

Connecting *with your* Class *through Surveys*

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Before you start...

- Think about your goals and what information you're looking for. Examples could be seeking feedback on a past program, understanding what would motivate an unengaged classmate to connect with others, or gauging interest in different types of events.
- Who will you target? Do you have the ability to email just that segment of your class?
- Consider if you need to make this survey anonymous. Respondents may feel more comfortable sharing candid feedback if they know the survey is anonymous.

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Crafting the survey...

- Write your questions.
 - Surveys can have different question formats, from short and long open answers to multiple choice or 'select all that apply.' Sticking to multiple choice questions makes it easier for the respondent to answer and easier to summarize responses after the survey has closed. However, if you're looking for qualitative information, you'll also want to give respondents open space to write in their thoughts and opinions. Using a combination of types of questions will give you the best of both worlds.
 - Keep in mind how long the survey takes to complete. The longer the survey, the less likely people will finish it.
 - Re-read your questions and get a second opinion to make sure they are clear.
 - Don't forget to capture personal or demographic information if that's what you are looking for.
- Keep the end product in mind. When you look at the data after the survey is done, you'll want clean, standard answers. For example, if you use an open-ended question to ask what state the respondent lives in, they may write in "New York" or "N.Y." or "NY." Having multiple answers that mean the same thing will make more work for you when analyzing the results. This situation can be avoided through multiple choice answers or drop down menus.
- There are many platforms that support online surveys. Your Class Programs engagement officer can help you build the survey using an application called Qualtrics. To do so, send them a list of questions, including any multiple choice or drop down menu responses.

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Running the survey...

- Write an email asking people to complete the survey. Let them know what it will be used for and how long it will take to complete. Note if the survey will be anonymous.
- Communicate how long the survey will be open. You'll want to provide enough time for people to answer your survey, usually at least two weeks, but adding a deadline can create a sense of urgency.
- If you have the desire and ability, you can offer incentives for completing the survey. Examples include swag, a raffle entry for a prize, or a discount to an upcoming event.
- Send one or two reminders to those who have not completed the survey. As a best practice, the subject line should include the deadline or other indicator that time is running out. Your staff liaison can help monitor participation while the survey is open so you can decide how many reminder emails are necessary.

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Understanding the results...

- Staff can share the raw data with authorized class council members in a spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel) format. Remember that data should always be handled confidentially, especially if survey responses are not anonymized and contain sensitive information like location. Only authorized class council members should have access to your data.
- The data provided by your staff liaison will include every answer from each respondent in its own row. Each of your questions will appear in columns from left to right, and each response will appear in rows from top to bottom.
- If your dataset is large, it will be helpful to summarize the data. You can do this with a pivot table in Excel or Google Sheets. A pivot table can sum, average, or otherwise combine and organize data based on what fields you choose to include. For more info on how to make a pivot table, check out these guides for [Excel](#) or [Google Sheets](#), which operate similarly with minor differences.
- Once you have organized your data into tables, you can also create graphs to visualize the data. This is helpful if you want to present the results to other class officers or any other group of people. Here are some resources about graphs in [Excel](#) and [Google Sheets](#).

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After the survey...

- Don't forget to thank your survey participants!
- Follow up with any rewards that need to be provided to respondents if you offered an incentive.
- Share how your survey results are informing your class council activities to remind classmates that sharing their opinions is impactful.
- Save results somewhere accessible so that, if you run the survey again in the future, you can compare how trends have changed over time.



Links referenced in this article

[Excel: Pivot Tables](#) bit.ly/CACO_ExPT

[Google Sheets: Pivot Tables](#) bit.ly/CACO_GoSh_PT

[Google Sheets: Charts & Graphs](#) bit.ly/CACO_GoSh_CG

[Excel Graphs & Charts](#) bit.ly/CACO_ExCG