Survey Response Strategies

Make it relevant.
- Solicit responses from specific student populations who have reason to be interested.
- Explain thoroughly in the email what the purpose of the survey is.

Help students understand the value of their response by sharing results.
- Preface survey links with an explanation of what results are being used for.
- Send follow-emails sharing a few findings.
- Cite assessment results when publicizing new programs/decisions.
- Publish certain results on a website, newsletter or blog.

Decrease the number of times you ask a student to complete a survey.
- Break the student body into 3 – 6 "panels" of random students so each student does not get each survey.
- Use the larger group only when necessary, such as when you need to generalize to the entire population or significantly filter results.
- Use other methods: web-based on-site, PDAs, etc.

Use incentives.
- Consider smaller incentives with higher chances of winning (give out three $10 gift cards instead of one $30) which has shown to be more effective.
- Consider "immediate" incentives, like coupons or printable gift certificates, which have shown to be more enticing.

Send notification at appropriate times. People are more likely to complete a survey when they first open it than to go back into it. They'll either do it, or delete it. This is why most responses come in the first day.
- Identify when students are more likely to respond and email during those times.
- Send reminders to non-responders using the Mass Mailing feature. You'll see a peak with each reminder without having to aggravate those who have already completed the survey.

Keep survey length down, and tell the student exactly how long it will take them to reply.
- Include only truly necessary questions. Ask yourself: Why would I use this piece of data?
- If you need to link responses to demographics, upload student data to Campus Labs Baseline to be matched to student responses.

Establish credibility.
- Send a pre-notification email asking for their participation.
- Ask student leaders/government for their endorsement and help publicizing.
- Think carefully about the "from" address. Send emails from a name students will recognize and trust.