



Computing Senior Survey

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to examine factors affecting undergraduate computing students' choices about graduate school. It was begun to provide comparison data for evaluation of two REU programs for underrepresented students, but it will also provide information about the undergraduate research experience and graduate school decisions of students from a broad range of undergraduate programs.

Who is conducting the survey

The survey is supported by the National Science Foundation as part of a Broadening Participation in Computing grant to an alliance of the Computing Research Association Committee on the Status of Women (CRA-W) and the Coalition to Diversify Computing (CDC). It will be conducted by the Center for Survey Research (CSR) at the University of Virginia. CSR is working in conjunction with Dr. Joanne Cohoon, University of Virginia, who is a member of the CRA-W board specializing in evaluation, and Dr. Betsy Bizot, a CRA staff member with responsibility for surveys and evaluation.

How departments are selected for participation

Departments were randomly selected from among schools of comparable size that had at least one student participate in a CRA-W/CDC REU program during 2006-2009. Some are PhD-granting departments among CRA's members, but many are not. (The REU programs are the Collaborative Research for Undergraduates (CREU) and the Distributed Research for Undergraduates (DREU, formerly called Distributed Mentoring Program or DMP).)

How students are selected for participation

In most cases, all graduating students from the selected department will be surveyed. For departments graduating more than 300 students this year, half of the students will be randomly selected for survey.

How departments will participate

Departments that choose to participate will need to:

1. Provide us with the name, e-mail address, and phone number of a contact person in the department, as soon as possible, along with an approximate number of students who will be included in the list in #2, below. Send this to Betsy Bizot, survey@cra.org.
2. The contact person will provide a list of all students who have completed or are expected to complete a computing undergraduate degree from the department between September 1, 2009, and August 31, 2010. This list must include the students' name and e-mail address. We prefer it to include postal address and phone number as well, if available, and we prefer it in electronic spreadsheet form. We will need this list by mid-February, 2010. Students will be surveyed in early April.
3. This research will be submitted to the Institutional Review Board at the University of Virginia. If your institution will require separate IRB approval at your site, we will ask your assistance with the process.

Each participating department where 10 or more students respond to the survey will receive a summary report of the responses of its students compared to overall responses. Departments where fewer students respond (some of the surveyed departments graduate fewer than 10 students in a typical year) will receive a summary of responses from students in comparable departments. Only summary responses will be published; individual student responses are confidential.

How students will participate

Students will be contacted in March 2010 and asked to complete an online survey. They may choose to opt out. Contact will be primarily by e-mail but may also include notification and reminder postcards and a reminder phone call. The survey will ask about:

1. Their undergraduate experience: research experience (in courses, internships, formal REU programs, or other), work experience, involvement with the computing community, and mentoring
2. Their career preferences
3. Their knowledge of and attitudes toward graduate school, including understanding of the graduate application and funding process
4. Their highest degree intentions and immediate post-graduation plans
5. The factors that most influenced their choices about graduate school
6. Graduate school applications and acceptances
7. Demographic information

Students who complete the survey will receive a \$10 gift card from their choice of several options.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Betsy Bizot, CRA, survey@cra.org or 202-234-2111 X109