Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to announce that, starting on January 7, 2015, a system-wide site license for the Qualtrics online survey software tool will become available to all Washington State University faculty and staff.

The increasing accessibility of survey tools combined with increasing expectations for evidence-based decision-making have made access to survey tools essential for a wide array of users and popular among even more. Widely varying levels of security and privacy protections have raised concerns among faculty, staff, respondents, and university officials. In response, the Provost’s Office recently convened a work group to identify options that could provide access to an online survey tool to replace the Skyliight system, which will no longer be available after December 2014. The work group reviewed potential survey software tools, sought additional information as necessary, and made recommendations based on the strengths, weaknesses, and likely cost of acceptable and preferred choices.

The work group was facilitated by Vice Provost Erica Austin and comprised a broad representation of survey user types along with experts on compliance, technology, and survey science, as follows:

Ayesha Ahmed and Andrea Lazarus, College of Pharmacy; Thom Allen, Rose Krebill-Prather, and Lena Le, Social and Economic Sciences Research Center; Scott Avery, Graduate School; Patrick Conner and Malathi Jandhyala, Institutional Review Board; Edwin Hamada, Residence Life; Steve Hines, College of Veterinary Medicine; Stephanie Kane, Institutional Research; Tony Opheim, Information Technology Services; Craig Parks, Faculty Senate; Kevin Ulstad, WSU Auditor; Rebecca Van de Vord, Global Campus; and Guy Westhoff, Enterprise Systems Group. The work group was assisted on the technical details by Information Technology Services, the Enterprise Systems Group, Purchasing Services, and the Attorney General’s Office.

The Provost and Faculty Senate wish to express their appreciation to all individuals involved for their work to make this transition possible.

The work group’s recommendations are being implemented as follows:
Starting on January 7, all faculty and staff will have access to a new university-wide Qualtrics site license and will be able to access this new site using their WSU network ID and password. The web address for this new site will be announced shortly.

Existing Qualtrics users will maintain access to their current Qualtrics accounts while ITS, ESG, and the Provost's Office work out the details to enable a smooth migration to the new site. This will allow existing Qualtrics users to continue their research and data collection uninterrupted.

During the spring semester, WSU will develop guidelines and a plan to provide for appropriate availability for student use.

Users of survey data collection tools should be aware of the following policies and guidelines:

- Personal information collected through surveys must be privacy protected and kept secure according to University guidelines. Faculty and staff are expected to abide by University guidelines on data collection and stewardship, including WSU’s policies on retention of University data (EP#8).
  

- WSU strongly discourages the use of any free online survey tool due to security risks. WSU also has significant concerns about the security and privacy practices of many commercial tools for any data collection that includes private information of any sort. WSU discourages the use of products such as SurveyMonkey or Zoomerang.

- Tools such as Doodle are acceptable for polls that do not collect personal information, such as to determine where and when to hold a meeting or what food to serve at that meeting.

- Use of WSU Qualtrics is permissible for university business only; it is not appropriate to use WSU Qualtrics for any personal, commercial, or outside nonprofit projects.

- WSU studies requiring Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval will be eligible to use the system-level Qualtrics license. Leaders of HIPAA-compliant research studies should consult with the IRB for appropriate data collection procedures at [www.irb.wsu.edu](http://www.irb.wsu.edu).
• Studies requiring a higher level of privacy and security than the system-level Qualtrics license will provide can contract with an appropriate survey provider, such as the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at sesrc.wsu.edu.

Next steps:

• A team of faculty and staff will be developing a resource to answer frequently asked questions regarding what program may be most appropriate for particular data collection needs; in the meantime, users can contact Craig Parks, chair of the Faculty Senate, at parkscd@wsu.edu with questions about what is the appropriate program to use for a particular purpose.

• For more information on how to use Qualtrics, users can consult qualtrics.com/university/researchsuite for tips and tutorials (select “Basic Building”).

• In addition, the survey tools work group has endorsed surveys.umn.edu/qualtrics-u-of-m, based at the University of Minnesota, as a good resource for WSU faculty regarding best practices for all WSU survey data collection needs.

More information will be provided in early January.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Bernardo                    Craig D. Parks
Provost and Executive Vice President  Chair, Faculty Senate

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