2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Goal
To survey customers and process partners to measure service satisfaction, strengths, opportunities for improvement, and to identify future potential, high-value services.

Approach
In early 2013 a focus group of FSU/COM faculty researchers and process partners was convened to provide input for development of the survey questions and approach. From May 14 – 31 **on-line surveys were distributed to 124 individuals** interacting with Pre-Award within the past two years. **Response rate - 54% (67)**.

Focus
The surveys focused on **general customer service** characteristics, asked in-depth questions about **proposal preparation** and submission, **progress reporting**, and communication through the **newsletter and website**, and sought **input on future potential value-added services**. Additionally, we sought **insights** from investigators and Sponsored Research Services on how Pre-Award services compare to other FSU departments and universities.

Overall Results
All investigators indicated high degrees of satisfaction with overall customer service, and the efficiency and effectiveness of proposal preparation services provided. **Their overall rating of customer service was 69% either "very good" or "excellent"** with a range from 5% "fair" to 58% "excellent." The overall quality rating for proposal preparation services was 69% either "very good" or "excellent" with a range from 7% "fair" to 41% "very good" to 28% "excellent."

Investigator Comparisons to Other Institutions
59% (17/29) of PIs have submitted proposals at other institutions. Of those, 71% had pre-award staff assistance available. **45% felt the pre-award process at COM was "better" or "much better" than at their past institutions**, and 55% felt the pre-award process at COM was "about the same" as their previous experiences.

Sponsored Research Comparisons
When asked to compare the quality of the COM application packages to non-COM investigators, more than 57% (4 out of 7) indicated the quality was "better" or "much better" when compared to others WITH pre-award support. **86% (6 out of 7) indicated the quality was "better" or "much better" when compared to others WITHOUT pre-award support.**

Progress Reporting
35% of those responding with active projects were unaware Pre-Award could assist them with submission of their progress report, yet **91% of those who asked for assistance were "satisfied" or "very satisfied."**

Primary Role of Pre-Award

- *To assist COM investigators with proposal preparation and submission, and*

- *To help investigators successfully navigate the sponsored research/research administration landscape.*

Customers and Process Partners

- *COM faculty & staff investigators*

- *COM post-docs, students*

- *COM Executive Administration*

- *Department chairs and support staff*

- *Research Accounting*

- *Non-COM Collaborators and support staff*

- *Sponsored Research, Research Foundation, CRC, OTT, and OVPR*

Possible Future Pre-Award Services

COM Investigators were presented with a menu of services not currently offered by Pre-Award and were asked to rate the value of each item in relation to their efforts to obtain sponsored funding (1="not at all valuable" and 4="very valuable").

Future Service Categories	Not at all valuable	Somewhat valuable	Valuable	Very valuable	Total Responses	Average Rating
Grant writing workshops	2	5	11	12	30	**3.10**
Grant proposal editing (non-science)	3	5	12	10	30	2.97
Grant proposal critiquing (non-science) to improve presentation quality	2	6	13	9	30	2.97
Workshops on how to use funding opportunity databases	2	8	13	7	30	2.83
Personalized assistance with funding searches	0	8	14	8	30	**3.00**
Collaborator matching services	4	13	8	5	30	2.47
"One stop" guidance for IRB, animal use, and biosafety issues	3	9	10	8	30	2.77
Repository of model proposals/model language for insertion into proposals (e.g. Facilities and Resources)	0	5	10	15	30	**3.33**
Proposal development support for large, program/center awards	0	5	13	12	30	**3.23**

Continuous Improvement Recommendations Based Upon Survey Results

- The three most highly valued services by investigators associated with proposal preparation and submission process are 1) budget preparation, 2) identification and completion of forms, and 3) planning and coordination of the steps to meet deadlines. *Every effort should be made to maintain and improve customer service in these core activities, as well as ongoing communications of the value that the Pre-Award Office provides to investigators.*

- Periodic progress reporting involves a high administrative burden for investigators. Efforts over the past year to reduce the burden have been well received. *There is an opportunity to communicate the availability of support for progress reporting requirements, and to proactively plan ahead to provide services to investigators well ahead of deadlines.* This includes providing reminders to investigators about progress reporting deadlines.

- Not all researchers are aware of the application preparation services that Pre-Award provides. *Efforts should be made to increase awareness by investigators of Pre-Award staff efforts that can facilitate the quality and compliance of proposals during the review process.*

- A follow-up contact to Pre-Award stakeholders should be made to *determine the key reasons behind the low usage and awareness of the Office's website*. In addition, strategies for *raising awareness about the Pre-Award Office's newsletter*—particularly new faculty, postdocs and graduate students—will be explored.

- *More frequent and formal communication with Sponsored Research Services, Research Accounting and department-based GCAs should occur to prevent downstream problems*, to gain greater understanding for complementary roles and responsibilities, and to improve the coordination of efforts—including notification to downstream partners of upcoming proposal submissions as soon as the Pre-Award Office is aware of them.

- Potential future services identified as most valuable by investigators are consistent with those being targeted by the new Office of Proposal Development (OPD), which was announced in September. *A strategic partnership between COM and the OPD should be forged to ensure that COM investigators have the best support possible at both the College and University levels*.

- Other enhancements for consideration by COM could include *the development of sponsoring agency timetables* for various grant due dates, *development of a best-practices guide to grant application and writing* skills, and *expanding the list of grant opportunity sponsors*.

85% "likely" or "very likely"

Would you route proposals through Pre-Award before submitting them to Sponsored Research, <u>even if you didn't have to</u>?