UC Merced Survey Coordinating Committee

The goal of the UC Merced Survey Coordinating Committee is to coordinate survey activities on campus, particularly surveys of UC Merced students, applicants, alumni, faculty, and staff, and to improve the quality and usefulness of these activities. The Committee will help the Institutional Planning & Analysis Office develop a strategic plan for campus surveys (based on information needs) and establish a process for approving ad hoc campus survey requests (internal or external). Benefits of greater coordination of these activities include:

- Improving communication about self-study efforts
- Facilitating the sharing of survey results in ways that are meaningful
- Improving the quality of information collected through survey efforts (e.g., encouraging use of standard questions for consistency over time)
- Assisting with questionnaire design, sampling techniques, and other methodological issues
- Increasing collaboration opportunities and more efficient use of resources
- Avoiding duplication of efforts and coordinating timing of surveys to avoid over-surveying of some groups
- Providing better assessment data required by WASC, other accrediting agencies, program reviews
- Ensuring proper authorization to contact students, applicants, alumni, faculty, and/or staff
- Facilitating access to institutional data and contact information
- Assisting in navigating the IRB process
- Providing access to, and assistance with, campus web survey tool

The Survey Coordinating Committee will develop an effective strategy for survey management and data collection; coordinate and approve internal and external requests to survey UC Merced students, applicants, alumni, faculty, and/or staff; and officially sanction surveys that require access to institutional data and/or contact information. The Committee will track the administration of surveys on campus and maintain a repository for contributed reports, questionnaires and survey items. All requests to survey members of the campus community should go through the Survey Coordinating Committee review process. In addition to paper surveys, those include other data gathering techniques, such as: web surveys (e.g., Survey Monkey), focus groups, and telephone surveys.

The Survey Coordinating Committee does not replace the functions of the IRB (Institutional Review Board); nor does it act as a resource proprietor for approval to access contact information or other protected university data. It can, however, by virtue of the membership, help guide survey requestors through these approval processes.

The Survey Coordinating Committee will develop the standards used to approve survey projects, such as:

1. **Importance:** What is the overall importance/purpose of the survey? Does it provide useful information for institutional planning and assessment purposes? Does it provide useful feedback to those providing services to students, alumni, faculty, or staff? Is the survey of national importance? Are there peer institutions conducting the survey and will peer data be available for comparative purposes/analyses?
2. **Dissemination and Use of Information Collected:** Who will have access to the information collected and how will they use it? Will it be presented to management groups or individuals to inform decision-making?

3. **Content and Design of Survey:** Is the survey well designed: Is the content appropriate? Does it follow sound survey methods and practices? Is it of appropriate length? Are questions easily understood and interpreted?
4. **Population and Sampling Methodology:** What is the target population? Is there a sound sampling strategy? What strategies will be used to ensure adequate response rates? How will confidentiality of responses be ensured?
5. **Timing:** If the project schedule conflicts with another approved survey project, can the schedule be adjusted?

Proposed meeting schedule (FY2008-09)

After establishing general guidelines and expectations, most of the business of the committee will be conducted via email. A committee site will be set up (via Confluence or UCMCrops) for document sharing and committee decision tracking.

Early September: First meeting of the UC Merced Survey Planning Committee

- Overview of current major surveys administered; timing
- Establish general guidelines and procedures
    1. number of follow-up reminders to nonrespondents
    2. use of incentives/prizes
    3. over-surveying and response rate problems
    4. etc.
- Schedule any subsequent meetings for fall semester

Early February: Second meeting

- Draft campus survey schedule for FY2009-10 through FY2013-14