Purpose of Policy

This policy establishes consistent procedures for administering surveys at Bronx Community College. This policy promotes best practices to ensure that surveys benefit both the College and survey developers, while also protecting the rights and well-being of survey participants. Benefits of this policy include improved use of existing, better coordination of survey schedules, reduced survey fatigue, and consistent human subject protections.

Policy Statement

Surveys are an essential tool for collecting actionable data from students, faculty, and staff to evaluate the effectiveness of college programs and services and to advance the College's mission and strategic priorities. However, the widespread availability of electronic survey tools has led to increases in survey activity, raising concerns about student privacy, human subject protections, and the risk of over-surveying. Excessive or duplicative surveys can result in low response rates, inefficient use of resources, and potentially unrepresentative data. To mitigate these issues, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) is responsible for coordinating all surveys at Bronx Community College to ensure they align with best practices and comply with regulatory requirements.

Definitions

A survey is defined as a tool used to collect, measure, and analyze data from a population being studied and may include the collection of responses through questionnaires, polls, or other methods.

Who is Covered by this Policy?

All Bronx Community College administrators, faculty, staff, students, and individuals not associated with the college who seek to use surveys to gather data from college stakeholders. Surveys subject to this policy include:

- Any survey for which the sample is comprised of 50 or more prospective, current, or former students.
- Any survey for which the sample is comprised of 25 or more university employees (staff, faculty, or administrators).
- Any survey for which the sample is randomly selected from a population of campus constituents.

Surveys exempt from this policy include those targeting a limited, well-defined groups for which the researcher has an established connection. Examples may include:

- Students in a researcher's class.
- Students in the researcher's academic major, department, etc.
- Evaluation of teaching and learning in a course.
- Surveys soliciting feedback from participants in a specific course or college event.

Prioritization of Surveys

Major institutional surveys that have been identified by college leadership and OIE have priority. OIE maintains a schedule of these surveys for the current academic year. Other surveys will be scheduled as requests are received. When multiple requests are received, priority will be given to studies closely aligned with institutional goals. Surveys by administrative units, student organizations, and faculty researchers have lower priority. Surveys from external sources will be considered only after all internal survey requests have been scheduled. **Surveys will not be administered to students during the last three weeks of the semester.**

Best Practices

Researchers soliciting feedback from Bronx Community College stakeholders are expected to:

- Become familiar with IRB requirements for human subject research and receive IRB approval, as appropriate;
- Ensure that surveys are accessible to students with disabilities;
- Use samples whenever possible;
- Avoid repeating surveys annually;
- Brand surveys in manner consistent with the college guidelines;
- Follow the basic principles of informed consent; and
- Use best practices in survey construction, administration, and reporting.

Survey Process

When contemplating a study for which a survey is being considered, researchers should adhere to the following process:

1. **Consult with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE)**
   Researchers considering a survey should schedule an initial consultation with OIE staff, who are trained survey researchers with many years of experience designing and administering surveys. They also have a broader institutional perspective than the typical researcher, allowing them to determine how the proposed research aligns with institutional priorities. The OIE team will also discuss whether a traditional survey is necessary to answer a research question or if previous collected survey data or institutional data are more appropriate. If a new survey is determined to be necessary, OIE will work with researchers to craft a basic outline and discuss a plan for data collection and analysis.

2. **Complete Survey Request Form**
   Survey administration requires careful planning. Requests to conduct a survey must be submitted **no later than four weeks prior to the anticipated start date**. The BCC Survey Request Form enables the OIE to evaluate the survey's design, determine its appropriateness as a data collection method, and ensure that it does not conflict with other ongoing assessments.

3. **OIE Review**
   OIE staff will review and approve requests based on a survey's alignment with institutional priorities, the content and quality of the survey instrument, the number of requests received, and the timing of the survey's administration. **Survey approval is not guaranteed.** OIE will consult with requestors on the following criteria:

1. The purpose of the survey;
2. Linkage to strategic priorities;
3. Survey design (see below);
4. Appropriateness of target population;
5. Consideration of alternative data sources;
6. Survey administration timeline;
7. IRB approval (if required);
8. Similarity to other planned surveys.

Please note that human subjects research must be approved through CUNY Human Research Protection Program process prior to the launch of any survey. Please consult with [BCC's IRB Coordinator](#) for additional information.

Survey Design
Effective survey is both and art and a science. A survey achieves its greatest impact when its questions are closely aligned with desired goals and when resulting data can inform meaningful actions. OIE may offer analysis of survey instruments to ensure that questions are technically sound and are structured in a manner to elicit feedback that produces actionable insights.

4. Survey Administration
Launching a survey takes careful planning. Researchers need to decide when their survey will be distributed, how it will be shared, who will receive survey requests, and who will be sending the surveys. It's a good idea to test the survey with a small group from your target audience first to make sure the questions are clear.

OIE can help set up surveys when time permits, but is not responsible for administering surveys for researchers. Researchers have access to surveying tools like, Microsoft Forms, Brightspace, Snap Surveys (contact IT for installation), Navigate, and other free online options to create and launch their own surveys. CUNY researchers are required to use software applications approved by the university.

5. Survey Analysis
After collecting survey responses, the data must be analyzed. Basic analysis can be performed in Excel, while more advanced statistical work may require specialized software like SPSS. During the survey approval process, it is essential to determine who will be responsible for conducting the analysis. OIE has expertise in statistical analysis and can provide guidance to researchers on how to interpret their results. If OIE will be conducting the analysis on behalf of the researcher, a timeline for completion will be established during the approval process to ensure clarity and accountability.