GRINNELL COLLEGE

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION

March 12, 2017

I.   Introduction General Policy

This policy is intended to assist the campus community in conducting successful survey research within our constituency groups including, but not necessarily limited to, students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Past experience and survey research at Grinnell has shown that surveys should be scheduled asynchronously to improve response rates.

Consistent with Grinnell College's core values of excellence in education for students in the liberal arts (including active scholarship in traditional and interdisciplinary fields) and social and personal responsibility, the college holds its students, faculty, and staff to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research. The college also seeks to uphold a culture of informed decision making, ongoing research, and collaboration.

These policies and procedures for survey implementation with Grinnell College students, faculty, staff, and alumni are available on the Office of Analytic Support and Institutional Research (OASIR) website.

Scope

This document describes the policies and procedures that must be followed when seeking to implement a survey of the above constituent groups, generally in their entirety or significant subsets. In this context a 'survey' is defined as any set of questions intended as 1) research or 2) information to inform decisionmaking or broader campus discussions. Note that this does NOT include data collection for administrative tasks such as event RSVPs and food orders.

This policy applies specifically to faculty and staff members, outside consultants, and students conducting surveys within our community unrelated to coursework.

This policy does not apply to the following (but consultation/coordination with OASIR may be beneficial):

- surveys of small subpopulations within the students, faculty, staff, and alumni constituencies (see the "Survey Approval" section for the authority for this determination)
- independent faculty research; and
- students implementing surveys as part of a course project or MAP.

Roles and Responsibilities

The OASIR is responsible for maintaining an institutional survey timeline based on survey information provided to the office. This timeline will be made available to students, faculty, and staff at the beginning of each academic semester via GrinnellShare.

II. Procedures

Because of the variety of surveys conducted on campus, the outline below is intended to offer a broad framework for proposing new surveys and coordinating with the OASIR.

Existing Data Resources

To avoid duplication of efforts, the OASIR requests that prior to survey implementations, researchers consider publicly available sources of data, including the Common Data Set (CDS), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and others. A summary of such data is available on the OASIR website and is linked below in the Survey Data Storage and Ownership section of this policy.

The OASIR has access to a variety of data in a range of formats, including but not limited to: detailed administrative data, survey results in both aggregate and unit record form, and detailed student record data. Grinnell College does not release this information to outside researchers without appropriate authorization, although in some cases, non-individually-identifiable data of a non-sensitive nature may be provided to qualified researchers, particularly those on campus. In considering implementation of a new survey, researchers should work with the OASIR to determine if the information sought already exists.

Application for Survey Approval

All surveys as defined above must be approved prior to administration. Applications should be made as soon as possible, preferably in the semester before administration and should include the following details:
- Constituent Group: what population or group will you be surveying?
- Purpose/Research Questions: what is the purpose of your survey? Please include the research question(s) that your work will address.
- Time Frame: when do you propose to implement the survey? For how long will the survey remain open?
- Expected Survey Burden: how long will it take to complete the survey?
- Consultation with Institutional Review Board as necessary: Have you determined IRB exemption (if applicable)?
- Platform: Please specify survey software platform to be used.
- Data Storage: All institutional data is to be stored securely by the OASIR. Access to and sharing of these data is subject to FERPA requirements.
- Intended Use of the Data: how will the data effect our knowledge or work going forward?

Survey Approval

At least once per semester (or if required, on an ad-hoc basis) the OASIR will convene a meeting of constituent group representatives to review proposals for the coming semester. The meeting will include the VP for Academic Affairs (representing faculty), the AVP for Human Resources (representing staff), the AVP for Student Affairs (representing students), and the VP for Development and Alumni Relations (representing alumni), or their designees. This body will review and recommend to the President the survey schedule for the coming semester; the President will have final approval authority.

The Associate Vice President for Analytic Support and Institutional Research will have authority to determine whether a given survey's intended participants constitute a large enough group to be subject to this policy.

The constituent group representatives strongly encourage anyone interested in applying for survey approval to communicate in advance of the submission with the constituent senior staff member, or their designee, in an effort to understand opportunities and limitations of surveying respective audiences.

Survey Implementation

The OASIR will notify those submitting a survey request of any concerns/findings after the meeting of constituent group representatives. If the President approves the survey, work may proceed as planned. If the constituent group has concerns or questions, these will be communicated back to those proposing the survey. Concerns related to survey timeline (i.e., date of implementation) will be addressed by the group and, if conflicts present themselves, a final determination will be made in consultation with the President.

III. Other Considerations

Survey Data Storage and Ownership Survey data created as a function of a staff member's role at the College is the property of the institution. Survey data must be provided to the OASIR for secure, long-term storage. This storage provides two important functions 1) the creation of a backup data set in a secure location should the original data set become corrupt or otherwise unusable and 2) the creation of a historical file of data related to work at the college. The major data sources held by the OASIR can be found at the following link: