Survey or Not to Survey
Developing a Survey Policy

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Presentation Outcomes

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Make a clear connection between an effective survey policy and the continued use of surveys as a means of gathering reliable data.
- Become familiar with the basic elements of a viable survey policy.
- Share their own experiences developing and implementing an institutional survey policy.
- Identify ways to enhance their institutions’ survey protocols based on current best practice recommendations.
Presentation Structure

- Survey eco-system on campus
- An overview of issues that prompted us to consider instituting a formal survey policy
  - “Survey Fatigue”
- Research
- Campus conversations
- Writing a first draft
Survey Uses

- General assessment – Student Satisfaction, Student Engagement, Employee Satisfaction
- Needs assessment – Learning Center, Peer to Peer Health Education
- Feedback – Honors Program Year-End Survey
- Research – Longitudinal Study of Emerging Adulthood, Religious Diversity in the Workplace
Assessment Partners

- General assessment – Office of Research, Planning & Assessment
- Needs assessment – Units considering a change/upgrade to their program(s) or service(s)
- Feedback – Units conducting ongoing assessment
- Research – Faculty and students
Do We Really Need a Campus Survey Policy?

- It takes time and effort …
- We are a small campus …
- Will they even listen to us …
- Are we becoming too much like the “Soup Nazi” …
Yes! We Really Did Need a Campus Survey Policy.

- Proliferation of surveys big and small without knowledge or input from assessment office
- Survey overload/ "survey fatigue" / "feedback fatigue"
- Students' privacy a concern
- Duplication of data gathered
- No process for dissemination of information
Yes! We Really Did Need a Campus Survey Policy.

- Easy to use survey software, available free online, has led to a proliferation of surveys without input from the assessment office
  - Calendar conflicts with paid-for institutional surveys
  - Lack of quality control: poorly designed survey instruments
  - Wasted chance to collect potentially useful information
  - Called on to bail out students who have run into technology issues
Yes! We Really Did Need a Campus Survey Policy.

- Quantity and variable quality of surveys led to overall "survey fatigue"/ "feedback fatigue"
  - Noted by students in the comments section of our annual Student Satisfaction Survey
  - Multi-year audit of survey response rates by our student worker indicates diminishing numbers:
    - Example: Gen-Ed Survey
      - 2012  38.3%
      - 2013  28.8%
      - 2014  34.3%
      - 2015  20.9%
      - 2016  32.4%
Yes! We Really Did Need a Campus Survey Policy.

- Protection of students' privacy rights a concern
- Duplication/inefficiency in data gathering
- No process for dissemination of information gathered by scattered units/individuals
Here is What the Experts Say

- "... current rules of thumb of good survey practice dictate striving for a high response rate as an indicator of the quality of all survey estimates." (Groves 2006)

- "In many discussions about the rise in survey nonresponse, survey fatigue is often cited as one possible cause. ... the issue of survey fatigue will become increasingly important as the costs of designing and administering a survey decrease. A variety of software products now allow anyone with minimal technical skills to create and administer a simple Web survey." (Porter et al. 2004)
Examples of Survey Policies from Other Campuses

- NC State, Raleigh, NC
  https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-01-25-17

- Duke University, Durham, NC

- Davidson College, Davidson, NC
  https://www.davidson.edu/offices/institutional-research/policies-and-methods

- Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI
  https://www.stritch.edu/OIS/DQIR/On-Campus-Survey-Research-and-Policies/
Survey Policy Development Process

- Survey Fatigue
- Smaller Sample Size
- Unreliable Information

- Literature Review
- Examples

- Campus Conversations
  - Undergraduate Research
  - IRB*
  - Dean of Students

- First Draft of a Survey Policy

*Institutional Review Board is a committee that has been formally designated to approve, monitor, and review biomedical and behavioral research involving humans.
Research & Campus Conversation Outcomes

- Provide survey methodology & *Qualtrics* *(survey software)* instruction for students participating in the Undergraduate Research Program
- IRB to work more closely with Office Research, Planning & Assessment
- Develop simple survey request form in *Qualtrics*
- Define types of surveys for campus community – confidential, anonymous, open
- Share calendar of major surveys in the campus-wide Google calendar
Elements of Our Survey Policy

- Coordination of campus surveys
- Use of Qualtrics
- Survey development training
- Collection of survey data
- Sharing survey data
- Privacy of respondents
- Handling off-campus requests for survey of students/faculty/staff
- Definitions of survey types
Marketing the New Survey Policy

- Campus publications
- Presentations – All Campus, Faculty Council, Student Government, Deans/Department Heads
- Classroom presentations for research based courses
- Advertise incentives awarded (ongoing)
- Advertise feedback gathered and improvements made (ongoing)
Pair & Share

- What's your interest in survey policy development?
- Where are you in terms of a survey policy?
- Any insights to share?
- If you have a survey policy in place, how is it going?

Any particular challenges? How did you advertise it?
References


Thank You!