

NORTHWEST VISTA COLLEGE PROCEDURE

Procedure Number: CS. 002
Procedure Title: Survey Procedure

I. Purpose: As NVC continues to develop evidence-based approaches to decision-making, the college has experienced an increased interest among organizational members regarding independent administration of surveys to various populations of the campus community. The procedures of the Institutional Research Office herein are provided to meet this growing need while yielding effectual survey results. This is achieved by bearing in mind the multiple components necessary for successful survey administration. In the planning phase, these components include such factors as accurately defining the research question, expressing effective question wording, defining the appropriate survey audience, and establishing the method of distribution. The process continues with regard to data collection, analysis and reporting. Distribution of survey results completes this process.

II. Goals of the Procedure: This procedure seeks to:

- Educate campus groups of available data prior to provisional survey administrations
- Ensure that provisional surveys do not conflict with critical administrative surveys
- Ensure earnest survey methodology and design
- Maximize the benefits of campus surveys
- Minimize duplication of survey administrations
- Encourage report out of survey results

III. Scope of the Procedure: While this procedure aims to guide provisional survey administrations, it is important to observe NVC's commitment to employee and student success. Comprehensive college assessment surveys meet this need and are valuable research projects that enable NVC to assess these subject matters. The following surveys are examples of the surveys that fall outside the scope of this policy and will continue to be administered by Institutional Research on a scheduled basis:

- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE)
- Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)
- Noel-Levitz's Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)
- End of Course Evaluations

This procedure does **not** apply to surveys considered small scale and does not include focused intent such as:

- Faculty surveys of students in their own classes
- Surveys of small groups (e.g. staff in one's own area, faculty in one's own department)
- Surveys associated with performance evaluations/reviews of an individual
- Certain alumni surveys conducted by academic departments
- Service satisfaction surveys, if carried out at time of service

- Event evaluation surveys, if carried out at time of event
- Clubs or other groups surveying their own members

Surveys to fulfill dissertation requirements are not performed by Institutional Research. These requests must be forwarded to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for consideration. Current contact is Simon Van Dijk, svandijk@alamo.edu.

IV. Survey Tools: The current survey software tool offered at Northwest Vista College is Qualtrics. See [AlamoShare](#) Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness page to create account.

Alamo Colleges (AC) uses Survey Point to facilitate survey administration. All surveys developed through Survey Point will adhere to appropriate survey development standards and be in accord with AC strategic goals and strategies. AC Survey Point Development Procedures and Guidelines can be found at the district website, [AC Survey Point Procedures](#).

Surveys developed through Qualtrics or Survey Point will adhere to appropriate survey development standards and will be in accord with AC strategic goals and strategies. However, in order to reduce the possibility of non-response bias, the availability of any of the survey tools may be limited at certain times in order to prevent over-surveying a specific population.

V. Survey Population & Management: No student, faculty, staff, alumnus, or stakeholder should be surveyed more than once in any given 30 day period. Surveys that utilize email invitations should limit follow-up email reminders to no more than two email solicitations spaced no less than one week apart for the duration of the survey. Survey duration should not exceed 15 working days. Survey administration of students will be prohibited during the final two weeks of any semester.

VI. Quality Surveys: IR will provide guidelines for appropriate sampling, follow-up reminders, and structuring of survey items.

- IR will also gather information from users about the purpose of the survey and how they plan to use results from the survey.
- If data (other than student) from the AC administrative computer system will be merged with survey data, IR will refer the survey requester to the "owners" of that data to ensure that data elements are being used appropriately (field definitions, format, confidentiality, etc.)
- Follow-up forms will be used to gather data on the response rate, administration of the survey, and how results were used to improve programs and services on campus.
- Comments and suggestions for improvement of the functionality or use of the web-based survey tool will be solicited as well.

VII. Treatment of Human Subjects

IR staff will review the proposed survey questions and email/letter announcing the survey to ensure the following guidelines have been followed:

- If the results of the research are to be published or presented or distributed, the approval of the NVC Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required.
- If a formal IRB is not required; however, the purpose of the research, the fact that participation is voluntary, and actions to ensure confidentiality must be explained to participants.
- If the survey includes identifiers to facilitate sending reminders, IRPE staff will strip the identifiers from the data before releasing it to the user. If identifiers will be used to merge data with information in college databases, participants will be informed what additional information will be collected.
- If data from student records are used in assessment research, all requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) must be met. Non-public student data may be used without the student's consent by NVC employees for "legitimate educational" purposes provided the data are not reported in such a way that individual students can be identified. All other users must receive written consent from the student(s) to access non-public student data.

VIII. Responsible Party

Institutional Research staff will be responsible for the implementation of the NVC survey procedure stated herein.

IX. Policy Distribution and Access

A copy of the official Institutional Research Procedure will be available on the IR Share-Point site and in the IR office.

PROCEDURES FOR INITIATING A SURVEY

Phase I: Survey Planning

REQUEST FOR SURVEY SUPPORT

Organizational members or interested parties who desire to survey members of the campus community must submit a survey request to Institutional Research (IR).

In addition to the information requested in the data request form, the "Specific Data Needed" portion of the data request form must include the following:

- Purpose statement; description of the survey topic, rationale and methodology. Include the research question you are trying to answer and why you want to conduct the survey.
- Target population to be surveyed (e.g., students, staff, faculty, graduating students)
- The number of people to be surveyed
- Survey administration date(s)
- How data will be used and with whom results will be shared
- Statement of whether Institutional Review Board approval is required, and, if required, indication of whether such approval has been sought and/or received.

DEADLINES

Provisional surveys must be planned well in advance to allow IR time to ensure minimal duplication of survey administration to campus populations. IR also requires time to incorporate additional surveys into existing college initiative assessment activities such as our annual CCSSE and PACE survey administrations. In order to meet these needs, survey requests must be submitted August 1 for fall semester surveys, and November 1 for spring semester surveys.

BASIS FOR APPROVAL

IR will review survey proposals using the following guidelines:

- The purpose of the survey fits with NVC's mission and strategic plan
- IRB approval (if necessary) has been sought and granted
- The survey does not duplicate efforts (i.e., the information is not otherwise available)

Normally IR will seek to limit the number of survey requests to any one population to two per semester. NVC and AC initiative surveys which are on an established schedule (e.g. PACE every year) will receive first priority. After that, priority is on a first come, first-served basis. However, IR will not approve any surveying of students during the final two weeks of any term.

Phase II: Survey Administration

SURVEY REVIEW

Upon approval, organizational members are requested to meet with IR staff to review proposed survey research and methodology, and lay out a plan for survey administration.

Whenever possible, an internet based survey should be the primary method of survey administration.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT

Organizational members are encouraged to meet with IR staff to define the selected population for survey administration. Those wishing to survey students via email are strongly encouraged to select a sample of students to survey rather than attempting to survey all students.

Phase III: Survey Reporting

REPORTING

To encourage report out of survey information and minimize duplication of effort, IR will maintain on IR SharePoint site a list of all approved surveys, including date(s) of administration and name of the individual responsible. Members of the campus community are encouraged to consult this list prior to developing a new survey, to determine whether the information they are seeking may already be available.

IR will maintain a data archive of survey information in a secure location, following applicable FERPA and/or IT security policies. To facilitate this, the following procedures have been established:

- All administrative units whose surveys fall under this policy must submit to IR an electronic copy of the final report of survey results (in PDF format).
- Faculty and student researchers whose surveys fall under this policy are encouraged, but not required, to share a report of their findings for the IR archives.

- Those seeking information from a previous survey should first contact the individual responsible for conducting that survey.
- IR will not share data or results from any survey without the permission of the individual responsible for that survey, unless that individual is no longer a member of the campus community.

Contact for Interpretation: NVC Office of Institutional Research

Relevant Board Policy: C.1.9: Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources

Relevant SACSCOC Principle:



Last Updated: August 17, 2016

Approved: _____
Vice President for College Services