Grace Francomb

Dr. Long

Math for Liberal Arts

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Post-Discussion Notes and Proposal

The people from the BCC gave very good insight into what we should do as a class for our survey. Probably the most helpful information they gave was how to collect a sample that is reasonably representative of the community. We must look at demographics (information we could get from the census), but we mustn’t worry too much about it when surveying people. If we need simple demographics like gender or age, we could eyeball it ourselves, but we would not need too much detail. We will need to ask whether they live in Newport, and on which side of the Monmouth Street divide.

It seems that the best way to get a large sample size would be to survey at large events like football games or in commonly-visited places like libraries. These events would stretch across demographics pretty well. To be systematic and remove bias, we would need to have a system to figure out whom to survey: we ask every 10th person who walks by, for example. It may be a good idea to have an incentive, like a piece of candy, for filling out the survey.

Regarding the actual survey format, statements would be more desirable than questions. A choice between strongly agreeing, agreeing, disagreeing, or strongly disagreeing with clear, concise statements would be helpful since people have a say in the definitiveness of their yes or no. A neutral is not helpful to us, so we should not give the option. We will need to make sure the wording is as unambiguous as possible, so everyone gets as close to the same meaning as they can. But we also must make sure to write statements that will not affront people or make them feel judged.

I propose the following statements for our survey, with options to choose “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree”:

1. I feel like I am able to provide for myself and the people who rely on me.
2. I feel safe in my neighborhood.
3. There is a group of people in my life who supports and values me.
4. There is at least one person in my life that I trust and can confide in.
5. I am optimistically looking forward to the future.