

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE *GRADUATING MASTERS AND DOCTORAL STUDENT SURVEY* SUMMER 2007 - SPRING 2008

This report summarizes the main findings from the Summer 2007 - Spring 2008 Florida International University *Graduating Masters 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 Masters and Doctoral Student Survey* was distributed to 2,384 individuals who were members of the graduating classes of Summer 2007, Fall 2007 and Spring 2008. The survey was returned by 79 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:* 81% of the graduates indicated that they were satisfied with their graduate program (28% very satisfied, 53% satisfied).
- *Overall Academic Experience:* 82% of the graduates rated positively their overall academic experience (35% excellent, 47% good ratings).
- *Challenged:* 86% of the graduates agreed that they had been challenged to do the best that they could (35% most of the time, 47% some of the time).
- *Recommend FIU:* 85% of the graduates reported that they would recommend FIU to a friend or relative considering their graduate program (43% without reservations, 42% with reservations).

- *Satisfaction with Department of Major:* 59% of the graduates were satisfied with the department of their major (19% strongly agreed, 40% agreed).
- *Professors Were Good Teachers:* 82% of the graduates agreed that their professors were good teachers (36% strongly agreed, 46% agreed).
- *Research Facilities Available in Graduate Program:* 63% of the graduates rated positively the availability of research facilities in their graduate program (20% excellent, 43% good).
- *Professors Were Good Researchers:* 72% of the graduates agreed that their professors were good researchers (33% strongly agreed, 40% agreed).
- *Quality of Research in Graduate Program:* 73% of the graduates rated positively the quality of research performed in their graduate program (19% excellent, 55% good).
- *Faculty Available to Assist Graduate Student Research:* 83% of the graduates rated positively the availability of the faculty to assist them in their research (38% excellent, 46% 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 responsiveness of support services towards graduate students ($r = .84, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents overall rated highly the opportunity to receive graduate assistantships, they also rated highly the opportunity for graduate teaching assistantships ($r = .82, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents agreed that their advisors were helpful, they also believed that the information they received was useful for their research ($r = .80, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents agreed that they received sufficient time during advising sessions, they also agreed their advisor was available when needed ($r = .78, p < .001$).

Strongest Predictors of Overall Academic Experience

- Extent of agreement they were satisfied with their major department meeting their goals and objectives ($r = .75, p < .001$).
- Extent of agreement that they were satisfied with their quality of instruction in their program ($r = .70, p < .001$).
- Extent of agreement that they were satisfied overall with their graduate program at FIU ($r = .69, p < .001$).

- Extent of agreement that the faculty were good teachers ($r = .68, p < .001$).

Positive responses to the ten principal indicators of satisfaction remain relatively high, with positive responses of over 78% for seven of the principal indicators. Positive responses increased for four 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 (2002-2008).