**Annual Race, Ethnicity and Veteran Status Survey – Fall 2018**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Why are University employees and students asked to provide personal information such as sex, race and ethnicity?**

**Answer:** Missouri State University is a federal contractor and receives funds from the federal government in the form of financial aid and research funding. Federal contractors are required to complete an annual Affirmative Action Plan, and universities must report summary data about employees to the U.S. Department of Education.

1. **Is the race, ethnicity, and veteran status information I provide kept confidential?**

**Answer:** The information you provide is considered sensitive and private data, and it will be safeguarded. It is used for compliance and reporting purposes in aggregate form only. No individual information is released.

1. **What laws require the University to collect personal demographic data?**

**Answer:** Executive Order 11246 requires the University to create and maintain an annual Affirmative Action Plan. Part of the Affirmative Action Plan is an analysis which contains summary data regarding the sex, race, and ethnic origin of our workforce.

The collection and reporting of sex and race/ethnicity data also are mandatory for all institutions which receive, are applicants for, or expect to be applicants for federal financial assistance as defined in the Department of Education regulations implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (34 CFR 100). The federal government requires these changes so that data collected for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the core postsecondary education data collection program, from all primary providers of postsecondary education in the country is consistent. This mandate applies to enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty, staff, finances,

institutional prices, and student financial aid.

1. **Is this change definite?**

**Answer:** Yes. The change to the new categories is now law (Higher Education

Opportunity Act - <http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>).

1. **If employees or students have provided this information before, why are they being**

**asked again?**

**Answer:** The Federal government is collecting this data in a different way. The Higher Education Opportunity Act, passed August 14, 2008 <http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html> requires all institutions of

higher education to collect and report data on race and ethnicity in a new way,

which requires asking certain new questions. To ensure that all employees and students have the opportunity to identify themselves more accurately, the information is being requested again.

1. **Is the University required to make these changes?**

**Answer:** Yes

1. **What are the categories used for reporting race and ethnicity to the federal government, and how is the data collected to reflect the changes?**

**Answer:** The standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity were revised by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and adopted by the Department of Labor, Department of Education, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. For detailed information on the OMB's revisions, see https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/federal-register/ The following are the federal reporting categories with descriptions:

* + **Hispanic or Latino** – a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.
	+ **American Indian or Alaska Native** - a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains a tribal affiliation or community attachment.
	+ **Asian** - a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.
	+ **Black or African American** - a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
	+ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** - a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.
	+ **White** - a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa.
	+ **Two or more races** (not Hispanic/Latino).

The revised standards require that employers offer individuals the opportunity to select one or more races in order to comply with federal data reporting. In addition, "Hispanic or Latino" ethnicity is now to be considered a separate and distinct category from race. Finally, the category "Asian or Pacific Islander" is now divided into two categories, "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander."

1. **What was the U.S. Department of Education’s intent when they decided on this new**

**approach?**

**Answer:** According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are multiple reasons for their decisions. It was a mandate by the Office of Management and Budget because the federal government wants to report race and ethnicity uniformly for the student population across the U.S., and they want to stop double reporting of people who identify with multiple races. Additionally, this will make the data comparable to the U.S. census statistics. The U.S. Census Bureau has used the Hispanic/Latino question for nearly a decade.

1. **What does the University do if an employee does not self-identify his or her race or ethnicity?**

**Answer:** Federal regulations require that the University collect EEO data on all employees. If an employee fails to self-identify his or her race or ethnicity, then as a last resort, a University official will be asked to assign the employee a race or ethnicity category based on a visual assessment.

1. **What veteran employment obligations apply to the Missouri State University?**

**Answer:** The University is a federal contractor and is subject to the regulations of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). One of the areas enforced by the OFCCP is affirmative action as it applies to veterans, including the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRAA) and the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 (JVA).

1. **How does the University report on the employment of veterans?**

**Answer:** As a federal contractor, the University uses voluntarily self-reported data provided by new employees to prepare an annual report on the number and types of veterans in the workforce. Employees are not required to disclose this information, but the University encourages them to do so in order to make the affirmative action plan and governmental reporting as accurate and useful as possible.

1. **Why are current employees being re-surveyed regarding veteran status?**

**Answer:** In the past veteran statuses were Special Disabled Veterans, Vietnam Era Veterans, Other Protected Veterans, and Newly Separated Veterans (2 years).

The Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA) revised these categories, so the University is re-surveying all current employees. The new categories of veterans covered under the regulations are:

* + **Disabled Veteran** – (i) A veteran of the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or (ii) A person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
	+ **Other Protected Veteran** – A veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval, or air service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized under the laws administered by the Department of Defense. (The complete list of wars, campaigns, and expeditions can be found in the VetGuide Appendix A at https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/veterans-services/vet-guide-for-hr-professionals/.
	+ **Recently Separated Veteran** – A veteran during the three-year period beginning on the date of such veteran's discharge or release from active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service.
	+ **Armed Forces Service Medal Veteran** – A veteran who, while serving on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air force, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Services medal was awarded pursuant to Executive Order 12985 (61 FR 1209, 3 CFR, 1996 Comp., p. 159).
1. **If I am a veteran, may I choose more than one category of veteran status?**

**Answer:** Yes. You should check all categories that apply to you. It is very likely that if you are a veteran you may fall into more than one category.

1. **Is there any way to ensure continuity in longitudinal studies given the change in categories?**

**Answer:** No. The best we can do is to notate when the change in categories occurred as

an explanation for shifts in counts. All other institutions of higher education data

will experience the same challenge. Individual researchers may choose to follow up with individuals who have changed their race/ethnicity identity to learn how the new IPEDS questions may have influenced their answers.