

# Assessment Cycle 2022-2023

## Recruiting Office

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Date: June 23, 2023

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Date: June 26, 2023

**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 programming 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 2022-23 the target was not met. For the Fall of 2022, new graduate enrollment decreased from 1,140 students to 1,031 students, or 119 students. This decrease can still be attributed to similar reasons as last assessment cycle, outdated admissions processes using virtually no electronic system and shifts to a more competitive marketing environment.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024 we will continue to have conversations with Academic Affairs and the Graduate School. While this measure falls under the Recruiting assessment, University Recruiting only controls the recruitment of graduate students, not the admissions process or the latter section of the enrollment funnel, which the Graduate School has oversight. We will continue to make suggested changes to the admissions process, pursue new ways of gaining warm leads through name purchases and events, and continue innovating graduate student recruiting practices. We have completed 4 program market insight reports through EAB to hyper focus our efforts on specific programs that are struggling with recruiting, in order to help deploy new recruiting and retention tactics. As reported last year, virtually all graduate school programs have had the GRE requirement removed, which should help in removing barriers for students. As still the same as last year, 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. We're close to solution with this barrier, and hopefully soon the process issue can be resolved to help students.

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

**Finding. Target not met.**

**Analysis.** In Fall of 2021, we were able to enroll students from 55 of 64 of the parishes, while in Fall of 2022, this fell to 52 of 64 parishes, and the target was not met. We lost 3 parishes, which was the amount gained the previous year. Based on the data, we're still lacking students from Cameron, East Carroll, St. Helena, and Tensas parishes, which is consistent with previous years. We gained students in Caldwell, Catahoula, West Carroll, Madison, and St. James, where we previously didn't enroll students. There are now new parishes where we fell short of recruiting students from, including: Assumption, East Feliciana, Franklin, Iberville, Plaquemines, Point Coupee, St. Charles, and St. John. As stated previously, we're also looking at race and ethnicity in order to measure diversity in other ways than geography. Based on that, of our true entering freshman, in face to face classes that have disclosed race and ethnicity in Fall 2021, 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%). In Fall of 2022, those numbers are as follows: White – 525 (55.5%), Black/African American – 264 (27.9%), Hispanic or Latino – 56

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(5.9%), Asian – 10 (1.0%), 2 or more Races – 44 (4.6%), American Indian or Pacific Islander – 13 (1.3%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander – 1 (0.01%), and Foreign or Resident Alien – 8 (0.8%). With these numbers, we're almost directly mirroring the breakdown of race and ethnicity in Louisiana. We're lower than the state breakdown on Black/African American, which has fallen since the previous year, White and Native American or Pacific Islander. We've grown numbers for Asian and two or more race students. Those that are lower, we're within 6 or less percentage points.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024 this measure will continue to measure geographic region, race, and ethnicity in order to look at the full picture of diversity. We have had success this year in all parishes through new recruiting initiatives, innovative post card mailers, and utilizing new communication plans in our CRM system. Parish numbers should trend upward, as well as demographic numbers. We have helped some of the aforementioned parishes with new college fair initiatives, as well as cast a wider net with preview day invites. We will always 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 demon 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 2022, in AC year 2022-2023, seniors overall stated that 94.2% strongly agreed the events were helpful and 98.3% agreed or strongly agreed the event was helpful, which was a 2% and 1% increase over the previous year.

**Action.** In AC 2022-2023 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. We also now pair former high school students from the touring high school on tours when available, which creates a great connection from the start. N-Side View Day has continued to be overhauled, and provides conference feel instead of a break-up of student demographic, session style. While keeping the new changes from last year, and adding in new academic session for major exploration, students really get a feel for what it may be like to attend NSU as a student. This helped students view what they wanted, participate when needed, and helped with the overall flow of the event. Satisfaction continues to rise.

**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.

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## **Finding. Target met**

**Analysis.** For fall 2022, the same average of 99% was attained as the previous two years of students and parents indicated that the tour guide was knowledgeable.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024, we will continue to utilize more financial aid information in the discussion during tours and preview events. As stated last year, we have now placed all tuitions, fees, and scholarship breakdown charts online in an easy to locate place on the financial aid website. We have also developed tuition and fees and scholarship literacy flyers that allow students to fill in their own information to know exactly what their semester and yearly cost will be. This allows every student to have an in-depth conversation with a recruiter or financial aid representative about what their gap in cost may be. This will help overall retention down the road as one of the biggest retention issues is due to a large balance being owed between years or semesters.

## **SO 3. Enrollment of Transfer students will increase each year.**

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

**Finding.** Target Met.

**Analysis.** After declining transfer enrollment dipped to 471 in the Fall of 2021, University Recruiting addressed lead generation practices, ROI from transfer fairs, and innovated recruiting practicing, boosting transfer student enrollment to 551 for Fall 2022 for an 85% increase.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024 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 still try to create a transfer portal where students can complete degree audits in minutes, as opposed to waiting days, if not weeks. This will be reliant in IT infrastructure. We have created transfer entrance packets, and now host transfer orientation days incorporated with general orientation, as well include transfers in preview days and general recruiting practices. We have also now implemented a transfer scholarship for \$1000 per semester that will start in Fall 2023. Last assessment year, 550 was the transfer goal, and we exceeded that by 1 student. We plan to raise the goal to 600 next assessment cycle.

## **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.** Since 2019, we have purchased ACT names in bulk with a 20 ACT average and above, and we will continue that practice, however, we focused on geographic regions in Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi as well. In Fall of 2021, the ACT average was 20.1, and we have raised that to 20.72 in Fall of 2022. While we're closer to our goal of 22, we have still not met the target. With the holistic admission policy by the Board of Regents is now

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in place, it will make efforts of raising average ACT harder due to only GPA needed for admission.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024 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, while leaning on creative scholarship packing and matching with NSU Foundation monies. Louisiana Scholars College continues to be the natural landing spot for higher ACT scores. It was reported that last year, the Scholars' College enrolled 44 students, and as of this moment we look to triple that amount this year through concise recruiting efforts. This will drastically increase the ACT average, as many of those students are above the 30 ACT composite thresholds. We have also implemented new Dual Enrollment scholarships for participation to increase matriculation with Dual Enrollment students, who also tend to have robust ACT scores. We look to seek more innovative ways to encourage higher ACT scoring students to attend NSU.

**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 Fall 2021, there were 63 PLP students, 36 Ambassadors, and 44 Scholars' students, for a total of 143. In Fall of 2022, there was a concise recruiting effort to identify more students with documented leadership capabilities in all areas. There were 64 PLP students, 36 ambassadors, and 35 Scholars' students. PLP rose by 1, ambassadors remained consistent, and Scholars' student fell, for a total of 135 students, which was 15% of the entering freshman class.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024 moving forward, we will strive to recruit more students to all the aforementioned programs in the measure through tactics previously discussed. As previously mentioned, Scholars' students should triple through recruiting efforts, and the same should apply for ambassadors and presidential leadership students as early identification recruiting tactics were used through this assessment cycle.

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

- We finally have achieved a great foundation in our Banner CRM system and look to now take more innovative measure going forward with custom communication plans built around academic and extracurricular activities.
- Continued to redevelop all recruiting materials to be more cohesive, less wordy, and more attractive.
- Continued to develop social media calendars to enhance strategy and campaigns from recruiting office to be geared towards goals.

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- Added a key position through grant opportunity of Beyond Graduation Coach to further help with recruitment of key central Louisiana parishes, which will now expand to 7 new parishes in Fall of 2023.
- Created key partnerships with more community colleges, American Indian Tribes local entities, school districts, etc., and we look to expand even further in the future.
- Attempting to remove all barriers of entry to NSU through the admission process, like arbitrary fees, unneeded paperwork, and digitization efforts of materials through Banner Document Management.

### **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 through improved training methods. We've built many bridges with academic units this year, and will continue to do in the future, as empowering faculty to also recruit, will provide dividends in the future. We will lead the effort across campus in order to break down barriers and work together. We will also continue to provide personalization and customer service to all entering students, as it's the hallmark of NSU, and what attracts many students.

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