

PROTOCOL FOR NSF INTERVIEWS ON DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH

(NSF staff will provide introductions if present, otherwise use first paragraph below)

Good morning/afternoon. I'm Jim Firnberg from the Louisiana State University System and I'm working as a consultant on the National Science Foundation's Higher Education R&D Survey (also introduce ICF staff at this time if present). I'm/we're here to talk about the concept of departmental research, which I'll explain in more detail in a minute.

[Ask for introductions of other university staff present if needed]

We would like to record this interview so that we have all your comments. This is only to aid our note-taking, we will not be publishing any reports linking your comments to your name(s) or institution. Would that be okay? [*Have attendees sign consent forms.*]

Before I get to my questions, I'd like to give you a little more background about why [I'm/we're] here today. As you may or may not know, NSF is responsible for collecting and reporting information on the science and engineering enterprise in the United States as well as awarding research grants. NSF's Survey of R&D Expenditures at Universities and Colleges has collected information on research expenditures by academic field for more than 30 years. Between 2007 and 2010 the survey went through a major redesign and expansion, and as of 2010 is now called the Higher Education R&D Survey. The survey collects information on separately budgeted organized research and development projects and currently excludes departmental research that is not separately budgeted.

However, from 1972 through 1977 NSF did collect current expenditures for instruction and departmental research by department (Engineering, Physical Sciences, Environmental Sciences, etc.) This item was discontinued because universities reported major issues in estimating the portion of departmental research. This topic hasn't been revisited since the late 70s, and NSF decided it was time to learn more about how departmental research is currently defined by institutions, how large a component of faculty research time it represents, and whether we should attempt to estimate it going forward.

So today we're here to gain an understanding of how various institutions treat departmental research.

1. Before we get started, could you tell me about your role(s) at this university?
 - a. How are you connected with research at this institution?
 - b. How much of your job, if any, is focused on measuring the amount of research at the university/college? (Depending upon who is being interviewed)
2. When you hear the term “departmental research” what comes to mind? How would it differ from other types of research? In general, how would you differentiate “departmental research” from “organized research” at this institution?
3. I’m going to read a list of terms and ask you to tell me how you would classify each one —as organized research, departmental research, instruction, or public service. (May not ask all depending upon who is being interviewed and their knowledge)
 - a. Keeping current in one’s discipline by reading journal articles
 - b. Attending sessions at professional meetings
 - c. Serving on a panel at a professional meeting
 - d. Giving a paper at a professional meeting
 - e. Writing grant proposals
 - f. Working with dissertation students on their projects
 - g. Conducting a research seminar with graduate students
 - h. Writing an article for a professional journal after a grant is over
 - i. Writing a book after the funding has stopped on a grant
 - j. Writing articles for magazines or newspapers that rely on a faculty member’s professional expertise
 - k. Start up funds for new faculty
 - l. Collecting data for a research project that is not yet funded
 - m. Helping faculty members with a survey of alumni for your institution
 - n. Conducting a survey sponsored by a federal grant to determine how voters perceive their local governing body
 - o. Conducting a survey of business leaders sponsored by a state grant concerning their hiring practices
 - p. Putting on an exhibit of a faculty member’s original works of art
 - q. Rehearsing for a faculty concert or recital
4. How would you distinguish “research” from other “creative activities” of a faculty member? [If respondent mentions teaching: What about creative activities other than teaching?]
5. Who decides if a project that a faculty member is working on is “research?”
6. Does your institution track the amount of “departmental research” conducted? (probe for details, if “yes”)
7. If so, who is responsible for tracking this?

- 8.** Does your institution have standard teaching loads for faculty? If yes, what is that standard? Does it vary by school or college?
- 9.** If a faculty member is supported by external funds how does that affect the faculty member's teaching load?
- 10.** What factors affect how much "release" time a faculty member should have to conduct departmental (non-budgeted) research?
- 11.** Is there a formal procedure that the university/college/department goes through to determine release time? If so, who reviews the proposals?
- 12.** Would it be valuable for you to know national data about departmental research?
- 13.** Would it be helpful for you to compare such information with your peer group of institutions?
- 14.** If NSF decides to collect data on departmental research who would be the best person or people at your institution to find this information?
- 15.** Do you have any questions or are there any other comments you'd like to make?