**Round table discussion**

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**Session objectives:**

This roundtable will highlight best practices and common pitfalls to avoid when conducting survey research, from creation to administration to analysis, in order to achieve impactful survey results. Participants will be exposed to the different steps in survey research.

**Session questions:**

1. What are the *different steps* and *best practices in survey research*?
2. *Common survey pitfalls* include: biased survey items, incorrect sampling methodology, and overlooking the how results will be used. What other common pitfalls have you encountered and how did you overcome or avoid them to create the most impactful surveys?
3. Given guiding principles (see back of page) as well as different institutional goals, how would you *change any of your current surveys or their administration*?
4. Survey data can supplement behavioral outcomes, such as retention and graduation, to understand the impact of educational initiatives and other factors to make informed decisions. What *other data sources in conjunction with survey responses* can provide insights?
5. What suggestions do you have *for getting buy-in and engaging* a diverse set of stakeholders?
6. There is a list of resources on survey research (such as books, articles, and websites) on the back of this sheet. What *other resources would you recommend* to others so that they can engage in their own program of impactful survey research?

**Survey Research Best Practices**

American Association for Public Opinion Research’s Guiding Principles (<http://www.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/Best-Practices.aspx>):

1. Have specific goals.
2. Consider alternatives to using a survey to collect information.
3. Select samples that well represent the population to be studied.
4. Use designs that balance costs with errors.
5. Take great care in matching question wording to the concepts being measured and the population studied.
6. Pretest questionnaires and procedures to identify problems prior to the survey.
7. Train interviewers carefully on interviewing techniques and the subject matter of the survey.
8. Check quality at each stage of the survey.
9. Maximize cooperation or response rates within the limits of ethical treatment of human subjects.
10. Use appropriate statistical analytic and reporting techniques.
11. Develop and fulfill pledges of confidentiality given to respondents.
12. Disclose all methods of the survey to allow for evaluation and replication.

**Suggested Resources for (Alumni) Survey Research**

*Journal Articles/Books*

Borden, V. M. H. (2005). Using alumni research to align program improvement with institutional accountability. *New Directions in Institutional Research*, *126*, 61-72.

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: the tailored design method*. John Wiley & Sons.

Fowler, F. J. (2013). *Survey research methods*. Sage Publications.

Hoey, J. J., & Gardner, D. C. (1999). Using surveys of alumni and their employers to improve an institution. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, *101*, 43-59.

Rea, L. M., & Parker, R. A. (2005*). Designing & conducting survey research: A comprehensive guide*. Jossey Bass.

Umbach, P. D. (2004). Web surveys: Best practices. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, *121*, 23-38.

Volkwein, J. F. (2010). Assessing alumni outcomes. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, *2010(S1)*, 125-139.

*Online Guides*

Ithaca College’s guide on survey best practices: <http://www.ithaca.edu/ir/icsrc/docs/bestprac.pdf>

Survey Monkey’s guide:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/survey-guidelines/>