FAMU Service Excellence Employee Survey Report

AN AGGREGATE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR SPRING 2024.

Prepared by:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) Employee Service Excellence Survey captures the perceptions of all FAMU employees regarding their customer service experiences on campus. The survey addresses performance on the four core standards guiding the Service Excellence Initiative: courtesy, responsiveness, collaboration, and professionalism. The survey was developed by the Service Excellence Team, Measurement Subcommittee, which comprises representatives from the Division of Audit and the Division of Strategic Planning, Analysis and Institutional Effectiveness.

This report summarizes findings from data collected during the spring 2024 administration. All current employees received an invitation to complete the survey. A total of 3,736 employees received an invitation to participate in the FAMU Service Excellence Employee Survey. From those invitations, 490 responses were received and 92 were removed because they completed less than 10% of the survey items. There was a 10.6% ($N = 397$) response rate for spring 2024 survey administration.

Methodology

The Florida A&M University (FAMU) Service Excellence Employee Survey is intended to assess employees' perceptions regarding customer service at the institution, in alignment with the Service Excellence Initiative. Florida A&M University implemented the Service Excellence initiative to enhance how we engage with students, faculty and staff, alumni, and diverse stakeholders. Our Service Excellence Philosophy ("We inspire Excellence by showing kindness and delivering exceptional Service.") guides this effort by focusing on four core standards: courteous, responsive, collaborative, and professional.

The survey is a composite of both Likert response items and open-ended response items. The survey consists of 25 questions: 22 multiple choice items and 3 short response items. Each core standard is addressed in a series of four questions on a Likert response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Six general Service Excellence items were included to gather overall perceptions of customer service at FAMU, not limited to the core standards. The survey was distributed to all employees through their FAMU email address with the assistance of the Office of Institutional Research and Analytics.

Key Findings

Courtesy

The first core standard – courtesy – comprised questions related to kindness in customer service at Florida A&M University (FAMU). Overall, employees perceived that kindness was demonstrated in the interactions between colleagues at FAMU. Although aggregate differences in percentage of respondents who agreed (i.e., agreed or strongly agreed) or disagreed (i.e., disagreed or strongly disagreed) with the statements were small, the largest percentages of respondents agreed with the statements related to the institutional commitment to kindness and courtesy in service interactions. Specifically, more employees indicated it was evident that kindness is an important part of FAMU's organizational culture (63%) and as a whole FAMU demonstrates a commitment to always be kind in our service interactions (61%). For each item relating to kindness in interactions with other colleagues and customers, 22% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements.
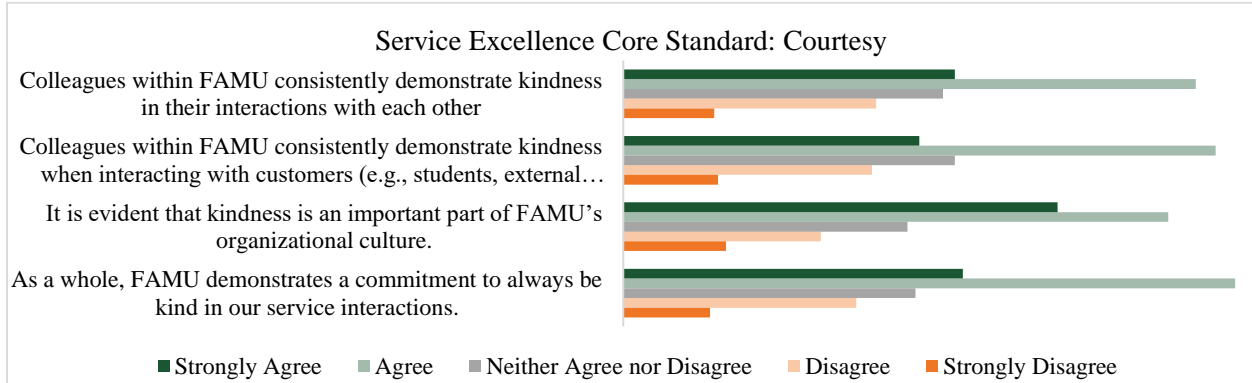
Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Core Standard: Courtesy

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Colleagues within FAMU consistently demonstrate kindness in their interactions with each other.	84	21	145	37	81	20	64	16	23	6
Colleagues within FAMU consistently demonstrate kindness when interacting with customers (e.g., students, external partners).	75	19	150	38	84	21	63	16	24	6
It is evident that kindness is an important part of FAMU's organizational culture.	110	28	138	35	72	18	50	13	26	7
As a whole, FAMU demonstrates a commitment to always be kind in our service interactions.	86	22	155	39	74	19	59	15	22	6

Figure 1

Bar Graph of Response Counts for Service Excellence Core Standard: Courtesy

Service Excellence Core Standard: Courtesy

Colleagues within FAMU consistently demonstrate kindness in their interactions with each other

Colleagues within FAMU consistently demonstrate kindness when interacting with customers (e.g., students, external…

It is evident that kindness is an important part of FAMU's organizational culture.

As a whole, FAMU demonstrates a commitment to always be kind in our service interactions.

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Responsiveness

The second core standard – responsiveness – comprised questions related to responsiveness in customer service at Florida A&M University (FAMU). Overall, employees perceived that responsiveness was demonstrated in customer service at FAMU. Of the items, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that departments within FAMU are responsive to colleague requests for collaboration or assistance (56%). The differences in percentages for agreement were slight; however, less respondents supported the claim FAMU meets the expectations for responsiveness when dealing with internal and external stakeholders (32%).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Core Standard: Responsiveness

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Departments within FAMU are responsive to colleague requests for collaboration or assistance.	59	16	148	40	64	17	66	18	37	10
Departments within FAMU are responsive to customer requests or inquiries.	62	17	133	36	74	20	65	17	39	10
It is evident that FAMU values and prioritizes responsiveness in its day-to-day operations.	63	17	124	33	73	20	64	17	50	13
FAMU meets the expectations for responsiveness when dealing with internal and external stakeholders.	54	14	114	30	86	23	76	20	44	12

Figure 2

Bar Graph of Response Counts for Service Excellence Core Standard: Responsiveness
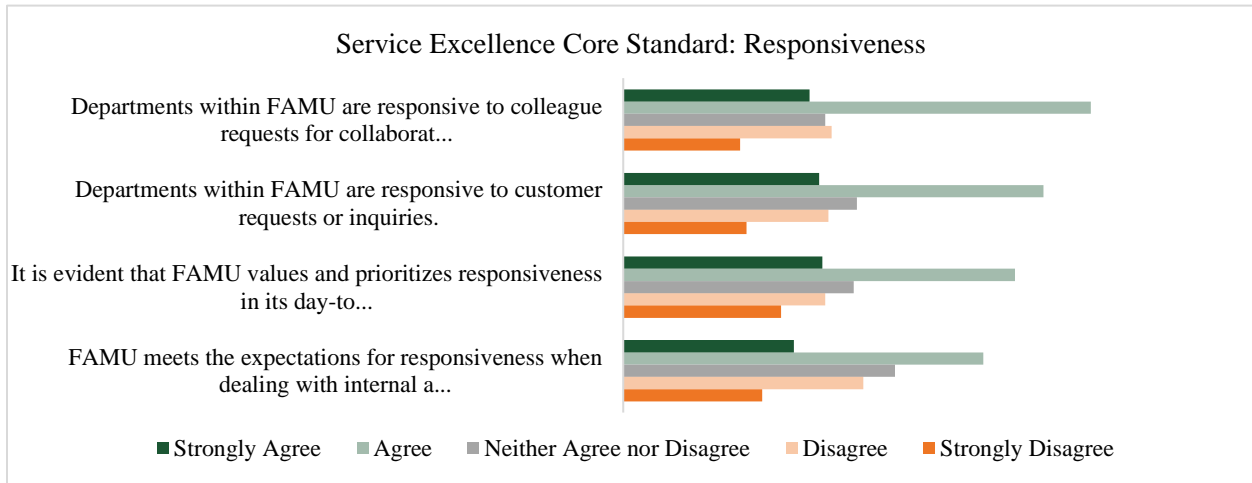
Collaboration

The third core standard – collaboration – comprised questions related to collaboration between departments at Florida A&M University (FAMU). Overall, employees indicated that their departments collaborate to effectively implement processes and meet customers' needs at FAMU. Specifically, more employees agreed or strongly agreed that within their department they collaborate efficiently and effectively to complete cross-functional processes (77%) and that their department actively collaborates with customers to ensure their needs are met (79%). Despite the consensus around collaboration occurring in their departments, numerous respondents disagreed that across the University departments collaborate efficiently and effectively to achieve common business goals (16%) and that FAMU fosters a culture of collaboration to enhance overall efficiency and effectiveness (13%).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Core Standard: Collaboration

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Within my department, we collaborate efficiently and effectively to complete cross-functional processes.	132	37	145	40	31	9	35	10	17	5
Across FAMU, departments collaborate efficiently and effectively to achieve common business goals.	56	16	144	40	81	23	57	16	21	6
My department actively collaborates with customers to ensure their needs are met.	146	40	140	39	43	12	21	6	11	3

| FAMU fosters a culture of collaboration, both internally and with customers, to enhance overall efficiency and effectiveness. | 76 | 21 | 135 | 38 | 78 | 22 | 46 | 13 | 24 | 7 |

Figure 3

Bar Graph of Response Counts for Service Excellence Core Standard: Collaboration

Service Excellence Core Standard: Collaboration
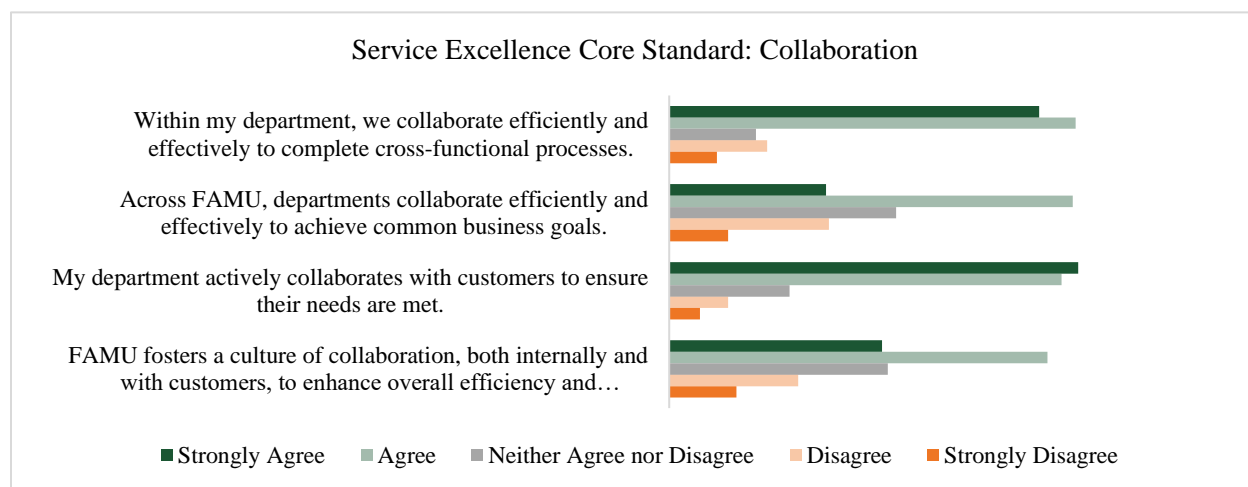
Professionalism

The final core standard – professionalism – comprised questions related to maintaining professionalism and professional standards at Florida A&M University (FAMU). Overall, respondents indicated the largest percentage of agreement (i.e., agreed or strongly agreed) related to the demonstration of a high-level of professionalism in the workplace (75%). Respondents were mostly neutral – i.e., neither agree nor disagree – (24%) or disagreed (15%) – i.e., disagree or strongly disagree – that FAMU upholds professional standards when dealing with both internal and external stakeholders.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Core Standard: Professionalism

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
My colleagues demonstrate a high-level of professionalism in the workplace.	111	32	150	43	44	13	33	9	13	3
FAMU demonstrates a strong commitment to maintaining a professional work environment.	81	23	151	43	66	19	39	11	14	4
Professionalism is consistently demonstrated by management	82	23	143	41	61	17	42	12	23	7

|									
in day-to-day interactions and communication.									
FAMU upholds professional standards when dealing with both internal and external stakeholders.	83	24	129	37	84	24	33	9	22	6

Figure 4

Graph for Service Excellence Core Standard: Professionalism

Service Excellence Core Standard: Professionalism

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
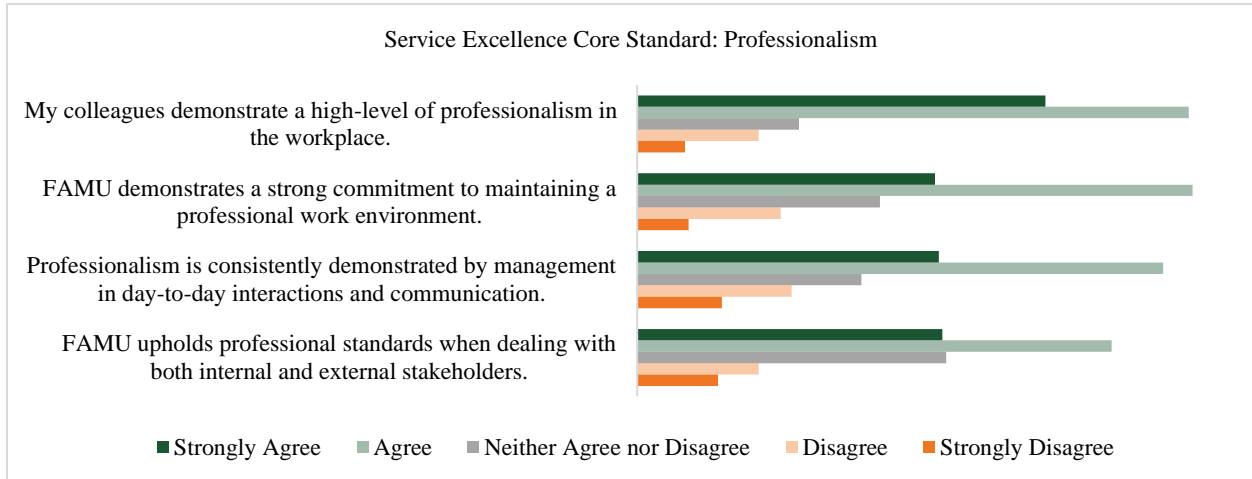
General Service Excellence Questions

The general service excellence questions addressed respondents' overall perception of service, management's responsiveness, and the effectiveness of internal processes. Respondents indicated the largest percentage of agreement (i.e., agree or strongly agree) to 'I am satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by FAMU' (51%) and 'it is my experience that management is responsive when addressing my needs or concerns' (56%). There was less agreement related to the effective communication of internal processes to stakeholders, with 23% indicating they were neutral (i.e., neither agree nor disagree) and 37% indicating disagreement (i.e., disagree or strongly disagree).
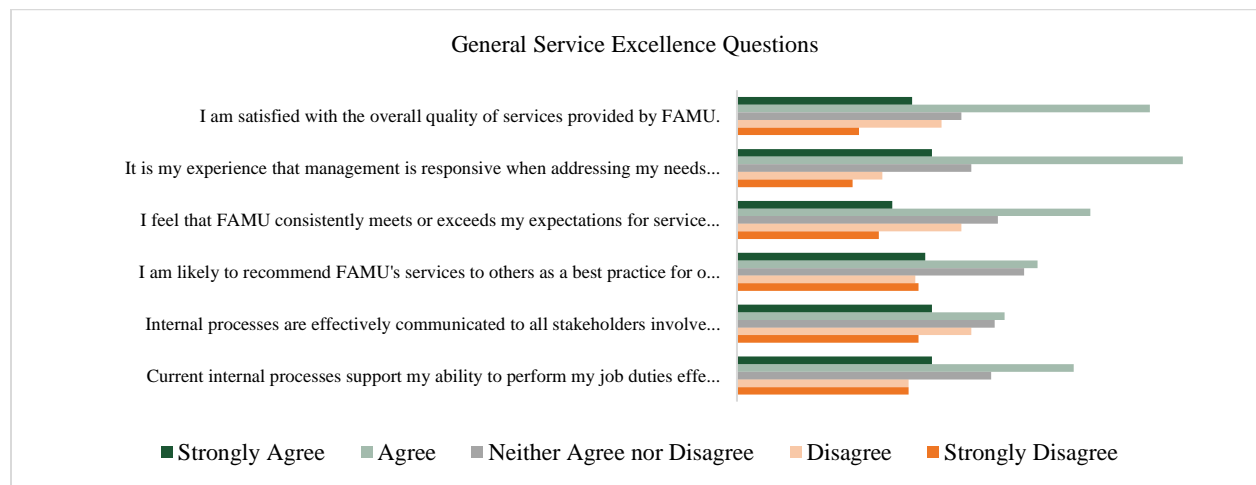
Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for General Service Excellence Questions

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by FAMU.	53	15	125	36	68	20	62	18	37	11
It is my experience that management is responsive when addressing my needs or concerns.	59	17	135	39	71	21	44	13	35	10
I feel that FAMU consistently meets or exceeds my expectations for service excellence.	47	14	107	31	79	23	68	20	43	13
I am likely to recommend FAMU's services to others as a best practice for other universities to follow.	57	17	91	26	87	25	54	16	55	16
Internal processes are effectively communicated to all stakeholders involved.	59	17	81	24	78	23	71	21	55	16
Current internal processes support my ability to perform my job duties effectively.	59	17	102	30	77	23	52	15	52	15

Figure 5

Graph for General Service Excellence Questions

General Service Excellence Questions

- I am satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by FAMU.
- It is my experience that management is responsive when addressing my needs...
- I feel that FAMU consistently meets or exceeds my expectations for service...
- I am likely to recommend FAMU's services to others as a best practice for o...
- Internal processes are effectively communicated to all stakeholders involve...
- Current internal processes support my ability to perform my job duties effe...

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative Responses

Are there any specific areas where you think internal processes could be streamlined or improved?

After removing responses of 'no', 'n/a', and 'none', 159 statements remained in the dataset to address the prompt: are there any specific areas where you think internal processes

could be streamlined or improved. A thematic analysis of the data revealed nine core themes delineating aspects of internal customer service that could be improved at FAMU: communication; transparency and accessibility; efficiency and workflow; training and development; customer service and responsiveness; technology and systems; culture and accountability; specific departmental concerns; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); and collaboration and interdepartmental coordination.

Communication. Regarding communication, employees perceived that the institution lacked clear communication channels and protocols for institutional processes. Unclear or inconsistent messaging around the processes for travel, purchasing, and requisitions were highlighted by numerous respondents. Additionally, respondents noted the poor communication between departments, and between management and staff. Due to poor communication, employees noted that there is a lack of timely, comprehensive notice about policies and procedures, as well as updates related to policies and procedures. Finally, respondents shared that slow responses have led to a general sentiment of frustration and a sense that departments are inefficient.

Transparency and Accessibility. Transparency and accessibility issues were noted due to the lack of accessible policies, procedures and guidelines. Employees explained that information is either missing or difficult to find on established processes. Moreover, because of poor documentation or lack of documentation there was little understanding of processes.

Efficiency and Workflow. Employees felt that there were several areas where efficiency and workflow could be improved at FAMU. Overall, they felt that processes were outdated and inefficient due to their time-consuming and labor-intensive nature. Employees highlighted redundancy and lack of automation, where applicable, as issues related to efficiency and workflow. Respondents indicated that slow processing of paperwork and documentation, coupled with the lack of clear guidelines or responsible parties results in errors and delays that are costly to departments.

Training and Development. Respondents perceived that training and development could be improved or enhanced at the institution. They noted a need for standard processes for onboarding at the University and in their department. Beyond the need for a standard onboarding process, respondents felt that training in new systems and processes was necessary and there was a need for cross-training to ensure continuity and efficiency during staffing transitions. Finally, employees shared their desire for ongoing professional development opportunities.

Customer Service and Responsiveness. Respondents shared negative customer service experiences as both internal and external stakeholders. A key service issue they noted was a lack of responsiveness to student and fellow employee requests. Employees revealed that their interactions with colleagues in various departments have lacked courtesy, kindness, and transparency.

Technology and Systems. Regarding technology, employees noted the impact of outdated systems and technology on service at FAMU. They indicated that department productivity is hampered due to these issues. Employees recommended leveraging more modern tools to enhance operations and to streamline processes. Beyond their call for updated technology and processes, they requested more user-friendly platforms for key processes such as procurement, travel, and financial aid.

Culture and Accountability. As it relates to culture and accountability, respondents shared that a perception of entitlement among long-term employees hindered progress and service at the institution. They desired a full embrace of a culture of excellence, accountability, and transparency across FAMU. Employees also revealed a desire for clear organizational structures and hierarchies to facilitate change and improvement.

Specific Departmental Concerns. Several departments were discussed by respondents when asked about areas that can be streamlined for improvement. Chief among these were financial aid, human resources, procurement, travel and student accounts were repeatedly addressed and require attention according to employees. Respondents shared critical issues such as delays with tuition waivers, lack of responsiveness, and inefficiencies in processes.

Collaboration and Interdepartmental Coordination. Finally, employees noted a need for improving collaboration and interdepartmental coordination to streamline FAMU. Improved collaboration is necessary between departments to reduce the silos at FAMU. Respondents shared that these silos result in a lack of synergy between units. They revealed a desire for streamlined processes to accomplish cross-departmental tasks and projects.

What aspects of internal customer service do you find most helpful and valuable?

After removing responses of 'no', 'n/a', and 'none', 133 statements remained in the dataset to address the prompt: are there any specific areas where you think internal processes could be streamlined or improved. A thematic analysis of the data revealed eight core themes delineating aspects of internal customer service that could be improved at FAMU: communication and transparency; responsiveness and timelines; empathy and support; knowledge and competency; efficiency and streamlining processes; professionalism and courtesy; culture and leadership support; and resource access and collaboration.

Communication and Transparency. Respondents explained that clear and transparent communication are essential for fostering trust and collaboration within the institution. Respondents valued when colleagues provided thorough communication of needs, requests, and any delays in processes. Employees shared that transparency was appreciated, especially in situations where there are delays or challenges.

Responsiveness and Timeliness. Employees valued when their colleagues were responsive to inquiries, whether through email, phone calls, or in-person interactions. They tied the responses to smoother workflows and successful outcomes for students and other stakeholders. Additionally, respondents emphasized meeting deadlines and providing timely assistance as helpful aspects of customer service.

Empathy and Support. Employees appreciated internal customer service that demonstrated empathy and a willingness to provide support. They highlighted actively listening to concerns, showing understanding, and offering assistance in problem-solving as actions that conveyed empathy and support. Respondents identified collegiality and teamwork as important for creating a supportive environment.

Knowledge and Competency. Respondents noted the importance of staff members being knowledgeable about their departments' services and processes in providing exemplary service. Respondents valued interactions with employees who demonstrated competence in their roles and were able to provide comprehensive answers to inquiries. Employees emphasized how their colleagues' competency helped them to resolve the concerns of their stakeholders.

Efficiency and Streamlining Processes. Employees shared a desire for internal processes to be more efficient and streamlined. They noted the importance of efficiency in reducing barriers and roadblocks. Respondents identified cross-training, updating policies and procedures, and implementing systems for creating and tracking requests as methods to become more efficient and create streamlined processes.

Professionalism and Courtesy. Employees indicated several traits that they found the most helpful and valuable in internal customer service. Professionalism, courtesy, and respect were seen as essential components of internal customer service. Respondents appreciated interactions with staff members who maintained respectful decorum, regardless of the situation.

Culture and Leadership Support. Employees highlighted that positive organizational culture that prioritizes excellence, kindness, and responsiveness is desired. They indicated that a culture that valued these traits required adoption from leadership to staff. Leadership support in fostering this culture and addressing any deficiencies was seen as crucial for improving internal customer service.

Resource Access and Collaboration. Employees noted that resources and collaboration were necessary for exemplary internal service. Access to resources needed to perform job duties, as well as collaboration across departments, was valued. Respondents appreciated being able to call upon other departments for advice or assistance and highlighted the importance of teamwork in achieving common goals.

What aspects of internal customer service could be improved to better serve your needs?

After removing responses of 'no', 'n/a', and 'none', 154 statements remained in the dataset to address the prompt: are there any specific areas where you think internal processes could be streamlined or improved. A thematic analysis of the data revealed seven core themes delineating aspects of internal customer service that could be improved at FAMU: communication and responsiveness, training and knowledge, efficiency and streamlining processes, attitude and professionalism, leadership and accountability, resource allocation and staffing, and feedback and continuous improvement.

Communication and Responsiveness. Respondents shared that there was a lack of timely response to email and phone calls. Additionally, they felt that the communication between departments was ineffective. They suggested that clearer pathways for communication and a better method for sharing information on processes and procedures would be beneficial.

Training and Knowledge. Participants emphasized the role of holistic training and development in improving service at FAMU. They explained that with more information on their roles, their colleagues would be able to manage internal processes better which will enhance customer service. Beyond more training in their own areas, employees indicated that cross training between departments was important. According to them, cross training allows departments the flexibility to manage their workload through transitions in staffing as well as helps staff members understand the all functions of their department.

Efficiency and Streamlining Processes. Numerous respondents emphasized the need for streamlining processes and reducing unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles. Employees noted excessive paperwork, convoluted approval processes, and inefficient procedures as hurdles in completing tasks such as travel approvals, procurement, and financial aid processing. They indicated that revisiting these processes could improve service.

Attitude and Professionalism. Employees highlighted concerns about employee attitudes, professionalism, and morale. Respondents noted experiencing rudeness, apathy, and hostility from staff members, which negatively impacted internal customer service. There was a call for a more positive and cooperative work environment, with mutual respect and empathy.

Leadership and Accountability. Several respondents indicate issues with middle management and leadership. These concerns include a lack of vision, accountability, and responsiveness. Employees shared a desire for more proactive leadership that addresses concerns, implements positive changes, and fosters a culture of collaboration and support.

Resource Allocation and Staffing. Many employees highlighted the impact of understaffing on internal customer service. Respondents explained that overburdened employees struggle to meet the demands of their roles, leading to decreased responsiveness and effectiveness. There was a call for adequate staffing levels to ensure that employees can fulfill their duties and provide quality service.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement. Finally, respondents recognized the need for feedback mechanisms and a commitment to continuous improvement. Employees suggested implementing feedback surveys, tracking systems for requests, and regular training sessions. Respondents recommended using this information to address areas of weakness and enhance internal customer service.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The aggregate data revealed that there was overall agreement that service excellence was present on campus. Largely, respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements indicating that courtesy, responsiveness, collaboration, and professionalism were present in customer service interactions at FAMU. Slightly more than half of the employees in the sample were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by FAMU (51%) and felt that management was responsive when addressing their needs or concerns (56%).

Despite the positive feedback, the data did reveal facets of customer service that could be improved as the institution strives to provide exemplary customer service. For example, respondents indicated less agreement when asked if they felt that their colleagues consistently demonstrated kindness in their interactions with each other and when interacting with customers. This sentiment was echoed in the open-ended responses; respondents shared instances where courtesy was lacking in their interactions with their coworkers and they instead experienced rudeness, apathy, and hostility. They also discussed the need for more professionalism, respect and empathy in their service experiences.

To address these concerns, leadership should consider expanding training to address the affective aspects of service excellence, such as demonstrating empathy & understanding, modeling positive interactions, maintaining a willingness to support the customer. Additionally, departments should engage front-line employees in regular, interactive professional development activities focused on how to interact with stakeholders. Departments can also consider using a 'secret shopper' model to gather organic feedback on customer service. Across the institution, a full FAMU adoption of point-of-service satisfaction surveys will allow departments to gather feedback that can be used to refine their services and processes.

An issue was noted in the closed- and open-ended responses related to responsiveness in customer service. Over half of the respondents were neutral or disagreed (i.e., disagreed or strongly agreed) that FAMU meets the expectations for responsiveness when dealing with internal and external stakeholders (55%). In alignment with this finding, thematic analysis highlighted efficiency, workflow, responsiveness, and processes as issues with customer service. A lack of effective integration of technology, a lack of resources, and minimal collaboration also hindered service according to the data. These findings were bolstered by respondents' disagreement (i.e., disagreed or strongly agreed) that across FAMU departments collaborate efficiently and effectively to achieve common business goals (22%) and that FAMU fosters a culture of collaboration to enhance overall efficiency and effectiveness (20%). Responsiveness and collaboration appeared to be further hindered by staffing issues, unclear paths of communication, and lack of responsible parties to contact for tasks.

To improve customer service as it relates to these issues, departments should embark on website review and overhaul. These efforts should focus on ensuring the presence of easy to access contact lists that indicate who to contact for particular topics, reviewing website to ensure that core processes or policies are highlighted within a few clicks, and reviewing their website to ensure all listed information is up to date. These efforts can minimize the likelihood of requests taking more time to process because they are not routed to the appropriate party. Additionally, placing information on the site clarifying processes or procedures can help stakeholders eliminate issues that arise from requests that are not in good order. Moreover, integrating the use of technology in processes or fully leveraging existing technology (e.g., implementing DocuSign across campus, using cloud-based solutions for completing forms instead of creating 'paper' based forms for submission) can simplify processes and make them more efficient. A culture of accountability should be communicated or reinforced that focuses on 'owning' the process of assisting a customer; expanding accountability to include the responsibility for connecting stakeholders to the individual who can assist them can decrease some of the frustration resulting from lack of response or slow response. Clear, standard communication around the timeline for processing requests, regular communication around issues or challenges that might impact processes, and adhering to the communicated timelines can help stakeholders to set reasonable expectations around how or when their issue will be resolved. Moreover, reviewing staffing in the department to ensure that employees are not overburdened can reduce the length of time for responses.

Finally, employees delineated the need for professionalism in customer service interactions. More respondents were neutral (24%) or disagreed (i.e., disagree or strongly disagree) that FAMU upholds professional standards when dealing with internal and external stakeholders (15%). This aligns with the thematic analysis that revealed the need for more training, development, and knowledge for employees. Respondents explained the need for deeper knowledge of their role to be more effective, more cross-training within their department to fully understand the function of their office, and cross-training between departments to understand the points where stakeholders rely on collaboration among the FAMU offices.

To address these concerns, processes should be clearly outlined and readily available to all employees. Allowing employees on-demand access to this information will equip them to better understand their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, a wider adoption of LinkedIn learning as a formal professional development tool will help with training employees on customer service in general and some of the more nuanced aspects of their role. Finally,

standardized onboarding at the University and the department level can help employees understand how their role supports the general function of the institution and why it is important for them to exhibit mastery of the job competencies. Standardized departmental onboarding ensures that every employee gets a holistic view of role within their unit.