Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)

Division or Department: TIED

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

Office of Sponsored Programs Mission. The mission of Northwestern State University's Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is to nurture and grow the sponsored-programs enterprise at NSU in accordance with the University's overall mission. OSP offers faculty assistance in: (a) identifying funding opportunities; (b) developing grant applications for submission to external funding agencies; and (c) implementing funded projects. OSP will work with faculty to encourage the inclusion of undergraduate and graduate students in their sponsored projects and activities.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

(1) Data from assessment tools (direct & indirect and quantitative & qualitative) are collected and returned to the director and stored by the director in secure digital format.

(2) The director and support staff will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met.

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff and reported to the Vice President of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development.

(4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required to address identified concerns.

(5) The director, in consultation with the staff and senior leadership, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

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Service Outcomes

SO1. OSP ensures a collaborative partnership with faculty and administration to increase the number of proposals submitted to external agencies. OSP will accommodate 100% of faculty requests for assistance with the use of funding search databases (grants.gov, GRC (Grants Resource Center) database, program websites, etc.) to increase the number of proposals submitted. Monitored via Office calendar and/or email.

Measure 1.1. OSP complies with the university growth expectations of a 10% increase in proposal submission to external agencies, determined at fiscal year-end.

Finding: Target was not met by June 1, 2022; however, reporting does not end for the Office of Sponsored Programs until June 30, 2022.

	Target	Actual
Submitted Proposals		
2019-2020	50	55
2020-2021	55	61
2021-2022	60	50

Analysis.

In 2020-2021, the target was met and exceeded as additional proposals were submitted beyond the assessment deadline for a total of 61 proposal submissions. In 2020-2021, OSP joined forces with a team of Grant Coordinators in three academic divisions to drive the cycle of improvement. At the end of the fiscal year, OSP (1) analyzed the effectiveness of the partnership with the Grants Coordinators, and (2) addressed the strengths and weaknesses of this collaboration at its fundamental stage.

These actions raised OSP staff's awareness of the productiveness of the collaboration with the Grants Coordinators. The objective of this interdepartmental outreach initiative was to encourage grant writing within departments by strengthening proposal preparation and increasing the number of proposal submissions. OSP is prepared to provide the tools and resources considered necessary to accomplish this task.

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the OSP staff made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement. As funding opportunities arose, OSP solicited announcements in advance to Deans and Department Heads before sending the announcement for global distribution on the university's Messenger platform. OSP has received a better response rate when sending applicable announcements to specific departments versus sending multiple opportunities that may or may not suit their departmental needs.

During the fiscal year, the Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs assumed the role of the University of Louisiana Systems Research and Grant Content Expert. This

role has afforded the OSP office greater exposure and has granted a greater understanding of Sponsored Programs initiatives and processes. Webinar sessions led under this directive have provided insight to grant database system training and the LA Board of Regents Support Fund programs.

Decision.

In 2021-2022, the target has not yet been met. These actions will remain in place as there have been reports of faculty appreciation for the addition of a liaison between OSP and the respective departments. A discussion will be held at the end of June 2022 to determine the overall effectiveness of this collaboration. OSP will push the cycle of improvement forward as our Director conveys her understanding and knowledge of sponsored initiatives and discovers how we can better serve our faculty. Since the target goal is currently not met and the university is facing uncertainties with reduced enrollment, the 2022-2023 target will remain at the current total of 60.

SO2. OSP ensures an increase in external dollars received from submitted proposals by faculty, staff, and administration.

Measure 2.1. OSP complies with a target goal of 15% increase of external dollars received at fiscal year-end.

Finding: Target has not been met for fiscal year 2021-2022.

Grant Submission	Target	Received
2019-2020	$5.6m	$5.6m
2020-2021	$6.4m	$8.9m
2021-2022	$7.4m	$2.4m
2022-2023	$2.8m	

Analysis.

In 2020-2021, the target was met and exceeded. For 2021-2022, OSP strived to (1) gain insight into key funding trends, (2) disseminate targeted funding information to faculty promptly and effectively, and (3) incorporate feedback and suggestions received from Grants Coordinators to support the faculty's grant writing projects and to secure successful funding rates. These actions will improve the faculty's accessibility to valuable resources from their Grants Coordinators as they work in union with OSP.

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP staff shared key elements of writing successful proposals and funding announcements as they became available. This partnership with the Grant Coordinators has served as an asset for targeting faculty members who were more inclined to engage in the management of a grant award. Additionally, it was beneficial in identifying obtainable goals and objectives for the overall academic unit. It is standard practice for OSP to proofread proposal submissions and provide suggestions for content purposes and adherence to the sponsoring agencies guidelines, but it is also advantageous to have the Grant Coordinators proofread with a familiarity of the subject matter. The integration of the

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Grants Coordinators has been effective and is not liable for the downward shift in funding. Other factors contributed to the decline in the of the external dollars received during 2021-2022. For instance, remnants of the pandemic and the discouragement of large gatherings prevented OSP from attending the Fall departmental meetings which serves as an outreach medium for promoting OSP services. Not only were fewer proposals submitted, but also fewer requested funding amounts were reported.

Decision.

In 2021-2022, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, OSP will (1) provide support to Grant Coordinators with periodically scheduled meetings for a needs assessment, and (2) solicit training and informative sessions as opportunities arise.

OSP will utilize the Grants Coordinators and the Research and Grants Content Expert role as promotion tools for soliciting funding opportunity announcements and encouraging system-wide initiatives to reach the goal of a 15% increase in external dollars received by the end of the fiscal year. If this downward trend of funding continues for the 2022-2023 year, OSP will consider reducing the percentage of increase to a lesser value to obtain this goal.

Measure 2.2. OSP enforces a 100% internal deadline date requirement on its internal routing form, managed by Office calendar and deadline reminders, thus providing timely review and feedback for quality assurance of proposals with 9 support meetings each fiscal year.

Finding: Target was met.

Proposal Meetings	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
1st Quarter	5	3	4
2nd Quarter	4	4	2
3rd Quarter	2	7	2
4th Quarter	1	4	1

Analysis.

In 2020-2021, the target was met. To drive the cycle of improvement, OSP elected to permanently provide its internal routing forms in a fillable and digital format to secure electronic signatures in 2021-2022.These changes have improved the faculty's ability to review and sign the routing forms with a quicker response time. Originally, these required forms were hand-delivered to offices across campus for signatures. This update allows OSP to submit required documents by deadline dates and allows OSP sufficient time to review and process documents.

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP strived to increase proposal opportunity meetings to 9 and notify faculty of the revised format of the internal routing form. As a result of these changes, in 2021-2022, the target was met.

Decision.

In 2021-2022, the target was met at 9 proposal opportunity meetings. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, OSP will increase the proposal opportunity meeting goal to 10 in 2022-2023 and continue to use the electronic version of the OSP routing form.

These changes will lessen response time to obtain signatures, create instant access for corrections and effectively secure copies of the necessary documentation required for administrative approvals while continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO3. OSP promotes collaboration and disseminates opportunities among departments for institutional-wide projects and proposals.

Measure 3.1. OSP will monitor attendance and participation of collaborative focus groups supporting institutional-wide projects and/or proposals for a minimum of 3 opportunities annually.

Finding: Target was met.

Collaboration Sessions	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
1st Quarter	2	2	0
2nd Quarter	0	2	0
3rd Quarter	0	3	3
4th Quarter	2	0	2

Analysis.

In 2020-2021, the target was met as opportunities for collaboration developed. OSP staff did maintain encouragement of interconnectedness among campus entities through collaborative focus groups in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

This action improved the faculty's ability to receive numerous benefits from grant writing projects and initiatives. Beyond the financial incentive, collaborative efforts provided opportunities for professional development and created a clearer vision of the mission and goals of individual departments as well as the university.

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP staff made all efforts to advise Deans/Department Heads, Grant Coordinators, and faculty by email of any collaborative opportunity notices.

The appointment of two grant writing consultants within the University of Louisiana System fostered discussions of collaborative efforts within the nine universities. OSP promoted the notion that once a shared need is identified and matched with a prospective funding source, a system-wide proposal could increase the probability of producing a more competitive proposal to secure increased external funding. As a result of these changes, in 2021-2022, the target was met.

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Decision.

In 2021-2022, the target was exceeded as departments began to compare the impact of individual projects versus institutional-wide projects. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, OSP staff will keep these efforts in motion and work towards pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 3.2. OSP will achieve 100% positive feedback on a Performance Survey submitted to faculty/staff participants to ensure participants are satisfied with the opportunities provided. Target goal of 30% return rate with 80% of participants at 100% Satisfaction or better. Survey is administered at the end of Fall and Spring semesters. Appendix A

Finding: Target was not met.

	2018-19 FY	2019-20 FY	2020-21 FY	2021-22 FY
Quality of OSP	100%	*survey not submitted	*survey not submitted	
Response Time to Questions	93%	N/A	N/A	
Satisfied Responses	92%		N/A	
Increased Skills/Knowledge	81%		N/A	
Quality of Information	100%	25% Excellent	N/A	
Overall Quality	100%	33% Excellent	N/A	

Analysis.

In 2020-2021, the target was not met as surveys were not distributed. OSP combined the Performance Survey (SO 4, Measure 4.2) and the Satisfaction survey into one Performance Satisfaction survey. The target was to increase the number of responses. In addition, the staff also concluded that a 100% return rate is neither reasonable nor practical, thus a return rate of at least 30% with 80% of these participants reporting 100% satisfaction was recommended.

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP will: (1) revise the current Performance Survey, (2) consider adding a short survey to the signature line of email signature, and (3) increase the distribution of surveys as opportunities become available.

OSP was active in disseminating funding opportunities and assisting faculty and staff with proposal preparations. Many of the funding opportunity informational sessions are provided by the external agencies so a performance survey would not serve as a reflection of OSP's services. Additionally, the response rate for the previous Performance Surveys was low and ineffective. The Director of OSP was appointed as the UL System Research/Grant Content Expert and was responsible for hosting many of the webinars. OSP opted to rate the UL Grants Webinar series since it reached a larger target audience and greater feedback was expected. OSP

implemented these changes to continue to push the cycle of improvement forward. As a result of these changes, OSP found that the response rate to the survey distribution was unproductive and decided to rate the UL Grants Webinar series since it reached a larger target audience to continue to push the cycle of improvement forward. Results attached.

Decision.

In 2021-2022, it was determined that there was an overall 87% Very Satisfied rate and 13% Somewhat Satisfied rate. A 100% rate was reported for participants' expectations being met. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, OSP will (1) distribute surveys and process responses from the UL Grants online seminar series, and (2) distribute a Performance survey on a quarterly basis. By monitoring feedback from future trainings and question-and-answer sessions throughout the fiscal year, OSP will thereby continue to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO4. OSP will ensure opportunities for quality professional development for faculty and staff.

Measure 4.1. OSP will comply with a minimum of 9 professional development opportunities for faculty annually. Appendix B

Finding*:* Target was met.

Professional Development	Workshop/Webinars		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
1st Quarter	6	4	3
2nd Quarter	0	3	8
3rd Quarter	0	2	5
4th Quarter	1	1	10

Analysis*.*

In 2020-2021 the target was met with a transition to virtual based training and informational sessions. In 2020-2021, the availability of sponsoring agency opportunities and funding announcements were more accessible by WebEx or Teams meetings. OSP was able to notify faculty and staff of upcoming presentations and allowed them sufficient time to register, if applicable, and plan to participate. In some instances, the presentations were recorded for later viewing. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP opted to continue this trend of promoting online professional development sessions.

As a result of this shift in 2021-2022, the target was met.

Decision.

In 2021-2022, the target was surpassed. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, OSP staff will increase the target goal to 15 for the next fiscal year. Based

on the steady trend of funding agencies offering virtual presentations, OSP will continue to communicate opportunities with faculty and encourage participation.

Measure 4.2. OSP staff participate in a minimum of 6 professional development sessions to advance their professional knowledge base.

Finding: Target was met.

	OSP Staff Attended PD		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
1st Quarter	5	15	4
2nd Quarter	2	11	3
3rd Quarter	4	13	5
4th Quarter	2	4	6

Analysis.

In 2020-2021, the target was met through specified training for established funding sources but also for potential external sponsoring agencies. OSP searched for further professional development opportunities as they became available in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement forward. The surge in the presentation of professional development sessions through virtual platforms has amplified OSP staff's knowledgebase and ongoing learning practices. Changes to online submission databases occur regularly, so it is imperative to attend training sessions to stay abreast of the requirements and regulations of federal, state, and private agencies.

As a result of these changes in 2021-2022, the target of OSP staff participating in a minimum of 6 professional development endeavors was met. These changes had a significant impact on the OSP's ability to meet the needs of faculty and to abide by the sponsoring agency's guidelines.

Decision.

In 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, OSP will increase the minimum of participating in professional development endeavors to 9. As a centralized service office, OSP must remain up to date with grant administration systems and program regulations. OSP will attend professional development sessions as availabilities are announced thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.

<u>Increase in Grant Proposals</u>
- Effectiveness of Grant Coordinators partnership increased awareness of pre-award processes and grant writing productiveness. There was a total of 61 proposal submissions

<u>Increase External Dollars</u>
- Shared key funding trends as they became available
- Disseminate targeted funding information to faculty promptly and effectively through Grant Coordinators
- Incorporate feedback and suggestions received from Grants Coordinators to support the faculty's grant writing projects and to secure successful funding rates
- Elected to permanently provide internal routing forms in a fillable and digital format to secure electronic signatures providing a quicker response time

<u>Promotes Collaboration and Disseminate Opportunities</u>
- Successfully maintained interconnectedness among campus entities through collaborative focus groups to drive the cycle of improvement creating opportunities for professional development and clearer vision of the mission and goals of individual departments as well as the university
- Survey success was not achieved. OSP
  (1) revised the current Performance Survey
  (2) consider adding a short survey to the signature line of email signature
  (3) increase distribution of surveys as opportunities become available

<u>Quality Professional Development</u>
- 26 Professional development opportunities were offered
  Virtual based training through WebEx or TEAMS provided greater opportunity for attendance
  Recorded presentations could be viewed at later times as a convenience to the participants
- Virtual offerings for staff professional development encouraged more participation.
  18 total professional development sessions attended by OSP staff

Plan of action moving forward

<u>Increase in Grant Proposals</u>

Move forward with the collaboration with Grants Coordinators to push productiveness in grant submissions. This interdepartmental outreach encourages grant writing within departments and strengthens proposal preparation and submission.
  (1) analyze the effectiveness of the partnership with the Grants Coordinators
  (2) address the strengths and weaknesses of this collaboration at its fundamental stage

<u>Increase External Dollars</u>

To improve the faculty's accessibility to valuable resources from their Grants

Coordinators as they work in union with OSP.
   (1) provide support to Grant Coordinators with periodically scheduled meetings
      for a needs assessment
   (2) solicit training and informative sessions as opportunities arise
   (3) increase proposal opportunity meeting goal to 10 and use revised version of the
      OSP routing form

Promotes Collaboration and Disseminate Opportunities

Push forward with another year of monitoring the success of these goals:
To improve the faculty's ability to receive numerous benefits from grant writing projects and initiatives.
(1) persist on encouraging interconnectedness among campus entities through collaborative focus groups.

To measure participants feedback throughout the fiscal year.
(1) revise the current Performance Survey
(2) consider adding a short survey to the signature line of email signature
(3) increase the distribution of surveys as opportunities become available

Distribution of Survey
(1) distribute surveys and process responses from the UL Grants online seminar series
(2) distribute Performance survey on a quarterly basis, monitor feedback and host question and-answer sessions

Quality Professional Development

To improve the faculty's competency in their fields.
(1) Increase target goal to 15
(2) Increase OSP professional development to 9