POLICIES OF COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY POLICY

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<th>Conducting Surveys at CSU</th>
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<td>Policy Owner:</td>
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PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

Large-scale surveys have become an increasingly popular method of gathering information and feedback from the CSU community. As the number and frequency of surveys increases, so too can the potential for survey fatigue, redundancy, unnecessary cost, declining response rates, lower quality results, and confusion. There is a need for a coordinated approach to conducting surveys, with appropriate oversight. The purpose of this policy is to help facilitate the use of surveys where appropriate, achieve better survey methods and results, protect CSU community members’ privacy and safety, and enable departments and individuals to conduct surveys that are effective and efficient.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all University employees, constituents and others wishing to conduct surveys of the CSU community.
Any person, either a member of the CSU community or someone external to the University, planning on asking any number of members of the CSU community to participate in a survey is subject to this regulation and must complete and submit the Survey Information Form. This includes those wishing to conduct surveys of the CSU community using central administrative email listservs.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS POLICY

**CSU community**: All students, alumni, faculty, staff, and affiliates of the University, and any segments of this population.

**Survey**: Any means of data collection by University personnel or students, or anyone using university resources, in which questions are presented to respondents in electronic (e.g., email, web) format for the purpose of gathering data to evaluate or assess programs, functions, or services, or to make findings or inferences about a given population.

**Large-scale survey**: Any survey that will be received by more than 100 people in the CSU community or that requires the use of limited-access email addresses (i.e., those not already accessible to the survey proponent).

**Limited survey**: a survey that is confined to fewer than 100 people, for example, the members of a unit or department, for its own internal purposes and not for research or any use external to that unit. Limited surveys include, for example, asking for feedback from customers or clients at the point of service, or collecting information for administrative purposes such as assignment of space, event planning, and the like.

Limited surveys require the advance approval of the department or unit head, if confined to a department or unit, or college Dean, if involving more than one department within a college or division.

*Personally Identifiable Information (PII):* Personally Identifiable Information means any information from which a specific individual can be identified, and includes but is not limited to: a social security number; a personal identification number; a password; a pass code; an official state or government-issued driver’s license or identification card number; a government passport number; biometric data, as defined in C.R.S. § 24-73-103(1)(a); an employer, student, or military identification number; or a financial transaction device, as defined in C.R.S. § 18-5-701(3); and all such sensitive personal information as defined below.

*Sensitive personal information* includes social security numbers, personally identifiable health information, personally identifiable financial information including credit card information, driver’s license information, personal employment and student performance information, proprietary research and academic information, third-party proprietary information, FERPA-protected non-directory information and any other information that
through disclosure would adversely affect an individual or besmirch the reputation of the University.

University-wide surveys: Surveys administered to a group of over 1,000 CSU personnel and/or students over 1,000 (?)

EXEMPTIONS FROM THIS POLICY

This policy does not apply to:

- Faculty and/or students doing surveys of the students in their own class;
- ClassEval and similar course evaluation activities;
- CSU leaders doing surveys of their own divisions, colleges, units, or departments (not including students);
- Employee councils doing surveys of their employee group;
- Surveys related to performance reviews (e.g., 360° reviews, 5-Year Department Head reviews);
- Point-of-contact” or “event” surveys (e.g., administering a survey to those who have just participated in an activity, such as an assessment after a workshop or presentation);
- Intercept surveys (e.g., stopping people walking on campus);
- Convenience surveys of individuals not asked directly to participate (e.g., asking viewers to comment on a web page (e.g., “How do you like this web page?”), comment cards);
- Surveys of those in an existing CSU subject pool (e.g., Psychology course students) or panel;
- University evaluations that are conducted under independent contract for an external agency for internal purposes only (i.e. NSSE);
- Course-related activities or assignments for educational teaching purposes that are part of the course and the information collected is not disseminated for use outside the classroom (i.e., labs, projects and class exercises and assignments). The assignment can include a presentation to the class, but the data must be destroyed at the end of the project;
- Non-electronic surveys.

POLICY STATEMENT

Surveys are widely recognized as an important means for collecting information that can maintain and assure educational quality, enhance institutional effectiveness, improve

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student and employee satisfaction, and contribute to general knowledge. Technology has made it easier for faculty and staff to distribute surveys to various CSU populations.

However, there is a growing perception that the number of surveys being administered has escalated and that this growing frequency and increased volume of surveys has resulted in redundancy and duplication. The increasing number of surveys has in all likelihood come at some financial cost to Colorado State University as more units devote resources to survey activities.

In addition, over-surveying has likely contributed to survey fatigue among members of our CSU community, leading to declining response rates and, ultimately, less robust data. Issues related to privacy and confidentiality, questionable survey quality and overall confusion are also evident. CSU has a commitment to accountability and serving the CSU community and there is a strong need for continuing surveys. In order to minimize these concerns, the Survey Advisory Committee has been charged with survey review and oversight, and this policy governs the use of surveys at CSU.

POLICY PROVISIONS

University Survey Advisory Committee

The USAC, under the direction of the Vice Provost for Planning and Effectiveness, has the responsibility to help minimize survey burden and costs to our CSU community, and to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that our internal surveys will yield results that are valuable to the University. The USAC will work collaboratively with the CSU community to minimize survey fatigue and increase response rates, provide advice and support related to survey design and implementation, disseminate results for application, and assist CSU in effective survey administration. The committee will:

- Develop guidelines and procedures for managing surveys and promoting efficiency in survey activities;
- Inform prospective survey researchers about university survey guidelines and other research policies as appropriate (e.g., use of human subjects), and best practices in survey research;
- Help to ensure prospective survey researchers provide sufficient information and time for evaluating the project and approving access to the survey population;
- Provide design recommendations for any revisions needed to bring a survey into alignment with university guidelines;

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• Advise prospective survey researchers on strategies for coordinating approved survey projects when feasible;

• Review and approve large-scale survey requests, and the use of limited-access email data for survey populations;

• Refer survey proponents to the Institutional Review Board, when appropriate. All requests to gather University data for research or external use must go through the IRB as well as the Dean of the respective college or Vice President of the respective division. USAC review does not replace any aspect of IRB review and approval.

The USAC will review proposed surveys and assist survey proponents in creating surveys. As part of this service, the USAC will create a website that includes information about:

• Committee charge and membership
• Survey Information Form
• Survey review and distribution process (steps, population requests, an online survey request form, exemptions)
• Survey Design Guidelines
• Survey Calendar
• Survey Results

Survey Information Form

The USAC will provide a Survey Information Form on its website. Use of this form is required to obtain USAC review.

Survey Review and Approval

1. Anyone seeking to survey CSU community members must seek approval from USAC to administer the survey. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications at least one month in advance of the proposed survey launch date. Please allow five business days to receive a response from the date of application submission.

2. To assist faculty, staff, and students in their research and data collection here at Colorado State University, CSU has purchased a contract with Qualtrics software to provide free online survey software to all current CSU faculty, staff, and students. All surveys must be conducted using the Qualtrics software, which is the official survey tool for the University, unless exemption granted for extraordinary circumstances.

3. All conducted research must comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
4. For approved survey proposals, unless approval is granted to distribute the survey via University-wide email lists (refer to the Email List Message Policy), USAC will provide the list of email addresses required for the survey. Unless there are compelling reasons to employ a census, the list should be produced using a randomly drawn sample that will be agreed upon between USAC and the principal investigator(s). No other office may provide this list of email addresses without the consent of USAC. The email list should not be redistributed or used for any other purposes without authorization of USAC.

5. Email list samples will not be provided for undergraduate or graduate student research.

6. Email list samples will not be provided for research that does not directly benefit the institution.

Before a survey is distributed to the CSU community, it must be approved by the appropriate Cabinet-level administrator or College Dean, taking into consideration the recommendations of the USAC. Subsequently, the survey must be approved by the USAC. Decisions by USAC to not approve, or to restrict or limit a proposed survey, may be appealed in writing to the Vice Provost for Planning and Effectiveness, whose decision will be final.

Data Use, Security and Storage

1. Surveys should not collect Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from respondents unless it is absolutely necessary for the purpose of the survey to do so.

2. Surveys may not collect Sensitive Personal Data without the express, prior written approval of the CSU IT Security Manager.

3. Survey administrators must store all survey data securely and use data only for the designated and intended purposes. Survey administrators must agree to adhere to University policies for handling data. Data containing PII participant names, identifying information, e-mail addresses, or other confidential information must be saved in an encrypted format on computers or drives that belong to the University, and these data should be properly disposed of when the survey is completed. These data must not be stored on computers or servers outside the University.
COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

Compliance with this policy is required. For assistance with compliance, please contact USAC at usac@colostate.edu.

REFERENCES

IRB?

Email listserv policy?

PROCEDURES, FORMS AND TOOLS

In order to have your survey approved, you must complete the survey information form. Once submitted, your form will be reviewed, and you will be contacted by a member of USAC within five business days.

Survey Information Form [link]

APPROVALS

Vice President for General Counsel

By: ____________________________ By: ____________________________

___ Jason L. Johnson

FINAL APPROVAL: COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

By: ____________________________

___ Anthony A. Frank, President date