UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Office of Research
Office of Sponsored Programs

Office of Sponsored Programs — 2016 Faculty & Staff Survey

Administered by the Social Research Lab, University of Northern Colorado, November 2016
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Executive Summary

Overview

The following report provides an edited summary of the findings from the survey administered to University of Northern Colorado faculty and staff who have applied for and/or received grant funding through the Office of Sponsored Programs. The survey assessed feedback from participants who have utilized the office for access to funding, grant writing, training and award support. The Office of Sponsored Programs Survey was administered to all of the faculty and staff members who were listed as having applied for and/or received grant funding in the last 5 years. The survey was administered over a two-week period in November 2016. Data collection and analysis was completed by UNC's Social Research Lab. All identifying information has been removed and identified data is stored securely at the Social Research Lab only. Requests for the full, unedited report should be directed to the office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

How to Read this Report

The Appendix contains a table for each quantitative question addressed by the survey. Tables one (1) through three (3) are demographic information. Tables four (4) through eight (8) identify the level of respondent participation with OSP in the proposal process. Tables nine (9) through twelve (12) examine opinions about communication with OSP. Tables thirteen (13) through nineteen (19) look at support provided by during the proposal writing process and Tables twenty (20) through twenty-five (25) look at support provided in the post-award process.

Tables nine (9) through twelve (12), sixteen (16) through nineteen (19), and twenty-two (22) through twenty-five (25) are presented in Likert Scale.

Each row represented by a Likert scale point has a percentage associated with it for a given statement. These percentages represent the number of respondents that selected each point. Directly under each table or statement, or listed right under each question statement is an N. This

N represents the number of respondents for each statement. The N for each table varies in relation to the number of participants who chose to or were given the option to answer that question.

The higher the mean score, the more agreement for a given item. The mid-point for the Likert scales is 2.5. Anything above 2.5 indicates that the majority of the people responding were at least somewhat agreeable with the item. While a mean score between 2 and 2.5 still indicates general satisfaction, there are enough dissatisfied respondents that it is a point of concern.

Demographics

A total of 84 participants completed the survey (though not every respondent answered every question). The survey was first administered on 11/14/2016 via email to 186 participants who had been involved in the proposal and grant writing process at UNC within the last 5 years. Data collection was completed on 11/28/2016. Participants responded at a 45% rate, which is very high.

Table 1 identifies that 23.8% of the participants are tenure track faculty, 56% are tenured faculty, contract renewable faculty made up 6%, adjunct faculty made up 0%, 6% are staff, and 8.3% are administrators. Just under 90% of the participants have been at UNC for at least four (4) years, shown in Table 2.

Table 3 shows that the participants represented all of the colleges on campus, specifically; Education and Behavioral Sciences represented 28.6%, Humanities and Social Sciences 17.9%, Monfort College of Business 2.9%, Natural Health and Sciences held the majority with 42.9%, Performing and Visual Arts 2.4%, University Libraries 2.4% and other, which included University College and Facilities Management were 3.6%.

Recommendations and Highlights

Numbered items below are the verbatim recommendations and highlights prepared by the Social Research Lab. Bulleted points under each numbered item are OSP's responses and planned action items.

1. The fact that nearly half of all respondents completed the survey indicates that people feel very strongly about OSP. This indicates that OSP is a vital office on campus that directly impacts the day-to-day life of anyone who is applying for or managing an award. Response rates for surveys where people do not have as much buy-in tend to hover around 20%.
    - *OSP recognizes the remarkable response rate for this survey and appreciates the feedback provided by each respondent. To continue the dialogue, OSP will develop a web-based form that faculty and staff can access any time they wish to provide further feedback to OSP, anonymously or otherwise. The link to the online form will be disseminated once the form is established.*

2. Communication is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed. Respondents did not generally find communications to be timely, and many do not know who to contact. The

grant world is inherently confusing and frustrating so we would not expect high scores here, but perhaps more proactive work on the part of OSP could help alleviate some of these issues.

- *A new "Who Do I Call?" link and page were added to the Office of Research website.*
- *OSP commits to a response window of two working days for all emails and phone calls. If OSP cannot address a query/task fully within this timeframe, OSP will contact the sender/caller to update on status of the task within the two-day timeframe.*
- *OSP aims to become UNC's 'one stop shop' for questions and issues related to the administration of research and sponsored activity. While there are many offices across campus that must work together to manage UNC's research enterprise, OSP will take the lead in fielding questions and coordinating the right people to get tasks accomplished and problems solved.*
- *OSP is reinstating project kick-off meetings, to ensure all key individuals are well informed about the award, budget, terms/conditions, and who is responsible for what during the life of the award. Upon notice of award, OSP will lead in coordinating a meeting with the PI, Grant Accountant, and College Business Manager.*

3. While trainings are offered by OSP, they are not being taken advantage of by faculty. In some respects, this puts OSP in a difficult place. Presumably, if faculty completed the training, they could avoid other frustrations that arise later on. While this might not be in the control of OSP, it is a part of the reality of the office and should be accounted for. If faculty are not going to take advantage of the training, then it might be necessary to develop other outreach methods.

- *Post-award management is the area that survey respondents indicated most strongly as lacking clarity and training from OSP, so this will be OSP's focus area in 2017.*
  - *OSP and General Accounting will collaborate to present a post-award primer via CETL forum on **April 12, 2017 (11:30a-1p)**. Register directly with CETL.*
  - *OSP staff will receive internal and external training this year, to increase proficiencies in this area.*
- *Because scheduling conflicts may prevent faculty and staff from attending, OSP will add all presentations to the OSP website after live sessions, as well as host open office hours (dates/times to be posted on the website) for faculty and staff to stop by Kepner 0025 and participate in one-on-one or small group review of training material, as needed.*

4. Professional development workshops do not seem to be meeting the needs of respondents. Two of the most common concerns which emerged in the qualitative comments suggest that moving these opportunities in whole or in part onto the web might yield useful results. Participants complained about a lack of time to attend or scheduling conflicts as well as lack of relevancy when they did attend. A high quality, well-

developed online training could alleviate both of these concerns as participants could access the material as-needed and opt out easily if the course did not fit their needs.

- *OSP will expand professional development resources and grants preparation/management training materials available on the website and communicate when new materials are available (via UNC Today and/or emails to College Deans for dissemination).*
- *For grants preparation/management topics, OSP will create a series of UNC-focused how-to trainings, so that the subject matter is more relevant and practical for faculty and staff. These will be made available on the OSP website.*

5. Hanover is a fantastic resource, but very few people take advantage of this service or even know about it. While there is a question on the NOI asking people if they would like to be place in the Hanover queue, perhaps this could be re-worded to simply ask faculty if they would like to take advantage of specialized grant consultants that UNC has contracted with which raises odds of success by XX%

- *The NOI was modified to ask more generally if the PI is interested in a critical review of their proposal narrative.*
- *Hanover has worked with UNC for two years. To date, Hanover's team has conducted 18 proposal reviews and 10 prospecting projects, and of the proposal reviews, four awards were funded ($1.6 million).*
- *Details about Hanover Grants capabilities are on the [OSP website](#) and the [Hanover Grants fact sheet.](#)*

6. The OSP website could benefit from some substantial revision. Fewer than half of respondents rated the website as somewhat or extremely easy to navigate. This is a very low percentage for a resource that should be among the valuable assets of any office.

- *The Office of Research launched a new website, which includes a fully updated OSP website, in December, 2016. Content was updated and reorganized to increase ease of navigation.*
- *The Office of Research and OSP will keep the new website dynamic and up-to-date with current information and resources. OSP welcomes any feedback on the new website (osp@unco.edu)*

7. Reallocate effort that is being spent on support for identifying funding or do a better job of marketing this service. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they did not utilize OSP for this service. We recommend either promoting these services more widely or simply shifting any FTE devoted to this task over to other aspects of the office (e.g., communications).

- *A number of resources are available for faculty on the [OSP website](#) to conduct their own searches for funding opportunities. Hanover Research and OSP's Associate Director, Cira Mathis, are also available to assist faculty individually with prospecting funding sources. Interested faculty can submit a request for Hanover or OSP support by contacting Cira (cira.mathis@unco.edu).*

- *OSP will improve dissemination of funding opportunities through a combination of posts on the OSP website, announcements in UNC Today, and emails targeted to the specific Colleges, Schools, and faculty each opportunity is most relevant to.*

Appendix A: Tables

Demographics

Table 1. What is your status at UNC?

	Frequency	Percentage
Tenure track faculty	20	23.8%
Tenured faculty	47	56.0%
Contract renewable faculty	5	6.0%
Adjunct faculty	0	0.0%
Staff	5	6.0%
Administrator	7	8.3%

N =84

Table 2. How long have you been at UNC?

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one (1) year	0	0.0%
One to three (1-3) years	9	10.7%
Four to ten (4-10) years	38	45.2%
Greater than ten (10) years	37	44.0%

N =84

Table 3. What college are you in?

	Frequency	Percentage
Education and Behavioral Sciences	24	28.6%
Humanities and Social Sciences	15	17.9%
Monfort College of Business	2	2.4%
Natural Health and Sciences	36	42.9%
Performing and Visual Arts	2	2.4%
University Libraries	2	2.4%
Other: University College Facilities Management	2 1	3.6%

N =84

Table 4. When was the last time you submitted a proposal to an external sponsor through UNC?

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	4	4.8%
Less than one (1) year ago	39	47.0%
One to two (1-2) years ago	20	24.1%
Over two (2) years ago	20	24.1%

N =83

Table 5. Including your most recent proposal, how many proposals have you submitted while at UNC?

	Frequency	Percentage
One (1)	6	7.6%
Two to three (2-3)	23	29.1%
Four (4) or more	50	63.3%

N =79

Table 6. When was the last time you received an award from an external sponsor?

	Frequency	Percentage
Never (Skip to the end)	17	20.5%
Less than one (1) year ago	25	30.1%
One to two (1-2) years ago	13	15.7%
Over two (2) years ago	28	33.7%

N =83

Table 7. How many sponsored awards (grants) have you received in your career?

	Frequency	Percentage
One (1)	12	18.2%
Two to four (2-4)	19	28.8%
Greater than four (4)	35	53.0%

N =66

Table 8. How many sponsored awards (grants) have you received at UNC?

	Frequency	Percentage
None	2	3.0%
One (1)	13	19.7%
Two to four (2-4)	23	34.8%
Greater than four (4)	28	42.4%

N =66

Communication with OSP

Table 9. Communications from the AVP for Research & Sponsored Programs and his staff are timely and effective.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	14	16.7%
Somewhat Disagree	29	34.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17	20.2%
Somewhat Agree	18	21.4%
Strongly Agree	6	7.1%

N =84 Mean=2.68

Table 10. The Office of Research and OSP web pages are informative and easy to navigate.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	2.4%
Somewhat Disagree	27	32.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	21.4%
Somewhat Agree	31	36.9%
Strongly Agree	6	7.1%

N =84 Mean=3.14

Table 11. You know who to contact in OSP regarding budget development and proposal submission.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	7	8.9%
Somewhat disagree	18	22.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	6.3%
Somewhat agree	27	34.2%
Strongly agree	22	27.8%

N =79 Mean=3.49

Table 12. You know who to contact in OSP when you have questions about post-award sponsored projects management.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	13.1%
Somewhat disagree	17	27.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	8.2%
Somewhat agree	17	27.9%
Strongly agree	14	23.0%
I don't know	4	6.2%

N =61 Mean=3.20

Table 13. Grant writing training opportunities were…

	Frequency	Percentage
Offered and you attended.	29	34.9%
Offered, but you did NOT attend.	47	56.6%
To your knowledge, never offered.	7	8.4%

N =83

Table 14. Professional development (workshops and forums) opportunities were…

	Frequency	Percentage
Offered and you attended.	29	35.8%
Offered, but you did NOT attend.	35	43.2%
To your knowledge, never offered.	17	21.0%

N =81

Table 15. Hanover Research support for sponsor prospecting and/or proposal review was…

	Frequency	Percentage
Available and you received Hanover support.	13	15.7%
Available and you requested Hanover support, but were declined	1	1.2%
Available, but you did not request Hanover support.	31	37.3%
You have no idea what 'Hanover Research' is.	38	45.8%

N =83

Table 16. For your most recent submitted proposal, the support that you received for identifying sources of funding was…

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	5	6.3%
Unsatisfactory	2	2.5%
Neutral/Not requested	57	72.2%
Satisfactory	13	16.5%
Outstanding	2	2.5%

N =79 Mean=3.06

Table 17. For your most recent submitted proposal, the support that you received on budget development was…

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	6	7.6%
Unsatisfactory	19	24.1%
Neutral/Not requested	19	24.1%
Satisfactory	30	38.0%
Outstanding	5	6.3%

N =79 Mean=3.11

Table 18. For your most recent submitted proposal, the support that you received on assembling and submitting the proposal was…

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	6	7.6%
Unsatisfactory	16	20.3%
Neutral/Not requested	22	27.8%
Satisfactory	25	31.6%
Outstanding	10	12.7%

N =79 Mean=3.22

Table 19. For your most recent submitted proposal, the approval process, i.e. routing and signing of the PREF was…

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	4	5.1%
Unsatisfactory	11	13.9%
Neutral/Not requested	22	27.8%
Satisfactory	33	41.8%
Outstanding	9	11.4%

N =79 Mean=3.41

Post-Award Management

Table 20. Training opportunities for post-award management were…

	Frequency	Percentage
Offered and you and/or your unit/college-level staff support person(s) attended	7	10.6%
Offered, but you did NOT attend	8	12.1%
To my knowledge, never offered	39	59.1%
I don't know	12	18.2%

N =66

Table 21. For your most recent sponsored award, the Award Set-Up meeting…

	Frequency	Percentage
Was scheduled and carried out in a timely manner	21	33.3%
Did not occur on your request (i.e., the GCA requested the meeting but you declined).	1	1.6%
You were not contacted by the GCA to schedule a meeting	29	46.0%
I don't know	12	19.0%

N =63

Table 22. For your most recent sponsored award, you use the INSIGHT reporting software to manage the financial expenditures and budgeting of your project.

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	18	33.3%
Rarely	14	25.9%
Sometimes	6	11.1%
Often	8	14.8%
Always	8	14.8%

N =54 Mean=2.52

Table 23. For your most recent sponsored award, post-award support (processing invoices, personnel actions, etc.) from your unit (department/school/program) was

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	4	6.6%
Unsatisfactory	8	13.1%
Neutral	12	19.7%
Satisfactory	23	37.7%
Outstanding	14	23.0%

N =61 Mean=3.57

Table 24. For your most recent sponsored award, post-award support (approval queues, INSIGHT support, personnel actions, etc.) from your college business manager was

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	3	5.8%
Unsatisfactory	6	11.5%
Neutral	8	15.4%
Satisfactory	22	42.3%
Outstanding	13	25.0%

N =52 Mean=3.69

Table 25. For your most recent sponsored award, post-award support (budget and program revisions, no-cost extensions, reporting, close-out, etc.) from OSP was

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	7	12.1%
Unsatisfactory	10	17.2%
Neutral	18	31.0%
Satisfactory	18	31.0%
Outstanding	5	8.6%

N =58 Mean=3.07

Table 26. For your most recent sponsored award, post-award support (project expenditures, financial monitoring, financial reporting) from General Accounting was

	Frequency	Percentage
Unacceptable	9	16.7%
Unsatisfactory	9	16.7%
Neutral	8	14.8%
Satisfactory	21	38.9%
Outstanding	7	13.0%

N =54 Mean=3.15