TO: All Instructors in the Department of Psychological Science

FROM: Ad-Hoc Participant Pool Committee (Interim Chair: Jim; Membership: Jim)

SUBJECT: Participant Pool [please note how “no-shows” are handled]

DATE: 01/09/2024

The Department "participant pool" using the on-line Sona system will be starting up again for the Spring 2024 semester, with guidelines similar to those used in Fall 2023. All psychological science students can still register for available studies through the *SONA System* <http://ccsu.sona-systems.com/> but will also potentially be able to get credit in other ways such as mass testing sessions as described below.

You will soon receive “SONA Participant Instructions for Psy 112 Students” or “SONA Participant Instructions for Non-Psy 112 Students” which you can distribute to your students. Let me highlight some points of the SONA system for this semester (please remember that there are bound to be hiccups and adjustments that will need to be made from time to time - thanks in advance for your help and flexibility).

**Updates to SONA for Spring 2024 (actually nothing new from Fall 2023)**

* The requirement for Psy 112 remains 6 credits, and instructors may again count any SONA credit earned as “extra-credit” at their discretion, consistent with their own class grading policies, or as simply a course requirement met. Note: SONA may again be a requirement for classes in addition to Psy 112.
* There may be both “on ground” and online SONA studies by Research Methods II (PSY 302 and/or 597) students, at the discretion of the RM II instructor.
* We agreed as a RM Faculty to award a bonus SONA credit to incentivize in-person data collection. Any participants that complete an “on ground” study will earn 1 bonus SONA credit, on top of the duration-based credit award.

**Description of SONA**

Here’s a little more detail about SONA, the totally on-line tool that helps us manage the participant pool. The system:

* Allows researchers to post their studies. Potential participants can “sign-up” for studies from any computer with internet access. How long they must sign up before an in-person study occurs depends on the study and will be specified in the study description. The latest time that a student may cancel an in-person appointment is 24 hours prior to the scheduled data collection.
* Automatically reminds researchers and participants of their appointments, and all records are kept on-line, in a secure environment. Individual students will be able to access their personal records.
* Keeps track of participants’ credits – researchers enter the credits and participants can log in to see them.
* Provides you (the instructor) with a credit report at the end of the semester.

User types. SONA divides users into four categories: Participants, Instructors, Researchers, and Principal Investigators. **Participants** are undergraduate students who participate in studies for credit. **Instructors** are faculty members who teach courses that require or award credit to students for research participation. **Researchers** are faculty members (or their assistants), graduate students, or undergraduates taking PSY 302 (Research Methods Two) who are conducting the research. **Principal Investigators** are faculty members who are conducting research (they will have dual status as P.I.s and Researchers), and/or supervising graduate or undergraduate students (e.g., Psy 302 students) conducting research. There is a fifth category called **Administrators**. That would primarily be Caleb Bragg (or for Spring 2024, Jim Conway while Caleb is on sabbatical). We will tell faculty members who wish to gain Administrator access how to do so, as long as you promise not to change any parameters of the system without consulting with us.

Two options for obtaining credit. There are two main options for participants: Option 1 is participating in research studies (the main focus of SONA); Option 2, for students who do not wish to or cannot participate in research studies, is to do short research papers (summaries of what they learned from a psychology journal article of their choosing). The papers are submitted to the [psychpapers@ccsu.edu](mailto:psychpapers@ccsu.edu) e-mail address. Both options have the same deadline for the Spring 2024 semester, which is Monday April 29th at 5:00 pm. This is a hard deadline; no late papers will be accepted.

**Instructors and Your Student/Participants**

There are a few things I want to emphasize.

1. Most researchers are Psy 302 and 597 students who will have finished data collection well before the deadline. Thus there will be few studies available for students who wait until the last minute to fulfill this requirement. Please let your students know this.
2. All students, including those choosing option 2 (research papers instead of participation in studies), must register with SONA Systems on-line (https://ccsu.sona-systems.com) in order to receive credit. **They must use a unique, working email address to register.** They must also indicate to which course the credit should be posted. If they are taking more than one course that gives credit for research participation, they can access their personal account and re-allocate credits whenever they wish.
3. There will be two types of SONA studies: on-ground (traditional, go to a physical location) and online (no physical location). Students may earn all their required SONA credits online. We agreed as a RM Faculty to award a bonus SONA credit to incentivize in-person data collection. Any participants that complete an “on ground” study will earn 1 bonus SONA credit, on top of the duration-based credit award.
4. Attached to this memo is a form for copying that is to be used for students under the age of eighteen who wish to participate in studies. They return the signed form to their instructor who can forward it to Caleb Bragg (or actually to Jim for Spring 2024). Please provide a scanned PDF!
5. Please remind your students that, for online studies, after they have signed up for an online study, your students must complete it before the final data collection deadline. I would recommend that they complete their participation as soon as possible to avoid any issues or complications. Please remind your students **if they need to cancel their online signup, to please contact the experimenter as soon as possible**.
6. Two problems we anticipate are (1) students not receiving their passwords because there is a typo in their email address, or because their mailboxes are full or not accessible; and (2) students neglecting to indicate to which class they want their study credit posted. **These details should be emphasized to participants. In addition, students are only to use ONE email address in order to earn extra credit through SONA research participation.**
7. If/when glitches arise, please contact Jim (conwayj@ccsu.edu or 832-3107) who will work to fix problems in a reasonably timely manner.
8. As always, should students taking a course with a research requirement not wish to participate in research projects, they may earn their research credit by reading published research reports and writing brief papers summarizing them. Students must e-mail their papers to [psychpapers@ccsu.edu](mailto:psychpapers@ccsu.edu) following the rules for submission noted in the instructions provided to student participants. **They still must be registered with SONA to receive the credit**.
9. The instructions for distribution to your students will be e-mailed to you. The instructions will also be posted on the department website. Some faculty also link from their course page in Blackboard to both the [http://ccsu.sona-systems.com/](http://ccsu.sona-systems.com/%20)  site and to the [psychpapers@ccsu.edu](mailto:psychpapers@ccsu.edu) address to make it more convenient for their students. We encourage you to do this. Please review the handouts and contact Jim with any questions or comments about the procedures. Remember, the 6 units of credit are the Department requirement for PSY 112.
10. It must be stressed that we have no way to award SONA credit to students who participate in studies but are not registered with the SONA system as detailed in the instructions that will be given to students. **I strongly suggest that instructors have an early assignment - perhaps worth a nominal amount of credit – where the students must print out and turn in the email that they receive from SONA with their logon information**. This will help ensure that all students are registered.
11. Typically, research projects do not begin until at least two or three weeks into the semester. However, students may begin checking the website [http://ccsu.sona-systems.com/](http://ccsu.sona-systems.com/%20) beginning the first week of the semester. As always, and consistent with the mandate in the APA 2002 Ethics Code Standard 8.04b, students have the option of not participating as a research volunteer, they may choose to write brief research papers to complete the research requirement. The **final deadline** for all research participation is **Apr. 29th at 5:00 p.m.** and for paper submissions (option 2) the deadline is **also Apr. 29th at 5:00 p.m.** Again, this is a hard deadline; no late papers will be accepted.

Please let me know of any problems that you or your students experience so that we may continue to enhance the process for all involved. We believe that the process has been useful as a learning experience about research in psychology for the student-participants, but are always looking for ways to make it even more meaningful for our students. The pool has also been greatly appreciated by our students who are conducting research. Please feel free to contact me with your comments, suggestions, or questions. Thank you for your assistance.

Jim Conway (subbing for Caleb Bragg)

January 2024

**To the Parent or Guardian of a Psychology Undergraduate Student under the age of 18 at Central Connecticut State University**

Faculty and advanced students in psychology conduct research in their areas of interest. In order for the research to be conducted, we request that volunteers participate. Often Psychology students serve this role. They get to see exactly how our research is conducted, and they are a valuable resource for us as well. All research conducted with people at CCSU is reviewed for ethical acceptability, no questionable research is allowed. Participants are guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. They are entitled to full and complete information about each study in which they participate. Students must be at least 18 years old to participate (if under 18 they need written parental permission). [NOTE: RESEARCH PARTICIPATION IS NOT REQUIRED. If for any reason students do not wish to participate in research projects they do not have to. They may earn their required units (and extra credit) by another option, which involves reading articles and writing short papers.]

If you wish to allow your child or ward to participate in psychological studies during the Spring 2024 semester at Central Connecticut State University, sign and date this letter below. If you have further questions about the research activities, please contact Dr. Jim Conway at (860) 832-3107, email: conwayj@ccsu.edu.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who is under 18 years of age, has

name of student

my permission to participate in psychology research studies at Central Connecticut State University during the Spring 2024 semester.

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Signature of parent or guardian date

The student should return this document to their course instructor (electronically) who will forward it to Dr. Conway.