

## Campus Working Group on Assessment

### Rationale:

Under the guidance of the Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC), UC Merced has adopted a distributed (rather than centralized) model for supporting assessment across the campus. Key elements of this model include

- Assessment specialists and expertise associated with academic and administrative units across the institution.<sup>1</sup>
- An Office of Institutional Assessment, under the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, that includes the Coordinator for Institutional Assessment, Graduate Assessment and Substantive Change Coordinator, and the Program Review Manager.

Overarching coordination and oversight of assessment activities that contribute to the mission of the university is provided by the Periodic Review Oversight Committee.

To realize the institutional efficiencies and benefits of regular communication and coordination among the assessment specialists and experts facilitating assessment across the campus, PROC establishes the Campus Working Group on Assessment.

### Charge

With the goal of facilitating continued development of a culture of evidence in support of the campus' mission, the CWGA will

1. Share information and resources related to assessment practices and results.
2. Support the implementation of the campus' assessment-related priorities and initiatives, as appropriate.<sup>2</sup>
3. Coordinate surveying activity at UC Merced in keeping with the goals, responsibilities, and scope outlined in the appendix to this charge.
4. Bring to PROC's attention issues related to ensuring UC Merced's assessment practices and infrastructure effectively and efficiently support a transparent, evidence-based, improvement-oriented approach to fulfilling the campus's educational mission.

Convened by the Coordinator for Institutional Assessment, CWGA will report to PROC, and other campus constituencies like UCG and GRC as relevant, and will provide an annual report on activities.

### Membership

Academic Senate, Analyst  
Center for Research on Teaching Excellence, Representative  
Division of Business and Administrative Services, Representative  
Division of Student Affairs, Coordinator of Assessment, Research and Evaluation  
Institutional Research and Decision Support, Representative  
Library, Representative  
Merritt Writing Program, Representative

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<sup>1</sup> Including in the Schools, the Division of Student Affairs, Graduate Division (administrative), the Division of Administration, Institutional Research and Decision Support, and the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence. Significant assessment expertise also exists in the library and Merritt Writing Program.

<sup>2</sup> For example, needs that emerge from the annual report of the Committee for the Review of PLO Reports.

Office of Institutional Assessment, Director of Institutional Assessment & PROC Representative  
Office of Institutional Assessment, Graduate Assessment Coordinator  
Office of Institutional Assessment, Program Review Manager  
School of Engineering, Accreditation Analyst  
School of Natural Sciences, Manager of Student and Program Assessment  
School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, Manager of Student and Program Assessment

## **Appendix: Survey Coordination at UC Merced – Goals and Responsibilities**

### *Goals*

The CWGA coordinates surveying activity at UC Merced with the goal of cultivating, over the long term, a campus culture of evidence-informed planning and decision-making (assessment) in which

- (1) Surveys are recognized as one of several, possible tools for gathering perceptions from stakeholders, and chosen for their [appropriateness to the question under investigation](#).
- (2) Surveys are ***selectively and strategically employed*** as part of a plan for data collection that is grounded in a specified goal or set of goals (or questions) that, as relevant, includes multiple, complementary lines of evidence.
- (3) Planning to survey involves consideration of the larger campus context, including
  - Our collective goal to manage survey fatigue<sup>3</sup>, as a means for maximizing the usefulness of each survey that is offered.
  - Existing [institutional data](#), including [survey data](#).
  - The [campus calendar of surveys](#).
  - [Resources](#) to support survey planning and implementation.
- (4) Planning to survey includes an evaluation of [whether the survey is subject to the requirements](#) associated with [human subject research](#) as well as compliance with federal, state, and university policies and privacy regulations, including the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA).
- (5) Participation in surveys is understood by stakeholders to be one way (of many) to give back to UC Merced and advance our campus' success.

### *Responsibilities*

In support of the aforementioned goals, and on behalf of campus constituents and the Periodic Review Oversight Committee, the CWGA

- (1) Reviews requests/proposals to survey students, staff, faculty, and alumni advising on topics related to the five outcomes listed under Goals above. This includes recommendations related to timing, sampling strategy, etc.
- (2) Makes transparent the magnitude of survey activity on campus.
- (3) Coordinates the campus calendar of surveys, and facilitates awareness and use of the calendar for planning purposes.

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<sup>3</sup> Decreased willingness to participate in surveys, which reduces response rates and can compromise the usefulness of the data.

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- (4) Facilitates discussions to address competing survey priorities and, as appropriate, makes recommendations for survey priorities to PROC<sup>4</sup>.
- (5) Facilitates the review and revision of institutional surveys, ensuring appropriate stakeholder involvement.
- (6) Facilitates strategic promotion of institutional surveys, including planning.
- (7) Facilitates the distribution of institutional survey data to campus stakeholders.
- (8) Facilitates communication to campus stakeholders of how survey results are used, including actions taken in response.
- (9) Consults, advises, and provides professional development regarding effective survey and data gathering practices as requested.

### *Scope*

The CWGA reviews all requests/proposals to survey UC Merced *students, faculty, staff and alumni* **except**

- Point of service surveys, such as workshop evaluations. (Point of service surveys occasionally address large populations, so please see the first bullet under survey proposals requiring review below.)
- Course evaluations
- Faculty surveys of students for pedagogical or curricular purposes (i.e. the results will not be published or otherwise disclosed)
- Surveys administered by faculty or graduate students as part of a research study that has been approved by the UC Merced Institutional Research Board
- Student surveys of fellow students conducted solely to fulfill the requirements of a course assignment (i.e. results will not be published or otherwise presented to an audience external to UC Merced) under the guidance and direction of a faculty member who has completed an approved humans subjects protection curriculum
- Student, faculty, or staff surveys (polls) that involve voting on (or selecting) one or more preferred options from a range of choices for a specific event (e.g. commencement speaker)

Requests/proposals to survey UC Merced *students, faculty, staff and alumni* that **require review** by the CWGA include those that

- Involve more than 5% of any of the aforementioned populations<sup>5,6</sup> and/or surveys that involve participation of stakeholders from more than one school or across administrative divisions.
- Require contact information (e.g. names, email addresses, phone numbers)
- Require institutional information about the population (e.g. race, sex, grades)
- Involve publication or other disclosure of research results to an audience external to UC Merced
- Are being conducted by an external group or stakeholder, such as a national research organization

### *Additional Membership for Survey Coordinating Responsibilities*

Registrar's Office, Representative

Office of Undergraduate Education, Representative

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, the CWGA would ask PROC to opine on decisions in which high priority, institutional surveys of the same populations are planned.

<sup>5</sup> In other words, more than 1 in 20 members of the population would receive the survey.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. 300 or more undergraduates or alumni, 20 or more graduate students, 10 or more Senate or lecturing faculty, and 50 or more staff based on AY 2014-15 data. These numbers can be used as a rough guide as UC Merced grows. Up to date headcounts for students, faculty, and staff are available at <http://ipa.ucmerced.edu/>.