

STATEWIDE STUDENT CREDIT CARD SURVEY

Administrative Procedures

A project sponsored by the Center for Student Affairs Research

As a member of the consortium, your institution is entitled to participate in this significant statewide survey concerning the issues of student credit card use. The projected date this survey will be administered is November 2002. Several options for administering the survey are presented below for your consideration.

Option 1 (Web-based)

1. This is by far the easiest to administer. Your first step is to advertise ahead of time (via single or multiple email messages, student newspaper announcements, campus or institutional publications, public bulletin boards, or any other appropriate mass media) of the upcoming credit card survey.
2. Since all students can take part in the survey, a sampling technique is not required. That is, all students at your institution will get a chance to take part in the survey, if they choose to do so. When you are ready to administer the survey, inform the students (via the media mentioned) of the link they need to visit in order to participate in the survey. That link will be on the CSAR website. Be sure that you let them know the importance of the survey, any incentives* you think you need to have to persuade them to complete the survey (such as a chance for a drawing for a book scholarship or a gift certificate), that the survey is voluntary and anonymous, that there are only 20 questions in the survey, and that it will take them a relatively short amount of time to complete the survey.
3. CSAR will monitor the response rate for each institution and compare characteristics of the respondents to known student characteristics of each institution. Periodic reports will be provided to all participating institutions.
4. Depending on the response rate and characteristics of those who have responded early, it may be necessary to make a second public announcement of the survey.

Option 2 (Paper-based)

1. Institutions will be responsible for printing out the necessary copies of the survey instrument for administration. The survey is available on the CSAR website.
2. Due to the considerations of time and cost, institutions may wish to devise a sampling technique rather than canvas all students. The common and preferred practice is to use a probability sampling technique, which ensures that all students will get an equal and non-zero chance of participating in the

study. However, institutions may select a non-probability sampling technique that may suit them better.

Probability Sampling

The easiest method is simple random sampling. Depending on your student enrollment and your desired sample size, you can select randomly between 10-30% of your students from a list of all attending students. This can be done by working with your registrar or records office, which can typically not only generate a list of randomly selected students but also mailing labels.

If you feel the above technique may not generate the representation you want, in the alternative, a stratified random sampling technique can be performed. In this procedure, you first divide up your student body into appropriate sub-groups (such as the five classes of students—from freshmen to graduate students—and/or some other student characteristics) and then randomly select cases from each of the sub-groups based on their known representation on the student body. As an illustration, if your student enrollment is 5,000, your targeted sample size should be between 500-1,500 students. If freshmen at your institution represent 25% of the student body, between 125 and 375 students from the freshman group should be chosen randomly. Then select the other groups based on their representations on the student body. Bear in mind that college students are notorious for not returning questionnaires. Count on no more than 30% response rate. You may get as low as 20%. As long as at the front end, you target enough people, you are more likely to end up with a large enough sample size.

Non-Probability Sampling

If you feel that sending a survey to students will not generate the response rate you want, then you may need to consider the non-probability sampling approach. Such techniques include visiting typical classes and administering the questionnaires to the students when you wait. Please bear in mind that since not all students will have equal chance (some will have no chance at all) of taking part in the study, care must be taken to ensure that the sample will be representative of the larger population. You may want, for example, to visit typical classes or places where you are likely to find students that represent your student population. Again, remind all potential participants of the voluntary and anonymous nature of the survey.

Once the paper-based surveys are completed and returned to you, CSAR will devise a mechanism for institutions to enter the data to be sent to CSAR. All web-based responses will automatically be sent to CSAR.

We will be working with all of you to advise, clarify, or help with any of the above administrative procedures, including those that are not mentioned above, if you have

other preferences. Please feel free to call or email us for any assistance you might need.

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*Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, student identification information required in any incentive strategy (like a drawing for a book scholarship) must be collected separately so that completed responses cannot be linked to any particular student. To ensure anonymity, respondents who choose to participate in a drawing will have to fill out a card, which will be decoupled from their completed responses.

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