



National Organization of Research Development Professionals

# Maximizing Impact: Fostering A Creative Approach to Customer Service in a University Level Research Development Office

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**TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY



# Research Development at TAMU

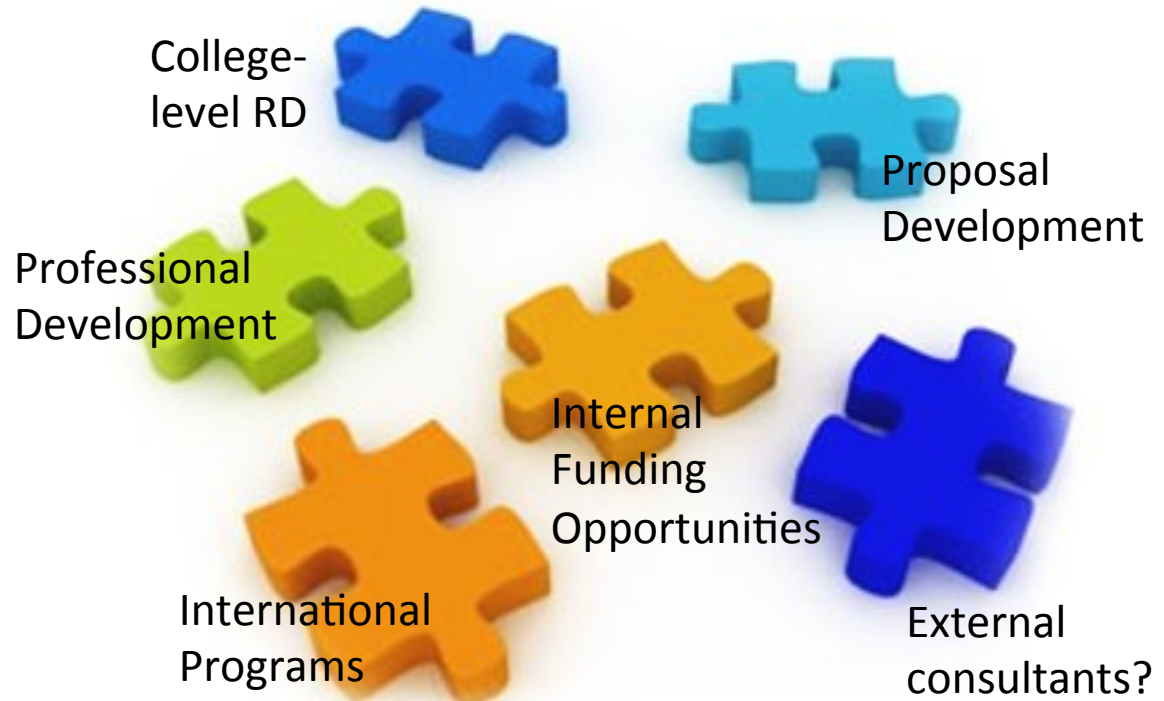
Office of Proposal  
Development (2003-2011)

Office of Research  
Development (2011-2013)



2003-2013

- Larger proposal assistance; Individual assistance as capacity allowed

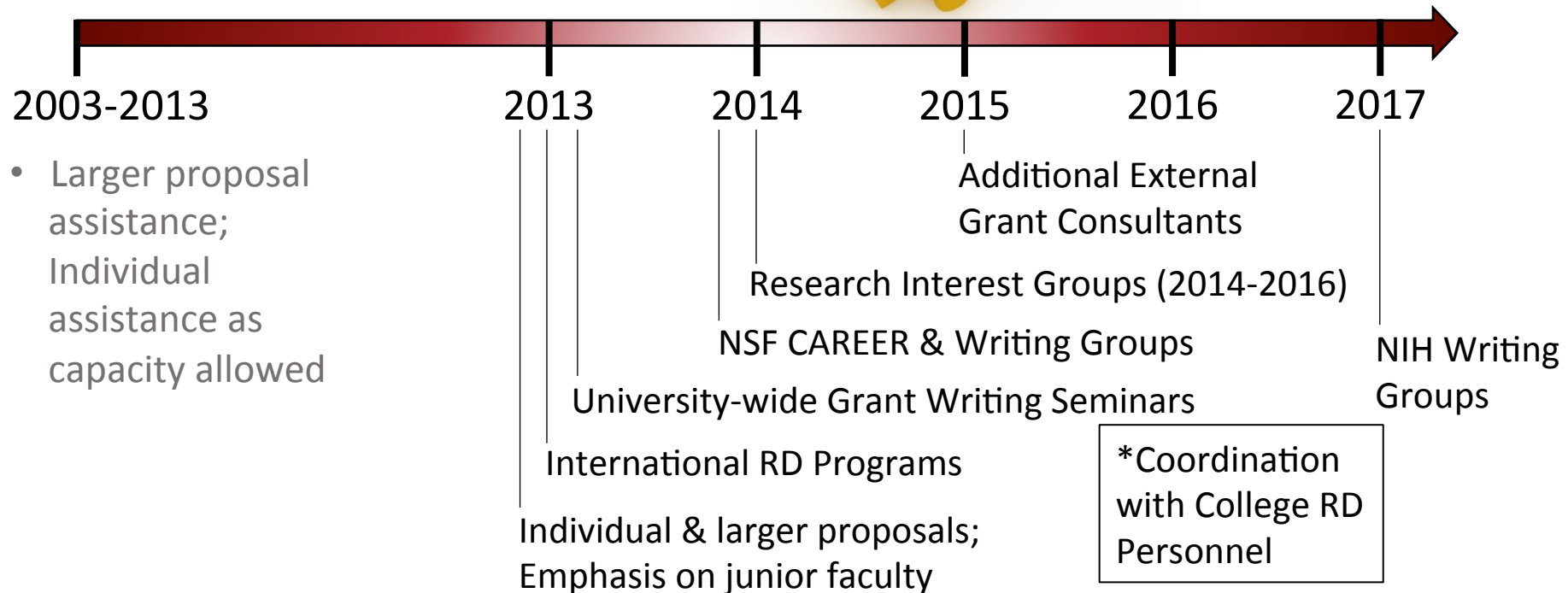




# Research Development at TAMU

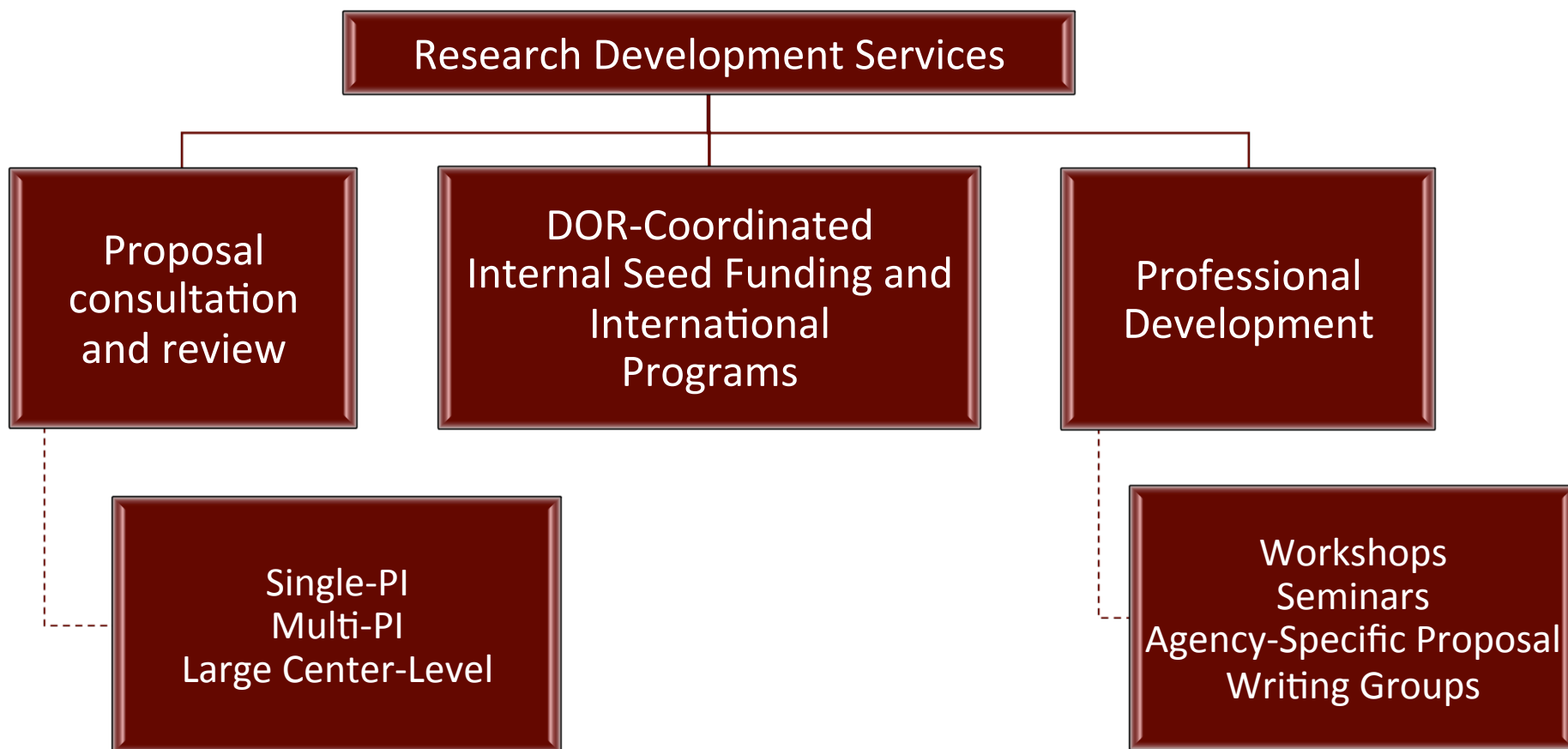
Office of Proposal  
Development (2003-2011)  
Office of Research  
Development (2011-2013)

Research  
Development  
Services  
(2013-present)



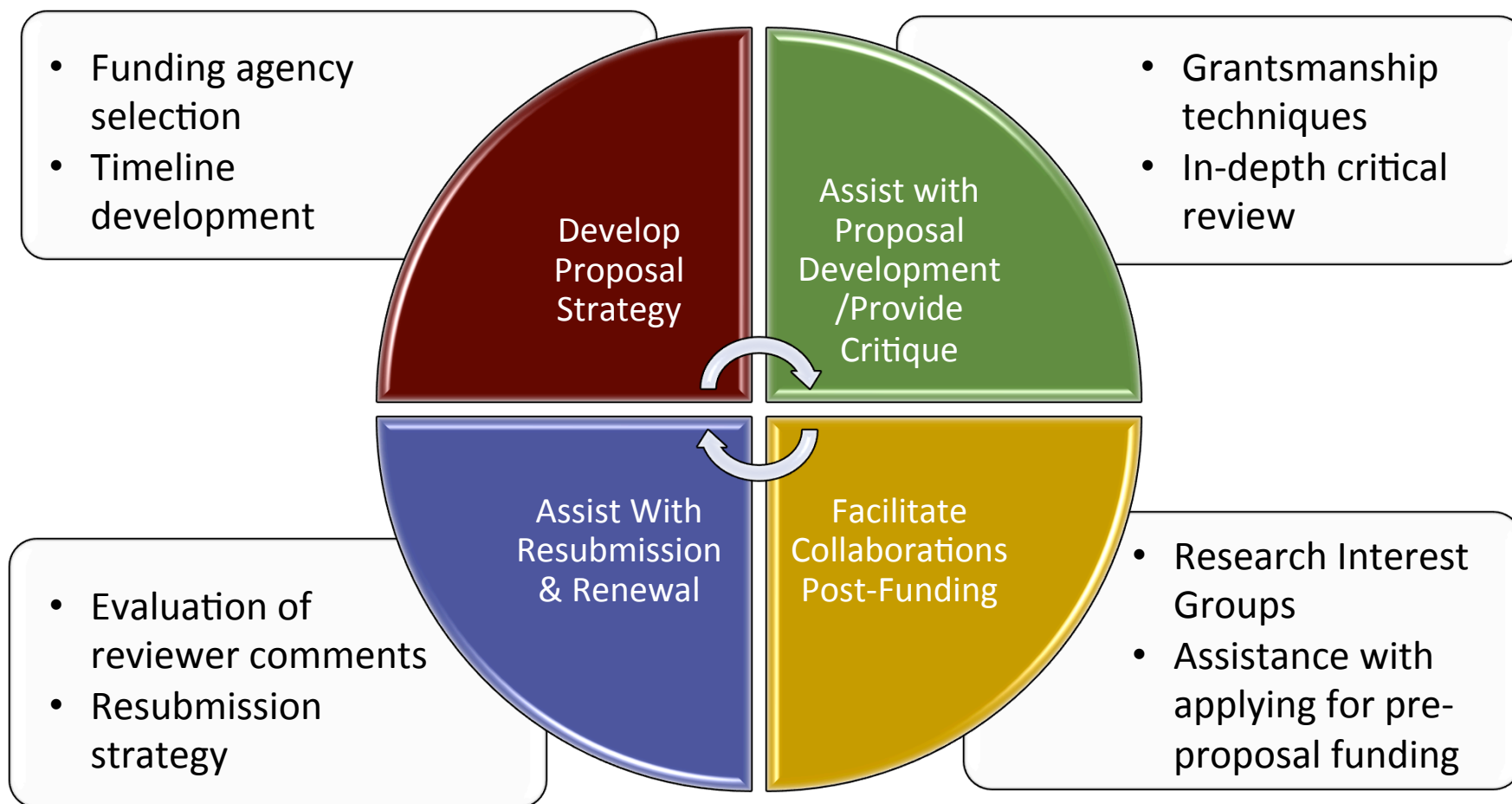


# Services We Offer





# Proposal Development Support







# DOR-Coordinated Internal and International Seed Grant Programs

Texas A&M internal programs:

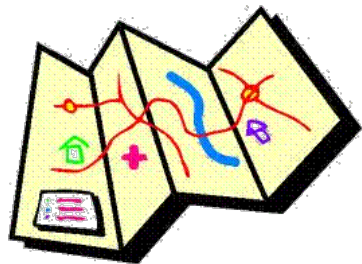
- PESCA (seed funding program)
  - 2001 - present
- International research grant programs
  - Mexico, Brazil, China
- Arts & Humanities Fellows Program
  - 2015 - present



# Professional Development

Goal – Help PIs navigate the grant writing process

- Seminars by RDS Personnel:



Agencies	Audiences	Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIH</li><li>• NSF</li><li>• Other federal agencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Junior Faculty</li><li>• New PIs</li><li>• Departments (Lunch &amp; Learn)</li><li>• Postdocs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CAREER</li><li>• Agency regulations</li><li>• How Not To Get Funded</li><li>• Others, as-requested</li></ul>



- Grant Writers' Seminars and Workshops



# Writing Groups



Succeed!

Stay on track

Set goals

- Learn NIH or NSF CAREER
- Grant Writing Skills
- Funding

- Motivation
- Support & Accountability
- Critical Feedback

- Timelines
- Strategy
- Brainstorming





# Engaging Faculty Across Colleges



Networking  
Opportunities



Infrastructure  
& Support

Faculty-  
driven subject  
areas

- Imaging Science
- Healthy Aging
- Others

- Faculty Conveners  
(from relevant colleges)
- Planning
- Coordination
- Web Resources

Promote  
Collaboration  
Across  
Disciplines

Goal: Increase  
competitiveness for  
larger grant opportunities



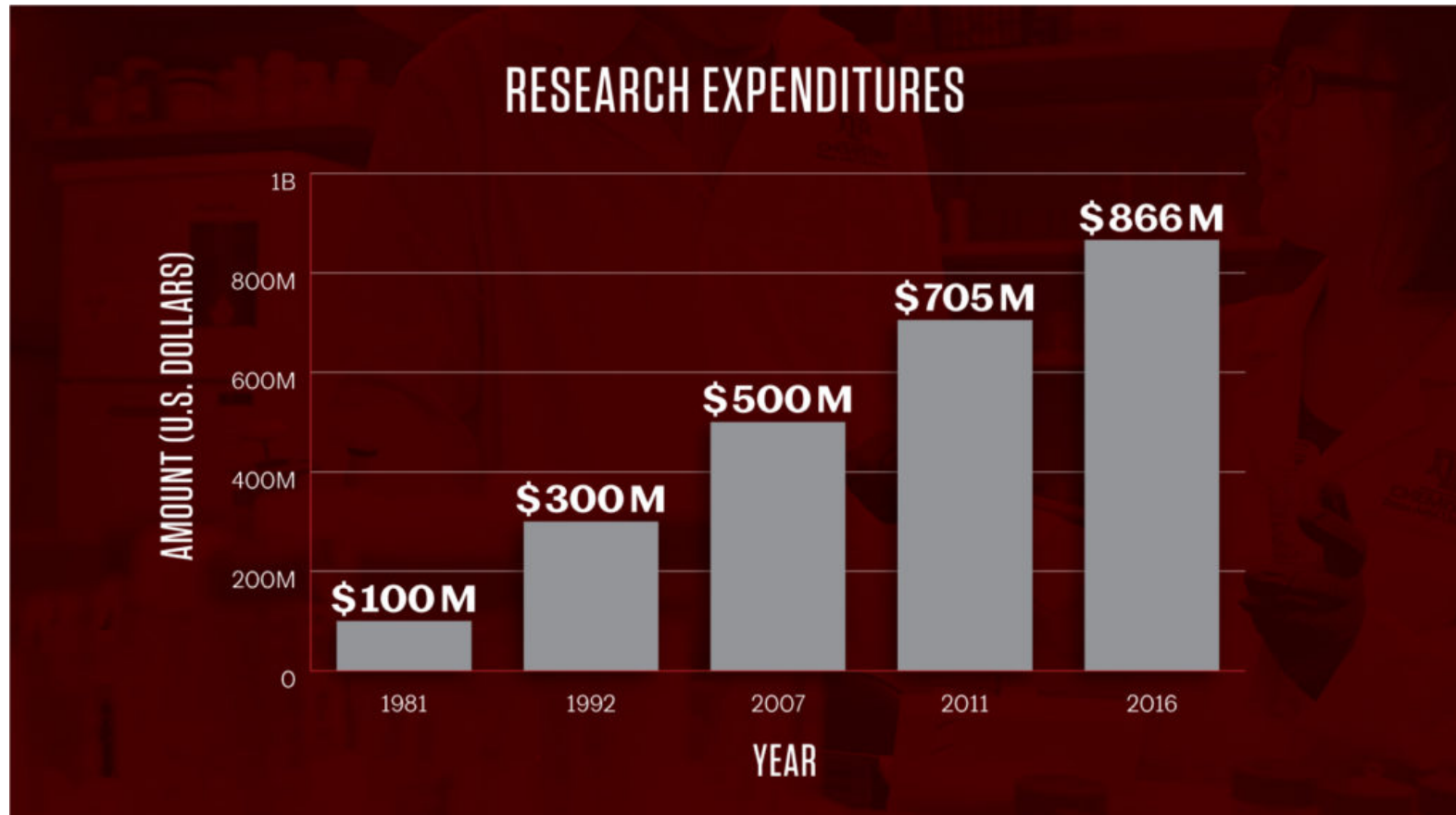
# Texas A&M University

- Land-grant, sea-grant and space-grant university located in College Station, Texas
- Opened in 1876 – flagship university of The Texas A&M System
- 2016 enrollment – 67,000
  - 77% Undergraduate
  - 23% Graduate
- Faculty – 4,971
  - ~3,000 PI Eligible
- AAU member
- FY15 expenditures exceeded \$866M
- Ranks 9<sup>th</sup> among US public universities (HERD)





# Texas A&M University Research Expenditure Growth





# The RDS ethos...

The Research Development Services group at Texas A&M University has a simple mission:

## Customer Service



# How does our mission affect how we work?

- 1) For RDS staff, the needs of faculty and researchers is paramount.
- 2) We answer each request for assistance within our mission with a “**YES!**” (there is one exception)
- 3) We prioritize faculty consultation above other tasks.
- 4) We use every opportunity to be visible and create productive relationships with faculty and other researchers.



# Faculty/Researchers Needs Are Our TOP Priority!

How does this prioritization appear to faculty in our work?

1. Turnaround times are fast. Often within 24-48 hours.
2. Meeting faculty where they are. (Convenience)
3. Staying knowledgeable and up to date regarding funding agency requirements.
4. Going the extra mile when deadlines are pressing.





# Being “**Yes**” women and men.

- 1) Regardless of the type of faculty/researcher request we respond with either:
  - 1) Yes! (in nearly every case).
  - 2) Yes!, but....
    - 1) Teach to fish rather than give a fish
    - 2) Refer to outside proposal development consultancies if appropriate.



# Prioritizing Consulting Above All Else

In addition to faculty research development, RDS staff also program manage:

- 1) The PESCA seed grant program
- 2) The Arts & Humanities Fellows Program
- 3) The CONACYT international grant program
- 4) Many other non-consulting related activities

But:

- Faculty Research Development Consultation always comes first!
- Effective prioritization is key!



# Visibility to Faculty and Researchers

Efforts are consistently made to increase the visibility of RDS staff to faculty and researchers including:

- 1) A slate of six “Coffee and Research Discussion” panels in different geographic regions of the main campus spring and fall.
- 2) Several dozen workshops and seminars led by RDS research development personnel.
- 3) Dedicated NSF and NIH proposal writing groups.
- 4) Promotion of faculty research development resources at the department, college and university levels.



# The Payoff....

As we all know, word travels slowly through faculties across an enormous campus like Texas A&M University, but it does travel.

- 1) Faculty talk to colleagues about the assistance they've received with their proposals and where to go to get it.
- 2) Every day, faculty email the RDS staff looking for all sorts of assistance and get told "Yes, I can help you!"
- 3) It would only take one no, or one slow, incomplete, or incorrect response to a request for assistance to undo the reputation for excellence we've built so far.
- 4) Our goal is a 100% satisfied client base.



# Questions?



# Research Development Services Staff

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Executive Director
- **Monica Holder, M.S.**  
International Programs Coordinator
- **John Ivy, Ph.D.**  
Sr. Research Development Officer
- **Jim Izat, Ph.D.**  
Sr. Research Development Officer
- **Christina Papke, Ph.D.**  
Research Development Officer
- **Shannon Prescott**  
Sr. Administrative Coordinator

