

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Alumni Survey

INTRODUCTION: This is a request to obtain Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) three year approval for the information collection entitled United States Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Survey, OMB Control No. 2133-NEW.

Part B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

The purpose of the alumni survey is to document student perceptions about education received at USMMA and will not be used for any type of forecasting or projecting. The survey results will be tabulated and documented as indirect evidence for accreditation purposes. The accreditation authorities will not benchmark the results with any minimum requirement. The institution will track the results for its own continuous improvement.

1. Describe potential respondent universe and any sampling selection method to be used.

USMMA graduates approximately 200 students each year. The goal of USMMA alumni surveys is to seek perceptions from all those who graduated within the last ten years. Those entering the 10-year window will receive three surveys during that period. Overall, approximately 500 surveys will be mailed (as we expect not to have current address for at least 100 out of the 600 targeted alumni) and no sampling techniques will be used. We are not surveying each class every year for 10 years. We don't want representation from each year for each survey. What we want is feedback from alumni at defined intervals. It is a well known fact that alumni perceptions vary with the number of years after they leave their *alma mater*. So, our respondent universe each year is 500 (e.g., if we conduct an alumni survey this year as planned, we will survey the class of 2009, 2005 and 2000). Most recent college alumni are very vocal just after graduation and provide useful feedback or observations given the currency of their experience which is why they are surveyed just after graduation. During the 5th year and 10th year, typically the involvement with their alma mater gets a boost and they usually take a higher level of interest in providing quality feedback although their memory and currency may be lagging. This is why small colleges usually do their surveys at multiple intervals unlike the bigger universities that graduate 1000s of students each year and use rigorous statistical techniques.

2. Describe procedures for collecting information, including statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection, estimation procedures, degree of accuracy needed, and less than annual periodic data cycles.

The Academy's plan is to survey three different class years each year. All members of those classes will be contacted. One group of survey recipients would have graduated six months ago from the college, another group five years earlier and the 3rd group, 10 years ago. This is a standard technique used by small colleges to gather input from their alumni during the course of a ten-year window that follows graduation.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rate.

USMMA will seek assistance from the USMMA Alumni Foundation to encourage participation and maximize the response rate. The Alumni Foundation maintains a database of USMMA alumni and publishes a quarterly periodical in addition to maintaining web presence. The Academy will announce the timing of alumni survey through these media so as to communicate with past students and encourage participation. The Academy will also seek the Foundation's help in getting any address updates. The expectation is get a 70% or higher response rate. USMMA alumni are very vocal and usually very generous with their comments.

4. Describe tests of procedures or methods.

All universities conduct alumni surveys routinely; they are required for maintaining institutional accreditation. No special tests are required. The Academy's plan is to survey each graduate three times during a 10 year window. The first survey will be six months after graduation, the second survey five years after graduation and the third survey ten years after graduation. This is a standard technique used by small colleges to gather input from their alumni during the course of a ten-year window that follows graduation.

5. Provide name and telephone number of individuals who were consulted on statistical aspects of the information collection and who will actually collect and/or analyze the information.

The surveys were prepared by the Academy's two degree granting departments, viz., Marine Transportation and Engineering under the supervision of the Academic Dean. Once the responses are received, faculty members from the two degree granting departments will compile and analyze the data under the supervision of the Academic Dean.

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