



Guide to Administering IDEA Feedback for Administrator System

This document is intended to help administrators and raters effectively use the IDEA Feedback for Administrator System.

This document is divided into the following sections:

- I. Features of IDEA Feedback Systems
- II. Campus Environment for Rating Administrator Performance
- III. Logistics and Checklist
- IV. Completing the *Information Forms*
- V. Using the Report
- VI. Statement of Confidentiality
- VII. Resources

I. Features of IDEA Feedback Systems

The IDEA Feedback for Administrator System is designed for online administration via the Internet. This online system contains the following features:

- Email delivery of the *Information Form* to be completed by the administrator being rated.
- Email delivery of the surveys directly to the eligible raters (faculty, professional and support staff, etc.).
- Campus-specified start and end dates of the survey's online availability.
- Automatic email reminders delivered to those who have not responded. The campus determines the frequency of reminders.
- Ability to preview surveys, which encourages reflection and thought prior to completion.
- One-time restriction on information form and survey submission to ensure confidentiality and authentication of responses.
- Confidential submission of surveys directly to The IDEA Center in Manhattan, Kansas (see *Statement of Confidentiality* in Section VI).
- Three copies of the summary report of results, including open-ended comments, are provided. They are mailed within 10 working days of the survey administration end date.
- If multiple administrators are using the Feedback Systems simultaneously, each set of reports is returned in separate sealed envelopes to further ensure confidentiality.
- Option to add up to 20 additional questions for survey customization.

II. Campus Environment for Rating Administrator Performance

Setting the Stage

Special Notes:

- *Surveys will only be administered as part of an institution's official feedback process or with the administrator's consent.*
- *A minimum of five respondents is required for the Administrator Surveys.*

The IDEA Center believes it is important to *conduct regular and meaningful ratings* of administrators at all levels. The IDEA Feedback for Administrator System is designed to be one component in the systematic rating of higher education leaders (e.g., deans, presidents, vice presidents, institutional officers over admissions, student affairs, institutional research and development, and business).

Just as faculty benefit from regular and valid ratings, the IDEA Feedback for Administrator System should provide beneficial information when conducted at *regular intervals*, such as every three to five years. The timing of the ratings may be dependent upon their purpose. The results may be used to provide formative feedback to the administrator (e.g., areas where the administrator might focus his or her improvement efforts) and should occur earlier in the administrator's appointment to allow time for improvement. If the rating is to be used for summative feedback (e.g., decisions to retain the administrator), the timing of the process is usually later in the administrator's appointment.

While IDEA Feedback for Administrators can be one source of evidence in an administrator's feedback process, *other sources should also be included*. Examples of other information might include administrative responsibilities, a statement of administrative philosophy, administrative accomplishments, and administrative awards (refer to Seldin and Higerson, 2002, for additional ideas).

Questions to Consider

There are several questions to consider prior to beginning any of the IDEA Feedback processes. The important questions relate to purpose, timing, number of administrators being rated simultaneously, and number of raters asked to participate.

First, *how will the results be used? Is the purpose for summative or formative feedback?*

Corresponding to the first consideration is, *who will receive the report?* If the information is to be used by an administrator to improve his or her performance, copies of the report might only be seen by the administrator being rated. If the information is to be used in personnel decisions, then the immediate supervisor of the administrator might also review the report.

Another question to consider is the *timing of the rating*. While campus policies may determine the timing of ratings, it is wise to consider factors that can impact the response rate of the surveys. Such factors might include potential workloads (e.g., registration) and holiday schedules (e.g., Spring break) of the raters.

It is strongly recommended that *individuals not be asked to rate more than three administrators* in one semester. If individuals are asked to complete more than three surveys the response rates could be lower, which in turn will decrease reliability of the results.

When possible, there *should be at least 10 raters* for any IDEA Feedback system that is undertaken. The reliability of any survey is questionable when there are fewer than 10 raters responding, and extreme caution should be used when interpreting results. In cases of fewer than 10 raters (e.g., small departments), it is important to rely more heavily on other sources of information as part of the rating process. ***A minimum of five respondents is required for the Dean and Administrator surveys. Reports cannot be generated with fewer than five.*** In addition, results can be interpreted with more confidence when the response rate is high. For example, you can have more confidence in the interpretation of results when eight surveys represent a 100% response rate than if those eight only represent 50% of those surveyed.

Finally, *are there important performance expectations that are not addressed in the IDEA instruments?* No single survey form can anticipate all the needs of all administrators. The IDEA systems offer the option of adding up to 20 additional questions. These can consist of either open-ended comments, questions using from two to five response options (strongly agree, agree, etc.), or a combination.

Preparing the Campus Environment

The Administrator and the Raters: It is essential that the administrator, or those requesting the process, prepare the campus **prior to the online delivery of the surveys**. The following areas should be addressed in communications to those who are being rated (the administrator) and those who have asked to complete the survey (faculty, staff, etc.).

- The purpose of the rating
 - Will the feedback be used for improvement, decision-making purposes, or both?
 - What additional sources of information will be collected as part of the overall evaluation process?
- A description of the survey process
 - Email delivery of instrument from The IDEA Center – admin@theideaonline.org
 - Email reminders until completion of the instrument
- Timing of the survey process (e.g., start and end dates)
- The supported browsers are Internet Explorer 8.0, Mozilla Firefox, and Apple Safari
- Who will receive a copy of the reports
- Confidentiality of the system (see Section VI. Statement of Confidentiality)
- Note that the administrator being rated is required to complete an Information Form. This form is different from the actual survey instrument.

This discussion can occur through a personal correspondence from the administrator or coordinator of the process (e.g., either an email or a letter can be sent to all raters), public forums where raters will have access to information (e.g., institution web sites), through announcements at meetings where all of the raters will be in attendance, or a combination of the above.

Following is a sample letter of introduction that may be a useful guide to edit for use on your own campus. The important thing is to be sure that all raters are aware of the process that is occurring, how the information will be used, and that they will be receiving an email requesting their participation in the feedback process.

Introductory Letter Template

Dear Colleagues,

Every *[insert timing]* our campus solicits systematic feedback about our administrators. As part of my *[or insert name of administrator]* overall rating, I am requesting that you provide some input. Next week you will receive an email from The IDEA Center (admin@theideaonline.org) requesting your participation in a survey providing feedback to me *[or insert name of administrator]*. The email will provide you with specific directions. The survey will be available for you to complete until *[insert survey end date]*. You can expect email reminders from The IDEA Center until you have completed the survey.

The results will be aggregated and provided to me, and *[insert who will see the results]* in one report. The information will be used primarily to *[insert purpose, for example: guide future goals and to improve my overall effectiveness as Chair. OR: The information will be used as part of my overall rating to determine continuance in this position.]*

Since confidentiality is always a concern with this type of process, I have attached a Statement of Confidentiality provided by The IDEA Center. If you have additional questions about the logistics of the process, please contact *[insert campus contact name]*.

As always I value your input and feedback and strongly encourage you to take this opportunity to participate in the survey. The results will be most meaningful if everyone provides input.

Sincerely,

[insert name]

Email System Administrators: Please forward this information to the appropriate email system administrators at your institution.

Emails from The IDEA Center

To ensure your campus receives the survey emails, your email system administrators may need to configure the campus servers to properly work with the IDEA mail server. Occasionally, email and firewall servers may incorrectly identify IDEA mail as spam. In mild cases, this will merely delay emails sending. In worst cases, denied email will queue on our server and block other institutions from receiving their survey email.

The IDEA Center IP Addresses

To ensure survey emails are delivered, please make sure your email server and firewall accept connection from theideaonline.org IP addresses:

98.129.60.80 through 98.129.60.87 (CIDR: 98.129.60.80/29)

72.3.228.104 through 72.3.228.111 (CIDR: 72.3.228.104/29).

If possible, explicitly accept or whitelist all mail from theideaonline.org.

Connection Limit

Make sure that the connection limit for your email servers is set to at least 10 simultaneous connections. Make sure that your servers are configured so they do not treat the occasionally large email load as a denial of services attack.

III. Logistics and Checklist

In order to use any of the three IDEA Feedback Systems for Administrators system, the **Request Form for IDEA Feedback for Administrator System** must be completed. The Excel form can be downloaded from our website (www.theideacenter.org/AdminRequestForm), and the completed form emailed to support@theideacenter.org. The following information needs to be provided (Please note: there are **two** worksheets).

Worksheet 1: Order Form

- ❑ Contact Information
 - ❑ A primary contact needs to be identified. This is an individual who is taking responsibility to initiate the IDEA Feedback process and who will address general questions and make needed decisions during the process and verifies that the survey process is being conducted as part of the formal/required institutional process or that the administrator being rated has consented to the process.
- ❑ Survey Information
 - ❑ Verify that the survey is being administered as part of an institution's official rating/feedback process or with the administrator's consent. The IDEA Center will only administer surveys if at least one of these conditions is met.
- ❑ Online Administration Dates and Frequency of Email Reminders
 - ❑ Administrator Information Form (for the Administrator to complete)
 - ❑ Survey Form (for the staff/faculty to complete)
- ❑ Administrator Information
 - ❑ Administrator name, title, email address, and total number of raters (a minimum of 5 responses is required for Administrator reports).
- ❑ Additional Questions
 - ❑ Indicate if additional questions will be added for the administrator.
 - ❑ Up to 20 additional questions can be used.
 - ❑ The question format can be either open-ended (comment) or use 2-5 response options (e.g., 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree).
 - ❑ An electronic copy of the additional questions (and response options if used) must be emailed to The IDEA Center (support@theideacenter.org). The additional questions must be listed in the order they are to appear on the survey. The list must include the name of the administrator(s) for whom the questions apply.
- ❑ An electronic copy of rater emails and names must be emailed to The IDEA Center (support@theideacenter.org). This can be a Word or Excel document or listed in the text of the email. Following is an example of how the emails and names should appear:

Raters for: John Williams (administrator's name)

jdoe@college.edu, Jane Doe
rsmith@college.edu, Robert Smith
sjones@college.edu, Sue Jones

- ❑ *NOTE: We strongly advise that a campus test the email addresses prior to sending them to The IDEA Center. This should assist you in sending addresses without errors and only sending addresses of eligible raters. There is a fee for correcting undeliverable emails (see*

the Fee Schedule for IDEA Feedback Systems for College and University Administrators).

Sending the announcement via email is a good way to test your email addresses before sending them to The IDEA Center (see Section II).

- ❑ Emails provided to The IDEA Center will be used solely for the purpose of survey administration.

Worksheet 2: Shipping – Billing Information

- ❑ Shipping Information
 - ❑ This is the person who will receive and distribute the reports and may be the same person as the primary contact. To ensure confidentiality, reports are sent in separate, sealed envelopes labeled with the name of the person who was rated.
- ❑ Billing information (if different from the shipping information)

Completing the *Information Forms*

In order for the data to be processed, *the administrator being rated must complete the appropriate Information Form.* The administrator will receive an email with a link to the survey’s Welcome Page. From there, the administrator can choose to “View the Information Form” or to “Complete the Information Form.” The IDEA Center recommends that the administrator allow at least 10 to 20 minutes to complete the form in order to provide thoughtful and thorough responses.

An email reminder will be delivered to the administrator after a specified number of days until the *Administrator Information Form* has been completed or the cutoff date has passed. In order to protect confidentiality of the administrator, the Administrator Information Form must be completed in one session. He or she cannot stop and return to the survey at a later date.

The *Information Form* for the *IDEA Feedback for Administrators* system is currently only used for research purposes. The information provided will not impact the results and is not provided on the report.

IV. Using the Report

Three copies of the report, transcription of comments, and a report summarizing additional questions (if used) will be mailed within 10 working days of the survey administration end date to the person indicated in the shipping information on the Request Form. Reports for each administrator being rated are returned to the contact person in separate sealed envelopes labeled with the administrator’s name, to further ensure confidentiality.

VI. Statement of Confidentiality

One of the critical considerations in the development of the IDEA Feedback Systems for Administrators was ensuring the confidentiality of individual’s responses. In this system, the data are submitted directly to the IDEA Online database. The system does track who has responded to the survey so reminders can be sent to those who have not. However, when responses are downloaded for processing, no identifying information (email address, name, etc.) is linked to the

data. As a result, the responses of specific individuals cannot be identified in our data. Only IDEA Center staff members have access to the online system – individuals from your campus do not have access to the system or data.

The IDEA Feedback systems do allow for respondents to make open-ended comments. Responses to these questions are provided verbatim to the administrator. The survey instructions advise that individuals should avoid comments that could reveal their identities.

Reports are sent in sealed envelopes to the person identified as the campus contact on the initial request form. To provide further levels of confidentiality, demographic subgroup results are only reported if there are at least five individuals responding from that category. Samples of the reports that show how the information is summarized can be found on The IDEA Center's web site (www.theideacenter.org).

VII. Resources

Abby, C. L. (1995). *The president's journal: Issues and ideals in the community college*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

Bogue, E. G. (1994). *Leadership by design: Strengthening integrity in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cooper, T. L. (1998). *The responsible administrator: An approach to ethics for the administrative role*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (1998). *Encouraging the heart: A leader's guide to rewarding and recognizing others*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2000). *The five practices of exemplary leadership: When leaders are at their best*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

McDade, S. (1989). *On assuming a college or university presidency: Lessons and advice from the field*. Washington DC: American Association of Higher Education.

Seldin, P. (1988). *Evaluating and developing administrative performance: A practical guide for academic leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Seldin, P., & Higginson, M. L. (2002). *The administrative portfolio: A practical guide to improved administrative performance and personnel decisions*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

Vineyard, E. E. (1993). *The pragmatic presidency: Effective leadership in the two-year college*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

Wilcox, J. R., & Ebbs, S. L. (1992). *The leadership compass: Values and ethics in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.