SURVEYING & STUDENT/ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT IN CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEWS

June 7, 2019

Presented by: Quality Assurance Office, Institutional Analysis and Planning and Alumni Relations
PURPOSE OF THIS WORKSHOP

To provide you with information to get positive engagement and feedback from students and alumni in program reviews and the resources available to you.

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Understand the importance of engaging students and alumni in the academic program review
- Recognize where and how students and alumni can be involved
- Understand the proper process for getting information from students and alumni
- Know where to access survey templates and survey software
- Know how to disseminate surveys and collect responses
- Know who can assist you with surveys and focus groups
WHY ENGAGE STUDENTS AND ALUMNI IN ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS?

It is best practice AND a requirement to include students (and alumni) in the authorship of the self-study:

“The self-study results from a participatory self-critical process and documents involvement in its preparation of all faculty in the program, and of students.”

“The self-study shows active involvement of students in the agenda-setting, self-analysis and preparation of the Report.”

“Students contribute to the preparation of the self-study, as well as meet with the external reviewer(s).”

(Source Guide to the QAF)
SURVEYING

“A student survey provides another valuable source of input to the self-study”.
(Guide to the QAF)

Who to survey?

- Undergraduate students
- Graduate students
- Alumni
- Employers
OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

- Get existing survey data (e.g., NSSE, CUSC, OUGS etc.) from IAP
- Fine-tune Learning Outcome’s (LOs) with CTE
- Look at the timeline for doing a survey and work backwards from deadline

Consider:

  o Review survey administration process & Academic Program Review survey toolkit on IAP website
  
  o When is the best time to send out a survey? Consult data steward (e.g., RO, Alumni Relations, Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs, Cooperative and Experiential Education).
  
  o Explore how RO and Alumni Relations supports departments/programs with surveys (e.g., survey dissemination)
EXISTING UNDERGRADUATE SURVEYS

- IAP will review the survey repository for existing survey results by program
- Data availability is dependent on sample size of the program

Survey data provided by IAP:

- Employment rate, related skills/subject, and salary – six months/two years (OUGS)
- Satisfaction with quality of teaching, would recommend Waterloo, program contribution to growth and development (CUSC GY)
- Program contribution to skills, quality of overall experience, would take same program again (NSSE)
EXISTING GRADUATE SURVEYS

- IAP will review the survey repository for existing survey results by program
- Data availability is dependent on sample size of the program

Survey data provided by IAP:
- Availability of courses needed to complete program (CGPSS)
- Would recommend Waterloo to someone considering their program (CGPSS)
- Would select same field of study if restarting graduate/professional program

- CGPSS
CONDUCTING YOUR OWN SURVEY

- Preparation is KEY in a well thought-out survey!
- **Survey Toolkit** is available on the IAP website:
  - Set of pre-approved questions and instructions for conducting surveys
  - Student questions (e.g., Academic Profile, Program Satisfaction and Quality, General Satisfaction etc.)
  - Alumni questions (e.g., Academic Profile, Program Satisfaction and Quality, Skills and Competencies, General Satisfaction, Post Graduation Experiences etc.)

- Waterloo’s [Survey Research Centre](#) can assist for a fee (e.g., they will program Qualtrics for you for a fee)
Institutional process: all surveys to be reviewed by IAP on behalf of the Survey Advisory Group

To begin review:

- Check IAP survey calendar for appropriate timeline
  - Discuss proposed timeline with IAP and Data stewards (Alumni, GSPA, Registrar) first

- Submit the following for review via IAP Survey review form
  - Brief description of survey
  - Target population and proposed timeline
  - Description of incentives*
    - Documents: Survey instrument, invitation/reminder letters, Incentives rules*, Privacy policy*

- IAP to review documents and send feedback within 1 – 2 weeks
IAP | INCENTIVES GUIDELINES

- Incentives can be offered to all survey participants, or in the form of a draw
- If offering a draw, consider the following:
  - Draws should be open to the entire target population regardless of if they participate in the survey (Criminal Code of Canada/ Competition Act)
  - Skill-testing question requirement (Criminal Code of Canada)
  - Privacy: store contact information used for draws separately from Survey responses (PIPEDA)
  - Disclose the following to participants (Competition Act – Fair disclosure):
    - Number/ value of prizes, skill-testing requirement, odds of winning, eligibility criteria, contest rules, privacy policy
    - Prepare & disseminate Incentives Rules and Privacy Policy to survey participants
  - Send documents to IAP for review
  - Sample documents (pages 37 – 39) of Survey toolkit
IAP | SURVEY RESOURCES

Resources:

- IAP Survey Calendar
- Survey Request form: https://uwaterloo.ca/iap/surveys/survey-data-request-form
- Survey Review form: https://uwaterloo.ca/iap/surveys/survey-review-form
- Survey Toolkit (sample documents: student letters, incentives rules, privacy policy) & APR Survey Toolkit (pre-approved sample questions):
  https://uwaterloo.ca/institutional-analysis-planning/surveys/survey-toolkits
ALUMNI RELATIONS

Step 1: Connect with your Alumni Officer

**Faculties**

Ryan McGuinness  
Applied Health Sciences

Patti Cook  
Faculty of Arts

Gosia Brestovacki  
Faculty of Engineering

**Dheana Ramsay**  
Faculty of Environment

**Kristine McGlynn**  
Faculty of Mathematics

**Bonnie Fretz or Sharon McFarlane**  
Faculty of Science

**Schools**

Mary Stanley  
School of Pharmacy

Karen Browne  
School of Accounting & Finance

Andrea Carthew  
School of Optometry
ALUMNI RELATIONS

Step 2: Alumni Officer (AO) coordinates with Alumni Relations for an email to be sent on your behalf

- Message will be scheduled so it does not conflict with other emails being sent to alumni from your program.
  - E.g. alumni events, news updates, fundraising appeals, other surveys

- AO will organize for the recipient list, making sure your message goes to the right alumni (program, year graduated, etc.), and honours privacy and Canada Anti-Spam Law (CASL) guidelines.
  - Alumni audience should be 5-7 years out from graduation

- Will be sent using a template that is on-brand, responsive (adjusts properly to device screen size), can be personalized (“Dear first name”), and consistent with messaging alumni receive from Waterloo.

Tip: A lot of email goes out to alumni – reach out to the AO sooner rather than later to book your email
ALUMNI RELATIONS

Step 3: Develop the content for your email

- The AO will coordinate content with you, and can provide examples of other programs’ emails.
- Consider who the email signatory will be. Name recognition can lead to more responses.
- Keep your message brief and to the point. Aim for 200-250 words.
- Put the “fine print” details on the first page of the survey – don’t have them cluttering up your email message.
  - E.g. ethics, methodology, “you don’t have to answer every question”
- Be sure to answer “Why should I take the survey?”
  - Your feedback can make a difference
  - You’re going to help future students
- Be courteous: let them know how long the survey will take and include your thanks
- Optional – may want to include survey close date
Dear Lisa,

The School of Planning is embarking on an important review of our degree programs. Whether you completed a BES, Masters, or Ph.D., we would love your perspective on your degree experience while studying with us. We have designed a short survey (10 to 15 minutes to complete) which you can access via the button below. Your participation is anonymous but we’d be happy to share the results with you if you’re interested.

Thanks in advance for considering this request in the midst of your busy day! Your feedback is important as we consider how to shape our program for future students.

We sincerely appreciate your support.

Clarence Woudsma
Director, School of Planning
1. Connect with your Alumni Officer

2. Alumni Officer (AO) coordinates with Alumni Relations for an email to be sent on your behalf

3. Develop the content for your email
SURVEY CREATION & DISSEMINATION

- Create your survey in a software platform
- **Qualtrics** is recommended - UW has a license, IST support available
  - Can also use other survey platforms, such as Survey Monkey

**Student Surveys**

Timing of student surveys should be verified with IAP, but surveys are sent out by a program representative to their own list of students.

**Alumni Surveys**

*All contact with alumni must be run through Alumni Relations*

Your Faculty Alumni Officer can help facilitate surveying (e.g., provide list of alumni to contact, email content and timing).
SURVEY RESPONSES

- The software platform in which you create your survey will collect the responses
- Send reminders to respondents, if needed
- Review the results
- Seek assistance for interpretation of data, if needed
- Statistical Consulting & Collaborative Research Unit (SCCR) will provide data analysis (Note: a cost maybe involved for their services)
FOCUS GROUPS

Student Success Office offers Student Consultation Groups. They will:

- help program prepare a set of questions
- recruit the students
- host and facilitate the focus group
- report back on results

Alumni Relations will:

- help connect you with alumni for focus groups

Please contact your Faculty’s/School’s Alumni Officer if you are interested in arranging alumni focus groups.
INTEGRATING RESULTS INTO THE SELF-STUDY

Self-Study (Section 1.6)

- Discuss how students and alumni were consulted and what role they played in creating the self-study.
  - Include a copy of survey(s) or focus group questions as an appendix
  - Include aggregate data as an appendix

Self-Study (Section 9)

- Survey/focus groups results will help inform the strengths, challenges/threats, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement
CONTACTS

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