

Faculty Senate Policy Governing Electronic Surveys and Questionnaires

Implications for Student Affairs Assessment Activities

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Introduction

On September 8, 2012 the Faculty Senate approved the “Policy Governing Electronic Surveys and Questionnaires Directed to Student, Faculty Members, or Staff of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.” In response to the ease and proliferation of web-based surveys the Faculty Senate adopted this new policy. The complete text can be found at: <http://www.senate.illinois.edu/gp1210rev.pdf>. This policy documents the general procedures that have been in place for years but never codified. It is not meant to supersede any existing policies and procedures currently in affect.

Scope

This policy applies to all web-based or email surveys and questionnaires sent by UIUC students, staff, or faculty, and non-UIUC entities to UIUC populations. Non-UIUC entities may be subject to additional requirements or conditions. This policy focuses on unsolicited requests for access to campus-wide populations for large-scale surveys. As in the past, full populations such as, all undergraduates, all Juniors, all faculty members, or all staff members in a particular unit will rarely be approved. There are a few exceptions to this policy (e.g., The Freshman Survey, the Senior Survey) and these will continue to be allowed. The Division of Management Information can assist in creating samples for assessment purposes (fees may apply).

Existing Oversight

This policy **does not** supersede or circumvent Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval or Student Affairs Research Approval (SARA). If the data collected will be shared with non-UIUC entities then human subject approval from IRB **is required** as well as SARA. If the assessment is purely for program or service improvement, the data will not be shared outside of the Student Affairs unit, and the data can be kept confidential; IRB and SARA approvals are not necessary. The students surveyed must have utilized a service or participated in a Student Affairs program. However, if a comparative study is planned (i.e., users compared to non-users of a service) then a SARA may be necessary if the study is very large in scope. Surveying non-users will also trigger the implementation of the Faculty Senate policy.

Administration of this Policy

An Electronic Survey Administration Committee, reporting to the Chancellor, will be appointed to administer this policy. The Director of the Division of Management Information will chair the committee; and one additional member will be appointed annually each by the Chancellor, Provost, Dean of Students, Dean of the Graduate College, IRB Office, Urbana-Champaign Senate, Illinois Student Senate, and Council of Deans. The committee will meet at least annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and recommend revisions as needed.

Implications for Student Affairs Assessments

The new policy does not restrict the surveying of students whom use specific Student Affairs (SA) services or participate in SA programs. If the data is aggregated, the respondents kept confidential, and data is not shared with non-UIUC entities then no approvals are required. IRB approval or exemption and SARA is necessary if non-users of a service or program are surveyed. The surveying of non-users will also trigger the Senate Policy. At this time we do not know how exactly it will be implemented other than through existing procedures (i.e., SARA or IRB approval).

In addition, third party survey companies such as StudentVoice/CampusLabs or EBI must have language in their agreement with the SA unit specifying that;

- the responses to the survey will not be used for any other purpose
- email addresses will not be used for any other purposes
- respondents will not be subjected to inappropriate or annoying ads
- appropriate server firewalls will be in place to protect data collected

The SA unit will not provide confidential information (e.g., major, marital status, etc.) to a third party surveyor. SA units should use Webtools to create all surveys. Non-UIUC survey tools are considered to be a third party vendor and subject to guaranteeing the four bullets above. *StudentVoice/CampusLabs has the appropriate safeguard language in their contract.* Contracts with any other third party vendor should be reviewed to ensure the four bullets above are guaranteed.