



PIEDMONT
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS NEWSLETTER

MAY 2018

UNDERSTANDING SAMPLE SIZES

Do you ever read a statistic and think, "That just can't be accurate"? Often, our instincts are correct, but other times, we misunderstand how the data is represented. There are five important components to consider when creating or evaluating surveys.

- **Population:** the entire group that will be represented by survey responses. For example, the responses on our Alumni Survey are intended to represent every alumnus of PIU.
- **Sample:** those who receive the survey. We used email and Facebook to inform over 5,400 alumni about the Alumni Survey.
- **Response Rate:** the percentage of individuals who complete the survey. We offered an incentive, and 360 alumni responded to the survey. Our response rate was 360/5,400 or about 6%.
- **Margin of Error (MOE):** the extent to which the responses of the sample represent the entire population. The MOE is often represented as "+/-" followed by a number, usually between 4 and 8. We used an online MOE calculator to determine that our MOE for the Alumni Survey is 5. This means that the opinion of the entire population could be 5% higher or lower than the responses of the sample.
- **Confidence level:** the reliability of the measure. We used the industry standard for confidence level, which is 95%. A confidence level of 95% means that if the same survey is conducted under the same conditions 100 times, the responses would lie within the margin or error 95 of those times.

As the I.E. Office continues to conduct surveys, we will evaluate sample sizes, response rates, margin of error, and confidence level to ensure that our statistics are reliable.

Sources:
Creative Research Systems. "Sample Size Calculator." Retrieved from <https://www.surveysystem.com/sscal.html>
Survey Monkey. "Margin of Error Calculator." Retrieved from <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/margin-of-error-calculator/>
DataStar. "What Every Researcher Should Know About Statistical Significance." Retrieved from www.surveystar.com/startips/significance.pdf

STATISTIC OF THE MONTH

96% 

of our alumni believe that PIU adequately equipped them to apply biblical principles in their families and ministries.

UPCOMING DUE DATES

May 11 - Senior Surveys Close

May 18 - Online Course Evaluations Close

May 31 - Assessment Summaries from all Administrative Units are due.

Alumni Survey Question 35: Overall, how satisfied are you with your education at PIU?

