Surveys

The purpose of surveys in an Advising Program evaluation is to gain insight into respondents' attitudes and perceptions about advising services and practices. Surveys can elicit feedback on the usefulness and effectiveness of advising practices as well as collect information on respondents' perceived achievement of program outcomes.

Surveys are employed when:
- the program wants to study student satisfaction with and/or perceptions of advising through a sample representation of students
- the program is seeking potentially inexpensive, short, and easily analyzable* responses to the Advising Program (*as compared to other evaluation measures).

Establishing and Conducting Surveys
- **Selection of target respondents**
  - How will the survey distributors contact them?
  - Will there be reminders/follow ups sent out?
  - How will respondents provide their consent to participate? Do they need to complete the entire survey in order for the program to have significant data?
- **Selection of medium**
  - Print
    - STRENGTHS: captivated audience
    - WEAKNESSES
  - Electronic/online
    - STRENGTHS: clicker: immediate feedback, captivated audience; online: easy analysis, less labor intensive for data entry
    - WEAKNESSES: clicker: no qualitative data
- **Selection of platform**
  - If online, which platform?
- campus-based? paid or free platform?
- Designing questions and their order
  - How will the survey be organized? Incrementally? Thematically? A hybrid?
  - Order of question types: important questions all at beginning (so mixed question type) OR all open-ended questions at beginning of sections OR end of sections or entire survey OR

### Question Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td><em>How satisfied are you with the process of making advising appointments?</em></td>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agreement</strong></td>
<td><em>Please state your level of agreement with the following statement: “My advisor is knowledgeable.”</em></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extent</strong></td>
<td><em>To what extent do you use advising services?</em></td>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>To little extent</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helpfulness</strong></td>
<td><em>How helpful is the Advising Program website?</em></td>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>Somewhat helpful</td>
<td>Not so helpful</td>
<td>Not at all helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest</strong></td>
<td><em>Please indicate your degree of interest in more availability of advising workshops.</em></td>
<td>Considerable interest</td>
<td>Moderate interest</td>
<td>Little interest</td>
<td>No interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relative Quantity</strong></td>
<td><em>Should the Advising Program offer less or more opportunities to meet with advisors?</em></td>
<td>Much more</td>
<td>Somewhat more</td>
<td>Somewhat less</td>
<td>Much less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td><em>How important to you is online accessibility to advising services?</em></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>Somewhat unimportant</td>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Rating</strong></td>
<td><em>Please rate the quality of communications from the Advising Program.</em></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Closed-ended (respondent selects answer from closed set of responses)
  - multiple choice
  - yes-no
  - Likert scale (continuous scale, measuring respondents’ graded responses to different themes)
    - Even number of choices allows respondents to align clearly with degrees of agreement or disagreement without taking a neutral stance.
    - Odd number of choices permits the respondents to select neutral or not applicable stances besides degrees of agreement.
The directionality of scales and their assigned labels, rooted in Western tradition, proceeds from left to right, smallest to largest.

Types of scales (see purple chart)
- Performance scales
- Agreement scales
- Satisfaction scales
  - ordered or unordered options

Open-ended
- Short answer responses

Data Analysis
- Quantitative analysis
  - Statistical software can analyze closed-ended responses.
  - Patterns can readily be generated from computer-analyzed data.
- Qualitative analysis
  - Data coding (assigning broad, key words to responses) by multiple researchers
    - (basic) emergent themes classified by frequency
    - (advanced) classification of themes by subgroups (demographics)

Caveats
- Consider the important focus of each survey, in light of multi-year studies.
  - Focus on clearly identified, important incremental information in specific surveys.
- Account for possible inaccuracy of respondents’ answers (due to idealized responding, lack of information, misunderstanding of question, etc.)
  - Be aware of possible discrepancies between real-life and survey-taking behaviors.
- Create clear and carefully written questions that address the essential constructs that the program wishes to explore in order to avoid vague, potentially unusable responses.
- Account for the percentage and kind of actual respondents.
  - Of the invited respondents, what percentage replied? Is the response rate too low?
  - If discoverable, what kind(s) of respondents replied?
  - (How) Are answers to the preceding questions relevant to understanding the totality of responses?
- Be aware of respondents’ “survey fatigue,” resulting from:
  - the taking of too many surveys from the institution (e.g., UCUES, Campus Climate)
  - the length and breadth of a particular survey
  - Consider consolidating surveys or using/cross-referencing already created surveys.
Resources and Examples

- UCUES Homepage: [http://studentsurvey.universityofcalifornia.edu/](http://studentsurvey.universityofcalifornia.edu/)
- UC Berkeley Campus Climate Survey: [http://diversity.berkeley.edu/campus-climate](http://diversity.berkeley.edu/campus-climate)
- Penn State Career Services Survey Results: [http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/assessment/pdf/162.pdf](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/assessment/pdf/162.pdf)

Low-Cost Tools to Create Surveys

- Create a Free Google Online Survey Video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sOFs4ai2oY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sOFs4ai2oY)
Presenting Survey Data: Do’s and Don’t’s

The presentation of the results of survey data collection should align with the purpose of the study and the audience of the results. Following this, the language and images selected should allow for quick and easy access to the information.

(adapted from Davis, 2011: 43-45)

Many low- or no-cost survey platforms (see Resources and Examples) provide options for data presentation in the forms of tables, charts, and graphs.
Sample Visual Representations

Sample Table:
Q1. What is your class status? (N = 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Davis, 2011: 44)

Sample Bar Graph

(http://cstl.syr.edu/FIPSE/TabBar/BuildBar/BUILDBAR.HTM)

Sample Pie Chart

SFSU on-campus students-Fall 2009

(http://digitalnewsgathering.wordpress.com/tag/pie-chart/)