

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE *GRADUATING MASTERS AND DOCTORAL STUDENT SURVEY* SUMMER 2003-SPRING 2004

This report summarizes the main findings from the Summer 2003-Spring 2004 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 1,946 individuals who were members of the graduating classes of Summer 2003, Fall 2003 and Spring 2004. The survey was returned by 201 graduates, for a response rate of approximately 10%. 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:* 83% of the graduates indicated that they were satisfied with their graduate program (27% very satisfied, 56% satisfied).
- *Overall Academic Experience:* 79% of the graduates rated positively their overall academic experience (31% excellent, 48% good ratings).
- *Challenged:* 85% of the graduates agreed that they had been challenged to do the best that they could (53% most of the time, 32% some of the time).
- *Recommend FIU:* 81% of the graduates reported that they would recommend FIU to a friend or relative considering their graduate program (41% without reservations, 40% with reservations).
- *Satisfaction with Department of Major:* 61% of the graduates were satisfied with the department of their major (17% strongly agreed, 44% agreed).
- *Professors Were Good Teachers:* 79% of the graduates agreed that their professors were good teachers (31% strongly agreed, 48% agreed).

- *Research Facilities Available in Graduate Program:* 61% of the graduates rated positively the availability of research facilities in their graduate program (13% excellent, 48% good).
- *Professors Were Good Researchers:* 63% of the graduates agreed that their professors were good researchers (23% strongly agreed, 40% agreed).
- *Quality of Research in Graduate Program:* 69% of the graduates rated positively the quality of research performed in their graduate program (15% excellent, 54% good).
- *Faculty Available to Assist Graduate Student Research:* 73% of the graduates rated positively the availability of the faculty to assist them in their research (38% excellent, 35% good).

Items With the Highest Correlations

- To the extent that graduating respondents believed that their advisor was helpful, they also believed that the advice they received was useful for their career goals ($r = .96, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents believed that their advisor was available, they also believed that their advisor was helpful ($r = .95, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents believed that the advice they received was useful for their educational goals, they also believed that sufficient time was available during advising sessions ($r = .95, p < .001$).
- To the extent that graduating respondents believed that their graduate education contributed to their critical thinking skills, they also believed that it contributed to their ability to express thoughts ($r = .95, p < .001$).

Strongest Predictors of Overall Academic Experience

- Extent of agreement that the faculty were good teachers ($r = .929, p < .001$).
- Extent of agreement that they were satisfied with how their major department met its goals and objectives ($r = .926, p < .001$).
- Extent of agreement that they have been challenged to do the best they could ($r = .923, p < .001$).

Positive responses to the ten principal indicators of satisfaction remain relatively high, with positive responses of over 75% for five of the principal indicators. However,

positive responses to the ten principal indicators of student satisfaction decreased for all of the principal indicators compared to the responses of students who graduating in Spring 2003.

Positive responses to the ten principal indicators of student satisfaction generally were stable or increased across the four-year period (1999-2003) and showed a small decline in Spring 2004.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the data contained in this document is accurate. For further information about this and other Continuous Quality Improvement Survey Reports, visit our website at <http://www.fiu.edu/~opie/effectiveness.htm>, or contact Yasmin LaRocca at larocca@fiu.edu or the Vice Provost for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 305-348-2731, (FAX) 305-348-1908. You may also visit the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at University Park, PC 543.