Campus Climate Survey

Survey Outreach Toolkit
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Section One: What Has Worked?

Overview

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide guidance about how to develop a successful outreach strategy. The research team strongly encourages institutions to develop and implement a strategy to create awareness among students about the campus climate survey and motivate them to participate by taking the survey. These methods are known as survey outreach strategies. In addition to guidance on outreach methods, this toolkit includes samples of successful outreach plans implemented during other campus climate projects. These samples can be tailored for the specific implementation needs of the HBCUs involved in the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Campus Climate Project. **The HBCUs involved in the project are not expected to implement all the strategies in this toolkit. These samples are provided as guidance. Instead, each HBCU should review the material covered in this toolkit and decided what strategy(ies) will fit their communities and capacity.**

This guide offers an overview of the benefits of an outreach plan, suggested outreach activities, information on what has worked well for other universities in the past, as well as what to consider including in the overall strategy. It is important to create and implement a communications strategy or outreach plan in order to maximize student participation in the survey. The more students who take the survey, the better the data can be in representing the demographics of your institution.

The table below provides a brief overview of several successful outreach plans implemented in similar campus climate projects.

Survey	Key Points
Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) study	• Some of the schools involved in this study posted advance notices, pre-notifications, about the survey in student newspapers and on social media prior to administration of the survey in order to raise awareness. • This material informed students about the upcoming survey and encouraged them to participate. • Staff at the involved schools sent out emails describing the study and encouraging students to participate by taking the survey.
#iSPEAK survey at Rutgers University	• Communications took the form of a series of strategically planned personalized e-mails, letters, a social media campaign, and other promotional materials. • Section 2 of this document provides a detailed outline of the #iSPEAK outreach plan as an example for your reference.
Cultivating Learning and Safe Environments (CLASE) at the University of Texas	• The research team encouraged stakeholders to promote student participation and provided sample recruitment and promotional emails, flyers, and social media strategies to be modified and customized for each institution involved in order to raise awareness about the survey.

Survey	Key Points
	• Institutions sent an initial promotional letter to all students, faculty members, and staff informing them of the survey and demonstrating institutional support. • Social media was used to promote the survey and the survey announcements were sent by email with a link to students at each institution.
ARC3	• Active recruitment methods were utilized such as: direct contact by email, face-to-face invitations (pop-up stations), and mailed invitations. • Posted flyers or posters where large groups of students cluster. • ARC3 researchers also highlight the importance of having authority figures, i.e., professors, student leaders, athletic coaches, and senior administrators promote the survey. Students are more likely to participate when the invitation is extended by these individuals.
Tulane Climate Survey	• Students were introduced to the project through an extensive campus-wide marketing campaign that included social media marketing and community competitions to increase participation.

Outreach Strategies

The HBCU Campus Climate Survey will use a census sampling approach, inviting all students to participate in the survey. This method has many advantages, some of which include efficient and easier outreach and a high response rate. In census sample designs, researchers and school administrators will be primarily concerned with inviting all students to take the survey and informing them about how they will be compensated for their participation.

Ideally the outreach plan will combine the strengths of differing methods of communication (i.e., paper notification, email notification, listserve announcement etc.). The combination of different communication methods can happen in different phases of the survey as follow:

Phase I   *Pre-notification:* communicating with students to raise awareness of the survey prior administration. This has been found to increases response rates by legitimizing the survey and emphasizing how participation will benefit participants and the larger community (Dillman et al., 2014). If students do not receive an initial contact, the response rate may be lower than expected as the groundwork for the survey may not be built up sufficiently.

Phase II   *Survey Opening:* communicating about the survey when it first opens and it while remains open by sending email reminders. These invitations to participate by taking survey should be personalized and include information such as: the university's name, title of the survey, a URL link to the survey, as well as an explanation of the purpose and use of the survey (Porter and Whitcomb, 2007).

Outreach Materials

Print and promotional materials can be used during both phases to encourage students to participate by taking the survey.

Print Materials: These materials should focus on raising awareness about the survey; illustrate the school's commitment to the survey; and encourage students to take the survey. The materials should be simple in design and include only necessary information such the web address of the survey and the incentive amount. Other items to include are: the survey name, when the survey will be open, and the closing date of the survey. If the institution creates a social media account or a website to promote the survey, the printed material can also mention these sites. The same logo and language can be used on all materials to ensure consistent messaging.

Print items might include: posters, banners, table tents, flyers, photo campaign signs, and door hangers. These can be hung up around campus and at off-campus locations frequented by students. Resident Assistants can be encouraged to participate by displaying door hangers on each dorm room door in the residence halls. Residence hall staff can also be asked to dedicate a bulletin board in each hall for the survey print materials.

Promotional Materials: These products display the survey and/or project name and will be used to promote the project among students. Ideas for promotional items include; stickers, silicone bracelets, phone chargers, and/or phone cases.

Framing of the Survey: How the survey is framed and discussed in outreach materials is important to consider. Although various campus climate projects have used different approaches, for the purposes of the HBCU project, the language should remained aligned with the BJS project, which referred to the survey as a "web-based survey about the sexual experiences and attitudes of undergraduate students."

HBCUs' Outreach Responsibilities: The Rutgers research team will take the lead on email recruitment of students. The team will send a series of emails inviting students to participate in the survey and additional reminders to students who have not yet participated. All other outreach efforts should come from the HBCUs themselves. However, this toolkit is solely meant to provide an overview of outreach methods and examples of outreach activities. The HBCUs involved in the project are not responsible for conducting all outreach activities suggested in this toolkit. Instead, each HBCU should review the material covered in this toolkit and decided what will work best on their campus. Some of the activities outlined here are more expensive (e.g., promotional materials) or time intensive (distributing print materials throughout campus) while other are easier and cheaper to implement (e.g., electronic mail and announcements). Each campus should weigh the pros and cons of using each outreach method and decide on an outreach plans that works best for them based on budget, time commitment, and effectiveness in reaching students.

Conclusion: The aim of this section was to lay out some of the best practices when it comes to survey outreach and recruitment. Decisions about what strategies to utilize will depend on what works best for your unique campus. What matters is that some form of outreach strategy is put in place combining the use of pre-notifications of the survey to raise awareness, reminders to participants to take the survey, and promotional materials for the survey. Additionally, it is also important that all communication is clear and consistent. Using these methods, institutions can promote the survey to students and work to ensure an adequate response rate.

Section Two: Sample Outreach Plan

This section of the toolkit presents the outreach plan used to promote the #iSPEAK Campus Climate Survey at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. This following is offered as an example of one university's outreach strategy for its campus climate survey. These activities were designed to fit the Rutgers University-New Brunswick campus and may or may not be suited to other settings.

It is important to note that while the outreach plan was constructed prior to the survey's administration, some updates and adaptations were expected. In particular, as implementation progressed, team members noted which activities reached and resonated with the most students and adapted their efforts to maximize results.

The table below contains elements of the #iSPEAK outreach plan that might be implemented on your campus for survey recruitment.

Advisory Board Meetings	The research team's activities and decisions throughout the survey's administration should be guided by the Advisory Board. To maintain close communication, the administrative liaison might meet with the Advisory Board several times throughout the outreach planning process in order to discuss issues such as: • Guidance regarding outreach activities • Support sending out reminder emails to students • Access to stakeholders, faculty, and staff to promote the survey • Survey promotion in general
Branding	The survey should be branded in order to provide a universal method of promoting student participation. Branding considerations include: • Naming the survey: example: #iSPEAK • A possible survey name might emphasize students' voices • A survey logo helps create a visual identity • Keep it simple, clear, and legible

Social Media	Create and maintain a daily schedule of social media posts including branding, photo campaign pictures, social media contest submission pictures, topical articles, information about pop-up survey stations, and news about raffle prizes. Social media considerations include:
	• Facebook:
	  o Create a Facebook profile picture frame and group for the survey
	• Twitter:
	  o Use one main hashtag for the survey
	• Instagram:
	  o Associate posts with a consistent hashtag
	• Snapchat:
	  o Create a filter

Dedicated Survey Website	Create and maintain a dedicated survey webpage providing up-to-date information leading up to and throughout the survey period. • For example, at Rutgers, the research team included information about survey dates, a downloadable "#iSPEAK because" sign to use in the photo campaign, sample photo campaign pictures of students leaders, and information about campus resources regarding sexual assault.

Newsletters / University Media Outlets and Emails	Announcements should notify students of the survey launch and encourage student to take the survey. Similar language should be used in all forms of electronic communication to maintain a consistent message. All communications should be brief and include the link to the survey webpage so students can access further information.
	Newsletters/University Media Outlets and Emails considerations include:
	• Electronic Newsletters and University Media Outlets:
	   o Survey announcements can be placed in numerous University electronic newsletters and include advertisement(s) in the student newspaper.
	   o A message can also be provided on students' university web portal, a page that students must login to in order to access their schedule, email accounts, grades, and class sites.
	   o Announcements can also be placed on course managements systems such as Canvas and Blackboard for students to view.
	• Emails from Administrators and Staff:
	   o The research team will send the email invitations but administrators and staff are welcome to email students to encourage them to participate as well.
	   o Multiple emails could be sent by administrative officials (e.g., the Chancellor of the University, the Chancellor of Student Affairs etc.) to encourage students to take the survey.
	   o Emails might also be sent out to faculty to let them know that the survey is occurring and request that they remind students to take the survey.
	   o A slide with information about the survey can be distributed to faculty so they can add it to their own lecture slides.
	• Emails from a Student Leader:
	   o Institutions might request that prominent student organization leader(s) draft an email that the research team can send out to the student body encouraging students to participate in the survey.

Print and Promotional Materials	It is important to keep survey posters and flyers simple in design and include only necessary information such as: the survey name, the dates the survey will be live, the survey's social media accounts, and the mention of "cash prizes." It is also important to note that while drafting these items, the same logo and language should be used on all materials to ensure the use of consistent messaging. Considerations regarding print materials are below.

	• Print Materials:
	   o Posters and flyers can be hung around campus and at off-campus locations commonly frequented by students.
	   o Posters and flyers can be distributed around campus beginning the day the survey goes live.
	   o Survey print and promotional materials may include: posters, banners, table tents, flyers, photo campaign signs, and quarter sheet flyers.

Meetings with Student Organizations	To increase student investment, administrators might meet with student organizations including speaking at member meetings. Student organizations and student leaders can be enlisted in efforts to publicize the survey. Institutions might create and disseminate resources and toolkits that outline how students can assist with recruitment and get involved. Ways for students to get involved include: • Staffing pop-up survey stations; joining the photo campaign; tabling at events; posting on social media about survey and why they took it.

Section Three: Sample Outreach Materials

Remember, across platforms and for all study designs, messages should be clear, consistent, and extremely concise. They should convey the topic of the study, include all necessary information about how to access the survey during the administration period, and emphasize that participation earns each student a chance(s) to win a prize (McMahon, Stepleton & Cusano, 2016).

Branding

To facilitate clear communication, your institutions may also choose to "brand" your survey. This gives all members of the community an easy way to discuss the project while also creating "buzz" about the survey. At Rutgers University, the campus climate survey was named #iSPEAK to emphasize that it provided an opportunity for students to share their voices with an audience that valued their input. While, the University of Texas at Austin used the acronym "CLASE" (Cultivating Learning and Safe Environment) for their survey. The name should be short, easy to spell, and memorable. Across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, members of the community can use a hashtag linked to the campaign to talk about the survey and addressing sexual experiences and safety on campus.

The logo below was used during the #iSPEAK Campus Climate survey at Rutgers University.

Survey Emails:

While the research team will be responsible for sending out the survey invitation, school administrators, faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to send out notifications to students about the survey and why it is important. Receiving emails about the survey from key stakeholders encourages survey participation and improves response rates.

The following are recommendations; however, the outreach plan will be designed based on each institution's preference.

The following are sample emails that might be use both prior to and during the survey administration.

Email 1:

To: Students

From: Student Leader

Target Date/Time:

Subject: [Insert Survey Name]: A student survey to improve our response to campus sexual assault

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As a member of the student body, it is troubling to learn about the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses. Research has found that 1 in 5 women are sexually assaulted in college, and though it is less common and infrequently reported, male students experience sexual assault too. Better understanding and responding to campus sexual assault has become a national priority, and there is something you can do here within the [Insert School Name] community in order address this issue.

[Insert School Name] has launched the [Insert Survey Name] Campus Climate Survey. The purpose of this survey is to learn about your experiences of, attitudes about, and awareness of campus sexual assault and resources to address it. The results from this survey will help to improve [Insert School Name]'s efforts to prevent sexual violence, respond effectively when assault does occur, and support student survivors.

With you, I want to continue our school's efforts to create a safe environment where sexual assault is never tolerated. I encourage you to take a few moments to learn about the survey and encourage you to participate by taking the survey. Your voice matters, and the faculty, administration, and entire [Insert School Name] community is listening.

In addition to taking an active role in tackling this issue, students who participate will receive $25 cash.

Together, we can build upon the work that has been done over the years to make [Insert School Name] a leader in developing innovative and effective violence prevention and response programs. Thank you for speaking up with me in order to make [Insert School Name] a safer community for all.

Sincerely,

Email 2:

To: Faculty, Staff,

From: Leadership

Target Date/Time:

Subject: [Insert Survey Name]: A student survey to improve our response to campus sexual assault

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Members of the [Insert School Name] Community,

Many of you have heard this troubling statistic: 1 in 5 women are sexually assaulted in college. Though it is less common and infrequently reported, male students experience sexual assault too. This is unacceptable. Colleges and universities must engage in ongoing, proactive efforts to keep students safe and support survivors. Better understanding and responding to campus sexual assault has become a national priority, and I am proud to say that [Insert School Name] is a leader in this area.

On [INSERT DATE] our community, will take another step to improve its response to sexual violence with the launch of the [Insert Survey Name] student survey. The survey [Insert School Name] will open on [Insert Date] and is open to all students. The [Insert Survey Name] survey will gather essential information about student experiences of, attitudes about, and awareness of campus sexual assault and resources to address it. What we learn will directly inform the development of more robust programs to prevent sexual violence, respond effectively when assault does occur, and support student survivors.

Our staff and students have done remarkable work over the years to create an environment where members of our community are safe, learners can thrive, and sexual assault is never tolerated. But this work continues, and we have to be honest in our assessment of the problem in order to craft effective solutions. [Insert Survey Name] will help us deepen our understanding about what students experience and what they need, challenging us to keep confronting the problem of campus sexual assault and seeking strategies to end it.

Thank you for your part in making [Insert School Name] a safer, more supportive place for all.

Sincerely,

Survey Listserv Announcements

At Rutgers, the research team also promoted the #iSPEAK survey through listserv announcements to students. Such listservs included those for graduate student, off-campus students etc. Other places where such announcement might appear include course managements systems (e.g., Canvas and Blackboard) and students' university web portal (a page students login to access their schedule, email accounts, grades etc.).

Below are example listserv announcements modified from the #iSPEAK campus climate survey.

Listserv Announcement 1:

Title: Campus Climate Survey

Make your voice heard! On [Insert date], the [Insert Survey Name] with launch. Students will have the chance to share their thoughts about the campus climate around safety. The survey will be open until the end of the semester [Insert date]. If you complete the survey you will be rewarded with $25 cash.

The [Insert Survey Name] survey will help [Insert School Name] improve our campus. Now it's time we speak!

Listserv Announcement 2:

Title: [Insert Survey Name]: A student survey about campus climate

All over campus students are speaking out. [Insert Survey Name], a survey to help [Insert School Name] improve our campus, will be open to all [Insert School Name] students from [Insert Date] until [Insert Date]. Students who complete the survey will be awarded a $25 cash.

Share why you're taking the survey by using [insert campaign name or hashtag] on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Conclusion

This guide has offered an overview of the benefits of creating an outreach plan, suggested outreach activities, information on what has worked for other universities, and what to include in an outreach plan. Institutions are encouraged to develop and implement a strategy to create awareness among students about the campus climate survey and motivate them take the survey. The samples provided in this toolkit can be tailored for the specific implementation needs of your campus. Both the samples and guidance provided are this toolkit are intended to assist in the creation of an outreach plan for your campus. You are also free to contact Yoyce Geronimo, HBCU Campus Climate Project coordinator, with any further questions regarding outreach, at yg356@ssw.rutgers.edu.

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