

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE *GRADUATING MASTERS AND DOCTORAL STUDENT SURVEY* SUMMER 2008 - SPRING 2009

This report summarizes the main findings from the Summer 2008 - Spring 2009 Florida International University *Graduating Master's and Doctoral Student Survey*, a Continuous Quality Improvement study conducted by the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. This survey was adapted from a prototype survey developed by the SUS Accountability Committee on Survey Activity (Legg, Final Report, 1992). The survey was designed to measure graduates' satisfaction with and attitudes about Florida International University. The survey design assured respondents of their anonymity in an attempt to facilitate candor.

The *Graduating Master's and Doctoral Student Survey* was distributed to 2,506 individuals who were members of the graduating classes of Summer 2008, Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. The survey was returned by 70 graduates, for a response rate of approximately 3%. (*The survey response rate decreased tremendously due to the migration of the new student email which was being implemented at the same time as the survey was being conducted. In result it is unknown whether every student received an email inviting them to partake in the survey.*) The comprehensive survey asked questions about the graduates' satisfaction with Florida International University in various domains such as the quality and availability of faculty in their major, the quality of research produced in the graduate program, the quality and availability of academic advising by university advising staff and faculty members, and the quality of the libraries. The survey also questioned graduates about the frequency of use and quality of services such as Counseling and Psychological Services, Recreational Services, and Health Services.

Ten principal indicators have been singled out as the most reliable measures of the graduates' satisfaction with FIU and have been summarized below.

- *Overall Satisfaction With Graduate Program:* 75% of the graduates indicated that they were satisfied with their graduate program (32% very satisfied, 44% satisfied).
- *Overall Academic Experience:* 68% of the graduates rated positively their overall academic experience (38% excellent, 30% good ratings).
- *Challenged:* 75% of the graduates agreed that they had been challenged to do the best that they could (55% most of the time, 20% some of the time).
- *Recommend FIU:* 77% of the graduates reported that they would recommend FIU to a friend or relative considering their graduate program (36% without reservations, 41% with reservations).
- *Satisfaction with Department of Major:* 65% of the graduates were satisfied with the department of their major (23% strongly agreed, 42% agreed).

- *Professors Were Good Teachers:* 68% of the graduates agreed that their professors were good teachers (33% strongly agreed, 36% agreed).
- *Research Facilities Available in Graduate Program:* 62% of the graduates rated positively the availability of research facilities in their graduate program (26% excellent, 36% good).
- *Professors Were Good Researchers:* 71% of the graduates agreed that their professors were good researchers (33% strongly agreed, 38% agreed).
- *Quality of Research in Graduate Program:* 71% of the graduates rated positively the quality of research performed in their graduate program (28% excellent, 44% good).
- *Faculty Available to Assist Graduate Student Research:* 65% of the graduates rated positively the availability of the faculty to assist them in their research (39% excellent, 26% good).

Items With the Highest Correlations

- To the extent that graduating respondents rated highly the responsiveness of the administration towards graduate students, they were also satisfied with the advice they received in which they found it to be useful to their career ($r = .96, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents overall agreed their courses were too large, they also agreed that their advisor was available when needed ($r = .96, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents agreed the advice they received was useful to their career, they also believed their courses were too large ($r = .94, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents agreed they would refer FIU, they also agreed they were satisfied with the grading policy in their program ($r = .87, p < .001$).

Strongest Predictors of Overall Academic Experience

- Extent of agreement they were satisfied with the responsiveness of support services to graduate students ($r = .77, p < .001$).
- Extent of agreement that they were satisfied with their quality of instruction in their program ($r = .75, p < .001$).
- Extent of agreement that they were satisfied with the availability of coursework in their program ($r = .74, p < .001$).
- Extent of agreement that they were satisfied with the opportunity for graduate assistantships ($r = .69, p < .001$).

Positive responses to the ten principal indicators of satisfaction are neutral, with positive responses of over 70% for five of the principal indicators. Positive responses increased for one

of the ten principal indicators of student satisfaction compared to the responses of students graduating in Summer 2007-Spring 2008.

Positive responses to the ten principal indicators of student satisfaction fluctuated across the six-year period (2003-2009).