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#### ABSTRACT

In 1996, a survey was conducted of customer satisfaction with the Office of Grants and Contracts of Nova Southeastern University, Florida. The Office had a core constituency of 112 faculty and administrators who regularly received services related to external funding; however, to be as inclusive as possible and to broaden communication with the entire university, the survey was sent to a total of 530 faculty and administrators. Surveys were returned by only 76 respondents, most of whom represented the core constituency of the Office of Grants and Contracts. Responses were useful in determining motivations for involvement in the grants process and the types of services faculty and administrators expect. Approximately 40% of respondents indicated that they seek external funding to complete a particular project or to gain recognition for the department, center, or institution. Respondents also offered very favorable ratings of the many services the Office provides. The survey is attached as an appendix. (Contains 9 tables and 10 references.) (SLD)



# FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY RESPOND TO AN OFFICE OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

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Nova Southeastern University Research and Planning

November 1996

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Research and Planning Report 96-21



#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides a summary of results of the 1996 Office of Grants and Contracts Customer Satisfaction Survey. Survey results were previously incorporated into the University's Quality Improvement Plan.

In May 1996, when the survey was released, the Office of Grants and Contracts had a core constituency of 112 faculty and administrators who regularly received services related to external funding (i.e., the core constituency of 112 faculty and administrators is defined as those faculty and administrators who have indicated an interest in or are actively pursuing external funding for research, teaching/training/ or community service, and/or who are currently receiving funding, and whose awards are being managed through the Office of Grants and Contracts). However, to be as inclusive as possible and to also broaden communication with the University community, the survey was released to a larger group of 530 faculty and administrators. Surveys were returned by 76 of the 530 potential respondents, for a survey return rate of 14 percent. Tracking practices, such as different colored survey forms, were not used to differentiate between the core constituency and the broader list of faculty and administrators. However, because participants were asked to respond to statements only if they had received services from the Office in the past 12 months, it is likely that most respondents were members of the core constituency. If that were the case, then it is likely that the response rate from the core constituency approached 65 percent or more.

Responses were very useful in determining motivations for involvement in the grants process as well as the types of services faculty and administrators expect from the Office of Grants and Contracts. Approximately 40 percent of all respondents indicated that they seek external funding because of their *Desire to complete a particular project* and also to *Gain recognition for the department/center/institution*. The most frequently identified (30 percent of all respondents) pre-award service offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts to University personnel was *Received program announcements*, *Requests for Proposals (RFPs)*. The most frequently identified (21 percent of all respondents) post-award service offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts was *Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers*.

Respondents also offered very favorable ratings to statements relating to the many services offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts. All statements received a mean rating of 3.74 or higher (1=Very Dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied), indicating broad satisfaction with these services. The overall rating of the Office of Grants and Contracts was Mean = 4.29, with Median = 4 and Mode = 5.



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#### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background**

The Office of Grants and Contracts was created in 1994 "to provide a central resource for administrators, faculty, and staff interested in pursuing funding for research, training, and community service projects, and to assist them in administering their projects once awarded" (Office of Grants and Contracts Quarterly News; Spring 1996, p.1). The Office provides a wide variety of pre-award and post-award services, including:

- Identification of funding sources
- Assistance with budgets
- Coordination of contract review by University legal counsel
- Assistance to the principal investigator in award administration
- Assistance with the preparation of funding agency reports and audits

In fiscal Year 1995-96, faculty and staff at Nova Southeastern University submitted 122 proposals totaling over \$24.7 million to various private and public agencies. As of Fall Term 1996, the University had 66 grants and contracts from public and private sources, totaling \$11,582,356 (Office of Grants and Contracts Quarterly News; Fall 1996, p.2).

#### Purpose of This Report

In 1994, the University reimplemented a *Quality Improvement Plan* process that required administrative service units to conduct the same level of assessment that academic centers have been performing for the last 15 years. This assessment process is required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (*Criteria for Accreditation*, 1996, p. 19). Assessment of academic centers is demonstrated in the *Institutional Effectiveness Report*. Assessment of administrative service units is demonstrated in the *Quality Improvement Plan*.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of the 1996 Office of Grants and Contracts Customer Satisfaction Survey. The results of this study were used by the Office of Grants and Contracts as part of the continuous process for assessment, evaluation, and the



use of findings to support improvement by administrative service units at the University, as reported in the University's Quality Improvement Plans, Administrative and Educational Support Services: 1995-96 (1996, pp.97-112). Results will also provide a useful base line for future assessment. Additionally, the communication of these results to the University's faculty and administrators may help further motivate involvement in externally funded research.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

#### Survey Development

In preparation for the Quality Improvement Plan, a key component of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' institutional effectiveness process, the Director of the Office of Grants and Contracts shared a draft customer satisfaction survey with the University's Office of Research and Planning in April 1996. By using a customer satisfaction survey previously used by the University's Office of Human Resources and Payroll (Employee Reaction to the 1996 Human Resources Customer Satisfaction Survey, 1996) as a model, Research and Planning was able to assist the Office of Grants and Contracts in final preparation of the appended survey.

### **Sampling**

In May 1996, when the survey was released, the Office of Grants and Contracts had a core constituency of 112 faculty and administrators who received services on a regular basis (i.e., the core constituency of 112 faculty and administrators is defined as those faculty and administrators who have indicated an interest in or are actively pursuing external funding for research, teaching/training/ or community service, and/or who are currently receiving funding, and whose awards are being managed through the Office of Grants and Contracts). However, to be as inclusive as possible and to also broaden communication with the University community, the survey was released to a larger group of 530 faculty and administrators. Surveys were distributed on May 7, 1996, and received by Research and Planning until May 24, 1996.

Surveys were returned by 76 of the 530 potential respondents, for a survey return rate of 14 percent. Tracking practices, such as different colored survey forms, were not used to differentiate between the core constituency and the broader list of faculty and administrators. However, because participants were asked to respond to statements only if they had received services from the Office in the past 12 months, it is likely that most respondents were



members of the core constituency. If that were the case, then it is likely that the response rate from the core constituency approached 65 percent or more.

As presented in Table 1, nearly 60 percent of all respondents were faculty. Survey return was nearly equal between female respondents and male respondents (Table 2). Respondents from the Health Professions Division represented 30.3 percent of all respondents (Table 3). This statistic was expected since the Health Professions Division, with slightly less than 140 full-time faculty, represents nearly 40 percent of all full-time faculty at the University.

Table 1

Job Category

JOB CATEGORY	N	% TOTAL
Dean or Associate/Assistant Dean	9	11.8
Academic Department Chairperson or Director	10	13.2
Faculty Member	45	59.2
Other	11	14.5
Unidentified	1	1.3
Total	76	

Table 2
Gender

GENDER	N	% TOTAL
Female	37	48.7
Male	35	46.1
Unidentified	4	5.3



Table 3

Academic Center or Administrative Unit

ACADEMIC CENTER OR ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT	N	% TOTAL
School of Psychology	4	5.3
Center for Undergraduate Studies	5	6.6
Family and School Center	5	6.6
Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education	13	17.1
Health Professions Division	23	30.3
Law Center	8	10.5
Oceanography	4 .	5.3
School of Business	1	1.3
School of Computer and Information Sciences	2	2.6
School of Social and Systemic Studies Academic Affairs	6	7.9
Institutional Advancement	1	1.3
Other	3	3.9
Unidentified	1	1.3
Total	76	



#### RESULTS

#### Motivation to Seek External Funding

Respondents were asked to react to a series of statements that would offer a sense of why administrators and faculty seek external funding to support research, teaching and training, and community service projects. As presented in Table 4, the five leading reasons for grants involvement included:

•	Desire to complete a particular project	40.8 percent
•	Gain recognition for your department/center/institution	39.5 percent
•	Availability of funds	34.2 percent
•	Provide opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, other institutions, organizations, etc	32.9 percent
•	Obtain resources to fund travel, acquire equipment, and/or provide personnel support	32.9 percent

#### Pre-Award Services

Respondents were also asked to identify, from a comprehensive listing, the types of preaward services used or received from the Office of Grants and Contracts in the last 12 months. With all responses presented in Table 5, the five most used pre-award services included:

	Received program announcements, Requests for Proposals (RFPs)	30.3 percent
•	Assistance with budget preparation	27.6 percent
•	Assistance with completion of required assurances/ compliances	26.3 percent
	Received application forms	19.7 percent
•	Coordination of proposal review and approval	18.4 percent



Table 4

Motivation to Seek External Funding

MOTIVATING FACTOR	· N	% YES
Availability of funds	26	34.2
Desire to complete a particular project	31	40.8
Gain recognition for your department/center/institution	30	39.5
Assistance from the Office of Grants and Contracts in the development of the proposal	14	18.4
Encouraged by the Office of Grants and Contracts	12	15.8
Encouraged by your supervisor	16	21.1
Encouraged by your colleagues	12	15.8
Receive recognition in university publications	5	6.6
Receive other forms of public recognition	7	9.2
Provide opportunities for publishing	20	26.3
Provide opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, other institutions, organizations, etc	25	32.9
Obtain resources to fund travel, acquire equipment, and/or provide personnel support	25	32.9
Other-please describe	11	14.5



Table 5

Pre-Award Services Used or Received
During the Last 12 Months

SERVICE	N	% YES
Used grant and contract library resources	10	13.2
Participated in grant development workshops	11	14.5
Received program announcements, Requests for Proposals (RFPs)	23	30.3
Received application forms	15	19.7
Funding search(es)	10	13.2
Liaison with funding agency in my behalf	10	13.2
Assistance with project conceptualization	6	7.9
Attendance of Office of Grants and Contracts staff at funding agency technical assistance workshop	2	2.6
Assistance with proposal preparation (i.e., provided "boilerplate" information, writing, editing)	13	17.1
Assistance with budget preparation	21	27.6
Assistance with completion of required assurances/compliances	20	26.3
Assistance with special requirements (i.e., human subjects-IRB, animal subjects)	3	3.9
Assistance with special approvals (i.e. subcontracts, consultant agreements) .	9	11.8
Assistance with copying and collating final document	13	17.1
Coordination of proposal review and approval	14	18.4
Mail or hand-delivery of proposal	7	9.2
Other	4	5.3



#### Post-Award Services

Respondents were also asked to identify, from a comprehensive listing, the types of post-award services used or received from the Office of Grants and Contracts. Reaction to this listing was restricted to respondents who had received an externally funded grant or contract award within the last 12 months. With all responses presented in Table 6, the five most used post-award services included:

•	Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers	21.1 percent
•	General assistance with grant/contract project management	18.4 percent
•	Liaison with university accounting department	15.8 percent
•	Assistance with project continuation/closeout	11.8 percent
•	Expenditure approval	10.5 percent

#### Satisfaction with Resources and Services

Respondents were also asked to indicate (1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied) their level of satisfaction with resources and services offered by the Office of Grants and Contracts. All statements received a mean rating of greater than 3.0, indicating positive levels of satisfaction. Responses are summarized in Table 7, in descending rank order by mean rating. The five statements with the highest mean ratings included:

•	Assistance with special approvals (i.e., subcontracts, consulting agreements)	Mean = 4.47
-	Assistance with copying and collating final document	Mean = 4.47
-	Liaison with funding agency	Mean = 4.40
-	Assistance with budget preparation	Mean = 4.35
•	Assistance with completion of required assurances/	Mean = 4.33

As presented in Table 8, respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the level of service provided by the staff of the Office of Grants and Contracts. All statements received



a mean rating of greater than 4.0. The overall rating of the Office of Grants and Contracts (Table 9) was Mean = 4.29, again indicating a positive level of satisfaction with the Office.

Table 6

Post-Award Services Received Within the Last 12 Months

SERVICE	N	% YES
Assistance with award negotiation	4	5.3
Coordination of contract review by University legal counsel	5	6.6
General assistance with grant/contract project management	14	18.4
Liaison with funding agency on my behalf	7	9.2
Liaison with university accounting department	12	15.8
Liaison with human resources with respect to grant/contract hiring/staffing on my behalf	3	3.9
Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers	16	21.1
Assistance with development of subcontracts	5	6.6
Assistance with the use of consultants	3	3.9
Expenditure approval	8	10.5
Assistance with project continuation/closeout	9	11.8
Other	1	1.3

Table 7

Ratings of Selected Statements Related to Assessment of Resources and Services Provided by the Office of Grants and Contracts in Rank Order by Mean

STATEMENT	N	MODE	MEDIAN	MEAN	SD
Assistance with special approvals (i.e. subcontracts, consultant agreements)	15	5	4	4.47	0.74
Assistance with copying and collating final document	15	5	4	4.47	0.92
Liaison with funding agency	15	5	4	4.40	0.74
Assistance with budget preparation	29	5	4	4.35	1.05
Assistance with completion of required assurances/compliances	27	5	4	4.33	1.11
Assistance with award negotiation	10	5	4	4.30	0.82
Grant and contract library resources	21	5	4	4.24	1.00
Assistance with project continuation/closeout	16	4	4	4.19	1.05
Grant development workshops	21	5	4	4.19	0.98
Assistance with proposal preparation	24	5	4	4.17	1.17
Assistance with special requirements (i.e., human subjects, animal subjects)	9	5	4	4.11	1.45
Budget revisions/carryovers	21	5	4	4.10	1.09
General assistance with grant/contract management	23	5	4	4.09	1.16
Contracts Quarterly Newsletter	36	5	4	4.00	0.99
Assistance with project conceptualization	13	5	4	4.00	1.47
Coordination of proposal review and approval	19	5	4	3.95	1.22
Funding search(es)	21	4	4	3.91	1.04
Coordination of contract review by University legal counsel	9	4	4	3.89	0.78
Program announcements, Requests for Proposals	34	4	4	3.74	1.24
Expenditure approval	17	4	4	3.59	1.37



Table 8

Ratings of Selected Statements Related to the Level of Service Provided by the Staff of the Office of Grants and Contracts

STATEMENT	N	MODE	MEDIAN	MEAN	SD
Courtesy of Office	50	5	4	4.56	1.01
Timeliness of response from Office	45	5	4	4.53	0.86
Availability of Office staff	47	5	4	4.34	1.07
Expertise/knowledge of Office staff	44	5	4	4.36	1.04

Table 9

Overall Rating of the Office of Grants and Contracts

STATEMENT	N	MODE	MEDIAN	MEAN	SD
What is your overall rating of the Office of	49	5	4	4.29	1
Grants and Contracts?	49	5	4		4.29

#### **SUMMARY**

The Office of Grants and Contracts provides a wide variety of services for faculty and administrators at the University. As identified throughout this report, these services received positive ratings from survey respondents. In addition to the services that might normally be associated with a university grants office, the Office of Grants and Contracts also provides communication and training that ostensibly should motivate faculty and administrators to seek external funding.

As an example of these training activities, the Office has been engaged in a series of six, one-hour brown bag lunch workshops on proposal planning and development (Office of Grants and Contracts Quarterly News; Summer 1996, p.1). Topics at these training activities addressed the following external funding activities:



- Identifying Funding Opportunities
- Developing Your Idea
- Developing the Problem Statement, Objectives, and Methods
- Preparing the Budget
- Writing the Evaluation Plan
- Preparing and Submitting the Final Document

Partially because of this proactive, interventionist strategy, the University has experienced considerable expansion in involvement with externally-funded research. As presented in the University's *Master Plan* (1996, p.79-80):

- Excluding the Health Professions Division, sponsored funding increased by 46 percent from Fiscal Year 1989-90 (\$8.5 million) to Fiscal Year 1994-95 (\$10.4 million).
- Sponsored funding for the Health Professions Division increased by 73 percent from Fiscal Year 1989-90 (\$2.0 million) to Fiscal Year 1994-95 (\$3.4 million).

Although the University is enjoying the benefits of increased sponsored funding for research and other activities, it was identified in the University's *Master Plan* (1996, p.81) that competition for these funds is keen and likely to increase:

Current fiscal constraints impacting the level of federal, state, and local funding allocations for grant-supported projects are anticipated to continue. The grant award process will be increasingly more competitive. Grantee responsibilities with regard to compliance issues, audit, and other administrative matters will increase as well. This view is supported by many academicians and experts in the field, among whom there is consensus that public funds are becoming more limited while more non-profits seek them. As a result, private foundations, no doubt, will find themselves besieged by proposals because of public funding shortfalls.

In Fiscal Year 1994-95, Tuition and Fees (\$131,236,144) represented 77.5 percent of the University's Total Current Funds Revenues (\$169,344,730) (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Finance Survey FY 1995, Form F-1A; 1995, p.3). In contrast, Tuition and Fees represented 69.1 percent of the Total Current Funds Revenues for the 22 members of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (The Impact of Independent



Colleges and Universities of Florida on the State Economy: Fiscal Year 1995; 1996, p.14). The University is currently more dependent on Tuition and Fees for operational funds than other independent universities in Florida.

Accordingly, it is critical that the University's Office of Grants and Contracts regularly monitor the types and quality of services offered to the University. Such attention to quality will likely enhance the University's acquisition of external funding and correspondingly reduce the University's dependence on *Tuition and Fees*, which should in turn contribute to the fiscal stability of University operations. This assessment should therefore be viewed not only as an assessment of the Office of Grants and Contracts, but it should also be viewed as part of a more comprehensive assessment of operations that affect the University's fiscal base.



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**APPENDIX** 



## **MEMORANDUM**

Date:

May 7, 1996

To:

Selected Administrators, Faculty, and Staff

From:

John Losak

Subject:

Office of Grants and Contracts Customer Satisfaction Survey

Attached is a Customer Satisfaction Survey developed by the Office of Grants and Contracts to obtain your judgments regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the Office's current services to users. Your candid responses will assist in identifying those areas in which performance is satisfactory, and those areas that need improvement.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey and return it to Laura Uslan in the Research and Planning Office by Friday, May 24. Thank you for your cooperation and participation in completing this survey.

Please use Interoffice Mail to return this survey to:
RESEARCH AND PLANNING
Davie Campus
Attention: Laura Uslan
by May 24, 1996



# NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS (OGC)

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY May 1996

Dean or Associate/Assistant Dean  Academic department chairperson or director Faculty member  Other (specify:	Male
Other (specify:	   Female
V T. 1 1 ANDERT	<u>)                                  </u>
Years Employed at NSU Years	
2. PLEASE CHECK EITHER YOUR ACADEMIC CENTER	R OR YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
ACADEMIC CENTERS	Administrative Units
School of Psychology Center for Undergraduate Studies Family and School Center Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education Health Professions Division Law Center Oceanography School of Business School of Computer and Information Sciences School of Social and Systemic Studies	Academic Affairs Administration Office Financial Operations Human Resources Institutional Advancement Research and Planning Student Affairs Other



The state of the s	external funding.
Pre-award Services—Please check all pre-award serv and Contracts in the last 12 months, regardless of wheth	ices you have used or received from the Office her or not your proposal was submitted or fund
Used grant and contract library resources	• .
Participated in grant development workshops	December (DEDs)
Received program announcements, Requests for	Proposals (RPS)
Received application forms Funding search(es)	
Liaison with funding agency in my behalf	·
Assistance with project conceptualization	
Attendance of Office of Grants and Contracts sta	off at funding agency technical assistance
workshop	
Assistance with proposal preparation (i.e., providence)	ded "boilerplate" information, writing, editing)
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Post-award Services—If you have received an extermonths, please check all post-award services you have use a services with award negotiation.  Coordination of contract review by University legal General assistance with grant/contract project man Liaison with funding agency on my behalf Liaison with university accounting department Liaison with human resources with respect to grant Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers Assistance with development of subcontracts Assistance with the use of consultants Expenditure approval Assistance with project continuation/closeout	rnally funded grant or contract award within to used or received from the Office of Grants and to al counsel agement
Other-please describe  Post-award Services—If you have received an extermonths, please check all post-award services you have use a services with award negotiation coordination of contract review by University legal General assistance with grant/contract project man Liaison with funding agency on my behalf Liaison with university accounting department Liaison with human resources with respect to grant Assistance with budget revisions/carryovers Assistance with development of subcontracts Assistance with the use of consultants Expenditure approval	rnally funded grant or contract award within to used or received from the Office of Grants and all counsel agement agement at/contract hiring/staffing on my behalf

Grant and contract library resources		1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Grant development workshops	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U	
Office of Grants & Contracts Quarterly Newslette	r	1	2	3	4	5	NA	U
Program announcements, Requests for Proposals		2	3	4	5	NA	U	



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