Message from the Director, Jolene Smyth

This is the first BOSR Annual Report to be produced since 2011. The last 4 years, and especially last year itself have been times of great change and also great success for BOSR. In 2011, I came on as a co-Director of BOSR and took over the sole Director position 2012. BOSR was in great shape when I took over, thanks to Julia McQuillan’s former leadership. Since 2012 BOSR has continued to grow, improve, and better serve our clients. Some highlights include:

- Renewed focus on staff training and career building, including enrollment in courses in the Survey Research and Methodology Program at UNL and The Evaluator’s Institute at George Washington University,
- Development of an internal Methods and Minutes program where staff learn and share current developments and best practices in survey methodology, and a market adjustment to make BOSR more competitive in hiring and bring stability to BOSR core staff.

Building BOSR’s national profile through research and leadership involvement in the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, International Field Director’s and Technologies Conference, and Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations. BOSR staff have regularly attended conferences to present methodology research and learn new practices and techniques. In addition, BOSR staff have begun taking on leadership roles in some of these organizations.

- Becoming a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative (http://www.aapor.org/AAPORKentico/transparency.aspx), which involved a renewed commitment to best practices in conducting and reporting the methods BOSR uses.

- Continued focus on making sure we have the right resources to do our work well such as through the acquisition of Voxco CATI and web software and development of questionnaire templates to improve questionnaire design and gain efficiencies in our work.

- Development of methods and procedures for collecting bio samples such as saliva, hair, and blood.
A celebration of our 50th anniversary that brought many current and past BOSR Directors and staff together to reflect on BOSR’s past and plan for the future. The celebration included colloquia highlighting some of BOSR’s recent contributions to survey methodology literature, a Director’s panel that recognized BOSR’s important contribution to the larger field of survey methodology through training and career building, and a celebration banquet.

In the last four years, BOSR has also undergone some significant and challenging transitions. Perhaps the largest was the acquisition of the Nebraska Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Systems contract, which required us to open and staff a second telephone calling facility in 2013. While opening a new facility in about a month’s time was a bit wild, the BRFSS project quickly became a success and is currently running very smoothly under the leadership of Nikki Gohring and her wonderful staff.

Other transitions have included the coming and going of many great staff members. BOSR has seen a number of staff move on to other career opportunities. Most recently, this past summer, Amanda Richardson, who served as the Assistant Director throughout my time as Director moved on to a new position at Castleton College in Vermont. While we miss Amanda greatly, Lindsey Witt-Swanson has stepped up into the Assistant Director Position and is doing a wonderful job working with clients and leading the staff.

Finally, BOSR is looking forward to more big transitions in the near future that will help position us to continue to make important contributions to the University. Foremost among these is a planned move this fall from our temporary home in Benton Hall back to Oldfather Hall. This move will ensure we are more centrally located and accessible for our clients and help bring our staff back into more regular contact with key academic departments that make up our clientele as well as inform best practices for survey methods. We are also looking forward to building a collaborative relationship with the new Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Consortium at UNL.

As you will see in the rest of this report, BOSR continues to serve a diverse clientele and conduct a variety of types of projects of all sizes. Our clientele and our revenue stream have grown substantially in recent years, and BOSR is in sound financial shape. In the coming year, we look forward to continued service to our clients, the university, and the state as well as to continued involvement in the survey methodology community more broadly.
**2014-2015 Projects Highlights**

**Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)**
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
2015 marked the start of the third year that BOSR has collected data on adult health risk factors in Nebraska via phone.

**Student Health Risk Prevention Surveillance System (SHARP)**
Nebraska Departments of Education and Health and Human Services
The BOSR fielded the YRBS, YTS, and the Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey conducted in the State of Nebraska school systems. These surveys measure student health behaviors like substance use, nutrition, physical activity, gambling, and behaviors that lead to unintentional injuries and violence. The data are used for local and state planning and evaluation. The 2014 administration marks the third SHARP administration conducted by BOSR.

**Labor Availability Survey**
Nebraska Departments of Labor and Economic Development
This project involves a series of surveys that measure employment, labor availability, commutes, benefits, and future work plans of Nebraskans and people living in adjoining counties in neighboring states. The Panhandle Labor Availability Survey is BOSR’s third administration of such a mail survey. The prior two administrations focused on Northeast Nebraska and Lincoln/Omaha Metro Area respectively.

**Community Connections & Wellness Study**
Bridget Goosby & Jacob Cheadle, UNL Sociology Department
This two part project involved both mailing and on-campus data collection with community members to try to better understand how social experiences impact people’s physical health and bodies. The on-campus data collection involved BOSR staff both interviewing participants and collecting biological data through hair, saliva, and blood samples.

**Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey**
Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska
The BOSR assisted with the administration of in-home and childcare center mail surveys at both the program and teacher-level. The next step will aim to collect the same type of data among Nebraska schools with Kindergarten through third grade. These surveys will inform policy makers and educators about the needs of and improvements to training and education for early childhood professionals.

**UNL Innovation and Economic Prosperity Survey**
UNL’s Innovation and Economic Prosperity Team
The BOSR collected data from internal and external stakeholder as well as students on UNL’s contributions to innovation and economic development efforts in Nebraska.
NASIS

Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS)

BOSR’s annual omnibus survey was conducted again during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. NASIS allows researchers to share data collection costs by purchasing a portion of space on the questionnaire and sharing the costs of over 40 demographic items asked annually. NASIS is a very cost-effective, efficient way to collect representative statewide data.

This administration included multiple experimental design treatments. These treatments aimed to better understand the effect that monetary incentives and cover letter wording have on the accuracy of within-household selection.

Clients included UNL faculty, graduate students, and evaluators.

NASIS has been conducted since 1977. Below are a few highlights.

- In **2010**, NASIS moved from phone to mail administration
- In **1993**, 33.9% of respondents had any education beyond a high school diploma
- In **2014**, 81.3% of respondents had any education beyond a high school diploma

Team Photo

*Front*: Julia Black, Tricia Cook, Deb Predmore, and Quan Zhou  *Middle*: Joan Larson and Kim Meiergerd  *Back*: Lindsey Witt-Swanson, Ricky Hull, Jolene Smyth, and Nikki Gohring

Revenue continued to increase through FY 2014-2015. During the last fiscal year, BOSR reached a new record exceeding $1,500,000 of revenue through client projects. As Table 1 illustrates, BOSR has tripled revenue over the last three fiscal years while direct support has decreased.

As shown through the list of BOSR’s clients also included in this report, BOSR continues to serve the University of Nebraska-Lincoln community through faculty, graduate student, and administrative projects. At the same time, BOSR’s dramatic increase in revenue is the result of the State of Nebraska hiring BOSR to complete more and more projects that have also led to an increase in indirect dollars to the University as well.

The direct support provided by the Department of Sociology continues to offset certain administrative costs associated with BOSR’s status as a cost center. In FY 2014-2015, BOSR attracted $47 of revenue for every dollar of direct support. As such, BOSR continues to be a great investment for the Department, college, and university.

Table 1. BOSR Revenue and Dept. of Sociology Direct Support
2014/2015 Clients

Faculty and Graduate Students across UNL Departments in…

- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business Administration
- College of Education and Human Sciences
- College of Engineering
- College of Graduate Studies
- Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

UNL Campus Services and Organizations

- University Museum
- University Communications
- UNL Health Center
- Career Services
- The Public Policy Center
- UNL Police

- University Libraries
- UNL Children’s Center
- Admissions
- Academic Affairs
- Holland Computing Center
- Food Services

Nebraska State Government

- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
- Nebraska Department of Labor
- Nebraska Department of Economic Development
- Nebraska Department of Education
- Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

Other Universities

- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- South Dakota State University
- Rutgers University

Other Outside Organizations

- Nebraska Health Coalitions
- Healthcare Foundation of Greater Kansas City
- Tribal Epidemiology Center at Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council
Services Available

Research Design Consultation
Questionnaire Design
Mail, Phone, and Web Surveys
In-person Interviewing
Focus Group Facilitation
Data Entry, Processing, and Analysis
Study Recruitment and Scheduling
Technical Report Preparation
Transcription

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