

Overview of the SCHEV Post-College Outcomes Study

Presented to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

July 16, 2019

Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory
Center for Public Policy

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
Virginia Commonwealth University



Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory

- Founded in 1982
- Full-service academic and applied research center
- Project design, development, execution, analysis, reporting
- 8 full-time and 7 part-time staff including 3 full-time Ph.D. researchers
- Understanding and appreciating the public service mission
- Collaborative approach to designing and executing research

Post-College Outcomes – Considerations

- Success and productivity are not solely reducible to income
- Life choices are driven by multiple factors, not just college degrees
- Results of a post-college outcomes study could enhance public confidence in the quality, utility and/or purposes of higher education in Virginia

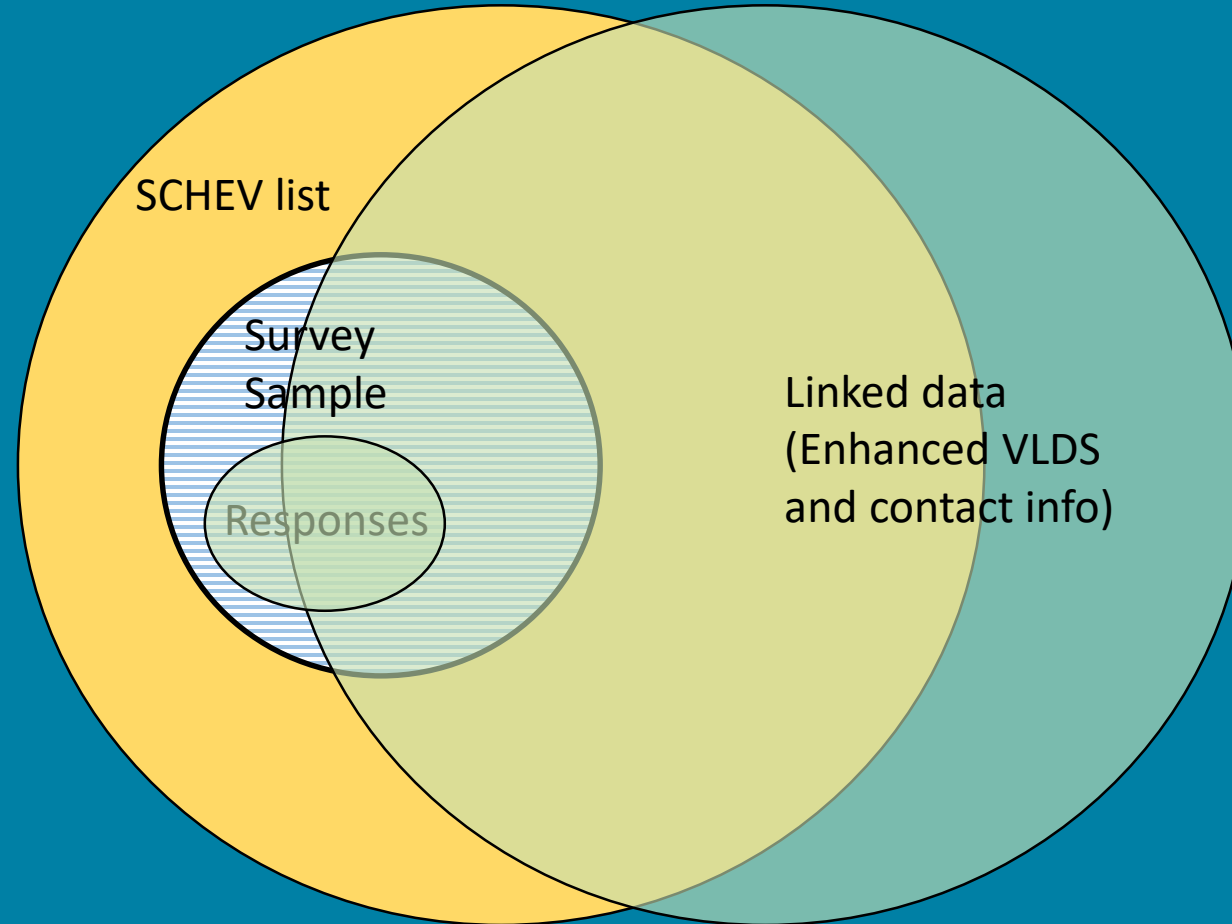
Examples of Research Questions for the Study

- Employment status of graduates
- Relationship between a student's education and employment
- Are salaries commensurate with level of education (controlling for profession and location)?
- Do graduates remain in Virginia? If they leave, do they return?
- How do graduates contribute to the civic life of their communities?
- Are graduates satisfied with their professional circumstances and opportunities?

Survey Design – General

- Maximize survey response rates
- Customized design and development to fit research needs
- Good stakeholder input
- A well-articulated pilot survey
- A probability-based sample allows generalization of the results
- Link to enhanced data
- Total Survey Error: a framework for identifying and suppressing errors – a balancing act among costs and biggest threats of error

Survey Design – Sampling Scheme



General Survey Parameters

- About 20% of SCHEV records matched on email address; about 60% matched on postal address
- Incorporate mail to legitimize the survey, deliver small incentives and represent those without email matches
- Offer paper and web-based survey modes
- Pursue methods to reach a sample of the 40% with no matches
- Sweep existing literature for model questions in the public domain
- Pilot of about 3,600; production survey of about 36,000
- Assume a 20% response rate but try for better; maximize sample size

Overall Project Plan

- Design (Jul-Aug) – lit review, advisory committee, focus groups, additional stakeholder input
- Develop (Aug-Sep) – draft questionnaire, cognitive interviews, revise
- Pilot (Oct-Nov) – test protocols, strata, linkages, questions, other
- Revise (Dec) – stakeholder input, final questionnaire & sampling plan
- Production (Jan-Mar) – large-scale, multi-mode (mail, web)
- Analysis (Apr-Jun) – multifaceted
- Reporting (May-Jun) – intensive

Advisory Committee Tentative Schedule

- 6/27/2019 (Thu) – convene, orient, discuss roles
- 7/18/2019 (Thu) – updates from the Council meeting, preparations for focus groups, data and sampling thoughts to date
- 8/22/019 (Thu) – review and discuss input from focus groups, discuss draft survey questionnaire
- 9/19/2019 (Thu) – review and finalize committee input for the pilot
- No October meeting – possible phone or email update on pilot
- 11/14/2019 or 11/21/2019 (Thu) – initial results from the pilot
- 12/12/2019 (Thu) – final meeting for input before production survey

Stakeholder Input

- The advisory committee is the primary mechanism for stakeholder input from the institutions
- Supplemented by an open online panel
- 8 focus groups around Virginia will be the primary mechanism for stakeholder input from college graduates
- Supplemented by literature review and outreach to groups

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