

APPENDIX A

THE STUDY

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Recognizing that academic literacy—critical reading, writing, and thinking—is required of entering students regardless of their course of study, the Task Force wished to conduct in-depth, virtual interviews with our colleagues in all three segments of California’s public postsecondary institutions. A review of the literature indicated that no such study had previously been conducted, and we were eager to establish baseline information that might also be of use to other researchers in California in future years.

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The Task Force secured the names of faculty throughout the UC, CSU, and CCC systems who had taught freshmen-level or introductory courses across the curriculum in the past 4 years. These names were culled from four sources: review of online schedules of classes; examination of college and university catalogues; use of community college professional organizations and e-mail lists; and names provided by the CSU Chancellor’s office.

E-mail invitations were then sent to the faculty for whom e-mail addresses could be ascertained. The invitation contained a Web-based link that enabled the invitees to access the study’s online, interactive, interview questionnaire. Following several pilot tests of the questionnaire, hundreds of e-mail invitations were sent to the identified faculty across the disciplines. A number of invitations were returned because of non-functional addresses, and in some instances,

filters on local systems of some colleges or universities rejected invitations sent to multiple faculty members on that campus. For a variety of technical reasons, then, it is not possible to determine the number of faculty who ultimately received and opened their invitations.

RESPONDENTS

Of the 402 responses returned, consultants recommended using the 289 thoroughly completed responses; 88% of those respondents also offered narrative comments and expressed their willingness to be further interviewed.

The distribution of courses evaluated by those participants, by segment, is indicated in Appendix A-2.

FUTURE USES OF THIS DATA

The interview questions produced far more information than could be included in this report. Future task forces charged, as we were, with revising an existing competency statement, may wish to review additional information not reported herein. Researchers who wish to explore these findings or who seek other information about the methodology of this study should contact either of the two consultants for this project:

Dr. Robert Daly (University of California, Irvine)
or
Dr. Jerry Rudmann (Coastline Community College)