

American River College

Institutional Research Statement/Policy on Survey Use

Purpose

Surveys are a popular method for gathering information and feedback from participants. The purpose of the Institutional Research Statement on Survey Use is to provide a coordinated approach to surveying prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, staff, employers, community members, and other stakeholders in order to:

- Ensure that survey design, administration, analysis, and reporting are methodologically and ethically sound.
- Ensure that surveys conducted on behalf of the college adhere to consistent standards of quality.
- Minimize the collection of duplicate data and “survey fatigue” by combining data collection needs whenever possible and appropriate, managing the number and timing of multiple surveys to the same group of respondents, and applying appropriate sampling methods.
- Ensure the appropriate distribution and use of survey results.
- Ensure that data analysis methodologies applied to survey data are appropriate and follow standards for good practice.
- Maintain a thorough and accessible record of survey instruments and results.
- Ensure that security and anonymity are maintained by using the most appropriate survey platform (tool) for a given survey administration.
- Ensure that the results of the research are both reliable and valid.

The following forms of data collection are EXEMPT from this policy:

- Student evaluation of individual courses and instruction.
- Surveys conducted by faculty as part of instruction with students currently enrolled in their class or classes.
- Systems for electing students, faculty, or staff to leadership positions within the college.
- Feedback instruments used in the evaluation of employee performance.
- Within-department polling/voting concerning a specific departmental topic (e.g., to agree on a meeting time/place, who will bring what to a potluck).

Also exempt are individuals or groups conducting survey research that would utilize ARC students, employees, data, or facilities and is NOT conducted by ARC for the primary purpose of internal decision-making and improvement (e.g., CCSSE, DOE, LRCCD, but excluding individuals performing survey or focus group research approved through ARC’s Internal Review Board process).

Definitions

A survey is defined broadly as any means of data collection in which questions are presented to participants in a paper, oral (e.g., interview, focus group), or electronic (e.g., email, web) format for the purpose of evaluating/assessing College programs, functions, or services; or gathering feedback from respondents for decision-making and continuous improvement. Respondents include, but are not limited to, prospective students, current students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators, employers, and other community members.

Applicability

The Institutional Research Statement on Survey Use applies to all surveys conducted by or on behalf of American River College, its employees, offices, services, departments, divisions, and programs. Survey data will be used to further the interests of the college and to aid in making data informed decisions.

Policy Statement

Surveys must be reviewed and approved by the Dean of Planning, Research, and Technology prior to being implemented. A copy of all surveys, datasets, analyses, and associated reports that are generated by the surveyor(s) will be provided to the Office of Institutional Research electronically for retention in a survey archive.

Responsibilities and Procedures

The Office of Institutional Research will:

- Provide consultation on the development and administration of surveys and analysis of results.
- Review and approve survey requests (including those requests from researchers outside of ARC such as doctoral students with IRB approval through their own institution).
- Maintain a survey archive.
- Annually review the scope and effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures.

Individuals requesting to conduct a survey will:

- Work with ARC's research team to
 - determine if surveying is the appropriate method for answering a particular research question.
 - create a survey instrument (or refine their draft survey instrument), prior to the survey's administration.
 - identify to whom the survey will be administered (sampling).
 - select the most appropriate survey platform needed to ensure data security and the anonymity/confidentiality of respondents.
 - determine whether the requestor or the Office of Institutional Research will administer and/or analyze the results of the survey.
 - assist the requestor in identifying which data analysis methodologies are most appropriate and follow standards for good practice.
 - Ensure that surveys are conducted in accordance with best practices for ethical research.
- Provide the Office of Institutional Research with a copy of all datasets, analyses, and associated reports of findings.

Please direct any comments or suggestions to:

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