



Yukon University legislation: What we heard report

Department of Education
September 2019



Background

Yukon College is in the process of transitioning to Yukon University. The Government of Yukon is drafting new legislation to oversee the university and asked Yukoners to share their thoughts.

Yukon University will be a hybrid university that will offer existing college programming such as trades, adult basic education and second language support. But it will also offer new university degree programs.

In Canada, the provinces and territories oversee post-secondary institutions. The Government of Yukon oversees Yukon College through the [Yukon College Act](#). To ensure Yukon University meets the requirements of a university, new legislation is needed to provide the legal framework for a university.

To ensure Yukon University continues to meet the diverse education needs of Yukon citizens, the Government of Yukon asked the public, Yukon First Nations governments, municipal governments, Yukon College Community Campus Committees and other partners for feedback on key aspects of the legislation during an engagement period in May-June 2019.

Engagement process

Purpose

We asked for feedback on key aspects of the legislation, including:

- University mandate;
- Government oversight and university autonomy;
- University accountability;
- University governance; and
- Program delivery in Yukon communities

Our goal was to gather feedback on these different aspects of the legislation. We considered the feedback as we drafted the legislation for Yukon University.

Process

The key aspects for Yukon University legislation were identified following a review of post-secondary legislation across Canada and joint work with Yukon College.

We considered the feedback gathered as we drafted the legislation. Results of the public survey and public sessions was considered alongside input from Yukon First Nations governments, municipal governments, Yukon College Campus Committees and recommendations from Yukon College's Board of Governors.

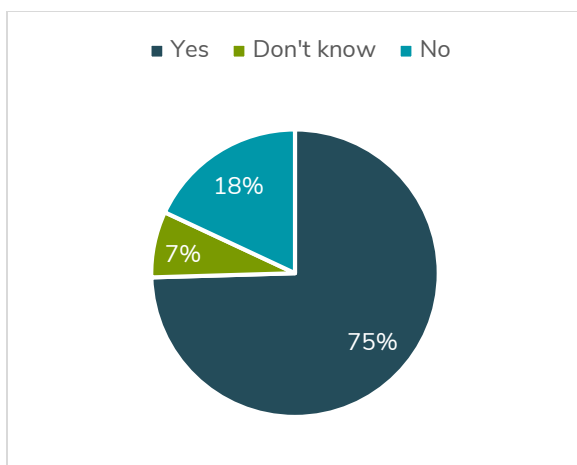
What we heard:

Mandate for Yukon University

We asked participants whether or not they agreed with the Objects and Purpose being considered for the Yukon University legislation.

Results:

Q1. Do you agree with the Objects and Purpose being considered for Yukon University legislation?



Comments:

Q2. Do you think anything needs to be changed or added?

Of those who completed the survey, 175 provided comments on the proposed Objects and Purpose being considered for the Yukon University legislation.

The majority of comments were aimed at programming considerations for Yukon College as it transfers to a university, including developing programs focused on the environment, ensuring programs are of the same quality as other universities in Canada and that skills are transferable to other jurisdictions.

Of the comments related specifically to the options being considered for the legislation, many indicated the Objects should be supportive of all students of the university.

Many other comments emphasized the importance of trades programming and adult basic education and of including a specific reference to this type of programming in the Objects and Purpose of the legislation.

Some comments preferred finding an alternative to the word “investing” in the Purpose section of the legislation as it seemed to suggest prioritizing business and economic development. Some comments preferred Yukon College to remain a college.

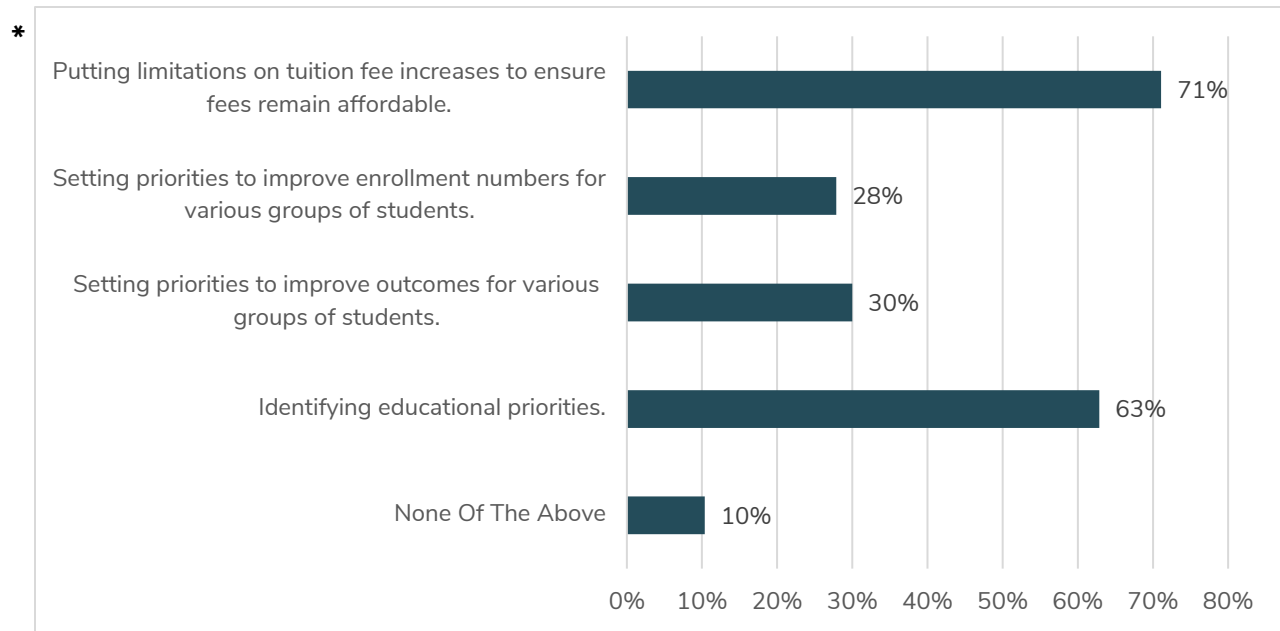
Public sessions: Comments provided by the 10 participants who attended public sessions were not conclusive, but included ensuring the mandate of the university is focused on benefiting the north and Yukon; that there is a focus on the environment; and that there is inclusion of First Nations knowledge and values.

Government Oversight and University Autonomy

We asked participants in what areas and/or activities the government should provide oversight over Yukon University and where it is important for Yukon University to be autonomous.

Results:

Q.3 In its responsibility to provide oversight for the post-secondary education system, do you think the government should consider overseeing any of the following? Check all that apply.



Comments:

Q4. Is there anything else that should be considered to ensure we find the right balance between providing some government oversight and ensuring Yukon University is autonomous?

Of those who completed the survey, 132 provided comments on considerations for government oversight and university autonomy.

Comments did not always specify university autonomy or government oversight but many comments instead identified ideas for setting priorities for the university, including ensuring programs meet the needs of Yukoners and the labour market, ensuring space for Yukon students, and ensuring the university is affordable.

Many comments leaned toward ensuring Yukon University remains autonomous to make decisions about educational priorities, budget, staffing and enrolment. Other

comments leaned toward ensuring the government provides some oversight over the university, including courses being offered and ensuring it is accessible to a range of students.

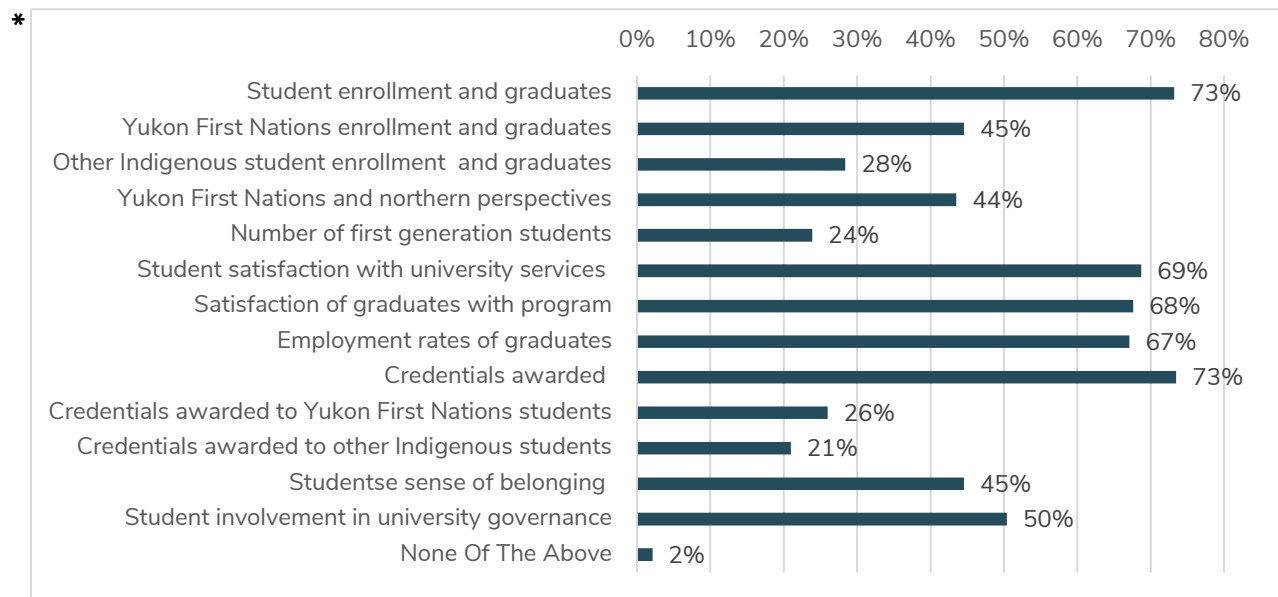
Public sessions: Comments provided by the 10 participants who attended public sessions were not conclusive, but included ensuring quality assurances are in place and ensuring the university is affordable and accessible to Yukon students.

University Accountability

We asked participants in what areas and/or activities should Yukon University be accountable to the public.

Results:

Q5. From the list below, what Accountability Indicators do you feel are important for Yukon University to be accountable for? Check all that apply.



* The wording of answer options in some charts has been shortened for visual representation of the data. Please refer to the survey document on Engage Yukon for a full account of the question and answer options.

Comments:

Q6. Is there anything else that should be considered?

Of those who completed the survey, 109 provided comments on other areas they think the university should be accountable.

Many comments thought the university should be accountable for ensuring it is inclusive, accessible and safe and that indicators are inclusive of all students.

Many other comments felt it is important that the university be held accountable for the quality of programming and services, and the quality of staff. Some comments felt it is important for the university to be accountable for its budgeting and spending.

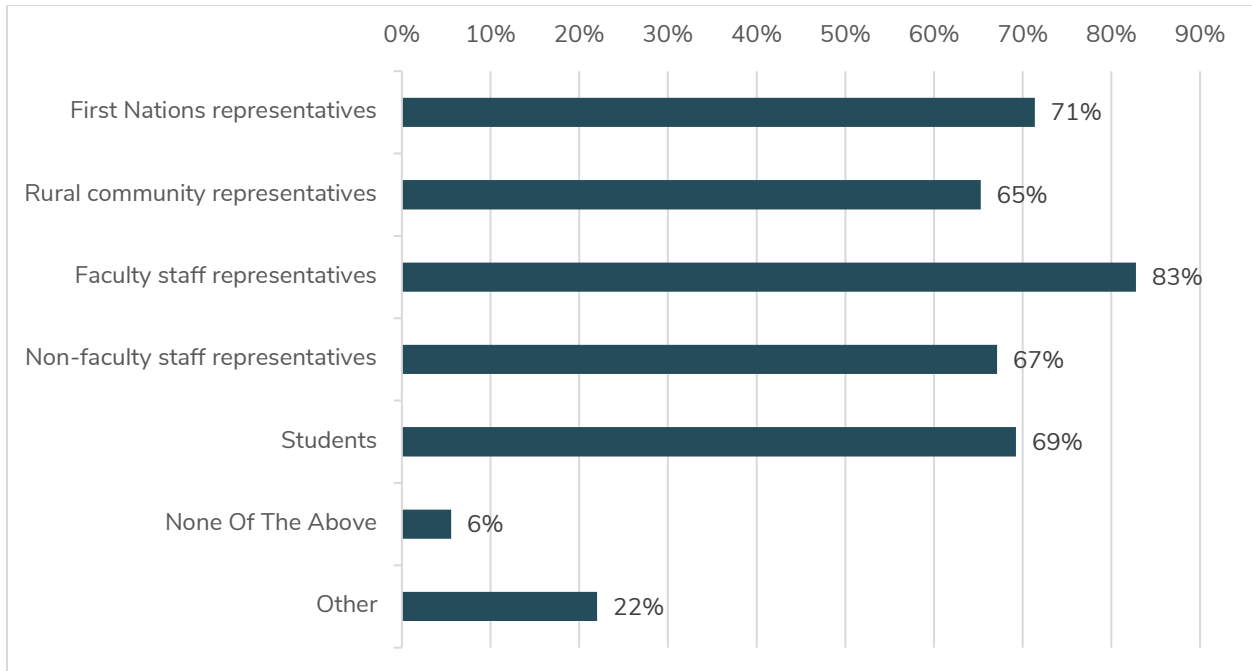
Public sessions: Comments provided by the 10 participants who attended public sessions were not conclusive, but included ensuring the university is reporting on the number of Yukon and northern students, ensuring partnerships with Yukon First Nations and other universities are in place and ensuring mental health and wellness of students.

University Governance

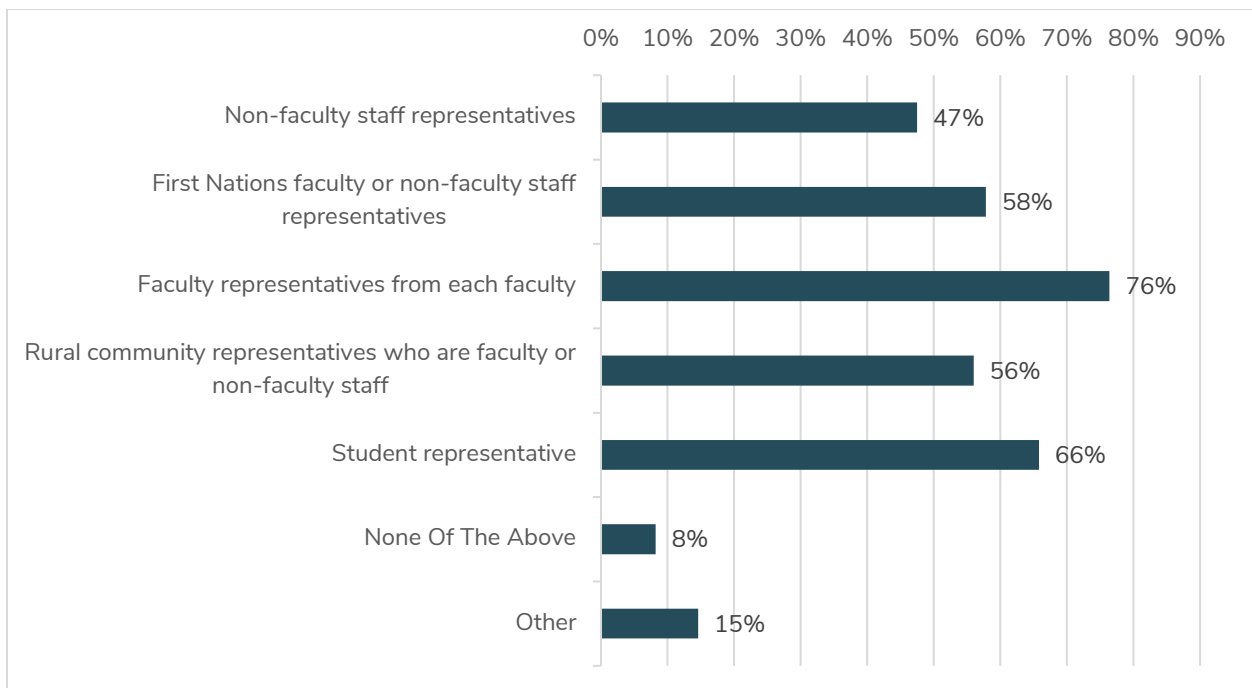
We asked participants about member representation for the Board of Governors and the Academic Senate and if we should consider anything else. Survey participants were asked to identify, from a provided list, who should be represented on the Board of Governors and the Academic Senate. They were also given the option to select “Other” and to provide alternative options.

Results:

Q7. Which of the following members do you think should be represented on the Board of Governors? Check all that apply.



Q8. Which of the following members do you think should be represented on the Senate? Check all that apply.



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Comments:

Board of Governors

Of those who completed the survey, 83 selected “Other” and provided an alternative option for consideration for the Board of Governors.

The majority of survey participants who selected “Other” in their responses identified diversity as an important consideration. Suggestions included, multicultural representation, persons from the Francophone community, representation of women, persons with disabilities, and representation of First Nations.

Many also felt it is important to include representation from the business community, especially employers, business owners and industry representatives. Others felt it is important to ensure the most qualified persons are represented on the Board of Governors. Some felt it is important to ensure public members sit on the board.

Academic Senate

Of those who completed the survey, 55 selected “Other” and provided an alternative option for consideration for the Senate.

The majority of survey participants who selected “Other” in their responses identified diversity as an important consideration. This included representation from the Francophone community, women and persons with disabilities.

Many also felt it is important to ensure the most qualified persons are represented on the Senate, while some felt there should be some public representation.

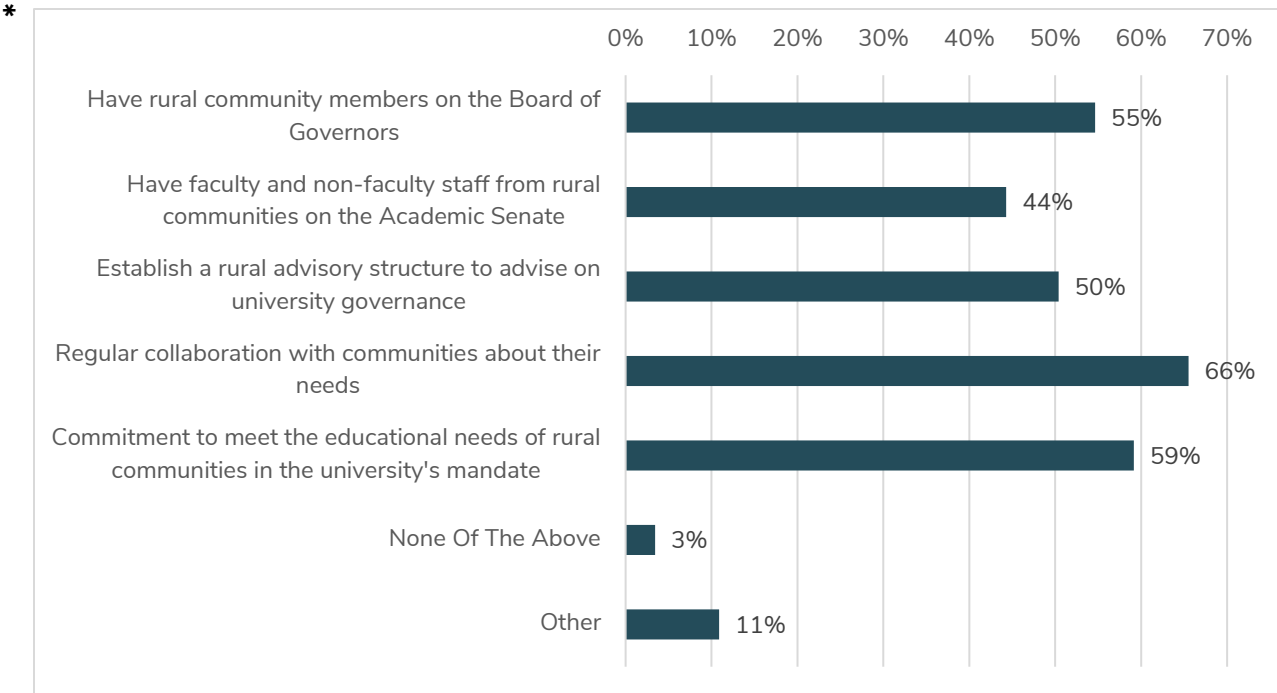
Public sessions: Comments provided by the 10 participants who attended the public sessions were not conclusive, but included ensuring qualified persons are on the Board of Governors and the Senate.

Program Delivery in Yukon Communities

We asked participants how Yukon University can best ensure Yukon’s rural communities have a voice in the governance of the university and ensure their educational needs are being met.

Results:

Q9. How can Yukon University best ensure people who reside in Yukon’s rural communities have a voice in the governance of the university and ensure their educational needs are being met? Check all that apply.



Comments:

Of those who completed the survey, 41 provided additional comments for consideration to ensure Yukon’s rural communities have a voice in the governance of the university and their educational needs are being met.

The majority of comments said it was important to ensure equal access to programs for rural communities. This included ensuring distance learning options using technology, and exploring other program delivery options.

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Many comments said it is important to ensure programming options for the Francophone community and that there is representation on the Board of Governors and Senate from Yukon's rural communities.

Some comments said it is not necessary to ensure rural communities have a voice or ensure their educational needs are being met.

Public sessions: Comments provided by the 10 participants who attended the public sessions were not conclusive, but included ensuring community campus committees are in place and ensuring communities have fair access to educational programming.

What's next?

We considered the feedback gathered as we drafted the legislation. Results of the public survey and public sessions was considered alongside input from Yukon First Nations governments, municipal governments, Yukon College Campus Committees and recommendations from Yukon College's Board of Governors.

Participation

Engagement methods

The public and partners were given an opportunity to fill out an online survey from May 15 to June 30, 2019. There was also an opportunity to attend public sessions on May 29 and June 4 in Whitehorse. Public sessions in rural communities were offered to First Nations governments to coincide with in-person meetings with the First Nation. One public session was held in Carcross on June 7 at the request of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

Participation by the numbers

Public

- 378 participants completed the public survey
- 10 participants attended public meetings in Whitehorse and Carcross
- One provided written feedback

Notification

A news release was issued to announce the opening of the engagement to the public. The announcement was shared on Facebook and Twitter. Information was posted on [EngageYukon.ca](https://engageyukon.ca). The public survey and public sessions were advertised through radio, newspaper, and Facebook. Posters were placed up in Whitehorse and a rack card mailer was sent to all citizens and businesses in Yukon.

The public survey and public sessions were also promoted through key partners. E-mails were sent directly to key postsecondary and labour market partners, including Yukon College. Letters were also sent to Municipal Advisory Councils, Yukon College's Community Campus Committees and the Whitehorse, Yukon and Yukon First Nations Chambers of Commerce. Yukon First Nations governments and municipal governments were also asked to promote the survey to their partners and community members.