Encouraging Advocacy through Focus Groups with Students, Staff, and Faculty

Presenters:
Ms. Lisa J. James, unit manager, TTU Ethics Center
Dr. Yi-hui Lee, administrator, TTU Ethics Center
Ms. Lora L. Lopez administrator, TTU Ethics Center
Dr. Ralph Ferguson managing director, TTU Ethics Center

Texas Tech University
Ethics Center
www.ethics.ttu.edu
ethics.center@ttu.edu
Focus Groups

History -

➤ Group-based research originated in early 20th century

➤ Robert K. Merton at Columbia University 1940’s

➤ Social scientists after World War II

Sources:


Focus Groups

History and Today -

1960’s - Method *du jour* among commercial market researchers

1980’s - Reemerged, gained popularity as a research technique in academia

2002 - Approx. 218,000 groups conducted in US ($7 billion)

Approx. 245,000 groups conducted Europe, Latin America, Asia-Pacific

Today - Dominates qualitative research in commercial, social and political areas

(81% of consumer goods companies, 61% marketing research firms)

Sources:


Intent

- Build clarity through dialog
- Ability to communicate across disciplines
- Provide resources
- Enrich ethical values
- Reinforce good conduct
Methods

- Participants randomly selected, volunteer their time
- Diverse disciplines and backgrounds
- 10 participants or less
- 60 minute sessions
- Topic unknown
- Sessions video-recorded
- Edited video posted to social media
Topics

- Academic Integrity
- Honor Codes
- 24-hour Ethics Filibuster
- Ethics Lapel Pin
- Campus Internationalization
Features

- Gather insightful information
- Campus wide inclusion
- Random sampling from across disciplines and diverse backgrounds
- Moderator to reduce unrelated digression
- Sustainable power and potential for researchers
2014 Academic Integrity Survey of 1,500 Students

- **Academic Integrity means that you are accountable for your own work**: 95.6% Important/very Important, 4.2% Not at all important/somewhat important, 0.2% Not answered.
- **Making a personal decision to adhere to the standards of ethical behavior**: 95.6% Important/very Important, 0.7% Not at all important/somewhat important, 3.7% Not answered.
- **Ethical behavior and independent thought are important for achieving academic success**: 94.9% Important/very Important, 4.6% Not at all important/somewhat important, 0.7% Not answered.
- **Trust and respect among students, faculty and staff are essential components of education**: 95.2% Important/very Important, 4.5% Not at all important/somewhat important, 0.3% Not answered.
- **Academic Integrity is the foundation of professional and educational careers**: 95.7% Important/very Important, 4.0% Not at all important/somewhat important, 0.3% Not answered.

Figure 1: 2014 Academic Integrity Survey
Relevance

- Best practices to promote ethical wellbeing
- Sustain dialog across campus
- Establish a network by engaging student, staff, and faculty
- Define plan of action
- Share perceptions from different constituents
Benefits

- Energize participants to form opinions
- Fact finding as well as advocacy
- Students lean consistently towards ethical values
- Video stimulated interest beyond the Focus Group function
- Benefit to the mission of the institution
Participants believe they contribute to outcome
Freedom to speak candidly
Staff Senate need for leadership academy
Student Government need for honor code
Faculty Senate partner on research projects and proposal development
Ethics Center as external resource
Summation

- Stimulate exchange on diverse topics
- Ideal environment to voice personal views
- Generates effective advocacy interest on a topic
- Significant body of data collected
- Ethics Center viewed as resource
- Videos posted and viewed at leisure
- Other groups utilize Focus Groups as advocacy tool


Questions?
“Expanding the Dialog”