Survey Instrument  COFHE Survey of New Students
Owner(s)  Vice Provost for Education; Vice President for Institutional Affairs
Sponsor(s)  Council of Undergraduate Deans
Study Population  Entering Fall Cohort of First-Time, First-Year students
Invited Participants  Same
Invitation Signatory  Provost and Vice Provost for Education

Administration
Penn annually surveys First-Time, First-Year undergraduate students, via the web, prior to the beginning of fall classes. In most years, incoming students receive the COFHE Survey of New Students (SNS), but every 4th year, incoming students receive the CIRP Freshman Survey instead. Regardless of the instrument employed, Penn’s first year surveys open four weeks prior to the beginning of the Fall semester, and remain open for approximately one month.

Brief Description
The topic areas covered by the SNS include: High School Experiences (Learning Style, Engagement, and Preparation); Self-Assessment; College Application Behavior; Expectations for College; Long-Term Education Goals; and Life Goals. The four main goals of the SNS are to: 1) set baselines for personal and academic development; 2) provide background measures on engagement, learning style, preparation level and risk relevant to subsequent outcomes, as well as programming and curriculum development; 3) provide comparative diversity measures not generally available through administrative sources; and 4) monitor topics of special interest to entering students, such as the admissions process and planning a college career.

Relationship to Other Instruments
Several questions on the SNS also appear on other survey instruments, such as the Enrolled Student Survey, the Senior Survey, and the Alumni Survey. This question repetition allows for comparisons between anticipated and actual behavior.

Institutional questions about culture and climate appended to the SNS are also included in surveys of other populations of the Penn community. This allows for comparisons between undergraduate and graduate responses as well as between students and faculty.

Data gathered by the SNS can also be linked to additional information contained in Penn’s data warehouse, allowing for further analysis.

Survey Results
Each SNS administration results in an institutional summary report of selected questions. Intra-institutional comparisons are made possible through the creation of individual reports for each of the undergraduate schools. Summaries by gender, minority status and international status are also generated. Departmental results are available upon request.

Participation in the SNS allows comparison between Penn’s population of First-Time, First-Year students to those at participating COFHE institutions.
Distribution Plan
Each administration year, a top-level institutional summary with basic frequency counts for each survey item is available by the end of the fall semester. This summary is accessible to the Penn community via the IR&A website.

Detailed reports are shared with the Office of the President and the Office of the Provost. Deans of the Undergraduate Schools receive school-specific results. Results are also shared with the Council of Undergraduate Deans and its workgroup. As appropriate, results are shared with Faculty committees dedicated to issues related to undergraduate education.

Only aggregated data are released to any constituent group. Any information that might uniquely identify individual students is suppressed by IR&A.