Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

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.

<h1 style="text-align:center; color:blue">Assessment Cycle 2020-2021</h1>

SO 1. 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 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 10% increase in proposal submission to external agencies, determined at fiscal year-end.

Finding: Target was met.

	Target	Actual
Submitted Proposals		
2019-2020	50	55
2020-2021	55	55

Analysis.

In 2019-2020, the target was met. Changes made in 2019-2020 included adding a funding opportunity list to the existing monthly university newsletter that would provide faculty with the resources to explore various agencies funding announcements. OSP later discovered that issuing department specific funding opportunities was more effective than distributing a generalized list in the university newsletter. The newsletter is a format used for OSP to primarily share recently submitted proposals as well as to highlight the success of funded projects so the decision to keep this information separate was made to avoid information overload.

Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the OSP staff made the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Due to COVID restrictions, OSP was unable to compile information to include in the newsletter each month but the office staff continued to share upcoming funding opportunities via email and included information in the newsletter that would deem beneficial to all departments in relation to the overall grant writing process. Announcements of funding opportunities were also included in global Messenger announcements which are sent out daily and extended to all faculty and staff. Additionally, OSP worked closely with each newly hired Grants Coordinators housed in the Colleges of Education and Human Development, Arts and Sciences, and in the School of Business. We anticipate the number of proposal submissions to increase by June 2021 while exercising best practices to comply with the established 10% university growth expectation.

Although full implementation of our changes was hindered by the effects of the pandemic, as a result of these changes in 2020-2021, the target was met. The obtainable changes made a direct impact on OSP's ability to target specific disciplines with useful information versus disseminating a mass of funding

opportunities campus-wide that may or may not be applicable to each academic discipline. Recent collaborative efforts with the designated Grants Coordinators have afforded OSP the opportunity to extend their services to a more targeted audience. The Grant Coordinators have an academic advantage of using their commonality to consult with faculty and staff to discover which type of projects will deem most beneficial to the departments as well as individually. Therefore, OSP can utilize this information to provide more specialized funding opportunity searches that will match the needs of faculty members and ultimately lead to an increase in overall proposal submissions.

Decision.

In 2020-2021, the target to have a total of 55 proposal submissions was met. Based on the analysis of 2020-2021 results, the OSP staff will implement the following actions in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement: (1) analyze the effectiveness of the partnership with the Grants Coordinators, and (2) address the strengths and weaknesses of this collaboration at its fundamental stage.

These actions will raise OSP staff's awareness of the productiveness of the collaboration with the Grants Coordinators. A goal of this interdepartmental outreach initiative is to encourage grant writing within departments to strengthen proposal preparation and submission while incorporating OSP's ability to provide the necessary resources to continually push the cycle of improvement forward. Since the target goal was met, the 2021-2022 target will be 61.

SO 2. 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 was met.

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

Analysis.

In 2019-2020, the target was met. OSP seeks and identifies grant opportunities and disseminates their findings to faculty and staff from various funding sources such as listservs, Grants Resource Center, Foundation Directory Online and individual funding agencies. Faculty and staff are notified of upcoming funding opportunities as they become available through targeted email announcements, market services and

individual department meetings. Furthermore, OSP informs Departments Heads and Administration of pertinent funding opportunities and encourages them to solicit the information to their faculty as they deem fit. In efforts to increase external funding and awareness, OSP has extended its services to provide individual or group training on navigating online these funding search resources. Training empowers faculty and staff with the ability to customize their intended search content as well being able to set the interval in which they receive funding opportunity notifications.

Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, OSP staff made the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement: (1) provided 14 informational sessions, (2) utilized emails, market services, and department meetings to distribute information and (3) co-hosted a professional development presentation with the Grants Coordinators. Informational and interactive sessions were provided on a requested basis. During these sessions, faculty and staff were introduced to OSP's purposes and services offered from the pre-award process through the execution of an agreement. Faculty and staff were also guided through several grant research websites and instructed on how to navigate those sites in order to produce funding opportunities customized to their individual or departmental needs. Additionally, the Vice President for Academic Affairs hosted a Professional Development opportunity during the beginning of the Spring semester. As a collaborative effort, OSP joined the Grants Coordinators team and presented an informative session entitled, "Grants 101" which served as an orientation to grant writing as well as an introduction to supportive role of the Grants Coordinators.

Although still in its early stages, these changes were positively received and had a considerable impact on faculty and staff awareness of available tools and resources. The outcome will be available at the end of the fiscal year.

Decision.

In 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the OSP will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement: (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 changes will improve the faculty's accessibility to valuable resources from their Grants Coordinators as they work in union with OSP; thereby continuing to reach the goal of a 15% increase in external dollars received by the end of the fiscal year.

Measure 2.2. OSP enforces a 100% internal deadline date requirement, managed by Office calendar and deadline reminders, thus providing timely review and feedback for quality assurance of proposals with 8 support meetings each fiscal year.

Finding: Target was met.

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

Analysis.

In 2019-2020, the target was met. Faculty support meetings are critical in assisting with timely submissions of grants. Based upon previous success of adhering to deadline date requirements, 8 support meetings have been the most productive number of meetings to assist faculty in meeting these deadlines. The past year presented many challenges in making these meetings happen but with technology and adaptations of the staff, OSP was able to meet these requirements with 100% timely submissions.

Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results and the impact of the pandemic, OSP staff made adjustments and exceptions to policies in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Previously, proper signatures were completed in person on the documents and physically routing to offices across campus. Due to COVID restrictions and the rise of virtual meetings, OSP accepted electronic signatures of its required internal routing forms and improvised with the timing constraints of its requirements.

As a result of these changes, in 2020-2021, the target was met with a total of 18 faculty support meetings primarily through virtual meetings, emails and telephone communications. Considering the residual effects of the pandemic, face-to-face meetings were almost obsolete. These changes had a direct impact on the faculty's ability to obtain necessary signatures while teleworking and proved to be a more efficient method of meeting internal deadlines.

Decision.

In 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP will permanently provide its internal routing forms in a fillable and digital format to allow electronic signatures in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

These changes will improve the faculty's ability to submit required documents by deadline dates and to allow OSP sufficient time to review and process documents within 9 support meetings during the fiscal year; thereby, continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO 3. OSP promotes collaboration and disseminates opportunities among departments for institutional-wide projects and proposals.

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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
1st Quarter	2	2
2nd Quarter	0	2
3rd Quarter	0	3
4th Quarter	2	0

Analysis*.

In 2019-2020, the target was met. OSP has been able to successfully provide a minimum of 2 opportunities annually. OSP seeks funding opportunities through research-based resources to encourage participation of collaborative focus groups supporting institutional-wide projects and/or proposals. As a result of the target goal being achieved, it was recommended to increase the opportunity to a minimum of 3 collaborative opportunities annually.

Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, OSP staff made the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement: (1) incorporated the availability of COVID-19 and weather-related funding opportunities and (2) relied on the expertise and knowledge of Deans/department heads to disseminate funding opportunities to ideal faculty members. Deans/Department Heads were added to our efforts because of the rapport they share with their faculty members. They have the firsthand knowledge of the demands/challenges faced within each department and have better insight on which person(s) may be an ideal fit for preparing a successful proposal. Faculty tend to be more attentive when information is shared from a direct supervisor; therefore, Deans/Department Heads complement OSP's efforts in supporting collaborative initiatives on all projects including those that were submitted for COVID-19 and weather-related funding opportunities.

As a result of these changes in 2020-2021, the target to provide a minimum of 3 collaborative opportunities was met.

Decision.

In 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP staff will persist on encouraging interconnectedness among campus entities through collaborative focus groups in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

This action will improve the faculty's ability to receive numerous benefits from grant writing projects and initiatives. Beyond the financial incentive, collaborative efforts provide opportunities for professional development and create a clearer vision of the mission and goals of individual departments as well as the university as a whole while working to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

Finding: Target was not met.

	2017-18 FY	2018-19 FY	2019-20 FY	2020-21 FY
Quality of OSP	76.6%	100%	*survey not submitted	*survey not submitted
Response Time to Questions	90.2% Just Right	93%	N/A	N/A
Satisfied Responses	94.75% Just Right	92%		N/A
Increased Skills/Knowledge	84.95% Little/Lot	81%		N/A
Quality of Information	N/A	100%	25% Excellent	N/A
Overall Quality	93%	100%	33% Excellent	N/A

Analysis.

In 2019-2020, the target was not met. Two surveys were being used prior to the 2019-2020 academic year. Return rates were very low as exemplified in last year's return rate of 16%. After staff discussion and review of the low return rate, it was decided to combine the two surveys into one. Beginning 2020-2021, 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 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 2019-2020 results, OSP staff modified its delivery of disseminating performance surveys for 2020-2021 academic year. Due to the limited participation rate and COVID restrictions, performance surveys were not disseminated as proposed. OSP's inability to interact with faculty at the Fall departmental meetings had a direct impact on visibility, advocacy of services and efficacy of survey participation. As a recovery effort, OSP disseminated a survey via a Messenger announcement requesting feedback from any faculty staff who had utilized OSP's services. Only one response was received and consequently was not included in this year's findings. We are, therefore, considering the notion of adding a survey link to our email signature line to reach the maximum number of participants.

As a result of these changes, the OSP can improve its ability to gauge the effectiveness of providing trainings and resources to faculty regarding the sponsored programs office; thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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Decision.

In 2020-2021 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement: (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.

These changes will improve OSP's ability to measure participants feedback throughout the fiscal year thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO 4. OSP will ensure opportunities for quality professional development for faculty and staff.

Measure 4.1. OSP will comply with a minimum of 8 professional development opportunities for faculty annually. Appendix B

Finding*: Target was met.

Professional Development	Workshop	
	2019/20	2020/21
1st Quarter	6	4
2nd Quarter	0	3
3rd Quarter	0	2
4th Quarter	1	1

Analysis*.

In 2019-2020 the target was not met. In 2019-2020, the number of professional development opportunities offered to the faculty/staff increased to 8 opportunities. At the close of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, it was expected that OSP would be able to meet this target of 8 opportunities. With limited access to campuses and resources during the set of conditions of the pandemic, OSP was unable to offer professional development opportunities during the latter part of the fiscal year. These professional development sessions are offered as external opportunities arise. Faculty and staff requests are considered as the sessions are scheduled for presentation.

Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, OSP disseminated prospective professional development opportunities in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. As the virtual trend soared during the pandemic, most agencies adapted by converting conferences and workshops to an online delivery mode thus increasing the availability of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

As a result of this shift in 2020-2021, the target was exceeded with a total of 10 as of June 3, 2021 but is subject to change by the fiscal year end. These innovative changes impacted OSP's capability of providing faculty opportunities designed to increase their professional knowledge, competence, skill set, and effectiveness.

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Decision.

In 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP staff will promote online professional development sessions and trainings in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

This initiative will improve the faculty's competency in their fields; thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward. As we return to some form of normalcy, OSP will assess the availability of professional development opportunities and set a target goal of offering 9 sessions for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Measure 4.2. OSP will achieve a 100% positive feedback from each professional development session OSP conducts. Participants are provided a Satisfaction Survey following each PD session. Appendix A & B

Finding: Target was merged with SO3 Measure 3.2.

	2017-18 FY	2018-19 FY	2019-20 FY	2020-21 FY
Quality of OSP	76.6%	100%	*survey not submitted	*survey not submitted
Response Time to Questions	90.2% Just Right	93%		
Satisfied Responses	94.75% Just Right	92%		
Increased Skills/Knowledge	84.95% Little/Lot	81%		
Quality of Information	N/A	100%		
Overall Quality	93%	100%		

Analysis.

In 2019-2020 the target was not met. This measure was combined with SO 3 and Measure 3.2. The combination of the information resulted in a more comprehensive insight of the faculty/staff's need to increase the number of grant submissions to secure external funding. Findings indicated that faculty were interested in a wider range of funding opportunities besides the emphasis placed on the upcoming LA Board of Regents proposals discussed in the Fall departmental meetings. Since these meetings only allow a brief, informational overview of OSP services, faculty and staff were strongly urged to schedule office visits, join WebEx meetings and reference online grant seeking resources. Furthermore, all faculty were encouraged to register on Grants.gov to receive individualized funding opportunity updates.

Based on analysis of 2019-2020 results, OSP held individual and group trainings on grant funding resources and worked with Grants Coordinators to address specialized interests in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Positive feedback was received, and most individuals expressed their satisfaction verbally or through chat features of the virtual platforms. Despite all efforts, not all faculty/staff have registered for Grants.gov to receive the full benefit of receiving individualized funding opportunity

updates. Although virtual meetings have become the standard means of presentations, OSP will strive to disperse surveys on a more frequented basis and strongly encourage survey participation to improve the effectiveness of the Sponsored Programs office.

As a result of these changes, in 2020-2021 the target of receiving 100% positive was verbally expressed but data was not recorded as surveys were not dispersed.

Decision.

In 2020-2021 the target was not met. Based on the verbal expressions of satisfaction, OSP will administer surveys in a higher frequency in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

These changes will improve OSP's ability to gauge the effectiveness of providing trainings and resources to faculty regarding the sponsored programs office; thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 4.3. OSP staff participates in a minimum of 6 professional development sessions to advance their professional knowledgebase.

Finding: Target was met.

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

Analysis.

In 2019-2020, the target was met. Professional development for the OSP staff is vital to provide faculty and staff with quality information and current grant offerings pertinent to their field of interests. In 2019-2020, OSP placed professional development emphasis on small grant opportunities and support with grant writing skills for new faculty.

Based on the analysis of 2019-2020 results, OSP participated in numerous professional development webinars and sponsoring agency affiliated informational sessions in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. OSP registers for informational sessions on new funding announcements to stay abreast of program updates to keep potential grant writers informed of submission requirements, additional documentation needed, and deadline dates. Each sponsoring agency has its own requirements, and many have elected to provide potential participants with a preview of what is expected and allows for a Q & A session.

As a result of these changes in 2020-2021, 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 abide by the sponsoring agency's guidelines.

Decision.

In 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, OSP will seek further professional development opportunities as they become available in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The surge in the presentation of professional development sessions through virtual platforms has amplified OSP staff's knowledgebase and ongoing learning practices thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

Increase in Grant Proposals
- Changed Best Practices to include department specific funding opportunity notifications.
- Used Messenger to announce funding opportunity availability.
- Partnered with newly appointed Grant Coordinators in the Colleges of Education and Human Development, Arts and Science, and School of Business.

Increase External Dollars
- Offered 16 trainings.
- Distributed information via emails, market services, and department meetings.
- Teamed with Department Grant Coordinators and Department Chairs.
- Added information and interactive sessions as requested. Increased external dollars received by the university.

Promotes Collaboration and Disseminate Opportunities
- Partnered with Department Chairs to support collaborative initiatives on all projects.
- Incorporated COVID-19 and weather-related fund opportunities.
- Adjusted SO measure to reflect more realistic survey response expectations.

Quality Professional Development
- Offered more than 8 professional development sessions, virtual meetings provided a venue that exceeded this face-to-face target.
- Professional development provided to staff based upon requests as opportunity became available.
- Offered Grants.gov as a source of external opportunities to faculty and staff.
- SO4 Measure 4.2 was merged with SO.3 Measure 3.2, however the survey was not disseminated due to COVID-19 complications.
- OSP professional development currently stands at 43, well above target due to virtual meetings.

Plan of action moving forward.

Increase in Grant Proposals

Raise OSP staff's awareness of the productiveness of the collaboration with the Grants Coordinators. A goal of this interdepartmental outreach initiative is to encourage grant writing within departments to strengthen 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.

Increase External Dollars

To improve the faculty's accessibility to valuable resources from their Grants Coordinators as they work in union with OSP.
   (1) gain insight into key funding trends,
   (2) disseminate targeted funding information to faculty promptly and effectively,
   (3) incorporate feedback and suggestions received from Grants Coordinators to support the faculty's grant writing projects and to secure successful funding rates.

To improve the faculty's ability to submit required documents by deadline dates and to allow OSP sufficient time to review and process documents within 9 support meetings during the fiscal year.
   (1) permanently provide its internal routing forms in a fillable and digital format to allow electronic signatures.

Promotes Collaboration and Disseminate Opportunities

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.

Quality Professional Development

To improve the faculty's competency in their fields.
   (1) OSP staff will promote online professional development sessions and trainings.
   (2) Will seek further professional development opportunities as they become available.