

Longitudinal Respondent Tracking Underway

Debby Pyatt has joined the National Study of Youth and Religion research team. Her work with the study focuses on tracking youth survey respondents who have agreed to future contact for a possible second-wave longitudinal survey in coming years.

The project's grant provides for the possibility of conducting a follow-up survey of teen respondents in the future. Second-wave longitudinal surveys provide uniquely valuable data for understanding the causal effects of religion in social life because they enable a study of the effects of variables measured in the first wave on diverse outcomes. Because these outcomes play themselves out over time, they can better be observed in the second wave survey. Longitudinal studies thus provide more analytical power than simple cross-sectional designs and can add significantly to the project's findings.



Pyatt's responsibilities will include involving survey respondents in an appropriate manner that enables them to understand that they are an important part of this nationally representative study and employing methods for maintaining regular post-survey contact with respondents in order to maintain the option of conducting a second-wave survey with them some years after the first-wave survey.

In maintaining this contact, Pyatt will rely on mail and email. Funding for the second-wave survey is not included in the grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. but will be sought from an interested funder at the appropriate time.

Pyatt comes to the study from the Department of Mathematics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a graduate of Duke University.

The National Study of Youth and Religion is a four-year research project funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. It began in August 2001 and will continue until August 2005. The purpose of the project is to research the shape and influence of religion and spirituality in the lives of U.S. adolescents; to identify effective practices in the religious, moral and social formation of the lives of youth; to describe the extent to which youth participate in and benefit from the programs and opportunities that religious communities are offering to their youth; to foster an informed national discussion about the influence of religion in youths' lives, and to encourage sustained reflection about and rethinking of our cultural and institutional practices with regard to youth and religion.