

Encouraging Participation in the HERI Faculty Survey

Faculty participation is critical to survey success. Simply put, the more respondents you have, the more confidence you have that your results accurately represent your faculty as a whole. However, many institutions struggle with challenges related to obtaining a satisfactory response rate. HERI's templates for invitation and reminder messages to faculty emphasize the survey's value for the institution. In addition, efforts on campus can effectively supplement the invitation and reminder messages sent to your faculty.

Factors that Contribute to Higher Response Rates

Each campus surveying faculty should take some time to assess local culture and determine the best way to reach their faculty. While there is no single magic bullet that will increase response rates, research (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009¹) does indicate several factors that contribute to higher response rates:

- Perceived importance of the survey (value to the faculty member, perceived legitimacy)
- Level of interest faculty have in the research
- Trust that the data will be used and maintained properly
- Perception of reward for participation
- Minimizing respondent burden

These factors should be considered as you plan your survey administration and promotion. Publicizing the survey by using flyers, social media, school website, and emails, as well as incentives provided for participation can reinforce the message to faculty that survey results are valued and used on campus. We now offer templates for you to promote your surveys via print or digital options (<http://www.heri.ucla.edu/promo-faculty-2016.php>). Suggestions for promotional activities frequently used by campuses administering the HERI Faculty Survey include:

- Sending a pre-notification email informing faculty that they will soon be receiving a request to complete an important survey (refer to Pre-Notification Email Templates)
- Customizing survey invitation messages (refer to Invitation and Reminder Templates)
- Advertising the incentives (see below for additional information on incentives)
- (NEW!!) Promo Pack – Print and digital templates provided by HERI:
 - Placing an ad in a faculty newsletter or academic personnel portal
 - Sharing on Facebook or Twitter selected results during and after the survey administration

¹ Dillman, D., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). *Internet, mail and mixed mode surveys: The tailored design method* (3rd Ed.) John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ.

- Posting flyers on campus
- Placing signs on campus in high-traffic areas, such as faculty mailrooms or central administrative offices
- Frequently reminding faculty that the institution cannot link survey responses to individual faculty members

Do include information about why the survey is important, its purpose, how the results will be used on campus, etc.

Incentives

Incentives can prove to be an effective means of increasing survey response rates. Gift certificates to the campus bookstore, donations to departmental funds or charities, or an automatic entry into some type of raffle or lottery are all possible incentives. You might consider structuring HERI Faculty Survey incentives in a few different ways:

- Offer a small incentive (e.g., gift card) to each participant before or as the survey is administered.
- Offer a small incentive (e.g., donation to departmental development fund) to each participant who turns in a completed questionnaire.
- Offer a lottery or drawing. Under this plan, faculty should receive information detailing the odds of winning, the number and type of prizes being offered, and the date of the drawing.

In the case that you create an incentive plan that differs from the above options, we **strongly** encourage you to check with your local IRB or other appropriate campus personnel to review the structure of your incentive program.

There are important guidelines for using incentives on the HERI Faculty Survey, including:

- Any incentive program may require local IRB approval. We recommend that you check with your institution's IRB as soon as you have made a decision regarding incentives.
- Incentives for survey participation should be designed in a manner that maintains the voluntary nature of the survey.
- The amount or value of the incentive should not be so large as to seem coercive.
- Each institution that decides to conduct a drawing (i.e., raffle or lottery) should first consult applicable state law to determine whether such a drawing would be legal.
- The Survey Information Sheet covers the rights of participants with respects to all aspects of survey administration **except** incentives. Therefore, if you plan to utilize an incentive for your HERI Faculty Survey, you **must** add an addendum to the Survey Information Sheet. This section should be titled "Payment for Participation" and would describe, in detail, the incentive program including the amount that could be won, an estimate of the odds (if you are utilizing a drawing), and how any drawing or other incentive program would be conducted. This information should be included on the "Welcome" page.