

MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty and Administrators

From: Andrés G. Gil, Vice President for Sponsored Research

Re: Research and University Graduate School Annual Activity Report

Date: May 4, 2009

During the past two years, coinciding with the arrival of Senior Vice President George Walker, the Office of Research and the University Graduate School embarked on a series of initiatives to improve services provided. Periodically, we have communicated on these efforts with the University community and reports have been provided to the Board of Trustees.

The Office of Research has conducted two annual surveys of faculty who have submitted grant applications or have been awarded grants. We will continue to conduct these annual surveys and intend to provide an annual report of the results of the surveys, and more importantly, the steps taken to address findings from the surveys. We begin with the first annual report, which in this instance covers a period longer than one year, and includes results from the 2007 and 2008 Surveys. The Report can be accessed at <http://osra.fiu.edu/reports.html>.

In addition to the Annual Reports, we will also provide access on the OSRA website to the Board of Trustees (BOT) Reports. While there is some overlap between these reports, the BOT reports provide more detailed information on grant applications, grant awards and research expenditures. The BOT reports consist of a mid-fiscal year and final fiscal year report. The most recent mid-year report can be accessed at <http://osra.fiu.edu/reports.html>. We have also provided the final fiscal year BOT reports for the past 3 years.

I want to thank all the faculty members that participated in the two annual customer surveys. The feedback we received has been instrumental in the plans we are developing for improvements in services to FIU's research community.



ANNUAL REPORT

I. Introduction

The Office of Research and University Graduate School (RUGS) has committed itself to making an annual report to the faculty that reviews various indicators and initiatives of importance for progress in the essential research and graduate education missions of Florida International University (FIU). This report focuses on factors and activities related to the Office of Sponsored Research Administration (OSRA). However, subsequent annual reports will focus on both Research and Graduate Education (RUGS).

During the past 1½ years, we have published several updates associated with initiatives of importance to our research and graduate education mission. This is our first comprehensive annual report to the faculty. However, the timeframe covered by this report encompasses more than one year, as it includes parts of the 2006-2007 and the 2007-2008 academic years (AY). This report focuses on: a) [research and creative activities](#), b) [sponsored research performance](#), c) [research integrity](#), d) [intellectual property](#), and e) [quality of service](#).

In order to continue developing FIU's research and graduate education performance and reputation, the University needs to improve and grow its research and graduate education programs. One important component of this continuing effort is the improvement of the quality of services RUGS provides. This must be done with even more scarce but required resources to hire and develop staff needed for training, and to develop new modern research administration and financial computer technology. However, getting the "trains running on time" is necessary but not sufficient to guarantee progress. Part of the University's plan requires investing wisely in productive research faculty (both existing and new), judicious use of scarce research space, and selective investment in Ph.D. programs. Nevertheless, better service, new research, as well as graduate education resources and personnel alone will not allow us to reach our goals if we do not have transparent, University-wide strategic plans for research investment. These must be supplemented by a spirit of cooperation and accountability (progress reviews). This report addresses all of these areas.

Every spring semester we will provide an annual update covering the prior academic year.

II. Research

Research and Creative Activities:

During the 2007-08 AY, the Office of the Vice President for Research requested the development of research strategic plans from each college. The goal was to gain a better understanding of the resources needed for development of research and creative activities, as well as graduate education in each college, and to allow for the identification of connections and clustering of research within and among colleges. The plans will also allow RUGS to partner with the colleges for the allocation of investments in research and graduate education. Below we present a brief overview of the areas of research foci across the University. More detailed plans can be obtained from the Deans of each of the colleges. It should be noted that these strategic plans have been affected by the current budget challenges and several changes in college leadership positions. Nevertheless, the University is committed to move forward with its core research and educational mission, and these strategic research areas will continue to be important to the progression and evolution of the University. **We will work with Deans and departments to update the strategic research plans given new leadership in many of the colleges. Additionally, we have been working with Deans to develop and implement specific Cluster Hiring plans in line with the strategic research plans.**

The major strategic research areas identified by the colleges included **health, the environment, hurricane-related research, nanotechnology and international studies**. Some examples are provided below.

Health-related areas include HIV/AIDS and substance addictions, child welfare, health disparities, child/family mental health and development, early learning, school readiness, early childhood development, learning disabilities, literacy and bilingualism, clinical practice, tele-health and cyber-medicine, and imaging and signal processing with neuroscience and assistive technology research. These strategic areas involve several colleges, including the *College of Arts & Sciences, the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, the College of Education, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, the College of Engineering and Computing, the College of Architecture and the Arts, and the College of Medicine*. Within the *College of Arts & Sciences*, several departments are engaged in these research areas: Biological Sciences, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Psychology, Physics and Biophysics.

In terms of the environment, several areas were identified pertaining to Southeast Florida and the neotropics, alternative energy initiatives, and environmental/green engineering. These research initiatives are taking place in the *College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Engineering and Computing*, and related centers, such as SERC and ARC.

There were strategic research areas related to hurricane technology and preparedness from the *College of Engineering and Computing, the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, the School of Business, and the College of Medicine*. These include areas such as hurricane engineering (including the Wall-of-Wind), storm surge prediction models, business continuity preparedness, and public health issues associated with disasters.

The *College of Engineering and Computing* identified research in nanotechnology initiatives focusing on bio/nano sensors, nano-electronics, drug delivery, imaging, information storage, and nano-structured materials. This research has clear connections with initiatives taking place in the *College of Medicine*.

The *College of Medicine* has also identified the following: 1) environmental hazards, 2) infectious diseases, 3) reproduction, 4) cancer, 5) biosensors, and 6) social determinants and ethnic health disparities.

Sponsored Research: [\(back\)](#)

During the current FY, 2008-2009, there have been substantial increases in new awards. Table 1 compares awards during the first seven months of FY 2007-2008 and FY 2008-2009. As shown, awards increased by 30.8% between the two periods, and the indirect rate of the new awards increased from 16.8% to 20% between the two periods.

Table 1 - Comparison of Awards Received Between FY 2007-2008 and FY 2008-2009

College/School/Center/Division	JULY 2007- JANUARY 2008			JULY 2008 - JANUARY 2009			% change
	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	
Academic Affairs	\$95,022	\$2,979	\$98,001	\$0	\$0	\$0	-100.00%
Applied Research Center (ARC)	\$1,968,994	\$745,594	\$2,714,588	\$2,010,861	\$643,395	\$2,654,256	-2.22%
International Hurricane Research Center (IHRC) ¹	\$2,028,708	\$193,327	\$2,222,035	\$1,660,340	\$366,708	\$2,027,048	-8.78%
The Wolfsonian Museum	\$928,401	\$32,326	\$960,727	\$1,016,544	\$5,870	\$1,022,414	6.42%
Undergraduate Studies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$54,750	\$0	\$54,750	100.00%
University Libraries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$105,729	\$23,448	\$129,177	100.00%
Frost Arts Museum	\$4,350	\$0	\$4,350	\$193,729	\$0	\$193,729	4353.54%
College of Architecture & The Arts	\$125,113	\$0	\$125,113	\$199,620	\$4,346	\$203,966	63.03%

Table 1 - Comparison of Awards Received Between FY 2007-2008 and FY 2008-2009

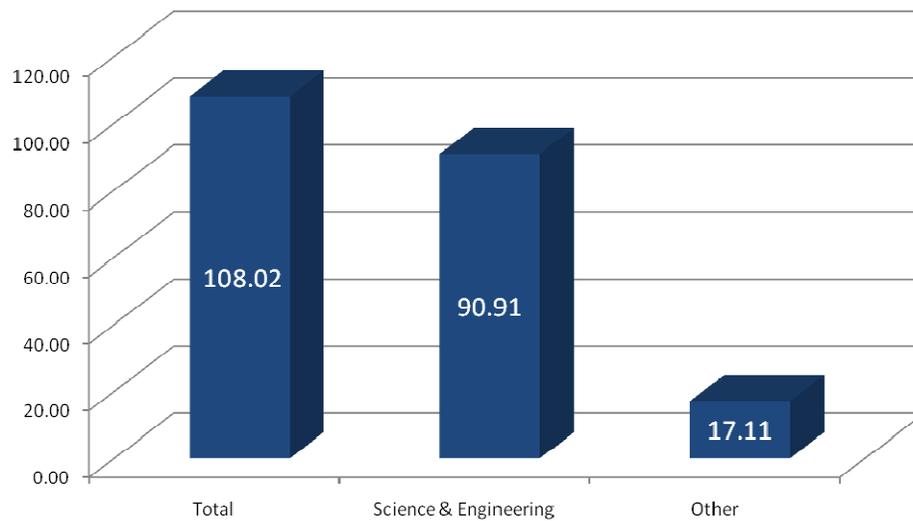
College/School/Center/Division	JULY 2007- JANUARY 2008			JULY 2008 - JANUARY 2009			% change
	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	
College of Arts & Sciences	\$13,047,525	\$2,085,094	\$15,132,619	\$16,578,103	\$3,329,251	\$19,907,354	31.55%
Center for Transnational and Comparative Studies	\$9,575	\$0	\$9,575	\$158,125	\$9,249	\$167,374	1648.03%
Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies	\$566,900	\$45,352	\$612,252	\$13,889	\$1,111	\$15,000	-97.55%
Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC)	\$784,137	\$45,694	\$829,831	\$2,245,206	\$265,299	\$2,510,505	202.53%
Southeast Environmental Research Center (SERC)	\$3,636,854	\$683,414	\$4,320,268	\$3,834,769	\$794,297	\$4,629,066	7.15%
Cuban Research Institute (CRI)	\$285,714	\$14,286	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	-100.00%
Metropolitan Center	\$463,759	\$45,871	\$509,630	\$438,292	\$110,266	\$548,558	7.64%
Center for Labor Research & Studies (CLRS)	\$49,821	\$3,779	\$53,600	\$75,861	\$8,139	\$84,000	56.72%
College of Business Administration¹	\$1,181,437	\$68,516	\$1,249,953	\$834,048	\$48,060	\$882,108	-29.43%
College of Education	\$3,192,008	\$284,678	\$3,476,686	\$2,355,041	\$228,027	\$2,583,068	-25.70%
College of Engineering & Computing	\$5,242,425	\$905,573	\$6,147,998	\$10,106,890	\$2,136,311	\$12,243,201	99.14%
College of Law	\$137,149	\$0	\$137,149	\$107,268	\$0	\$107,268	-21.79%
College of Medicine	\$501,948	\$171,416	\$673,364	\$956,298	\$267,262	\$1,223,560	81.71%
College of Nursing & Health Sciences	\$972,353	\$165,963	\$1,138,316	\$675,952	\$147,956	\$823,908	-27.62%
College of Public Health & Social Work	\$3,141,372	\$1,007,283	\$4,148,655	\$5,220,474	\$1,434,809	\$6,655,283	60.42%
Division of Finance & Administration	\$37,838	\$0	\$37,838	\$25,944	\$0	\$25,944	-31.43%
Division of Student Affairs	\$1,641,269	\$99,649	\$1,740,918	\$1,178,207	\$82,420	\$1,260,627	-27.59%
Division of University Advancement	\$182,036	\$0	\$182,036	\$86,402	\$0	\$86,402	-52.54%
School of Hospitality & Tourism Management	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$75,000	100.00%
School of Journalism & Mass Communication	\$128,875	\$21,133	\$150,008	\$147,856	\$53,224	\$201,080	25.40%
University Technology Services	\$994,567	\$91,150	\$1,085,717	\$948,656	\$56,344	\$1,005,000	-7.43%
CIARA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$68,067	\$28,814	\$96,881	100.00%
TOTAL²	\$34,684,768	\$5,831,350	\$40,516,118	\$44,163,105	\$8,834,111	\$52,997,216	30.81%
Effective/average indirect cost rate	16.81%			20.0%			

¹ Funding for Hurricane Loss Model (PI: Hamid) is included in IHRC and College of Business awards

² Total excludes Centers/Institutes under the College of Arts and Sciences

We also present research expenditures as reported on the NSF Form, which is the major criterion used externally to classify the level of research productivity by universities. **Figure 1** presents research expenditures for FY 2006-2007. As shown, research expenditures totaled \$108.02 million, with 90.9% from the Sciences and Engineering. Federal grants accounted for 48.2% of the expenditures during FY 2006-2007. The total research expenditures in the NSF report of \$108.02 million qualified FIU for the tuition differential rate recently approved by Governor Christ. The FY 2008-09 report to the NSF is due on September 2009.

**Figure 1—Direct and Indirect Grant Expenditures
(in million dollars)**



III. Office of Research Integrity ([back](#))

The Office of Research Integrity (ORI) continues to implement a comprehensive research compliance program. The program includes making updates to ORI's policies, procedures, website, and other important compliance areas. Progress this year included:

- The ORI website was redesigned to provide better clarity, functionality, and regulatory guidance to FIU faculty, students and staff members.
- A Conflict of Interest/Commitment form and policy is undergoing review by the University Compliance Office and the Office of the General Counsel. This policy will provide a disclosure process that protects the University from potential risks associated with all types of conflicts of interest (financial, fiduciary and time-commitment) as they relate to sponsored research activities.
- The University Graduate School manual was updated to include a brief summary of the various compliance initiatives as they affect graduate education. For example, information is included that will assist graduate students in the process of obtaining approval from the appropriate review committee when conducting research involving humans (i.e., the IRB), animals (i.e., the IACUC), and/or recombinant DNA (rDNA).
- The Animal Care Facility is undergoing a range of changes in policies, equipment, and compliance to obtain AAALAC accreditation.
- ORI continues to conduct educational training seminars on areas such as the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), continuing education workshop series, and Research Involving Human Subjects. The seminars are intended for FIU students, faculty and staff members. The schedule of seminars is posted on the ORI webpage (<http://ori.fiu.edu>). In addition, after July 15, 2008, completion of the on-line CITI RCR training modules became a requisite in order for graduate student to submit a thesis or dissertation proposal to the University Graduate School.

IV. Intellectual Property Management ([back](#))

We are in the process of conducting a complete assessment of the activities, procedures and philosophical approach of the Office of Intellectual Property Management (IP). This will be necessary as we plan for expected growth related to the new COM and growth activities throughout the University, including greater focus on commercialization through the FIU Research Foundation. This assessment will include consultation

with Deans and faculty members from the programs and fields most likely to engage in research producing IP. The goal is to have developed a plan for future management of IP at FIU by the end of the upcoming Summer Semester.

During FY 2006-2007, active marketing of promising technologies with professionally developed materials led to an increase in industry and potential licensee interest in FIU technologies. Several visits or licensing discussions/negotiations from at least 10 technology transfer organizations, VC firms, or companies, also took place. Some of these included the Calvert Research Institute, UTEK Corporation, Sigma Partners, Seagate, Insight Media, Current Technologies Corporation, SimpleTech, Safe Hydrogen LLC, Neurotech, Mitsubishi Pharma Healthcare Venture Management, and ICx Nomadics.

In addition, FIU participated with other Florida universities on state initiatives to enhance technology transfer and commercialization, including support of a proposal submission for the “Institute for Commercialization of Public Research” with other Florida public universities. We also received a \$50,000 grant from the State dedicated to Enhancing Biomedical Technology Transfer.

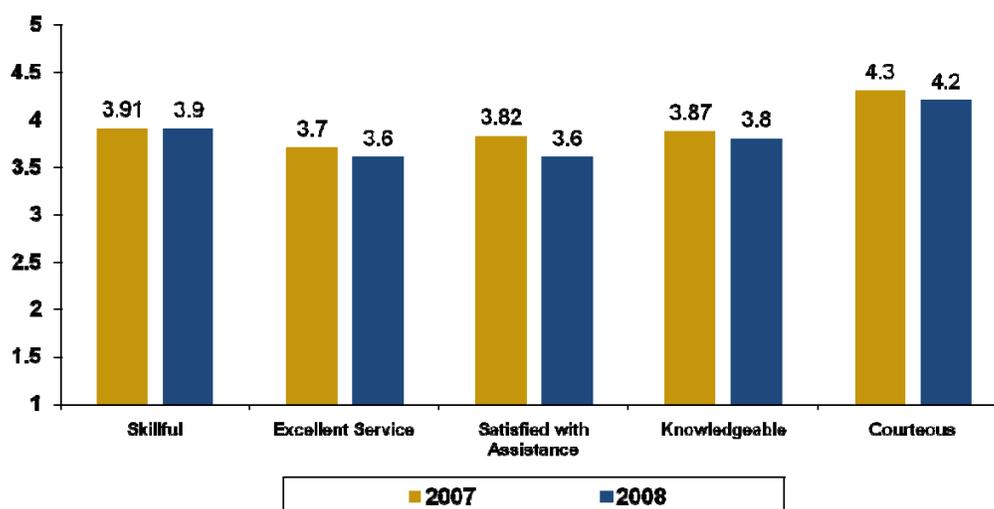
V. Quality of Service [\(back\)](#)

Results from Office of Research Annual Quality of Service Surveys:

In 2007, the Office of Research began its first annual survey to assess researchers’ levels of satisfaction in Pre-Award and Post-Award areas, to identify obstacles and challenges, and provide feedback on future plans. A second survey was conducted in the Fall of 2008. The first survey (2007) was sent to 204 faculty members, and 111 completed the survey (54.4% response rate). The 2008 survey was sent to 302 members, and 194 completed the survey (64% response rate). The range of scores for each question was from 1 (lowest level of satisfaction) to 5 (highest level of satisfaction).

Figure 2 shows the results regarding experiences with Pre-Award staff. Overall, satisfaction was relatively high for both years, with scores near 4 (out of 5) for most items. The average score for the combined questions was 3.92 for Pre-Award and 3.62 for Post-Award in 2007, and 3.80 for Pre-Award and 3.71 in 2008. There were slight decreases in all the categories and we plan to make improvements in this area as both Pre-Award and Post-Award OSRA staff begins to be embedded in the colleges (see [Goals for Improvement](#)). The next Survey will be conducted during the upcoming Fall 2009 semester.

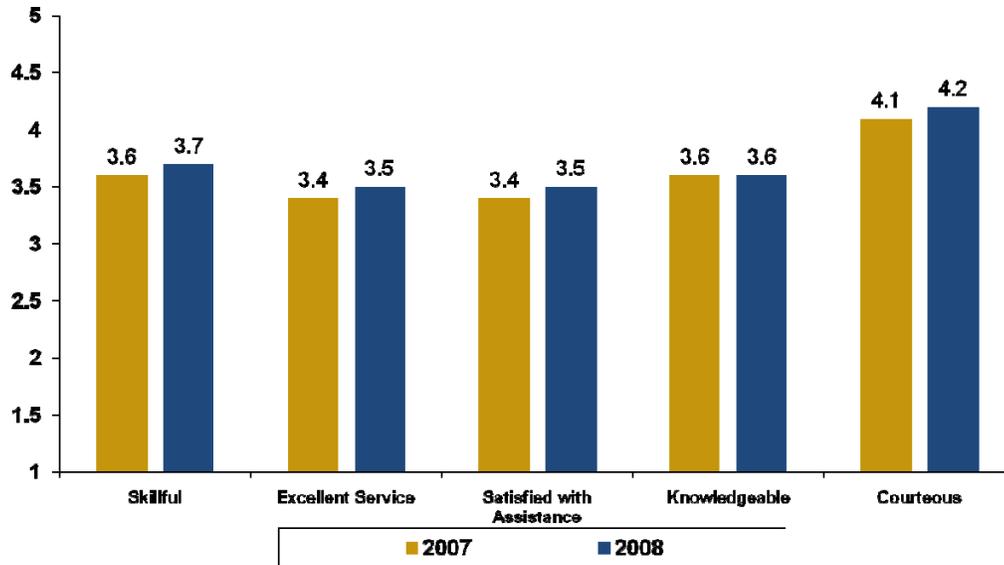
Figure 2 – Experiences with Pre-Award OSRA Staff



Scoring: Scale from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating highest level of satisfaction or agreement.

Figure 3 presents results for satisfaction for Post-Award staff. Note that in comparing Figures 2 and 3, levels of satisfaction are higher for Pre-Award for each of the questions. However, level of satisfaction with Post Award staff remained unchanged or improved slightly for these questions.

Figure 3 – Experiences with Post-Award OSRA Staff

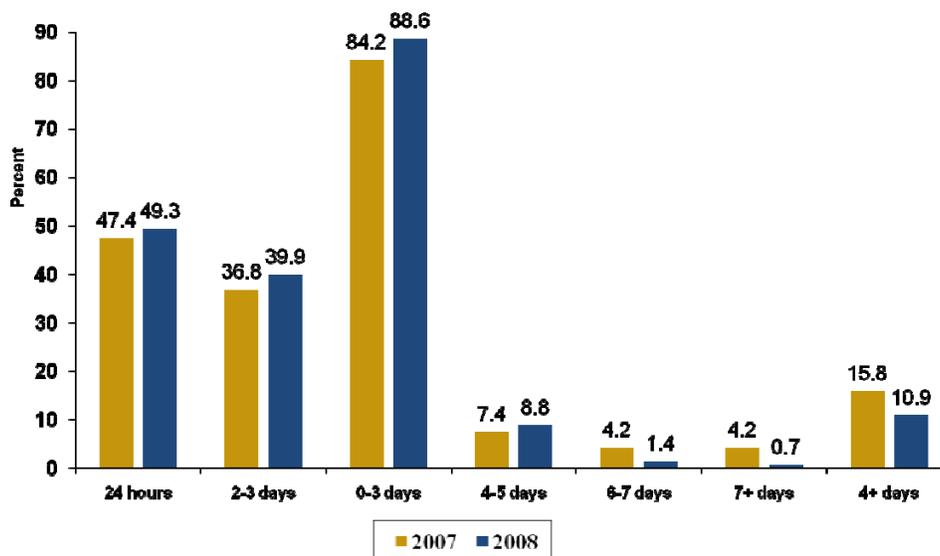


Scoring: Scale from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating highest level of satisfaction or agreement.

[\(back to Goals section\)](#)

The surveys contained specific questions regarding the number of days it takes OSRA staff to respond to inquiries. Results are shown on **Figure 4**. There were marked improvements between 2007 and 2008, especially in the frequency of taking more than four days to respond. However, there is a need to improve the 24-hour response time from the current 49.3% to levels that are closer to 80%. Later in this report, we address the plans for such improvements.

Figure 4 – Length of Time for Office of Research to Return Telephone Calls



The surveys also included a series of questions regarding areas in which PIs indicated they needed support in processing and/or management of grants. Results for Pre-Award are presented on **Figures 5 and 6**. The major areas of needed assistance remained similar for both years, and focused on needs in areas pertaining to budgeting, preparation of Internal Clearance Forms for internal approval of submission, and general support from the college pertaining to grant submissions.

Figure 5 – Level of Importance for Pre-Award Areas of Support for PIs: Proportion Reporting “Very Important” and “Important”

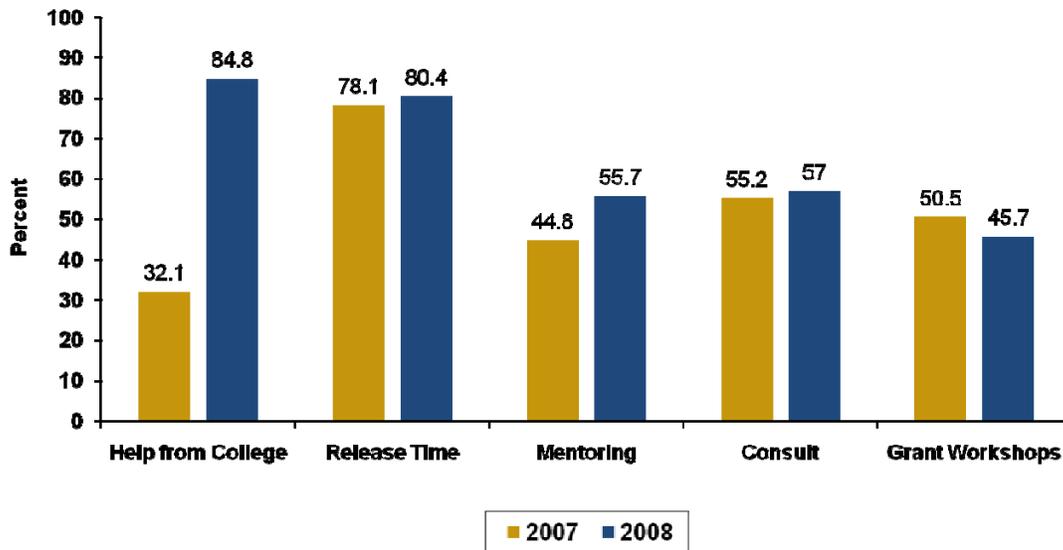
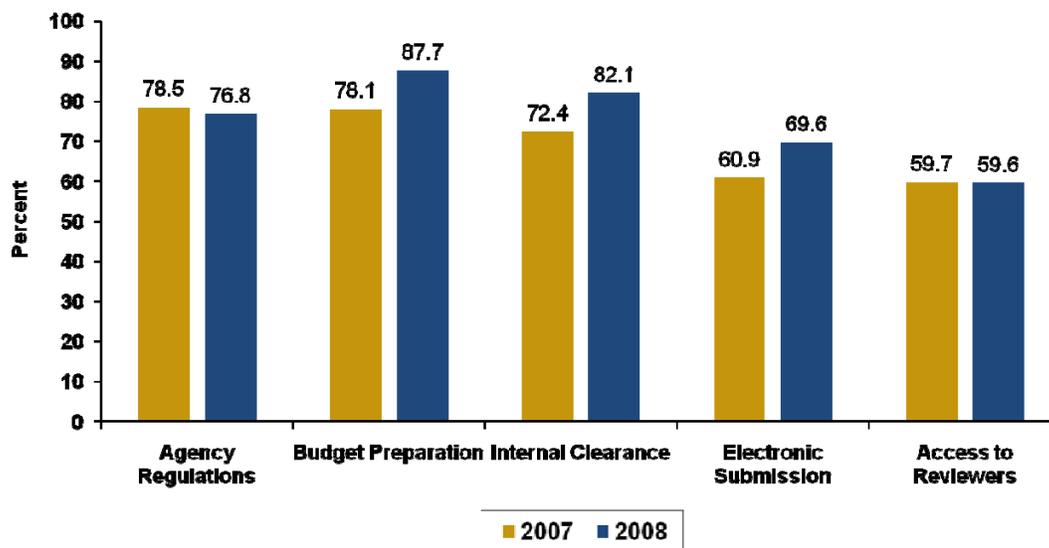
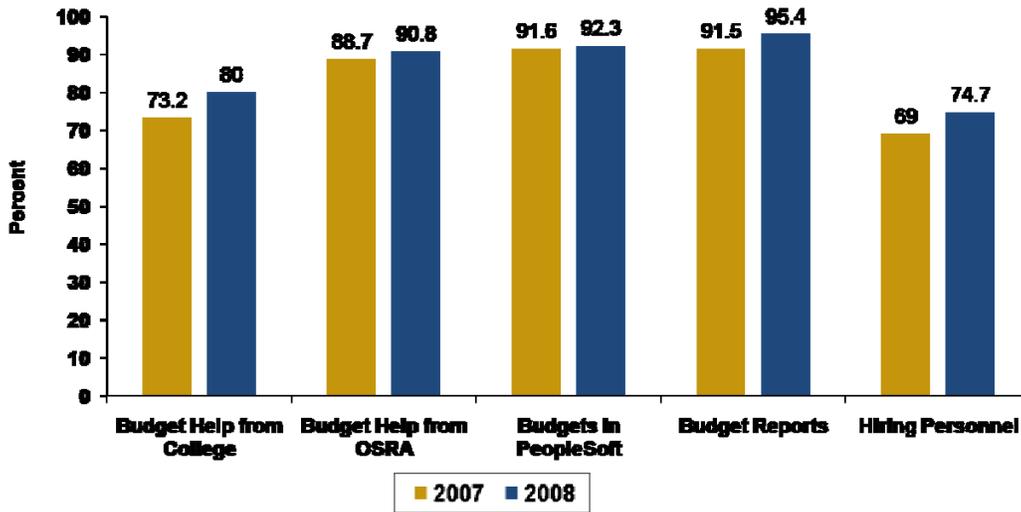


Figure 6 – Level of Importance for Pre-Award Areas of Support for PIs: Proportion Reporting “Very Important” and “Important”



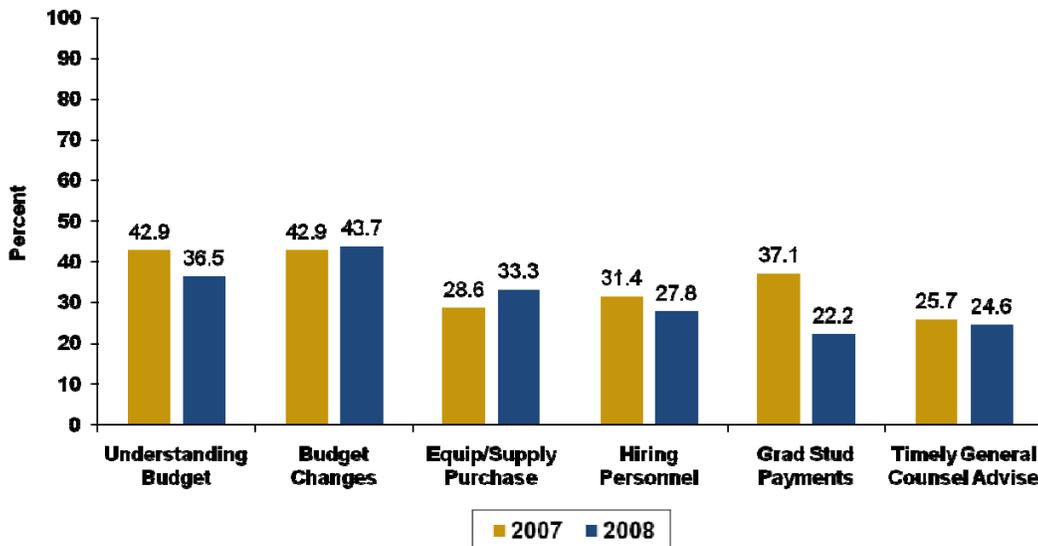
PIs were also asked about areas of importance pertaining to Post-Award. **Figure 7** shows results in this area. Similar to results from Pre-Award, areas pertaining to budgeting remained high in level of importance for both years. Hiring personnel and budget help from the college increased from 2007 to 2008.

**Figure 7 – Level of Importance of Post-Award Areas of Support :
Proportion Reporting “Very Important” and “Important”**

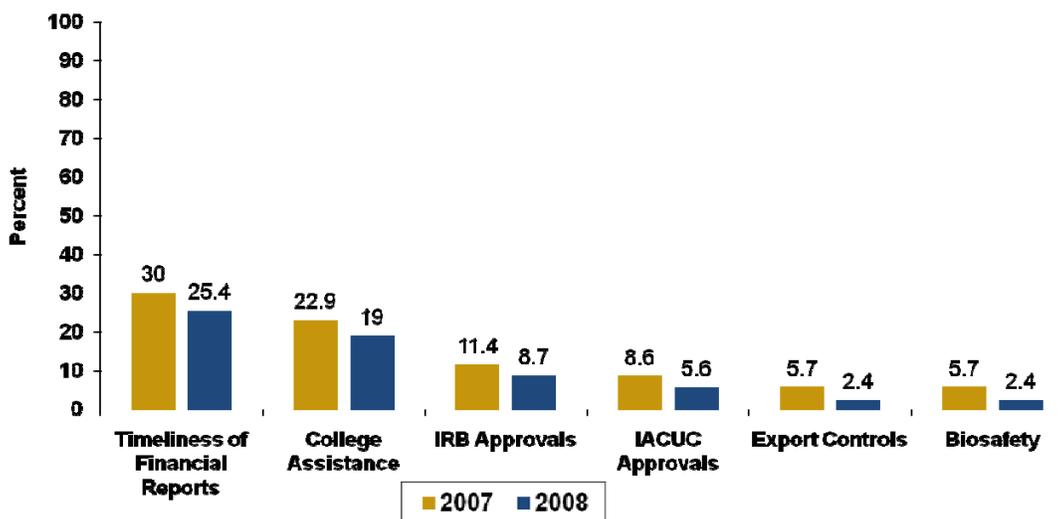


The next section of the surveys focused on obstacles PIs encounter in the management and execution of their sponsored projects. **Figures 8 and 9** show the results. There were several areas of improvements from 2007 to 2008. For example, reports of frequent problems understanding budgets declined by 15%, and frequent obstacles due to timeliness of reports also declined by 15%. The largest improvement was in the frequency of managing payments to graduate students from grants (40% improvement). Additionally, frequency of difficulties obtaining IRB and IACUC approval was relatively low in 2007; nevertheless, each improved 24% and 36%, respectively.

**Figure 8 - Major Obstacles in Managing Existing Grant:
Proportion Reporting “Frequently”**

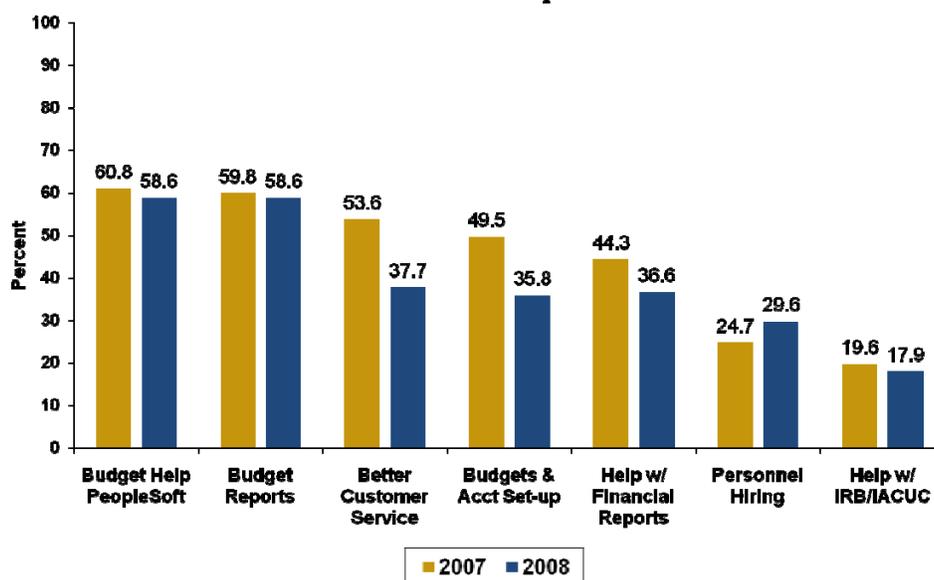


**Figure 9 - Major Obstacles in Managing Existing Grant:
Proportion Reporting “Frequently”**



Finally, the surveys also included questions regarding areas PIs considered as the ones with the most need for improvements (see **Figure 10**). Given the results shown above, it is not surprising that issues pertaining to budgeting were the highest regarding needs for improvements, although there were slight improvements both for “budget help with PeopleSoft” and “budget reports.” The area with clear deterioration between 2007 and 2008 was hiring personnel, with a decline of 20%. Major improvements needed, as reported by the PIs, improved substantially in several areas: better customer service (29%), budget and account set-up (28%), and help with financial reports (17%).

**Figure 10 – Areas Considered “Very Important” for
OSRA to Make Improvements**

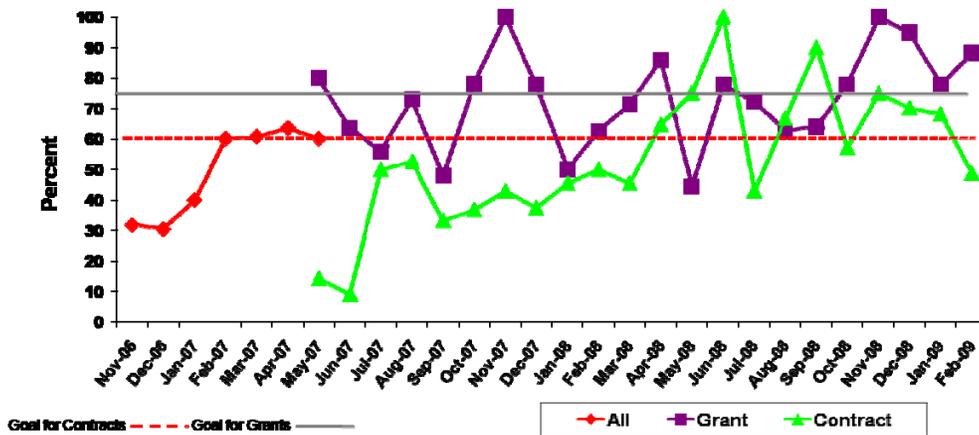


Timing of setting-up accounts and budgets for new grants and contracts:

A specific quality of service area in which we have focused efforts pertains to the timing of setting-up accounts and budgets for incoming grants and contracts. We have seen major improvements through internal changes in the Office of Research and the collaboration of the Controller’s Office. We began with the goal to have the accounts set-up for 80% of all awards within 5 working days of receiving the award, and 95% within 10 working days. As we worked on changes and tracked our performance, it became evident that contracts tend to include negotiations that make it difficult to predict the timing of finalizing budgets and account set-up. As a result, in May 2007 we began to track grants and contracts separately. Our present goal is to complete the budget and account set-up for 75% of grants and 60% of contracts within 5 working days; and to complete more than 90% of grants and 80% of contracts within 10 working days. Finally, in order to achieve these goals, we estimate that the average number of working days it takes to set-up accounts and budgets should be near or below five (5).

Figure 11 shows the improvements on the proportion of grants for which accounts have been set-up within five (5) working days. In May 2007, we began tracking grants and contracts separately, as we noticed that each required different procedures. For example, setting-up budgets and accounts for contracts are often delayed by negotiations with the sponsors subsequent to award notification. Since May 2007, we have been near or surpassed the goal of 75% for grants, but need additional improvements to consistently achieve this goal. January and May 2008 were below 50%. However, during the five months from October 2008 to February 2009, we have surpassed the 75% goal. As for contracts, there is a clear trend of improvements, surpassing the goal of 60% for most months since April 2008; but there are still months with proportions below our goal.

Figure 11 - Proportion of Grants with Account Set-up in Five or Fewer Working Days



Number of Grants per Month in Chronological Order:
 November = 22; December = 24; January = 15; February = 15; March = 28; April = 21; May = 23; June = 41; July = 20; August = 49;
 September = 45; October = 28; November = 16; December = 28; January = 27; February = 18; March = 25; April = 24; May = 26; June = 29;

Figure 12 illustrates improvements in the timing of setting-up accounts within 10 working days. We have achieved or approximated our goal with new grants since May 2007 and with contracts since December 2007. The improvements achieved in setting-up new accounts are perhaps best illustrated by the reduction in the average days it takes to set-up accounts (see **Figure 13**). We address plans for improvement in these areas below with the introduction and implementation of the PeopleSoft Grant Suite.

Figure 12 - Proportion of Grants with Account Set-up in Ten or Fewer Working Days

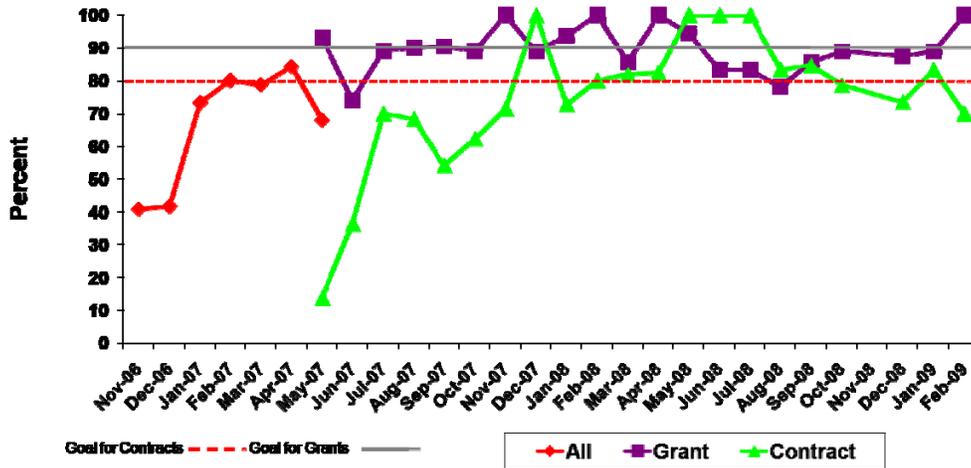
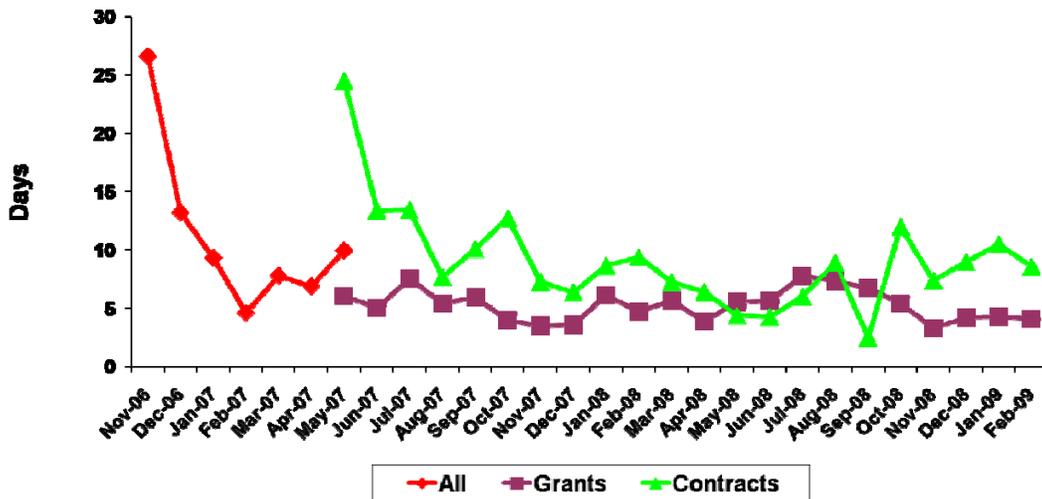


Figure 13 - Average Working Days From Incoming Grant Award to Final Account Set-up



Goals for Improvements: [\(back\)](#)

The Office of Research has embarked on a series of modifications to respond to the needs reported in the survey as well as in informal meetings we have had with faculty throughout the University. The goals are:

- Improve the scores in each of the categories for Pre-Award and Post-Award from the range in 2007 and 2008 of 3.4 - 4.2 to a range of 4.0 - 4.5 (see [Figures 2](#) and [3](#)).
- Respond to 80% of inquiries to the Office of Research within 24 hours, and 100% within 48 hours.
- Notify PIs within 3 days of the receipt of the award.
- Set-up accounts for 75% of grant awards within 5 working days of receiving the award, and 90% within 10 working days.

- Complete the budget and account set-up for 60% of contracts within 5 working days, and 80% within 10 working days.
- Produce all financial reports within the deadlines required by the funding agencies.

In addition, [Table 4](#) shows some of the major challenges identified in the survey, and the plans to address them. It is important to note three specific initiatives, which will focus on addressing several of the areas with greatest identified need for improvements in the services and support provided by OSRA.

1. **InfoEd:** The OSRA staff has been progressing on the systematic roll out of the InfoEd Proposal Development Module (PD). PD has been implemented and is currently being used in the *Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, The Wolfsonian and The Metropolitan Center*. As of this report, the staff has met with the research administrators at the *College of Nursing and Health Sciences, College of Engineering and Computing, College of Architecture and the Arts, College of Education and the College of Business* to implement PD at their respective units. The primary reason for implementation of InfoEd is the requirement by federal agencies for electronic submission of grant applications. Other benefits of InfoEd's PD include: 1) electronic processing for the review and approval of grant submission, 2) ability of research faculty to maintain information in the system for subsequent grant applications, and 3) ability to transfer grant application information into new PeopleSoft Grants Suite once grants are awarded. However, in the process of implementing the InfoEd Proposal Development Module (PD) we have encountered multiple difficulties, mostly related to the ongoing changes made by Grants.gov and the inability or delay of InfoEd to keep-up with the changes taking place at Grants.gov. Therefore, we have determined to terminate the effort to convert to InfoEd PD (we will keep InfoEd as a tracking system), and to implement an alternative transition system for proposal development. Subsequently, we will incorporate a proposal development system that will have a better interface with the PeopleSoft Grants Suite. We will use the embedding of OSRA staff into colleges (see #3 below) as a means to support the implementation of this transitional system in each of the colleges.
2. **PeopleSoft Grants Suite:** The University is in the process of implementing the PantherSoft Financials Grants Suite. This project will employ a complete web-based solution for grants management. The Grants Suite includes the following five modules: Contracts, Grants, Project Costing, Billing and Accounts Receivable. The PantherSoft Grants team has completed the design phase of this project and is currently in the initial stages of the test phase. The test phase will require the development of testing scripts and scenarios that will identify system errors and inefficiencies. The test phase has four different testing cycles—Unit, System, Integration and User Acceptance testing—that will last all the way prior to implementation. With each cycle, we are striving to eliminate system errors, ensure seamless integration and the delivery of the optimal grants management system. Based on the current analysis and business users' feedback, the tentative go-live date is July 13, 2009.
3. **Embedding OSRA in Colleges:** As part of our ongoing mission to improve services to the faculty at the college level, the Pre-Award and Post-Award teams will provide a member of their staff to visit the colleges for several hours each week. The length of time will vary by size and needs of each college, but could range from 4 to 8 hours each week.
 - The services the OSRA team will provide include:
 - ✓ Training college research support personnel.
 - ✓ Forging closer working relationships with faculty members.
 - ✓ Coordinating the start-up of grants with University units that influence the functioning of sponsored research projects (e.g., HR, purchasing, environmental health & safety, general counsel, etc.).

We will begin deployment of the Pre-Award team in June, once expected grant application activity associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act subsidies. This team will generally assist

college research support personnel with proposal tracking, proposal development, as well as guidance and assistance with the various sponsor electronic systems for proposal submission. In addition, the Pre-Award team will have two specific features. One is the implementation of an OSRA Training Program provided on a monthly basis, with college research support personnel required to attend specifically determined sessions. The other is a Sponsored Project Kickoff Meeting, whereby Pre-Award staff and college research support staff will meet with the Principal Investigator and complete a Grant Initiation Checklist. The checklist will assist the Principal Investigator and college support staff in the identification and anticipation of challenges and needs that will arise for specific projects.

It is anticipated that the Post-Award team will begin working with the colleges by Fall 2009. The team will be involved with providing training and support regarding the functionalities of the PeopleSoft Grants Suite and will train and support PIs on obtaining reports to be able to manage project budgets. The Post-Award team will also host a PeopleSoft “Open Lab” once a week (10 am-12 noon and 1-4 pm) for faculty members or college support staff experiencing difficulties managing their projects with PeopleSoft. The reason for the later deployment of the Post-Award team is to wait until the final implementation of the PeopleSoft Grants Suite and to complete internal OSRA training in this new system.

4. Formation of a Research Advisory Committee (RAC). During the Spring 2008 semester, a cross-college faculty committee was formed at the request of the Vice President for Research to provide advice regarding matters related to research. The role of the Committee is to provide advice and leadership in issues regarding development of research at FIU, as well as identifying obstacles to conducting research at FIU. While attempting to have representation from the various colleges, as well as different levels of experience and time at FIU, twelve faculty members noted for their experience conducting research studies at FIU were invited to join. This Committee will also assist the Office of Research in addressing challenges and shortcomings identified in the annual quality of service surveys conducted by RUGS (see Table 4 below). The Committee met twice during the 2007-2008 academic year. Beginning with the current semester and through the rest of the year, the Committee will address issues and challenges that have been identified by faculty and through our customer surveys. These include:

- The application of HR rules to grants and contracts, including the hiring of personnel for grants;
- Challenges with purchasing of equipment for grants and contracts;
- Procedures for hiring and payment of subcontracts and consultants in grants and contracts;
- Improvement of procedures and systems for compensation of participants in research projects.

The Committee will also identify other challenges and provide advice Vice Present for Research regarding improvement of grant management at FIU, as well as the development of systems and programs to foster development of research, training and creative activities at FIU.

Table 4 - Plans to Address Deficiencies and Make Improvements

Challenges	Possible Solutions	Approach & Timing
1. PIs inability to understand the status of budgets in their grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New budgets in PeopleSoft that reflects all categories in PIs original budget in grant submission. • Provide accessible and easy to read budget summaries in PeopleSoft. • Train college grant management staff and establish greater coordination between college grant management personnel and OSRA personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New budget formats will be available with PeopleSoft Grants Suite. • PeopleSoft Grants Suite to go “live” in July 2009. • Greater direct interaction among OSRA staff and College/Department grant administration staff.
2. Difficulties with unexplained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially addressed by solution to #1. • Reduce delays in setting-up grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better coordination with college Post-Award administrators in processing PI and

Challenges	Possible Solutions	Approach & Timing
budget transfers.	contracts in the colleges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce budget exemptions (which are already occurring). 	Co-I contracts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train purchasing staff regarding account codes. To be addressed as part of PeopleSoft Grants Suite implementation
3. Difficulties in hiring personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate personnel hiring between HR and Office of Research. • Increase coordination between OSRA and colleges in assisting PIs at time of grant funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Research Advisory Committee (RAC) of experienced researchers to advise Office of Research. • Embed OSRA Pre-Award personnel in colleges for better training of college research administration staff and greater coordination with PIs (begin June 2009). • As part of embedding OSRA in colleges, develop project initiation “checklist” to anticipate grant-specific challenges. • Explore possibility designating one HR staff member exclusively to grants (supported by OSRA).
4. Difficulties with participant payments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a participant compensation system for FIU, in collaboration with Controller’s Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of Research will gather information on approaches used at other Florida universities, as well as outside of Florida. • VP for Research will work with Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and Controller’s Office to implement new system by Fall 2009.
5. Return time for telephone inquiries to OSRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train Office of Research personnel to ensure quick response. • Set-up monitoring system to ensure prompt responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the Summer 2009, the Office of Research will begin regular electronic satisfaction surveys of individuals that have contacted the Office of Research via telephone.
6. Improve level of satisfaction with Pre-Award and Post-Award staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactorily address items 1 to 5 above. • Ongoing training of OSRA staff. • Continue to create climate within OSRA staff of high expectations for performance with ongoing assessment, feedback, and rewards for performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the PeopleSoft Grants Module in July 2009. • Embedding of OSRA personnel in colleges.
7. Difficulties with Internal Clearance approvals for grants and contracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic system for more rapid internal approvals for grants and contract submissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify Internal Clearance Form and set-up more efficient approval process. • Simplify Internal Clearance for Modular Budgets. • Implement changes to Internal Clearance Form and process by July 1, 2009.

VI. RUGS Future Goals

In addition to improving the quality of service in the Office of Research and the University Graduate School, we have several specific goals for the current year and the near future. These are summarized below:

1. **Cluster Hires**—RUGS has been working with deans to support cluster hires in strategic research areas by continuing to provide start-up funding to the colleges for these hires.
2. **Grant Writing Mentoring for Junior Faculty**—OSRA will continue to support the Faculty Research Award Program. As part of this program, we will provide grant writing workshops focused on specific granting agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF), financial support for internal and external mentors for faculty selected for awards, and bridge funding for faculty between sponsored research awards.
3. **Increase research development services in the Office of Research**—Traditionally OSRA has focused on grants management through systems in Pre-Award, Post-Award, Budgeting and Systems, Research Compliance and Intellectual Property Management. These are necessary systems in the management of the University's grants and contracts portfolio. However, the Office of Research is also engaged in the intellectual, creativity and educational mission of the University. Support for the Cluster Hiring Initiative is one such example. During the upcoming academic year, and well into our future, we plan for the Office of Research to dedicate effort and resources to Research Development throughout the University. This includes activities such as:
 - a. Faculty Research Awards that will provide internal support for faculty to conduct research. This will be in the form of awards for research activities as well as bridge funding. We expect to grow the level of support in this area.
 - b. Dedication of position(s) at the Office of Research and the University Graduate School (RUGS) dedicated to obtaining research infrastructure and graduate training infrastructure grants, and assisting junior faculty in the preparation of grant applications.
 - c. Development of new tools to support research faculty in OSRA's website.
 - d. Coordination and facilitation of exchanges among faculty research experts throughout the University. This will include organizing faculty research groups to discuss research plans and identify sponsored research opportunities, and to also increase interdisciplinary exchanges throughout the University.
4. **Research Compliance** – As research activities grow in quantity and complexity, the University has an obligation to have the systems in place to facilitate and monitor research compliance. During the next few years, the Office of Research will focus on improving and setting-up new necessary systems and resources to facilitate research compliance. This is a critical issue for a robust Research Intensive University.