

How to Gain Participation For Survey Data Collection

Basic Tips:

- *Expect* to get participation—if you decide ahead of time that students are too busy, this belief will infiltrate all your communications. Instead, tap into students' general desire to share their opinions and provide feedback.
- Make sure students understand why they are doing this, how the information will be used and *how it can benefit them and others*. This builds buy-in and ownership of the project.
- Incentives (e.g. a drawing for a gift certificate) can help; if you decide to use them be sure to include a description of them in your IRB proposal. Refer to aweonline.org "AWE Products" for more information about IRB approval.
- Schedule activities over the dinner or lunch hour and order pizzas. This fits into their busy schedules.
- When sending emails, make sure that the sender is familiar to them. They get a lot of email and may skip it if it is from someone they don't normally work with or know.
- Use the email as an opportunity to briefly communicate your enthusiasm for the project or activity and to express the importance and benefits of their participation.
- Send reminders.

Sample Email Invitation:

Subject With Incentive: <Win a Palm Pilot! Or Provide us Feedback!
Subject Without Incentive: Help Us Improve WIE Activities

If an incentive is available, "advertise" it in the subject line: Win a new Palm Pilot! Free ice cream coupons! Win free book vouchers!

Be a part of a survey that can help us improve WIE Programming for you and others who will follow you. Provide your feedback on your experiences at [name of institution]

The survey will take about ½ hour. Your responses will provide us with valuable information on how to improve student life at [name of institution].

(If incentive is offered): All participants will be entered into a drawing for <item or items>

Date: DAY and date (Monday, July 4)

Time: Beginning and END (5:30-6:30 p.m.)

Location: Make it a place that they are familiar with and that is easy to get to.

RSVP (so we know how much food to order) by (date) to: (insert contact name)

Thanks! (your name)

Sample Email Announcing Winners (if incentive is offered):

Hi and congratulations!

You are one of the winners of a raffle prize (ranging from a bag of good cookies to a telephone with caller ID) among the participants who took the [name of survey].

To retrieve your prize, drop by [location] by [date, e.g. Friday, February 7th]. (if you can not come in by then, let us know you are planning to pick up your prize and on which date. Otherwise the prize will go to the next person on the list.)

