Florida State University Policy

Title of Policy: Administration of Surveys to Students, Faculty, Staff, and Alumni

Responsible Executive: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approving Official: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Effective Date: 08/01/2014

Revision History: Original Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

This policy helps minimize the occurrence of survey/email fatigue and oversampling of Florida State University students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni by managing the quantity of survey invitations to these audiences. This policy also defines specific permissions needed by survey authors to conduct surveys with Florida State students, employees, or alumni as participants. Additionally, this policy specifies limitations in the use of official university email accounts (or alumni email addresses on record) by those wishing to conduct surveys with current FSU students, employees, or alumni, in accordance with both federal law and FSU policies.

II. POLICY

A. Definition

1. For the purpose of this policy, “survey” is defined as: “Any instrument, questionnaire, or interview administered online or via paper that seeks to collect information on attitudes, expectations, opinions, and/or preferences and is intended for distribution to FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni.”

B. Audience

1. This policy has university-wide application and was approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. This policy was adopted to provide reference and procedural guidelines in the operation, management and/or implementation of surveys to FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni by either internal or external entities.

C. Scope

1. All surveys, regardless of sample size, must adhere to the following guidelines:
   i. Surveys involving any current undergraduate, graduate, or professional students are prohibited during the following-Administration Windows:
      • End-of-term course evaluations.
      • Windows of final exam weeks.
      • Windows of institution-wide surveys designated by the University Survey Review Group.
   ii. Current FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni will not be asked to participate in a survey approved by the University Survey Review Group by email more than once in a 14 day period.
   iii. The initial date of invitation will be used as the starting point of the 14 day period.
   iv. Those conducting surveys and sending email invitations to any FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni requesting their participation may
send a maximum of three (3) emails (one initial email and up to two subsequent reminders).

v. Exceptions to the frequency of administration and/or emails may be approved if deemed necessary by the University Survey Review Group.

vi. Survey authors should ensure questionnaires are appropriately constructed. For information on effective survey development, visit http://qualtrics.com/university/researchsuite/.

vii. Students, faculty, and staff employing online surveys for academic research are eligible to use the university’s online survey software, but may only use student or employee email addresses that are requested in accordance with this policy.

viii. Survey authors using university email addresses to request the participation of FSU students and/or faculty in surveys without gaining consent from the University Survey Review Group may be in violation of Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and FSU policy. For surveys where the use of student email addresses has been approved, the email addresses must be placed in the BCC: field for any mass mailings. (For more information, see http://registrar.fsu.edu/ferpa/definitions.htm).

2. All surveys conducted by individuals or organizations outside the University and distributed to any number of FSU faculty, staff, and/or alumni must first be approved by the University Survey Review Group.

3. All surveys administered by FSU units and distributed to a combination of 400 or more students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni, as well as all surveys conducted by external entities, must first be approved by the University Survey Review Group.

4. Exceptions to the review group requirement for surveys administered by FSU units include:

i. Institutional or organizational elections.

ii. Institutional Research survey projects fulfilling state or federal requirements.

iii. Satisfaction surveys, user surveys, or program/event evaluations administered one time or on an ongoing basis that (a) are administered only to individuals who have already used a given service or attended a specific program/event; and (b) are not administered to non-users or non-participants.

iv. Surveys administered by academic or student support programs for the purposes of evaluation or institutional planning to students who are direct participants in those programs (e.g. departmental surveys of specific majors within the department, University Housing survey of on-campus residents, etc.).

v. End-of-term course evaluations.

vi. Institution-wide surveys designated by the University Survey Review Group (e.g. National Survey of Student Engagement, Graduating Senior Survey, etc.).

vii. Direct Support Organization (DSO) surveys administered to DSO members, excluding students.

5. Academic research conducted by faculty or students and surveys conducted by students as part of an official FSU course assignment are subject to this policy only if the projects involve soliciting 400 or more total FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni as
participants in a survey or as recipients of an email invitation requesting their participation in a survey.

D. Survey Samples

1. Requests to sample total populations or to sample more than 33% of the desired FSU population will be approved only rarely and must first receive approval from the University Survey Review Group.

2. Requests for sample populations must include a statistical or logical justification of the sample size.

E. Approval Procedures

1. If none of the exceptions above apply, the survey author must submit the following information to the University Survey Review Group:
   i. Completed Survey Request Form
   ii. Final version of survey instrument
   iii. Narrative of all email invitations and reminders (if applicable)
   iv. Documentation of approval by the FSU Human Subjects Committee, if applicable.

2. The survey request form and all supporting documentation must be submitted online – initially at https://fsu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cZr6SzdsE7CTCAd.

3. The University Survey Review Group reports to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and includes designees from the following areas:
   i. Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development & Advancement
   ii. Division of Student Affairs
   iii. Institutional Research
   iv. Human Resources
   v. University Advancement
   vi. Registrar’s Office
   vii. Information Technology Services
   viii. Faculty Senate
   ix. Congress of Graduate Students (COGS)

F. Scheduling

1. Surveys will, in general, be approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

2. Surveys of an institutional nature (e.g. National Survey of Student Engagement, Graduating Senior Survey) hold highest priority, followed by college/school-wide surveys, and then all other surveys.

G. Survey Follow-up

1. An additional criterion for review of survey requests will be the plan by the survey author for dissemination of aggregated survey results to the FSU community. Sharing results through executive summaries posted online, presentations, or publications is strongly encouraged in order to communicate to future survey invitation recipients the impact and use of data collected through surveys.

III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

A. BOG Regulations 1.001(3) (d), (f), (4), (5) (a), (8) (f); 8.016

B. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Provost and Executive Vice President to determine if it comports with best practice and continues to advance the interests of the University.
Sally McKirin

Interim Provost and Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs

July 10, 2014

Date