

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Recruiting Office

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

The Student Experience provides the University community with programs and services to support the academic mission *of* creating, disseminating and acquiring knowledge through teaching, research and service while empowering a diverse student population to achieve their highest educational potential. The Student Experience creates a stimulating and inclusive educational environment that is conducive to holistic personal growth. The commitment to students initiates prior to entrance, sustains throughout the college experience and continues beyond graduation. Enrollment Services provides equal access to education for potential students throughout the state and region and promotes economic stability and financial access to citizens. Student Affairs enhances student development and broadens intellectual, social, cultural, ethical, and occupational growth. The Student Experience works closely with faculty, staff, students, and the community to ensure graduates have the capability to promote economic development and improvements in the region.

The Office of Enrollment Management is a student-centered division that is future focused providing educational access to students in our region to improve the lives of our citizens. High School Relations, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Admissions work collaboratively with University faculty and staff to provide services and programing that are innovative and surpasses state and federal guidelines. Enrollment Management fulfills the university's mission and commitment to academic quality, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The mission of Recruiting is to increase the quantity and quality of all new student enrollment to Northwestern State University. New student enrollment includes all first-time freshmen, transfer students, and new graduate students. Increase in quality is determined by increased ACT/SAT composite scores, GPA and leadership skills. In support of this mission, the Recruiting staff provides prospective students with accurate information necessary to the admissions and enrollment processes, while presenting the public with a positive image of Northwestern State University. The Recruiting staff are always focusing on an increase in diversity and access to higher education for all populations.

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Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from weekly applicant and admission reports that compares applicants and admits from each parish and state to the application and admissions numbers from the previous year on the same date.
- (2) The Director, along with the Enrollment Manager, will analyze the data and determine whether the applicable outcomes are met.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be disseminated and discussed with the appropriate staff.
- (4) Weekly staff meetings will be held to discuss the progress.
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff and senior leadership, will determine and propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. Recruitment efforts will lead to an increase in student enrollment and be representative of the regional community.

Measure.1.1 Student enrollment will increase by 8% per freshmen class. 6% is acceptable.

Finding. Target not met.

Analysis. In 2020-2021 the target was not met. There was a vast decrease from the previous 1401 to 1246 in Fall of 2021, by 155 students. This is similar to the loss in Fall of 2020 from 1515 to 1401, by 114 students or -7.5%. Based on the analysis of these results, a continued overhaul in recruiting tactics, strategies and implementation would be needed in unprecedented times.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, in 2022-2023 recruiting strategies for Fall 2022 will be to develop a communications plan throughout the year with mail, email, social media, texting, and other platforms. The foundation of a communication plan has been completed in this assessment year; however, it has not been fully integrated with Banner CRM Recruit yet to due to lack of technology resources in Information Technology. A third-party consultant has been hired to help push Banner CRM forward to fully use the technology to bolster first time, full time freshman recruitment. There will also be a continued refresh on marketing materials, correspondence, and tactics to continue to attract students to NSU. Phrasing such as impactful, valuable, and personal will be used, along with “Finding Your Path” and “Building Your Future”.

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Measure 1.2. New Graduate student enrollment will increase by 3% per academic year.

Finding. Target not met.

Analysis. In 2020-2021 the target was not met. For the Fall of 2021, new graduate enrollment decreased from 1,150 to 1,140, or 10 students, which is a 1% loss. Where this isn't a massive decrease, and numbers remain remotely flat, there wasn't an increase. This decrease can be attributed to the outdated admissions process, lack of marketing of certain programs, and shifts to a more competitive marketing environment.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, in 2022-2023 we will enhance the recruiting efforts for programs that are drawing new graduate students. We will continue to be more proactive in understanding our graduate student data and pursuing students to come to NSU. For the first time ever, we were able to purchase GRE testing data, in order to better fill our database with warm leads. This data was also sent to program leads for academic departments, and communication was sent to all these students. Marketing initiatives like creating flat rate tuition for our Educational Leadership programs, removing the GRE requirements for certain programs, and creating messaging that lands in front of the correct audience is being worked on. The biggest barrier that needs to be addressed is altering the paper only application process through College Net and creating an all-digital process through Banner CRM. It's noted throughout the year that this is the biggest barrier, and many students turn away from NSU because of lost paperwork, long times of wait, and lack of instant gratification.

Measure 1.3. The student body will be representative of university's regions in terms of diversity.

Finding. Target not met.

Analysis. In 2020-2021 the target was not met. In the fall of 2020, we enrolled 52 of the 64 parishes, which was the lowest in years. In Fall of 2021, we were able to enroll students from 55 of 64 of the parishes. This is an upward trajectory from last year, with 3 more parishes gained. Based on the data, we're still lacking students from Caldwell, Cameron, Catahoula, East and West Carroll, Madison, St. Helena, St. James, and Tensas parishes. These parishes are the least populated parishes in Louisiana, and the highest on the list of low socio-economic parishes. An increased effort of removing financial barriers with fees and looking for more creative scholarship packages will be utilized to help reach more students in these parishes. As stated last year, we're also looking at race and ethnicity in order to measure diversity in other ways that geography. Based on that, of our true entering freshman, in face to face classes that have disclosed race and ethnicity, was broken down like this: White – 577 (50.6%), Black/African American – 437 (38.2%), Hispanic or Latino – 50 (4.4%), Asian – 5 (0.4%), 2 or more Races – 47 (4.1%), American Indian or Pacific Islander – 20 (1.8%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander – 1 (0.09%), and Foreign or Resident Alien – 4 (0.4%). With these numbers, we're almost directly mirroring the breakdown of race and ethnicity in Louisiana. We're higher on Black/African American, 2 or more races, and Native American or Pacific Islander. Those that are lower, we're within 8 or less percentage points.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, in 2022-2023 this measure will

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continue to measure geographic region, race, and ethnicity in order to look at the full picture of diversity. All action items from last year's assessment were utilized, such as the Call Me MISTER Program, new programming in academic areas, and flat rate tuition and border discounts. Looking ahead, new flat rate tuition for all Federally recognized American Indian tribes nation-wide will be utilized. We're already double the state's make up of American Indian or Pacific Islander students, and this initiative will only further cause that to increase. We will also look to advertise the out of state fee waivers more in counties in Texas to help increase the Hispanic or Latino population at NSU. Lastly, we will continue the mantra of recruiting at every school, every parish in Louisiana, and anyone who invites us to their property, in order to give every future student a chance at higher education regardless of background or circumstances.

SO 2. Students who participate in NSide View Events, personalized campus tours on campus will learn the steps necessary in the admissions process.

Measure 2.1. Ninety percent (90%) of students who participate in Nside View and campus tours will respond that these events are very helpful in understanding the admissions process by responding, "strongly agree" or "agree" on their student survey. Students were able to select from 5 responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Finding. Target met

Analysis. In the campus tour surveys for the fall of 2021, in AC year 2021-2022, seniors overall stated that 92.2% strongly agreed the events were helpful and 97.3% agreed or strongly agreed the event was helpful.

Action. In AC 2021-2022 the target was met. We continue to only use recruiters when giving tours, when available, instead of ambassadors, since it seems to help with overall satisfaction. N-Side View Day was also overhauled, and emulated a conference feel instead of a break-up of student demographic, session style. This helped students view what they wanted, participate when needed, and helped with the overall flow of the event. Satisfaction has never been higher.

Measure 2.2. Ninety percent (90%) of students who participate in Nside View Events campus tours & recruiting receptions will respond these events are very helpful in understanding the Financial Aid process and associated requirements by responding "strongly agree" or "agree" on their student survey. Participants were given 5 choices on the measurement from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Finding. Target met

Analysis. In 2019-2020 the target was raised to 90%. For the fall 2020 group, an average of 99% of students and parents filling out the survey indicated that their tour guide was knowledgeable regarding the admissions and financial aid process. For fall 2021, the same average of 99% was attained, of students and parents indicated that the tour guide was knowledgeable. Even with the rewording of the question was geared to more financial aid knowledge, the same rate was achieved.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, in 2022-2023, we will continue to utilize more financial aid information in the discussion during tours and preview

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events. We will also look to post more transparent information on the NSU website, like our scholarship scale, so students know exactly what they'll receive based on ACT and GPA achieved. With information like this, students will be able to more effectively calculate how much they will receive and how much they will owe, which will increase financial understanding and literacy.

SO 3. Enrollment of Transfer students will increase each year. Measure

3.1. Transfer student enrollment will increase by 2% each year.

Finding. Target Not Met.

Analysis. In 2020, going into 2021-2022 the state changed the admissions requirements that allowed those students that would traditionally only go to community colleges, entrance into Universities. Test scores weren't needed, and only GPA's would be looked at for admission. This lowered the transfer student population drastically. In fall of 2020, we enrolled 584 students. The enrollment for fall of 2021 decreased to 471 due to the aforementioned reasons, and the target was not met.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, in 2022-2023 we will continue to increase our recruiting efforts by expanding our territory and increase the number of junior and community college agreements across our state and out of state. We will also look at creating a transfer portal where students can complete degree audits in minutes, as opposed to waiting days, if not weeks. The expediency of technology could drastically improve our enrollment. We will also look at hosting transfer only events, adding those students to orientation events, and creating entrance packets to help with retention. We will increase our goal for next year accordingly. We hope to enroll at a minimum of 550 transfer students for the fall of 2022.

SO 4. Entering freshmen will have scores and grade point averages that are above the state average and have cited leadership skills.

Measure 4.1. Freshmen ACT average for fall 2018 is 21.67. We will increase the average ACT for fall 2019 to 22.5. Acceptable targets are 22 ACT composite averages.

Finding. Target not met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020 we implemented an expansion of ACT names purchased and aggressively reworked scholarship packaging. The average ACT for fall 2019 increased by 0.15 from 21.67 (2018) to 21.82. With the same tactics in AC 2019-2020, the ACT for fall 2020 decreased to 20.3, which is a decrease of -1.52. In fall of 2021, the average ACT further decreased to 20.1. The same rule implementation from the Board of Regents, a student could potentially get into NSU without having to take the ACT, still effected our average. We will continue to review other university scholarship scales to be sure ours is very competitive and focuses on students with higher GPAs.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, in 2022-2023 to meet our 22 ACT goal, we will re-work and analyze our scholarship packaging to aggressively increase the higher ACT students to be more competitive with other universities. We will also look at matching more scholarships with NSU Foundation dollars to help those with higher ACT scores come to NSU. The Louisiana Scholars College continues to be the natural landing spot for higher ACT scores. With 44 students entering the Scholars'

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College with a 25 ACT or higher, this will only help our goals.

Measure 4.2. Ten percent (10%) of entering freshmen will have documented leadership skills as part of their application process for programs like the Presidential Leadership program, Louisiana Scholars' College and the student ambassador program.

Finding. Target met.

Analysis. In 2020-2021, we continued an aggressive outreach from recruiters to identify these leaders. Fall 2019, our first-time freshman numbers increased by 20 students, the 2018 percentage was a decrease of 9.2%, making the target just out of reach. In 2019-2020, the target was 140 and was met. There were 81 PLP students, 24 Ambassadors, and 38 Scholars' students, for a total of 143, which is 3 over the total needed. Fall 2021, there were 63 PLP students, 36 Ambassadors, and 44 Scholars' students, for a total of 143, the same amount as the previous year. Both ambassadors and Scholars' student rose.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2021-2022 results, in 2022-2023 moving forward, we will strive to recruit more students to all the aforementioned programs in the measure through tactics previously discussed.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.

- We made many improvements to our assessment pieces of each of our recruiting events and initiatives although we need to revise some of the wording in a few of our assessments that might have confused students and parents.
- Continued with Banner Recruit implementation to create first ever CRM for Recruiting to help with data, analytics, and recruiting strategy. There is still more work to be done, but the foundation is laid.
- Continued to redevelop all recruiting materials to be more cohesive, less wordy, and more attractive.
- Implemented ability to hold virtual recruiting events, and a real time solution to meet in one-on-one virtual meetings.
- Continued to develop social media calendars to enhance strategy and campaigns from recruiting office to be geared towards goals.
- Added a key position through grant opportunity of Beyond Graduation Coach to further help with recruitment of key central Louisiana parishes.
- Created key partnerships with FFA, community colleges, local entities, school districts, etc. to further opportunities.

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- Attempting to remove all barriers of entry to NSU through the admission process, like arbitrary fees, unneeded paperwork, and digitization efforts of materials.

Plan of action moving forward.

In addition to the action plans described above, we will continue to focus on inner office growth of recruiters and ambassadors. We will also look to strengthen the partnerships with academic areas, in order to breakdown silos across campus. Many missing data points, opportunities, and resources are available within academic units that are untapped. We will lead the effort across campus in order to break down barriers and work together. We will also lean on our customer service skills and training, as in unprecedented times, the most customer service friendly institution will win out.

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