Policy name: Campus-wide Survey Policy

Policy statement: Due to the prevalence and ease of administering surveys to a large population, "survey fatigue" is common among university populations. The lower response rates on surveys decreases their validity and wastes the resources of student, faculty, alumni, and staff time, as well as expenses incurred for nationally normed surveys (eg. National Survey of Student Engagement).

Therefore, the UIS Institutional Data Steering Committee (IDSC) is implementing this Policy to coordinate surveys at our university.

Policy:

I.   Scope of this Policy

This Policy applies to all unsolicited web-based or e-mail surveys and questionnaires sent to a significant portion* of students, faculty, alumni, or staff. It does not restrict in any way:

- Surveys sent by voluntary associations to their own members; for example, a registered student organization may freely poll its own members or a union may survey its own members;
- Surveys sent out to all members of a voluntary e-mail list;
- Departmental surveys of their program students for assessment and outreach;
- Electronic collection of information required for employment or matriculation;
- Electronic communication between a faculty member and his or her students for non-research purposes.

If the survey is being conducted by a member of the university system (UIS, UIUC, UIC, UA) as part of his or her administrative duties, as part of a research project, or as part of a thesis or class assignment, refer to Section II. Surveys conducted by parties external to the System are covered in Section III.

II.   Surveys Originating Internally

A. Policies

Campus-wide surveys will be conducted in a manner consistent with ethical considerations and security best practices. Since UIS students, faculty, alumni, and staff will be surveyed, the results will be considered the property of UIS with the expectation that they will

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* "Significant portion" means a survey that is sent to at least 10% of the target population (see Appendix: FAQ 1)

be shared appropriately with the campus community. Reasons for not sharing the results of a survey require explanation, which must be submitted to the IDSC for review.

Respondent survey data must be kept confidential. Thus, data shared must not include personally identifiable information such as social security number or name and reports using the data must not identify individual respondents (paper, electronic or verbal).

Summary data with small cell sizes must not be reported if it could potentially reveal data about an individual person. In general, at a minimum cell sizes of nine or fewer must not be reported, but depending on the summary report, it may be necessary to set a higher threshold in some cases.

B. Procedures

Following approval of the Institutional Review Board (if applicable), requests to survey a significant portion of UIS students, faculty, alumni, and staff, or above the college level, shall be submitted to the IDSC for coordination, using the appropriate form. The IDSC will publish a calendar of campus-wide surveys and advise potential surveyors of scheduling conflicts. In addition, the IDSC will maintain a database of existing campus-wide surveys. In the case of duplicate efforts, the IDSC will provide guidance on the use of current data sets.

III.   Surveys Originating Externally

A. Policies

The UIS community maintains its rights to privacy, within the limits of the Freedom of Information Act and FERPA. Therefore, surveys of UIS students, faculty, alumni, and staff by external parties will be denied except in cases where a member of the university community is a research collaborator. In those cases, the policies and procedures of Section II will apply.

B. Procedures

In the case of a UIS student, faculty, or staff member receiving a request from an external party to share a survey link with the rest of the campus, they should refer the inquirer to this policy and refuse to forward the email. If the UIS community member thinks that the survey is valuable, they may request to take part in the survey themselves, or can request to participate as a collaborator. Collaborative research involving campus-wide survey data is encouraged with the understanding that the results will be shared with the campus community. If the external surveyor is in collaboration with a member of the UIS community, then the survey will be considered of internal origin and Section II of this Policy will apply.

Requests for exceptions to this Policy may be made in writing to the IDSC for review.

IV.   Implementation

Under current UIS email policies the ability to send emails to large portions of the UIS community are granted to a limited number of managers who are responsible for email lists (e.g., faculty, staff, first year students...). Additionally, the UIS Campus Announcements email is monitored by staff in Information Technology Services. Therefore, these persons will be trained in this Policy. When they receive a request to send a survey to one of their email lists, they will

refer the inquirer to this Policy. The requestor can then apply to the IDSC, before the committee review deadlines posted on the Institutional Effectiveness webpage, in order to coordinate their survey of the campus.

The UIS Advancement Office maintains the official list of alumni and their contact information, so units must contact them in order to survey alumni. The Director of Annual Giving and Major Gifts will coordinate survey requests with the Institutional Data Steering Committee, following the procedures described in this Policy.

Questions related to this Policy may be addressed to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Institutional Effectiveness.
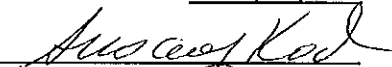
Appendix: FAQs

1. What is a "campus-wide" survey?
   A survey of any group or unit within the UIS community which represents a **significant portion** (at least 10%) of the population (eg. >600 students) **or** goes beyond the college level (eg. "all first year students" would include undergraduate freshmen from all four colleges, and so this Policy would apply).

2. What are the guiding principles of the IDSC?
   The IDSC is broadly representative of the campus community and advises the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Institutional Effectiveness. The Principles for Institutional Data Analytics are posted on the Institutional Effectiveness web page.

3. What is "cell size"?
   A reporting cell is the sub-group of a particular identifier, such as academic major. If only 9 students respond to your survey from a particular major, then reporting those responses at the level of major could jeopardize the privacy of those respondents' answers. Standard practice is to only report cell sizes of 10 or greater.

4. What is the difference between "anonymity" and "confidentiality"?
   Anonymity means that you will not be able to identify the source of the response to your survey, which is desirable when dealing with sensitive subjects. But even a supposedly anonymous online survey could be traced to an individual through their IP address, thus compromising the anonymity. Most survey data should be viewed as confidential, meaning that the results will be guarded. Raw results should not be made public. Best practices for reporting and securing the data are described on the UIS ITS website.

5. What is a "data management plan?"
   In order to maintain the confidentiality of your research subjects, raw data needs to be stored in a secure manner. Additionally, you need a plan for how the data will be archived at the completion of the project. The UIS Information Security Policy and UIS Data Policy further describe these concepts and as a member of the UIS

community, you must be in compliance with them. If you have questions about best practices for data management, contact the Office of Institutional Research. For questions related to the technical aspects of data security (servers, software, passwords, etc.) please contact ITS.

Appendix: Resources

- Current UIS email policies can be found at http://www.uis.edu/informationtechnologyservices/about/policies/#emaildistribution
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Institutional Effectiveness can be contacted at insteffect@uis.edu
- Best practices for reporting and securing data are described at http://www.uis.edu/informationtechnologyservices/security/bestpractices/
- Office of Institutional Research can be contacted at instres@uis.edu
- Information Technology Services can be contacted at techsupport@uis.edu

Date approved by Chancellor's Cabinet: _12/12/17_

Approved by Chancellor: _Susan Koch_

Date approved by Chancellor: _12/12/17_

Effective date: _12/12/17_