



## Vision

### DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

Berkeley, California

March 8, 2008

We, leaders of academic survey research organizations, today join together to form a new association of organizations, the Academic Survey Research Association [ASRA].<sup>1</sup>

We represent survey organizations from both private and public universities, in every region of the United States. The organizations that we represent, and other academic survey organizations in the U.S. and elsewhere, share a common mission. We provide professional, scientific survey expertise and infrastructure to researchers inside and outside of academe. We advance the research, educational, and service goals of our respective universities. As academic centers, our organizations share common features:

- We are embedded as parts of larger educational institutions that govern our functioning and the conduct of our research. We vary in the degree of independence that our universities grant to us, but each of our organizations is part of a university or college.
- We share in the traditions of excellence, diversity, entrepreneurship, and political independence from government that characterize higher education in the United States. No other country in the world has a larger number of academic survey research organizations.
- As academic centers, we prize our objectivity, our adherence to high ethical standards, and our ability to innovate and educate as we strive for the highest standards of quality in our research.
- Although we charge for many of our services, we operate on a non-profit basis.
- Our numbers include many small and medium survey research organizations, and a few larger ones. Thus, most of us bear many of the burdens and share many of the advantages that are typical of small enterprises everywhere.
- We operate as generalists, with each of our organizations carrying out surveys in several modes, surveys large and small, for, academic, governmental and non-profit clients.
- As academic centers, we face special challenges and opportunities in management, fiscal and organizational development. We are distinctive due to various supports and constraints of the university environment and our reliance on faculty, academic professionals, and students as employees.

---

<sup>1</sup> Later changed to AASRO, Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations

By virtue of our unique academic mission, we serve a vital function in the larger survey industry, the advancement of the social and behavioral sciences, and the betterment of society. Academic survey research centers are vital players in the advancement of survey methods, the publication and dissemination of important survey results, and the enhancement of our field's reputation in the eyes of decision makers, the media, and the public we serve.

**Our Vision.** We join together to form ASRA today because we have a common vision for the future of academic survey research: ASRA will be recognized as a leading voice in support and promotion of excellence in survey research conducted in academic settings.

**Our Mission.** To achieve its vision, ASRA will facilitate mutual support among member organizations in the following ways:

- Promoting excellence and integrity in the conduct of survey research;
- Sharing information for effective administration and organization of academic survey research centers;
- Promoting the value of survey research conducted in academic settings; and,
- Advancing the role of survey research centers across diverse university structures.

As we take this historic step toward formalization, we wish to thank our initial leaders, John Kennedy and Ronald Langley, who have brought us together informally for many years at the AAPOR meetings, under the name 'ASRO Directors,' to discuss our common interests and problems. We thank Bob Groves and the University of Michigan Survey Research Center for hosting our first national conference at Ann Arbor in February 2007, Bob Lee and the Survey Research Center at University of California—Berkeley for hosting our present gathering, and Jim Wolf for leading our discussions at both these conferences.

The structure of ASRA will be voluntary, democratic, and inclusive. ASRA is committed to working in cooperation with AAPOR (to which nearly all of us belong as individual members) to advance our common interests.

To this end we form an Interim Steering Committee, whose members we will elect today by acclamation, and we charge them with prompt establishment of a formal governing structure for ASRA. The ASRA Interim Steering Committee is charged with:

- promptly drafting By-Laws for our organization,
- nominating at least one qualified person for each position as an ASRA officer,
- securing the approval of the By-Laws by the member organizations when we convene again at the AAPOR meetings in New Orleans in May 2008, and
- holding the first election of our officers at that time, with provision for voting by participating organizations that do not have representatives present at New Orleans.

Once the by-laws are passed by the membership and officers are elected, the Interim Steering Committee will be dissolved.

Our Pledge. Understanding that our respective survey organizations will be called upon to pay dues to ASRA, that final criteria for membership have yet to be determined, and that we will need to commit our time and effort to achieving ASRA's goals, we pledge today our individual support for ASRA's vision and mission and we hereby approve or recommend ASRA membership for our respective organizations.