

## **Chronicle Joins With Gallup to Help Colleges Find Out How They Are Seen by the Public**

By GOLDIE BLUMENSTYK

*The Chronicle* has joined with Gallup in a new partnership. The first venture of the [Chronicle/Gallup Poll Alliance](#) is designed to help colleges use polling to learn more about how they are perceived by the public.

Gallup conducts polls each month using its consumer-focused Gallup Panel, a nationwide network of 63,000 households that provides a statistically relevant sample. Separate from the company's public-affairs-focused Gallup Poll, the Gallup Panel is used primarily by companies and government organizations to gauge consumer sentiment and public awareness of products and programs.

The Chronicle/Gallup Panel will create an opportunity for colleges, as well as charities, to take advantage of that same market-research expertise.

*The Chronicle* and its sister publication, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, may also use the panel for editorial purposes.

Colleges will be able to use the Chronicle/Gallup Panel to survey households that contain prospective college students and their parents. Academic researchers who do public-opinion polling as part of their research may also use the panel.

"At a time when colleges and universities are paying much more attention to branding and are increasingly concerned about their images, this seemed like a useful service," said Philip W. Semas, *The Chronicle's* editor in chief.

Gallup already has systems in place to do the nationwide polling, Mr. Semas noted, so this is a "relatively affordable way for colleges and universities to get feedback from the public about all sorts of things."

The more questions an organization places on the poll, the lower the cost per question. The cost for placing a single question is \$1,850. The cost for 20 questions is \$17,040, or \$852 per question. (A custom Gallup poll would cost a minimum of \$40,000.) Gallup will routinely send the survey to about 1,800 households and guarantee at least 1,000 statistically representative responses. (Additional information about prices and procedures can be found online at the [ChronicleGallup.com](#) Web site.)

As it does with other organizations that use the Gallup Panel, Gallup will ask colleges not to publish the results.

Robert C. Lockwood, a Gallup Organization partner, said that restriction was designed to ensure that Gallup Panel results were not confused with those of the Gallup Poll or misused by customers of the poll, since neither the wording of the questions nor the interpretation of the findings will have been vetted by Gallup experts.

"We don't want to become J.D. Power," he said, referring to the company that is known for its assessments of companies' services. "We don't want people to say, 'According to Gallup, we're the No. 1 institution in the country.'"

If, however, there is customer demand for publishable polling data, he said Gallup would consider adding that service to the Chronicle/Gallup Panel at an additional cost.

The first Chronicle/Gallup Panel surveys are expected to be circulated in March.

The venture is one of several higher-education services that Gallup now sells. Through its Institute for Campus Engagement, the company works with universities to measure the satisfaction of students, faculty and staff members, parents of students, and alumni. Gallup has also assisted in searches for college presidents and heads of higher-education associations, advising five boards of trustees and search committees in the past two years on how the leaderships skills of finalists fit with those institutions' needs.

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