Porterville College Survey Policy

Purpose of this policy:
This policy establishes a consistent procedure for managing surveys on the Porterville College campus. Such a policy allows us to use best practices in this area, to benefit both the college and the survey users. Benefits include improved use of existing and new data, coordination of survey schedules, reduced survey fatigue, and consistent privacy protections.

Regular Survey Cycle

One reason to coordinate surveys is to avoid fatigue and prevent or minimize conflict with other planned surveys. These may be surveys conducted by other offices, but in particular, the Office of Institutional Research oversees several surveys of either employees or students that are conducted on an ongoing cycle, usually every three years. These include:

- Student Satisfaction Survey (students), spring 2018, 2021, 2024, etc.
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE, students), spring 2017, 2020, 2023, etc.
- Strategic Planning Survey (employees), fall 2018, 2021, 2024, etc.
- Climate Survey (employees), fall 2016, 2019, 2022, etc.
- Staff Development Survey (employees), fall 2020, 2023, etc.

In addition, the IR Office sometimes conducts other ad hoc staff and student surveys on behalf of the college, the district, or other entities. Because of this survey cycle, we often will not want other surveys being conducted at the same time, especially if there is a partial or complete overlap in the group(s) being surveyed. This helps prevent confusion and survey fatigue.

The need for this policy has become more apparent with the increased proliferation of surveys. This is partly due to easy survey technology becoming available, but also increasing external mandates from grants, other agencies, and the need to document compliance or progress on a variety of local or external goals and objectives.

Policy statement:

All survey projects must be reviewed by the Office of Institutional Research (IR). The IR review ensures that appropriate privacy and data security protections are used and survey projects are coordinated. The right of participants to be appropriately informed prior to participation is also protected.

Anyone planning to administer a survey to Porterville College students, faculty, or staff must first obtain survey approval as part of the review by IR. In addition to the review done by the IR, requests to survey members of the Porterville College community will be reviewed by additional administrative offices as appropriate.

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People who use student, faculty, or staff contact information or demographics in a survey project must handle all information and results in accordance with Porterville College information security policies. Approved surveys must be administered and used strictly as approved, without changes.

All surveys require review by IR whenever the survey sponsor wishes to do any of the following:

- Use names, addresses, e-mail addresses, or phone numbers for a group that includes college-related individuals not directly under his/her normal supervision.
- Propose to survey a large group of students, faculty, or staff.
- Request information about the demographics of college related individuals in the survey population. Any such information must be specified and justified in the IR proposal, and must be FERPA compliant.

Examples:

- A faculty research survey that includes all faculty, or all staff, or all (or a large group of) students.
- A student research survey for a class that seeks to survey students outside the class, or seeks to survey faculty, staff, or other groups.
- Staff supervised local or national surveys of broad groups of students, faculty or staff

Exclusions from the review requirement:

Note that the exclusions DO NOT apply if the results of the survey will be published or will be shared in a presentation open to the public. Surveys that may be used in public presentations and publications must be reviewed, regardless of the exceptions below.

The IR review is not required for:

- Evaluations of events by participants.
- Feedback from customers at the point of service (e.g. bookstore, cafeteria).
- Teaching or advising evaluation forms.
- Surveys of a group of people who fall under the normal supervision of the person doing the survey.
    o Faculty surveying students in their own courses.
    o Administrators surveying employees they supervise.
    o Academic administration surveying faculty they supervise
- Forms used to collect information for administrative purposes (e.g. scheduling, declaration of major, etc.).
- Surveys for a course in which only students in the course are surveyed.

A note on contact lists for surveys on campus:

The actual contact list to be used typically should be constructed/selected by IR, based on the subject selection criteria. Representative sampled lists will be used in cases when appropriate, but some use of full lists will be needed. For electronic surveys on campus, IR may help with survey design and advise on sampling and distribution, but contacts for surveys will usually be the responsibility of survey sponsors (IR can advise on best practices).

Approval criteria to be used during the IR office review of surveys:

1. The survey should not run at the same time as another high priority institutional survey of the same participants. Multiple surveys using *different* subsets of a population can sometimes run simultaneously.

2. The survey will not cause the total number of surveys of the target population in a given year to be excessive.

3. The survey should not seek information that is already available from other sources (Banner/ODS data, etc.).

4. Surveys of the same or similar populations should be combined for the purposes of efficiency and prevention of survey fatigue when feasible. This may necessitate a delay in the project to coordinate with other offices. It is important to plan ahead.

5. Any demographic information requested as part of the survey must be included in the IR request, and must be in compliance with FERPA regulations (https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/?src=ferpa).

6. The survey should be sufficiently well constructed (clear, appropriate questions). IR assistance can be provided, given sufficient notice.

7. If IR assistance is requested, sufficient notice must be given and the survey project must fit with other scheduled IR projects (do not wait until the last minute).

8. The creation of the requested contact list information will not exceed available IR staff time.

9. The survey results will have perceptible benefits to the college or the members of the college community. For college-wide surveys, a copy of the final report must be provided to IR, so others can use results on campus when appropriate and when allowed by IR policies.

10. If a survey is being conducted as part of academic research, whether by a Porterville College employee or someone from another institution, the Institutional Review Board application and approval information must be shared with the IR Office before proceeding with the survey.

11. The messaging to survey respondents should make it clear whether the survey is anonymous, confidential, or neither. An anonymous survey is one in which the person or office conducting the survey does not ask or know who individual participants are. The information is not collected in any way. A confidential survey is one in which the person or office conducting the survey knows who each participant is (sometimes necessary for follow-up), but that information WILL NOT in any way be shared with others or made public at all. The information must be protected. If a survey is not anonymous or confidential, and individual responses are or may be public, that information should be clearly conveyed to all respondents on all survey materials.