ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

For over twenty-five years, the Burruss Institute has provided applied research services to organizations throughout the state of Georgia and nationally. The Institute houses a staff of skilled researchers with many years of experience designing and conducting research projects that meet client needs and expectations.

We have been fortunate to work with a variety of organizations that have chosen the Institute to provide data to inform their planning and decision-making efforts. Agencies from different public service areas, including education, public health, and planning have chosen the Burruss Institute for their research needs. Project sponsors range from government organizations such as federal departments, state agencies, and city and county governments to nonprofit organizations, private enterprises, and independent researchers. The Burruss Institute is a part of Kennesaw State University and engages with the campus community by providing services to departments and principal investigators. The Institute is also able to access the KSU faculty as a resource to our clients. This allows the Institute to include faculty and resources from the different departments and colleges on campus. The following pages contain examples of projects the Institute completed during 2016 as well as descriptions of services the Institute provides and our process.

The Burruss Institute offers a wide range of services capable of meeting the demands of the most challenging research projects. Research design and data collection services are provided using scientific methods that conform to industry standards and best practices. Organizations can be confident in using their data for planning, evaluation, or reporting purposes.

SERVICES

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PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation helps organizations know whether a program is functioning as intended and if program outcomes are achieved. Often, funders require or suggest grantees use an external evaluator. Institute staff work with program staff to develop evaluation plans and track progress at prescribed intervals to ensure that programs are achieving their goals. The Institute provides status reports throughout the year to help programs measure progress and summative evaluation reports that detail a program’s success.

TRAINING AND FACILITATION

The Institute is able to provide training for organizations on various issues by drawing on faculty from the university who are up to date on the latest developments and industry best practices and standards. The Institute also offers meeting facilitation services to ensure that meetings progress smoothly and are productive.
ONLINE SURVEYS

The Burruss Institute uses Qualtrics, one of the most highly respected and secure applications available, to author and host its online surveys. Online surveys are emailed to a sample of participants allowing individuals to complete the survey at a time that is convenient. Programming on the Web-based survey will assure only these responses which are appropriate are accepted; for instance, it will not accept multiple responses to single response questions. In addition, clients who try to skip mandatory questions will be prompted to enter a response, thus reducing item nonresponse. Examples of online surveys conducted during 2016 are below.

BIAS INCIDENTS ON THE CAMPUS OF KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Gail Markle, Associate Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at KSU, received a research grant from the University to learn about students’ opinions and experiences regarding possible bias shown toward individuals or groups at KSU. These incidents may include bias against a person or group because of race/ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, disability, or sexual identity. To this end, she asked the Burruss Institute to develop and administer an online survey of KSU students. 5,500 students were selected at random from the 34,000 students enrolled at KSU during Fall 2016. A total of 650 completed surveys were collected during the project.

LATIN AMERICA STUDIES (LALS) LATINO ACADEMIC OPINION SURVEY

In April, 2016, The Task Force for the Center on Latin America, working under the Institute for Global Initiatives (IGI), contracted with the Burruss Institute to conduct two online surveys of the KSU campus, one of students who self-identified as Latino, and a second survey for Latino faculty and staff. The surveys sought opinions about diverse topics concerning Latino needs and opportunities on campus, with the goal of helping the Task Force build its recommendations to the IGI for the creation of the Center on Latin America. Student participants completed 270 surveys. The Burruss Institute collaborated closely with Task Force members to devise, administer, and analyze the results of the surveys.
During 2016, the Burruss Institute continued its longstanding partnership with the Council on Alcohol and Drugs. The Institute was responsible for evaluating the Alcohol Abuse Prevention Initiative. This comprehensive five year project is designed to prevent underage drinking by working in collaboration with local, regional, and statewide partners. The project is funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. The Institute served as evaluators at sites in Cherokee, DeKalb, Floyd, Fulton, and Gordon counties.

The Burruss Institute also conducted a mixed-mode telephone and online survey of businesses that participate in the Drugs Don’t Work program in Georgia. This program enables employers to adopt drug free workplace policies and supports the continuation of these programs once they are established. The Institute conducts the annual survey to collect data on the outcome of the drug free workplace programs in participating organizations.

Wellspring Living is a program that delivers services and provides restoration programs for survivors of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The Burruss Institute worked with Wellspring Living to develop an evaluation plan to assess program impact, including logic models for each aspect of the program. This project included designing the evaluation using best practices associated with sensitive populations, and creating forms for program managers to record milestone results as participants’ progress through the program. In addition, we used the data collected to assess progress on goals and objectives for the year-end report to stakeholders.

The Burruss Institute contracted with Muscogee County School district to provide external evaluation services for the Math and Science Partnership Program grant. The goal of this two year grant was to increase math and science content knowledge for special education co-teachers. The Institute conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis to measure program success using assessments of knowledge and attitude. These include standardized assessments required for state and federal reporting (e.g., Learning Mathematics for Teaching (LMT) and Misconceptions-Oriented Standards-Based Assessment Resources for Teachers (MOSART)) and other local assessments.
Mixed-Mode Surveys

Changes in how people communicate have made traditional methods of data collection difficult. It is now a challenge to obtain a representative sample using a single data collection method. In order to overcome this challenge, the Institute has developed mixed-mode methodologies to collect data from multiple sources for the same survey. Mixed-mode surveys include a combination of telephone, online, or paper surveys. Examples of mixed-mode surveys conducted in 2016 are below.

Cobb & Douglas Public Health Community Needs Assessment

In a collaborative effort with faculty and students from the School of Nursing, the Burruss Institute assisted in mixed-mode data collection for Cobb and Douglas Public Health as a part of the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) project. The data collected during this project are used to direct strategic planning initiatives towards identifying and addressing public health issues. The Institute oversaw KSU nursing students who interviewed respondents via a telephone survey of landline and cellphones from a sample of Cobb and Douglas county residents. In an effort to boost response, the Institute added an online version of the survey that was distributed through local power companies. The mixed-mode method utilized in this project resulted in 701 completed surveys.

Fulton County Quality of Life Survey

As part of its efforts to measure performance on the six Strategic Priority Areas adopted by the Board of Commissioners in April 2015, Fulton County government partnered with the Burruss Institute to conduct a mixed-mode survey of its residents. The Strategic Priority Areas outline the top-level outcomes that direct Fulton County’s efforts, that “All People” are safe, healthy, self-sufficient, have economic, cultural, and recreation opportunities, and trust their government. The Institute utilized a mixed-mode method of data collection that included a landline and cellphone survey and an online survey. Collectively, 1,192 completed surveys were collected during this project, 1,022 via telephone and 170 online. Results of the survey were grouped based on whether respondents lived in unincorporated areas or cities within Fulton County.

Wright State University Diabetes Study

During the fall of 2016, Wright State University partnered with the Burruss Institute to conduct a telephone survey of individuals living in Southwest Ohio on behalf of the Diabetes Institute at Ohio University. The survey was part of a program to determine the prevalence of behaviors that contribute to diabetes and to create better outreach programs to prevent individuals from developing diabetes. The survey sample included landline and cellular telephones. The Institute collected 455 completed surveys during the course of this project.

Wright State University Southwest Ohio Issues Study

In the late summer of 2016, the Institute partnered with Wright State University to conduct a telephone survey of residents of Southwest Ohio on behalf of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This survey was a needs assessment designed to develop and implement an action plan. The action plan will facilitate programming of child abuse and child neglect prevention strategies and activities that will serve families within the region. Approximately 500 interviews were completed using a targeted sample of landline and cellphone telephone numbers.

Collaborative Projects

The Burruss Institute often partners with individual investigators or groups within the KSU community or from outside universities. Through this collaboration, research groups are able to obtain technical assistance or access to resources needed to complete a project.

Cornell University Partners in Care in Assisted Living

Researchers at Cornell University contracted with the Burruss Institute to conduct a paper survey of employees of assisted living institutions. This project is part of Cornell University’s Partners in Care in Assisted Living program which focuses on providing training to individuals who work with elderly populations in assisted living environments. The program aims to bridge the divide between families of residents in assisted living centers and the employees who provide care to those individuals. The Burruss Institute programmed survey instruments for this project, collected and scanned the completed survey instruments, and analyzed the data.

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**TELEPHONE SURVEYS**

The Institute operates a Telephone Survey Research Laboratory with 23 networked stations. The Survey Laboratory utilizes the CS3 WinCATI survey system from Sawtooth Software, Inc., to conduct survey interviews and record responses. Trained interviewers conduct surveys via the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone system in place at the Institute. During 2016, the Institute conducted several telephone surveys described below.

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SURVEY OF MORTGAGE HOLDERS**

The Burruss Institute conducted a telephone survey, using landline and cellular telephones, of homeowners who purchased Habitat for Humanity homes in Georgia. The survey was designed to collect data in order to better understand the changes individuals and families experienced after moving into their new home. The survey covered topics including personal finance, safety, health, nutrition, and family interactions. At the conclusion of the survey, 307 participants completed surveys.

**2016 COBB COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE SURVEY**

In anticipation of the development of its next Comprehensive Plan Update, representatives of Cobb County government engaged the services of the Institute to conduct a survey of adult residents in the county to obtain their opinions on a number of issues related to quality of life, public services, transportation issues and priorities, and future development patterns in the county. The Institute implemented a telephone survey of 2,498 adults in the spring of 2016. The survey included both landline and cellphone respondents. After the data collection was completed, the sample data was weighted based on survey mode (landline vs. cellphone), gender, age, and education to reflect the distribution of those characteristics among the population of Cobb County adults.

**2016 “METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS” SURVEY**

The Metro Atlanta Speaks (MAS) public opinion survey gives elected, business and community leaders the knowledge they need to understand residents’ perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the Atlanta region. It seeks to assess residents’ attitudes and opinions about key regional issues such as transportation, the economy, local and regional public education, regional and neighborhood quality of life, and aging. The Institute completed a survey of 5,300 adults living in the 13 county metro Atlanta region including respondents with traditional landline telephones as well as those who rely primarily on cellphones for calls. The 13 metropolitan cities and the city of Atlanta were included. The ARC presented an overview of the results at its annual “State of the Region” breakfast in October 2016, and will be developing a number of online slide presentations of the results. The Burruss Institute also conducted the MAS surveys in 2015 and 2013.

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

The Burruss Institute provides students attending Kennesaw State University the opportunity to engage in research projects outside of the classroom. The variety of projects from different sectors provides students with ample opportunities to gain experience using different software platforms, data collection methods, and data analysis. Students who join the Institute work under the supervision of staff members with years of experience. Students from multiple majors are able to benefit from the opportunities available at the Institute. The experience of working at the Institute enables students to apply the skills they have developed during their time at KSU. Working with original data, analyzing results, and contributing to professional reports are just some of the activities students are able to engage in while working at the Institute.

**INTERNSHIP**

Those interested in receiving class credit while gaining research experience are encouraged to apply for an internship position. During the course of a semester, students are able to work on a wide range of projects. Internships at the Institute provide students with hands-on experience working with a research team where students can apply the knowledge they have gained in their classes in a real world setting.

**GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

Students who have begun their graduate studies at Kennesaw State University are able to apply for Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) positions at the Institute. The GRA position provides students with the opportunity to work on academic research projects. GRA students work closely with the Institute director, assisting with projects that often result in a paper presented at a conference or submitted to a journal.

**STUDENT ASSISTANT**

The Institute provides on campus job opportunities to students through the student assistant position. This position enables students to gain experience in data collection while working in the Institute’s telephone survey laboratory. Student Assistants conduct survey interviews over the phone and record responses into a computer. Student Assistants receive training in survey methodology and research methods. Their work is conducted under the supervision of experienced supervisors.