



TRELLIS RESEARCH | FALL 2019 IMPLEMENTATION

Student Financial Wellness Survey (SFWS)

Understanding the connection between student finances and student success

Trellis Company, a nonprofit, is conducting a nationwide Student Financial Wellness Survey (SFWS) to explore the connection between student finances and student success.

Participating in this comprehensive survey is 100% free for schools. You'll receive reports about your students and the financial issues that threaten their paths toward graduation.

Why participate?

- > Increasingly, higher education views the interplay of finances and academic performance as a key driver of student success. The SFWS allows colleges to gain pivotal insights into this dynamic on their own campus. This visibility informs efforts such as financial education, emergency grants, and referring students to public assistance programs, food pantries, and coordinated carpools.
- > Colleges that deeply understand the financial challenges of their students can best structure programs, initiatives, and communication to bolster student success while optimizing administrative efficiency.
- > The SFWS is 100% free for schools to use.



What schools receive

All participating institutions receive a school-level report of findings with comparison response groups from their sector, and access to leading experts on financial wellness issues. To encourage high response rates and protect student anonymity, Trellis will not provide participating institutions student-level responses from the SFWS.

Reports contains:

- + Executive Summary of the survey findings
- + Context and analyst's insights around student financial wellness topics
- + Graphs and tables spotlighting significant outcomes
- + Cross-tabulation analysis of key questions and student characteristics
- + Detailed methodology and tests for representation
- + One-page infographic containing highlights of the report

How Trellis will use the survey data

Trellis will use the SFWS to produce reports for participating institutions and to produce research reports on the aggregate data set to inform various audiences of topics related to student financial wellness. At no point will Trellis share any institutional or student level data with any outside organization or persons.

Data security and student privacy is of utmost importance to Trellis. This project utilizes procedures and protocols to safeguard student anonymity and confidentiality and to protect against a breach in data security.

"The University of Oklahoma was extremely interested in participating in Trellis' Student Financial Wellness Survey in the Spring 2018 semester. By participating in the survey we hope to include our students' input into the national financial wellness data measures being collected. We plan to utilize this important research to further refine our various student financial services offered at the University of Oklahoma and to ensure we are addressing and targeting the actual needs of students as indicated in the final results."

Judi Voeller

Associate Director, Grants, Research and Special Projects

The University of Oklahoma,
Student Financial Services

How schools are using the data

Schools are using the information provided by the SFWS in a variety of ways to support student success.

Planning

- > Better understand the connection between their students' finances and academic success.
- > Develop baseline metrics to measure the effectiveness of campus resources and interventions.
- > Implement staff/faculty training on the financial realities of their student body.
- > Provide intentional programs and discussions on campus related to reducing some supplemental costs of education.

Financial education

- > Provide students with support to financially plan for their degree.
- > Get students enrolled in safe, legitimate financial services products (such as bank accounts).
- > Evaluate the environmental factors that support healthy financial decision making, including campus policies and procedures related to student payments, collections, and debt products on or near campus.
- > Evaluate messaging to students around college affordability, interventions, and campus resources.
- > Inform topic areas and instructional design for student loan counseling and financial education interventions.

Financial resources

- > Establish a resource center network that contains resources such as food pantries, clothes closets, counseling, temporary housing, case management, financial literacy, and access to emergency loans.
- > Create student financial crisis intervention teams on campus, similar to successful mental health crisis team models.
- > Implement emergency aid programs to support students that face an unexpected financial emergency and are considering withdrawing from college.
- > Target scarce resources to address the populations of students facing substantial financial difficulties.

Fundraising and community engagement

- > Demonstrate student and institutional need when fundraising or advocating for resources.
- > Engage in the process of working with their community to develop partnerships and develop resources.

How to participate

Signing up is easy. And again, participating in this comprehensive survey is 100% free for schools. To get started, visit www.trelliscompany.org/SFWS and complete the brief participation form. One of Trellis' research analysts will reach out to you about next steps.

"At Palo Alto College, faculty and staff know that our students are struggling to make ends meet. We see it every day as we connect our students to available resources, but we know these are only the students who come forward for assistance. The Student Financial Wellness Survey provided the entire community with a firm understanding of the extent to which our students are struggling. When you see that 6% of your students are experiencing homelessness – that requires action, attention, and ultimately resources. With thorough analysis and clear language, this report made the financial challenges facing our students clear and helped galvanize community support for our students in overcoming the barriers to their educational success."

Katherine Doss

Dean of Student Success
Palo Alto College

About Trellis Research

Trellis Research provides colleges and policymakers insight into student success through the lens of college affordability. With more than three decades of experience on the forefront of issues such as student debt, student loan counseling, and financial barriers to attainment, our research team continues to explore the role of personal finance and financial aid in higher education.

About Trellis

Trellis Company (www.trelliscompany.org) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation with the dual mission of helping student borrowers successfully repay their education loans and promoting access and success in higher education. For nearly 40 years, Trellis Company has provided individualized services to student loan borrowers and support to institutions and communities.