

Assessment Cycle 2022-2023

Program: Bachelor of Science (BS) Unified Public Safety Administration (256)

School: School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

College: Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern State University Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

College of Arts and Sciences Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, who working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The college strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The college provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the college houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the state's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs. The School of Social Sciences and Applied Sciences at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, history, public safety, law, and public service. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service the department produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and a driving force in the economic development and improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. The school delivers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and History and Bachelor of Science degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration with concentrations in Law Enforcement Administration, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, Public Facilities Management, Nuclear Surety and Geo-Measurement. Certificate programs in Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies and Public Policy and Administration are also available in addition to Pre-law and Paralegal Studies concentration and minor. The school also delivers a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security and a Post master's certificate in Global Security and Intelligence.

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Unified Public Safety Administration Mission Statement: We strive to develop students in gaining an appreciation for the complexities of homeland security organizations, leadership, policies, ethics, and challenges, through the review of pertinent literature, critical and synthetic thinking, research, and reflective analysis and assessment. The bachelor degree in Unified Public Safety Administration is unique in that it teaches students to develop plausible resolutions to the risks and threats currently challenging emergency response personnel through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences that prepare graduates for life and career success in this expanding occupational field of emergency management in the public and private sectors. Courses are designed with the present and future administrator or leader in mind having direct application to the challenges of emergency management and public safety.

Purpose: The Unified Public Safety Administration program will prepare students for entry level positions and enhancement of positions currently held to leadership positions of greater responsibility in government and the private sector with the ability to comprehend, influence, create, and respond to public safety policies from national, state, and local levels. It will also prepare interested students for the pursuit of further/additional advanced degrees in Homeland Security, Emergency Management, Political Science or Strategic Leadership, at this or other institutions.

Methodology: The assessment process for the UPSA program is as follows:

- 1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected by the program coordinator.
- 2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine if students have met measurable outcomes.
- 3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty and department head.
- 4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core and supporting courses if required (show cause).
- 5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the UPSA Advisory Committee and department head, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

To address the COVID-19 static issues, the students and faculty continue to remain affected by the pandemic. It manifests in many ways with each category (students and faculty). Many students are finding themselves excessively stressed and emotionally affected. Many faculty continue to deal with personal issues regarding the pandemic and must address the students' issues in a professional manner.

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Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. First, second, and third-semester students will be able to describe the historical evolution and context of early Unified Public Safety Administration, domestic homeland security practices and challenges, hazards, risks and the resources present in public safety preparedness and responses.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 2400: Introduction to Corporate and Municipal Emergency Management

UPSA 2550: Hazards Risk Assessment Methods

UPSA 2700: Planning and Decision Making in Public Organizations

Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge): On an annual basis, when offered, students enroll in UPSA 2400, 2550 and 2700, all required courses for UPSA students. Students will complete course assignments designed to evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, challenges, and applications of emergency management principles. Seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to describe a basic understanding by scoring 70% or higher on the assignments of the course. Weekly worksheets from the three courses will be used in this determination. Risk Assessment Exercises from UPSA 2550 and Weekly Scenario Exercises from UPSA 2700 are used to measure application of emergency management principles using the same metric.

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2021-2022, the target was not met. UPSA 2400 and UPSA 2700 were offered in the Fall 2021 semester, and UPSA 2550 was offered in B-term of the Spring 2022 semester. From UPSA 2400, 6 of 7 students met the standard of scoring more than 70% on weekly assignments. From UPSA 2700, 3 of 6 students met the standard of scoring more than 70% on weekly assignments. From UPSA 2550, 5 of 8 students met the measure standards. For the three classes 14 of 21 (66%) students met the stated standard. Although improvement was shown (56% to 66%) from the previous assessment period, results still fell short of the 70% target. Analysis of students with work not meeting the target measure showed that these students consistently did not submitted work or failed to meet course expectations with regard to weekly assignments which required independent research utilizing multiple cited sources presented with APA-formated citations.

As a result of AC 2021-2022 analysis, in AC 2022-2023, the target was not met. One of the three courses tied to the course map for this objective was offered (UPSA 2400) through the academic course rotation of classes. UPSA 2400 was offered during B term of the Spring 2023 semester. The class with eight (8) students was a success in that all but two students presented an above average understanding of the concepts and principles of this class. Students were interactive, ready, and prepared to participate in class activities. There were 4 assignments for this class. The SLO requires 75% of students to score a 70% or better. For all but one assignment and the final project, the 75% threshold (6/8) was achieved. For the remaining assignment, a 62.5% (5/8) was

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realized. Students were able to use correct terminology and produced exceptional results in their final projects.

The weekly assignments reflected students' understanding of various readings done for the class. The class responded to various questions along with writing "mini" essays about how their understanding of the readings applied to this class. The final project could have been redone to meet the standard of the SLO. UPSA 2400 and UPSA 2700 do not have textbooks, relying upon professional journals, academic journals, and governmental and internet sources for course content.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the limited AC 2022-2023 data, the faculty will utilize alternative forms of media to aid students with their personal style of learning. The faculty will search for better targeted and appropriate textbooks. Course content will be examined for the inclusion of content as appropriate, consistent with university standards curricular elements of cultural representation, equity and disparity, and compassion within the subject matter. A new final project will be created that more closely aligns to the measured learning objective.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability): Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a course project/writing requirement in which they are required to research and submit an academic research or service-learning project in each course. This research project is responsive to the research project requirements developed with the faculty responsible for the course and will evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of while working with a community partner as the meet the requirements set for the research project which contributes to the safety of the community. Seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. One hundred percent(100%) of students (5 of 5) completed the capstone projects and courses showed critical thinking expectations specified in the objective. One hundred percent (100%) of enrolled UPSA 4700 students completing the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards.

As a result of AC 2021-2022 analysis, in AC 2022-2023, the target was met. UPSA 4700 and UPSA 4480 were offered in the Fall 2022 semester. In the Fall 2022 semester, sixty-six percent (66%) of students (2 of 3) completed the capstone projects and courses showing critical thinking expectations specified in the objective. In the

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Spring 2023 semester, one hundred percent (4 of 4) of students enrolled, displayed analytical skills and applied knowledge satisfactorily. Only fifty percent (50%) of students (2 of 4) enrolled in UPSA 4700 completing the capstone course were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards. As the established standard of 75% of students enrolled in the two capstone courses for the degree (UPSA 4700 and UPSA 4480), the target was not met. Review of the student from UPSA 4700 not meeting the target goal revealed the student was not versed in the practices, theories, and nomenclature of the discipline. One hundred percent (100%) of students (4 of 4) completed the capstone projects and courses properly presenting critical thinking expectations specified in the objective. All students (100%) completing the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards.

Decision: Based on the analysis of AC 2022-2023 data and to drive the cycle of improvement, the faculty will revise the curriculum delivery to include the following: reflection exercises will be reviewed to assure that the principles of cultural representation, factors of equity, inclusion, and compassion are represented in an appropriate, balanced, and inoffensive manner.

SLO 2. Senior students will know the role and functions of the various agencies, laws, standards, risks, threats, tasks, and assignments in a comprehensive capstone exercise developed in conjunction with a community partner. The Senior Seminar course will include research, application, or analysis, from all UPSA core courses.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar
UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – knowledge): On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from the required courses listed above will be evaluated using a standardized research paper rubric (attached) by a panel of faculty members through the University of Louisiana Academic Summit and/or NSU Research Day or a formal presentation to UPSA faculty. The papers and/or projects will be evaluated to determine if a student can demonstrate basic knowledge of fundamental principles of emergency management, laws, practices, and procedures. At least 80% of students sampled will score 75% or higher on the evaluation.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2021-2022, the target was not met. All students met or exceeded the stated course requirements and this target goal. Live forums for presentations to the academic public and peers and the ability for students to respond to questions from the academic public were not possible. With COVID restrictions partially, but not completely, dropped, formal presentations were not easily available and not required. As a result, the

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target for this objective was not met. All public events were cancelled, eliminating public presentation forums. Thus, 0 of 5 (0%) students met the target.

In AC 2022-2023, all students met or exceeded the stated course requirements and this target goal. However, the ability for students to respond to questions from the academic public was not possible as all presentations were made to faculty. With COVID restrictions partially, but not completely, dropped, formal presentations were not easily available. As a result, the target for this objective was met as all students successfully fulfilled the required course requirements.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results and to drive continuous student learning improvement in AC 2023-2024, faculty will implement the following changes. A return to formal, live presentations is anticipated with the approach of AC 2023-2024. The requirement of a formal presentation at either the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, or another appropriate professional conference will be reinstated.

Measure: 2.2. (Indirect – Attitude): At the end of the term, students will be administered a survey asking: "In my public safety administration courses, I was provided a collegiate level of understanding of homeland security policy, strategy, threat assessment and trends, associated law and procedures, and how the various agencies interact across the spectrum of operations." At least 85% of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Eight of eight (100%) students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement. Interviews conducted as "exit interviews" with all graduating students found satisfaction with the program, and, in many cases, testimonials to the impact of the advisor, curriculum, and program were provided. In all instances of those completing UPSA 4480 (Senior Seminar), students expressed satisfaction with the degree, educational experiences, and what they had learned. All indicated that course content assisted them in current job positions and positions to which they aspire, provided for satisfaction shared common threads of program flexibility, individual projects allowing for problem identification and resolution, and interaction with faculty and partners in the community. Seeing a completed project implemented that they help solve was rewarding to the students.

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. All four (100%) of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement. Interviews conducted as "exit interviews" with all graduating students found satisfaction with the program, and, in many cases, testimonials to the strength of the curriculum and ability to work directly with faculty during the capstone project.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results and to drive continuous student learning improvement, the following will be implemented in AC 2023-2024. Faculty will redesign the rubric for use in the evaluation of projects that goes beyond the presentation itself (as it has been used in the past).

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Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement Based on Analysis of Results:

The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2023-2024. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2022-2023 results.

- Reviewed of the key learning objectives of the courses and expanded the content of emergency management practices. The exposure to the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of the emergency management system was covered in depth through examination of recent catastrophes and courses will be reviewed for assurance of appropriate inclusion of content elements of the following: cultural representation and impact, equity and disparity, and compassion.
- Evaluated various other resources and provided students with outside resources to assist them in formatting and proper ways to research topics. Students showed a lack of performance in simple grammatical areas grammatical, structural and presentation errors.
- Made program-wide changes including the modification of course content to the systematic utilization of evaluation rubrics that have resulted in students learning in greater detail and demonstrating a better grasp of the writing process and the expectations of the program faculty. The utility of the rubrics in enhancing student's writing process was significant. Empowering our students with the tools necessary to be successful was at the core of our continuous improvement goals.
- Integrated reviews of the key learning objectives of the courses and expanded the content on emergency management subculture, discretion, core functions, and case law. Expanded examination of doctrines of immunity were implemented with students requesting a greater representation of this subject. Expansion of this unit of instruction will be provided.

Plan of Action moving forward:

- Following this assessment, SLO's for this assessment will be evaluated for appropriateness, current validity, and possible modification.
- All textbooks will be reviewed for future use. Historically textbooks in some cases are dated and others hard to obtain. Major changes in philosophical underpinnings of emergency management coming in part from the pandemic and examinations of law enforcement practices have made for an academic paradigm shift in course content for several courses. Thus far, three new textbooks will be used and have been successful.
- External sources having approached and seeking the addition of an additional concentration for the degree and independent certificates within the degree will be added. Certificates responsive to these requests are being prepared for submission to the University's Curriculum Review Council.
- The requirement of a formal presentation at either the ULS Academic Summit, NSU

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Research Day, or another appropriate professional conference will be reinstated.

- A rubric will be created and used for the evaluation of projects that will go beyond the presentation itself which will include input from the community partner working with the student is being piloted.
- Student participation with the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Association will be emphasized as an academic, professional development, job opportunity and networking tool.
- FEMA educational courses will be included as extra-credit exercises in some classes.
- A new textbook will be used for UPSA 4200 and UPSA 4300. Data driven research will be used in course and the book will be used for both UPSA 4200 and 4300.
- As the result of continuous evaluation of the UPSA curriculum to grow course size and promote efficiency in instruction, merging core courses and a revised course rotation will be studied, with the merging of courses considered.
- Articulations between NSU and regional community colleges will focus on the efficient transfer of credits from these institutions.