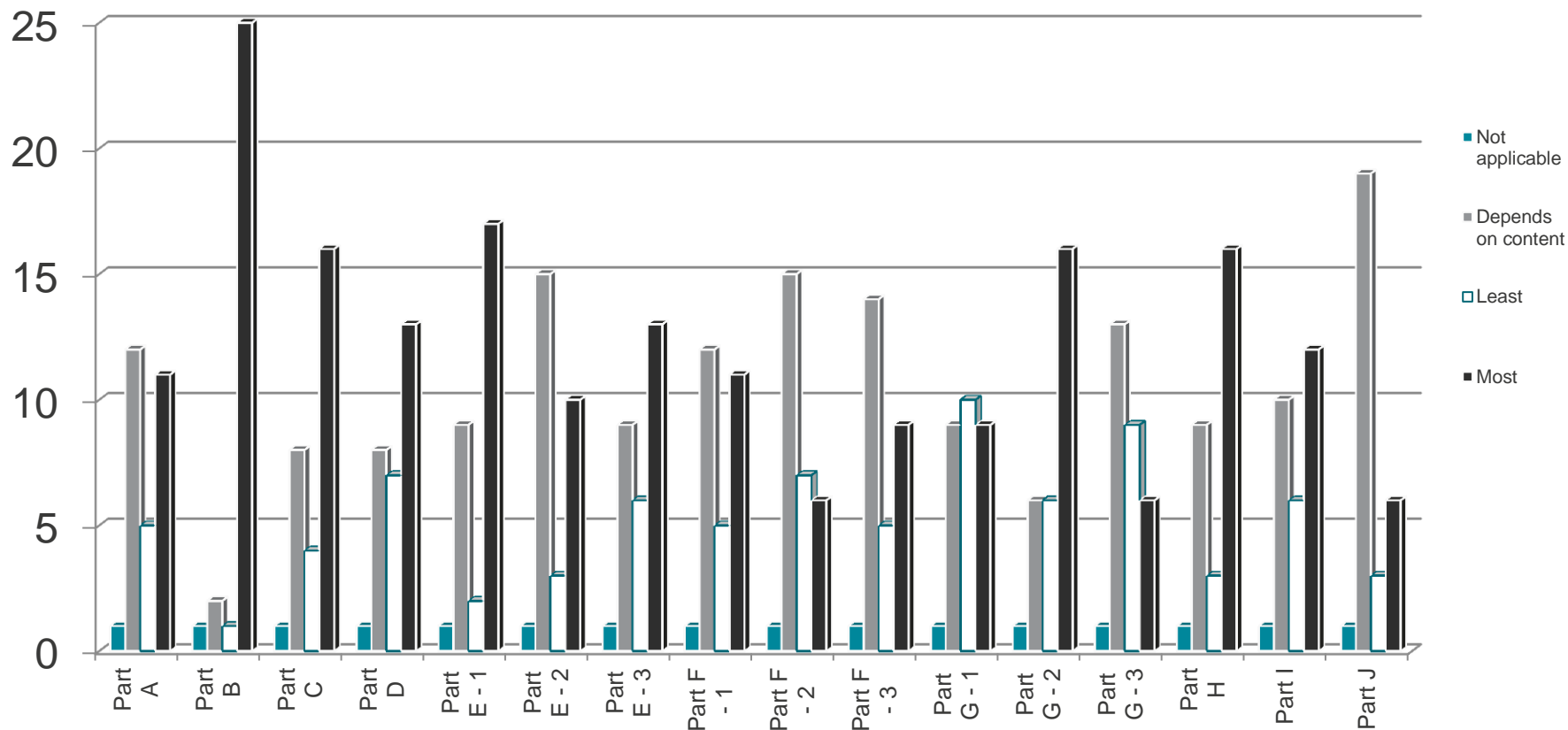
H – Course, Academic and Faculty reviews

I – Legislation, policy and procedures

J – General Business

K - Other

Level of Faculty Board member engagement with parts of the Agenda



Part A - Preliminary business	Part B - Report of the Dean	Part C - University matters	Part D - Reports of Heads of Schools and students	Part E - Report from Education portfolio	Part E - Standing committees: FEC, CPC, EIQC	Part E - Curriculum developments	Part F - Report from Research portfolio	Part F - Standing committees: FRC, RDC	Part F - HDR matters	Part G - Report from External, International and Social Inclusion portfolios	Part G - Accreditation matters	Part G - Equity and Social Inclusion Committee	Part H - Course, Academic and Faculty reviews	Part I - Legislation, policy and procedures	Part J - General Business
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The Survey – how Board members use the agenda

79% use the pdf from the email

12% go to online version

3% used both versions

6% did not respond to this question

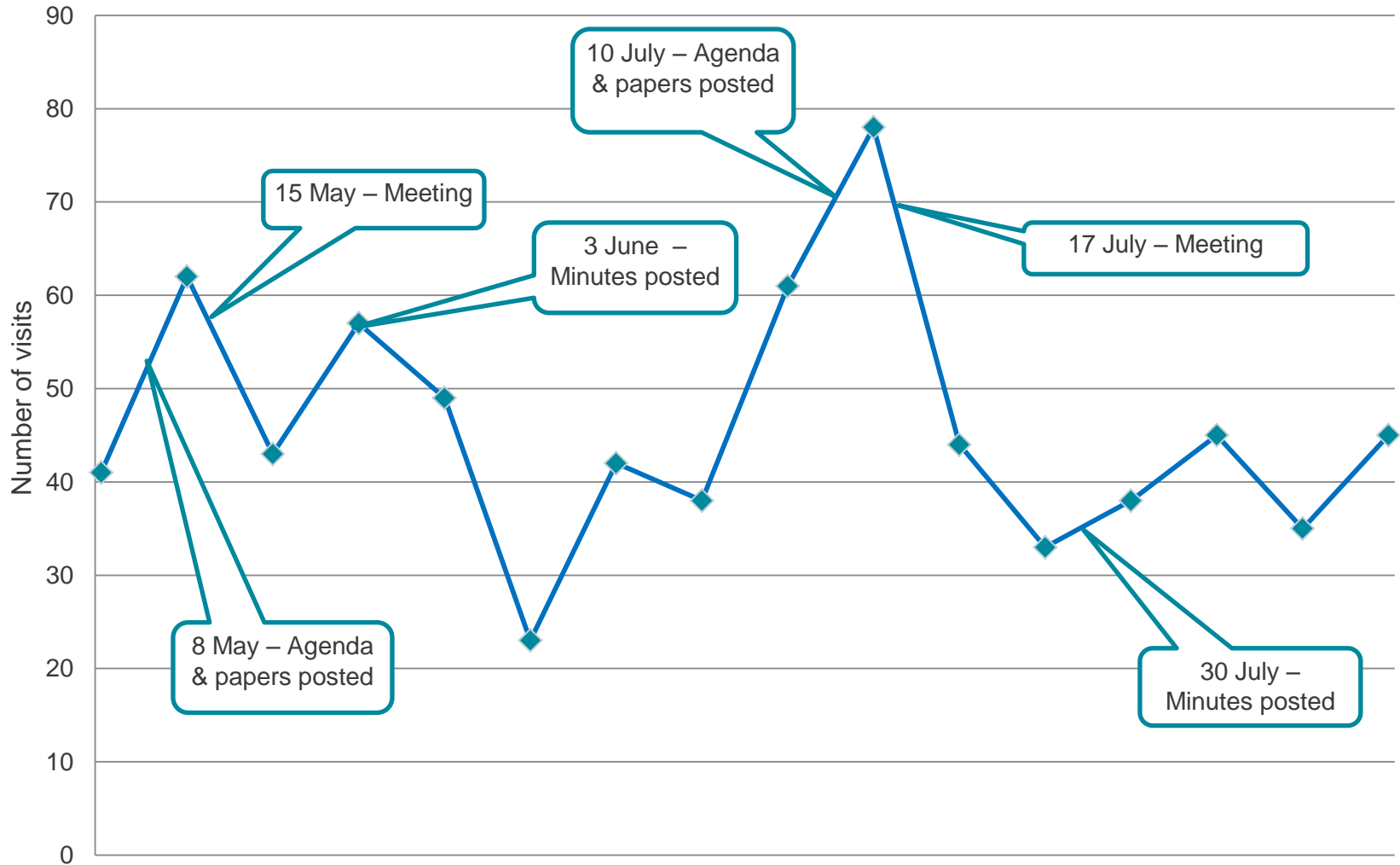


“I didn’t know it was available online”

“I have to print it because I don’t have an iPad”

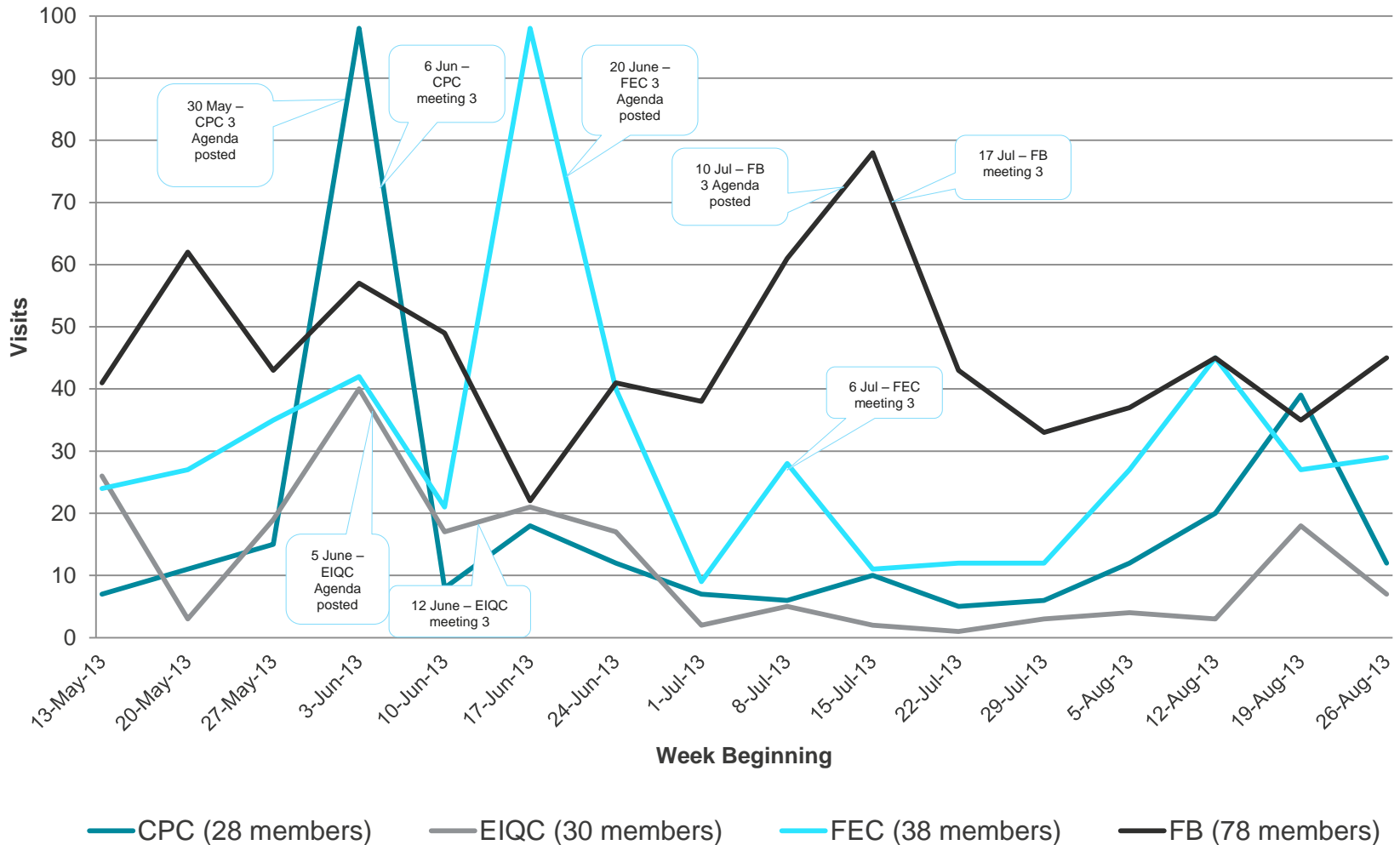
Total Weekly Webpage Visits - Faculty Board

(for timeframe 13 May to 1 Sep 2013)



Total Page Visits – All Committees - Meeting Cycle 3

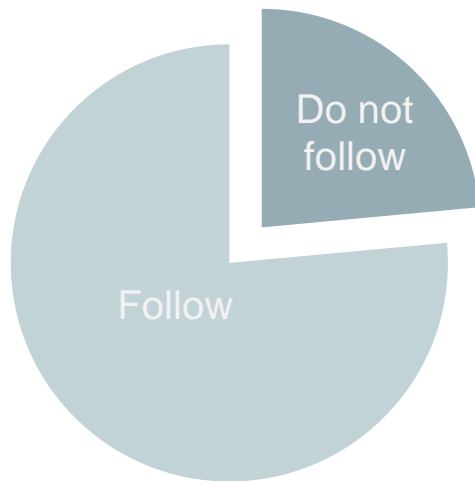
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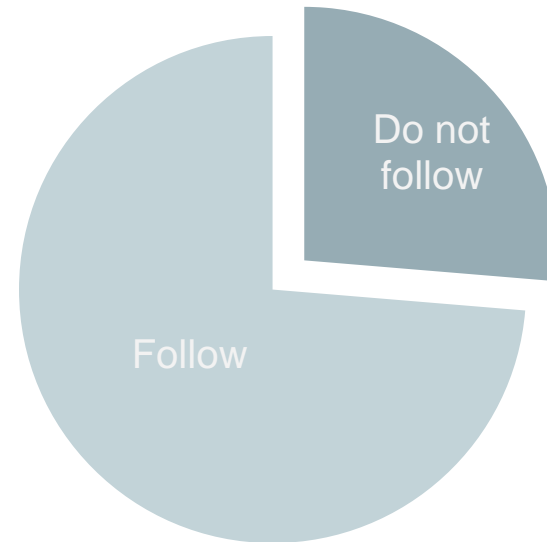
Proportion of Faculty Board members who follow hyperlinks in the Curriculum Development Report to the online Course and Unit Approval System (CUAS) and/or ePortfolio to view curriculum development data:



Course and Unit Approval System (CUAS)



ePortfolio



In more detail...

21% read most or all of the materials closely

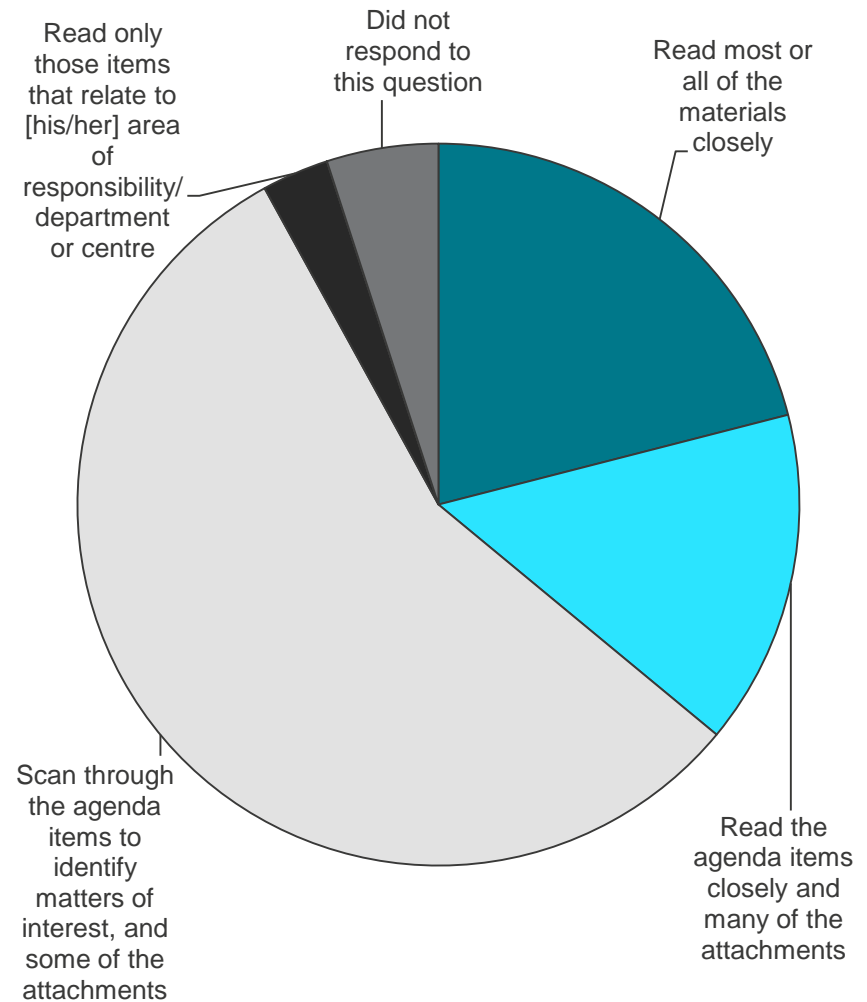
56% scan through the agenda items to identify matters of interest, and read some of the attachments

15% read the agenda items closely and many of the attachments

3% read only those items that relate to [his/her] area of responsibility/department/centre

0% barely read it at all

5% did not respond to this question



Contribution to Good Decision-Making

Please share your views about the extent to which the agenda (as currently managed) contributes to good decision-making and the Faculty's value of "integrity, transparency and accountability in our internal governance"

- **The agenda provides all the necessary information to support transparent decision-making**

- 50% agreed or strongly agreed
- 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 24% were either neutral or did not answer



- **The agenda is well structured and helps members navigate through a large volume of information**

- 62% agreed or strongly agreed
- 12% strongly disagreed
- 16% were either neutral, disagreed or did not answer


- **The provision of materials online and through a range of linked resources helps members make informed decisions**

- 47% agreed or strongly agreed
- 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 35% were either neutral or did not answer



“I can imagine that the world wide web provides all the necessary information to support decision-making in all situations. However, that does not lead to better and more transparent decisions. It is the art of writing succinct summaries that distinguishes a good decision support system from an ordinary one.

Any person with one day of training can embed links to websites and dump all information into a pdf file with navigation tools. The support system will become stronger if it respects the value of the time of the decision-makers.”



*“Providing materials online is all very well
and I'm a huge supporter of it
but we should also provide the means
to access that material effectively”*

Can we be more helpful?

Subject: BusEco Faculty Board - Agenda for Meeting 2/13, 22 May

Message 2013-fb-2-agenda-final.pdf (6 MB)

Dear members,

Meeting 2/13 of the Business and Economics Faculty Board will be held on **Wednesday 22 May, 3-5pm in the Council Room, Building 3a, Clayton campus**. Tea and coffee will be available in the room from 2.45pm.

A soft copy of the agenda is attached. This pdf is bookmarked for easy navigation, and includes internal linking of items to the relevant attachments, including those located on webpages and in the **e-Portfolio**.

The agenda (and other Faculty Board information) can also be found at:
<http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/esg/agu/comm/faculty-board/index.html>

As always, if you have any difficulty finding or accessing the information, please don't hesitate to call me.

There is one item "to follow", namely the minutes of the Faculty Research Committee (item 17.1).

A reminder for the iPad users among you: a free app for reading adobe documents and accessing e-Portfolios on the iPad is available for download from: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/adobe-reader/id469337564?mt=8>

Apologies and Teleconference details

If you are unable to attend the meeting, I would be grateful if you would let me know by Tuesday the 22nd so that I can record your apology.

To join the meeting by teleconference, please advise me of the details by no later than midday Tuesday 22nd so that we can get all the calls booked.

Kind regards,

Helen

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Suggestions for Improving the Online Materials

“Look to some Board papers software for tablets and iPad users. Enables annotation of agenda papers.”

“The Agenda is quite long especially in deciphering what is relevant to student representatives. Perhaps a creation of different secretaries to specifically address the components which comprise the Board e.g. Secretary for external faculties, secretary for research and development, secretary for student representation.”

“The secretariat is very efficient and does a great job. Materials are well constructed and clearly put together. My only problem is the technical one of getting access to some of the supporting materials”

“It could be improved if admin personnel with good language skills summarise information.”



Effectiveness of the Virtual Agenda

- *Have we accommodated the difference in reading on paper and reading on screen?*

We're giving it our best shot



- *Does the more clicks we put between the information and the committee member have an impact on their preparedness for decision-making, or their sense of engagement with the material?*



Not so much

- *Are the materials securely maintained for archive purposes?*

We have our fingers crossed



Assumptions



Committees are an enduring part of the decision-making framework of universities



...as are reports and briefing papers, proposals and plans...



...which members are expected to READ so that they can contribute to a collective informed decision.

If you thought 'paperless' was tidy...

Imagine how much tidier it could get....



Questions

