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THE IMPACT OF PERSONALIZED EMAIL INVITATIONS ON THE SURVEY RESPONSE RATE OF FIRST-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

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THE IMPACT OF PERSONALIZED EMAIL INVITATIONS ON THE SURVEY RESPONSE
RATE OF FIRST-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Stephanie D. Keister

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ABSTRACT

First-year community college students are a population of immense interest to community college administrators as first-year students encounter unique challenges that can impede them from graduation. Administrators depend on the college's office of institutional research to gather first-year student experience data so that they can plan and implement programs which might encourage students to reach graduation. Institutional researchers regularly use surveys to ascertain this valuable first-year student data. Unfortunately, first-year students have low response rates to survey requests. Previous studies on improving college students' survey response rates have focused primarily on students at four-year institutions. This study aims to broaden the existing research on college students' response rates by assessing the effectiveness of a personalized email on the response rate of first-year community college students. Using a quantitative research design, the study compared the differences in the response rates and demographics of respondents of first-year students who received a personalized email survey invitation with those who received a generic email invitation. The results are important to the work of community college administrators, institutional researchers, and staff who use surveys to obtain information about first-year community college students.

Keywords: first-year students, survey response rates, community college students

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my friends and family who supported me unwaveringly during the years I worked on this project. To my closest friends, thank you for your support and for always being understanding when I had to do homework instead of joining you for an outing. Your words of encouragement and continued interest in my project helped sustain my energy when it waned.

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

First-year community college students are a population of immense interest to community college administrators. Administrators are concerned about the challenges that first-year students face as these difficulties can impede them from graduation. First-year community college students face unique challenges that result in higher attrition rates than their peers at four-year institutions (Marti, 2007). Therefore, community college administrators are eager to identify any address barriers early in a first-year student’s academic career so that they can provide services that encourage students to reach graduation (Fike & Fike, 2008; Woosley, 2005). Previous empirical research has examined a range of variables to assess the experiences of first-year community college students so that administrators can gain a clearer understanding of the factors that contribute to student success and retention. But there are in fact “multiple interacting factors” that impact student achievement outcomes (Heller & Cassady, 2017, p. 22). In other words, not one variable can predict the success of first-year community college students.

Consequently, it is challenging for college administrators to identify the multifaceted aspects of the first-year community college student experience. But understanding the myriad of difficulties first-year students face is essential for administrators who seek to provide services that may improve student outcomes and retention. As a result, college administrators look to the college’s office of institutional research to discover the challenges faced by first-year students. Institutional research staff frequently use surveys as a method to identify this valuable first-year student experience data (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003; Standish & Umbach, 2019; Woosley, 2005).

Background

Institutional research staff are tasked by administrators with discovering the elements of the first-year student experience that may impede student success. Staff regularly use surveys as a means to gather first-year student experience data to report to college administrators (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003; Standish & Umbach, 2019; Woosley, 2005). Unfortunately, college students do not respond at a high rate to survey requests (Lin et al., 2017). Improving survey response rates is critical for institutional researchers as it is widely accepted that the higher the response rate, the more representative the results are of the population studied (Ruel et al., 2016). A response rate of 70% is the standard for establishing representativeness (Ruel et al., 2016). Of additional concern, if the response rate is low, nonresponse bias may compromise the quality of the data gathered. According to Standish and Umbach (2019), “nonresponse bias threatens validity when actual survey variable characteristics of respondents are significantly different than those of nonrespondents” (p. 338). Nonresponse bias can occur when survey participants have distinct differences when compared to nonparticipants (Ruel et al., 2016). As a result, higher education researchers depend on response rates as an indicator of nonresponse bias as the greater the nonresponse rate, the potential for bias increases (Standish & Umbach, 2019). Therefore, it is important for institutional researchers to achieve an adequate response rate so that the gathered data are both nonbiased and representative of the population. Additionally, if the appropriate response rate is not achieved, the institutional researcher has used valuable time and resources in developing and deploying a survey with limited representativeness.

To combat low response rates, institutional researchers use incentives to improve survey response rates (DeCamp & Manierre, 2016; Laguilles et al., 2011; Lederer, 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003). Incentives can be provided in a variety of formats,

from a guaranteed payment for completing the survey to gift cards. Previous studies have measured the impact of incentives on response rates (DeCamp & Manierre, 2016; Laguilles et al., 2011; Lederer, 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003). In that regard, scholarship has documented that incentives improve the survey response rates of college students (DeCamp & Manierre, 2016; Laguilles et al., 2011; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003; Trespacios & Perkins, 2016). Therefore, institutional researchers regularly use incentives as an effective means to improve survey response rates.

However, the use of incentives is not without drawbacks. Incentives can be costly and cumbersome for institutional researchers to manage. In fact, some research has shown that the use of incentives can lead to overrepresentation of certain students and therefore would lead to bias in the results (Parsons & Manierre, 2014). There are alternative and cost-effective means of improving response rate. One of those methods is personalized email invitations. The scholarship examining the effect of sending a personalized email invitation on the survey response rate of college students documented that a personalized email can improve response rates (Heerwegh, 2005; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007). The limitation of these aforementioned studies is that they were exclusively focused on the four-year college student population.

Additionally, it is important to note the empirical evidence showing that survey response rates may vary based on students' educational level. Students who were farther along in their academic career were found to be more likely to participate in survey research (Park et al., 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014). Therefore, an institutional researcher who is tasked with surveying first-year students may not receive the same response from first-year students as upper-level students. First-year students thus remain an important population to identify means for which to improve survey response rates.

Previous research on response rate improvement has not addressed the specific population of first-year community college students. Moreover, first-year students at community colleges have not been studied to determine the impact that personalized emails have on their response rates. The existing research supports the line of inquiry as there are gaps in the literature surrounding first-year community college students as a population of study as well as the impact that personalized emails could have on their response rates.

Problem Statement

The complexity of the first-year community college student experience makes it difficult for administrators and institutional researchers to understand the barriers students encounter on their path to academic success. Administrators need to be informed of first-year student needs so that they create tailored services to improve their experiences. Surveys are one effective way of identifying the challenges first-year community college students face. Unfortunately, college students do not respond to survey requests at a high rate (Lin et al., 2017). Existing research has shown that improvements in response rates can be made if students are motivated to complete the survey request. Motivation can be coerced through the use of incentives with monetary value. Unfortunately, surveys with incentives are costly and can be difficult for institutional researchers to manage.

However, studies have shown that college students can also be motivated to complete a survey request by using non-monetary means. Veen et al. (2016) found that a pre-notification email increased the response rate of college students asked to complete a survey. There is also evidence that personalized emails can improve survey response rates of college students. Heerwegh (2005) and Heerwegh and Loseveldt (2007) examined the impact of personalized emails requests sent to four-year college students. Both studies found that personalized emails

improved the survey response rate of college students. Interestingly, contrasting evidence exists to show that personalized emails did not improve response rate (Trespacios & Perkins, 2016). The unknown reasons as to why there could be mixed results in the two studies point to the need for additional research in this area.

Additional research is also called for as there have been studies that have demonstrated differences in college student survey respondents and nonrespondents' educational level. Students who are farther along in their academic career are more likely to participate in survey research (Park et al., 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014). Previous studies suggest that first-year students who are early in their academic career may need special treatment when institutional researchers send them a survey request.

This study aims to fill a critical gap in existing literature by examining the impact of a personalized survey invitation on first-year community college students. Previous studies have focused on the impact of personalized survey invitations at four-year colleges (Heerwegh, 2005; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007), but none have examined the effect on the response rate of first-year community college students.

Purpose Statement

This study sought to observe the differences in response rates between first-year community college students who are sent a personalized email invitation to participate in a survey with those who are sent a generic email invitation. Furthermore, the demographics of the respondents in the two groups were analyzed for differences.

Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question: Does personalizing an email survey invitation improve the survey response rate of first-year community college students?

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the overview of contemporary research in the area of first-year community college student response rates. Scholarly articles were found using the University of Southern Mississippi Libraries databases and Google Scholar. The specific library databases used were EBSCO Education Source, APA PsychArticles, EBSCO Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, and ERIC. The search terms were “first-year student survey”, “first-year student survey response rate”, “college students and survey fatigue”, “college students and social desirability”, “college students and non-response rates”. Results were limited to the dates between 2005 and 2020 in both Google Scholar and each library database. The three strands of the literature review were developed from the research question and are as follows: characteristics of the first-year community college student population, non-response bias in college surveys, and methods for improving response rates in college student surveys.

First-Year Community College Student Population Characteristics

First-year community college students are a population of interest to community college administrators and researchers because of their unique experiences during their transition to college. Administrators are concerned with the challenges and characteristics of first-year students as they hope to identify programs and services that can improve student outcomes and improve retention (Woosley, 2005).

Previous research has attempted to identify the characteristics of first-year community college students that lead to future success in college. Mertes and Hoover (2014) looked at the effects of age, gender, program of study, student success course grade, and high school GPA as indicators of retention. They found that these variables could be linked to the rate of retention. Windham et al. (2014) also studied age, gender, and student success course grade but also

reviewed ACT scores of first-year community college students. They noted that students who “successfully completed the student success course were 63.6% more likely to be retained” from fall-to-fall semesters (p. 473). Fike and Fike (2008) examined first-year student retention looking at the variables of completion of a developmental course, financial aid status, course delivery mode, semester hours completed, and participation in student support services. The results demonstrated that the strongest predictor of retention was the successful completion of the developmental reading course.

Hawley and Harris (2005) also examined retention in first-year community college students but additionally looked at persistence factors. The greatest predictors of attrition were the number of developmental classes, the desire to transfer to a four-year institution, and being an ESL learner. On the other hand, Hawley and Harris (2005) stated that the greatest predictors of persistence were cumulative GPA, the amount of time in college, and being of African American or Latino descent. Kimbark et al. (2017) similarly looked at persistence and retention in first-year community college students and established that completing a student success course led to improved persistence, retention, and academic achievement.

Previous research has also tried to identify the challenges first-year students encounter that are not as easily quantified. Heller and Cassidy (2017) studied the degree of perceived barriers of first-year community college students. They found that late starting female students had the highest degree of perceived barriers as well as the lowest levels of resource management and achievement. Boeck (2020) investigated how trust in relationships influenced a first-year community college students’ transition to college. Boeck (2020) discovered that first-year students seek information about the college transition from people they trust. In fact, the lack of trusting relationships influences first-year students to seek information from less reliable sources

if they felt trust in the relationship. As a result, Boeck (2020) called for community colleges to work toward establishing trusting relationships between college staff and first-year students so that the transition to college will be more successful for first-year students.

Previous research has examined a range of variables in the attempt to quantify the experiences of first-year community college students so that administrators can gain a better understanding of what factors contribute to student success and retention. But there are in fact “multiple interacting factors” that impact student achievement outcomes (Heller & Cassady, 2017, p. 22). In other words, not one variable can predict the success of first-year community college students. Furthermore, Heller and Cassady stated that “using predictive measures for likely barriers at program enrollment, institutions can connect learning proactively with coping resources that may mitigate the effects of academic challenges” (p. 23). Therefore, understanding the complexity of the first-year community college student experience is vital to deploying services that may improve student success and retention. Surveys are one effective way of identifying factors and challenges first-year community college students face on their path to academic success.

Methods for Improving Response Rates in College Student Surveys

It has been widely studied and demonstrated that incentives improve the response rates of college students who were asked to complete a survey (DeCamp & Manierre, 2016; Laguilles et al., 2011; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Trespalacios & Perkins, 2016). DeCamp and Manierre (2016) examined the effect of a financial incentive on the survey response rate and nonresponse bias. Students were offered either a \$5 credit to their student account, a \$2 credit to their account, or no incentive. The results indicated that the characteristics of the respondents who were offered

the \$5 credit were closer to the sampling frame than the other two incentive respondents. Additionally, the response rate for the \$5 credit was higher than the other groups.

Further, Laguilles et al. (2011) studied the use of incentives on college student survey response rates by comparing the response rates between a group of students who were offered entry into a lottery with those who were not offered entry. The findings revealed that the response rate was highest when the value of the prize was large. The previous studies on methods to improve response rates illustrate that the topic of improving response rates is relevant and important to researchers. This study will contribute to an already growing body of existing research on how to improve response rates among college students.

The effect of incentives on nonresponse bias has also been studied. Parsons and Manierre (2014) randomly assigned first-year college students to a group that received an incentive with those who did not. Not surprisingly, the response rate of the group that received the incentive was higher than those who did not. Interestingly, the characteristics of respondents were different than nonrespondents in that students who responded were female, farther along in their studies, and had a higher GPA. Parsons and Manierre (2014) stated that their use of a cash incentive may have led to the overrepresentation of women in respondents. This finding is meaningful as researchers should be aware that an increased response rate may not be a strong indicator of survey success and in fact may lead to nonresponse bias in results.

The breadth of the existing research on incentives and response rates of college students also illustrates that if students are motivated to complete a survey, it will increase the response rate. Motivation can be coerced through the use of incentives with monetary value. However, students can also be encouraged to complete a survey request by using non-monetary means. In that regard, Veen et al. (2016) documented that a pre-notification email increased the response

rate of college students asked to complete a survey. A pre-notification email served to increase awareness and thus improved responsiveness when the subsequent request to complete the survey arrived by email. Of particular interest is the finding of this study that simply by alerting students early to a forthcoming survey, the response rate improved.

Of critical importance to this study is the previous empirical evidence that personalized emails alone can improve survey response rates of college students. Heerwegh (2005) and Heerwegh and Loseveldt (2007) studied the effect of personalized emails requests on the response rate of four-year college students asked to complete a survey. The results of both studies were that personalized emails increased the survey response rate of college students (Heerwegh, 2005; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007). The existing evidence that personalized emails improve response rates in college students is essential to the context of this study. Of equal importance is the research that has shown contrasting results. Trespalacios and Perkins (2016) found that personalized emails did not improve response rate in college students. There is no obvious reason as to why there would be mixed results in the existing empirical evidence and therefore there is a demonstrated need for additional research in this area.

Non-Response Bias in College Surveys

Surveys are not without their drawbacks. In fact, nonresponse bias may limit the representativeness of the survey results. Previous research has shown that there are differences in the characteristics of respondents and nonrespondents of college surveys (Cranford et al., 2007; Park et al., 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Standish & Umbach, 2019; Woosley, 2005). As an illustration, Cranford et al. (2007), examined the differences between college students who completed a survey and those who did not. Demographic differences between the respondents and nonrespondents were found. Black and Hispanic students responded at a lower rate than

other student groups. The fact that Black and Hispanic students had a lower response rate is of importance to institutional researchers who seek to gather information from all student groups.

Park et al. (2019) also noted demographic differences between students who responded to survey requests and those who do not. The study looked at 540 undergraduate and graduate students across the United States. Specifically, the response rate varied based upon the educational level of the student and the topic of the survey. This indicates that survey researchers should consider the educational level of the desired student group being studied and adjust the format and content of the survey with the group of interest in mind.

Parsons and Manierre (2014) further documented differences between respondents and nonrespondents in college surveys. Their evidence illustrated that students who responded to a survey request that included a cash incentive were female and had a higher GPA than other student groups. Additionally, Parsons and Manierre (2014) discovered that students who were farther along in their education were more likely to respond. The fact that both studies discovered differences in respondents educational level suggests that first-year students who are early in their academic career may need special treatment when institutional researchers send them a survey request.

Institutional researchers equate a high response rate with quality survey data, but studies have shown that bias can exist in surveys that have high response rates. Students may select to complete surveys that interest them or intentionally answer questions untruthfully if they do not want to reveal behavior that may be considered undesirable. In that regard, Standish and Umbach (2019) noted nonresponse bias in the survey results of students' self-reported behavior. They argued that higher education researchers depend too heavily on response rate as an indicator of quality and recommended that researchers identify nonresponse bias by conducting validation

studies where the characteristics of respondents and nonrespondents are compared. Additionally, they stated that researchers can identify bias by comparing the characteristics of early responders and late responders.

In line with the research in this domain, Woosley (2005) explored non-response bias in survey requests sent to first-year college students by examining the characteristics of first-year students who responded to a survey in comparison to first-year students who did not. The results showed that the characteristics of respondents differed from respondents in gender and high school percentile rank. Most interestingly, Woosley (2005) made the connection between nonresponse and poor educational outcomes. Therefore, first-year students who do not respond to survey requests may be those in most need of services.

Furthermore, it is important to recall that researchers have found that survey response rates will vary based on students' educational level. Previous empirical evidence shows that students who are farther along in their academic career are more likely to participate in survey research (Park et al., 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014). The differences in response rates between upper-level and first-year students could impact the quality of the results gathered from the survey and could introduce non-response bias into the results.

These demonstrated differences in respondents and non-respondents would indicate non-response bias exists in college surveys with low response rates. The presence of non-response bias would limit the application of survey results to the population of study. Therefore, the presence of bias highlights the importance of improving response rates in survey research completed with college students. This study aims to equip institutional researchers with a more thoroughly researched method for distributing surveys to first-year students.

Summary

There is an abundance of research on the ways to improve survey response rates in college students but there are very few which examined the ways to improve response rates for community college students. Previous studies on improving response rates have focused on the student populations at four-year colleges and graduate schools. The existing research on personalized emails and response rates of first-year students were conducted at undergraduate institutions and not at a community college (Heerwegh, 2005; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007). There has been no research conducted on if the use of personalized emails improves the survey response rate of first-year community college students.

As a result, previous research has not adequately addressed the specific population of first-year community college students and the impact that personalized emails have on survey response rates. The line of inquiry for this study is supported as there are gaps in the literature surrounding first-year community college students as a population of study as well as the impact that personalized emails have on their response rates.

The literature presented in this chapter justifies the current study because there are no previous studies that have examined the effects of personalized emails on the response rate of first-year community college students who are asked to complete a survey. First-year community college students as a population are worthy of study because they have unique characteristics unlike other higher education student populations. Additionally, the success of first-year community college students is of interest to college administrators because attrition has a direct impact on the financial health of the institution. If personalized emails prove to be an effective method of improving response rates, institutional researchers will have a low cost and simple method of gathering data that can be generalized to their first-year student population.

Generalizations about the needs of first-year students could lead to clear and actionable methods to improve their experiences and success at community college.

CHAPTER III – METHODS

Research Design

The methodology used to answer the research question is the quantitative method of random sampling with two groups. This methodology is aligned in the existing research on the topic as the majority of studies in the literature review used random sampling with two groups. Randomly sampling with two groups allows for differences between the two groups to be calculated. Additionally, the response rate for both groups were calculated and compared. Finally, demographic differences between respondents from both groups were compared.

The proposed methodology aligns with previous research on improving survey response rates of college students. The quantitative method of using two groups with different treatment has been used in previous studies (DeCamp & Manierre, 2016; Heerwegh, 2005; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007; Laguilles et al., 2011; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Trespalacios & Perkins, 2016). Additionally, previous studies have shown that there are differences in the characteristics of respondents and nonrespondents of college surveys (Cranford et al., 2007; Park et al., 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Standish & Umbach, 2019; Woosley, 2005). Therefore, this study and methods are justified by previous research.

Research Setting, Population, and Sample

This study used random assignment with two treatment groups. In the fall of 2021, the researcher requested a list of all first-year full-time students who are 18 years and older at Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at BRCC. This list included the students' name, email address, and demographic information. The demographic information included ethnic group, age, gender, high school GPA, and number of credits currently enrolled in. This demographic data allowed the researcher to look for

differences in the respondents of the two groups. Looking for differences in the demographics of respondents in different treatment groups has been done in previous studies (Woosley, 2005). It allows the researcher to notice if there are trends in the differences in how students respond to the treatment.

Eligible students are those who were full-time first-year students during the fall of 2021. Full-time students are students who were enrolled in at least 12 credits in the fall of 2021. Total of 615 students were eligible to participate in the study. Students who met the eligibility criteria were randomly assigned to two groups by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at BRCC. Random assignment was completed by assigning each student a number and then using the Excel random number selection function. Students were evenly divided into two groups with group one including students assigned a number between 1 and 306 and students in group two assigned a number between 307 and 615.

Group A received a personalized email invitation that used their name specifically as well as provided detailed information about the nature of the study and how the results would be used to improve programs at BRCC (Appendix A). Group B received a generic email invitation that did not include their name but described the nature of the study and how the results would be used to improve programs. The treatment group is the group that received the personalized email, and the control group is the group that received the generic email.

Data Collection

The intervention utilized in this study was the email invitation. The email invitation type was the variable used to answer the research question regarding response rate differences. Upon obtaining the approval of the researcher's Institutional Review Board (Appendix C), the email invitations were sent to both groups using Qualtrics on October 14, 2021. This date was selected

since it is after the last day to drop courses and midterms had passed. The survey that was sent with the email invitation was the library satisfaction survey that has been sent annually to all BRCC students (Appendix B). The Library Director gave consent to use the library survey for purposes of this study. The survey was open for 10 days and two reminders were sent to both groups, on day 5 and day 10.

Data Analysis

A response rate for both groups was calculated in percentages after the survey was closed. The variables of ethnic group, age, gender, high school GPA, and number of credits currently enrolled were calculated as counts and percentages for respondents in both groups. The results were compared and examined for differences between the two groups. This method allowed for the measurement of the impact of personalized emails on the response rate of first-year students when compared to the response rates of first-year students who received a generic email invitation.

CHAPTER IV – RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the study obtained through the analysis of the data collected. The study was conducted in the fall of 2021 when a survey email invitation was sent to all first-year full-time students enrolled at BRCC. A list of eligible participants was obtained from the BRCC Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. The list included the students' demographic information: gender, ethnic group, age, GPA, credits currently enrolled in, and cumulative credits earned. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups. Group A received the personalized email survey invitation while Group B received a generic email survey invitation. The purpose of the study was to answer the research question – Does personalizing an email survey invitation improve the response rate of first-year community college students?

Response Rates

The population were 615 first-year students who were enrolled in 12 or more credits during the fall of 2021. Of the 615 students who were emailed the survey invitation, 35 students consented to participate in the study. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 39 years, with a mean age of 19.83 years. The majority of the sample participants were female (71.43%), 25.71% were male, and 2.86% refrained from identifying their gender. Participants were predominantly white (62.86%), with 14.29% Black, 8.57% Hispanic, 5.72% who did not specify an ethnicity, 5.71% Asian, and 2.86% Native-American. The students were enrolled in an average of 13.77 credits in the fall semester with an average GPA of 2.42.

There were 615 first-year full-time students who were eligible to participate in the study. Eligible students were randomly divided into two groups by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at BRCC. Group A had 309 students and Group B had 306 students. Group A

received the personalized email invitation and Group B received the generic email invitation (Appendix A). A total of 35 students consented to participate in the study after receiving the email invitation. The response rate of each group was calculated using the total number of invitations sent divided by the number of students who both consented to the study and completed the survey. Group A, the students who received the personalized email invitation, had a response rate of 5.50% (n=17). Group B, the students who received the generic email invitation, had a response rate of 5.88% (n=18). Thus, it can be concluded that the response rate for the students who received the generic email invitation was only slightly higher than the response rate for the students who received the personalized email invitation.

Participants Demographics

The demographics of each group were calculated in descriptive terms as counts and percentages of the total of each group. The summary of the results regarding response count and response rate are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Respondent Count and Response Rates for Group A and B

	Group A	Group B
Respondent count	17	18
Response rate	5.50%	5.88%

The demographic characteristics of gender, ethnicity, cumulative credits earned, and GPA of the respondents in both groups are found in Table 2. There were minimal differences between Group A and Group B when analyzing the counts and percentages of female, male, and unspecified respondents.

Table 2*Demographic Characteristics of Group A and Group B Participants*

	Group A		Group B	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Sex				
Female	12	70.59%	13	72.22%
Male	4	23.53%	5	27.78%
Unspecified	1	5.88%	0	0%
Ethnicity				
White	9	52.94%	13	72.22%
Black	4	23.53%	1	5.56%
Hispanic	0	0.00%	3	16.67%
Unspecified	2	11.76%	0	0.00%
Native American	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
Asian	1	5.88%	1	5.56%
Cumulative Credits Earned				
0 credits	7	41.18%	3	16.67%
1-18 credits	8	47.06%	11	61.11%
18 or more credits	2	11.76%	4	22.22%
GPA				
0	7	41.18%	3	16.67%
1-2.5	2	11.76%	2	11.11%
2.5-3.0	0	0.00%	3	16.67%
3.1-3.5	2	11.76%	1	5.56%
3.6-3.9	1	5.88%	3	16.67%
4	5	29.41%	6	33.33%

There were notable differences in the ethnicity of respondents in Group A and Group B. Group A respondents were mostly white (52.94%) and the next largest percentage of respondents were Black (23.53%). For Group B, the largest percentage of respondents were also white (72.22%), but the percentage of Black respondents was 5.56%. Therefore, there were a greater percentage of Black respondents in Group A than in in Group B. When Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, and unspecified groups were combined and calculated as a percentage of the

total responses, additional differences in the ethnicity of respondents in Group A and Group B became apparent. The percentage of respondents from underrepresented ethnic groups in Group A was 47.06%, while the percentage of respondents from underrepresented ethnic groups in Group B was 27.78%. When comparing Group A to the sample population, further differences are discovered. The sample population was 62.86% white and 37.14% from underrepresented ethnic groups. Therefore, the percentage of respondents from underrepresented ethnicities in Group A (47.06%) was greater than the percentage of underrepresented ethnicities in the sample population (37.14%).

In addition, there were differences in Group A and Group B respondents when the number of cumulative credits earned by respondents were analyzed. From the sample, 41.18% of respondents from Group A had earned zero credits, while 16.67% of respondents from Group B had earned zero credits. Therefore, there were a greater percentage of students in Group A who had not earned credits at BRCC previously than participants in Group B. Additional differences can be highlighted when comparing the cumulative credits earned in Group A with those of the sample population. The total of 28.57% of the sample population earned zero credits which is less than Group A. Thus, there were more respondents in Group A who had not earned credits at BRCC than in the sample population.

When looking at the GPA of respondents, Group A had the largest percentage of respondents with a GPA of zero (41.18%) while Group B respondents had the largest percentage of respondents with a GPA of 4.0 (33.33%). Respondents from Group A were predominantly students who had not yet received a grade for a course they were enrolled in. There are also marked differences between the GPA of Group A and the sample population. The sample population had an average GPA of 2.42. Therefore, there were more respondents in Group A

who had not yet received a grade for a course they were enrolled in than in the sample population.

Summary

The study measured the response rates of email invitations using two methods, a personalized email and a generic email. Differences in the response rates between the two groups were measured and calculated. Results indicate a minimal difference in the response rate of the group who received the personalized email when compared to the group that received the generic email. The response rate of students who received the personalized email was 0.38% lower than the response rate of the students who received the generic email. Additionally, the ethnicity, cumulative credits earned, and GPA of participants in each group were calculated in counts and percentages of the total number of respondents. There were notable differences in the ethnicities of the participants in each group. In summary, there was a greater percentage of respondents in the personalized email group who were from underrepresented populations, had earned zero credits, and had a GPA of zero. The limitation of the results is that there were 35 participants in the study and the participation rate may limit the widespread application of the results.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the study in relation to existing research on first-year community college student survey response rates and to describe the ways in which the results can advance the practice of institutional researchers and community college administrators. The objective of the study was to determine if personalizing an email survey invitation improved the survey response rates for first-year community college students. The study is based in existing research in areas regarding first-year community college students and survey research. The extent to which the study extends the existing knowledge on the topic is examined in this chapter. In addition, the implications for practitioners in higher education and specifically in fields of institutional research are described. The limitations of the study are explored as well as recommendations for future study.

Previous research has shown that first-year community college students have unique experiences that impact their future success in college (Heller & Cassady, 2017; Marti, 2007). To gain an understanding of the first-year student experience, institutional researchers frequently deploy surveys to first-year students but unfortunately this yields a low response rate (Lin et al., 2017; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003; Standish & Umbach, 2019; Woosley, 2005). Additionally, the results of previous research on the effects of a personalized email invitation on first-year student response rates have been mixed (Heerwegh, 2005; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007; Trespalacios & Perkins, 2016). Thus, the results of this study contribute to the limited and contradictory body of knowledge on the impact of personalized emails on response rates of first-year community college students. The principal finding of the study was that a personalized email invitation did not improve the survey response rate of first-year community college students. This result challenges the findings of Heerwegh (2005) and Heerwegh and Loosveldt (2007) but confirms

the findings of Trespalacios and Perkins (2016) who also determined that personalized emails did not improve response rates.

An additional result of the study was that the use of a personalized email had no impact on the gender representation in respondents. Interestingly, this finding does not align with previous research in this domain. Previous empirical evidence showed that survey response rates varied depending on students' educational level and gender and that students who are male and farther along in their academic career were found to be more likely to participate in survey research (Park et al., 2019; Parsons & Manierre, 2014; Woosley, 2005). When the results of this study were analyzed for differences in the self-identified gender of respondents of both groups, no differences were found in gender representation between the respondents of the personalized email invitation and the respondents to the generic email invitation. Therefore, the use of a personalized email did not influence the gender representation of respondents. This result furthers the current understanding on the effect of a personalized email on the gender representation of respondents.

The key discovery of the study was that there was a greater percentage of respondents in the personalized email group who were from underrepresented populations, had earned zero credits, and had a GPA of zero. This evidence confirms previous research on the first-year college student population as these variables have been used to demonstrate differences in student groups (Fike & Fike, 2008; Mertes & Hoover, 2014; Windham et al., 2014). This study also broadens the previous research on variables that may influence survey response rate. It is important to note that the results of this study contrast with previous empirical evidence which has shown that Black and Hispanic students have responded to survey requests at a lower rate than other student groups (Cranford et al., 2007). The results of this study were that students

from underrepresented groups and with no previous course work responded at a greater rate to the personalized email than to the generic email. Therefore, it can be concluded that personalized email invitations can improve the response rate of first-year community college students from underrepresented ethnic groups.

An additional outcome of the study is that it furthers our understanding of the role trust may play in the first-year community college student experience. Previous research has found that Black and Hispanic students have a lower survey response rate (Cranford et al., 2007). Additionally, empirical evidence shows that first-year community college students seek information from sources they trust (Boeck, 2020). The fact that there was a greater percentage of respondents in the personalized email group who were from underrepresented student groups indicates that the personalized email was an effective tool in eliciting a response from those student groups. Therefore, a personalized email survey invitation could be a means to developing trust with first-year students from underrepresented student groups. A personalized survey invitation signals a level of care and concern that a generic email invitation does not. Therefore, a personalized email may illicit a response from students who would likely not otherwise respond to a survey request from administrators.

Implications

The implications of the results of the study can be examined through the impact on higher education stakeholders, including both practitioners and researchers. Staff in offices of institutional research at community colleges can use the results of the study to modify their standard survey distribution methods to include personalized emails to first-year students. The most widely used survey distribution software has built in capabilities for creating personalized email invitations. Institutional researchers can generate personalized email invitations without

any additional cost and with only minimal time. The results of this study can also be used by institutional researchers to justify expanding the use of personalized emails when sending survey requests to students of any level at their community college. Institutional researchers at four-year institutions and higher education researchers should examine the results of this study for potential implications to their practices in surveying students.

The notable result of the study was the improved response rate of underrepresented students. Higher education administrators and researchers are intensely aware of the challenges these students encounter at institutions. If the use of a personalized email can improve the survey response rates of underrepresented student groups, the data collected from surveys would provide a more accurate representation of student experiences. Therefore, it would be a worthwhile undertaking for personalized emails to become standard practice for institutional researchers.

The use of personalized email invitations by institutional researchers at community colleges would have a direct influence on the experiences of first-year students. The impact on first-year students would arise from the change in tone of messages students receive from the institution. Instead of generic requests for survey participation, students would instead receive individualized messages. Personalized messages communicate to students that the institution cares for and recognizes their individuality. If personalized survey invitations are widely adopted on a community college campus, it is also reasonable to conclude that students will have a greater sense of connection with the institution.

Limitations and Recommendations

A limitation of the study was that it was conducted at one community college during one semester. A more thorough understanding of the impact of personalized email invitations on

response rates could be gathered by replicating this research at additional community colleges. Additionally, due to the fact the study was conducted only during the fall of 2021, it is a snapshot of the first-year student population at BRCC during that time period. It is difficult to extrapolate if subsequent studies would garner similar or different results. Therefore, the study should be conducted again at BRCC to see if the results would be consistent.

Further limitations of the study arise from the research design and low response rates. This study was designed as quantitative research that examined the response rates and demographics of the respondents when compared to the sample population. Therefore, the context of the student experience within the study is left uncovered. The study did not gather information about why students were motivated to respond the survey. Future research should employ qualitative methods to capture the attitudes of first-year students who received the survey invitation. Additionally, the sample size was rather small with a total of 35 students who consented to participate. The reasons for a small sample size should be investigated and could be remedied by repeating the survey request during different semesters and years to see if there was an increase in the number of students who participate.

Conclusion

The recommendations from the study are that the results can be used to improve institutional researchers' and community college administrators' understanding of how best to administer surveys to first-year community college students. The study discovered that using personalized email invitations improved the rate of response of students from underrepresented groups. If institutional researchers at community colleges continue to use surveys as the primary means to identify the challenges first-year students experience on their path to success, it is of great importance that they employ distribution methods that improve survey response rates.

Therefore, institutional researchers and administrators should incorporate the use of personalized email survey invitations into their practice as it is an inexpensive and effective method of gathering critical and accurate student experience data from first-year students.

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APPENDIX A

Invitation Emails Sent to Group A and Group B

Group A Personalized Invitation Email

Good morning [INSERT STUDENT NAME],

The BRCC library is always looking for ways to better serve BRCC student needs. This past year has been especially challenging for students so the library staff would like to find out if we can support your needs better. In the past, we have used the results of our surveys to make improvements like adding a quiet study space and new couches. We would like to do the same with this survey, improve our library for YOU!

Please click on the link [INSERT SURVEY URL] to access the survey. It will take no longer than 15 minutes for you to complete and your responses will be kept confidential. And remember, we will use what you share with us to make the library better!

Thank you again [INSERT STUDENT NAME], we look forward to learning more about how you use the library.

Group B Generic Invitation Email

Good morning,

The BRCC library would like you to complete a survey so we can learn more about your experiences using the library. The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes and can be found at the following URL [INSERT SURVEY URL]. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you

APPENDIX B

Library Satisfaction Survey

Q1 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The library continuously strives to better serve you, but we need your help! Your answers to this survey will help us improve library services and space so please answer as you think back to your time as a student at BRCC. Your responses to this survey are completely confidential.

Library Use This section will ask you questions about how, and how often, you use the library and library materials.

On average, how often do you visit the library's website (library's website off of the BRCC home page)?

- Never (1)
 - Occasionally (2)
 - Monthly (3)
 - Weekly (4)
 - Daily (5)
-

Q2 Why haven't you used the library's website?

- I didn't know the library had a website. (1)
 - I've never needed the information on the library's website. (2)
 - I find the library website confusing. (3)
 - Other (please specify below) (4)
-

Q3 On average, how often do you use digital library materials (e-books, databases, e-journals, etc.) through the library's website?

- Never (1)
 - Occasionally (2)
 - Monthly (3)
 - Weekly (4)
 - Daily (5)
-

Q4 Why haven't you used digital library materials (e-books, databases, e-journals, etc.)?

- I didn't know about them. (1)
 - I've never needed them. (2)
 - Finding information using digital library materials is confusing. (3)
 - Other (please specify below) (4)
-

Q5 On average, how often do you use physical library materials (print books, audio books, print journals, or magazines, etc.)?

- Never (1)
 - Occasionally (2)
 - Monthly (6)
 - Weekly (7)
 - Daily (8)
-

Q6 Why haven't you used physical library materials (print books, audio books, print journals, or magazines, etc.)?

- I didn't know about them. (1)
 - I have never needed them. (2)
 - I only use electronic or digital resources. (3)
 - Other (please specify below) (4)
-

Q7 On average, how often do you physically visit the library?

- Never (1)
 - Occasionally (2)
 - Monthly (3)
 - Weekly (4)
 - Daily (5)
-

Q8 Why haven't you physically visited the library?

- I didn't know Blue Ridge Community College has a library. (1)
 - I know there is a library, but I don't know where it's located. (2)
 - I prefer to study elsewhere. (3)
 - I have never needed to go to the library. (4)
 - I rarely or never visit the Blue Ridge campus. (6)
 - Other (please specify below) (5)
-

Q9 What do you do when you visit the library? (Check all that apply)

- Check out or return materials (1)
 - Study with a group (2)
 - Study alone (3)
 - Socialize (4)
 - Get reference or research help (5)
 - Use a computer for academic reasons (Blackboard, MyMathLab, search for a book or article, etc.) (6)
 - Use a computer for personal reasons (Facebook, Internet browsing, etc.) (7)
 - Make copies or print something (9)
 - Other (please specify below) (10)
-

Q10 Learning Style Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)
When studying, I enjoy the social aspect of being around others. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying, I prefer to sit upright in a traditional desk chair. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying alone, I prefer a quiet environment. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying, I like to spread out my materials. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying alone, I prefer a separate space or private study room. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Group Study

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements about group study:

	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	I don't study in groups (3)
When studying in a group, I prefer a loud environment. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying in a group, I like to use collaborative materials (i.e. whiteboards, shared computer). (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying in a group, I prefer a separate space or private study room. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 Library Environment Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not applicable (3)
I enjoy sitting in the library, even when I am not studying. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often come to the library for a few minutes to complete a task. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When using library computers, I prefer a quiet environment. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to be able to move library furniture around to fit my needs. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying in the library, I listen to music because others talk loudly nearby. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When studying in the library, I listen to music because I find silence distracting. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Houff Library depressing. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find signs, posters, and notices in the library overwhelming. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 Describe your ideal study or research environment:

Q14 General Views Which of the following statements BEST fits how you *presently* view the library?

- The library is basically a computer lab with books. (1)
 - The library is a quiet place for individual study. (2)
 - The library is a good place to work on group projects. (3)
 - The library is a good place to get research help. (4)
 - The library is a good place to relax between classes, or when waiting for the bus. (5)
-

Q15 Which of the following statements BEST fits how you would *prefer* the library to be?

- The library is basically a computer lab with books. (1)
 - The library is a quiet place for individual study. (2)
 - The library is a good place to work on group projects. (4)
 - The library is a good place to get research help. (5)
 - The library is a good place to relax between classes, or when waiting for the bus. (6)
-

Q16 From the list below, please drag and drop up to five desired improvements to the library:

1st most desired improvement	2nd most desired improvement	3rd most desired improvement	4th most desired improvement	5th most desired improvement
Additional computers (1)				
Color printer (41)				
Comfortable seating (2)				
Enclosed study rooms (7)				
Fireplace (4)				
Fish tank (5)				
Games (6)				
Height adjustable/ergonomic chairs (8)				
Instructional space (26)				
Larger tables (9)				
Longer weekend hours (22)				
Massage chair (42)				
Mobile flexible furniture (11)				

_____ More collaborative spaces (43)				
_____ More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (48)	_____ More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (48)	_____ More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (48)	_____ More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (48)	_____ More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (48)
_____ More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)	_____ More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)	_____ More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)	_____ More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)	_____ More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)
_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)	_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)	_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)	_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)	_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)
_____ More quiet spaces (47)				
_____ Natural light (windows) (14)				
_____ Phone chargers for checkout (15)				
_____ Popular videos (16)				
_____ Private space for phone conversations (17)				
_____ Reference help on weekends (18)				
_____ Self-checkout station (44)				

_____ Smaller
tables (23)

_____ White
boards (20)



Q17 From the list below, please drag and drop up to three things you would **NOT** use in the library:

1st thing I would not use in the library	2nd thing I would not use in the library	3rd thing I would not use in the library
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional computers (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional computers (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional computers (1)
<input type="checkbox"/> Color printer (41)	<input type="checkbox"/> Color printer (41)	<input type="checkbox"/> Color printer (41)
<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable seating (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable seating (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable seating (2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed study rooms (7)	<input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed study rooms (7)	<input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed study rooms (7)
<input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace (4)
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish tank (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish tank (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish tank (5)
<input type="checkbox"/> Games (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> Games (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> Games (6)
<input type="checkbox"/> Height adjustable/ergonomic chairs (8)	<input type="checkbox"/> Height adjustable/ergonomic chairs (8)	<input type="checkbox"/> Height adjustable/ergonomic chairs (8)
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional space (26)	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional space (26)	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional space (26)
<input type="checkbox"/> Larger tables (9)	<input type="checkbox"/> Larger tables (9)	<input type="checkbox"/> Larger tables (9)
<input type="checkbox"/> Longer weekend hours (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Longer weekend hours (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Longer weekend hours (22)
<input type="checkbox"/> Massage chair (42)	<input type="checkbox"/> Massage chair (42)	<input type="checkbox"/> Massage chair (42)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile flexible furniture (11)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile flexible furniture (11)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile flexible furniture (11)
<input type="checkbox"/> More collaborative spaces (43)	<input type="checkbox"/> More collaborative spaces (43)	<input type="checkbox"/> More collaborative spaces (43)
<input type="checkbox"/> More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (47)	<input type="checkbox"/> More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (47)	<input type="checkbox"/> More content (books, journals, and/or databases) (47)
<input type="checkbox"/> More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)	<input type="checkbox"/> More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)	<input type="checkbox"/> More power outlets/more tables with power strips (12)

_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)	_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)	_____ More programs (author signings, poetry readings, etc.) (49)
_____ More quiet spaces (13)	_____ More quiet spaces (13)	_____ More quiet spaces (13)
_____ Natural light (windows) (14)	_____ Natural light (windows) (14)	_____ Natural light (windows) (14)
_____ Phone chargers available for checkout (15)	_____ Phone chargers available for checkout (15)	_____ Phone chargers available for checkout (15)
_____ Popular videos (16)	_____ Popular videos (16)	_____ Popular videos (16)
_____ Private space for phone conversations (17)	_____ Private space for phone conversations (17)	_____ Private space for phone conversations (17)
_____ Reference help on weekends (18)	_____ Reference help on weekends (18)	_____ Reference help on weekends (18)
_____ Self-checkout station (44)	_____ Self-checkout station (44)	_____ Self-checkout station (44)
_____ Smaller tables (23)	_____ Smaller tables (23)	_____ Smaller tables (23)
_____ White boards (20)	_____ White boards (20)	_____ White boards (20)

Q18 What do you think the library needs? What could make the library better?



Q19 What social media applications do you use? (Check all that apply)

- I don't use social media (1)
 - Facebook (2)
 - Twitter (3)
 - Instagram (4)
 - Pinterest (5)
 - Other (please specify below) (6)
-

Q20 How likely would you be to connect to the library via social media?

- Very likely (1)
 - Somewhat Likely (3)
 - Somewhat Unlikely (5)
 - Very Unlikely (7)
-

Q21 What social media applications would you use to connect to the library? (Check all that apply)

- Facebook (1)
 - Twitter (2)
 - Instagram (3)
 - Pinterest (4)
 - Other (please specify below) (5)
-

Q22 Demographics

The following questions are about you. Your responses are confidential.

What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
-

Q23 Which of the following best describes you?

- Part-time student (1)
 - Full-time student (2)
 - Adjunct faculty (3)
 - Full-time faculty (4)
 - Staff (5)
 - Administrator (6)
-

Q24 How old are you?

- Under 20 years of age (1)
 - 21-25 years of age (2)
 - Over 25 years of age (3)
-

Q25 Which of the following best describes you?

- Associates Degree or Transfer path (1)
- Certificate or Diploma path (2)
- I am not taking classes (3)

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval Letter

Office of
Research Integrity



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NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-21-143

PROJECT TITLE: The Effect of Personalized Emails on the Survey Response Rate of First-Year Community College Students

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Educational Research and Admin

RESEARCHER(S): Stephanie Bush, Masha Krsmanovic

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved

CATEGORY: Expedited

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: September 22, 2021

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald Sacco".

Donald Sacco, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chairperson