

A.

The topic is interesting because the data will show if the funds provided by students are appropriately distributed according to the students' preferences

B.

What are CMU students' perceptions of the distribution of the mandatory fees across non-academic resources?

Carnegie Mellon University has a compulsory activities fees as part of its tuition. However, the student's participation in deciding how to spend the funds is limited by institutional constraints.

This research study will analyze CMU student's awareness and perceptions of how funds are distributed for non-academic resources. Moreover, the survey will evaluate to what degree CMU students might want to participate in the decision-making process.

C.

Previous Research:

1) CMU Enrollment Services

"Carnegie Mellon - Enrollment Services." Tuition Fees. Web. 04 Feb. 2010.
<http://www.cmu.edu/hub/sa/sa_tuition0809.html>.

The following table shows the Undergraduate Student Tuition and Fees:



2) Student's attitude towards mandatory activity fees (University of Toledo)

The research study conducted at the University of Toledo provides information on the awareness

of the student body on the mandatory activity fees. The main purpose of this study is to determine

whether the students are conscious that they pay a general fee each semester, the degree to which

students can identify the dollar amount of the general fee, how accurately students can identify

where funds

from the general fee are allocated, and how students perceive the importance of organizations

and activities receiving funds from the general fee. The activity fee does not include other charges

for non-academic resources that come from the general fee. This creates a narrower perception of

the actual full costs of the activity fee.

"Though useful in examining mandatory fees, the data fails to separate out each individual fee,

leaving the reader unable to determine the exact amount of the student activity fee"

Some of the main questions of interest in this study are similar to our study:

I. Are students aware they pay a general fee each semester?

- II. Can participants accurately determine the dollar amount of the general fee for one semester?
- III. Are respondents able to determine which organizations and activities receive funding through the general fee?
- IV. How important are organizations and activities receiving funding through the general fee to respondents?

3) "Only graduate students advocated a cutback in services to obtain a reduction in fees; most students would accept higher fees to fund three new programs" (Weichselbaum)

Ott, Katherine. "Students' awareness and perceptions of the activity fee at the University of Toledo: A descriptive research study." Thesis. The University of Toledo, 2009. Ohio Link. Web. 4 Feb. 2010. <http://etd.ohiolink.edu/sendpdf.cgi/Ott%20Katherine%20S.pdf?acc_num=toledo1239728340>.

4) Paying for technology: student fees and libraries
(The Journal of Academic Librarianship)

The study includes a survey on awareness and perceptions of Technology Resources (TR): "The first question on the survey asked students if they were aware that they paid a technology resource fee. Only 36.6% of the surveyed students knew they paid TR fees; however, they were more knowledgeable when prompted with a list of currently funded services and resources"

"Paying for technology: student fees and libraries." The Journal of Academic Librarianship 25.6 (1999): 462-72. JStor. Web. 4 Feb. 2010.

D.
The target population for this research study is CMU undergraduate students in the Pittsburgh campus. ✓

E.

Our Sampling Frame is all CMU undergraduate students listed in the C-Book with email addresses obtained through the CMU Directory (@andrew.cmu.edu or@ cmu.edu).

In order to make inferences about our target population most accurately, we will use the complete list of names of undergraduate students from the most recent copy of the student directory (C-Book) as our sampling frame. We will draw an SRS without replacement from this frame to form our sample. We feel that this will be the most representative sampling method because it includes the widest possible frame of undergraduate students that will match up most closely to our desired population. The only omissions from the sampling frame would be undergraduate students who for some reason were not included in the most recent student directory. We ✓

believe

that this population - the population of undergraduate students not in the directory - will be very close to zero and thus will not negatively affect our results.

We will then use a computer-based random number generator to generate 2 numbers, one for the page and one for location of the student on the page (pg.10-119 in C-book) to ensure that the process is random.

To address the issue of nonresponse, if a subject does not respond in 10 days, a reminder email will be sent. Further nonresponse will have to be dealt as "item missing data". If it is suspected that the sample is not representative of the target population, a couple steps to adjustment must be made. Firstly, the reason why the sample is not representative of the target population must be identified. Then, adjustments can be made accordingly. For example, some variance between the sampling frame and the population may come up due to variations between students listed in the C-Book Directory and the number of currently enrolled undergraduate students. This variation may result in a smaller Sampling Frame than our Target Population.

F.

With a list of students' names and email addresses, we will send an email that contains a link to an anonymous survey online and necessary instructions. If a subject does not respond, we will send a reminder email 10 days later. An online survey is a convenient way for students to respond and also provides sufficient confidentiality as to ensure that our results might not be compromised. Given our limited resource constraints, using emails for distribution of the surveys accommodates to our use of SRS and amplifies our exposure to undergraduate students at Carnegie Mellon University.

G.

We are interested in the satisfaction and reasons behind the level of satisfaction of the use of funds towards non-class functions. Specifically we are looking at students satisfaction with CMU providing:
Newspapers
Bus Pass
Student Activities
Licensed Software

For all of these we will be asking overall satisfaction, value, use of the service, and reasons behind using/not using the service. We will be testing for awareness of the fees and guessing the correct price of each. We also will be looking into satisfaction with the allocation of funds in general.

H.
CMU students' perceptions of the distribution of the mandatory fees across non-academic resources

I.
IRB

J.
The respondents' privacy will be kept because the method of distribution is via email. We will provide a consent form that provides general information about the research study and assures the respondents that their response will be kept confidential.

K.

In order to determine a representative sample, we will utilize a list of randomly selected undergraduate students from the student directory in C-Book 2009-2010. The C-Book provides a list of currently enrolled students according to information provided by the HUB (Enrollment Services at CMU). The C-Book has some minor disadvantages , such as varying number of students in each page and the combination of both graduate and undergraduate students. To account for these variations from our defined sampling frame, which includes only currently enrolled undergraduate students in CMU, we will make necessary adjustments to our list of selected students. We will use a computer-based random number generator <http://stattrek.com/Tables/Random.aspx> to generate 2 numbers, one for the page and one for location of the student on the page (pg.10-119 in C-book) to account for the variation in students in each page. We will compile a list of students from these numbers by eliminating ineligible students and locations. Utilizing the contact information for the selected students we will gather the corresponding emails, and then proceed to use the Carnegie Mellon Student Directory to ensure their validity. We will send an email with the necessary instructions, information and a link to our online survey. If a subject does not respond, we will send a reminder email 10 days later. An online survey is a convenient way for students to respond and also provides sufficient confidentiality as to ensure that our results might not be compromised. Given our limited constraints, such as limited manpower and economic resources, using emails for distribution of the surveys accommodates to our use of SRS. This method of acquiring our SRS also amplifies our exposure to undergraduate students at Carnegie Mellon University and will provide

a more representative sample of our target population.

L.

Survey Questions

M.

To account for any differences between the sample demographics and population demographics, we may choose to add weights accordingly
(Formula)