

EVALUATION OF FACULTY SATISFACTION METRICS IN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH  
ADMINISTRATION OFFICES: IS THE DATA USED?

by  
Katherine Danielle Bui

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## **Abstract**

Faculty satisfaction on research administration processes and services is potentially valuable information for University offices. Metrics measuring faculty satisfaction is a direct assessment of contentment with the customer service provided to faculty. Although the collection of faculty satisfaction metrics appears to be happening in research administration offices, it is unknown if these metrics are being utilized to influence changes in processes and services. This study evaluates faculty satisfaction metrics to determine if they are being collected, and if so, is the data being used? A survey was designed with questions to capture knowledge on metric collection methods, if metrics are collected on common processes and service qualities, and if the data was used to make adjustments.

Approximately 1,360 participants were strategically recruited from University research administration offices and peers in John's Hopkins Masters in Research administration program. Despite a large recruitment number, 156 individuals responded to the study survey. From those 156 respondents, 45 answered yes to collecting faculty satisfaction metrics in their office/University, and answered the remaining survey questions developed to capture what type of faculty satisfaction metrics are collected and if changes resulted from the metrics.

The results from the survey showed that faculty satisfaction metrics are being collected and changes were made as a result. Service qualities were the focus of more satisfaction metrics than were processes, but neither is statistically more effective at generating changes. In general, this study was able to compile data on the usefulness of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics in an effort to produce beneficial information for Universities research administration offices.

**Advisor/Official Reader: Jeffrey Kantor**

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### **Abbreviations**

CITI	Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
HIRB	Homewood Institution Review Board
IRB	Institutional Review Board
JHU	Johns Hopkins University
NCURA	National Council of University Research Administrators
NSF	National Science Foundation
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
ONR	Office of Naval Research
OSRD	Office of Scientific Research and Development



## Chapter 1. Introduction

Research generates knowledge that can be utilized to close the gap between problems and solutions presented in society. Years of effort and time is devoted by researchers to develop their research to benefit their professional field, research organization, and humanity. Research organizations support researchers' investigations through wisely investing their resources for conducting and managing research. Although managing the varying facets of research can be daunting, there are several set processes and systems used to oversee needs of the research organization and researcher.

After World War II, research has continuously grown at exponential rates from the support of new financial investors; creating expansion in research organizations and overall complexity<sup>1</sup>. With new demands for administrative oversight of research, a job field emerged that still exists today, research administration. Initially, researchers' perceptions of research administrators were burdens that create roadblocks; however, as the research industry has matured the opinion of research administration has started to shift. Recently, research administrators are viewed by the research community as a valuable resource to researchers by helping them navigate complex tasks. Many of these intricate tasks involve obtaining research funding, ensuring research practices are compliant and managing research expenses.

Research administrators hold a vast amount of knowledge in numerous categories. Several examples are, pre-award services, post-award processes, compliance, product development, ethical uses of animals and humans, negotiating contracts, export controls, and this expertise is an asset to researchers, their organizations, and the research community. Researchers

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<sup>1</sup> Kaplan, N. (1959). The Role of the Research Administrator. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, [online] 4(1), pp.20-42. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2390647> [Accessed 18 Jul. 2019].

lean on research administrators for their expertise to manage behind the scenes of their research. The working relationship between a research administrator and a researcher is critical for smooth and successful management of their research. As the perception of research administration has evolved, the field views their responsibilities as "services" they provide to researchers or the "customer".

Metrics in research administration are used to change research administrator's behavior, drive performances, and support investments<sup>2</sup>. When used correctly, metrics can help improve processes and services for efficiency and effectiveness. One metric research administration offices should collect is feedback from faculty members on their satisfaction with processes and services. For this study, the definition of a faculty satisfaction metric is a "qualitative or quantitative measurement of a faculty's contentment towards the service they receive".

Collecting faculty feedback on research administration processes and the customer service they receive can allow offices to better understand their customer's needs. As faculty members are a primary research stakeholder at a University, considering their opinion on the services they receive can hypothetically influence essential changes in processes and services. Collecting faculty satisfaction metrics can be useful for research administration offices. The goal of this research project is to evaluate if faculty satisfaction metrics are collected in a University setting, and are they useful? Or in other words, are faculty satisfaction metrics used to produce a change when collected?

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<sup>2</sup> Walters, F. (n.d.). *Using Metrics to Drive Research Administration Performance*. Lecture presented at NCURA 2012 Annual Meeting.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 What is Research Administration?**

According to the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46.102(d)), research is "a systematic investigation (gathering and analysis of information) designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge"<sup>3</sup>. Often a researcher's goal is to develop an idea or product from their research results; where a research organization's goal is to promote society impacting research produced from their researchers<sup>4</sup>. Working behind the scenes of research are research administrators giving the support required for researchers and their research institution to be successful<sup>5</sup>. In *Research Administration and Management*, Kulakowski and Chronister discuss the difficulty of defining research administration because of the "several influencing facets of the profession, often varying depending on the type, size, and environment of the research institution"; however, research administration, in its simplest forms supports the operation of research<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, "research administration is broad in scope and complexity"<sup>7</sup>. Overall, the "support" given by research administrators consists mainly of business and nonscientific functions associated with the research.

### **2.2 History of Research Administration**

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<sup>3</sup> Module 1: Introduction: What is Research?: ORI - The Office of Research Integrity. (n.d.). Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://ori.hhs.gov/module-1-introduction-what-research>

<sup>4</sup> Kulakowski, E. C., & Chronister, L. U. (2011). *Research administration and management*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan, N. (1959). The Role of the Research Administrator. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, [online] 4(1), pp.20-42. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2390647> [Accessed 18 Jul. 2019].

<sup>6</sup> Kulakowski, E. C., & Chronister, L. U. (2011). *Research administration and management*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

<sup>7</sup> Kulakowski, E. C., & Chronister, L. U. (2011). *Research administration and management*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Before the 1940s and WWII, the government's support for scientific research was inconsistent, and project-specific<sup>8</sup>. Lack of organization between researchers and the government created a gap in communication, expectations, and Federal regulations; however, WWII demonstrated a need for scientific knowledge to solve "technical problems paramount in war"<sup>9</sup>. Team-work started too developed between the government and the research community, creating the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) to coordinate scientific research for military purposes<sup>10</sup>. Universities were heavily utilized during the war to contract research work where the government would compensate for related research expenses<sup>11</sup>. Despite war motivating this partnership; the government, University scientists and the private industry saw the benefit of ongoing research outside of the war. Scientific progress had the potential to positively impact society at a larger scale by enhancing the nation's security, health, jobs, culture, and standard of living<sup>12</sup>. With a new perspective on research and the potential benefits insight, financial support from the government continued after the war, in fact, it increased drastically.

Growth in the research enterprise started a chain reaction of new demands. An increase in funding and structure created a rise in research investments. Federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Office of Naval Research (ONR) began to form and financially contribute to research<sup>13</sup>. With more research investments and Federal agencies

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<sup>8</sup> Campbell, D. R. (2010). *The role and development of the research administration profession in higher education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Washington State University, May.

<sup>9</sup> Bush, V. (1945). Science The Endless Frontier. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nsf50/vbush1945.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Campbell, D. R. (2010). *The role and development of the research administration profession in higher education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Washington State University, May.

<sup>11</sup> Cole, K. W. (2010). *Principal investigator and department administrator perceptions of services provided by offices of research administration at research universities* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of South Florida.

<sup>12</sup> Bush, V. (1945). Science The Endless Frontier. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nsf50/vbush1945.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Cole, K. W. (2010). *Principal investigator and department administrator perceptions of services provided by offices of research administration at research universities* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of South Florida.

involved, a demand for management and consistency across the research community emerged; the answer to these challenges were Federal regulations. Standardized laws and rules were put in place to oversee the administration of research. For example, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) constructed Circulars to regulate how the spending of federal research funding<sup>14</sup> (cite). Researchers were being pulled away from their studies to manage new administration requirements. The role of a research administrator emerged as a solution from another demand in the evolving industry of research. By adding a person to aid in these new intricate regulations, researchers were able to transition their efforts back to the science<sup>15</sup>. Research administration has grown over the years in parallel to the growth of research organizations. As research becomes progressively more complex, so does the administrative regulations that frame research possibilities<sup>16</sup>.

### **2.3 Where is Research Administration Practiced?**

The research community consists of different entities, all with various features; each one of these entities has some form of research administration tailored to their needs and goals. Kulakowski and Chronister list standard research organizations as, "institutions of higher educations, industrial research laboratories, independent profit, and not-for-profit research companies, medical research institutions, and government research laboratories and centers"<sup>17</sup>. In

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<sup>14</sup> OMB Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions,". (2000, August 08). Retrieved from <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2000/08/08/00-19653/omb-circular-a-21-cost-principles-for-educational-institutions>

<sup>15</sup> Kaplan, N. (1959). The Role of the Research Administrator. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, [online] 4(1), pp.20-42. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2390647> [Accessed 18 Jul. 2019].

<sup>16</sup> Kaplan, N. (1959). The Role of the Research Administrator. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, [online] 4(1), pp.20-42. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2390647> [Accessed 18 Jul. 2019].

<sup>17</sup> Kulakowski, E. C., & Chronister, L. U. (2011). *Research administration and management*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

the fiscal year 2017, 903 Universities spent about \$75.3 billion in research and development activities<sup>18</sup>. Research Universities are a large portion of the in the research community.

## **2.4 Research Administration at a University**

In a University setting, there are typically two types of research administrators, central administrators and department administrators<sup>19</sup>. A significant difference between these two positions is the location of the administrator and who they serve. Department administrators are often located within the departments and more readily available to faculty members. Central administrators are primary in one location that focuses on relationships with sponsors. Central administrators are often split up into pre-and post-award activities, where department administrations may have responsibilities from both types of activities.

### **Pre-Award Activities**

Pre-award activities are events occurring before the submission of a proposal for funding and those that happen before accepting an award<sup>20</sup>. "Preparation and submission of proposals are two primary functions of any research administration operation"<sup>21</sup>. A proposal often consists of varying requirements with specific guidelines for how those aspects should be submitted. A research administrator helping with pre-award activities may assist in building a project budget, assuring guidelines are met, regularly compliance aspects have been met, contract negotiation,

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<sup>18</sup> National Science Foundation - Higher Education Research and Development Survey (HERD). (2018, November). Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvyherd/>

<sup>19</sup> Campbell, D. R. (2010). *The role and development of the research administration profession in higher education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Washington State University, May.

<sup>20</sup> Campbell, D. R. (2010). *The role and development of the research administration profession in higher education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Washington State University, May.

<sup>21</sup> Kulakowski, E. C., & Chronister, L. U. (2011). *Research administration and management*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

and meeting deadlines. A proposal is a balancing act between meeting sponsor guidelines, complying with institutional policies, and ensuring the researcher will obtain what is necessary for their research. In a University setting, faculty members heavily rely on sponsor funds to facilitate their research, intensifying the importance of a strong proposal. An administrator can help ensure all nonscientific features of the proposal are compliant with the sponsor's guidelines and that the negotiation of the award does not jeopardize the institution or research.

### Post-Award Activities

Post-award activities are those that take place after a research project has been awarded funding; many of these activities are financially and compliance-related. A few functions associated with post-award activities include financial reporting, expense monitoring, financial compliance, accounting, OMB regulation interpretation and enforcement, technology transfers, and bringing research products to the market place<sup>22</sup>. Several of these activities aid in managing the sponsor approved budget and research expenditures<sup>23</sup>. The compliance of research includes maintaining approvals such as using either animals or human subjects in the research, export controls, or conflicts of interest. Faculty can lean on post-award administrators to help with how to spend their sponsored funds and ensure the study conducted is compliant with institution policies and sponsor guidelines. Post-award administrators may also work with other stakeholders preparing financial reports and billing research expenses.

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<sup>22</sup> Kulakowski, E. C., & Chronister, L. U. (2011). *Research administration and management*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

<sup>23</sup> Kulakowski, E. C., & Chronister, L. U. (2011). *Research administration and management*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

## Department Research Administrator

Department administrators are the "front line operator for the daily management of the funded research"<sup>24</sup>. They are the bridge that links central administration and to the faculty and department<sup>25</sup>. Department administrators often have a variety of responsibilities, some from pre-award, post-award, or both. Since department administrators have a columniation of work tasks, their knowledge of the field and institution has a considerable breadth and limited depth. As Universities have tried to regulate external demands, internal complexities have increased; creating the need for a department administrator who is readily accessible to faculty<sup>26</sup>.

The types of research administration activities and positions may vary based on institutional structures and needs. However, despite the naming of these activities and positions, stakeholders rely on these individuals and processes to guide them through the steps of applying for funding, managing funds once they are awarded, and oversee the compliance of the research. Administrators assist stakeholders with completing research while maintaining the integrity of the research, stakeholder, and University.

## 2.5 Stakeholders

In a University setting the stakeholders involved in research and the administrative oversight of research are those individuals who have a level of interest and risk associated with

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<sup>24</sup> Campbell, D. R. (2010). *The role and development of the research administration profession in higher education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Washington State University, May.

<sup>25</sup> Collinson, J. A. (2007). "Get yourself some nice, neat, matching box files!" *Research administrators and occupational identity work*. *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(3), 295-309.

<sup>26</sup> Campbell, D. R. (2010). *The role and development of the research administration profession in higher education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Washington State University, May.



the actions revolving around the regulation and facilitation of the research<sup>27</sup>. The breadth of the research administration field creates a range in the types of customers associated. A few of the main University stakeholders are the faculty members, research administrators, sponsors, and institutional management. Research administrators serve several of these stakeholders through their daily responsibilities, but faculty members are a main stakeholder as they have a personal interest and a high level of risk associated with the management of their research. This study will focus on faculty as a target stakeholder.

## **2.6 Faculty and Research Administrator Relationships**

The relationship between faculty and research administrators has grown as the perceptions of both stakeholders have evolved. Historically, faculty members have seen research administrators as roadblocks; confining their research with red tape due to implementing regulations<sup>28</sup>.

However, "research administration has a goal to facilitate research endeavors of the University, not to serve as an impediment to these endeavors"<sup>29</sup>. Part of this skewed perception is due to the ambiguity of research administrators' role<sup>30</sup>. In the past, faculty members sensed there was poor communication between administrators and themselves, which became more of a problem when administrative burdens increased for faculty<sup>31</sup>. To impact faculty members administrative

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<sup>27</sup> Streharsky, C., & Smith, C. (2002). Consider the Stakeholders in Research Administration. *Journal of Research Administration*.

<sup>28</sup> Kaplan, N. (1959). The Role of the Research Administrator. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, [online] 4(1), pp.20-42. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2390647> [Accessed 18 Jul. 2019].

<sup>29</sup> Campbell, D. R. (2010). *The role and development of the research administration profession in higher education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Washington State University, May.

<sup>30</sup> Kaplan, N. (1959). The Role of the Research Administrator. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, [online] 4(1), pp.20-42. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2390647> [Accessed 18 Jul. 2019].

<sup>31</sup> Davis-Hamilton, Z. (2018, April). What Makes a Research Administrator [Web log post]. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.srainternational.org/blogs/martha-jack/2018/04/27/what-makes-a-research-administrator-pulse>

workload, research administrators have had to change how they conducted their responsibilities. Research administrators started to reframe wither approach by presenting faculty members with more of a service delivery rather than a regulation approach<sup>32</sup>. A transition in services strengthen communication, trust, and respect between faculty and research administration. With better communication and a greater understanding of research administration, faculty members perceptions of a research administrator shifted from a hindrance to an asset.

## **2.7 Research Administration as a Service**

As research administration and the role of an administrator has changed over the years, the aspect of providing a service to faculty members in a University research environment has remained constant, in fact, it has become a "more critical element of their work:"<sup>33</sup>. According to Sharon Cole the author of Reframing Research Administration, "research administration is essentially a service-delivery system"<sup>34</sup>. Not only does the research field perceive research administration as a customer service-based position, but so does the administrators themselves. Zoya Davis-Hamilton and Sarah Marina conducted an informal study asking research administrators to rank qualities of importance for a research administrator<sup>35</sup>. The second-highest ranked quality was customer service because research administration is a "customer-facing

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<sup>32</sup> Cole, S. (2010). Reframing Research Administration. *Journal of Research Administration*, XLI(1), 11-21. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Davis-Hamilton, Z. (2018, April). What Makes a Research Administrator [Web log post]. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.srainternational.org/blogs/martha-jack/2018/04/27/what-makes-a-research-administrator-pulse>

<sup>34</sup> Cole, S. (2010). Reframing Research Administration. *Journal of Research Administration*, XLI(1), 11-21. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Davis-Hamilton, Z. (2018, April). What Makes a Research Administrator [Web log post]. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.srainternational.org/blogs/martha-jack/2018/04/27/what-makes-a-research-administrator-pulse>

role"<sup>36</sup>. University administrators are providing a service by presenting faculty with expertise, guidance, and processes that ease their administrative responsibilities.

## **2.8 Customer Satisfaction in Research Administration**

Customer satisfaction is a summarized response from a customer that varies in intensities based on a product or service-related experience<sup>37</sup>. Thinking of customer satisfaction in a research administration setting, research stakeholders are the customer, and specifically for this study, that customer is a University faculty member who experiences the product of research administration services<sup>38</sup>. Faculty members value these services based on how much they assist or ease processes necessary to complete their research. Research administration services and processes, in theory, should lift some of the administrative burdens that faculty face by conducting research, especially with sponsored funds. Capturing how faculty members' value research administration services and processes can help with understanding the effectiveness of those processes and services.

## **2.9 Faculty Satisfaction Metrics**

Metrics can be used to "evaluate and improve the efficiency and effectiveness" of research administration processes and service through quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis<sup>39</sup>. Obtaining performance metrics at a University frequently involves analyzing

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<sup>36</sup> Davis-Hamilton, Z. (2018, April). What Makes a Research Administrator [Web log post]. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.srainternational.org/blogs/martha-jack/2018/04/27/what-makes-a-research-administrator-pulse>

<sup>37</sup> Giese, J., & Cote, J. (2002). *Defining customer satisfaction*. Academy of Marketing Science Review, 2000(1). Retrieved from <http://amsreview.org/articles/giese01-2000.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

statistics regarding proposals, expenditures, cost transfers, and time measurements for task completions<sup>40</sup>. Several of the standard metrics collected at a University are used to evaluate research administration services and processes, but uncontrollable external factors may impact the metrics<sup>41</sup>. For example, over time, a change in the number of funded proposals may be influenced by a sponsor's annual budget. These metrics are not a complete representation of changes that have occurred with University services and processes. Faculty satisfaction metrics are collected data that is completely regulated by the University; meaning, changes in faculty satisfaction metrics over time are a direct reflection of research administration services and processes. Relying only on metrics that display financial or quantitative information does not allow a deeper dive into the quality of services being provided<sup>42</sup>.

### Pros and Cons of Collecting Faculty Satisfaction Metrics

Faculty satisfaction metrics are a newer measurement with a perception of being complex because the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data heavily relies on faculty involvement<sup>43</sup>. Also, collecting complicated metrics “take a significant amount of time and effort” for the end-users. University offices can find it hard to see the validity in collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. However, even with a difficult collection process, gathering this type of metric is imperative because "research faculty are the generators of the grants administration

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<sup>40</sup> Luther, J., & Peluso, K. (2018, October). *The Power of Metrics in Research Administration*. Lecture presented at NCURA Webinar. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from [https://hlcra.harvard.edu/files/hlcra/files/ncura\\_metrics\\_webinar\\_2018\\_oct\\_29.pdf](https://hlcra.harvard.edu/files/hlcra/files/ncura_metrics_webinar_2018_oct_29.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Marina, S. (2015). *Evaluating Research Development: Metrics and Satisfaction Surveys*. Lecture presented at 2015 NORDP Annual Meetings in Tufts University, Bethesda, Maryland. Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.nordp.org/assets/RDConf2015/presentations/nordp-2015-marina.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Cole, S. (2010). Reframing Research Administration. *Journal of Research Administration*, XLI(1), 11-21. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

workload and recipient of services; therefore, their opinions and participation are deemed important to the improvements of the system of research administration"<sup>44</sup>.

Assessing the services and processes provided to faculty members is vital to reflect on faculty needs and the administrative resources that are available to them. Often faculty members' demands change, creating a gap if services and processes no longer fit the needs of the customer. Assessments helps with shifting processes and services to realign them with the customer's new requirements, or to solve reoccurring issues<sup>45</sup>.

The most useful resource accessible to faculty members are research administrators. Evaluating administrative services and processes through faculty satisfaction metrics allows a direct measurement of the provided services to a significant customer. These measurements can be tracked to help make decisions on if processes or services need change to better satisfy faculty.

### Common Collecting Mechanisms

Different mechanisms and methods can be utilized to collect faculty satisfaction metrics such as surveys, informal feedback through conversations, or formal solicitation of feedback. One common method for collecting faculty satisfaction metrics is through distributed faculty satisfaction surveys soliciting faculty members' opinion<sup>46</sup>. Despite a survey being a structured system to seek faculty opinions, prior literature shows that response rates to surveys run low<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

## 2.11 How are Faculty Satisfaction Metrics Used?

Generally, there is an inadequate amount of literature on research administration, but there are even less scholarly studies reviewing faculty's perception of research administration services and resources<sup>48</sup>. Despite having little current literature, there have been surface-level investigations to better understand the use of faculty satisfaction metrics in a University research administration setting. The Society of Research Administrators (SRA) facilitated an informal survey to gauge how institutions are gathering evaluations on services being provided. According to Zoya Davis-Hamilton, 68% of the 175 respondents answered yes to collecting faculty feedback, the study's second highest type of metric collected<sup>49</sup>. Although the study breaks down how metrics are used to evaluate offices processes and systems, the study fails to specifically review if faculty satisfaction metrics influenced adjustments. These results were published in SRA's electronic magazine.

Also, Universities such the University of California, Berkley have started publishing faculty satisfaction surveys that are used to collected metrics<sup>50</sup>. However, many of these reports discuss current findings and do not elaborate on the usefulness of the metrics collected.

With a growing need to assess the processes and service research administrators provide to faculty, satisfaction metrics could be a usefulness mechanism to collect feedback. This study

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<sup>48</sup> Mullen, C. A., Murthy, U., & Teague, G. (2008). *Listening to those we serve: Assessing the research needs of university faculty*. The Journal of Research Administration, 39(1), 10-31.

<sup>49</sup> Davis-Hamilton, Z. (2014, July). Do we measure up? How Research Administration offices evaluate their services. SRA Catalyst.

<sup>50</sup> *Research Administration End Service Satisfaction Survey Detailed Summary Report*(Rep.). (2017, May).

Retrieved July 29, 2019, from University of California, Berkley website:

[https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/smaller file 2017 RA Satisfaction Survey - Detailed Summary Report.pdf](https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/smaller%20file%202017%20RA%20Satisfaction%20Survey%20-%20Detailed%20Summary%20Report.pdf)

will evaluate the usefulness of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics in a University setting, by capturing if faculty satisfaction metrics influence changes.

### **Chapter 3. Problem Statement**

Collecting and analyzing metrics to assess processes and customer service hypothetically benefits research administration offices. Despite these potential benefits, the metric collection and analysis procedures can consume offices' resources, time, and money. Studies and professional organizations have discussed collecting faculty satisfaction metrics to gauge the efficiency of processes and services. However, there is a lack of information on if and how offices use faculty satisfaction metrics after collection. Are faculty satisfaction metrics benefiting research administration offices by causing changes in their processes and customer services? This study evaluated the use of faculty satisfaction metrics and if the data was utilized in University research administration offices to determine if offices are collecting metrics, and if the data compiled is utilized to stimulate changes in office processes and customer services. The intent is that this study can be a tool for research administration offices when deciding if collecting faculty satisfaction metrics are worth the effort.



## Chapter 4. Methodology

To evaluate the utilization of faculty satisfaction metrics in a University setting an electronic survey was carefully designed to obtain data on how often metrics are collected, the mechanisms used to retrieve the metrics and changes that have occurred due to collecting metrics.

### 4.1 Institutional Review Board Approval Process

Johns Hopkins University's Homewood Institutional Review Board conducted an evaluation on a human subject protocol for this study<sup>51</sup>. As part of the application, the student researcher was required to complete training on the protection of human subject participants provided through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)<sup>52</sup>. See Appendix VIII for certification documents verifying the student researcher completed the required training. The application process also required the student researcher to compile a protocol for the human subject participants. The protocol outlined the methodology of the proposed study, along with how much risk the participants will face and a risk management plan. Included in the protocol was a description of the proposed participant pool to help determine if vulnerable populations will be involved, how to recruit participants and samples of recruitment emails. The IRB panel approved this study as Exempt on April 1, 2019. An exempt status indicates the proposed research does not qualify as human subjects research and collected data are professional opinions, not personal identifying information. Following this approval, an amendment was

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<sup>51</sup> Homewood Institutional Review Board. (2019). *eHIRB Guidance and Documents* | *Homewood Institutional Review Board*. [online] Available at: <https://homewoodirb.jhu.edu/ehrb-documents/> [Accessed 11 Jul. 2019].

<sup>52</sup> About.citiprogram.org. (2019). *Human Subjects Research (HSR) – CITI Program*. [online] Available at: <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/series/human-subjects-research-hsr/> [Accessed 11 Jul. 2019].

submitted to HIRB for permission to alter questions to the survey, on June 10, 2019, the amendment was approved. See Appendix IV for a copy of the HIRB approval letter.

## 4.2 Research and Survey Design

The primary purpose of the study was to gather information from research administrators on the collection of faculty satisfaction metrics in a University setting. Also, were the metrics influencing changes in research administration processes and services? The electronic survey was constructed using google forms and was used to store collected data from completed surveys. The author was responsible for maintaining the survey and the security of the data.

The first page of the survey was a brief explanation of the study's purpose and the anticipated use of the data. Next, participants were asked to consent to the survey based on meeting the minimum qualifications of being 18 years or older and being employed at a University with a job portfolio in research administration. Branch logic was used to direct the participants in the survey based on their answers to consent and their knowledge of faculty satisfaction metric collections. If participants selected "disagree", they are redirected to end the survey and thanked for their time. If the participant selected "agree", they are directed to the next question in the survey that better evaluates their knowledge about the collection of faculty satisfaction metrics in their office/University. The second question asked about the participant's knowledge on the collection of faculty satisfaction metrics in their office/University by presenting them with the options: yes, no, or unsure. "Yes" is the only answer that would progress the participant to fill out the remaining portion of the survey. If a participant selected no or unsure, they are led to the end of the survey, thanking them for their time. The design of the remaining questions captured information about how the respondents' office/University collects

faculty satisfaction metrics, the frequency of the collections, and the influence these metrics have on research administration processes and services.

The first question asked after the qualification questions are how frequent faculty satisfaction metrics are collected? Participants are presented the following options:

- Annually
- Semiannually
- Quarterly
- Monthly
- Weeklies
- Spontaneously or continuously

This question was designed only to allow one answer. The author found it essential to understand how often research administration offices are collecting faculty satisfaction metrics.

In addition to asking for facts about the collection of metrics in research administrators offices/Universities, survey questions asked for participants' professional opinions. Question 3 focused on gathering the participants' opinion regarding the collection frequency on faculty satisfaction metrics. The design of this question allowed a direct reference to the previous question. The relationship between current metric frequencies (question 2) and research administrators' needs (question 3) was used to assess the demand for faculty satisfaction data. The question was structured in a ranking format, going from never collecting metrics, to collection happens too often. The participant could only select one answer for this question.

The following question in the survey asked the participants to give a timeline on how long their office/University has collected faculty satisfaction metrics. The duration for collecting metrics is an essential factor to consider when looking at metric impacts and trends amongst offices. If there are little to no changes in research administration processes and services, this could be influenced based on how long the offices have been soliciting for faculty feedback. This question only allowed for one answer to be selected from the following options: less than one year, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, more than 5 years, and unsure. An "unsure" option was available to participants to consider participants who are new to their position and are not knowledgeable of this history.

There were several mechanisms for gathering faculty satisfaction metrics; question 5 was constructed to be open-ended to capture all of these mechanisms. There are typical mechanisms such as surveys and informal feedback through conversations, but formatting this question to be open, allowed unique processes and tools to be captured. There was no character limit on the answer section.

To effectively design the core questions of the survey (questions 6-10), the author needed to understand potential areas of use for faculty satisfaction metrics. Research on common faculty complaints and current applications of faculty satisfaction metrics were used to develop the surveys main questions and answers. With limited literature on faculty satisfaction metrics for research administration, the author also reviewed current faculty satisfaction surveys used by Universities<sup>53</sup>. From these resources, the processes and service features listed in Table 4.1

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<sup>53</sup> *Research Administration End Service Satisfaction Survey Detailed Summary Report*(Rep.). (2017, May). Retrieved July 29, 2019, from University of California, Berkley website: [https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/smaller file 2017 RA Satisfaction Survey - Detailed Summary Report.pdf](https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/smaller%20file%202017%20RA%20Satisfaction%20Survey%20-%20Detailed%20Summary%20Report.pdf)

(Appendix I) were used to develop questions on the usefulness of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. For questions 6-10, the participant had the option to select as many answers that were appropriate to their office, along with an open-ended "other" option.

Table 4.1: Processes and Service Features used to develop questions 7-10.

Processes	Service Features
Presenting funding opportunities to faculty	Knowledge or Expertise
Office/unit proposal review deadlines	Responsiveness
Notifications of updates (pre and/or post-award)	Effective communication
Financial status/expense reporting	Office/research administrator availability

Question 6 focused on the current utilization of faculty satisfaction metrics. According to Nathan Haines, the author of *Metrics for Research Administration*, metrics can be utilized to evaluate staff performance, motivate staff, assess processes and services<sup>54</sup>. To better understand the handling of faculty satisfaction metrics after collection, Nathan Haines examples were used to develop the answers in question 6. Participants were given these options along with an "other" open-ended answer, "the data is not used", or "unsure". An "unsure" answer was provided to account for individuals aware that faculty satisfaction metrics are being collected but are not knowledgeable of their utilization after collection.

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<sup>54</sup>Haines, N. (2012). Metrics for research administration offices (Parts 1/2). Journal of Clinical Research Best Practices, 8(6/7). Retrieved from <http://www.huronconsultinggroup.com/>

Questions 7-10 were designed to make a direct connection between collection topics for faculty satisfaction metrics and the impact the data has had on the listed processes and services. Being able to make a direct assessment will help with analyzing the usefulness of the metrics; the data had an explicit impact. Question 7 asked if the collection of faculty satisfaction metrics occurs on the specific processes listed in Table 4.1. Question 8 then asked the participants which of the processes has a change or adjustment been made as a result of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. Questions 9 and 10 use the same setup but using the customer service features listed in Table 4.1. The author will be able to compare metric collection on specific processes and service qualities, and if a change has occurred due to the obtained data. These comparisons were helpful when analyzing the usefulness of faculty satisfaction metrics.

The last couple of questions collected general demographic data of the participants, such as the size of their University based on research expenditures and the responsibilities of their job. Question 11 captured which area of research administration the participant works in; pre-award, post-award, both, or other. Collecting this information is essential to observe trends with metric collection and areas of research administration. The last question of the survey categorized the University the participant works for based on research expenditures annually. The author purposefully recruited participants from all expenditure categories, so obtaining this information can help with analyzing trends between University size and faculty satisfaction metric collections. The participants had the following expenditure categories to select from: \$450 million or more, Between \$200 million and \$499,999,999, Between \$1 million and \$199,999,999, and \$999,999 or less. This breakdown of expenditure categories roughly correlates to the Herd survey expenditure rankings as the top 50 colleges, 51-100, 101-150, and

151-200<sup>55</sup>. Both demographic questions only allowed for one answer to be selected. This information gave a better understanding of the recruitment population. A complete copy of the survey is in Appendix III.

#### 4.3 Participant Selection and Recruitment

In an attempt to evaluate the utilization of faculty satisfaction metrics in a University setting, participants were recruited based on their employment with a University with a job portfolio in research administration. Participants were asked to provide unbiased feedback in the study's survey. Recruitment via emails asked participants for their support in filling out a survey about faculty satisfaction metrics. Participants were also encouraged to complete the beginning portion of the survey; even if their office/University does not collect faculty satisfaction metrics. "No" answers were used to assess how prevalent Universities collect faculty satisfaction metrics. Participants were strategically chosen from a broad range of Universities based on their yearly research expenditure ranking in the National Science Foundation HERD<sup>56</sup>. Capturing data from research administrators at different sized Universities was important. To prepare an email list of potential participants that work at a University with a research administration job portfolio, the author used University websites to gather individuals' emails from departments and central offices. An overview of the Universities and their rankings are in Table 4.2 in Appendix II. Overall there was a total of 1,252 email recruitment invitations sent out to potential study participants through University email recruitment.

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<sup>55</sup>National Science Foundation - Higher Education Research and Development Survey (HERD). (2018, November). Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvyherd/>

<sup>56</sup> National Science Foundation - Higher Education Research and Development Survey (HERD). (2018, November). Retrieved July 29, 2019, from <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvyherd/>

Another source of participant recruitment was emailing current and former students in the Masters in Research Administration Program at Johns Hopkins University. The author retrieved fellow students' emails through class and program directories. The recruitment list for individuals associated with the program had a final count of 108.

The last source for participant recruitment was organizational forums. A variety of Collaborate communities were used on the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) website for recruitment. The purpose of NCURA Collaborate is to provide a "professional networking platform that allows members to easily interact and communicate online, empowering members to work effectively with easy access to the most relevant and popular information"<sup>57</sup>. The survey was posted to the following communities to recruit participants:

1. Departmental Research Administration Community
2. Financial Research Administration Community
3. NCURA Community Site

Although the author cannot declare how many NCURA members viewed the survey invitation in the Collaborate communities, a breakdown of the number of members per community is in Table 4.3<sup>58</sup>. Based on the number of members associated with the three communities at the time of the survey availability ended, July 22, 2019, 11:59 PM Eastern Time,

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<sup>57</sup> Membership & Volunteering. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ncura.edu/MembershipVolunteering/CollaborateNCURA.aspx>

<sup>58</sup> Membership & Volunteering. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ncura.edu/MembershipVolunteering/CollaborateNCURA.aspx>



the survey was accessible to about 1596 members. The invite to recruit community members to participate in the survey is in Appendix VII, the same invite was used in all three communities. Utilizing the NCURA Collaborate platform allowed the author to increase the availability of the survey, and to a diverse population that has a direct interaction with research administration in a University setting.

Table 4.3. Number of members per NCURA Collaborate Communities.

Community Name	Number of Members
Departmental Research Administration Community	621
Financial Research Administration Community	700
NCURA Community Site	275

It is important to note that although the number of participants recruited is based on the number of emails sent out, a small portion (~35) of addressees did not receive the email due to technical issues with the email address. Each participant was recruited once by email, but it is possible that individuals were invited multiple times through both email and Collaborate invites. Participant recruitment started June 19, 2019, and continued to July 22, 2019. The survey was available to the recruited participants during this time frame. Hypothetically the author was able to reach a wide range of participants from different sized Universities with varying responsibilities and job titles associated with research administration. Reaching individuals in pre-award, post-award, or both.

#### 4.4 Limitations

Despite careful crafting of the study design and survey, study limitations, and how they may affect the study were considered. A limitation that is difficult to mitigate is recruiting participants that are unaware of the collection of faculty satisfaction metrics at their University. This lack of knowledge could be due to several factors such as being new to a position, new to the University or are not involved in the metric collection process. In an attempt to manage this limitation, the author asked the participants if their office/University participates in collecting faculty satisfaction metrics at the beginning of the survey. This question allows participants to select yes, no, and unsure, to account for the knowledge of the participant.

Another limitation is the general topic of the study; faculty satisfaction metrics are a rather new metric to be collected in a University setting. Being able to recruit participants that obtain faculty satisfaction data can be challenging. To gather as much study data, the author attempted to recruit a large number of individuals to increase the rate of "yes" responses to collect more fully completed surveys. Also, the author used multiple sources for participant recruitment.

The last limitation to take in consideration is the number of participants that are recruited from each University. There is a larger targeted subject pool from Universities that have more annual research expenditures because with more research being conducted, more research administrators are needed. When recruiting participants, more participants were sent email invitations from Universities with larger expenditures due to having more available potential qualifying participants. With needing the survey to reach as many individuals as possible, the author did not equally distribute the survey to the same number of participants from each University. Instead, the survey was sent to as many individuals as possible from each University.

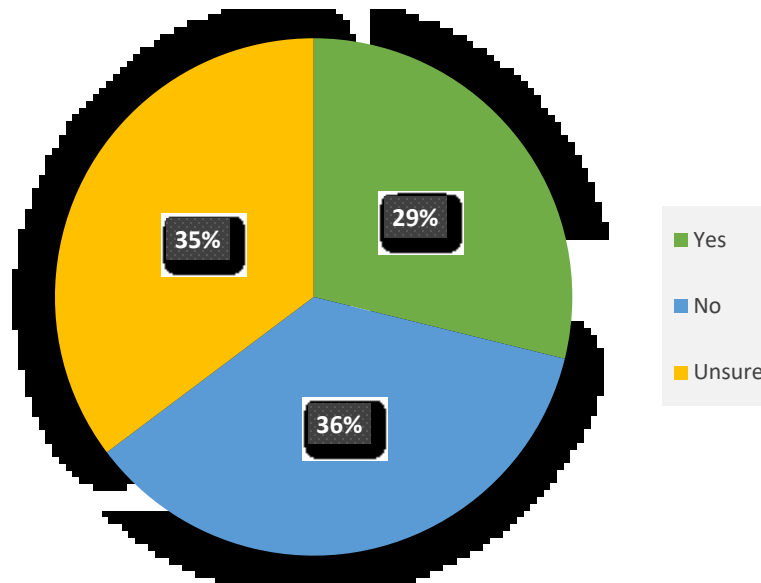
Although the author is aware of the study's limitations, and actions were taken to reduce the impact of these conditions on the data collection process, these limitations may still be present. With careful design and recruitment, a total of ~1,360 Individuals were invited to participate in the study.

## **Chapter 5. Study Results and Discussion**

The survey results and data analysis focused on participants who answered the survey questions. It is important to note that not every participant filled out every survey question, and for this reason, respondent counts for a particular question may vary. As a result of having questions left blank, the total respondent counts may vary.

The author distributed the survey to a total of ~1,360 potential study participants. A total of 158 individuals responded to the survey invitation and attempted to participate in the study. These 158 individuals were first presented with criteria questions to ensure they fit into the targeted population. The participants had to agree or disagree with being 18 years or older, work for a University, and have a research administration job portfolio. Of these 158 individuals, 156 selected “agree” to meeting the criteria, and 2 selected “disagree” and were thanked for their effort and directed out of the survey. The next question was another criteria question for the survey participants to determine if they have knowledge about faculty satisfaction metric collection in their office/University. Of the 156 participants, 45 individuals selected “yes” to collecting faculty satisfaction metrics in their office/University, 56 selected “no”, and 55 selected “unsure”. For a percentage breakdown of these answers, see Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Survey result: Faculty satisfaction metric collection percentages



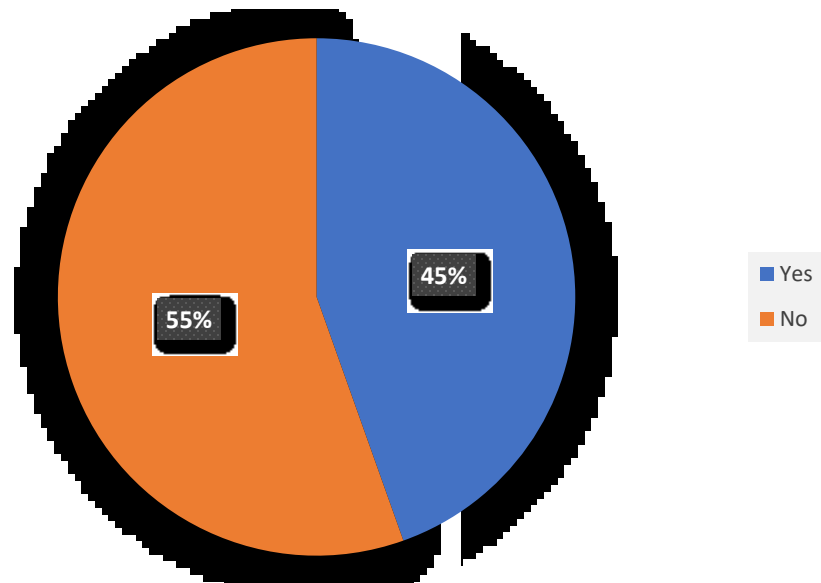
As discussed in the limitation section in chapter four, it is hard to recruit participants that are knowledgeable about faculty satisfaction metrics. It is important to note that the highest percentage of individuals that responded to the survey did not have knowledge about faculty satisfaction metrics in their office/University. Although this result is surprising, the author will not use the unsure data in the remaining data analysis.

Figure 5.2 depicts the results for participants who answered yes and no. A total of 45 respondents (45%) responded yes to collecting faculty satisfaction metrics, and 56 (55%) respondents selected no. The yes result for collection is slightly less than expected when comparing results to previous studies had results of about 68% of respondents collect faculty satisfaction metrics<sup>59</sup>. However, with a polar design question, these results are close to expected.

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<sup>59</sup> Davis-Hamilton, Z. (2014, July). Do we measure up? How Research Administration offices evaluate their services. SRA Catalyst.

Figure 5.2. Survey Results: Yes, and no percentages of faculty satisfaction metric collection.

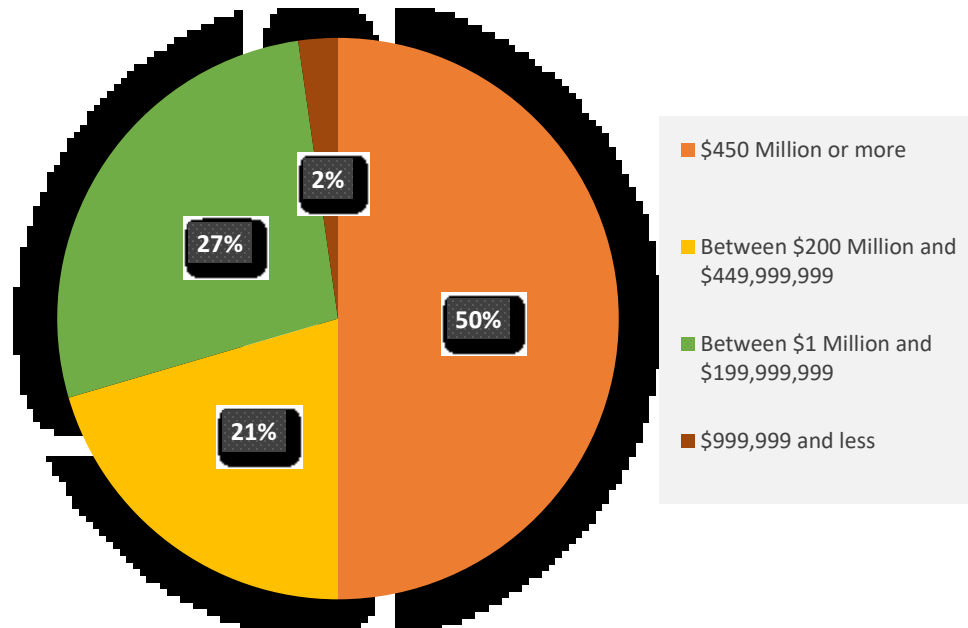


Participant demographic data were collected from all individuals that answered yes to collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. The first demographic result to review is University size based on annual research expenditures. As mentioned in chapter 4 the HERD survey from NSF was used to breakdown expenditure categories for participants<sup>60</sup>. From the participants that responded “yes” to collecting faculty satisfaction metrics, 50% of the participants came from Universities that have annual expenditures of \$450 Million or more. Limitations discussed in chapter four may influence these results, where there are more potential study participants from larger research Universities. The remaining results for annual expenditures are in Figure 5.3.

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<sup>60</sup> National Science Foundation, *Rankings by Total R&D Expenditures*, accessed 2019, <https://ncesdata.nsf.gov/profiles/site?method=rankingBySource&ds=herd>.

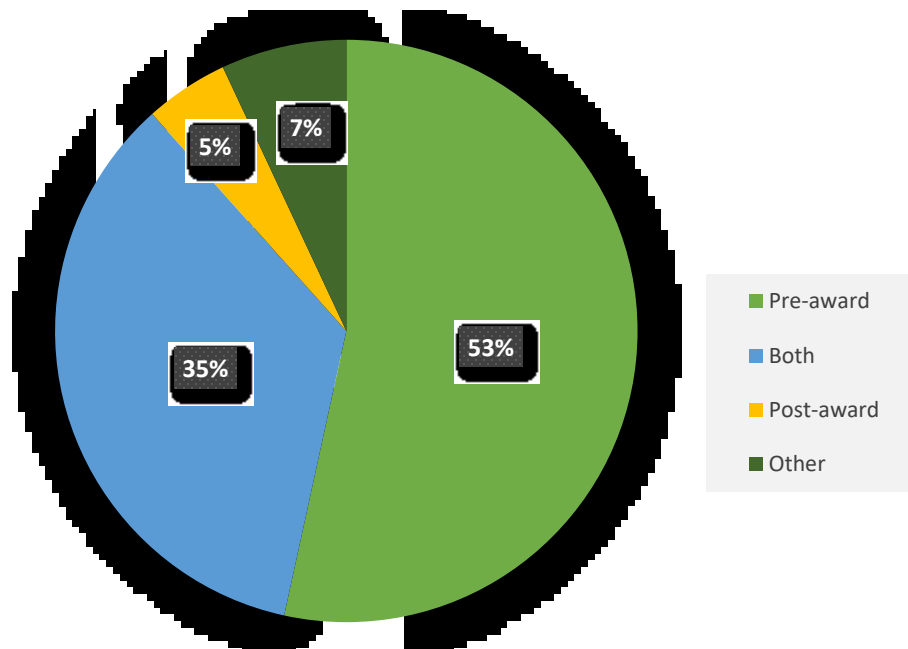
Figure 5.3. Survey Results: Percentages of respondents based on University annual research expenditures.



Another vital participant demographic collected in the survey is categorizing the area of research administration the participant mainly works in. A total of 53% or 23 participants stated they worked in pre-award services. The second most frequent response to survey question number 11 was “both,” meaning they mainly work in both pre and post-award services. As stated in the methodology section, question 11 allowed an “other” option that was open-ended, and a total of 3 participants selected “other” giving examples: Principal Investigator, Development Role, and Department research administration. Figure 5.4. displays the results for responsibility demographics. Overall, the majority of participants work in pre-award services, which is an unexpected result. The nature of pre-award services may lead to more of a demand to assess faculty satisfaction than with post-award services, potentially influencing the results in Figure 5.4. Generally, pre-award services focus on submitting proposals for funding, which can take an extensive amount of effort in a short amount of time. However, the majority of post-award

services are spaced out across the length of the project. Pre-award offices may collect more faculty satisfaction metrics because they perceived as beneficial in parallel to their work.

Figure 5.4. Survey Results: Percentages for participant categories of responsibilities.



Participants were asked how often their office/University collected faculty satisfaction and was presented with varying frequency options. Annually was the most selected answer with 18 respondents choosing this answer for how often they collect faculty satisfaction metrics. The second most selected answers were spontaneously and continuously for the frequency of faculty satisfaction metrics. These results are expected based on prior research conducted. Several Universities collect faculty satisfaction metrics annually through a widely distributed survey and post the results publicly on their websites. See Table 5.1 for the remaining results for metric collection frequency.



Table 5.1. Survey Results: Respondent counts for the frequency answer options in question 3.

Metric Collection Frequency	Respondent Count
Annually	18
Semiannually	1
Quarterly	1
Monthly	1
Spontaneously	10
Continuously	10
Total Answered	41

Next participants were asked for their professional opinion on if the frequency they collect faculty satisfaction metrics is enough. The most selected response with 31 occurrences is “we collect faculty satisfaction metrics enough”; confirming that their metric collection frequency is sufficient for their needs. The second most selected answer with 11 occurrences and the only other chosen answer in this question was “we should collect faculty satisfaction metrics more often”. These results were partially not expected. It was expected to have the majority of the respondents answer either “should collect faculty satisfaction metrics more often” or “we collect faculty satisfaction metrics often enough”. However, it was not expected that the majority of the participants feel that faculty satisfaction metrics are collect enough. It was expected there to be a more even split between these two answers. Table 5.2 shows respondent counts for their opinion on collection frequency.

Table 5.2. Survey Results: Respondents’ opinions on the frequency faculty satisfaction metrics are collected.

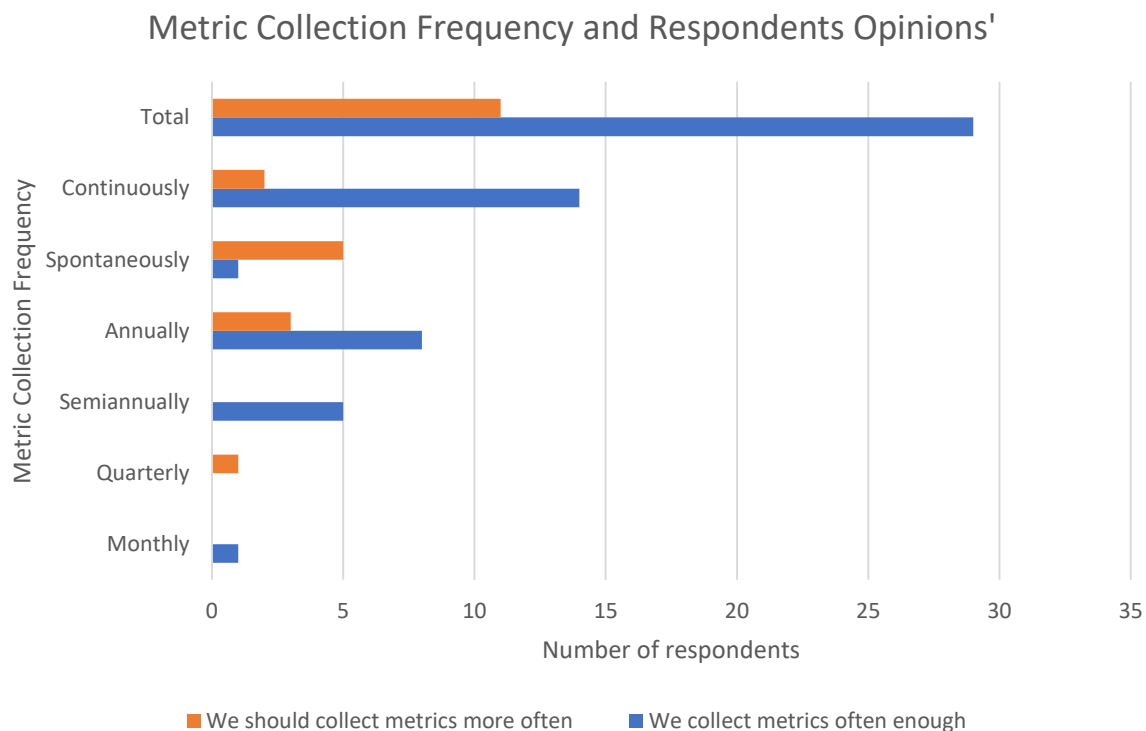
Respondents' opinion on metric collection frequency	Respondent Counts
We never collect faculty satisfaction metrics	0
We should collect faculty satisfaction metrics more often	11
We collect faculty satisfaction metrics often enough	31
We collect faculty satisfaction metrics too often	0

Participants were broken into two categories; “we should collect metrics more often” and “we collect metrics often enough”. These participant categories are then compared based on their metric collection frequency to better understand in a research administrators’ opinion what frequency is sufficient.

From the 31 individuals who answered, “we collect faculty satisfaction metrics often enough, 29 of these individuals also answered how often their offices collects faculty satisfaction metrics. A total of 14 individuals from those 29 collect faculty satisfaction metrics continuously. This result is expected as a continuous metric collection is the highest frequency available to research administrators. The second highest frequency was annually for participants that answered their office collection metrics enough. This result was not expected because an annual frequency for metric collection is a long period of time accurately capture issues and proactively make changes based on data collected.

From the 11 individuals who answered, “we should collect faculty satisfaction metrics more often”, 11 of these individuals also gave an answer for how often their offices should collect faculty satisfaction metrics. The highest occurring metric collection frequency for these 11 individuals was spontaneously at 5 participants. It was expected to have “spontaneously” as the most common answer for individuals who think their office should collect faculty satisfaction metrics more often. Having a structured collection frequency is helpful for research administration offices. Figure 5.5 is an overview of these results comparing opinion answers based on the frequency of metric collection.

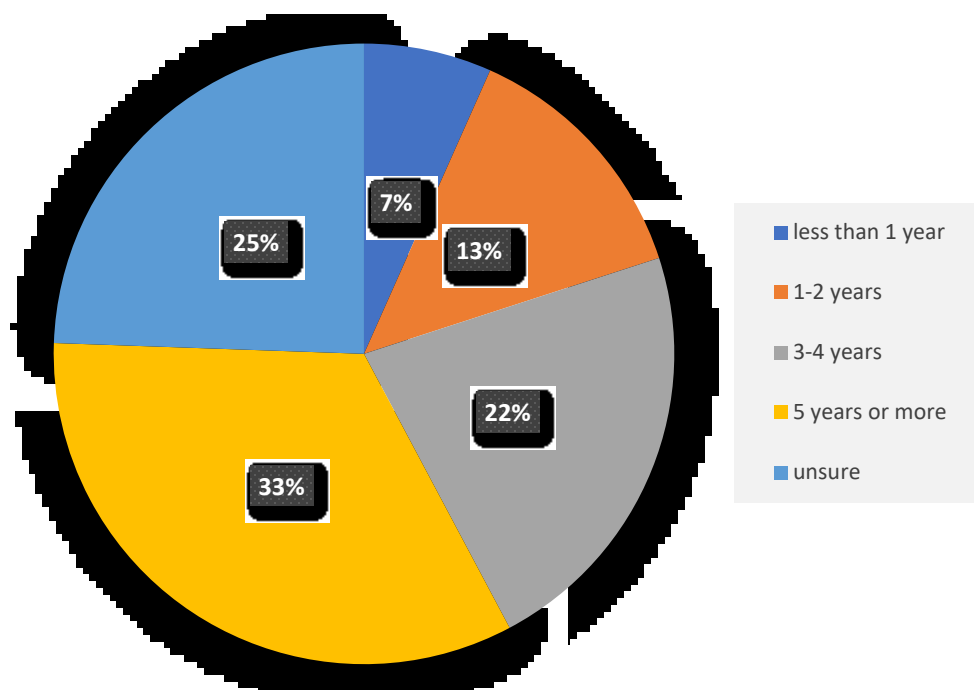
Figure 5.5. Comparing respondents’ opinions on faculty satisfaction metric collection frequency.



Participants were then asked how long their office has been collecting faculty satisfaction metrics, and the highest response was 5 years or more with 15 respondent counts (33%). This response was not expected. Faculty satisfaction metrics are a new metric for research

administration offices, and there is very little literature available to the field regarding the collection and utilization of these metrics. It is important to note that the second-highest occurring answer was unsure with 11 respondent counts (22%) — figure 5.6 breaks down the percentages of respondents' answers.

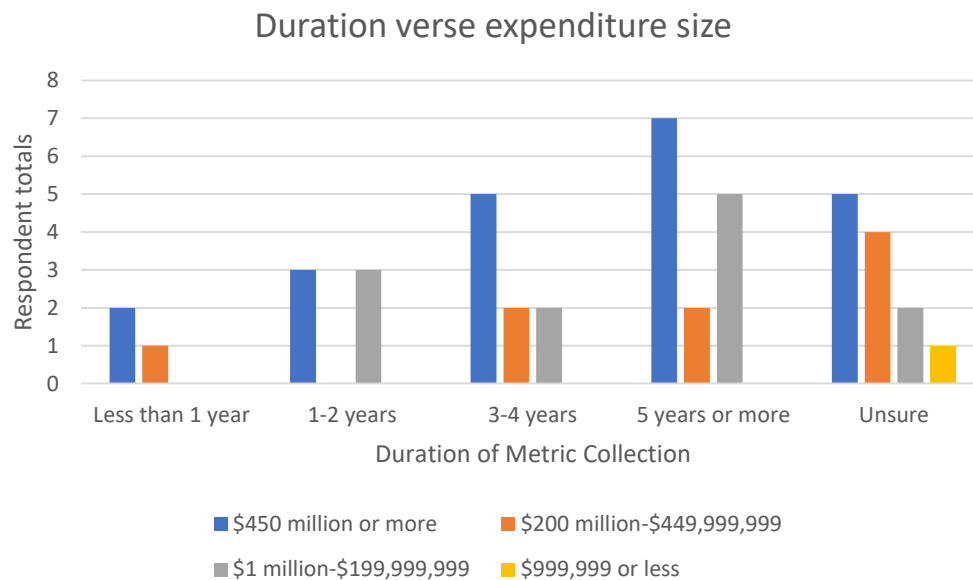
Figure 5.6. Survey Results: Percentage of respondents' answers on the duration of metric collection.



To better understand the demographics of the offices and Universities that are collecting faculty satisfaction metrics, respondent counts for duration answers were compared based on the size of the University. For an overview of duration, categories compared based on research expenditures reference Figure 5.7. In each duration category, Universities with research expenditures of \$450 million or more have the most respondent counts. Meaning, offices from larger Universities have been collecting faculty satisfaction metrics for a varying amount of time, rather than a common duration. Universities with research expenditures of \$450 million or more

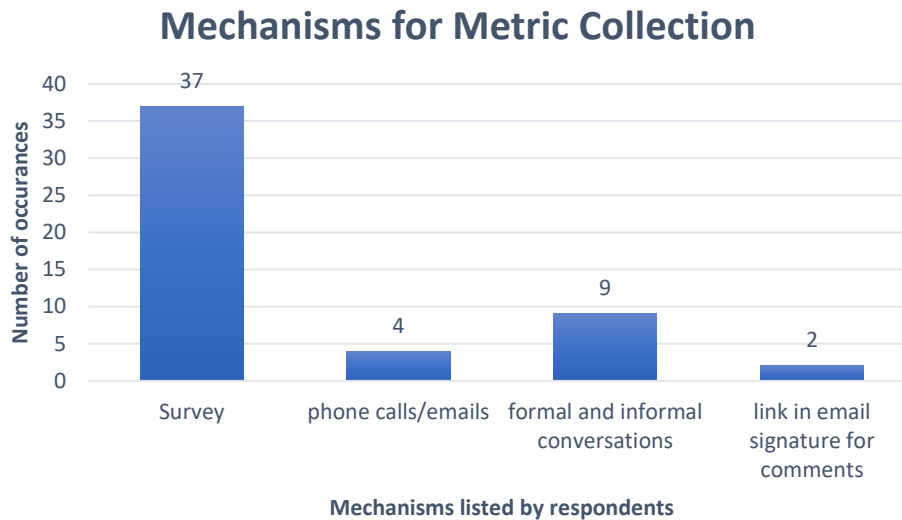
are expected high respondent counts as the majority of the respondents are from Universities of this size (50%).

Figure 5.7. Survey Results: Respondent counts comparing collection duration of faculty satisfaction metrics and University size by annual research expenditures.



Participants were asked what mechanisms were used to collect faculty satisfaction metrics through an open-ended answer. After reviewing the written responses, the most occurring mechanisms are listed in Figure 5.8 below. As expected, surveys were the most predominate answer. Surveys can be used for both qualitative and quantitative feedback from faculty members and are easily trackable to recognize patterns and changes.

Figure 5.8. Survey Results: Respondent counts on the mechanisms used to collect faculty satisfaction metrics.

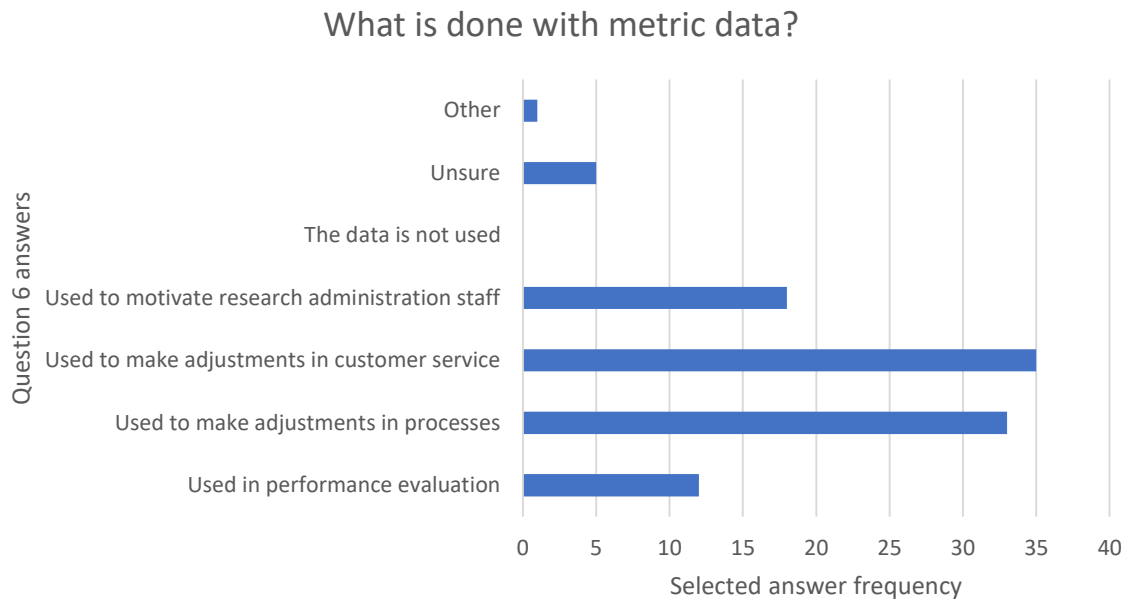


Participants were presented with a question to capture the overall use of faculty satisfaction metrics. The question allowed several answers to be selected, resulting in a total of 104 responses for question 6. The two most common answers were “used to make adjustments in processes” with 33 occurrences and “used to make adjustments in customer service” with 35 occurrences. This result was not expected. The author anticipated a more spread out result between the answer options based on claims from prior research on metric utilization in research administration offices<sup>61</sup>. There was an “other” option available to respondents, and only 1 respondent selected this answer inferring to using faculty satisfaction metrics for general purposes. Figure 5.9 displays an overview of these answer options and the frequency the respondents selected them.

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<sup>61</sup> Marina, S., Davis-Hamilton, Z., & Charmanski, K. (n.d.). Evaluating Research Administration: Methods and Utility. *Journal of Research Administration*, 46(2), 95-114. Retrieved July 29, 2019.

Figure 5.9. Survey Results: Respondent counts on how faculty satisfaction metrics have been used in their offices.

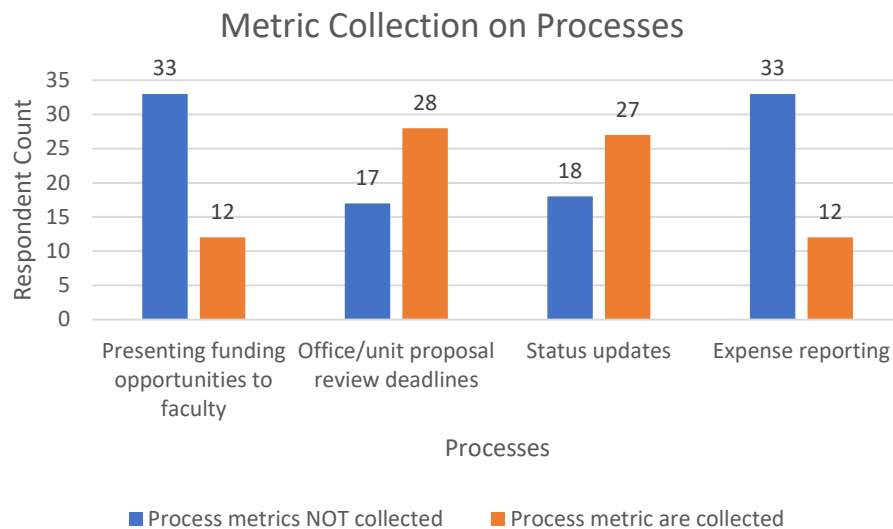


Next, and most importantly, the participants were asked which specific processes and services their offices collect faculty satisfaction metrics on. The respondents were then asked what processes and service qualities have a change occurred due to a metric collection.

Focusing on processes that offices collect faculty satisfaction metrics on, Figure 5.10 shows a breakdown of how many respondents collect metrics on a particular process. Office/unit proposal review deadlines (28 respondents) and status updates (27 respondents) have the highest number of respondent counts. Faculty satisfaction metrics are collected on these two processes, more frequency than the others. This result is expected as these processes are more board and generally relatable to all research administrators. Expense reporting processes only had 12 respondents that collect faculty satisfaction metrics, and this result was also expected due to

expense reporting being a post-award activity, and only 17 respondents handle post-award activities.

Figure 5.10. Survey Results: Faculty satisfaction metrics collected on specific processes.



Using the same processes, respondents were asked which had a change as a result of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. Both “presenting funding opportunities to faculty” and “office/unit proposal review deadlines” had 50% of the respondents note that a change occurred as a result of the metric collection. Status updates had 18 respondents (67%) state that a change has happened as a result of metric collection. These results are close to what is expected as there is a 50% chance change has or hasn’t happened because of collected faculty satisfaction metrics. Figure 5.11. and Figure 5.12 outline how many respondents selected a change occurred to a process based on faculty satisfaction metric collection.



Figure 5.11.: Survey Results: Changes in process options based on if metrics were collected.

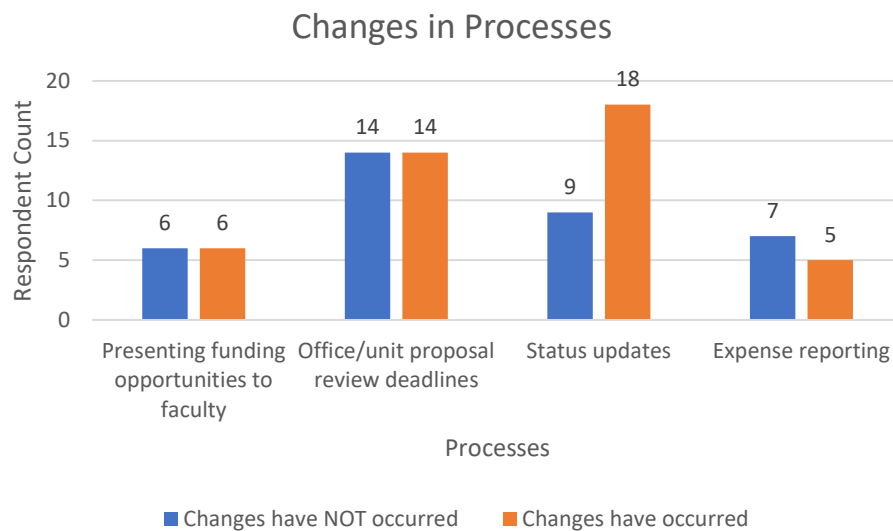
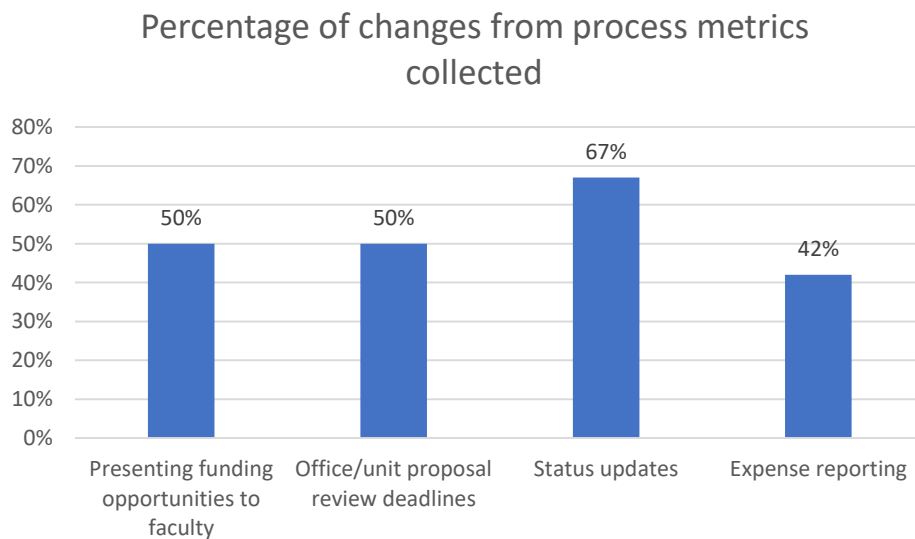


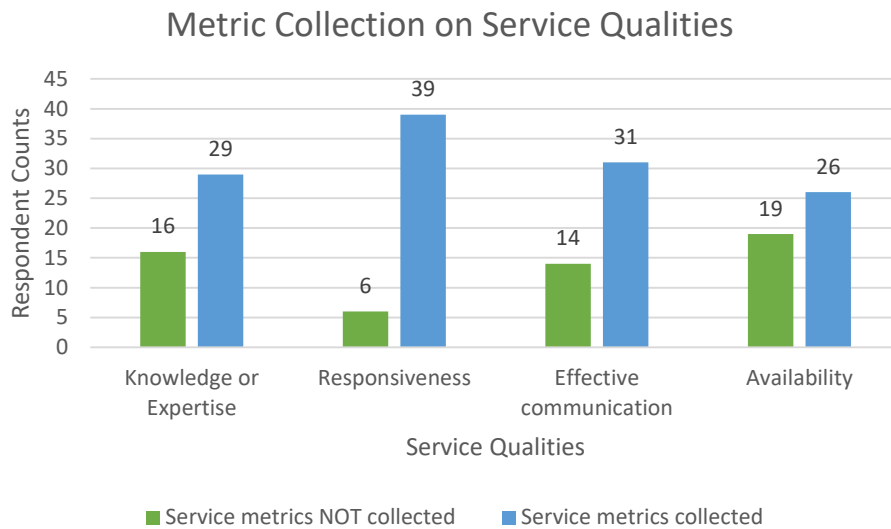
Figure 5.12. Survey Results: Percentage of respondents that recorded a change occurred from faculty satisfaction metric collection on particular processes.



The same method was used to look at faculty satisfaction metrics on office service qualities. Respondents were asked if they collect faculty satisfaction metrics on varying of customer services. By not selecting a service, the participant indicates they do not collect faculty

satisfaction metrics on that particular service. The highest occurring service where metrics are collected was for is responsiveness with 39 respondent occurrences.

Figure 5.13. Survey Results: Respondent counts for collecting faculty satisfaction metrics on office service qualities.



Respondents were then asked based on the services metrics were collected on, which services have changes occurred based on collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. The service with the highest occurrences of change is responsiveness with 26 (67%). This result is expected as responsiveness is the service quality that is collected the most; however, 67% of metric collection events resulting in change is higher than the anticipated 50%. The other three services have half or more occurrences of changes from metric collection. Figure 5.14 and 5.15 outline how many respondents recorded a change in a service based on collecting faculty satisfaction metrics.

Figure 5.14. Survey Results: Changes in service qualities based on if metrics were collected.

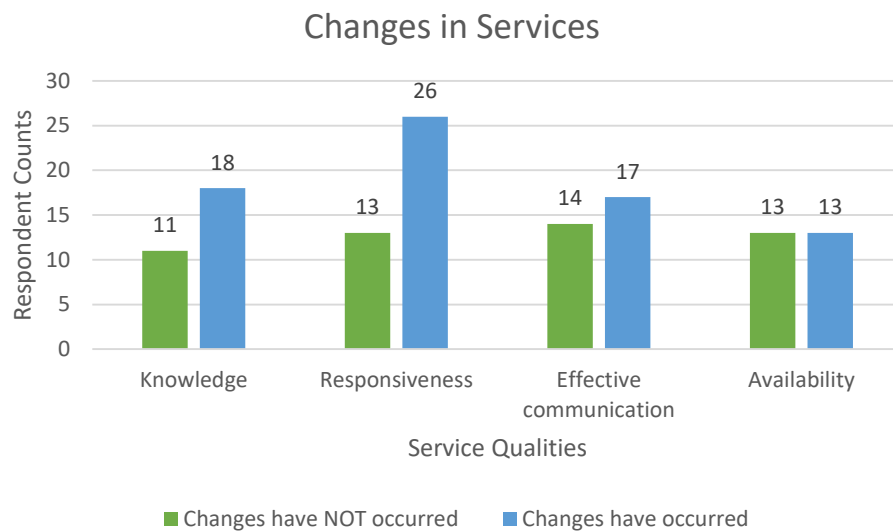
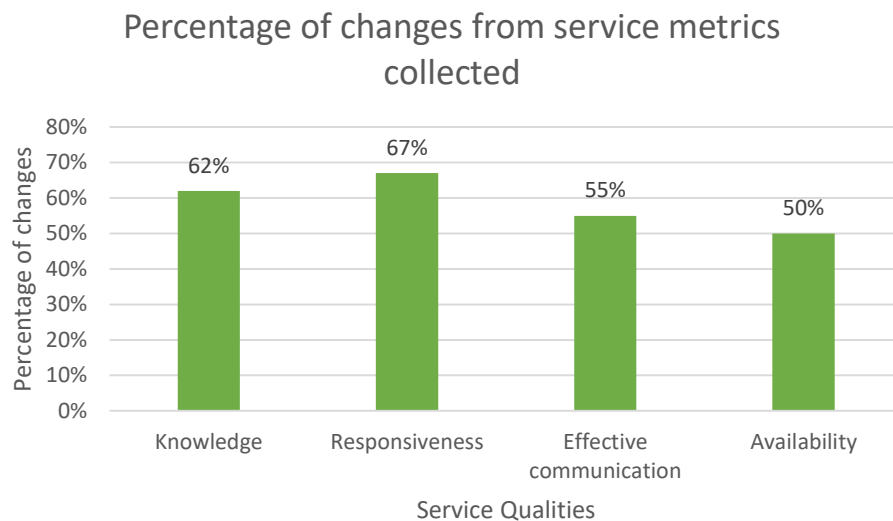


Figure 5.15. Survey Results: Percentage of respondents that recorded a change occurred from faculty satisfaction metric collection on particular office service qualities.



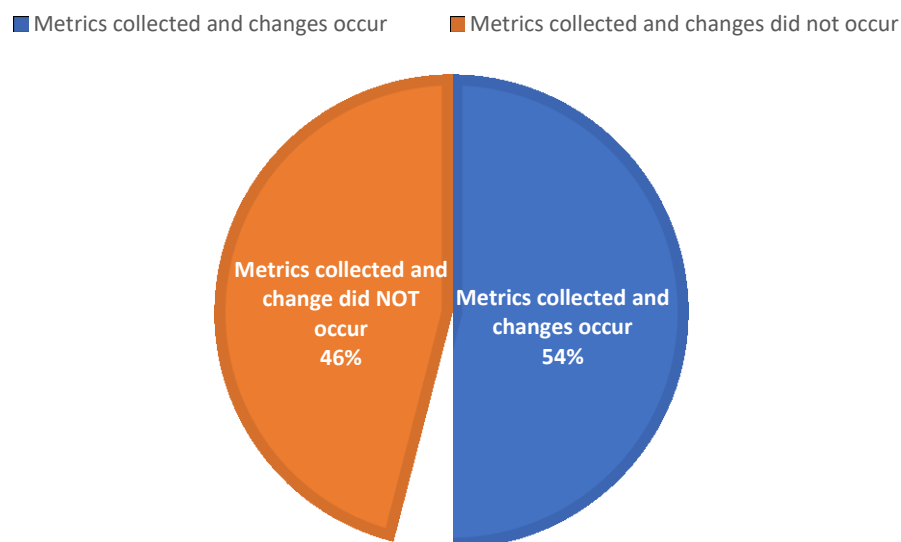
## Are Faculty Satisfaction Metrics Utilized in Research Administration Offices?

Overall, 45 individuals answered yes to collecting faculty satisfaction metrics and provided additional details about the collection process and utilization of the data. Participants responded to questions about faculty satisfaction metric collection for both processes and services while being able to select as many answers that apply to them. To consider having multiple answers per respondent, “occurrences” will be used to define the total number of times metrics are collected for processes and services.

When compiling the survey data for all processes, there were 79 occurrences of research administration offices collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. Of those 79 occurrences, 43 resulted in a process change based on collecting metrics. Figure 5.16 displays the percentage of occurrences that resulted in a change and the percentage that a change did not. With 54% of metrics collected on processes, also influenced a change is an expected result.

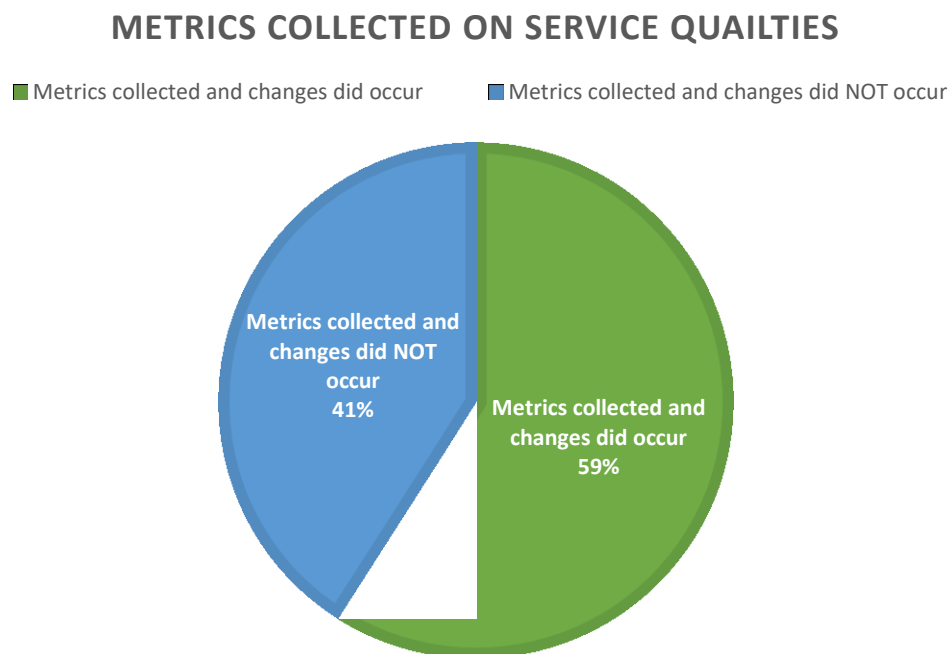
Figure 5.16. Results: Percentage of metrics for all the process options listed in the survey that are collected and changes did not occur verse metrics that are collected and changes did occur.

### METRICS COLLECTED ON PROCESSES



For service qualities, there was a total of 125 occurrences, where respondents recorded, they collect faculty satisfaction metrics for the services listed in question 9. Of the 125 occurrences where faculty satisfaction metrics are collected for service qualities, 74 of those occurrences also resulted in a service quality change. Figure 5.17 displays that 59% of the metrics collected by research administration offices resulted in a change in a service quality. This result is expected as there is a 50% chance collecting faculty satisfaction metrics will not influence a change.

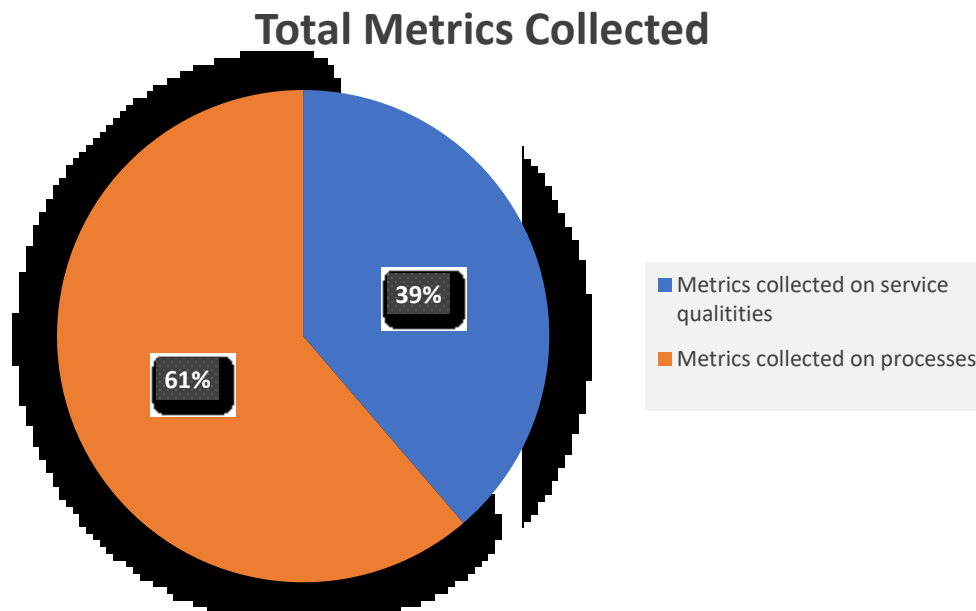
Figure 5.17 Results: Survey Results: Percentage of metrics for all the service quality options listed in the survey that are collected and changes did not occur verse metrics that are collected, and changes did occur.



Comparing metric collection for services and processes, there was a total of 125 occurrences of metric collection on services and 79 occurrences from processes. Based on respondents' answers, 61% of the metrics collected on faculty satisfaction were service-related,

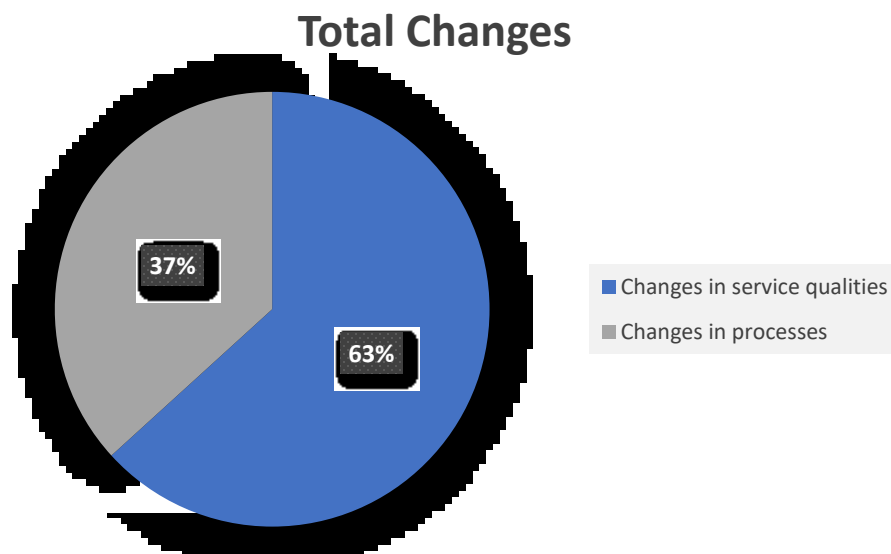
and 39% were on processes. Generally, the service qualities in the survey are broader than the specific processes selected, potentially influencing the result to be slightly different than the expected 50/50 result.

Figure 5.18. Survey Results: Percentages of metrics collected based on the type of metric.



There was a total of 117 occurrences of changes for both faculty satisfaction metrics collected on services and processes. Of those 117 changes, 43 (37%) occurred in processes and 74 (63%) in service qualities. Figure 5.19 displays the breakdown of changes based on metric category; service qualities verse processes.

Figure 5.19. Survey Results: Percentage of changes based on the type of metric category.



To understand if collecting services metrics is significantly more effective than processes based on the number of changes that occur from collecting faculty satisfaction metrics, a chi-square test was performed to see if the data results differ significantly from the expected 50/50. A chi-square test will statistically compare the counts of responses for changes have occurred, and changes did not occur between the categories of service qualities and processes<sup>62</sup>. The degrees of freedom used in the analysis was 1. This was calculated by the following equation:  $(\text{number of columns} - 1) \times (\text{number of rows} - 1) = 1$  (cite)<sup>63</sup>. The predetermined alpha level of significance used in the analysis is 0.05. The results for the chi-square analysis are in table 5.3.

<sup>62</sup> The Chi Square Statistic. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://math.hws.edu/javamath/ryan/ChiSquare.html>

<sup>63</sup> The Chi Square Statistic. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://math.hws.edu/javamath/ryan/ChiSquare.html>

Table 5.3. Survey Results: Chi-square analysis for changes between processes and service qualities.

<b>ACTUAL METRIC FREQUENCIES FOR CHANGES:</b>			
	<b>Changes did NOT occur</b>	<b>Changes did occur</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Processes</b>	36	43	79
<b>Service Qualities</b>	51	74	125
<b>Total</b>	87	117	204
<b>Actual frequency</b>	0.42647059	0.57352941	
<b>EXPECTED METRIC FREQUENCIES FOR CHANGES:</b>			
	<b>Changes did NOT occur</b>	<b>Changes did occur</b>	
<b>Processes</b>	33.69	45.31	
<b>Service Qualities</b>	53.31	71.69	
<b>CHI SQUARE TERMS:</b>			
	0.15838825	0.1177687	
	0.10009567	0.07443298	
<b>Chi square value: 0.45068559</b>			
<b>P value: 0.50200956</b>			

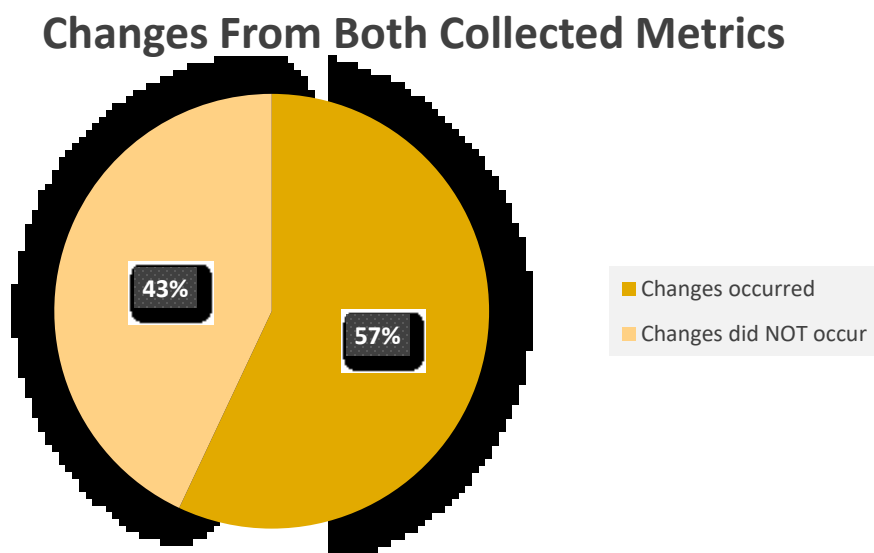
With a chi-square of 0.45068559, an alpha level of significance of 0.05, and a degrees of freedom = 1, a chi-square distribution table was used to determine if there is a level of significance in the analysis. The chi-square value of 0.45068559 is less than the chi-square value of 3.841 at an alpha level of 0.05, meaning there is not a significant difference in the actual frequency of changes and what is expected. Despite having more metrics collected on services



than processes, and more occurrences of changes in service qualities than processes, there is not a significant difference in change occurrences between these categories. Faculty satisfaction metrics on processes is just as useful as metrics on service qualities.

Overall, there was a total of 204 occurrences of participants recording their office collects faculty satisfaction metrics, and from those 204 occurrences, 117 resulted in some type of change as a result of the data collected. Based on these results, when faculty satisfaction metrics are collected in a research administration office, 57% of the time, a change resulted from the collection. This result is displayed in Figure 5.20. An expected outcome is 50%, and the results from this study are slightly higher than the expected.

Figure 5.20. Results: Percentage of metrics collected that either did or did not result in a change.



Based on the study results research administration offices are collecting faculty satisfaction metrics, but only about 45% of offices recorded knowledge to collecting these metrics. From those offices, a total of 117 occurrences of faculty satisfaction metrics being collected resulted in a change; about 57% of faculty satisfaction metrics collected resulted in a

change. Also, neither collecting faculty satisfaction metrics on processes or customer service qualities displayed more effectiveness or significantly more changes; both categories were equally effective.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Although there was not a significant number of changes from collecting faculty satisfaction metrics, this study does capture that changes are happening. University research administration offices are executing changes due to collecting metrics. Universities can utilize this study as a resource when considering if their offices should collect faculty satisfaction metrics. This study presents a more comprehensive understanding of current collection methods for faculty satisfaction metrics. Also, it reviews if collecting metrics is beneficial by making adjustments in processes and services. In the participant recruitment process, the author had seven individuals reach out wanting more information on the effectiveness of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics and requesting access to the results of this study.

Overall, this study created a base understanding of the utilization of faculty satisfaction metrics. Recommendations for moving forward focus on obtaining more data on faculty satisfaction metric collection. First, a better process to recruit participants would help generate better response rates. Next is to collect demographic data on all participants. The collection of demographic data would happen even if they answered no to the qualifying questions about collecting faculty satisfaction metrics. This information would be helpful to investigate possible trends in the populations that are not collecting metrics to find an answer as to why hopefully. This study may not be able to provide research administrators with an answer on if collecting faculty satisfaction metrics is useful. However, it does provide data to those determining if collecting faculty satisfaction metrics are valuable.

## Appendix I

Table 1.1. Common Processes and Services

Processes	Service Features
Presenting funding opportunities to faculty	Knowledge or Expertise
Office/unit proposal review deadlines	Responsiveness
Notifications of updates (pre and/or post-award)	Effective communication
Financial status/expense reporting	Office/research administrator availability

## Appendix II

Table 4.2 List of Universities used in research Survey Distribution

University Name	HERD Ranking
University of California - San Francisco	3
University of Pennsylvania	4
Duke University	8
Stanford University	10
Cornell University	13
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	14
University of Pittsburgh	16
University of Minnesota	17
New York University	18
Ohio State University	22
University of Florida	25
University of California - Berkeley	26
Northwestern University	29
Michigan State University	32
Emory University	34
University of Texas	35
University of Arizona	38
Indiana University	45
North Carolina State	47
University of Colorado	48

University of Virginia	51
University of Cincinnati	54
University of Maryland	56
Boston University	57
Case Western University	58
University of Utah	61
University of Kentucky	62
Miami University	64
Carnegie Mellon University	71
University of Nebraska	77
University of Connecticut	86
University of New Mexico	91
George Washington University	93
Wayne State University	99
Tufts University	100
Kansas State University	109
Clemson University	111
Auburn University	114
West Virginia University	117
Tulane University	121
University of Houston	125
Rice University	126
Thomas Jefferson	134

Drexel University	137
University of Vermont	144
George Mason University	146
University of Idaho	147
University of North Dakota	151
University of Rhode Island	152
University of Maine	155
Wichita State University	165
Rush University	166
Texas State University	182

## **Appendix III**

### **Research Project Survey Questions**

#### **Survey**

##### **Introduction:**

It is becoming more common for University's research administration offices to collect faculty satisfaction data on administration processes and services. For this study, faculty satisfaction metrics are defined as an assessment on how satisfied faculty are with processes and services related to research administration. The purpose of this study is to better understand the collection of these metrics and what is being done with faculty satisfaction metrics after collection.

Katherine Bui, a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University, is responsible for the conduction of this survey. The survey will be used in a research project as part of her thesis requirement for her Masters of Science in Research Administration.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous. All data will be collected and stored electronically with password protection. A complete submission of this survey is your consent to participate in this research project. At any time during the survey you may exit and your answers will not be submitted. The survey does not contain questions that can identify you. This study and the results will be used to complete the proposed thesis project and will be shared for educational purposes with Johns Hopkins University.

The survey will take approximately 10 quick minutes and consists of 12 questions.

##### **Consent:**

By clicking the "Agree" button below you are confirming that you: are 18 years or older, work at a University with a research administration role, have read the information above, and agree to voluntarily participate in this study. If any of these statements are not true, please push the "Disagree" button.

☐ Agree (go to question 1)

☐ Disagree (end survey)

##### **Qualify question:**

1. Have your University's offices of research administration collected faculty satisfaction metrics based on research administrations services?

☐ Yes (continue to question 2)

☐ No (end survey)

☐ Unsure (end survey)



**Remaining Questions:**

2. How often does your University's offices of research administration collect faculty satisfaction metrics?

- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Semiannually
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Spontaneously or continuously

3. What is your opinion on how often your University's research administration offices should collect faculty satisfaction metrics?

- ☐ We should never collect faculty satisfaction metrics
- ☐ We should collect faculty satisfaction metrics more often
- ☐ We collect faculty satisfaction metrics often enough
- ☐ We collect faculty satisfaction metrics too often

4. In general, how long has your office solicited faculty feedback?

- ☐ Less than one year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ More than 5 years
- ☐ Unsure

5. In your office what mechanisms are used to collect faculty satisfaction metrics? (example: surveys)

**Open ended/short answer**

6. What happens with the data collected from faculty satisfaction metrics? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Used in performance evaluations

- ☐ Used to make adjustments in processes
- ☐ Used to make adjustments in customer service
- ☐ Used to motivate research administration staff
- ☐ Other (open ended question)
- ☐ The data is not used
- ☐ Unsure

7. Have your University's research administration offices collected faculty satisfaction metrics on the following processes? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Presenting funding opportunities to faculty
- ☐ Office/unit proposal review deadlines
- ☐ Notification of updates (pre and/or post-award)
- ☐ Financial status/expense reporting
- ☐ Other (open ended answer)

8. Which processes has a change(s)/adjustment(s) been made as a result of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Presenting funding opportunities to faculty
- ☐ Office/unit proposal review deadlines
- ☐ Notification of updates (pre and/or post-award)
- ☐ Financial status/expense reporting
- ☐ Other (as listed previously, open ended)

9. Have your University's research administration offices collected faculty satisfaction metrics on the following customer service qualities/features? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Knowledge or Expertise
- ☐ Responsiveness
- ☐ Effective communication
- ☐ Office/research administrator availability
- ☐ Other (open ended answer)

10. Which customer service qualities/features has a change(s)/adjustment(s) been made as a result of collecting faculty satisfaction metrics? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Knowledge or Expertise

- ☐ Responsiveness
- ☐ Effective communication
- ☐ Office/research administrator availability
- ☐ Other (as listed previously, open ended)

11. What are of research administration do you work in?

- ☐ Pre-award
- ☐ Post-award
- ☐ Both
- ☐ Other

12. Select the best fit category for your University's research expenditures annually.

- ☐ \$450 million or more
- ☐ \$200 million-\$449,999,999
- ☐ \$1 million-\$199,999,999
- ☐ \$999,999 or less

### **End of Survey**

**Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions, I appreciate your time.**

## Appendix IV

### Institution Review Board Exemption Letter



**Homewood Institutional Review Board**

3400 N. Charles Street  
Wyman Park Building, Suite N468  
Baltimore MD 21218-2685  
410-516-6580  
<http://homewoodirb.jhu.edu/>

Michael McCloskey, PhD  
IRB Chair

**Date:** June 10, 2019

**PI Name:** Jeffrey Kantor

**Study #:** AM00009267 HIRB00008958

**Study Name:** An Evaluation of Faculty Satisfaction Metrics in Research Administration  
Offices: Is the Data Used?

**Study Expiration Date:** March 30, 2022

**Date amendment approved:** June 10, 2019

The Homewood IRB has reviewed an amendment to this research project and will be reviewed as Exempt going forward.

**Addition of/change to survey(s), questionnaire(s), or other research instruments**

Please keep a copy of this letter for future reference. Thank you for contacting the Homewood IRB about this research and for providing the requested information to make this determination. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

**Approved Documents:**

**Consent or Assent Materials:**

Introduction to Survey-Evaluation of Faculty Satisfaction Metrics.docx

**Recruiting Materials:**

Sample Email for Peer Recruitment.docx

Sample Email for Recruitment - Evaluation of Faculty Satisfaction Metrics.docx

Website Posting Recruitment Invitation.docx

**Study Team Members:**

Katherine Bui

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the HIRB at (410) 516-6580 or [HIRB@jhu.edu](mailto:HIRB@jhu.edu).

## Appendix V

### Email Survey Invitation

#### Sample Email for Recruitment

Greetings!

You have been identified as an employee at a University with a research administration portfolio.

I, Katherine Bui am working towards my Master of Science in Research Administration degree and plan to graduate in August! My last major assignment in my program is conducting a research project by collecting and analyzing unbiased feedback on how faculty satisfaction metrics are being used in research administration offices. Even if your office does not collect faculty satisfaction metrics, I encourage you to fill out the beginning of the survey to collect this information,

Your participation in a quick (10 minute) survey would be a huge help and greatly appreciated.

Feel free to share the survey link with colleagues.

The survey is now open and will remain open until July 22, 2019. If you have any questions or concerns please reach me at [ktulppo1@jhu.edu](mailto:ktulppo1@jhu.edu).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Katherine Bui

Graduate Student

Johns Hopkins University

Krieger School of Arts and Sciences

## **Appendix VI**

### **Peer Email Invitation**

#### **Sample Email for Peer Recruitment**

Dear Peers;

I hope all is well and classes/work are going smoothly!

I am beyond excited to be at the end of our program and currently working on my thesis; graduation is finally in sight! My research project aims to evaluate faculty satisfaction metrics, and if/how they are used in a research University setting. Are faculty satisfaction metrics being utilized? I am reaching out to ask for your help with completing my survey to collect your unbiased feedback for analysis.

I greatly appreciate your feedback and time!

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns. I wish you all success in both your education and careers.

Click [HERE](https://form.gle/gJrb1CdCz6bZQzMx7) for the survey or use the URL <https://form.gle/gJrb1CdCz6bZQzMx7>

Sincerely,

Katherine Bui

## Appendix VII

### COLLABORATE Invitation

Hello fellow NCURA members!

My name is Katherine Bui (Tulppo) and I am a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University. Currently, I am working on my thesis project evaluating how faculty satisfaction metrics are being utilized in a University setting.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would spare about 10 minutes of your time to assist me in this endeavor by completing this survey: <https://forms.gle/QKCA6hRadtNyYnsHA>. If your University/office does not collect faculty satisfaction metrics I encourage you to complete the beginning section of the survey to collect this valuable information. Please forgive me if you have received this invitation already as I have used several research administration resources to gather my data. With that in mind, please feel free to also distribute this survey with your friends and colleagues at your University. If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at ktulppo1@jhu.edu

If possible, please complete the survey by July 8, 2019, to allow adequate time for data analysis. However, the survey will remain open until July 22, 2019. Thank you for your time and consideration.

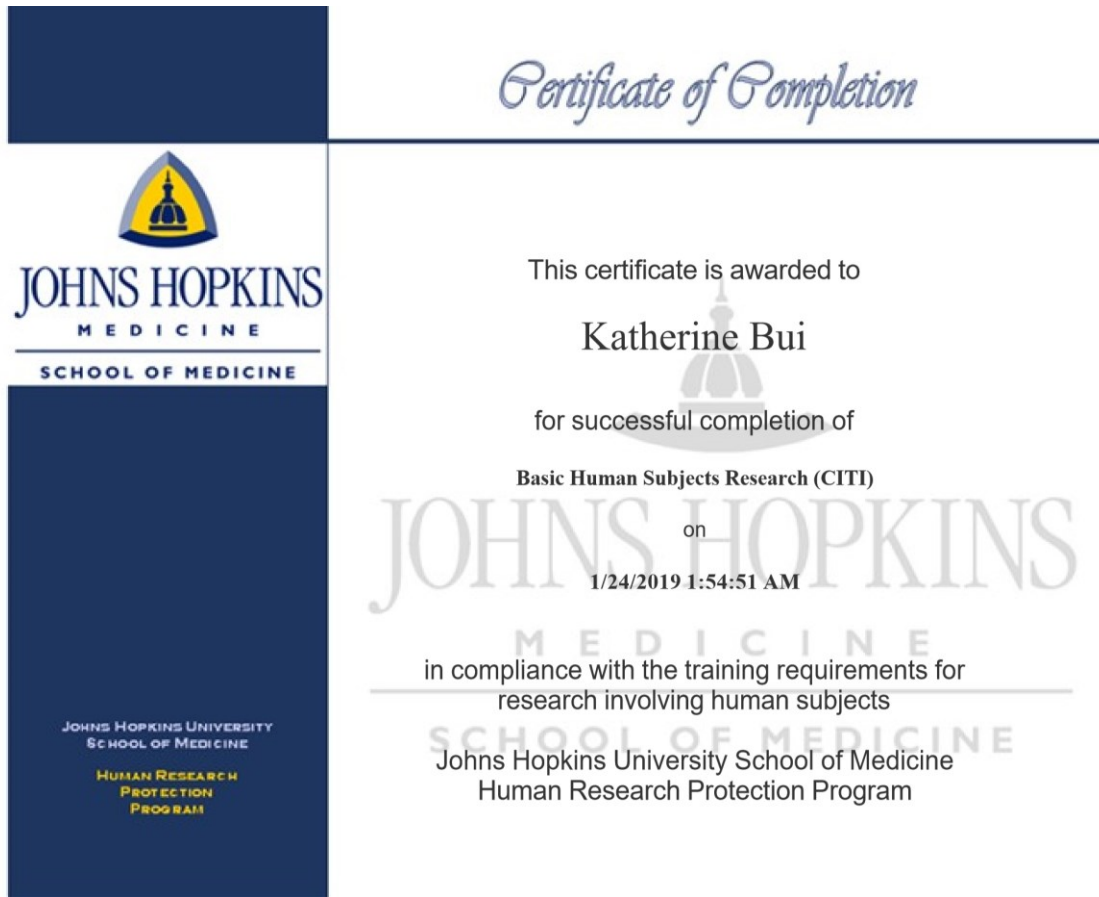
Sincerely,

Katherine Bui  
Graduate Student  
Johns Hopkins University  
Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences  
ktulppo1@jhu.edu



## Appendix VIII

### CITI Training Certificate for Human Subjects Research



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## **Biography**

Katherine Danielle Bui recently accepted a position as a Contract and Grant Specialist for the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan. This position acts as a department research administrator, working directly with the Office of Research Sponsored Programs and faculty members to provide both pre-award and post-award administrative support. This is Katherine's first position in research administration. Prior to this position Katherine had the pleasure of working the mental health field.

Currently, Katherine is pursuing her Masters of Science in Research Administration from Johns Hopkins with an anticipated graduation date of August 2019. Prior to this degree, Katherine obtained her Bachelors of Science in Neuroscience from Central Michigan University. Katherine is a member of the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) since June 1, 2018. This opportunity has been incredibly helpful with her transition from the classroom to the workplace. Katherine hopes to continue her new position after graduation and use her education to make positive impacts within her position by bringing her experiences from a diverse fellow-student body to the table.