

Survey Results Regarding Averages and Class Size on Transcripts

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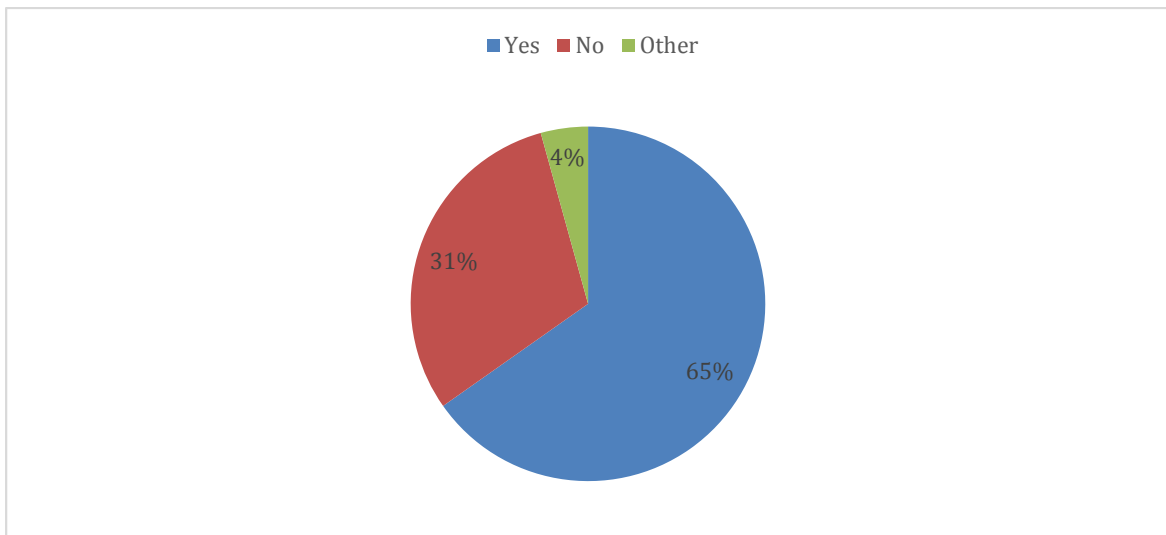
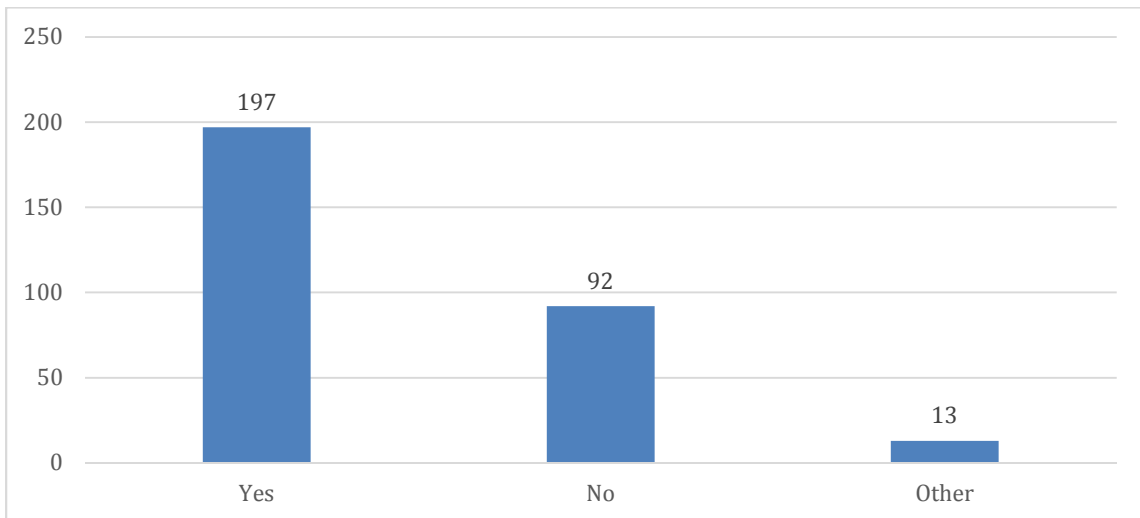
Introduction:

This report was prepared for the Associate Dean, Undergraduate, in response to his desire to know how engineering undergraduates felt about the prospect of having class averages and class sizes on their transcripts. This data was collected via an online survey that was distributed through the Engineering Society 'A' mailing list, through the Engineering Society 'A' Class representatives, and through a singular Facebook post from the UW Engineering Society Facebook page.

This report is based on the 302 responses received.

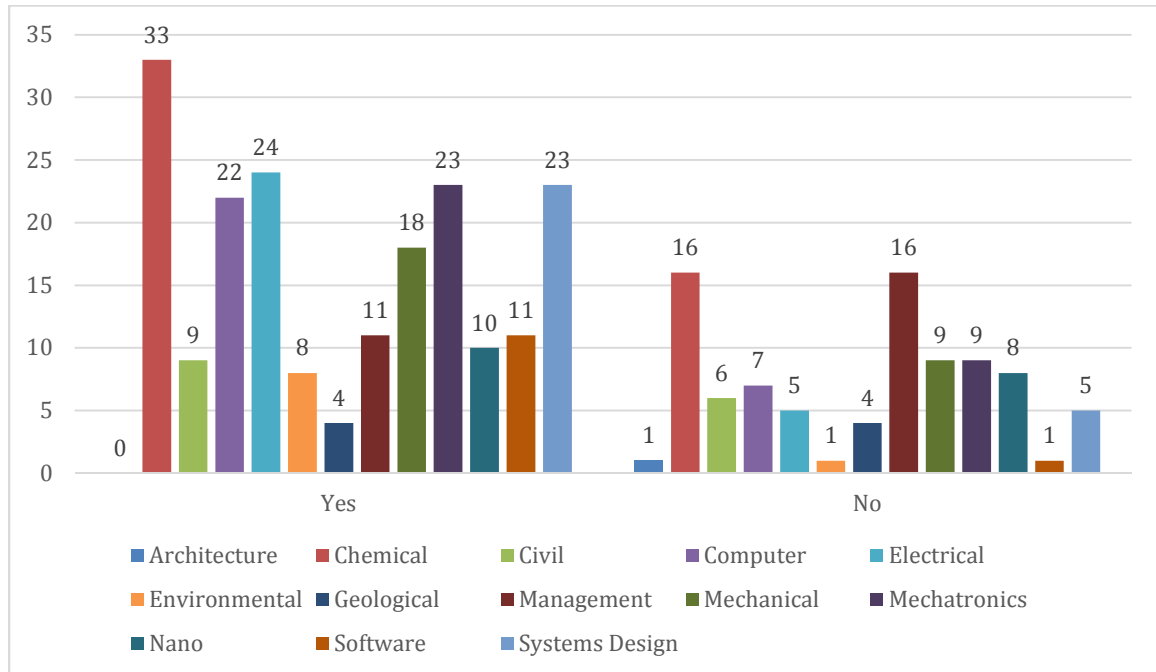
Part 1a: Course Averages on Unofficial Transcripts

Table 1a and 1b: Results of “Would you like to see course averages on your unofficial transcript” for all responders



It can be seen here that just over 65% of students that answered the survey would like to see averages on their unofficial transcripts.

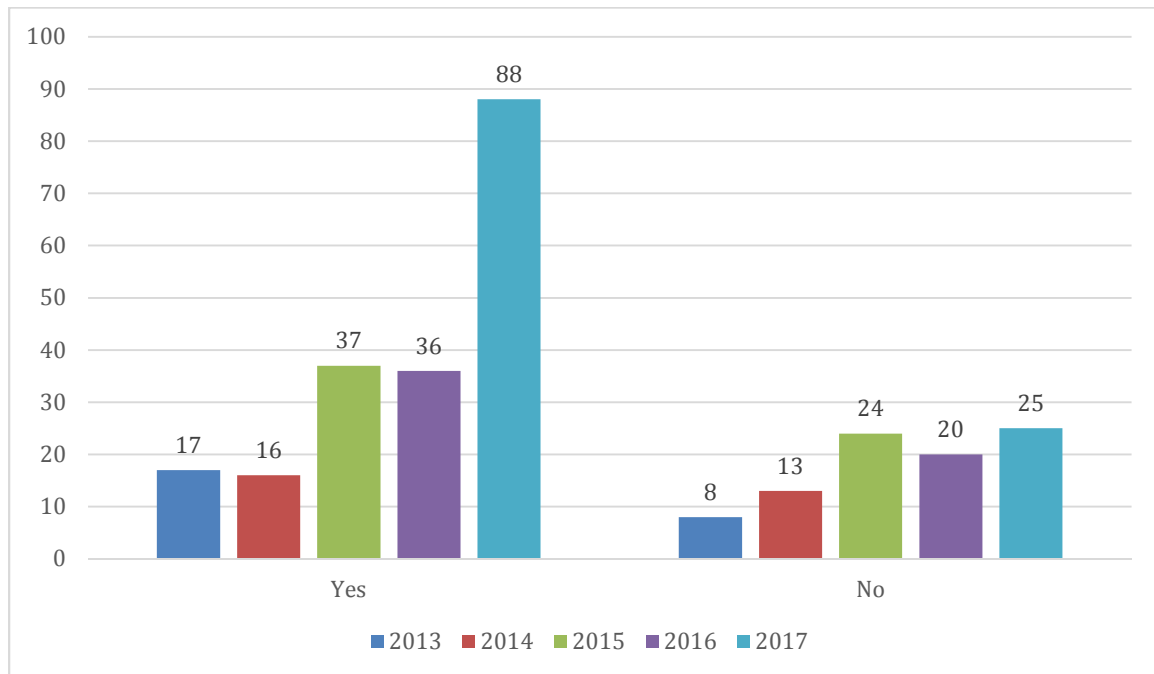
Table 2: Results of “Would you like to see course averages on your unofficial transcript” broken down by program



“Other” answers were omitted from this graph, as were students who did not properly indicate their program.

It can be seen here that in all programs except Architecture (which only had one response), Geological Engineering and Management Engineering, there is a preference for averages to be included.

Table 3: Results of “Would you like to see course averages on your unofficial transcript” broken down by year of graduation



“Other” answers were omitted from this graph, as were students who did not properly indicate their year of graduation.

From the above data, we can see that in every year there is a preference for averages to be included. As well, we can see that among first years, there is a significant 77.9% preference to have averages included, but it immediately drops off to under 65% for each of the other years, bottoming out at 55% for those graduating in 2014.

Part 1b: Course Averages on Unofficial Transcripts – Comments

The comments that appeared the most as to why students would NOT like to see averages were regarding the negative impact it would have on many people applying for jobs (this appeared significantly more than everything else), the fact that it would increase the already competitive levels of Waterloo engineering, and that it will be significantly detrimental to anyone below the average.

Other comments that were received as to why individuals would NOT like to see averages included:

- Classes have low variance due to bell curving etc
- Marks do not matter after graduation, I do not want to be reminded I was below average
- Employers are not asking for this, it is unnecessary
- Increases administrative work
- Would rather see it included in emails with ranking, but not on transcripts
- Would make already competitive environment more competitive
- Only benefits top 10 to 20% of class
- Unfair for those below class average
 - Sentiment mentioned by many students
- Will make it harder for some to get employed
- Could have negative impact on coop rates in general

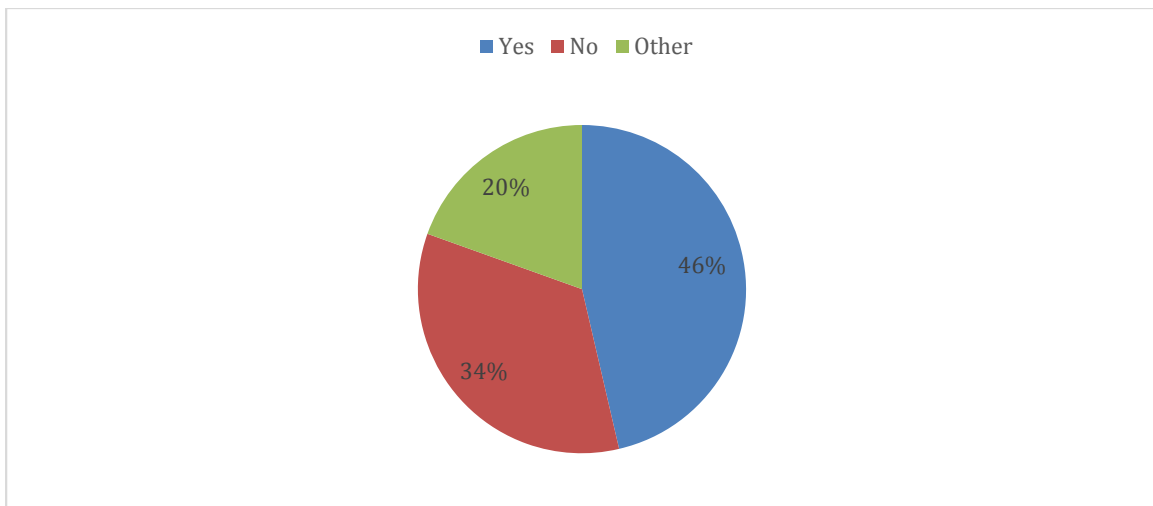
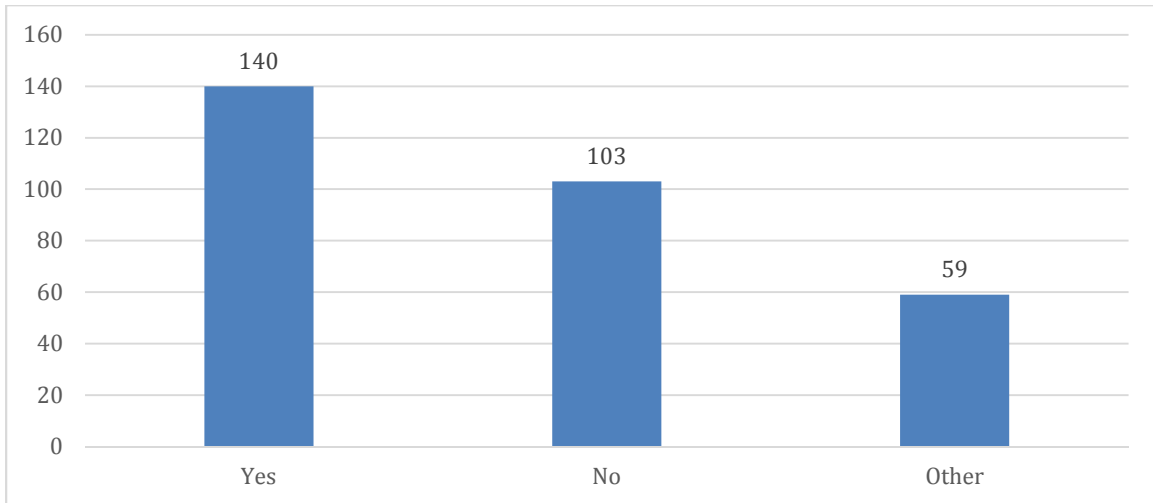
The comments that appeared the most as to why students WOULD like to see averages on their unofficial transcript were mainly focused around two things. Firstly, and most frequently, were comments that it gives your grades context. No matter how well or poorly someone did, if they do not know how the class did as a whole, it isn't relevant. The second most frequent comment was that this allows employers the same ability. If someone received a bad mark, but was still above average, the employer will be able to see that.

Other comments that were received as to why individuals WOULD like to see averages included:

- Would like to see how I did relative to class
- Helpful when applying to grad studies
- Provides context for grades
- Actual grades are less important than relative grades
- Some professors are harder than others
- Grades don't have significant meaning without average

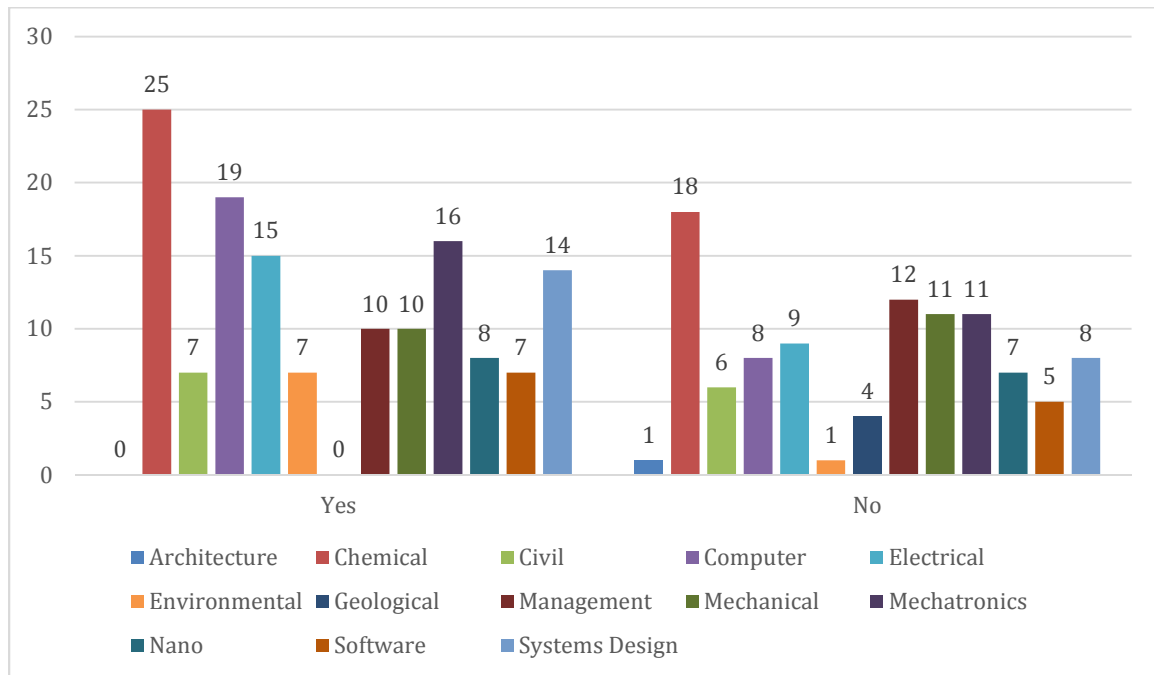
Part 2a: Class Sizes on Unofficial Transcripts

Table 4a and 4b: Results of “Would you like to see class sizes on your unofficial transcript” for all responders



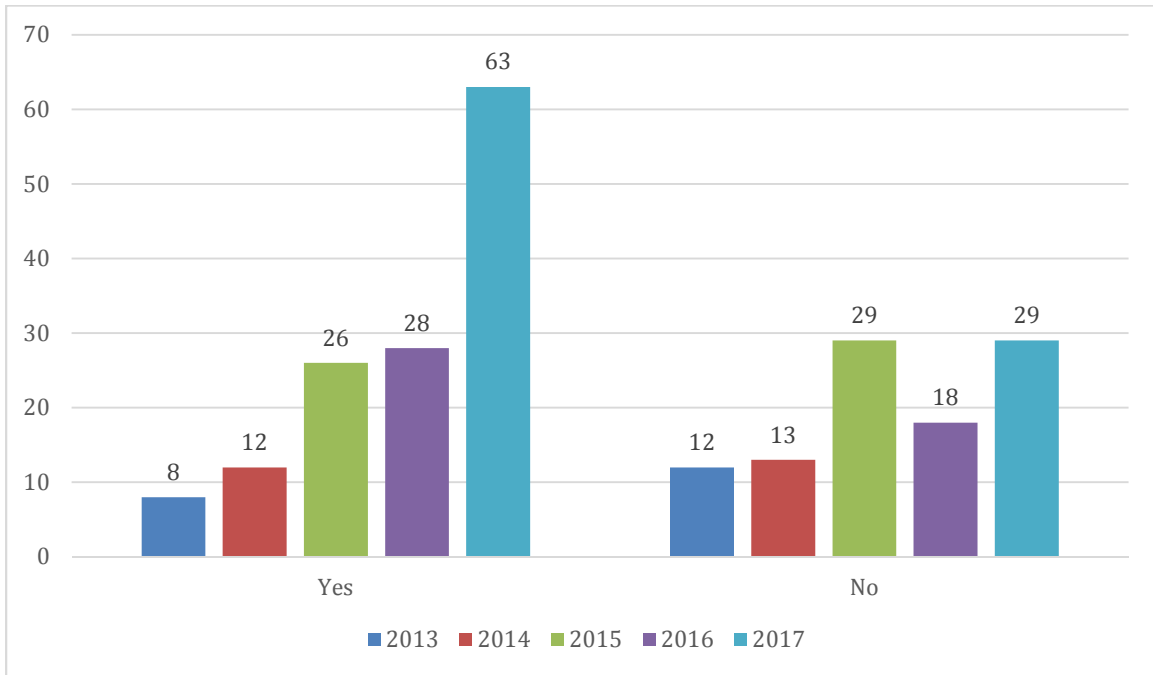
It can be seen here that just over 46% of students that answered the survey would like to see class sizes on their transcripts. Most of the “Other” answers simply stated that the student did not care whether or not it was included.

Table 5: Results of “Would you like to see class sizes on your unofficial transcript” broken down by program



“Other” answers were omitted from this graph, as were students who did not properly indicate their program. Just to reiterate, almost all “Other” answers were some variation of “indifferent.”

Table 6: Results of “Would you like to see class sizes on your unofficial transcript” broken down by year of graduation



“Other” answers were omitted from this graph, as were students who did not properly indicate their year of graduation.

As seen above, each of 2013, 2014 and 2015 students had a slight preference to have class sizes NOT included on transcripts; however, both 2016 and 2017 students said they would like to see them.

Part 2b: Class Sizes on Unofficial Transcripts – Comments

The comments that appeared as to why students would NOT like to see class sizes were almost exclusively that it is unnecessary information that does not benefit anyone. This sentiment was found in almost every answer.

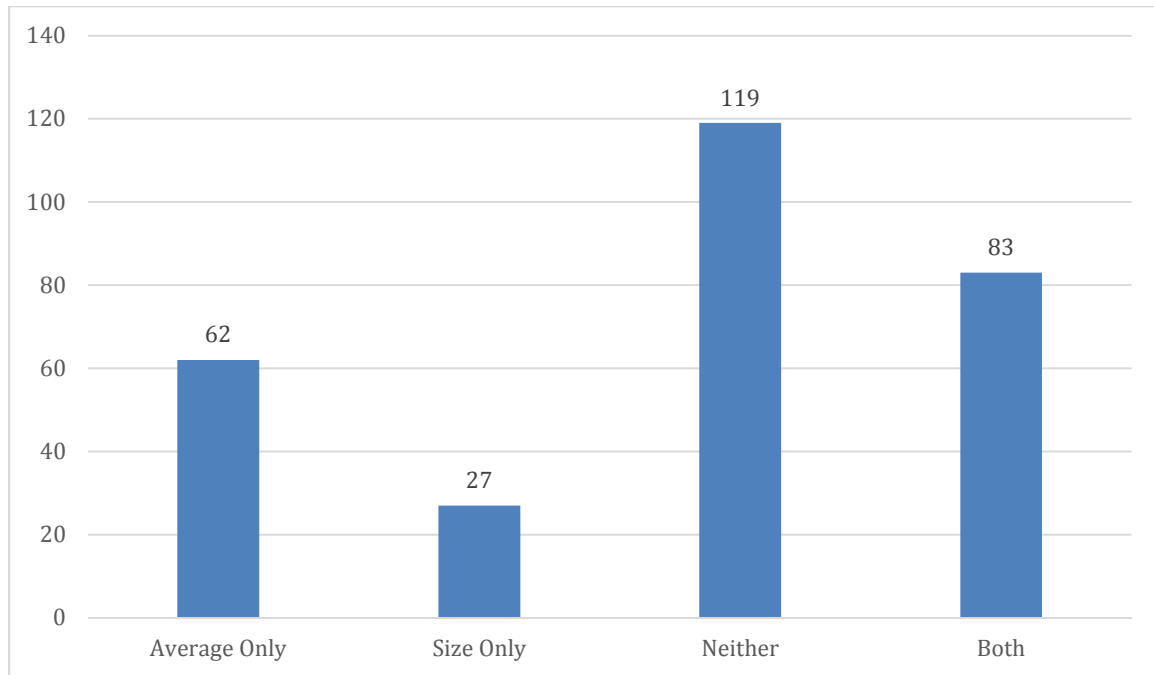
The comments that appeared the most as to why students WOULD like to see class sizes on their unofficial transcript were widespread, with most of them citing personal interest, that the more data on the transcript the better, as well as many students saying “why not.”

Other comments that were received as to why individuals WOULD like to see class sizes included:

- Shows level of interaction you would get with professor
- Keep track of class population
- More context for grades
- Personal interest / curiosity

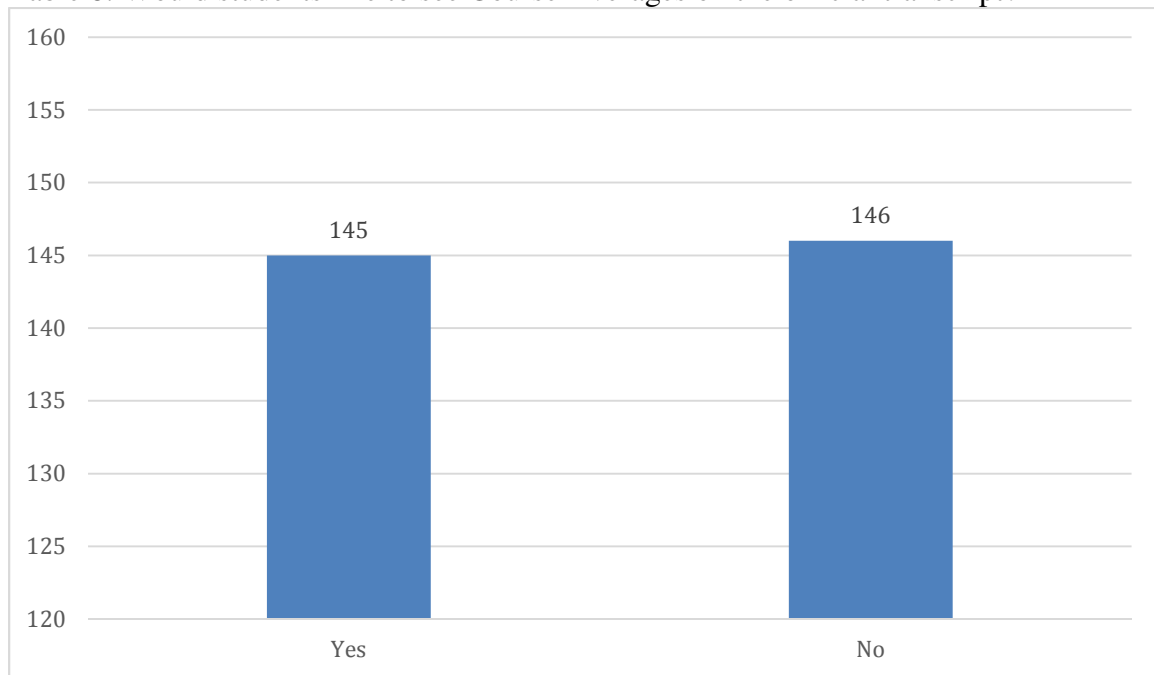
Part 3: Official Transcripts

Table 7: Results of “Do you think the University/Faculty should also consider putting these items on the Official transcripts”



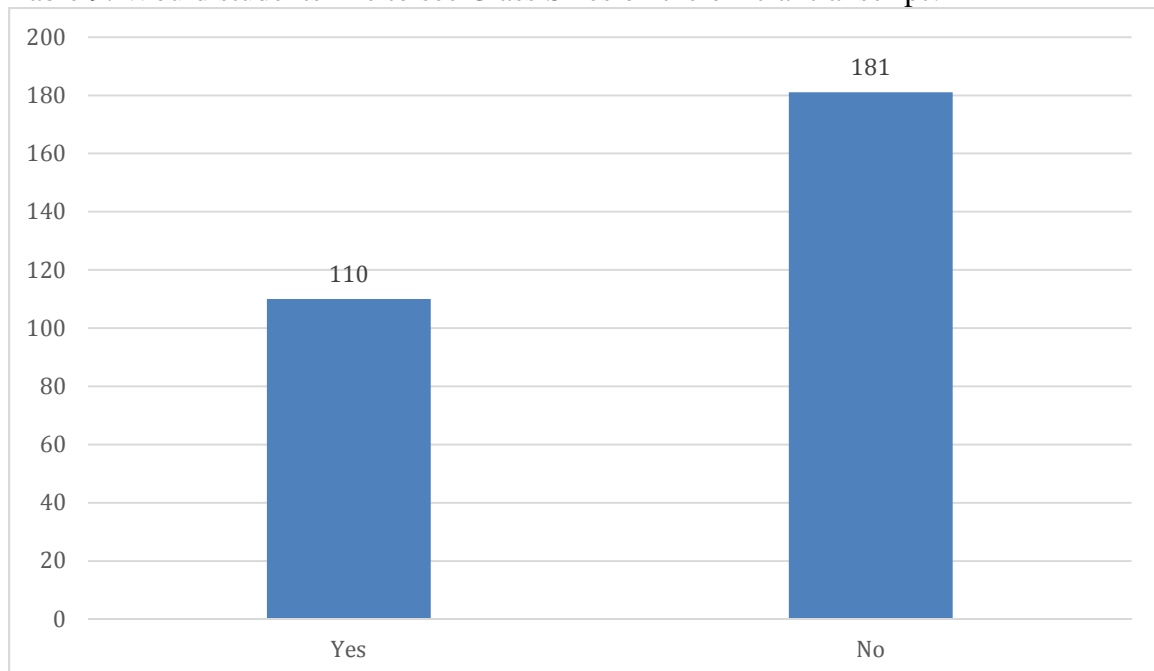
It can be seen above that the most students would like to see neither the average nor the size on the Official transcript; however, when the data is rearranged to determine the desire for each separately, the data is much clearer.

Table 8: Would students like to see Course Averages on the official transcript?



By combining “Average only” and “both” together, and “size only” and “neither” together, we can see that there is almost an exact 50% split between students that would like to see the average on the official transcript, and those that would not.

Table 9: Would students like to see Class Sizes on the official transcript?



By combining answers in the same manner for class sizes, it can be seen that over 62% of students would NOT like to see class size on the official transcript.

Part 4: Additional student opinion

A sentiment that was repeated is that students feel it would be beneficial to receive the averages in a similar manner to how we currently get ranks, but not to have them shown on any transcript.

Another recurring comment was that including averages automatically makes half of the class seem sub-par.

As well, students felt that this would make finding a coop job harder.

Students feel that the more information that is available, the better. It also makes it easier to assess performance, both personally and for employers.

The following comments were included as additional student opinion:

- Averages could demoralize smart students who don't test well
- Will look bad with employers if mark is below average
- Some classes have lower average, want to know relative mark
- Would rather this information be provided separately, similar to rankings
- Adding averages anywhere will mean that 50% of students (all of those below average) will be unhappy all the time
- Only support unofficial so information may be removed
- If mean to be included, median should as well
- Employers are not asking, so it isn't necessary
- University should not feel the responsibility to facilitate our post-graduate employment or studies
- Include final exam average
- Include median, or standard deviation

Conclusion and Recommendations:

After analyzing the data, it can be seen that students, as a whole, would like to see course averages on their unofficial transcripts. Even without the outlying results of the 2017 students (where almost 78% would like to see it) there is still over 50% of students that would like to see averages. On the other hand, there was a much wider range of reasons students would not like to see averages, as opposed to the list of why students would like to see them. Given the less than two-thirds in favor, and the passion felt by those students opposed to this inclusion, it would serve the Faculty wise to proceed cautiously with regard to supporting this change. It is instead recommended to investigate further into the potential of sending students their course averages in a similar manner to the rankings system.

As for the class sizes, due to the simple fact that less than 50% of students indicated that they would like to see this on their unofficial transcripts, it is recommended for the Faculty to not support this change.

Regarding any changes to the Official Transcript; due to the more complex and important nature of the Official Transcript, and the almost 50% split of those in favor and opposed, it is also recommended that the Faculty not support any changes to the Official Transcripts at this time.