COLLEGE SENIOR SURVEY
2014 Administration Guidelines

2014 College Senior Survey
Administration Guidelines

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) College Senior Survey (CSS) involves active participation from both CIRP staff and you, our campus partners, throughout the administration cycle. This document provides important information necessary to participate in the 2014 CSS, including registering and placing your order, customizing your survey, survey administration procedures and data and reporting information. Procedures and relevant processes are detailed in the general order in which decisions or actions are made. If you have questions about your specific survey administration, please contact us at css@ucla.edu or 310.825.7079.

The 2014 CSS is entirely web-based. Registration to participate in the survey can be completed on our registration site: http://heri.ucla.edu/cssreg.

Who Should Participate in the CSS?
The CSS is to be administered to graduating seniors. Institutions that plan to survey specialized samples of students (e.g., students enrolled in specific majors or colleges) should be aware that this choice will necessarily influence the degree to which the data are directly comparable to that provided by other institutions.

Important Dates to Remember
- Register to participate in the CSS starting March 2014
- Survey administration ends June 27, 2014
- Preliminary data is updated nightly
- Administrative Report Form (ARF) emailed to institutions, (after June 27, 2014)
- Institutional Profile and final data file available for download August 1, 2014

For a more detailed timeline approximating the general activities in the CSS cycle, please see Administration Timeline.

Registering and Placing Your Order

Registering for the Survey
The first step in participating in the CSS is to register. Registering for the survey indicates your intent to participate in the survey. Once you have registered, the next step is to place your order for the survey. You will register and place your order through our secure website at http://heri.ucla.edu/cssreg.

The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) will provide all of the necessary resources for the 2014 administration of the CSS. Copies of materials, including these administration guidelines, are available on the HERI website http://heri.ucla.edu/cssoverview.php#forms.

In order to complete your registration, you will be asked to supply some basic information about the primary contact for the surveys (name, address, phone, email, etc.) and a billing contact. The primary contact serves as the liaison between your campus and CIRP and receives all information and communication from us regarding the survey administration, data, and results. Once you have registered, the primary contact will receive a confirmation email from us; you may then proceed to placing your order.

Survey Administration Methods
The CSS is administered as a web-based survey. You can use our system to deliver the email invitations to complete the web-based questionnaire to students or elect to contact students on your own.

Placing Your Order
Once you have registered to participate, the next step is providing some basic information about your order. You will be asked to provide the following information:
- If would like to ask additional questions in your institution's survey
- Whether or not you intend to use group codes
- Whether you would like CIRP to email your students the invitations and reminders or if you would like to do that from your institution.
- The dates you would like to send the invitation and at least one of three reminders (if you elect to have CIRP manage your email invitation and reminders)
- Whether you will customize the Welcome and Thank You pages
- If you would like to add your logo to the survey
- A survey close date

More detailed information about customization options for the survey appears below:

Customizing Your Survey Administration
The CSS administration is designed to be flexible and allows institutions to design an administration that maximizes value for their individual campuses. Though many of the customization options are not mandatory, institutions find that taking advantage of some or all of these options greatly increases the utility of the results. Actions and decisions about customizing the survey are best made well in advance in order to allow for a smooth administration of your survey.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (additional charge)
Institutions have the option of adding up to 30 multiple-choice questions and/or 5 open-ended questions of specific local interest at the end of the questionnaire. These are institution specific questions that you will create, or adopt as part of a consortium.

If you choose to ask additional questions, you will want to set aside sufficient time to draft, pilot test, and incorporate your additional questions into the administration of the CSS. Additionally, it is important to consult with your local IRB. Your campus may require you to submit these questions for their review and approval. If your campus believes an additional question to be of a sensitive nature, you must submit that question to CIRP for our consideration at least one month in advance of your survey administration. For more information, please see Using Additional Questions.

GROUP CODES
Group codes are breakout groups that permit you to compare specific subgroups of your student sample. These breakout groups could be used to identify students in different colleges, majors, residence halls, or academic programs on your campus. Group codes allow you to identify up to 190 unique subgroups of students. For more information on adding group codes to the survey, please see Using Group Codes.

EDITING THE WELCOME AND THANK YOU PAGES (free)
You can customize the Welcome and Thank You pages with a message and/or the logo from your institution. Using an institutional logo reinforces the idea that individual colleges and universities administer the CSS. If you do not customize the Welcome/Thank You page text or graphic, a generic version of the webpages will be used. You can preview these pages when you place your order.

**Please contact the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA at
310.825.7079 or heri@ucla.edu with any questions**

EMAILING INVITATIONS AND REMINDERS
Your students will be invited to participate in the survey via an email that includes the following: 1) a short description of the survey project, 2) required information concerning human subjects, 3) information on how to opt out of the survey, and 4) a personal access code with which to access the web-based questionnaire. CIRP provides templates for invitations and reminder emails, but campuses will need to customize all their messages.

CIRP ADMINISTERED EMAILS (additional charge)
During the registration process, campuses choose the date that CIRP will send the invitation email to students as well as reminders to non-respondents who have not opted out of future mailings. Generic text for these emails is supplied, but should be edited to best suit your institution. Sections of the emails that cannot be edited are those required for human subjects approval at UCLA.

One of the advantages of this email option is that your institution does not need to send and monitor emails. More importantly, having CIRP administer the emails takes your institution "out of the loop." By having CIRP administer the survey your institution is further removed from any perceived intervention.

If you elect to have CIRP manage your email distribution, you will need to provide us with the email address for each student in your sample. The specifications for this file will be sent to you. CIRP does not use the email addresses you provide for any other purposes.

INSTITUTIONALLY ADMINISTERED EMAILS
Schools may elect to send the notification emails on their own, in which case CIRP will supply a set of logon codes specific to each school. The appropriate campus representative then merges these logon codes within their own system to create invitation and reminder emails and to monitor survey responses.

Pre-Populate Student ID
Those institutions opting to have CIRP manage email communications will provide CIRP with the email addresses and names (first name, last name) of all students to be surveyed. Institutions may elect to include student IDs as well. For more information please see Student Identifiers.

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Preparing to Administer the Survey

Linking the CSS with Other Data
In addition to studying a wide variety of issues based solely on data from the CSS, it is also possible to use these data to build a comprehensive database using other institutional data (e.g., registrar, admissions, or financial aid data) or by linking to other CIRP surveys (such as the CIRP Freshman Survey, the Your First College Year survey (YFCY) or the Diverse Learning Environments survey (DLE)) to create a longitudinal database. In order to do studies based on data other than those found on the CSS, it is necessary to be able to link these different data together. Thus, to maximize the utility of these data for institutional research purposes, we suggest that you encourage students to provide their student ID numbers in the grid on the first page of the survey. Note that if a student fails to provide an ID number when he or she completes the survey instrument, you will not be able to merge the CSS data with data from other campus files.

Anti-Spam Procedures
To ensure delivery of your emails to your students, you will want to instruct your institution's Information Technology department to add they survey email address to their approved senders list. This should allow emails coming from HERI's email distribution service to pass through the bulk or junk mail screening processes. Failure to do this may result in email being routed directly to bulk or junk email folders without ever reaching the intended survey respondents, and consequently affecting your survey response rate. For specific information to provide to your IT department, see Anti-Spam Guidelines.

Pre-Contact
In order to maximize your response rate, we suggest that you communicate with your students a week before the first email is to be sent out, introducing the survey and asking them to watch their email for the invitation. Survey methodology research indicates that pre-notifications can substantially increase your response rate. Suggested text for a pre-contact letter is included in Invitation and Reminder Templates.

Inviting Your Students to Participate
It is important to note that CSS participation is voluntary. **All students who receive the CSS instrument must be informed that this is a voluntary survey.**

Please note that *compulsory participation in research is a violation of federal regulations.* Also, some campuses may consider people under 18 to be minors. If this is the case on your campus, and if your CSS sample includes students under 18, you may need to seek permission from these students' parents prior to survey administration.

Incentives

Incentives can prove to be an effective means of increasing survey response rates. Gift certificates to the campus bookstore, food, money, or an automatic entry into some type of raffle or lottery are all possibilities. If you are considering using incentives in your survey administration, please refer to Encouraging Participation in CIRP Surveys for important information on structuring your incentive strategy.

Confidentiality

The CSS collects personal identifiers and potentially sensitive demographic data. Student responses to these survey items make it possible to link CSS data with data from several sources such as other CIRP surveys (e.g., TFS, DLE and YFCY), your campus registrar's office, other nationwide assessment instruments, and local assessment efforts.

Students' right to confidentiality as human research subjects must remain a priority throughout the administration of the CSS. Please inform your students that the questionnaires are handled in a confidential and professional manner. For more information regarding confidentiality and privacy, please see Confidentiality and Privacy.

Institutional Review Board Approval

Although there are common federal guidelines for the use of human subjects in research, procedures may vary from campus to campus. Therefore it is critical for you to familiarize yourself with your institution's human subjects guidelines. CIRP receives its human subjects approval from the UCLA North General Institutional Review Board (NGIRB) which requires that an appropriate college official certify that:

1. Your institution will abide by and comply with the CIRP administration procedures as approved by UCLA's IRB.
2. Your campus has determined if local IRB approval is required, and
3. If local IRB approval of this research is required on your campus, you will administer the survey only after you have received local IRB approval.

You further agree to the following statement:
The Higher Education Research Institute provides data files to assist institutional research activities. By receiving this data file, we agree that these data will be used only for statistical analyses and reporting of aggregated information, and not for the investigation of specific individuals. In affirming this agreement, we give assurance that use of these data will conform to widely

accepted standards of practice and legal restrictions that are intended to protect the confidentiality of research subjects. We also give assurance that no survey respondent will be sanctioned based on any answer provided in the 2014 CSS.

Compliance with the above statements is obtained by completing the Research Approval Form. **You will not be able to receive any data or reports until the Research Approval Form is completed.**

Many campuses have found that the application that CIRP submits to the UCLA IRB is very useful in discussions with their own local IRBs. For your convenience, our approved application is available on our website at: http://www.heri.ucla.edu.

Campus IRBs vary widely in their response time to a request for approvals, ranging from a few days to several weeks. We suggest that you begin this process as soon as possible.

After Administration

Administration Report Form (ARF) Online Survey
The ARF is a short web-based survey that inquires about specific institutional information needed to process your completed surveys and to prepare your institutional reports.

We will send the primary contact an email with a link to the 2014 ARF Survey shortly after the final processing cut-off date (June 27, 2014). Please note: We may be unable to process your institution's data until we receive the completed ARF. If we do not receive it, your data may not be included in the comparison groups for the national data and we cannot guarantee that you will receive your deliverables in a timely fashion.

Reports and Data Files
HERI provides participating institutions with several reports that allow comparison of student responses. For more information, please refer to Data and Reporting.

Questions and Further Information

If you have questions, please contact the CIRP office at CSS@ucla.edu or by phone at 310-825-7079.

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