OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

AND VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

CHANCELLOR'S SENIOR SURVEY REVIEW COMMITTEE

END OF YEAR REPORT

June 19, 2017

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Committee

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I. HISTORY OF THE CHANCELLOR'S SENIOR SURVEY

To understand the experiences of our graduating seniors and to gain input on student learning outcomes, a task force—established by the Chancellor—created a questionnaire in 1989. The work of that task force became the *Chancellor's Senior Survey*, which has been administered on campus regularly from 1996 to 2013. Over the years the instrument has grown to reflect changing interests in the student experience. Over time participation has slowly decreased from an historical average of over 55% to the most recent survey falling below 50% (2013). During the 2015-2016 academic year, a committee was charged to revise the Chancellor's Senior Survey to allow the campus an opportunity to design the survey to measure progress and student satisfaction that can be used to support the strategic plan and various initiatives across the campus. The committee diligently worked towards creating a new survey instrument based on their review of the previous survey, draft campus learning outcomes, the senior surveys of peer institutions, and good assessment practice. It was hoped that a well-constructed Senior Survey that is successful in achieving strong response rates may alleviate the needs for individual colleges to conduct their own senior surveys. This would obviate the need to ask students to complete multiple senior surveys.

II. COMMITTEE CHARGE AND RESPONSES

The Survey Review Committee work should include:

- communicating about the objectives and features of the revised survey to various stakeholders to obtain additional input, such as from the Council for Undergraduate Deans;
- testing the survey with a wider set of students and using the electronic format;
- identifying incentives that will motivate strong student participation;
- providing guidance for the piloting of the survey to December 2016 graduates;
- addressing a system for module creation and adoption; and
- determining how survey results will be reported to the public as well as to various stakeholders.

Communicating about the survey

The newly revised survey was the point of discussion at several meetings throughout the academic year, including meetings with the Council for Undergraduate Deans, the Assistant and Associate Deans, the Academic Advisors organization, and so on. In addition, the survey was discussed as part of the Assessment Workshops offered to faculty as part of the campus' assessment activities during the 2016-2017 academic year. Many programs that are using the campus learning outcomes within their own programs are looking to also use the Chancellor's Senior Survey as an indirect assessment tool.

Testing the survey

During the summer of 2016, Institutional Research Board (IRB) paperwork was submitted on the Chancellor's Senior Survey for the first time since it was offered. The IRB approval will allow for the campus to publish on the results of the survey as well as to use the survey for institutional improvement. Also in the summer of 2016, the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) began to administer the Chancellor's Senior Survey. CITL programmed the survey into the electronic system, tested the survey, and piloted the survey with the December 2016 graduates. CITL also communicated to the committee the areas where the survey seemed to have problems in the administration of the survey, such as questions that students appeared to misinterpret and where students typically quit the survey.

Identifying incentives

Since the December administration of the survey was a pilot, no incentives were provided for taking the survey. The committee did identify incentives for the Spring administration of the survey, including Amazon gift cards, caps and gowns, and VIP tickets to graduation. Specifically, 60 VIP tickets were given out so that 15 students can win up to 4 VIP tickets; and five cap and gowns: Herff Jones donating 2 cap and gowns; provost funding three.

Providing guidance for the pilot of the survey

As mentioned, CITL administered the pilot of the survey for the December graduates. The committee helped answer questions prior to the administration as well as reviewed early responses to improve the survey for the May graduates. The early feedback was that the survey was too long, the questions look the same, and the wording is too formal (not student friendly). To improve the survey, the follow-up questions based on where did you learn were only answered if a student selected that they moderately or up learned that objective. The survey also seemed too long, so it was decided to ask half of the learning outcome questions this year and half next year. The committee strove to not overlap the administration of the pilot with the Illini Success survey, but the December pilot did overlap more than what would be ideal.

The committee decided that the "thank you for taking the survey" should include important resources that students may need upon graduation. CITL will create a page for the committee to review.

Addressing a system for module creation and adoption

Given the length of the survey, the committee had decided to only ask about half of the learning outcomes each year. In a way, this divvying up of the questions will be a good way to test the module system. It would prefer not to include additional modules until after the full survey is administered, which will be Spring 2018. Therefore, any additional modules could start with the December 2018 graduates.

Modules should be limited to one a year and to five questions. There should not be an open call for module proposals, until a few have been tested. The committee also noted that it should note when policy changes occur on campus and how that may impact students' responses to the questions. For example, changes to study abroad programs that may lower participation.

Determining reporting out of survey results

Even though the Senior Survey has been administered since 1989, the reporting of the survey results has not been as effective as it could be. A campus report was shared and departments received coded reports where they could identify their units' responses. The committee discussed "Who needs the main report?" It decided that the following audiences would be most interested: Campus-level administration, student affairs, campus level committees, and libraries. Committee members also discussed: "How will people use the survey results?" It decided that mostly it would be used for accreditation and assessment.

To provide a better reporting strategy, a survey portal will be created. The committee considered several steps needed to create the portal:

Step 1: Clean the data

Step 2: Draft paper report; identify what tables will be included, and what data will go into the system

Step 3: Decide what is included in the data portal from the main categories of the survey

- Demographics
- Activities/Participation
- Learning Outcomes (List the 5 categories)
- Climate
- Satisfaction
- Open Ended

Step 4: Take out all student individual information

The data portal cannot both sort and compare the data, so to do this type of analysis would require two databases. The database cannot do significance testing. Eventually it would be helpful to look across different years of data to see trends. A decision will have to be made as to what to do with open-ended questions. The committee discussed whether the report appears on the screen or if an excel spreadsheet is provided. It believes the spreadsheet may work better for long reports.

Luckily this portal can follow the footsteps of the already completed Illini Success Survey, so lessons learned as well as programming may allow this portal to be created more easily. Julia Makela, the lead on Illini Success, provided several strategies for the portal.

Communicating survey results to stakeholders

The committee discussed that the report should be shared with individual departments, assessment groups, Public Affairs, Admission, and colleges. It would be helpful to increase the response rate if some key findings could be shared before the invitations to participate are sent for next year's survey.

III. FURTHER WORK NEEDED

The committee made great strides in reviewing the pilot of the new survey and creating strategies for reporting. The next steps include:

- Examining the survey to identify questions that need to be culled or kept;
- Identifying ways to better advertise and promote the survey;
- Reviewing the reporting strategies used for the survey so that that information disseminated is of most use to stakeholders;
- Continue to review incentives that will motivate strong participation;
- Selecting a time for the administrations of the survey that will not compete with the Illini Success survey but will promote student participation; and

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Chancellor's Senior Survey Committee: The committee recommends the continuation of this committee to review the survey and its results. The committee may need to make adjustments to the survey as it receives results and as it evaluates the survey experience for the students. It would be helpful to have many of the same members continue if they are able to do so.

Modules: The committee believes that carefully vetted modules would shorten the survey experience for students and lead to better usage of survey results for stakeholders, but that these modules should not be added until after the new survey is administered several times without modules.

Reporting/Communicating the Results: The committee believes that for the Senior Survey to be useful on campus, the results need to be shared very soon after the survey is completed; this may require the efforts of additional staff to compile and report the data, so that the survey will have the most utility for the units and campus. The committee believes that the reporting of the Illini Success results would be a good model for the Senior Survey results. During the next academic year, the committee should focus on reporting the results.