

# The Communique

*A Publication of the Institutional Research Office*

*"Assessing Elon University through the timely collection, analysis,  
and dissemination of institutional related information."*

## Your Voice Counts: The Importance of Survey Research

### What is a survey?

Surveys are most often described as a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals. The "sample" is the portion of the population being studied. Surveys provide an important source of basic knowledge. Because of the opportunity for obtaining knowledge, surveys have a wide variety of purposes, dealing with a variety of issues. Content can also vary, with focuses ranging from opinions and attitudes to behaviors and skills.

Types of Surveys	Benefits	Drawbacks
Web-based survey	Low cost to administer, gather results quickly	Technological breakdowns
Paper survey	Low cost to create, easy to create	Tedious to tabulate
Telephone interview	Convenient to administer, can closely supervise interviewers	Answering machines, caller ID, not wanting to use cell phone minutes for surveys
In-person interview	Good for collecting complex information	Sentence fragments/sound bites given as answers

### Examples of Surveys Supporting Elon's Improvement

Through the assistance of survey research, many departments and organizations across campus have implemented changes towards Elon's improvement. The following are just a few examples of surveys supporting Elon's improvement.

- ◇ **Freshman CIRP** (Cooperative Institutional Research Program)—this national survey has been used as a tool for forecasting retention, affirms the importance of the Study Abroad program, and is used to support the admissions office.
- ◇ **YFCY** (Your First College Year)—the First Year Experience committee, along with the Library and Campus Computing facilities use the results for improvements and reporting.
- ◇ **NSSE** (National Survey of Student Engagement)—supported the statistics core course and numerous student open forums.
- ◇ **ESS** (Exiting Senior Survey)—helps monitor and assess senior learning outcomes and General Studies goals.

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