**National Survey of Student Engagement**

**The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a national study about college student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. The survey is conducted by NSSE staff within the Center for Survey Research (CSR) at Indiana University-Bloomington.**

**Texas State University-San Marcos has elected to participate in this national survey in the spring of 2010. Texas State previously participated in the NSSE in 2000 and 2001.**

1. Identify the sources of the potential subjects, derived materials or data. Describe the characteristics of the subject population, such as their anticipated number, age, sex, ethnic background, and state of health. Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion. Explain the rationale for the use of special classes of subjects, such as fetuses, pregnant women, children, institutionalized mentally disabled, prisoners, or others, especially those whose ability to give voluntary informed consent may be in question.

**All first-year students and seniors enrolled as of the census date of the spring 2010 semester will be invited to complete the NSSE. Students who otherwise meet the study criteria but will be less than 18 years of age as of the spring semester first day of classes will be excluded from the sample. It is expected that approximately 3,500 first-year students and 8,000 seniors will be included in the final sample.**

1. Describe the procedures for recruitment of subjects and the consent procedures to be followed. Include the circumstances under which consent will be solicited and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the methods of documenting consent. (Include applicable consent form(s) for review.) If written consent is not to be obtained, this should be clearly stated and justified.

**Students will be invited to participate via e-mail messages addressed to their Texas State e-mail addresses. Distribution of messages will be managed by NSSE staff at Indiana University; each sampled student will be contacted a maximum of five times and students who indicate they do not wish to participate will be removed from the participant list and receive no further contact.**

**All recruitment messages have been reviewed to omit language that implies participation is not voluntary. NSSE provides recruitment message templates that allow minimal customization by participating institutions (see attachment “Recruitment messages” for Texas State’s versions).**

**Since this is a web survey, the consent form takes the form of a web page, with the student clicking the appropriate button to indicate consent (see attachment “Consent page”). The consent page does not contain all of the elements required by Texas State’s IRB in its “Requirements Checklist for Consent Forms,” but its content does meet requirements as specified in the federal regulations (45 CFR 46). Content of the consent page is provided by the CSR and has been approved by the Indiana University-Bloomington IRB (see attachment “IRB approval from IUB” for the approval letter).**

**We are bound by an agreement to use their standard recruitment message and consent page in order to participate in this national study.**

1. Describe the project’s methodology in detail. If applicable, detail the data collection procedures, the testing instruments, the intervention(s), etc.   If using a survey, questionnaire, or interview, please provide a copy of the items or questions.

**The CSR will distribute all e-mail messages, using contact information provided by Texas State. Students will receive five messages (one initial message plus up to four reminder messages, depending on whether or not the student responds by completing the survey or requesting removal from the sample). E-mail messages will contain a link to the online survey, which takes about 15 minutes to complete. Students may complete the survey on their own timing, in a location of their choosing. A PDF version of the 2009 NSSE web survey is included with this application.**

**NSSE data collection is a partnership between each participating institution and the CSR office at Indiana University-Bloomington. Confidentiality of data is a high priority at CSR. Their use of student data is regulated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA, 34 CFR 99.31(a)6(i)], which allows schools to share student data with outside agencies conducting research for the purpose of improving instruction. Individual students are identified in the sample file that Texas State will submit to CSR by a Texas State identifier (not a Social Security Number), first and last names, and an e-mail address. The sample file contains this identifying information because the survey data will be used for education assessment, including merging survey data with other campus data sources.**

**As a general guideline, all data from completed surveys will be provided by CSR to Texas State with our ID number attached. The only exceptions to this are when specific items are considered to be of a more sensitive nature, in which case students will be notified of differences in data use. For 2009, the only exception is a question about student disabilities:**

***Your institution will not receive your identified response to the following question. Only an overall summary of responses will be provided.***

**Do you have any disabilities? (Check all that apply.)**

* **No, I do not have any disabilities**
* **Yes, I have a sensory impairment (vision or hearing)**
* **Yes, I have a mobility impairment**
* **Yes, I have a learning disability**
* **Yes, I have a mental health disorder**
* **Yes, I have another disability**
* **I choose not to answer**

**NSSE research reports never identify individual students. All NSSE research and presentations report data at the aggregate level in a way that prevents the identification of individual students. Texas State will receive a data file that identifies students participants by the institutional identification number provided in the original sample file.**

**Access to all student data is protected through the use of secure servers and back-up media stored in locked storage. Student data files are submitted to CSR through a web-based institution interface using Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) software to encrypt information during transfer. Access to student data is limited to NSSE staff and authorized personnel at the CSR. Up to three individuals at each participating institution are identified each year who can access student data through the institution interface, and any requests for data transfer must be authorized by these individuals. For the 2010 administration, these individuals are Ms. Susan Thompson in Institutional Research and Ms. Jennifer Beck, Director of Retention Management and Planning.**

**CSR keeps data files submitted by schools and the response database in order to enable longitudinal student of student engagement trends and other analyses that may be requested by participating institutions. Sample files with identifying information submitted by institutions are maintained for 10 years, then destroyed; the response database is retained permanently, but it does not contain information which would allow any student to be identified once the population file has been destroyed.**

1. Describe any potential risks — physical, psychological, social, legal or other — and state their likelihood and seriousness. Describe alternative methods, if any, that were considered and why they will not be used.

**The only anticipated risk due to participation would be the possible loss of confidentiality of the responses as part of the data distribution process. The consequences of such loss of confidential would be minimal due to the nature of the questions asked on the NSSE survey, which do not cover topics that would generally be considered of a sensitive nature. Survey responses are not of a nature that would tend to embarrass students or place them at risk of physical, psychological, social, or legal harm.**

1. Describe the procedures for protecting against or minimizing any potential risks and include an assessment of the likely effectiveness of those procedures. Include a discussion of confidentiality safeguards, where relevant, and arrangements for providing mental health or medical treatment, if needed.

**Risks will be minimized by clearly explaining the purpose of the study to participants and requesting but not requiring them to participate. As described in response to questions 3 and 4 above, individual identifies will be protected through data security measures.**

**Arrangements for medical treatment do not apply.**

1. Describe and assess the potential benefits to be gained by the subjects, as well as the benefits that may accrue to society in general as a result of the proposed study.

**Results from this study will be used on the Texas State campus and by higher education professionals nationally to help improve the quality of college education, benefiting current and future students.**

1. Clearly describe any compensation to be offered/provided to the participants. If extra credit is provided as an incentive, include the percentage of extra credit in relation to the total points offered in the class.  Also, if extra credit is provided, describe alternatives to participation in your research for earning extra credit.

**A lottery system will be used to select 12 respondents to each receive a thank-you gift worth approximately $100. The chance of being selected is approximately 1 in 1,000; there will be approximately 12,000 students included in the survey sample. Freshman-level students who are selected will receive an IPod; senior-level students will receive a diploma frame. Details about the incentives and the students’ chance of being selected are provided in the recruitment and reminder e-mail messages.**

1. Discuss the risks in relation to the anticipated benefits to the subjects and society.

**Subjects are at risk only if their individual survey responses are identified and released in some way, and the risk is minimal. Every caution will be taken to ensure that release of individual information does not occur. Texas State’s Institutional Research Office has procedures in place to protect the confidentiality of individual data, as do the involved offices at Indiana University-Bloomington, and the risk is minimal in relation to the benefits to society of improved higher education programs and services.**

1. Identify the specific sites/agencies to be used as well as approval status. Include copies of approval letters from agencies to be used (note: these are required for final approval). If they are not available at the time of IRB review, approval of the proposal will be contingent upon their receipt.

**The NSSE will be administered as a web survey.**

1. If you are a student, indicate the relationship of the proposal to your program of work and identify your supervising/sponsor faculty member.

**N/A**

1. In the case of student projects, pilot studies, theses, or dissertations, evidence of approval of Supervising Professor or Faculty Sponsor should be included. Thesis and dissertation proposals must be approved by the student’s committee before proceeding to the IRB for review.

**N/A**

1. If the proposed study has been approved by another IRB, attach a copy of the letter verifying approval/disapproval and any related correspondence. If the proposed study has not been reviewed/approved by another IRB, please state this explicitly.

**The national NSSE has been approved by the Indiana University-Bloomington IRB, protocol number 06-11006, with an expiration date of September 28, 2010 (see attached letter).**

1. Identify all individuals who will have access, during or after completion, to the results of this study, whether they be published or unpublished.

**Texas State personnel who will have access to the raw data are Susan Thompson, Senior Research Analyst in Institutional Research and NSSE project manager for Texas State, and Ms. Jen Beck, Director of Retention Management and Planning. Professional staff in the Indiana University-Bloomington Center for Postsecondary Research and Center for Survey Research will also have access to raw data. Results of this study may be published and therefore accessible to the public, but only in aggregate form.**