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8 Tips to Success with First Destination Survey

By *Rebecca Florey*



Each semester, campuses gather information on soon-to-be graduates' plans for the future. Utilizing Symplicity CSM's First Destination Survey (FDS) module can make gathering this information easier while tracking who has received the survey, who still needs to fill it out, and more.

However, no matter how easy we make that piece of the puzzle, we know that you still need to do the hard work of connecting with every graduating student to reach that elusive goal of 100% participation. We asked our network of clients and found some great ideas for getting your graduates to participate in your FDS.

Raffles and Instant Giveaways

Whatever it might be—Amazon gift cards, food incentives, university swag, alumni apparel, limited edition university-inspired stickers, etc. — giveaways can be a great way to entice students to fill out your form. Some clients we spoke to are doing giveaways right at the survey table, like one client that told us they gave out a slice of cake in exchange for a response, while others are entering students into a drawing to win big ticket items.

CSM Client

Make It Easy

The simple recommendation of “keep it short” says it all. But we’re not just talking about the form here, we’re also talking about where and how you collect it. Make the effort to meet the students where they are by stopping by classes, visiting dorms, stationing at dining commons, sitting in the main student center, having a table at cap and gown distribution, etc. Make it easy for students to run into you and give you what you need.

CSM Client

Spread the Ownership

You might not be in the position to require that faculty help you gather this information, but do take advantage of all partnerships that exist. Collaborate with faculty and administration (e.g., department chairs, academic deans, the administrator of student employment), and take advantage of students’ strong relationships with career coaches and academic advisors – they might be able to track down one of those stragglers at the end.

Require, Require, Require

A common theme among our clients was tying the completion of the FDS to some academic requirement. For example, take advantage of the senior capstone course and make this part of the requirement. Clients are also holding hostage everything related to graduation until completion of the survey such as: graduation tickets, transcripts, cap & gown, walking in the ceremony, etc. If you can collaborate with the team that manages graduation, you can trade something you want for something your students need (and their parents really care about!).

Elevate the Importance

One of the barriers is that students simply don't understand the importance of sharing this information. When asking for such personal information, make it clear that the data will remain anonymous, and how the data will be shared. Give your students a peek at last year's reports so they understand how their responses will be used. Help the graduating class understand how this data helps strengthen the university's reputation and alumni network, build relationships with new employers, help the classes behind them get better jobs, and improve your university's ranking. Make the connection for them – from articles in the student newspaper to posters and social media posts, you can help them see how they are part of the bigger picture.

Take Advantage of Technology

Your students spend a lot of time online interacting with your university system. Utilize that and try to get a link to your online survey in all those high traffic sites. You can take advantage of the “force” option in CSM, create a pop-up in Blackboard, add a link in the system in which they enter their on-campus employment hours, etc. And don't forget social media! Link to not just your own social media accounts, but departments, deans, student housing, etc.

CSM Client

Timing Matters

And, finally, don't wait - open your survey very early in fall so as soon as students start accepting positions, you're ready to be part of that

excitement.

Want to learn more about how Symplicity CSM can support your FDS needs? [Visit the Symplicity Help Center*](#) to learn from two current Symplicity clients Brett Hobby (Director of the Career Center at Marilyn Davies College of Business at the University of Houston Downtown) and Duygu Yalaz (Associate Director of Career Advising & Professional Development at Colorado School of Mines) on how they're using the FDS as a powerful tool to collect data related to students and their future employment.

For more information about virtualizing student services, email info@symplicity.com or [schedule a conversation](#).

**Don't forget you have to log into your manager interface and click on Symplicity Help Center to authenticate before that link will work*

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