COLLEGE SENIOR SURVEY (CSS)
2014 Administration Guidelines

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Overview and Purpose

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 heri@ucla.edu or 310.825.7079.

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. Below are some pros and cons for the most common methods of selecting a group of students for survey participation on your campus.

All Graduating Seniors:

Advantages:	Limitations:
Larger numbers of respondents allow you to make comparisons by students' major, program, place of residence, or other characteristics.	It can be challenging to reach an entire population of seniors, especially those who live off-campus or whose course-taking patterns are atypical.
You have the potential for understanding how students at your institution have changed over the course of their undergraduate education. For example, if your institution participated in the 2009 CIRP Freshman Survey and/or the 2010 Your First College Year (YFCY) Survey, administering the CSS to all graduating seniors will allow you to follow-up with the largest number of those survey respondents, thereby generating a valuable longitudinal data set.	
This method will generate the most reliable and representative results for your institution	
Your data will be more directly comparable to those provided by other institutions in the CSS population	

Random Sample of Graduating Seniors:

Advantages:	Limitations:
Your data are more likely to be directly comparable to those provided by other institutions in the CSS population.	Smaller sample size may limit the ability to disaggregate your results. In other words, you may not have enough respondents in each sub-sample to yield meaningful comparisons between groups of students.
When utilizing true random sampling techniques, this method should generate representative results for your institution.	Limits the ability of all graduating seniors to feel that they have had the opportunity to provide input on their college experience.
Cost is reduced from the "all senior" method.	Drawing and reaching a random sample of students may add another layer of complexity to the management of survey administration.

Targeted Sample of Graduating Students:

Advantages:	Limitations:
It may be easier to administer the survey to students in specific courses, programs, or places of residence than the student population at large.	Specialized samples of students will necessarily influence the degree to which the data are directly comparable to those provided by other institutions in the CSS sample.
Targeted sampling will not provide an accurate or reliable representation of the overall student experience on your campus.	Limits the ability of all graduating seniors to feel that they have had the opportunity to provide input on their college experience.
Smaller sample size may limit the ability to disaggregate your results. In other words, you may not have enough students in each sub-sample to yield meaningful comparisons between groups of students.	

***Please Note: If you are planning to conduct a targeted sample of students for the 2014 administration of the CSS, we urge you to consider also surveying students who are not in your target group for comparison purposes (i.e., a control group).

Administration Period
The survey is open for administration from March 2014 through June 27, 2014. Institutions that close their surveys by June 27, 2014 will receive their institutional reports in August.

CSS as a Follow-up to the CIRP Freshman Survey, YFCY Survey, and DLE Survey
While the CSS may be used effectively as a stand-alone instrument, it was designed as a follow-up instrument to the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, YFCY Survey, and DLE Survey. CSS results are most valuable when linked to relevant pre-test data from the CIRP Freshman Survey or other local baseline data. Having baseline data collected at the time of college entry allows you to assess how and why your students change over time, and to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programs and policies at your campus. If you

indicated when registering for the CSS that you are following up with students who participated in the CIRP Freshman Survey, HERI will provide you with the names, dates of birth, and identification numbers of your CIRP Freshman Survey respondents from that year. However, you should not feel limited to administer the CSS only to CIRP Freshman Survey respondents.

Registering and Placing Your Order

Registering for the Survey
The first step in participating in the CSS Survey 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. You will use this secure site to:

- Register for surveys
- Place, customize, and monitor your survey order
- Receive your data and reports

The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) and DatStat, HERI's outside survey vendor, 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 CIRP Web Portal, under "Guides and 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.

Placing Your Order
Once you have registered to participate, the next step is providing some basic information about your order. In order to place your order, you will log into the web portal, and after supplying your password, you will be asked to provide the following information: whether or not you would like to ask additional supplemental questions and if so, if you would like HERI to administer the questions or if you will administer them yourself; whether or not you will customize the welcome and thank you pages; whether or not you intend to use group codes, the number of surveys you wish to order and the date of the surveys, and an optional survey close date.

Customizing Your Survey Administration

The CSS Survey 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.

1. Invitation and Reminders

One of the most important ways the CSS can be customized for all participating institutions is in the correspondence the students receive inviting (or reminding) them to participate. Although CIRP can manage various aspects of this process (see below), the intent is for students to understand that their college or university is soliciting their feedback. CIRP provides templates for invitation and reminder communications. Campuses should customize the invitation and reminder messages sent to students in order to maintain a tone that is consistent with campus culture. Campuses can also customize all messages so that they come from institution-designated signatories. Using an institutional logo for the web survey also reinforces the idea that individual colleges and universities administer the CIRP Freshman Survey.

2. Group Codes

Group codes are breakout groups that permit you to compare specific subgroups of your first-year 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.

3. Adding Additional Questions to the Survey

At the end of the questionnaire, campuses have the option of adding up to 20 additional multiple-choice questions of specific local interest. If you choose to utilize this option, you will want to set aside sufficient time to draft, pilot test, and incorporate your additional questions into the administration of the CIRP Freshman Survey. Additionally, it is important to consult with your local IRB. Your campus may require you to submit these additional items for their review and approval. Additionally, if your campus believes an additional question to be of a sensitive nature, you must submit that question to HERI for our consideration one month before administration. For more information, please see Information for Campuses Using Additional Questions.

Additional Web Survey Customization

4. 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 the email address provided below 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 the CIRP College Senior Survey, email will come from:

CIRPSurveys@datstat.com
DNS Name: hostmail1.datstathost.com
IP Address: 50.31.57.249

5. Email "Spoofing"
Email notifications will come from CIRPSurveys@Datstat.com unless you elect to provide an alternative "from" email address and email display name. This allows you to customize the invitation email to your participants, making the notification emails seem to come from an email address at your own institution (e.g., President, Dean, Director of Institutional Research). Emails can also be personalized with the recipient's name.

6. Customizing the "Welcome" and "Thank You" Pages
Material of your own, including additional text and your school logo, can be added to the screens at the beginning and end of the survey.

7. Displaying Your School Name
Your school name will appear at the top of the screen for the web questionnaire as a joint sponsor of the survey. It will look like this (your name will obviously replace "Sample University"):

Sponsored by the Higher Education Research Institute and Sample University

The institution name will, by default, be the name that shows in our registration system. If you would like to alter this name (e.g., "Sample U") then please check "Change Your School's Display Name for the Web Survey" on the "Place an Order" page in the CIRP Web Portal.

8. Pre-Populate Student ID
Those institutions opting to have HERI manage email communications provide HERI with the email addresses and names (first name, last name) of all students to be surveyed through the web portal. Institutions may elect to include student IDs as well. If student ID is included, it becomes a permanent part of the data file. The specifications for this file are

available on the CIRP web portal. If you have more than one email address for a student, you may send an identical email identification notification to the second email address, potentially increasing your response rate (note that a student responding to both email notifications will still only be responding once as the login codes will be identical).

Please note that provision of student IDs is compliant with FERPA regulations regarding how educational institutions may share student data (FERPA 34CFR99.31(a)6(i)). If an institution shares student records with HERI, HERI will:
> 1) Limit access to personally identifiable information to HERI staff who are responsible for the maintenance of HERI's research database.
> 2) Limit its use of personally identifiable information to the purpose of studies that improve higher education.

3) Only use student contact information for the purpose of inviting students to participate in CIRP surveys.

Survey Administration Methods
Starting in the spring of 2014, the CSS will be administered through the web-survey option only. This administration method allows you to use our system to deliver the email requests to complete a web-based questionnaire to students or contact students on your own.

Additional Issues to Consider Prior to 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.

Research Approval
Many campuses have found that the documentation we receive from UCLA's North General Institutional Review Board (NGIRB) is very useful in applications to their own IRB. Our approval documentation is available at http://www.heri.ucla.edu .

Additionally, CIRP and the NGIRB require that an appropriate college official certify compliance through our **Research Approval Form** with the following:
> 1. You 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 Your First College Year Survey.

Compliance with the above statements is submitted through the CIRP Web Portal. The first time you click on "Download Reports & Data/Data Analysis" from the Main Menu, you will be prompted to complete the Research Approval Form. You will not be able to receive any data or reports until the Research Approval Form is completed.

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., the CIRP Freshman Survey, the Your First College Year (YFCY) Survey and the Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey), 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. Following are some specific points to consider with respect to the confidentiality of CSS data:

- Your survey collection procedures and data storage systems must be secured.
- Viewing student responses to questions on the CSS (other than the names of respondents for tracking purposes) prior to data processing is considered a breach of confidentiality. Assure students that no one at your institution will examine individual responses to survey questions.
- Your data file will not include personal identifiers such as name, address and telephone number, but will include the student ID number, if provided.
- HERI does not release identifiable data to other researchers or to other agencies.
- The "Research Approval Form" states that the data will be used solely for statistical analyses and reporting of aggregated information, and not for the investigation of specific individuals.

Survey Information and Options

Group Codes
Group codes are breakout groups that permit you to compare specific subgroups of your first-year 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.

For more information on the CSS data files and group code reports, please see the "Reports and Data Files" section below and the "Custom Reports and Data Files" page at http://www.heri.ucla.edu/dsdownloads.php

Institutionally Matched Data
Prior to administration of the survey, institutions participating in a web administration have the option of providing student ID numbers for students in the survey population. CIRP will match this information to survey responses and integrate it into the institutional data files returned to the institution. This should facilitate longitudinal matching with CIRP Surveys as well as pairing CSS results with institutional databases.

Please note that provision of student ID number is compliant with FERPA regulations regarding how educational institutions may share student data (FERPA 34CFR99.31(a)6(i)). If an institution shares student records with HERI, HERI will:
1) Limit access to personally identifiable information to HERI staff who are responsible for the maintenance of HERI's research database
2) Limit its use of personally identifiable information to the purpose of studies that improve higher education
3) Only use student contact information for the purpose of inviting students to participate in CIRP surveys

Administering the College Senior Survey

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

The "Survey Information Sheet" <u>must</u> accompany all survey forms. It describes the purpose of the survey, the potential risks and benefits, and students' rights as research subjects.

Confidentiality MUST remain a priority throughout the survey administration. Please remember that the examination of any individual responses to the survey other than the respondent's name is considered a breach of confidentiality.

Please word your reminder correspondence in a way that does not appear coercive. Most students have not responded to the initial inquiry because they were pressed for time when it arrived and will be amenable to completing the survey. HERI has provided suggested and required text for the reminder. Please remember that the text **in bold must** be included in your communication with the students.

Specific Issues with Web Administration
There are two ways to notify your students of the opportunity to complete the College Senior Survey on the web:

1. An **<u>institutional administration</u>** is the default setting for web survey administration. In an *institutional administration*, your institution has the responsibility to contact the students with the request to participate and the necessary information to participate.

   Campuses indicating that they are conducting an institutional administration will receive:

   - A list of unique log-in codes for students to access the web-based CSS instrument to merge into email invitations to participate in the CSS
   - The web address (URL link) to the survey instrument
   - An electronic version of the information sheet outlining students' rights as research subjects (i.e., "Survey Information Sheet")
   - Templates for the email invitation and reminder correspondence

2. If you select **<u>Email Distribution</u>**, HERI (and our vendor, DatStat) uses email addresses and names that are provided by your institution and will manage the email

contact process for you[1]. When you place your order on the CIRP Web Portal, you will be able to specify dates and times at which you would like HERI to send an invitation and up to three reminder emails to those students who have not yet responded to the survey request, **but not including those students who have opted out of the survey**. You can alter the dates and times emails are sent up to 24 hours before they are due to be sent out.

Whether you select HERI to manage the survey administration process or if you do it yourself, there are several important issues to take into consideration to maximize the delivery of your web survey, including opportunities to customize the web administration for your institution. Please see above section entitled "Customizing Your Survey Administration."

Inviting Your Students to Participate
See <u>Templates for Invitations and Reminders</u> for suggested text for invitation and reminder emails to accompany initial and follow-up waves.

We strongly recommend that you use the invitation and reminder templates since they include appropriate language to meet guidelines for research involving human subjects and such language is a required element of the research protocol approved by the UCLA North General IRB, but again remind you to edit them to insert information about your school in the appropriate places.

Monitoring Your Survey Responses
Students following the link given in the email request to participate will be sent to a welcome screen that again explains the survey project and offers a way to opt out of the survey. If students click on the opt-out button, they will not receive any further communications about the survey.

You will be able to access, through the CIRP Web Portal, a Detailed Web Response Report. This file will detail, with unique identifiers, 1) those students who have completed the survey; 2) those who have not yet responded to the web survey; 3) those students who have accessed the survey, but may or may not have entered any data; 4) those students who have accessed the survey and hit the "save and return button"; and 5) those students who have opted out. This will enable you to follow-up with non-respondents **who have not exercised their right to be removed from further contact**. You can track your response rates in **real time.**

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[1] Both HERI and DRC abide by FERPA guidelines in the use of student information and all personnel involved with the data collection have successfully completed training in human subjects research that meets NIH requirements.

Returning Surveys for Processing
Web surveys are automatically submitted directly to our data processing center.

After Administration

Administration Report Form (ARF) Online Survey
Upon completion of your administration of the CSS, it is critical that you complete an Administration Report Form (ARF). The ARF is a short web-based survey that inquires about specific institutional information needed to process your completed College Senior Surveys and to prepare your institutional reports.

We will send the primary contact an email with a link to the 2014 ARF Survey at the end of your campus' survey administration. The ARF is due by 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 by the processing cut-off date, 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
Institutions can download preliminary data files in **real** time throughout the survey administration process. HERI provides participating institutions with several reports that allow comparison of student responses. For more information, please refer to Data and Reporting.