



U N I V E R S I T Y O F
SOUTH CAROLINA
A I K E N

How Do You Know They're Engaged If They Don't Take the Survey?

**Increasing Response Rates on the
National Survey of Student Engagement**

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Presentation Overview

- Increasing response rates on the National Survey of Student Engagement produces value.
 - Convincing results for federal, state, and private agencies.
 - Convincing results for internal constituencies to make data-driven decisions.
- This presentation will show you how the University of South Carolina Aiken increased their NSSE student response rate 27%.

The University of South Carolina Aiken

- USCA is a small-to medium-sized baccalaureate (diverse fields) institution.
- Headcount = 3,350
- 30 undergraduate programs, 3 graduate programs
- NCAA Division II
- The NSSE was first administered at USCA in 2004. The second administration was 2006.

2004 NSSE Response Rates

	USC Aiken	American Democracy Project	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2004
Overall Response Rate	32%	32%	40%	38%

2004 USCA-NSSE

- The 2004 NSSE response rate for USCA was:
 - 256 students or 32%
 - o 150 freshmen
 - o 106 seniors
- To make the results more dependable and
- To obtain faculty and administration “buy-in” the rates had to increase in 2006.

Strategy

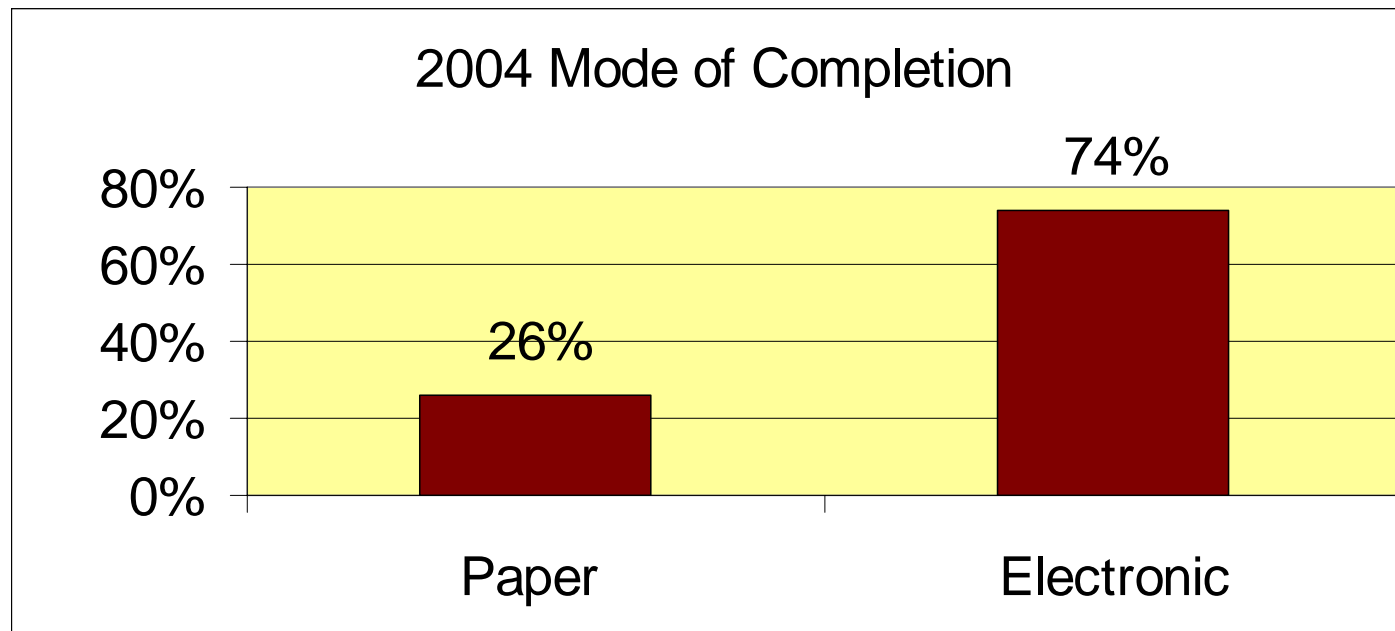
- USCA's Office of Institutional Effectiveness analyzed the 2004 response rate to NSSE.
- Three major factors appeared to affect the response rates:
 - Awareness
 - Convenience
 - Motivation

Awareness

- A major barrier to a high response rate in 2004 was the student awareness of the survey.
- USCA had no official policy for student email accounts.

Convenience

- In 2004, NSSE was administered through email and a random paper over-sampling of non-respondents (Web+ method).



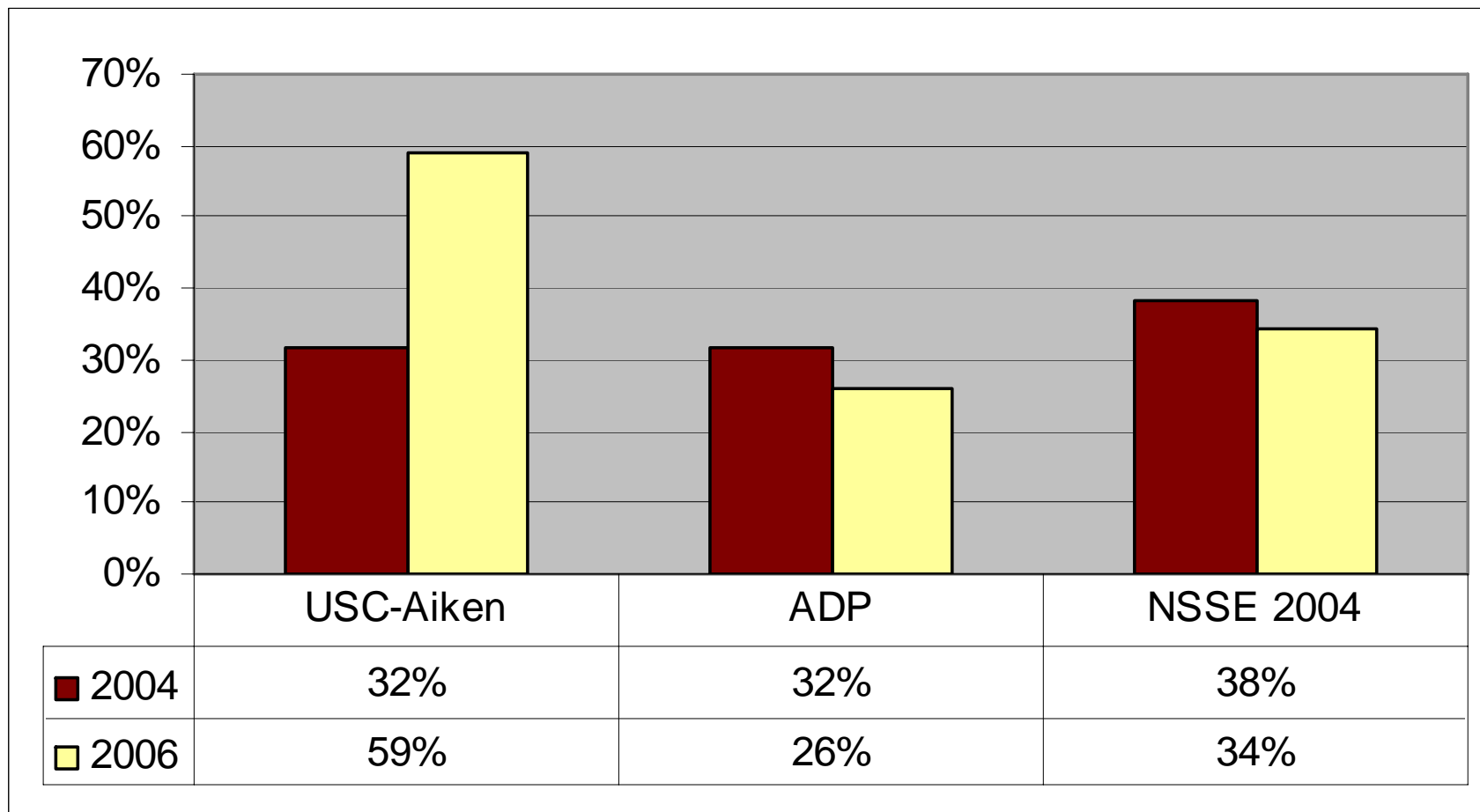
Motivation

- Students were offered incentives, but the incentives were not as attractive as they might have been.
 - Bookstore discount coupon
 - Various prizes (frisbees, keychains, some food, etc.)
 - Grand prize drawing for a Mountain Bike

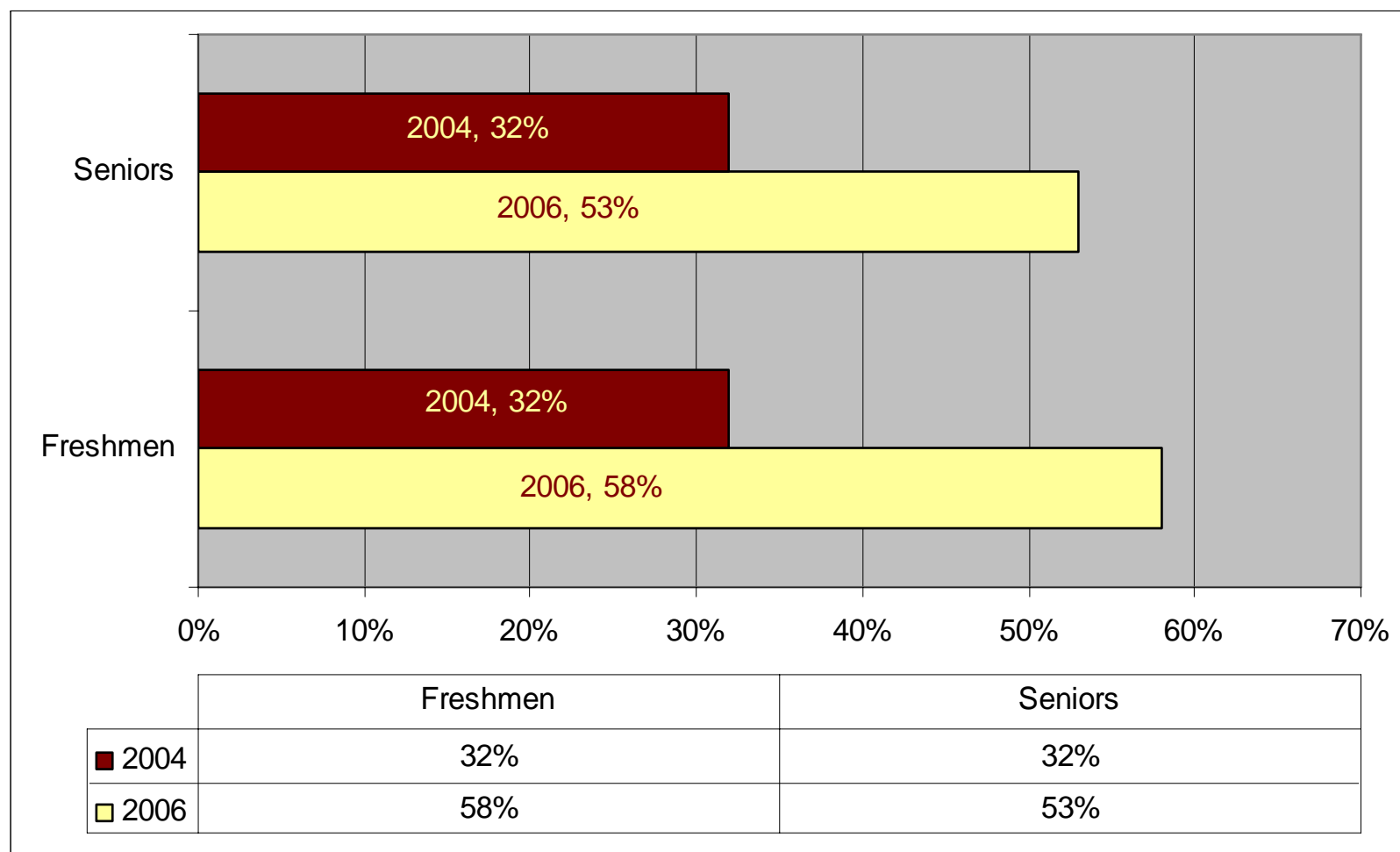
2006 NSSE Response Rates

	USC Aiken	American Democracy Project	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2006
Overall Response Rate	59%	26%	37%	34%

2004 and 2006 Overall Response Rates



NSSE USCA Response Rates



What did USCA do to get students to respond?

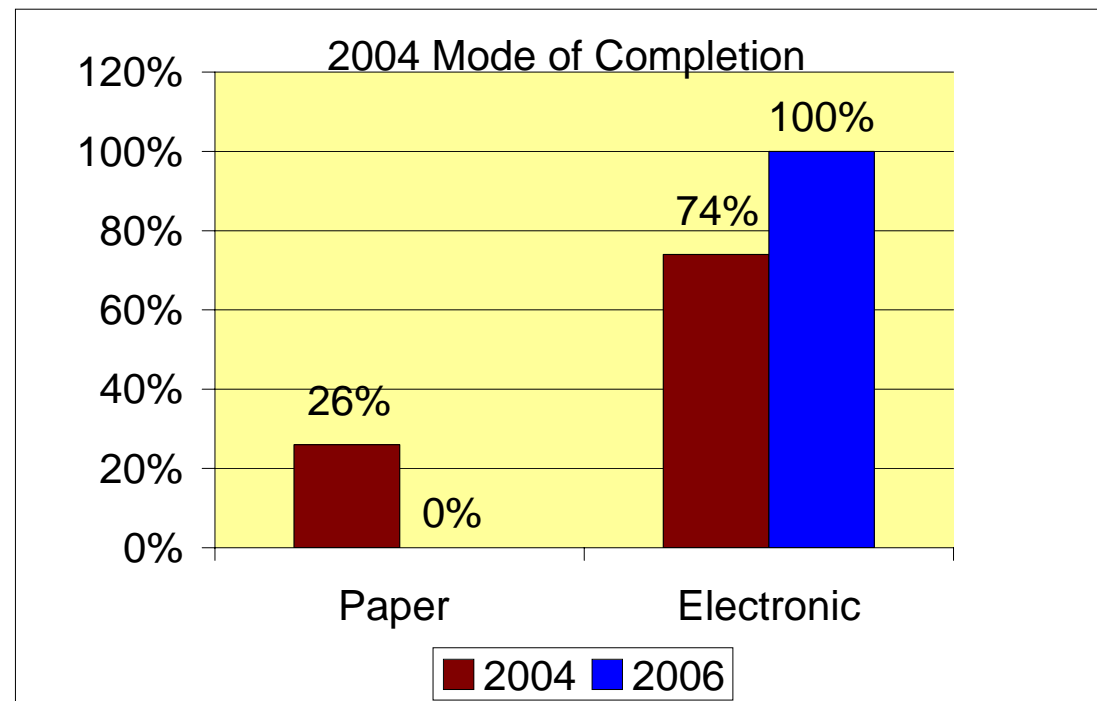
Awareness



- In Fall 2004, USCA instituted the following policies:
 - Students were required to use their official university email accounts.
 - Students were required to check this account for university communication at least once a week.

Convenience

- In 2006, the same method of administration was used (web+), but no respondents returned the paper survey.



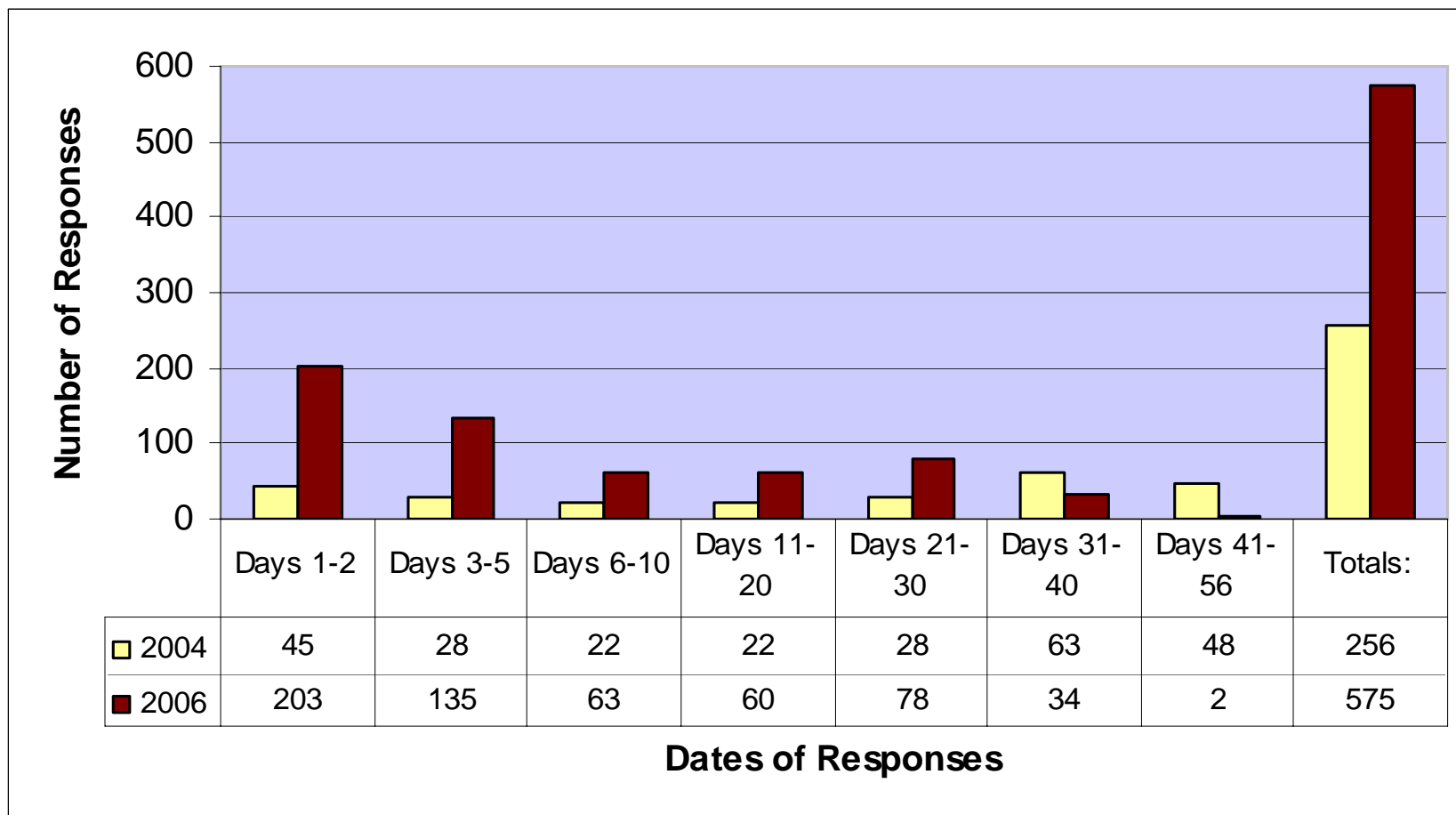
Motivation

- Prizes were collected from restaurants and fast food businesses.
- All 575 respondents were notified they had won a prize.
- 300 students actually collected their prize.

Motivation - 2

- Grand prizes
 - A mountain bike (donated by vending contract on campus)
 - 4 iPod Shuffles
 - 4 iTunes music cards

2004 and 2006 USC Aiken NSSE Responses



Costs for 2004 and 2006 NSSE USCA Administration

	2004	2006
Institutional Fee	\$ 300	\$ 300
Sampling Fee	\$3,150	\$3,375
Total:	\$3,450	\$3,675
Other Expenses		
Marketing:		\$1,227
Total Costs:	\$3,450	\$4,902
Difference:	\$1,452	

2004 vs. 2006 Costs

	2004	2006
Total Cost	\$3,450	\$4,902
Number of Respondents	256	602
Cost per respondent	\$13.48	\$8.14
Savings per student:	\$5.34	



Cost Breakdown - 2006

	2006 Extra Costs	Unit Prices
2006 NSSE price increase	\$ 225	
Post Cards	\$ 371	
Postage	\$ 370	
4 iPods	\$ 426*	\$106.50
4 iTunes Music Cards	\$ 60	\$15 ea.
2006 Extra Costs	\$1,452	

*Includes tax/shipping

Cost - Benefit

- In 2006, USCA paid \$1,452 more than in 2004.
- NSSE increased its fee by \$225
- Marketing by USCA was \$1,227
- USCA saved \$5.34 per student

Results and Significance

- The 2004 and 2006 differences were immediate and ongoing.
- The first two days, 203 students had completed the 2006 survey compared to 45 students in the first two days of the 2004 survey administration.
- Students responded on a regular basis from day one to the end.

Conclusions

- “Spend more and save” – it really is true.
- Incentives are not “give-aways” they are the cost of quality survey administration.
- Use-value of results has improved.