

New Orleans, Louisiana



June 2026

Introducing the **Grants Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)**

*A self-assessment tool for identifying
assets and opportunities to grow the
grant-seeking enterprise*

Kara Luckey, Seattle University

Dean Gerstein, Pomona College

Motivation

- National Organization of Research Development Professionals (**NORDP**)
PUI Affinity Group c. 2019
- Group of grant (RA/research development [RD]) professionals at PUIs seeking to grow the research enterprise in their institutions
- Initiated ongoing discussions around understanding and articulating what a 'culture of research' looks like at PUIs

Motivation

Sparse / scattered literature, but **intuitively** know that research culture at PUIs **differ from R1 institutions in critical ways**

- Heavy teaching loads, varying levels of grant-curiosity & grant-readiness
- Small/no grants office; staff do *everything*; capacity/bandwidth often limited
- Few/no grad students/post-docs
- Lack of articulated research vision from leadership
- Also: **PUIs are not a monolith**

‘Landscape Survey’

Are our intuitions about research culture, structure, and institutional contexts of grants development at PUIs **borne out by data?**

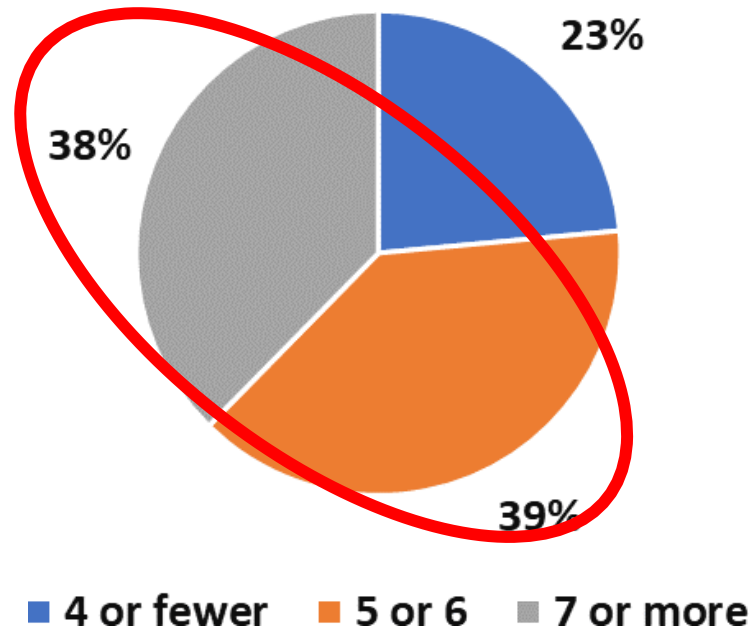
- 2021: Pilot survey of grant professionals at PUIs – “**Landscape of RD at PUIs**”
- Purposive sample (CLASP, RESADM, NORDP), unit of analysis=office, n=87



‘Landscape Survey’

Results underscore: **PUI faculty likely have heavy teaching loads**

- Tenured/Tenure-track teaching load: ~80% teach 5+ courses



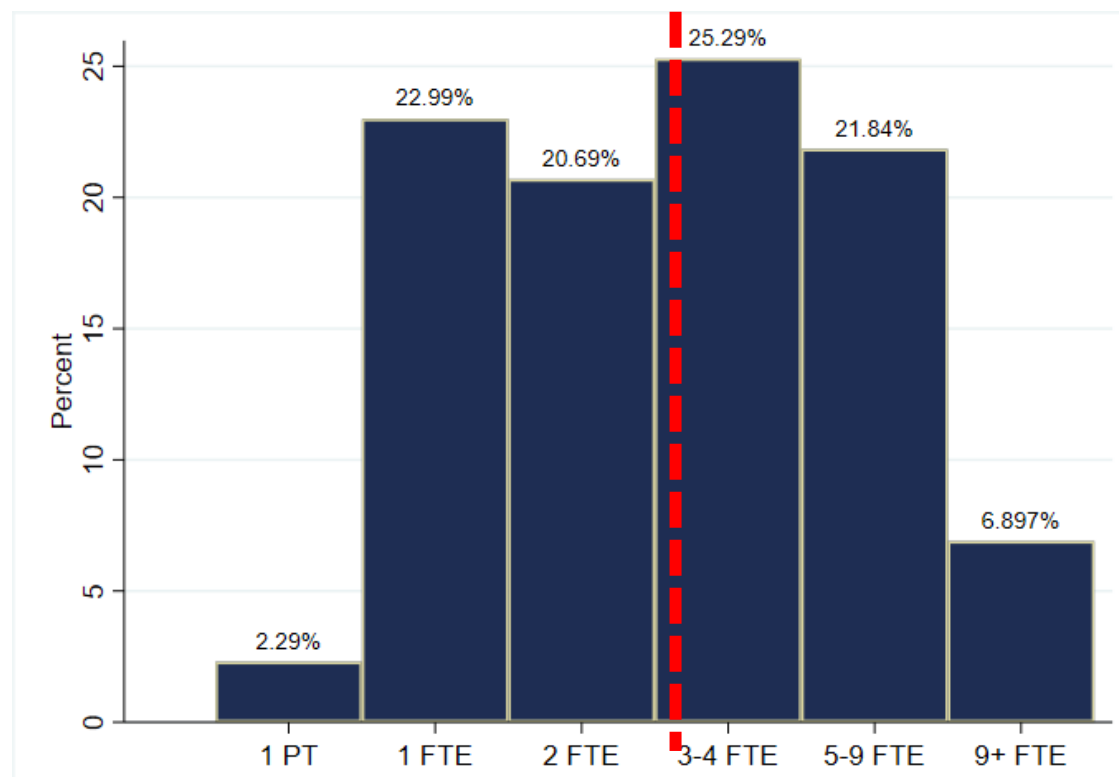
Bishop-Royse, Gerstein, and Glass (2022). "The Landscape of Research Development at PUIs: Results from a Pilot Study." NORDP Annual Conference, 2022.



‘Landscape Survey’

Results underscore: **PUI grants offices tend to be small**

- # of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working in office housing RD (*median*=~3)



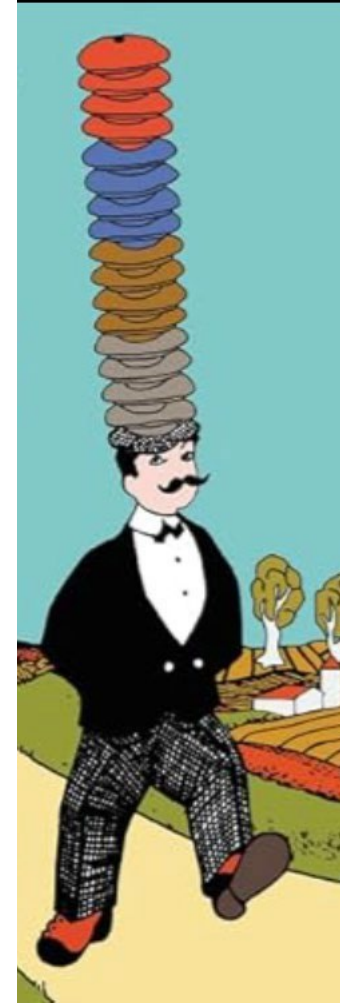
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‘Landscape Survey’

Results underscore: **PUI grants staff do *everything***

- Of responding offices –
 - ~70% responsible for **post-award RA activities**
 - ~60% responsible for **non-RA/RD research-related activities**
 - ~45% responsible for activities that are **not research-related**



Source: Slobodkina



‘Landscape Survey’

Results underscore: **PUI grant staff do a lot of grant development**

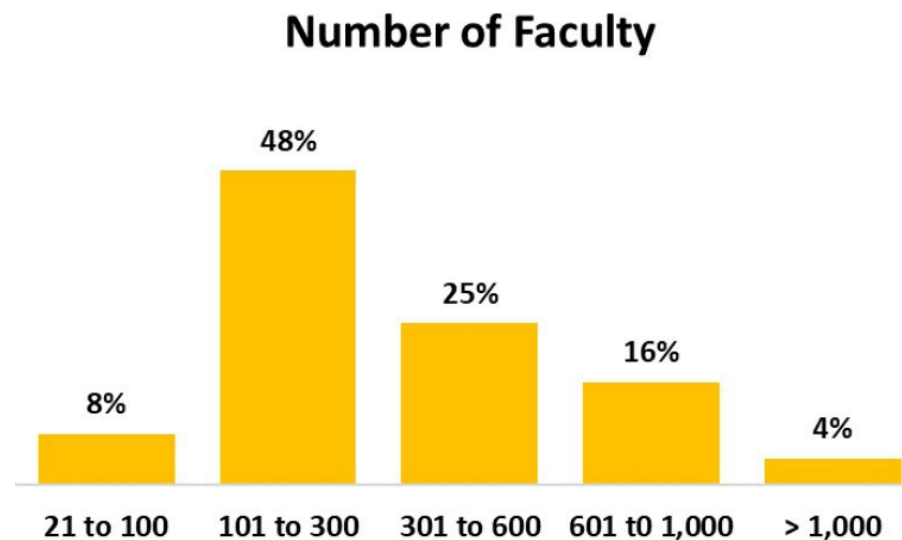
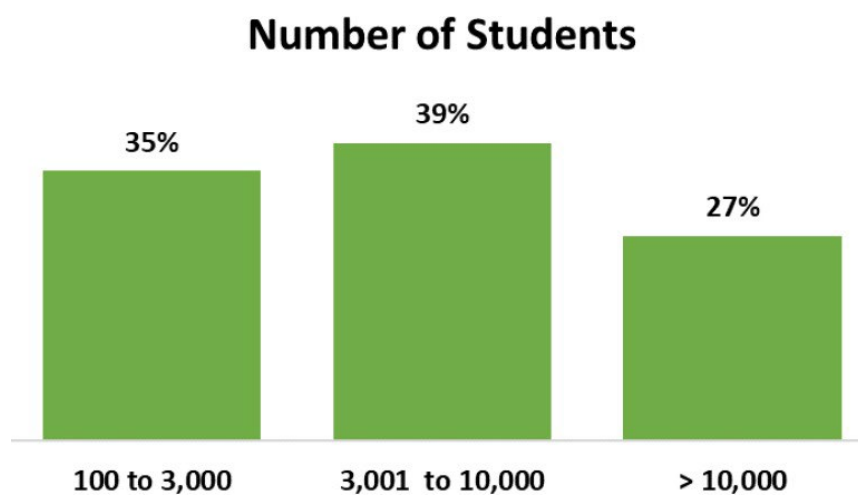
- PUI staff do many of the same RD activities as at R1s, but **while juggling many other things**
- **‘RD at the Margins’**: Many may not even think that they’re “doing RD”



'Landscape Survey'

Results underscore: **PUIs are not a monolith**

- **Size** – Number of students / faculty

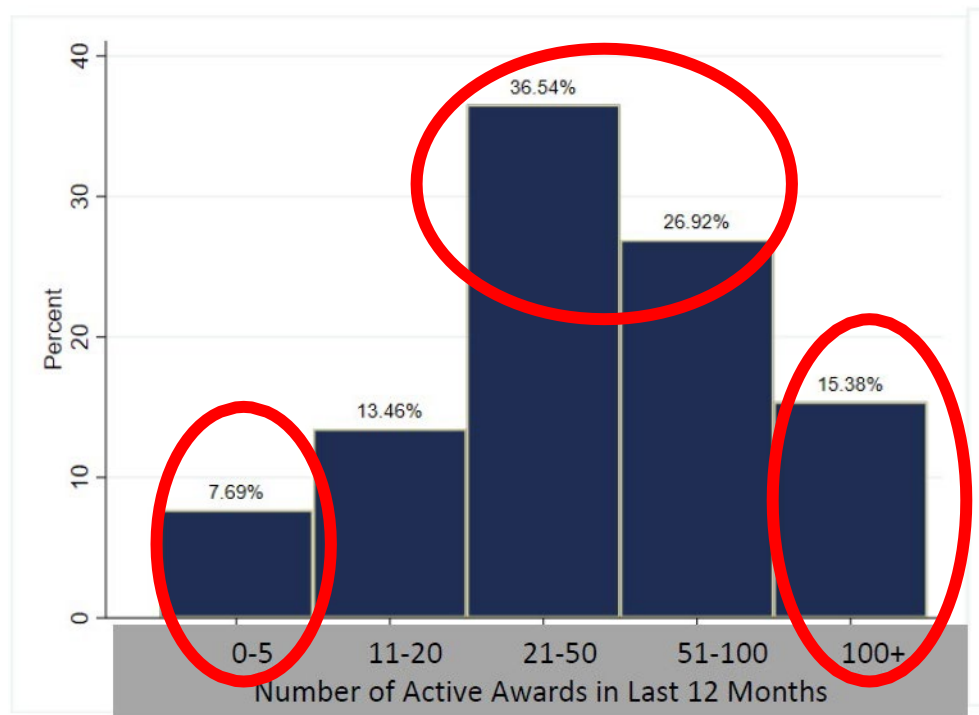


Bishop-Royse, Gerstein, and Glass (2022). "The Landscape of Research Development at PUIs: Results from a Pilot Study." NORDP Annual Conference, 2022.

‘Landscape Survey’

Results underscore: **PUIs are not a monolith**

- **Active Awards** – Majority have 21-100; ~8% have none; ~15% have 100+



Bishop-Royse, Gerstein, and Glass
(2022). *“The Landscape of Research
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Pilot Study.”* NORDP Annual
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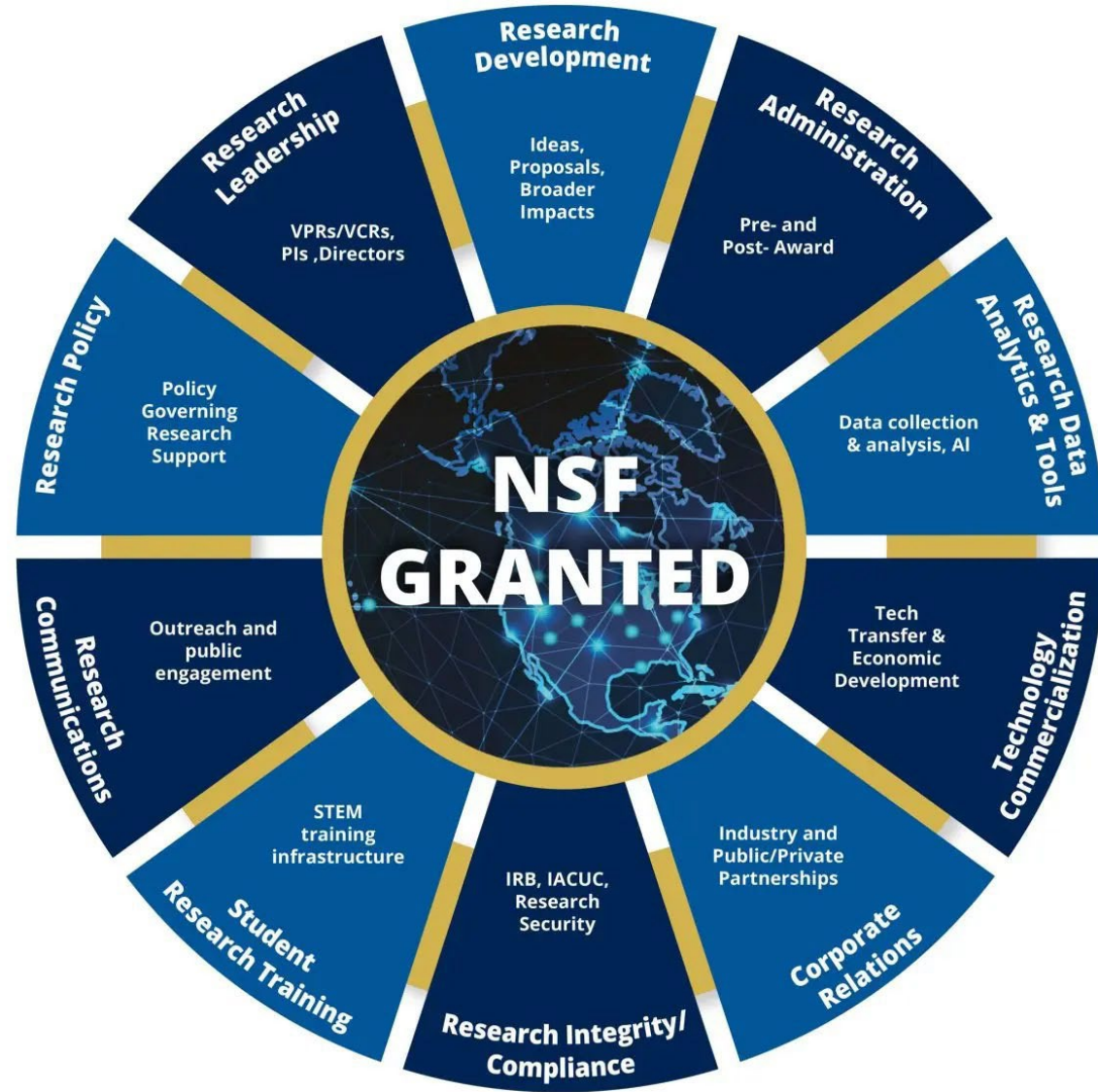


Motivation

- Landscape data **revealed many things we intuitively knew** to be true
 - ...but doesn't tell whole story of 'culture of research'
 - Clear that **more qualitative exploration** of 'culture' is needed
- There are certainly **barriers/challenges** to advancing research at PUIs
 - But also a need to spotlight the ample **assets possessed by PUIs**



Just about then...



Building A National Network of Enterprise Research Support for Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (**BANNERS-PUI**)

Amy Chan Hilton, PhD, Univ. of Southern Indiana

Jennifer Glass, PhD, Univ. of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

Dean Gerstein, PhD, Pomona College

Kara Luckey, PhD, Seattle University

Sarah Robertson, PhD, Bryn Mawr College

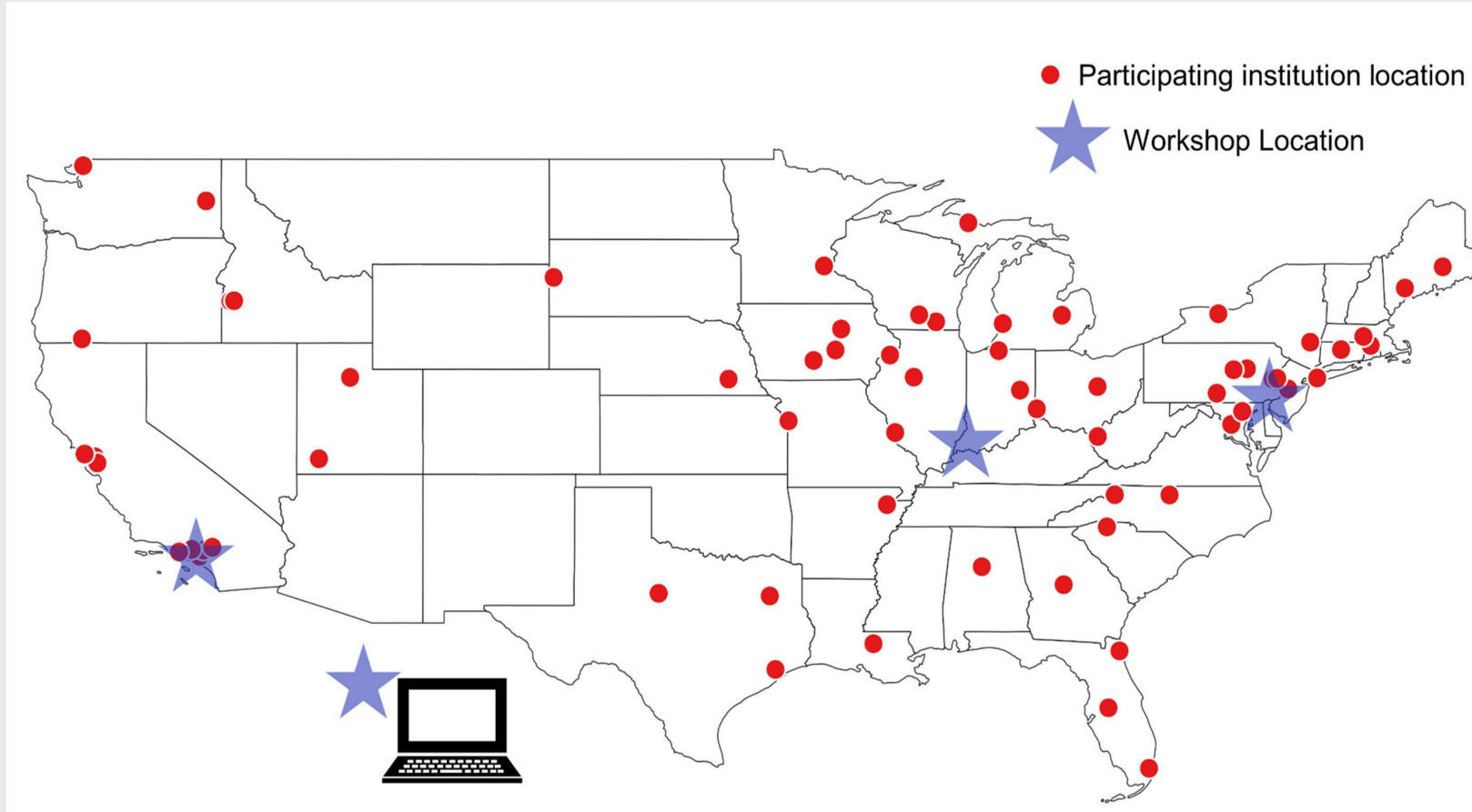
The project team is grateful for support from the National Science Foundation (NSF) under Award No. [2324517](#). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NSF.



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Purpose of BANNERS-PUI Convenings

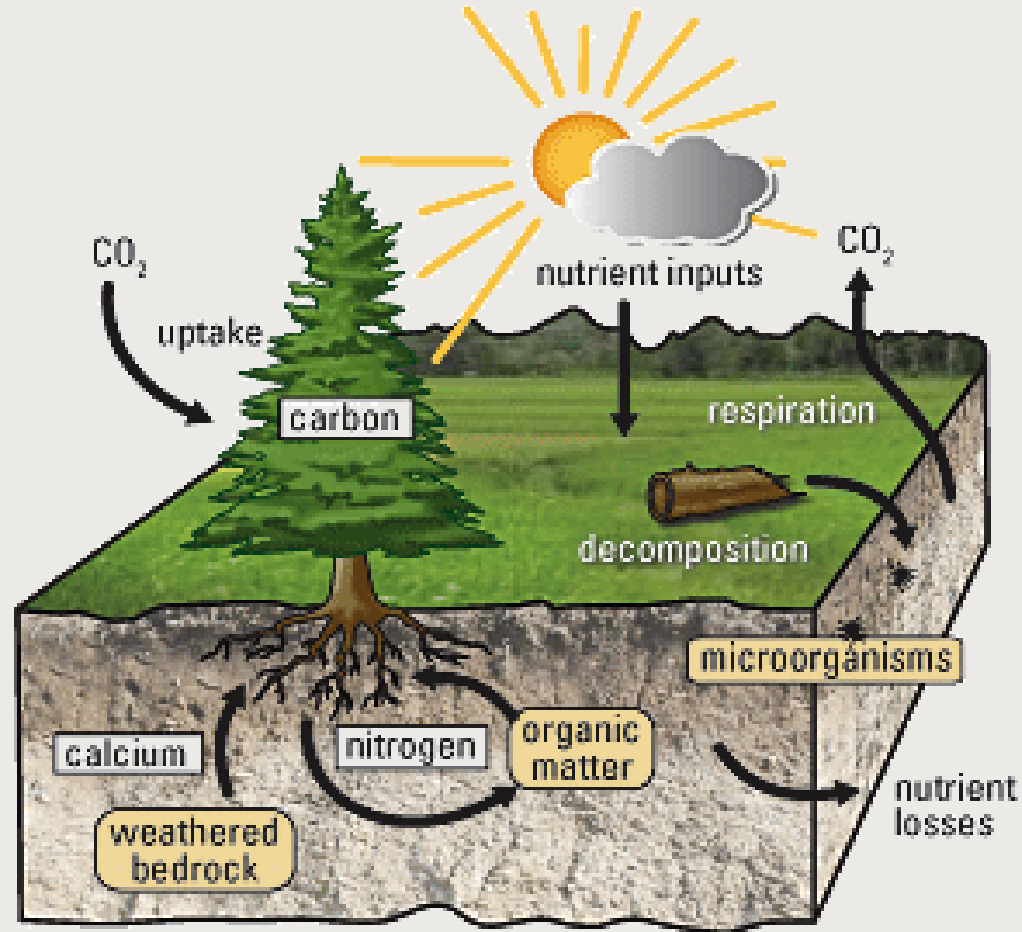
To develop recommendations that mitigate the challenges and build on assets of federal grants submission and management for sponsored research at **PUIs** and **ERIs**.



Important to us to be able to **visualize**:

- **Assets & strengths** of PUIs and ERIs
- Areas of **challenge & need**
- **Interconnectedness** of assets and needs
Despite strengths, deficiencies in some areas can make it very difficult to increase research activity at PUI/ERIs
- Considerable **variation** across PUIs / ERIs in terms of assets & needs

Grant development culture as **ecosystem**



“Imagine if...”

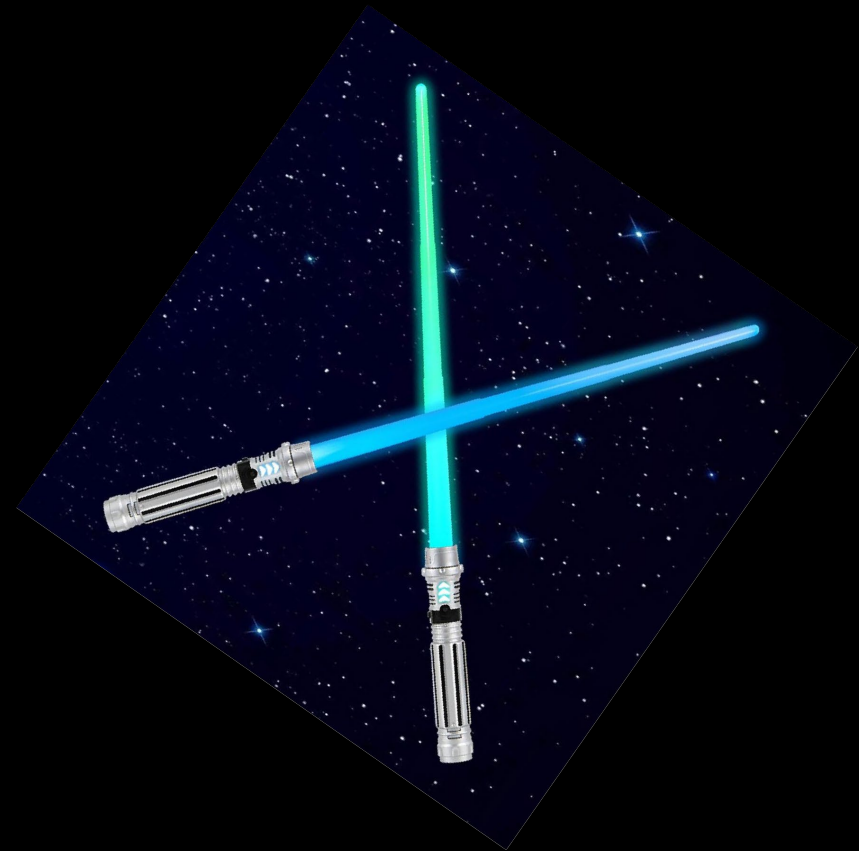
What would it look like...

**...to have a healthy grant development
ecosystem?**

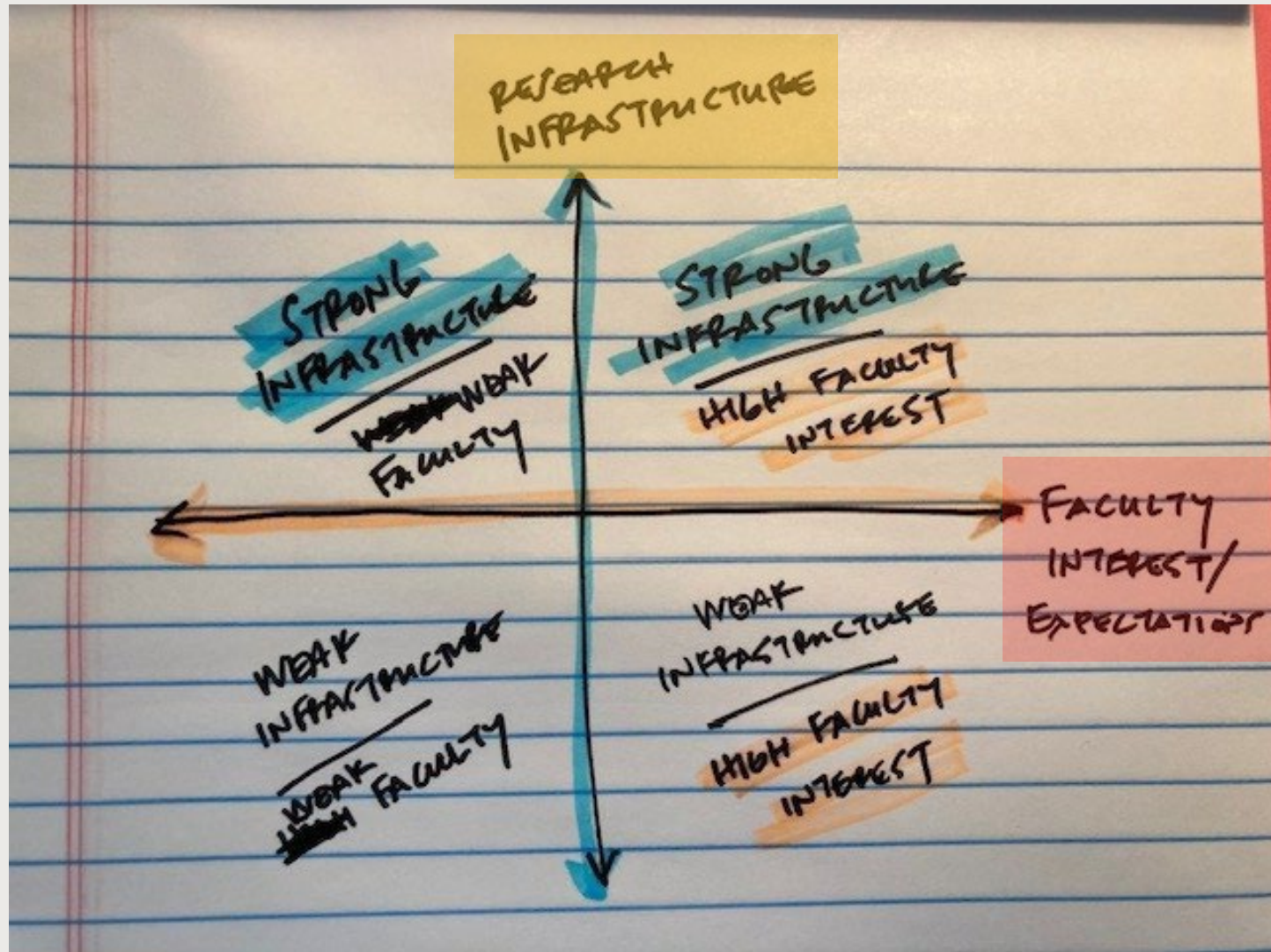


Introducing the Grants Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)

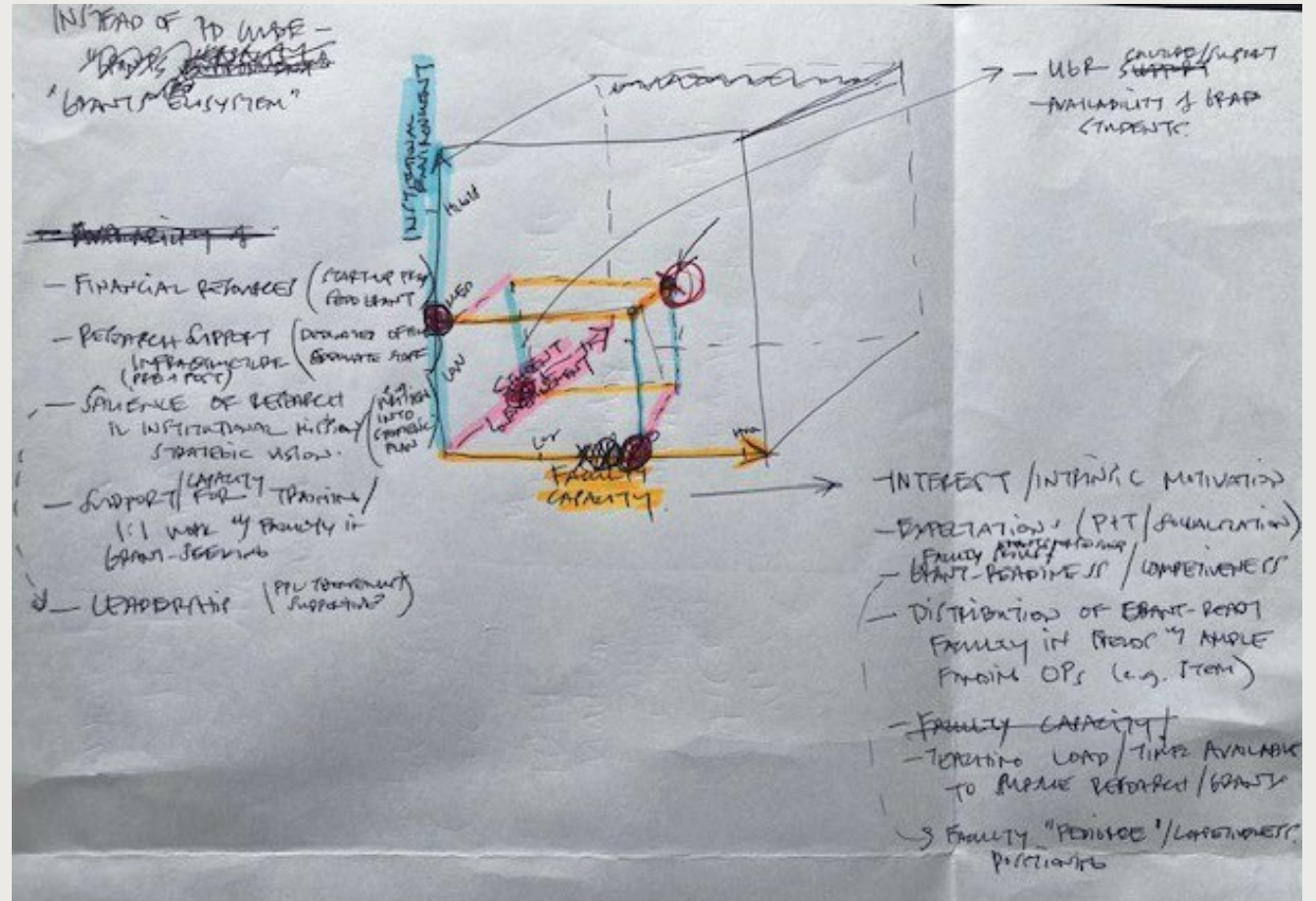
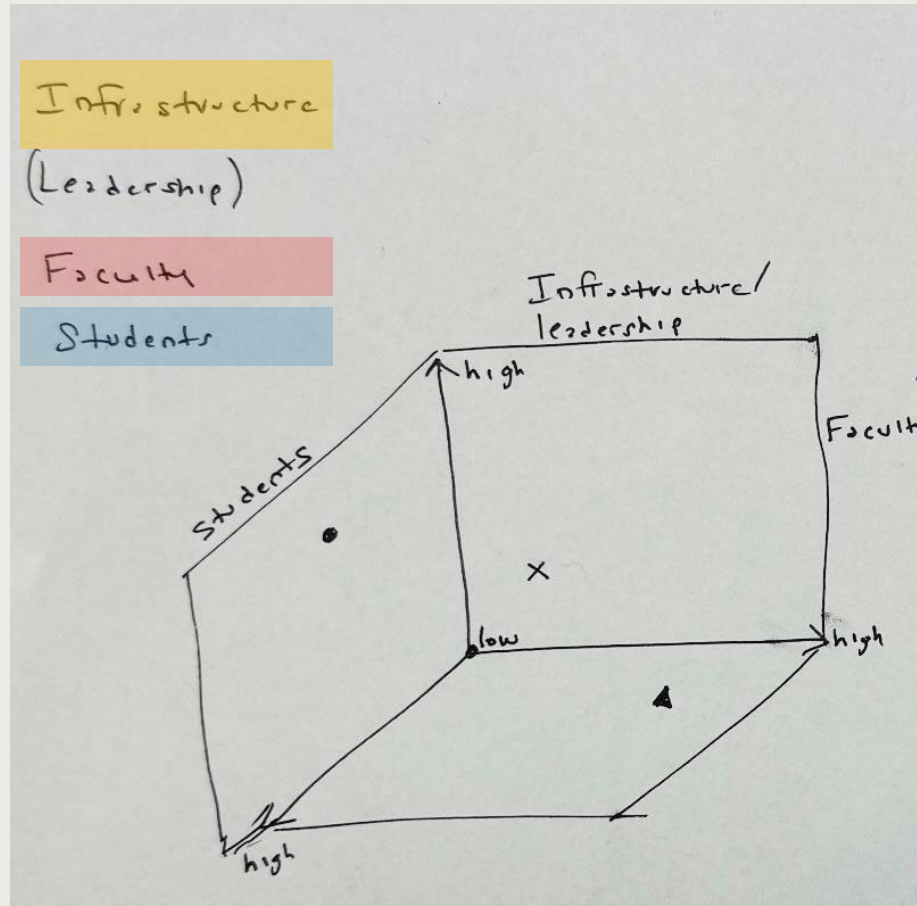
An institutional self-assessment tool for identifying assets and opportunities to grow the grant-seeking enterprise



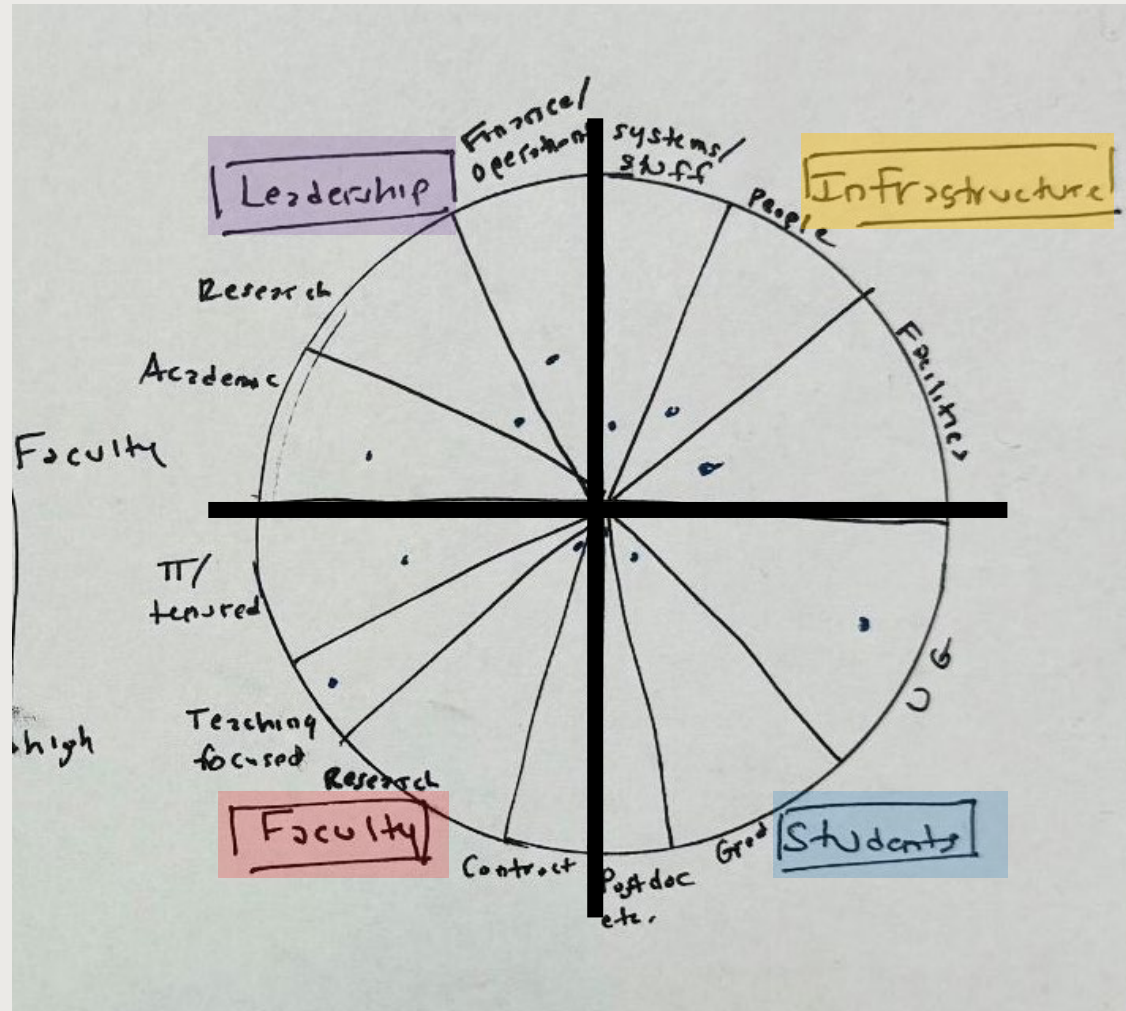
2x2?



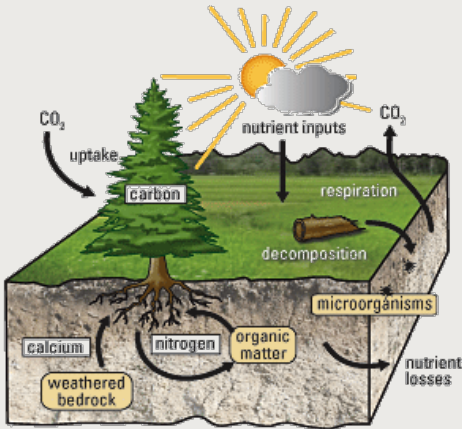
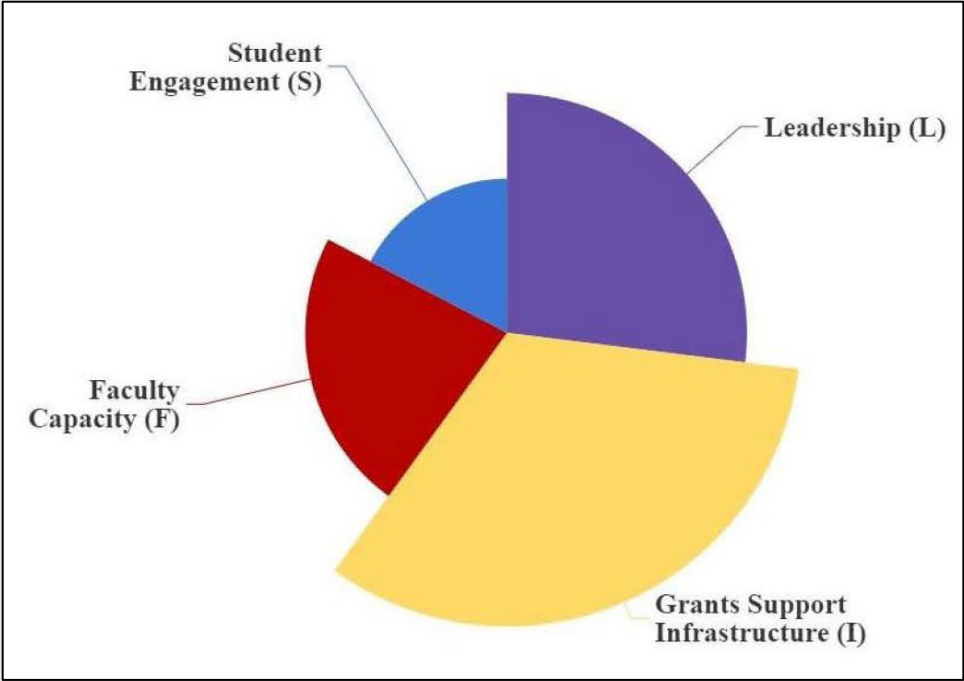
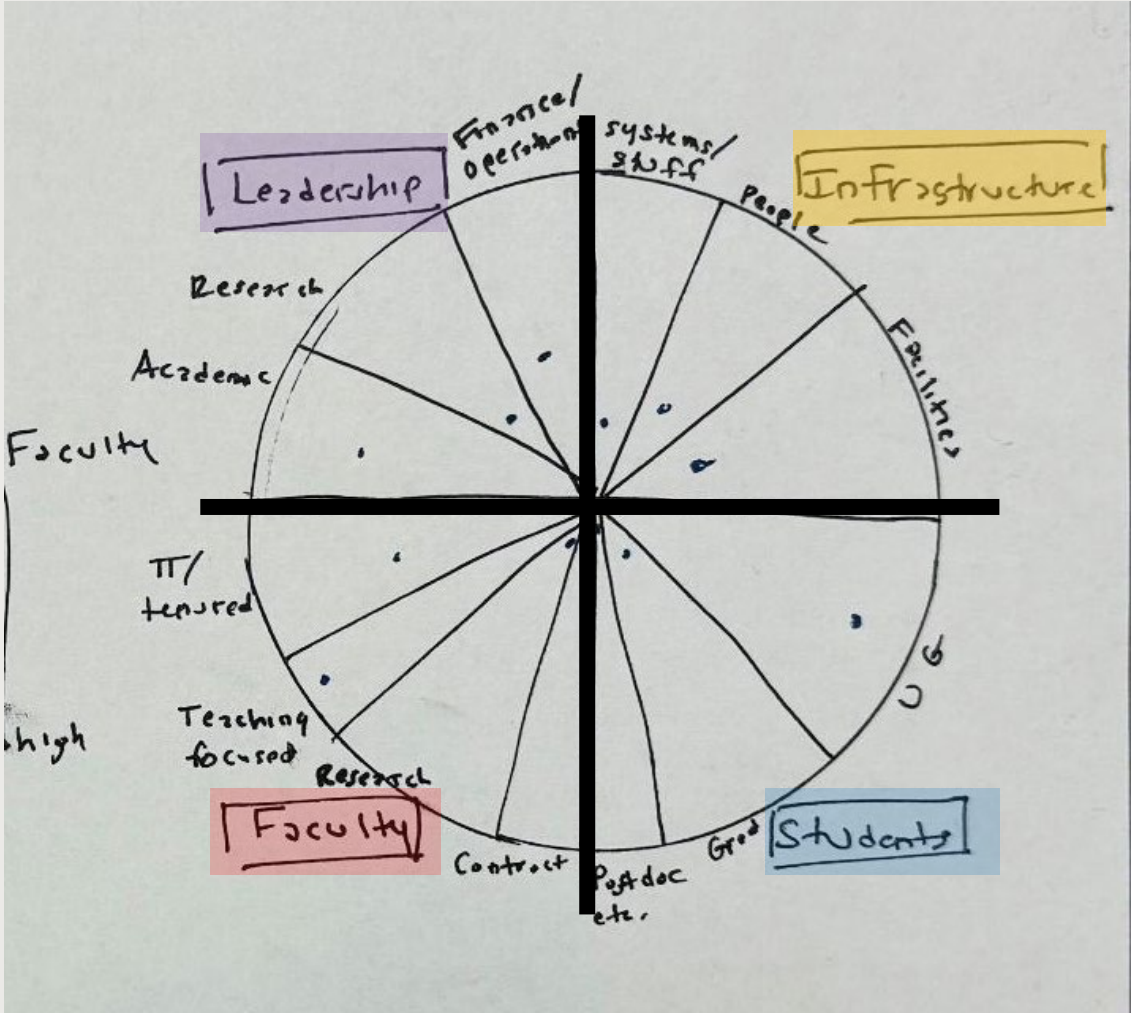
3D cube?



Slices of a pie?



Final concept



Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)

LEADERSHIP FACTORS

Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
L1. Inclusion of research-based grant objectives in institutional mission/vision/strategic plan	• Extent to which grant-seeking to support research activities is explicitly discussed (and if discussed, encouraged) in strategic plan and/or other vision/mission statements					
⋮						
L6. Reporting structure	• Extent to which office responsible for external grants has direct access to administrator(s)/leader(s) who are positioned to make financial and staffing decisions					

GRANT-SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FACTORS

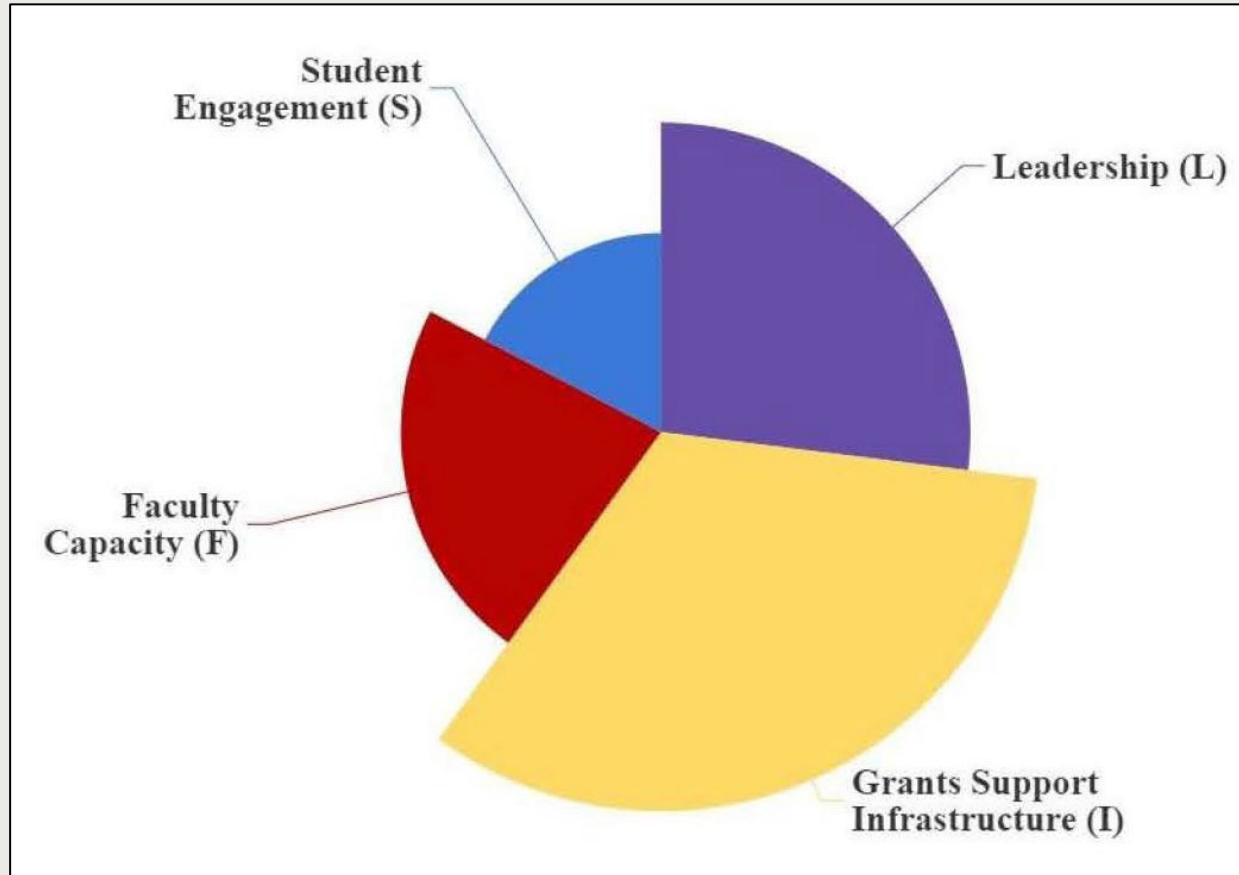
Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
I1. Internal financial resources available to directly support faculty research / grant-seeking	• Extent to which dedicated internal funding is available to PIs to support preliminary work leading to research-based and/or programmatic grant-seeking (e.g. seed funding, start-up funding)					
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I7. Access to indirect cost (IDC) returns	• Extent to which grants office has access to IDC returns for use in staffing and/or resources that support					

FACULTY CAPACITY FACTORS

Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
F1. Faculty's intrinsic motivation towards research-based grant-seeking	• Extent to which faculty are, in general, inherently interested and motivated to seek external grants to support their research activities					
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F12. Indirect cost (IDC) distribution to faculty	• Extent to which IDC return is allocated to faculty: N/A = none, Low = less than 10%, Med = 11-30%, High = greater than 30%					

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT FACTORS

Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
S1. Availability of graduate students to support faculty research	• Extent to which Master's and/or PhD students are (a) enrolled in programs relevant to faculty research and (b) available to contribute to faculty research					
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S6. Resources available to students in support of undergraduate research	• Extent to which financial support is available to UG students conducting research and travel to conferences					



Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)

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- Assesses **current state** (not aspirational) of institution across a series of sub-factors under **four (4) factors**:
 - Leadership
 - Grant-support Infrastructure
 - Faculty Capacity
 - Student Engagement

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- Quick sketch** – no more than 10 minutes

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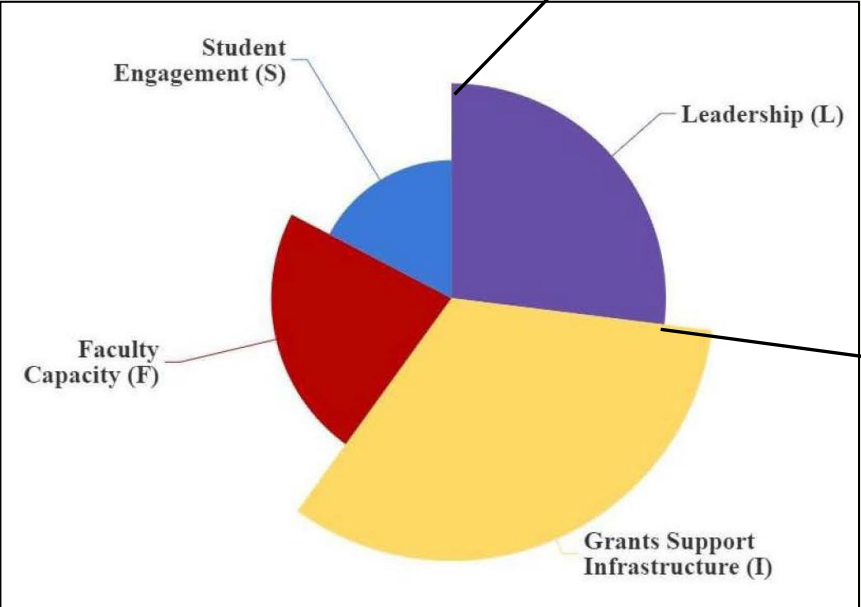
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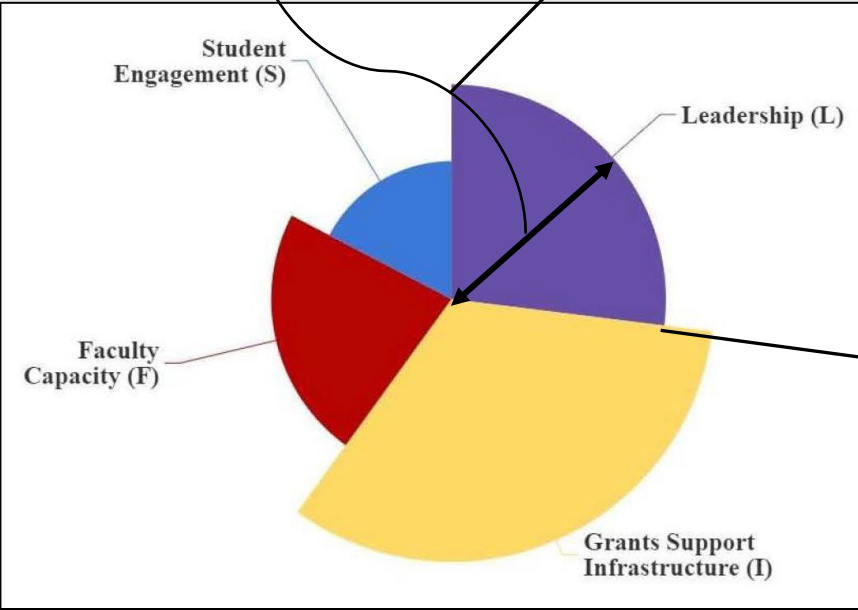
- Assesses **current state** (not aspirational) of institution across a series of sub-factors under **four (4) factors**:
 - Leadership
 - Grant-support Infrastructure
 - Faculty Capacity
 - Student Engagement
- Quick sketch** – no more than 10 minutes
- Scored on **3-point scale**
Low/Med/High & N/A
- Simple average** taken across all sub-factors to arrive at an score for each factor

Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)



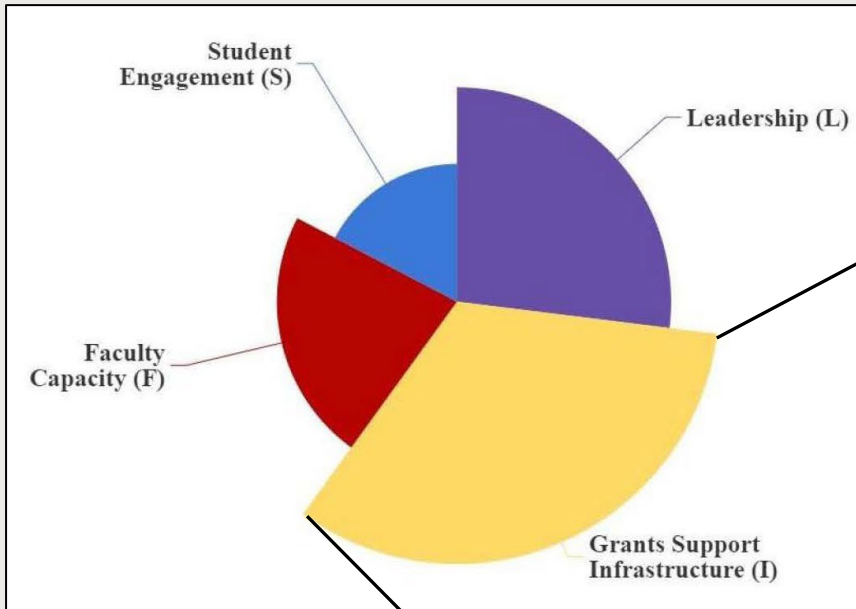
LEADERSHIP FACTORS (L)						
Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
L1. Inclusion of research-based grant objectives in institutional mission/vision/strategic plan	● <i>Extent to which grant-seeking to support research activities is explicitly discussed (and if discussed, encouraged) in strategic plan and/or other vision/mission statements</i>					
L2. Inclusion of programmatic grant objectives in institutional mission/vision/strategic plan	● <i>Extent to which grant-seeking to support programmatic/institutional priorities is explicitly discussed (and if discussed, encouraged) in strategic plan and/or other vision/mission statements</i>					
L3. Leadership support of grant-seeking	● <i>Extent to which leaders who are positioned to make financial and staffing decisions explicitly promote grant-seeking (whether disciplinary research and/or programmatic)</i>					
L4. Stability of leadership	● <i>Extent to which leaders who are positioned to make financial and staffing decisions have been in their roles for durations that enable them to act and follow-through consistently</i>					
L5. Promotion of interdisciplinary/cross-unit collaborations	● <i>Extent to which interdisciplinary/cross-unit collaborations are actively supported, financially or otherwise</i>					
L6. Reporting structure	● <i>Extent to which office responsible for external grants has direct access to administrator(s)/leader(s) who are positioned to make financial and staffing decisions</i>					

Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)



LEADERSHIP FACTORS (L)						
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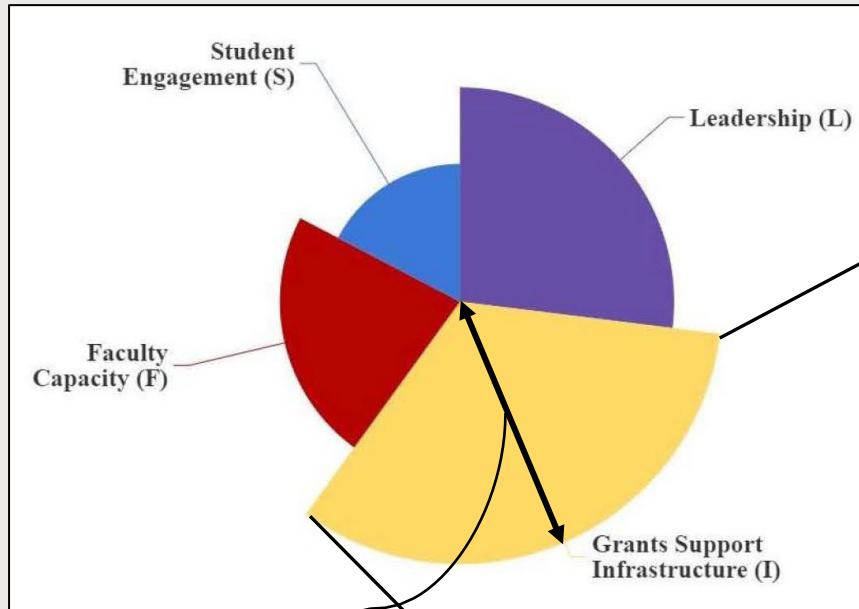
Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)



GRANT-SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FACTORS (I)

Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
I1. Internal financial resources available to directly support faculty research / grant-seeking	Extent to which dedicated internal funding is available to PIs to support preliminary work leading to research-based and/or programmatic grant-seeking (e.g. seed funding, start-up funding)					
I2. Material resources available to support/incentivize research-based grant-seeking	Extent to which direct support (e.g. financial, course release, staffing, grant-writer consultants, or other material resources) are provided to faculty/staff in order to incentivize/enable grant-seeking to support research-based activities					
I3. Material resources available to support/incentivize programmatic grant-seeking	Extent to which direct support (e.g. financial, course release, staffing, grant-writer consultants, or other material resources) are provided to faculty/staff in order to incentivize/enable grant-seeking to support programmatic/institutional priorities					
I4. Grant support infrastructure	- Presence of an office dedicated to pre- and post-award administration of external grants - If dedicated grants office is present, extent to which the office is adequately staffed					
I5. Research development support infrastructure	Extent to which, if at all, grant management staff are explicitly empowered to provide research development support					
I6. Capacity of grant support staff to provide grant-seeking support	Capacity (e.g. skills, interest) of grant support staff to provide training and 1:1 support in research development and/or grant-seeking					
I7. Access to indirect cost (IDC) returns	Extent to which grants office has access to IDC returns for use in staffing and/or resources that support					

Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)



Average = 2.86

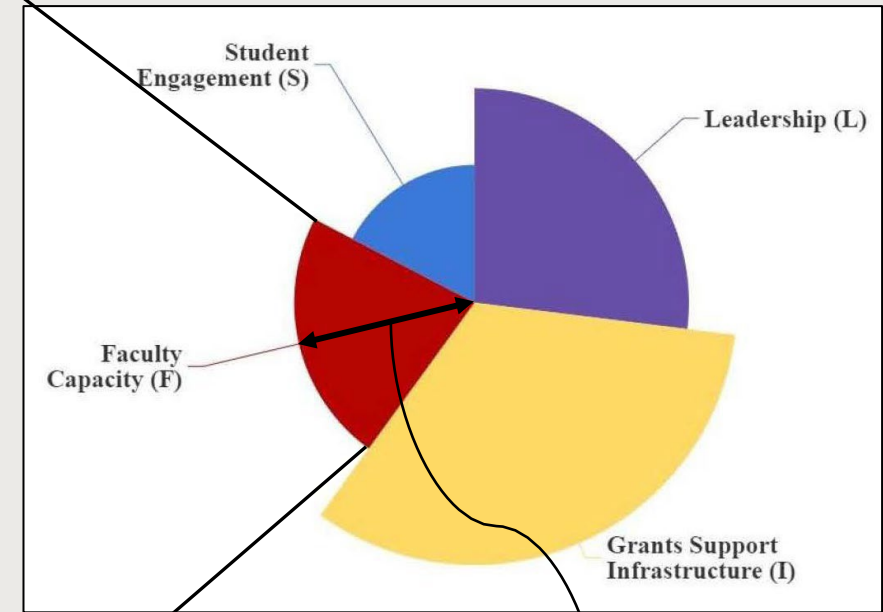
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Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)

FACULTY CAPACITY FACTORS (F)

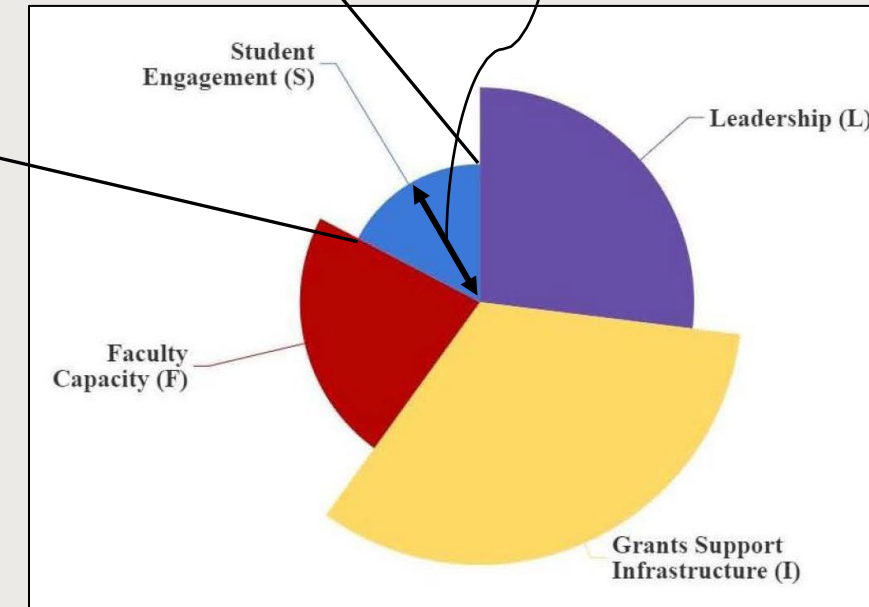
Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
F1. Faculty's intrinsic motivation towards research-based grant-seeking	Extent to which faculty are, in general, inherently interested and motivated to seek external grants to support their research activities					
F2. Faculty's intrinsic motivation towards programmatic grant-seeking	Extent to which faculty are, in general, inherently interested and motivated to seek external grants to support programmatic/institutional priorities					
F3. External / extrinsic expectations of faculty grant-seeking	- Extent to which formal and/or informal promotion and tenure expectations are inclusive of faculty grant-seeking (research-based and/or programmatic/institutional) - Extent to which social norms - outside of promotion and tenure expectations - push faculty towards grant-seeking					
F4. Faculty's availability of time to dedicate to research and grant-seeking	- Extent to which teaching load allows faculty to devote time to research and/or grant-seeking - Extent to which faculty are able to request grant-funded course release to enable protected time for research, if needed					
F5. Quantity of external grant activity (research and programmatic): Number of active awards	As a general guide, consider these broad levels: N/A = no awards, Low = fewer than 50, Med = 51-100, High = greater than 100					
F6. Quantity of external grant activity (research and programmatic): Annual expenditures of active awards	As a general guide, consider these broad levels: N/A = \$0, Low = less than \$2.5M, Med = \$2.5 to \$10M, High = more than \$10M					
F7. Intensiveness of external grant activity (research and programmatic): Percent of faculty who are/were grants active in the past 3 years	As a general guide, consider these broad levels: N/A = 0%, Low = fewer than 10%, Med = 11% to 50%, High = more than 50%					
F8. Availability of external funding opportunities in fields represented by faculty	Distribution of faculty in fields with ample funding opportunities (e.g. STEM)					
F9. Availability of equipment, facilities, and other resources necessary to faculty research	Access to labs and other facilities, equipment, and (internally and via local collaborators)					
F10. Faculty grant-readiness (skills), in general	Extent to which faculty are, in general, equipped with the grants-personship skills necessary for funding success					
F11. Inherent competitiveness / positioning for successful grant-seeking (research and/or programmatic)	Extent to which faculty are, in general, well-positioned with their fields for funding success (e.g. academic 'pedigree,' publication record, prior success with sponsors)					
F12. Connectedness with collaborators, in general	Extent to which faculty are, in general, 'networked' with productive collaborators at other institutions and/or interested in developing collaborations					
F13. Indirect cost (IDC) distribution to faculty	Extent to which IDC return is allocated to faculty: N/A = none, Low = less than 10%, Med = 11-30%, High = greater than 30%					



Average = 1.96

Grant Development Ecosystem Inventory (GDEI)

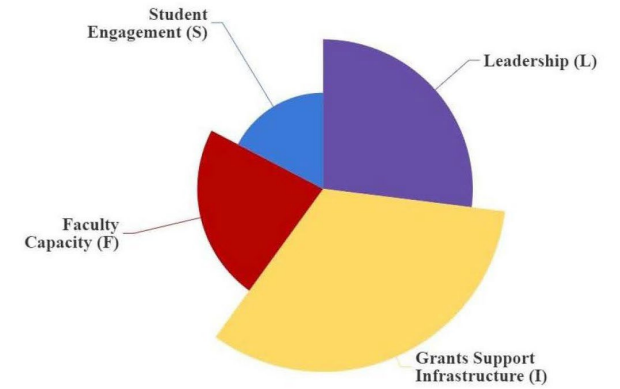
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT FACTORS (S)						
Factor	Dimensions	N/A	Low	Med	High	Notes for future discussion (optional)
S1. Availability of graduate students to support faculty research	Extent to which Master's and/or PhD students are (a) enrolled in programs relevant to faculty research and (b) available to contribute to faculty research					
S2. Availability of postdocs to support faculty research	Extent to which postdocs are available to contribute to faculty research					
S3. Expectations for undergraduate research	Extent to which UGs are required to or otherwise encouraged to complete research-based activities (e.g. thesis, capstone, summer research, etc.)					
S4. Undergraduate student researcher preparedness	Extent to which UG students possess or are provided training in basic research skills and/or research ethics					
S5. Resources available to faculty in support of undergraduate research	Extent to which financial support for salary and/or direct costs is available to faculty conducting research with UGs					
S6. Resources available to students in support of undergraduate research	Extent to which financial support is available to UG students conducting research and travel to conferences					



GDEI Use Cases

What does GDEI allow us to do?

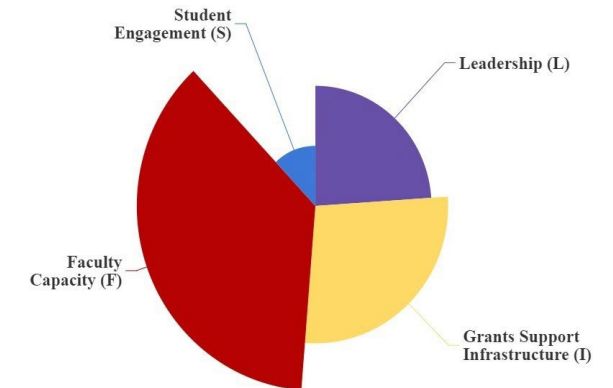
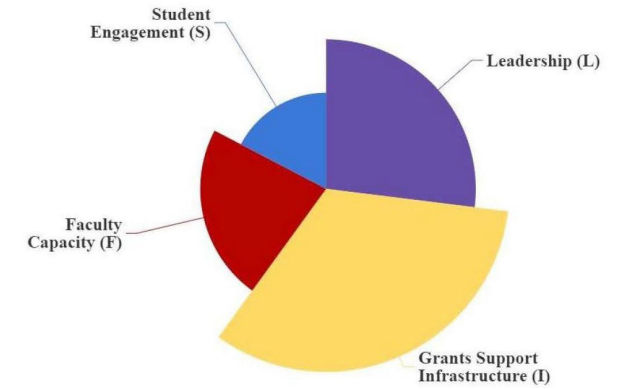
- Institutional **self-assessment** (current conditions)
- Identify **relative strengths** and opportunities
 - Radius of “slice” = Average score
 - Larger radius = Stronger factor



GDEI Use Cases

What does GDEI allow us to do?

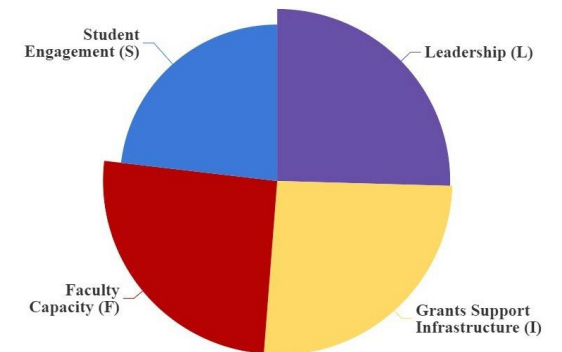
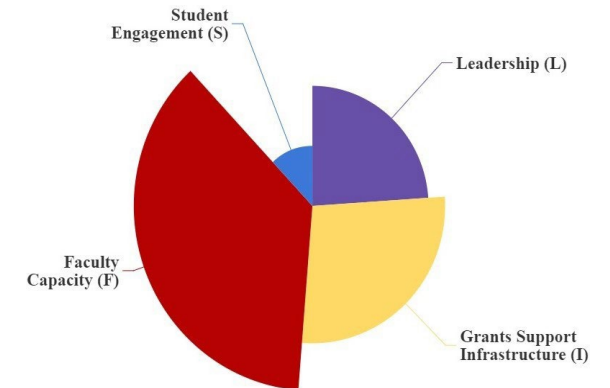
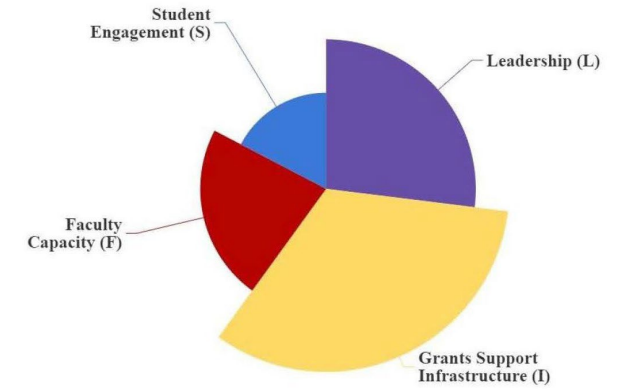
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GDEI Use Cases

What does GDEI allow us to do?

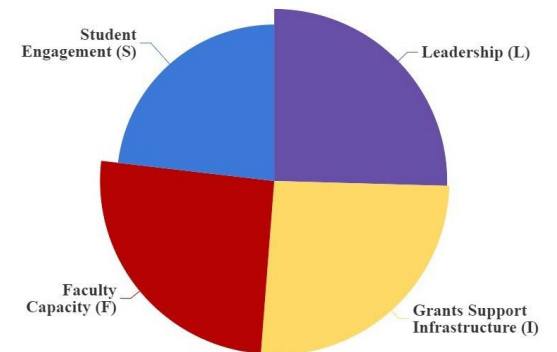
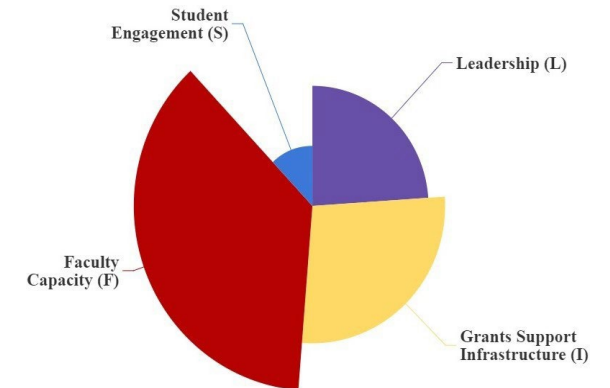
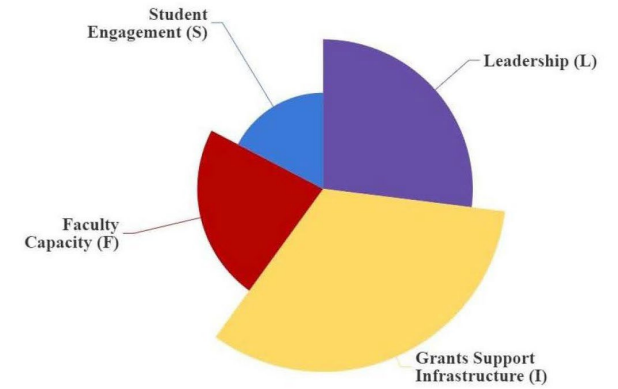
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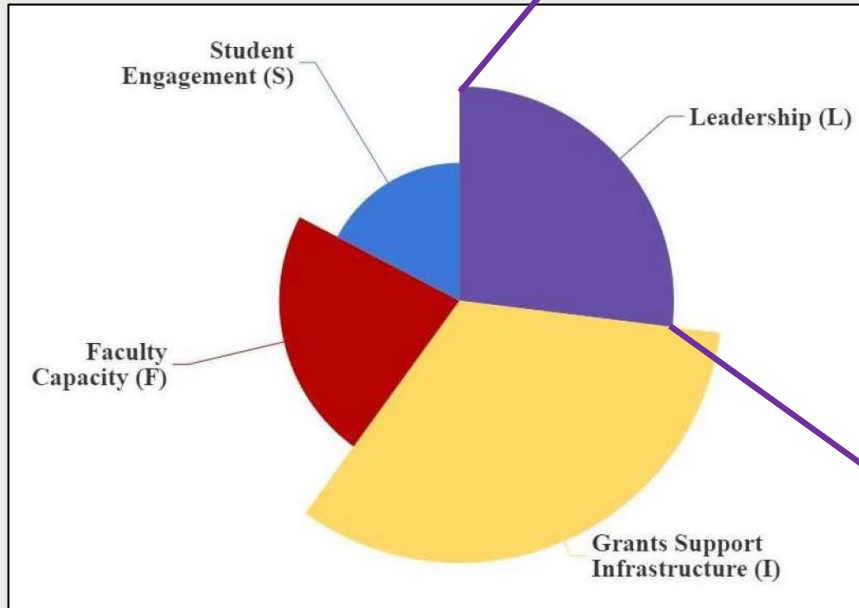
GDEI Use Cases

What does GDEI allow us to do?

- Institutional **self-assessment** (current conditions)
- Identify **relative strengths** and opportunities
 - Radius of “slice” = Average score
 - Larger radius = Stronger factor
- *Not* intended for quantitative analysis (bias), but does allow for **qualitative comparison** across institutions
- **Shared framework** and language
- Could be used to
 - Develop aspirational vision
 - Compare perspectives of different roles within institution
 - and... ??**



GDEI Factors



Leadership

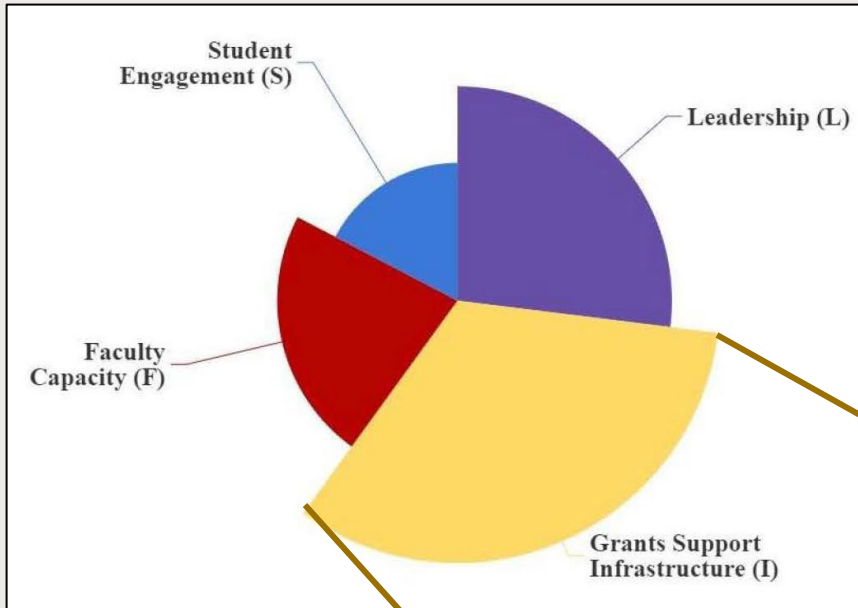
- Inclusion of grant objectives in institution-wide vision/strategic planning
- Leadership support for grant-seeking
- Leadership Stability
- Promotion of inter-disciplinary / cross-unit collaboration
- Reporting structure

Your Turn!

<https://bit.ly/GDEI-pdf>



GDEI Factors



Grants Support Infrastructure

- Internal financial/other resources
- Incentives to support grant-seeking
- Availability/capacity of grant support and/or research development staff
- IDC returns

Your Turn!

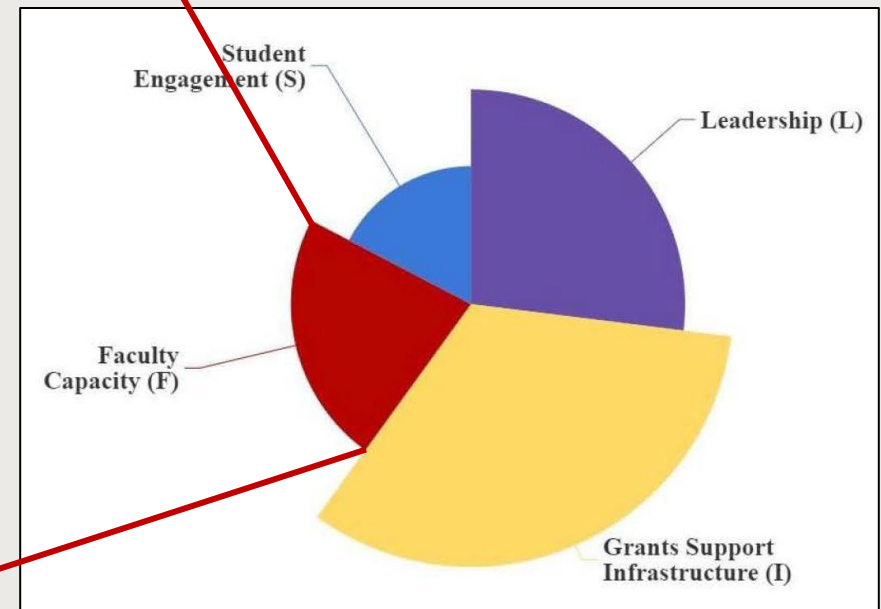
<https://bit.ly/GDEI-pdf>



GDEI Factors

Faculty Capacity

- Intrinsic / extrinsic motivations for grant-seeking
- Availability of time for research
- Quantity / intensiveness of grant-seeking activity
- Availability of equipment / resources
- Grant-readiness
- IDC distribution to faculty



Your Turn!

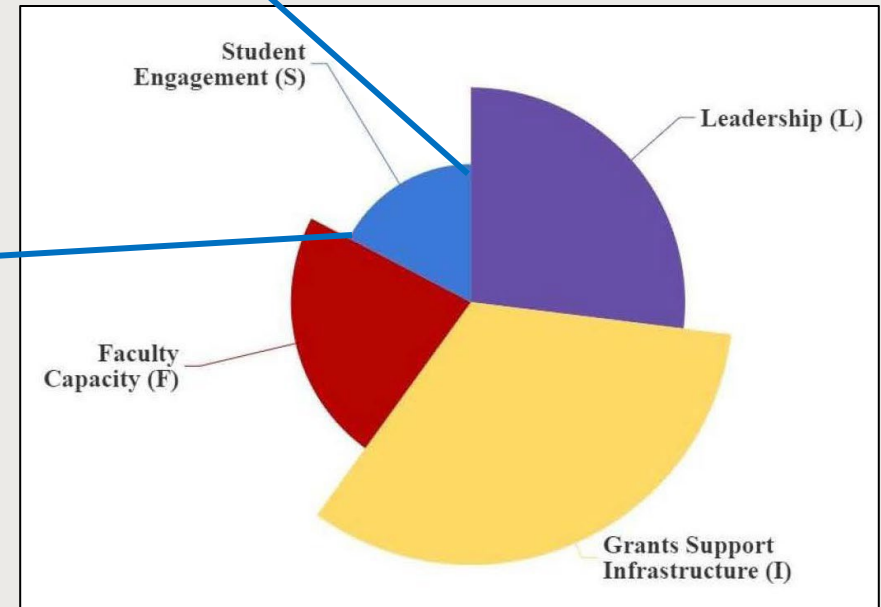
<https://bit.ly/GDEI-pdf>



GDEI Factors

Student Engagement

- Availability of grad students & postdocs
- Expectations for undergraduate research
- Resources available to students & faculty to support undergrad research

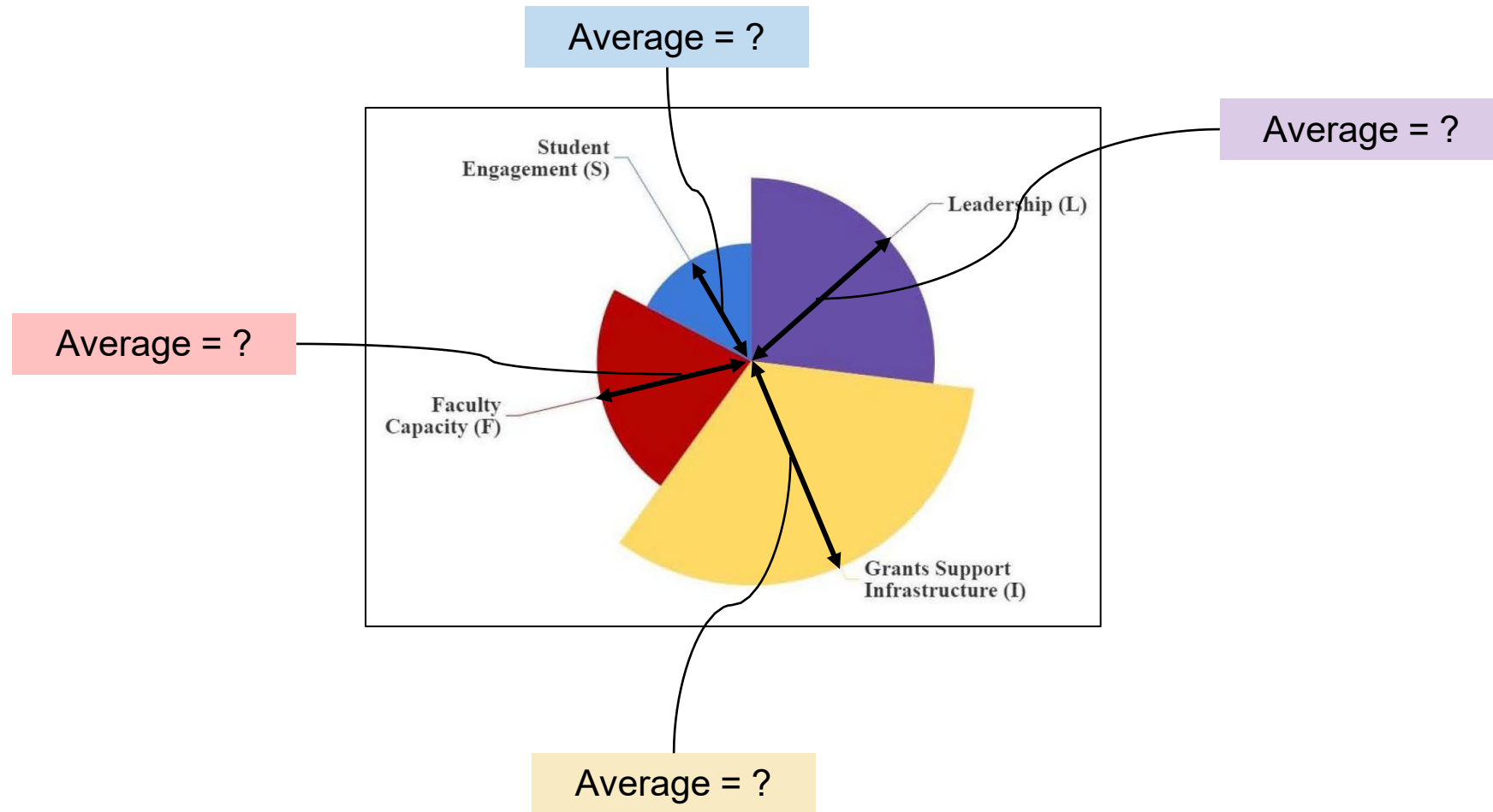


Your Turn!

<https://bit.ly/GDEI-pdf>

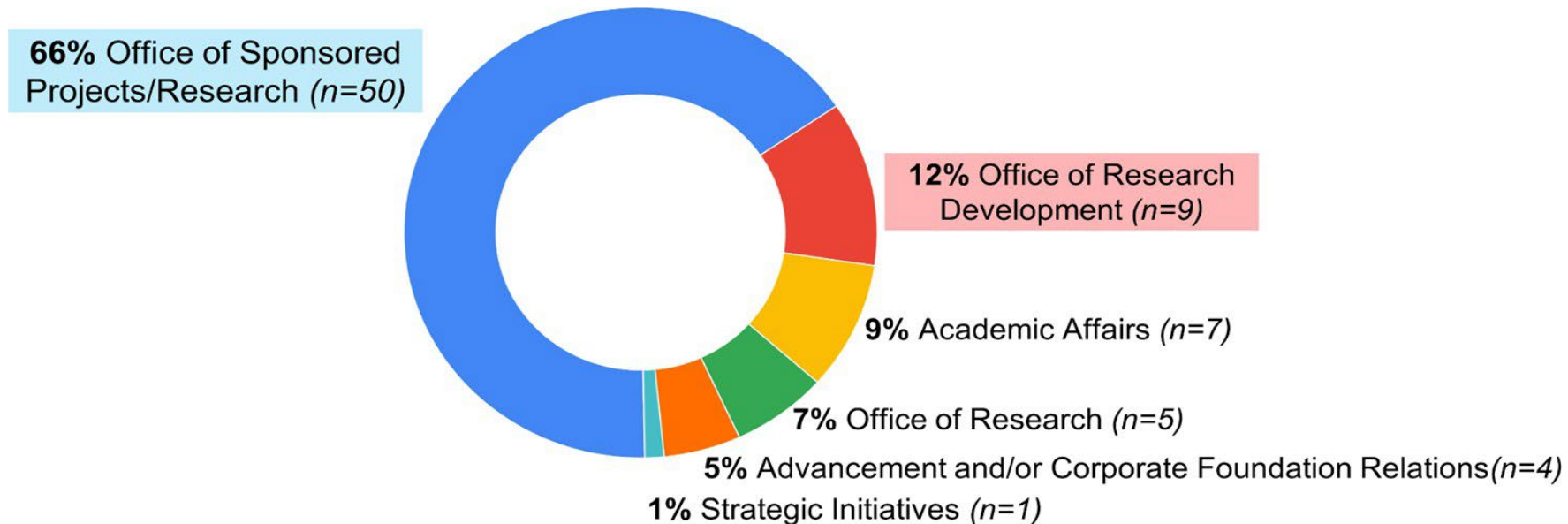


DIY GDEI visualization

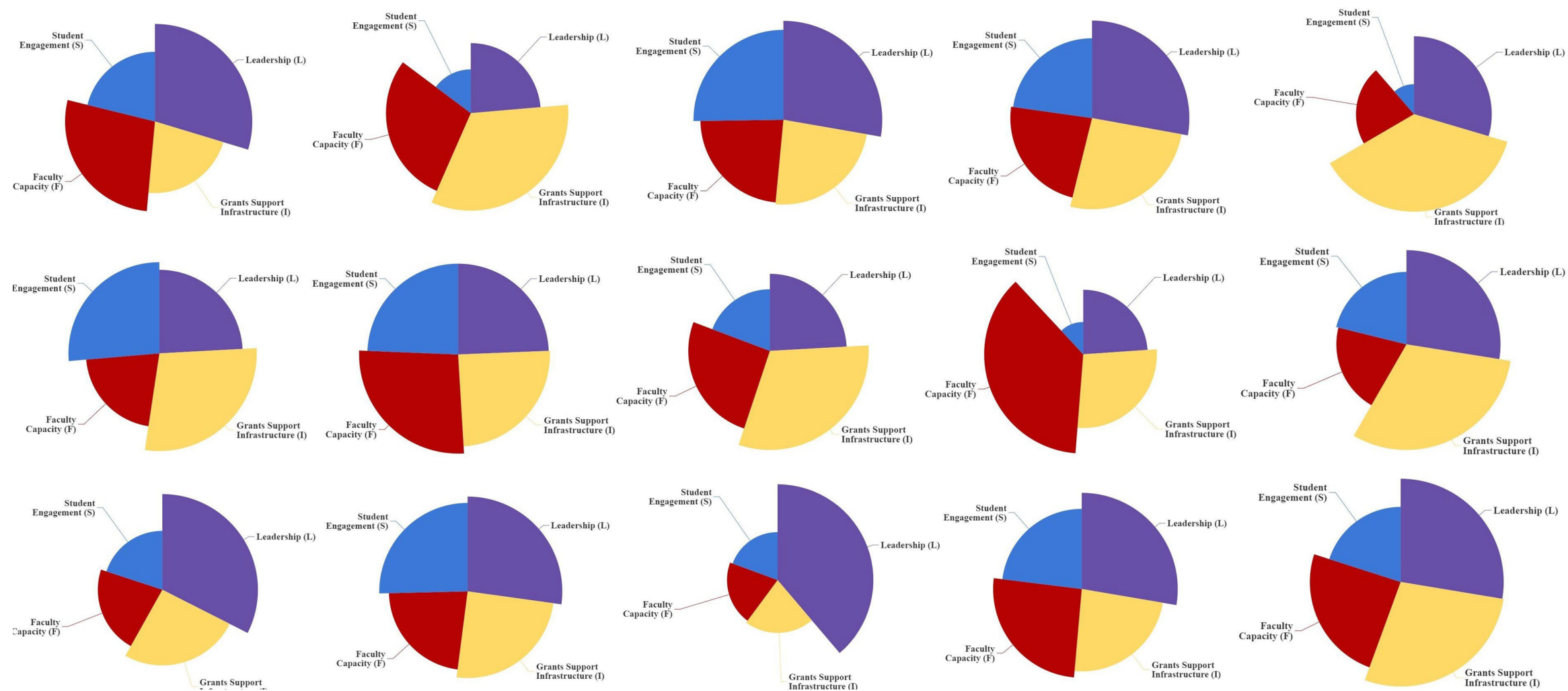


Preliminary Analysis

- Piloted with NORDP PUI Affinity Group & BANNERS Advisory Council (n=12)
- BANNERS convenings (n=75)
- NORDP Consulting Program (n=40)

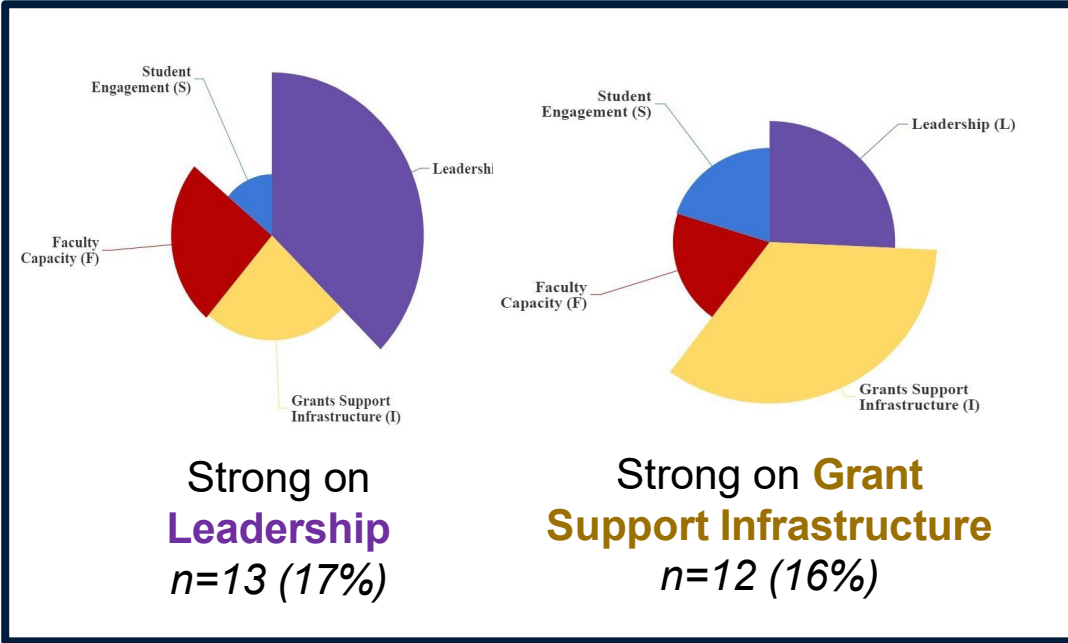


Preliminary Analysis



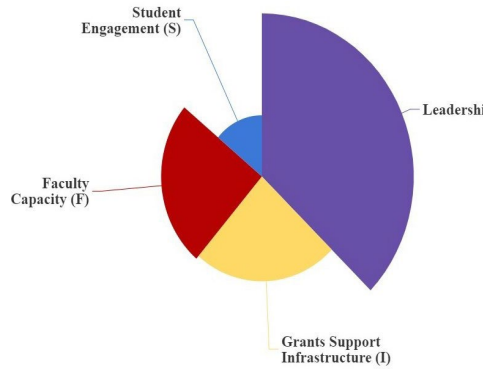
A lot of variation!

Preliminary Analysis –Typologies (Top 5)

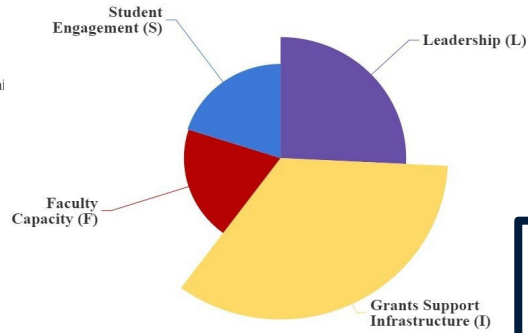


n=75 completed Grants Development Ecosystem Inventories

Preliminary Analysis –Typologies (Top 5)



Strong on
Leadership
n=13 (17%)



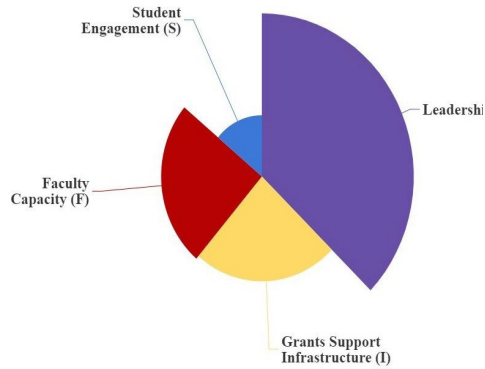
Strong on **Grant
Support Infrastructure**
n=12 (16%)



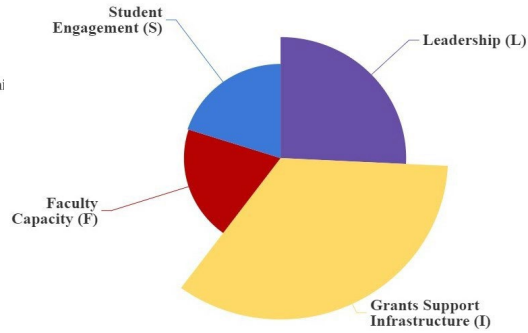
Strong on
**Leadership &
Faculty Capacity**
n=8 (11%)

n=75 completed Grants Development Ecosystem Inventories

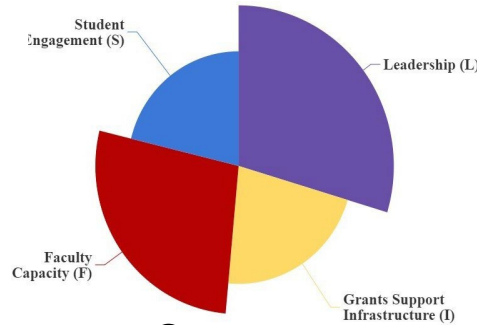
Preliminary Analysis –Typologies (Top 5)



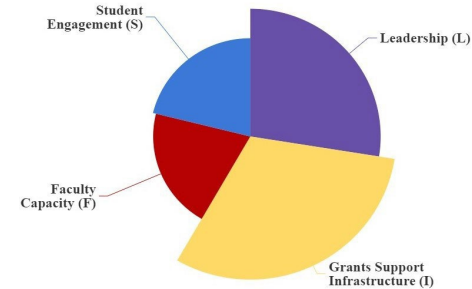
Strong on **Leadership**
n=13 (17%)



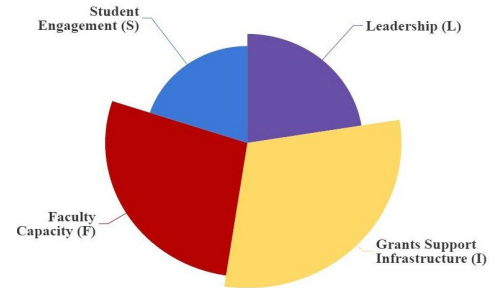
Strong on **Grant Support Infrastructure**
n=12 (16%)



Strong on **Leadership & Faculty Capacity**
n=8 (11%)



Strong on **Leadership & Grant Support Infrastructure**
n=7 (9%)

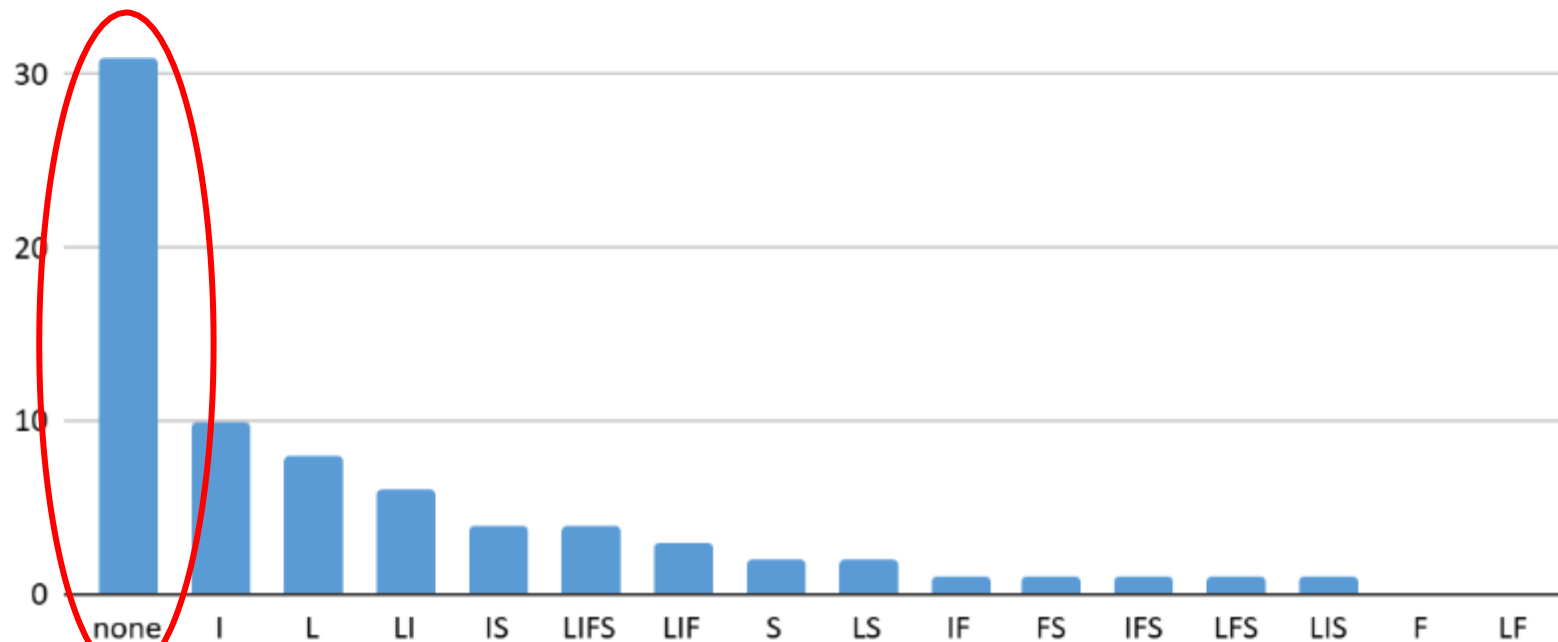


Strong on **Faculty Capacity & Grant Support Infrastructure**
n=7 (9%)

n=75 completed Grants Development Ecosystem Inventories

Preliminary Analysis –Typologies

- Typologies –score of 2+ = **strong**
- Most frequent typology: strong in **no factors**

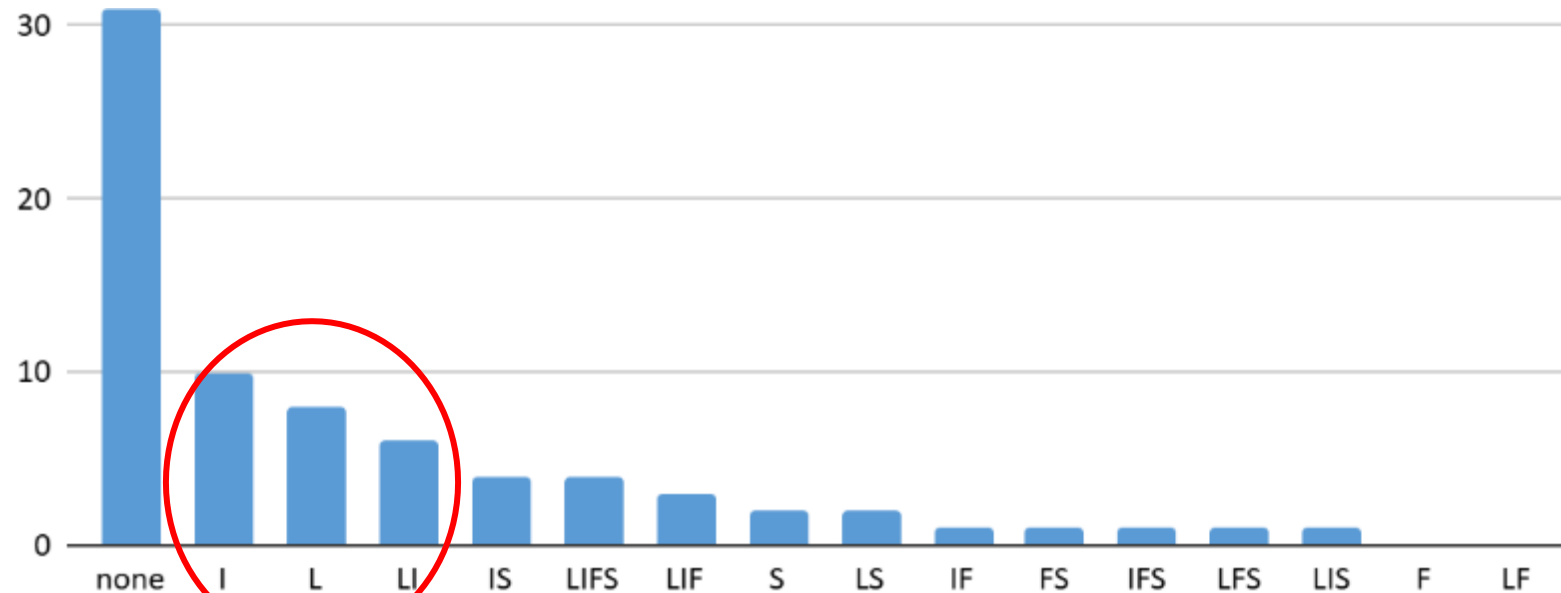


Typology. Note L=Leadership, I=Grant Support Infrastructure, F=Faculty Capacity, and S=Student Engagement



Preliminary Analysis –Typologies

- Typologies –score of 2+ = **strong**
- Most frequent typology: strong in **no factors**
- Followed by strong in **grants support infrastructure**; **leadership**; and **leadership + grants infrastructure**



Typology. Note L=Leadership, I=Grant Support Infrastructure, F=Faculty Capacity, and S=Student Engagement



Preliminary Analysis –Typologies

- Typologies –score of 2+ = **strong**
- % reporting each factor as “strong” –**grant infrastructure** & **leadership** on top

Factor	% reporting as “strong”
Grant Support Infrastructure	30%
Leadership	25%
Student Engagement	16%
Faculty Capacity	11%



Preliminary Analysis –Typologies

- Typologies –Average score
- Similar findings –**leadership** & **grant infrastructure** strongest

Factor	Average score
Leadership	1.83
Grant Support Infrastructure	1.71
Faculty Capacity	1.62
Student Engagement	1.50



Preliminary Conclusions

- Much variability: PUIs are not a monolith
- Clear trends
 - Most common typology: Weak across all factors
 - When possess strengths –most prominently in leadership & grants support infrastructure
 - Student engagement & faculty capacity weaker
 - (Consider the messenger)
- Realities of grants development ecosystem at PUIs are unique to each institution –no ‘one size fits all’ approach to advancing research culture

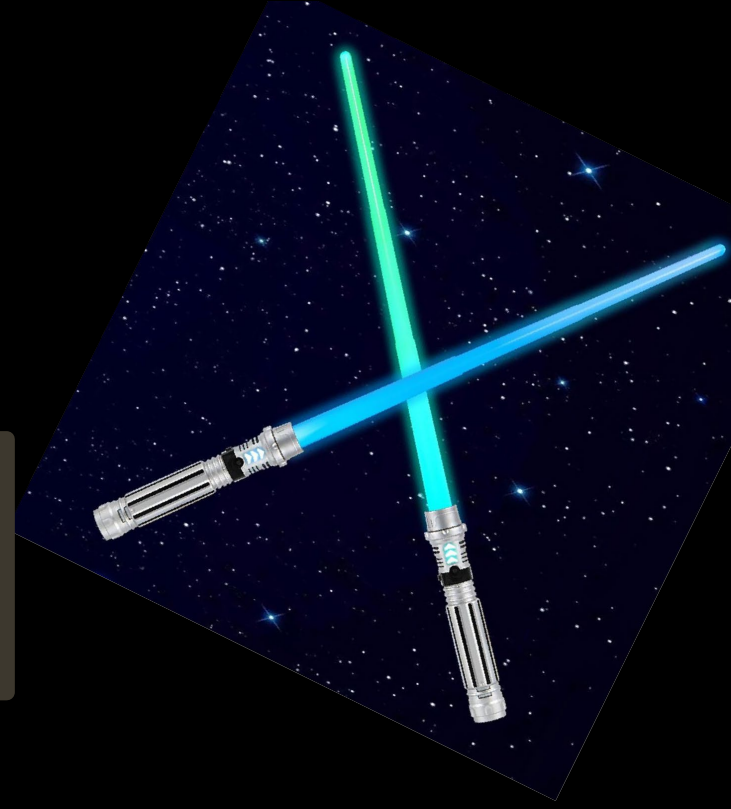
Next up for the GDEI

- **Open access web tool coming soon!**
- Deployment across broader range of institutions, units/roles within a single institution
- Refinement / psychometric validation

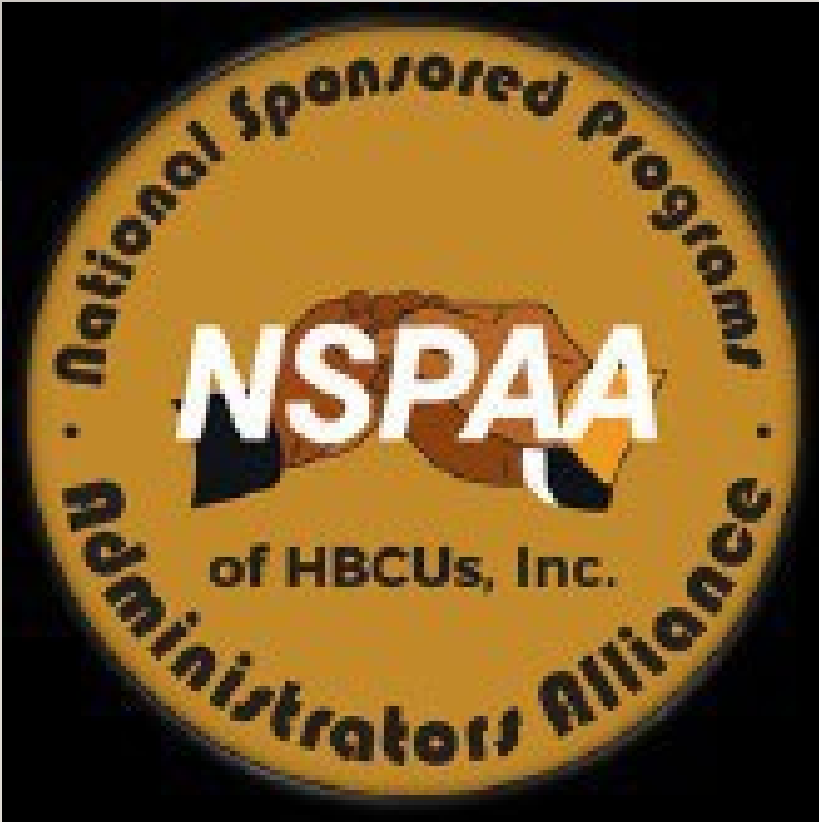
Be the first to know
when the GDEI webtool
is publicly available!



bit.ly/4cw4sIC



New Orleans, Louisiana



Thank You!

Questions?

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Dean Gerstein | dean.gerstein@pomona.edu

June 2026