

Student Life Committee Report of Subcommittee on Student Data Collection

Purpose

A temporary subcommittee of the SLC was formed in Fall 2018 in response to student concerns that they are “over-surveyed.”

Due Diligence

To gain a holistic overview of data collection efforts on campus, we initially met with Toni Holbrooke, Udeth Lugo, and Trish Moser. To flesh out the picture, we contacted representatives of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and several major campus units, including the Office of Residential Life & Explorations, the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement, the Center for Career & Life Planning (CLP), the Wellness Center, Dining Services, and Olin Library.

Findings

- Our research confirmed students’ perception that they are asked to complete a large number of surveys. The Appendix below lists twenty-eight (28) recurrent surveys that we are aware of, their target population, and their frequency. (This list does *not* include faculty and/or student research projects. Nor does it include CLP diagnostic tools such as Focus2, which are administered on an ad hoc basis.)
- Participation in these surveys is typically solicited via email, which students are inclined to ignore due to the sheer volume of email they receive. As a result, survey response rates are often low, rendering the data problematic.
- We are particularly concerned that the Diversity Council’s campus climate survey has been discontinued, due in part to a low response rate (approximately 10%).
- The purpose of surveys is often opaque to students. For example, many students are unaware that CIE data is considered in decisions regarding faculty retention, promotion, and tenure. Some surveys are not accompanied by promotional material describing how the data will be used to improve student life.
- There is no central repository of survey instruments or data, which makes it difficult to identify possible redundancies or gaps in campus data collection efforts.
- While this subcommittee was not primarily concerned with legal compliance, it became apparent to us that not all campus personnel recognize that all surveys of the student body require IRB approval.

Recommendations

- **Aim to clearly communicate the purpose of each survey, and how the data will be used to improve student life.**

Effective publicity, including face-to-face outreach (e.g. tabling) will typically be needed to achieve student buy-in.

Where possible, surveys should be integrated into courses with relevant content. For example, the Wellness Assessment, which has a very high response rate, is completed in BCMP courses.

For very important surveys – such as those used for SACS accreditation – it may be appropriate for the college president to directly solicit student participation via email.

- **Consider alternative methods of data collection.**

Rather than treat surveys as a default method of data collection, campus units should consider whether the desired information can be gathered through interviews, focus groups, observation, etc.

- **Aim for greater centralization of information.**

A public webpage listing survey titles and contact names could help identify redundancies and gaps in campus data collection efforts. The IRB already possesses this information, so this recommendation would be relatively easy to implement.

More ambitiously, the college might consider creating a central repository for survey instruments and findings (being mindful of student privacy concerns, of course). The IRB has a key role to play here, but additional staff support would probably be needed to implement this recommendation.

To manage the proliferation of surveys, some colleges require that each survey receive approval from a chief information officer (in addition to receiving IRB approval). A set of prioritization criteria could be developed to guide approval decisions, to include considerations such as accreditation needs, curricular needs, etc. A master calendar could be created to facilitate mindful decisions about survey timing. We recommend further research into the advantages and possible disadvantages of such a policy.

- **Campus climate must not fall through the cracks.**

While there are scattered questions about campus climate on several extant surveys, a consistent and intentional approach is needed. EAB has survey modules designed to address campus climate that may be useful in this connection. The college is currently using EAB's sexual violence module, but not its diversity and inclusion module.

■ **Research how other colleges are addressing these issues.**

Without necessarily endorsing any of the following policies or practices, we encourage further investigation into their pros/cons and suitability for Rollins:

A variety of incentive schemes could be employed to encourage participation in campus data collection efforts, from novelty gifts to extra credit points.

Many colleges administer CIEs in class, rather than relying on students to complete them on their own time.

Among ACS colleges, Rhodes College and Birmingham-Southern require that all surveys receive approval from a chief information officer.

- Matt Nichter, Amy Parziale, and Bill Svitavsky
for the Student Life Committee

Appendix: Recurrent Surveys of Rollins Students

	Population	Frequency
NATIONAL SURVEYS		
CIRP Freshman Survey	frosh	biennial
CIRP Senior Survey	seniors	biennial
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	frosh and seniors	biennial
Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)	frosh	biennial
National Assessment for Service & Community Engagement (NASCE)	entire student body	periodic (approx. once every four years)
Healthy Minds Study	entire student body	biennial
National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA)	entire student body	biennial
LibQual+ (library survey)	entire student body	triennial
Gallup	entire student body	periodic (approx. once every four years)
EAB Campus Climate Survey (sexual violence module)	entire student body	biennial
ROLLINS SURVEYS		
CIEs	entire student body	every semester, 1 per course
Office of International Programs survey	students enrolled in study abroad or field study	every semester
CLCE surveys		
Immersion survey	students participating in Immersions	every semester
Emerging Leadership Institute survey	students participating in ELI	annual
Community Engagement course survey	students in CE courses	every semester (pre- & post-experience surveys)
Bonner program survey	Bonner frosh	annual (beginning & end-of-year surveys)
Residential Life surveys		
Orientation survey	new and transfer students	annual
Title IX and Bystander Training survey	new and transfer students	annual (pre- & post-training surveys)
Peer Mentor Performance Evaluations	new and transfer students	annual
RA Performance Evaluations	all students living in dorms	annual
Living Learning Community Faculty Programming Assessment	new and transfer students	annual
On-Campus Satisfaction Survey	all students living in dorms	annual
Housing Medical Accommodations survey	all students living in dorms	annual
Career & Life Planning surveys		
First Destination Survey	seniors	annual
Career & Internship Expo exit survey	students who attend Career & Internship expo	annual
Career Studio exit survey	students who visit Career Studio	1 per visit
Wellness Assessment	students in BCMP courses; groups using Wellness Series	every semester
Dining Services survey	entire student body	every semester