



# FEDERAL DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP

Redefining the Government & University Research Partnership

## A Silver Lining of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Maintaining Our Transformative Efforts to Improve our Institutional Research Infrastructure

Hosted by: Faculty Administrator Collaboration Team (FACT)  
Speakers: Steven Post, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
Suzanne Alstadt, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

FDP Meeting – January 2021



# FEDERAL DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP

Redefining the Government & University Research Partnership

## Faculty-Administrator Collaboration Team (FACT)

Mission: FACT brings together paired FDP institutional representatives for joint interactions focused on understanding and enhancing faculty-administrator collaborations that support successful research operations and reduce administrative workload associated with federally-funded research.



# Introduction to FACT: Current Participating Institutions

FDP Member Organization	Faculty Rep	Admin Rep
Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science	Eva McGhee	Perrilla Johnson-Woodard
College of Charleston	Kelly Shaver	Susan Anderson
Northeastern University	David Budil	Joan Cyr
Michigan Tech University	Larry Sutter	Dave Reed
U Arkansas Medical Sciences	<b>Steven Post (co-chair)</b>	<b>Suzanne Alstadt (co-chair)</b>
U of North Carolina Chapel Hill	Lori Carter-Edwards	David Paul
University of Texas at Austin	Rob Crosnoe	Courtney Swaney
University of Washington	Mark Haselkorn	Lynette Arias/Rick Fenger
Montana State University	Jason Carter	Leslie Schmidt



# Agenda for FACT Session

- Introduction to FACT (Steve Post)
- Current project – (Mark Haselkorn)
- Introduction of analysis committee (Suzanne Alstadt)
- Theme discussion (Panel of FACT Members)
  - *Communication / Relationships (Lori Carter-Edwards/Suzanne Alstadt)*
  - *Flexibility / Adaptability (Mark Haselkorn/Steve Post)*
  - *Resources / Infrastructure (David Budil/Lori Carter-Edwards)*
- Thoughtexchange: Beyond the basics (Eric Tennison)
- Discussion/Next steps (Steve Post, Moderator)



# Current Project

## **A Silver Lining of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Maintaining Our Transformative Efforts to Improve our Institutional Research Infrastructure**

- A natural experiment on the impact of increased virtual communication and coordination on collaboration among faculty and administrators in support of university research programs
- A planned methodology: Crowdsourcing



# Thoughtexchange

## Exchange Summary

FACT

December 17, 2020

How has COVID-19 positively or negatively impacted faculty-administrator collaboration in support of your research mission?



# Breakdown of Participation



**66**  
Participants



**86**  
Thoughts



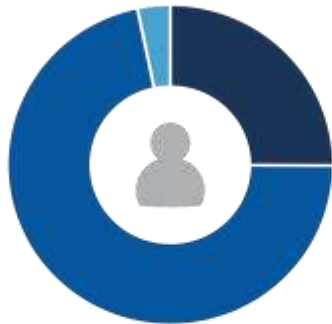
**1,294**  
Ratings





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# Survey Question 1

What is your role with FDP



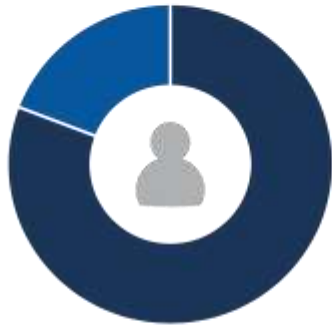
%		Answer
25%	(16)	 Faculty
72%	(46)	 Administrator
3%	(2)	 Technical





## Survey Question 2

The administrative burden associated with research awards has increased during COVID-19.



%	Person Icon	Answer
81%	(51)	Agree
19%	(12)	Disagree



## Survey Question 3

Effective collaboration between research administrators and faculty has been compromised by the response to COVID-19.



%		Answer
43%	(27)	Agree
57%	(36)	Disagree



## Survey Question 4

There are responses to COVID-19 that impact faculty/administrator collaboration which should remain in place after restrictions have ended.



%	Person Icon	Answer
85%	(52)	Agree
15%	(9)	Disagree





# Wordcloud





# Top-Rated Thoughts (overall)

**Since COVID forced working from home, it was discovered that many offices can indeed function 100% remotely, such as Sponsored Programs.** The elimination of traveling and coping with the stress of traffic and time wasted on travel has been a positive thing.

4.1  (10 )  
Ranked #1 of 82

**Virtual interactions have increased** Administrators are more frequently involved in project meetings/discussions due to the ease of scheduling virtual meetings.

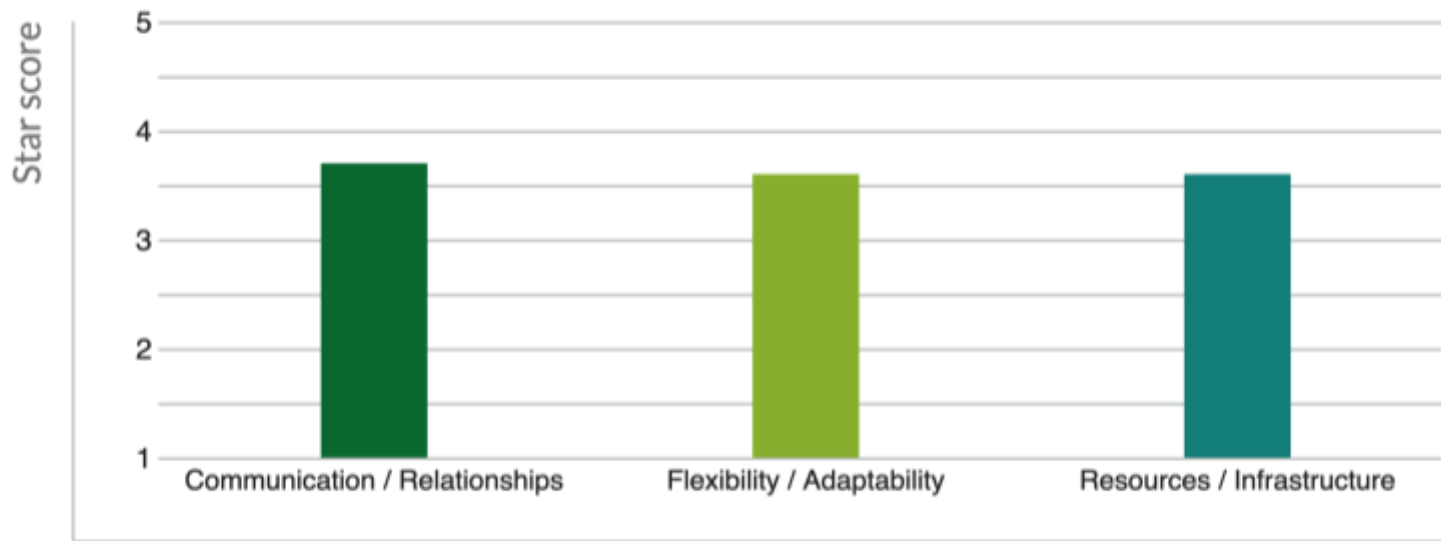
4.0  (20 )  
Ranked #2 of 82

**The remote aspect of our work has actually seemed to open up more communication avenues and opportunities to facilitate the submission of proposals.** Clear communication between administrators and faculty is essential to a successful submission and award administration.

4.0  (15 )  
Ranked #3 of 82

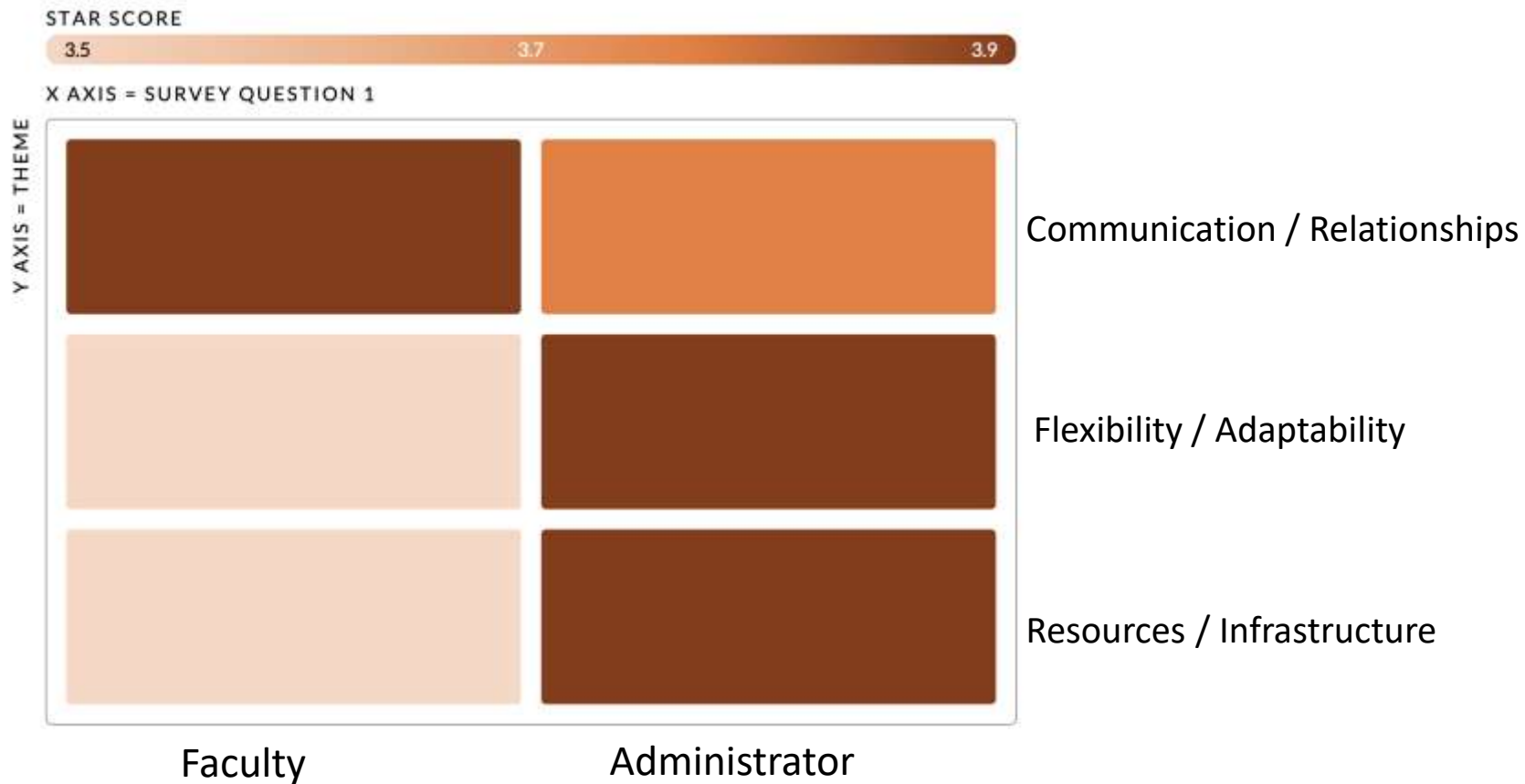


# Top Themes





# THEMES: Heatmap





# THEMES: Positive / Negative Impact













# THEMES: Communication / Relationships



## Positive



**The remote aspect of our work has actually seemed to open up more communication avenues and opportunities to facilitate the submission of proposals.** Clear communication between administrators and faculty is essential to a successful submission and award administration. 4.0  (15 )

**A positive impact - have gotten to know faculty better as a result of more fact-to-face phone calls via zoom.** Prior it was just an email communication/interaction. Now many feel compelled to speak directly on the phone which has fostered more collaboration. 3.8  (11 )

**COVID-19 has increased communications between faculty and administration** Increased communication has led to joint decision-making and some changes in system operations 3.8  (6 )

## Negative

**Negative** Reduced communications leads to more misunderstandings, inaccurate info and more re-working of documents. 3.3  (21 )

**Only being able to communicate electronically limits interaction** It is more efficient to be able to sit down and quickly resolve issues and grant applications 3.0  (20 )



# THEMES: Flexibility / Adaptability

## Positive

**Since COVID forced working from home, it was discovered that many offices can indeed function 100% remotely, such as Sponsored Programs.** The elimination of traveling and coping with the stress of traffic and time wasted on travel has been a positive thing. 4.1 ★★★★★ (10 👤)

**Postively** We have more work site options making it easier to accommodate life's intrusions into the work day. 3.9 ★★★★★ (19 👤)

**Administrators have proved their commitment to providing high quality assistance to faculty** Administrators have been faced with a myriad of obstacles to providing high quality service and stayed committed to their goal. 3.8 ★★★★★ (20 👤)

## Negative




**Effects of Covid on closing of childcare, preschools and schools impacts young faculty productivity.** This may disproportionately affect women faculty, leading to delayed career progression. 3.9 ★★★★★ (14 👤)

**The 24-7 expectations have increased without the boundaries of a workplace and a workday** I am concerned about unreasonable expectations and burnout 3.8 ★★★★★ (16 👤)




**There have been many temporary changes to research policies in response to the pandemic at both Federal and institutional levels.** More effort required to keep informed of which policies are applicable, how they affect different projects, and when they apply. 3.8 ★★★★★ (15 👤)

# THEMES: Resources / Infrastructure

## Negative

- \* Demand for central support has increased while central staffing has decreased.** Disparities among departments must be managed, creating workload shifts/overloads. 3.8  (16 👤)
  - \* Limitations locally with budget has impacted our ability to continue to progress in building our support structure for researchers.** This has limited our ability to be more responsive (budget cuts and hiring freezes caused directly by COVID). 3.4  (13 👤)
  - Negative impact as faculty have additional teaching loads and their administrative staff have been reduced due to layoffs.** Faculty are less productive and the administrative staff are coming to the central post award office to ask for us to complete their work 3.3  (18 👤)
- \* Represents many similar thoughts*

## Positive

- Since COVID forced working from home, it was discovered that many offices can indeed function 100% remotely, such as Sponsored Programs.** The elimination of traveling and coping with the stress of traffic and time wasted on travel has been a positive thing. 4.1  (10 👤)
  - Positive impact-New hire during COVID-19** to help with the increase proposals 2.9  (13 👤)
  - There are struggles, like figuring out new ways to communicate, but there have been positive changes like more video calls vs. in person meetings** It's important to find replacements for previous communication methods. 3.8  (21 👤)
- Ranked #10 of 82



# Thoughtexchange Results: Beyond the basics

**Eric Tennison: Thoughtexchange Team Member**



## Open Discussion

What are the important elements of faculty - administrator collaboration?

- Processes to effectively communicate and relate to each other
- Flexibility in how we engage and connect with each other
- Capacity to support and sustain interactions



# Thank you all!!

## From FACT!

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Suzanne Alstadt [sealstadt@uams.edu](mailto:sealstadt@uams.edu)

For more information about FACT, see our webpage:

<http://thefdp.org/default/committees/faculty-committee/faculty-administrator-collaboration-team-fact/>



## Next FDP Session

GSA Update on SAM and EUI

3:00pm ET/ 12:00pm PT

[thefdp.org/](http://thefdp.org/)