

## Example IRB Protocol

### 1. Introduction/Objectives

The proposed study will assess various aspects of Career Services from the student perspective, utilizing survey research. By participating in this project, [college or university name] will have access to benchmarking data from peer institutions that are also administering the same survey. Benchmarking data will allow Career Services to better document and understand what we are doing well, in comparison to peer and national averages, and where areas of opportunity exist. The project is a joint venture between the participating institutions and StudentVoice (a third party conduit to collect benchmarking data). Additional information about the project and about StudentVoice is included in this protocol.

This project will provide comprehensive data, from students, on:

- The perceived impact of Career Services on their post-graduation plans
- Outcomes of utilizing Career Services
- Information about which Career Services' offerings students utilize
- Comfort and understanding of various sources of information that employers might utilize during hiring
- Considerations when accepting a position

This study will provide data not only from Career Services users, but also from non-users. Thus, a related aim of the study is that it will provide insight into why students do not utilize Career Services and what may be changed or enhanced to encourage increased participation.

### 2. Subjects/Methods

The study will be conducted at [name of college or university] with a sample of currently enrolled undergraduate students. No one under 18 will be invited to participate in this study. This study utilizes survey research, only. Participation in the survey is voluntary and respondents may choose not to respond to any questions that they do not wish to answer.

The instrument, itself, was designed by a committee of Career Services directors. [Name of college or university] is able to modify the instrument where appropriate. The instrument was pilot tested with a sample of students to ensure that it was easy to understand, that the questions were relevant, and to gauge the time needed to complete the instrument.

All data collection will occur online. A random sample of students will be sent an email inviting them to participate in the study. Email addresses will be obtained from the XXX. Invitations will be emailed upon approval from IRB. By the end of [enter month and year] the survey will be closed down and data analysis will begin.

Student emails will be kept in an Excel file on a secure password-protected computer at all times. No survey respondent will be identified individually. Rather, all data will be

reported in aggregate and confidentiality will be protected. Email addresses will be discarded at the conclusion of this study.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes for students to complete. In the email invitation, consent is clearly outlined by the following statement: *“By clicking on the START SURVEY link you are indicating your willingness to participate in this survey.”* It is also clearly stated that participation is voluntary.

Survey respondents will not be compensated.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

Data will be analyzed using quantitative methodologies. In most instances, only descriptive statistics will be reported, however, when appropriate more advanced data analysis may take place (t-tests) to determine differences based on student populations. For example, it may be appropriate and useful to compare users and non-users of Career Services. All data will be reported in aggregate and confidentiality will be protected. Career Services staff will have access to the data on a secure, password-protected reporting site.

The benchmarking data will be available at the conclusion of this study. [Name of college or university] will have access to the national averages across the questions in the survey, as well as comparisons to several peer institutions. **At no point, will [name of college or university] data be identified.** Likewise, at no point will any of the other participating institution's data be identified. In all instances, data will only be designated as originating from Institution 1, Institution 2, Institution 3, and so on. **All [name of college or university] data is owned by [name of college or university],** as outlined in the StudentVoice legal contract. StudentVoice is merely serving as the conduit to collect the data and will not use the data for any undisclosed purposes.

#### **5. Risks**

This project is voluntary and is survey research designed to collect data for better understanding student needs and improving Career Services. As such, this project presents minimal risk to participants, however, we are still seeking consent of the students. Consent will occur if the students choose to start the survey. No identifying information will be collected about the students. The emails of the students will not be linked to survey responses, thus confidentiality is protected. The survey is voluntary and students may skip any questions that they are uncomfortable answering. Answering the survey questions should not adversely affect students, however, if students experience any discomfort, they will encouraged to contact the PI.

#### **6. Benefits**

Students will benefit from participation in that they will be able to provide honest feedback about Career Services and their post-graduation plans. Such feedback will help to improve and possibly expand services for students – thus enhancing the collegiate experience. Specific enhancements, resulting from this survey, may improve specific programming and new services for students. In addition, non-users or

infrequent users of Career Services may be encouraged to explore career opportunities after completing this survey and being asked to reflect upon their post-graduation plans.

### **About StudentVoice**

StudentVoice is dedicated to student affairs assessment and provides the technology to collect assessment, as well as assessment consultation. StudentVoice has worked with over 150 campuses in North America. **StudentVoice considers institutional and student privacy issues of high priority and importance. When required for project administration, student email addresses and/or identification numbers are never shared, sold, or disseminated to any third-party. Emails will be discarded at the conclusion of the project.** For additional information on StudentVoice, including a list of client institutions, visit [www.studentvoice.com](http://www.studentvoice.com).