Attachment 8. Improvements to the GSS Instrument—2011-13

Year	Design Change	Reason/Result of Change
Survey Organizational Enhancements and Improved Flexibility in Respondent Delegation		
2011	Enable coordinators to indicate they have no students/postdocs at either school or unit level	• Specify at the school or unit level one time that the school has either no postdocs or students to report. Many coordinators had been burdened with reporting all zeroes within each question for each unit, when their school had either no postdocs or students to report. This function reduces reporting burden.
2012	Allow single sign-on for coordinators who report for multiple schools	• Allow coordinators to select from a list of schools to access once logged in. When a coordinator is assigned multiple schools, there is a single user name/password to use to log into the GSS.
Measures to Improve Data Quality		
2011	Require confirmation of true zero on first-time full-time students	• Include feature to request confirmation on a report of zero for this value. It was determined that often respondents would provide a zero value for their first-time, full-time students, when they indeed had them, but could not report them.
2012	Request confirmation on use of excluded degrees	• Confirm excluded degrees. It was determined that many respondents did not take into account excluded degrees when reporting counts. For units that are in disciplines with excluded degrees, a confirmation is requested so the respondent will acknowledge these exclusions were considered when reporting their data.
Improvements in Look, Feel, and Overall Survey Usability		
2011	Automatic launch of coordinator e-mail to invite URs to participate	• Streamline coordinator duties for inviting URs. It is preferred to have coordinators contact URs to inform them of their reporting responsibility from the coordinator's personal e-mail. Previously, coordinators had to create an e-mail for each UR. • Via a link, an Outlook message is launched automatically, with the 'to' field automatically populated with the e-mail address of each UR and default message to provide. This prevents the coordinator from creating a multitude of e-mail messages and handles the requirement in a single click.
2012	Provide to new users a tutorial on the use the Web system, split into both Part 1 and Part 2	• Provide a detailed tutorial on the nature of the GSS collection and a walk through of each screen is provided for both Part 1 and Part 2 • Coordinators are provided a link to both tutorials. URs are provided a link to Part 2 only
2012	Enable coordinators to view unit listings of other coordinators in their institution	• Help prevent double counting by allowing coordinators to view the unit listings of other coordinators in the institution and avoid entering a unit that is already counted in another school
2012	Improve interface for UR assignments	• Allow for cross school assignment of URs • Prevent coordinators from replacing themselves, without notifying new coordinator
2013	Revise the upload feature with a new cross-reference file for download, improved instructions	• Provide improved instructions and cross-reference file for schools that have not uploaded in the past. They need an easy cross reference between the GSS and their internal systems. A list of GSS unit and IDs are provided and coordinators may fill in their corresponding internal system ID to build that cross-walk.