

Assessment Cycle 2022-2023

First Year Experience

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Northwestern State 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.

The Student Experience Mission

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 for education to 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.

Student Affairs Mission

The Division of Student Affairs prepares students to be productive members of society and to improve the quality of life of students. Student Affairs provides support services in career development and placement, advocacy and accountability, academic support, mental and physical health, disability accommodations, student activities and organizations, student union life, and opportunities in leadership, community service, and programs for new students. Through hands-on involvement in programs and services, Student Affairs promotes personal development in a student-centered environment, which delivers innovative practices in an environment of respect. Student Affairs encourages integrity, diversity, and collaboration with all members of the university community.

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First Year Experience & Leadership Development Mission

The Office of First Year Experience and Leadership Development, in collaboration with the University community, is committed to engaging, supporting, and empowering first-year students as they take ownership of their college experience. By providing programs, resources, and strategic services that meet the diverse needs of first-year students and families, we facilitate a successful transition to university life and set the tone for academic success, personal growth, and meaningful connections.

Methodology:

1. The First Year Experience and Leadership Development department is both service-oriented and focused on student learning. Therefore, both service and learning outcomes will be utilized. Assessment methods will be qualitative and quantitative, direct, indirect, and summative.
2. The Director is responsible for the assessment process.
3. The Director will share assessment results with both University and external stakeholders, and community agents.
4. Based on the sharing of data, revisions and recommendations for improvements will be made for the next assessment period.

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First Year Experience Service Outcomes

SO 1. First Year Experience programs will create a climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all.

Measure 1.1. Ninety percent (90%) of students will respond, “Strongly Agree” on the First Year Involvement Challenge assessment that the program met the stated objectives. DATA: *Freshman Connection – Summer 2023*

Finding. Target was not met.

Analysis:

In AC 2021-2022 the target was not met.

The director researched and implemented more effective programming and initiatives that more appropriately addressed the service outcomes for creating a climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all students. Based on the survey results, 83% of students surveyed indicated that the First Year Involvement Challenge met the expectations of the program. There were 128 students who completed the FYI challenge survey during the Freshman Connection sessions. This was the first year that it was included during Freshman Connection summer program and the team feels the program needs to remain during the summer programs.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, the staff implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The First Year Experience team researched and implemented more effective programming and initiatives within the FYI Challenge that more appropriately addressed the service outcomes for creating a climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all students. Furthermore, the team edited this measure to align with the Freshman Connection evaluation nomenclature and added a new program to evaluate. The staff included data from the “To Be A Demon” program. This program met the goal to create a campus climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was not met. Out of the 86 students who completed the survey, only 65% said that the objectives were met. There was a low number of respondents for this survey compared to the number of students who participated in the challenge.

Decision:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The staff will make the survey more understandable. As of now, there is not a question that specifically asks if we met the specific objectives of the FYI Challenge. Next year, the staff will offer an incentive for survey participation. The staff will improve the explanation of the FYI Challenge directions. Many open-ended question answers stated that students felt lost in their “first semester”. These changes will improve the student's ability to understand the survey questionnaire thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 1.2 Thirty percent (30%) of on-campus students participate in the Demon Days (42 total) program activities, specifically Freshman Connection, The Inferno, Color Chaos, Convocation, President's Picnic, and First Pep Rally. DATA: *Freshman Connection Registrations Stats 2023; Convocation RSVPs Fall 2022; Inferno T-Shirts at Pep Rally*

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Finding. Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2021-2022 the target was met.

The First Year Experience team utilized the ID swipers for more accurate data of attendees for survey purposes, worked with student and faculty/staff focus groups evaluated programming initiatives, increased first-year programming on off-campus instructional sites, and increased marketing strategies such as Mongoose texting.

- Freshman Connection: There were 775 students out of 997 who attended the summer Freshman Connection programs which is 78%.
- The Inferno: 9.6% (120 of 1246) of entering first-year students participated in The Inferno Run at the first home football game/homecoming pep rally.
- Convocation & President's Picnic: 76% (950 of 1246) of first-year students attended New Student Convocation. The picnic was postponed due to weather issues, so the attendee numbers was lower than usual. We had 250 students in attendance.
- Color Chaos: There were a total of 1130 students (91%) at the annual Color Chaos event.
- First Pep Rally – 350 students were in attendance for the first pep rally of the Fall term.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, the staff implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The First Year Experience team utilized ID swipers for all event, work with student and faculty/staff focus groups to evaluation programming initiatives and increase marketing strategies such as the utilization of Mongoose texting, Presence event creation, and submitting advertisement space in The Gavel Newsletter.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was met. The First Year Experience team utilized the ID swipers for more accurate data of attendees for survey purposes, increased first-year programming on off-campus instructional sites, and increased marketing strategies such as Mongoose texting. Each event sent a text message to first-year students with a promotional graphic and event information.

- Freshman Connection: There were 882 students out of 1029 who attended the summer Freshman Connection programs, which is 80.8%. 911 students registered to attend the program.
- The Inferno: 12.2 % (115 of 945) of entering first-year students participated in The Inferno Run at the first home football game.
- Convocation & President's Picnic: 49% (467 of 945) of first-year students attended New Student Convocation. The picnic had a larger attendance than New Student Convocation with over 500 attendees.
- Color Chaos: There were a total of 1198 students at the annual Color Chaos event.
- First Pep Rally – 400 students were in attendance for the first pep rally of the Fall term.

Decision:

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In AC 2022-2023 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The First Year Experience staff plans to utilize ID swipes in a larger capacity. To have an exact count of first-year students, we will begin swiping at each event hosted by this office. The staff will work to advertise our events more through social media, videos, Mongoose texting, and paper publications. These changes will improve the student's ability to enhance their first-year experience thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO 2. Parents participating in the University's First Year Experience will be satisfied with the program and services offered.

Measure 2.1 Ninety percent (90%) of parents will be very satisfied with program and services stating, "Very Satisfied" as measured by a satisfaction survey. *DATA: Parent Connection Evaluations Summer 2023*

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2021-2022 the target was not met.

Parent Connection program utilized digital surveys, emailed again to all parents after program had concluded, and called registered parents along with sending an email prior to the session they attended. These changes should improve communication with the parents prior to them arriving on campus and should facilitate opportunities for more resources and connections for parents and their students. 60% of parents indicated they were "very satisfied" with the programs and services provided during the summer Freshman Connection programs. Areas that were close to the 90% mark included (1) Supporting your Student's First Year (86%) and (2) the Check-In & University Welcome (83%).

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, the staff implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. There was room for improvement in terms of data collection with this measure. This measure was edited to include the survey responses to include "satisfied" as well as "very satisfied" as both indicate positive feedback. The survey was also edited to include a question in terms of overall satisfaction of the programs and services offered during the Freshman Connection program. The staff will collect information regarding the parent's satisfaction within each category.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was met. In 2022-2023, parents responded to the question regarding overall satisfaction with 97.47% of respondents either very satisfied or satisfied with the programming offered. There were comments left on the open-ended portion to the survey requesting specific breakout sessions, such as a Scholars' College Parent Interest Session. There was also a request to have a map for the Ask BIG Questions Browse to help ease the confusion of where certain departments would be located during that browse.

Decision:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. While the target was met, there is room to grow in

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specific areas. Due to the requests from the surveys, the staff will improve the Parent Connection programming by adding new aspects next year to fit parents' needs. Improvement to the Parent Connection schedule will be made by providing a diverse breakout sessions and the staff will follow the schedule in a timely manner. The staff will also work to provide more accommodations to parents, such as a map for browses. These changes will improve the parents' ability to connect with the campus thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO 3. Training of select students will allow them to coordinate, lead, and facilitate First Year Experience activities.

Measure 3.1. At least 100 students will volunteer to participate in the selection process for orientation leaders understanding only 30 are selected. *DATA: Fall 2022 Freshman Connector Informational Meetings/Applications/Interviews*

Finding. Target was not met.

Analysis:

In AC 2021-2022 the target was not met.

First Year Experience staff expanded the outreach to students through different platforms of social media, created marketing resources, and began outreach processes earlier in the fall semester. These changes should have improved the recruitment strategy for recruiting and identifying students to serve as Freshman Connectors and in other First Year Experience leadership positions. There were 50 Freshman Connection applications and attendees for this academic year. Twenty-three connectors were selected to serve in this leadership role.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, the staff implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. First Year Experience staff outreached to students through social media, the Gavel Newsletter, use of the Mongoose texting service and began the outreach and promotion at the FYE Demon Days events during the Fall term. These changes improved the recruitment strategy for recruiting and identifying students to serve as Freshman Connectors and in other First Year Experience leadership positions.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was not met. There were 62 applicants to serve on the 2023 Freshman Connector team.

Decision:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The First Year Experience staff will decrease our goal of 100 applicants for the Freshman Connector interview process to reflect our current enrollment trends. For AC 2023-2024, we will set a goal to see 50 students apply to be Freshman Connectors. In a typical year, between 40% and 50% of applicants are selected to serve as Freshman Connectors; therefore, setting a lower goal will be more attainable and realistic. With decreased enrollment trends, the Office of First Year Experience does not expect to see 100 students applying for a leadership role in the Freshman Connection program for AC 2023-2024. Our recruitment for the application process will consist of speaking to students about the process, more informational meetings, and social media pushes. The Office of First Year Experience traditionally hosts two informational meetings for those students interested in serving as Freshman Connectors. The staff plans to increase this number to three or four meetings to meet the needs of more students and their

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different schedules. They will be hosted on a variety of days of times. The staff will plan to do social media pushes with previous Connectors to show what the experience of serving as a Connector is like. These changes will improve the student's ability to understand how the process will work thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 3.2. Ninety-five percent (95%) of volunteers will attend the required activity training. *DATA: Orientation Leader Training (OR 1100), Retreat Evaluations, and Orientation Leader Outcomes Pres and Post Test.*

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2021-2022 the target was met.

The First Year Experience staff reviewed all existing programs and services for new students and implemented revised training and development programs for all volunteers and staff. These changes should improve competence in student leaders when working with other students, faculty, staff, and parents. Revised training will facilitate a working and communicative relationship between all students that make up the volunteer teams and provided them with the resources and information needed to form decisions on their own. All orientation leaders (23), the First Year Experience student coordinator (1), and Demon Volunteers (49) attended training workshops prior to the Freshman Connection orientation programs. This included sessions for Freshman Connection but also an event planning workshop to begin the training for the Fall Demon Days events.

Based on the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results, the staff implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The First Year Experience team reviewed all existing programs and services for new students and implemented revised training and development programs for all volunteers and staff. The volunteers began to utilize a customized event planning guide to successfully host Freshman Connection, Parent Connection, Kid Konnection, and Demon Days events from a volunteer perspective.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was met. All orientation leaders and student coordinators participated in a series of team building activities ranging from January 2023 to May 2023. These activities encouraged participation in required activities and promoted morale surrounding required activities. Student leaders in the First Year Experience Office were trained by outside facilitators on a variety of topics to enhance their competency levels.

Decision:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. In the upcoming year, the Director of First Year Experience will provide more intentional programming at the spring retreat to promote teambuilding. Through current programming on campus like Leadership NSU, the Freshman Connectors will be provided opportunities to grow in their leadership skills to better prepare them to serve on the orientation team. These changes will improve the student's ability to enhance the experiences for first-year students, parents, and families thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

SO or SLO	Measure	Key Evidence
SO 1	1.1	The First Year Experience team researched and implemented more effective programming and initiatives within the FYI Challenge that more appropriately addressed the service outcomes for creating a climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all students. Furthermore, the team edited this measure to align with the Freshman Connection evaluation nomenclature and added a new program to evaluate. The staff included data from the "To Be A Demon" program. This program met the goal to create a campus climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful.
SO 1	1.2	The First Year Experience team utilized ID swipers for all event, work with student and faculty/staff focus groups to evaluation programming initiatives and increase marketing strategies such as the utilization of Mongoose texting, Presence event creation, and submitting advertisement space in The Gavel Newsletter.
SO 2	2.1	There was room for improvement in terms of data collection with this measure. This measure was edited to include the survey responses to include "satisfied" as well as "very satisfied" as both indicate positive feedback. The survey was also edited to include a question in terms of overall satisfaction of the programs and services offered during the Freshman Connection program. The staff will collect information regarding the parent's satisfaction within each category.
SO 3	3.1	First Year Experience staff outreached to students through social media, the Gavel Newsletter, use of the Mongoose texting service and began the outreach and promotion at the FYE Demon Days events during the Fall term. These changes improved the recruitment strategy for recruiting and identifying students to serve as Freshman Connectors and in other First Year Experience leadership positions.

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SO 3	3.2	The First Year Experience team reviewed all existing programs and services for new students and implemented revised training and development programs for all volunteers and staff. The volunteers began to utilize a customized event planning guide to successfully host Freshman Connection, Parent Connection, Kid Konnection, and Demon Days events from a volunteer perspective.
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Plan of Action Moving Forward:

SO or SLO	Measure	Plan
SO	1.1	The staff will make the survey more understandable. As of now, there is not a question that specifically asks if we met the specific objectives of the FYI Challenge. Next year, the staff will offer an incentive for survey participation. The staff will improve the explanation of the FYI Challenge directions. Many open-ended question answers stated that students felt lost in their “first semester”.
SO 1	1.2	The First Year Experience staff plans to utilize ID swipes in a larger capacity. To have an exact count of first-year students, we will begin swiping at each event hosted by this office. The staff will work to advertise our events more through social media, videos, Mongoose texting, and paper publications.
SO 2	2.1	While the target was met, there is room to grow in specific areas. Due to the requests from the surveys, the staff will improve the Parent Connection programming by adding new aspects next year to fit parents' needs. Improvement to the Parent Connection schedule will be made by providing a diverse breakout sessions and the staff will follow the schedule in a timely manner. The staff will also work to provide more accommodations to parents, such as a map for browses.
SO 3	3.1	The First Year Experience staff will decrease our goal of 100 applicants for the Freshman Connector interview process to reflect our current enrollment trends. For AC 2023-2024, we will set a goal to see 50 students apply to be Freshman Connectors. In a typical year, between 40% and 50% of applicants are selected to serve as Freshman Connectors; therefore, setting a lower goal will be more attainable and realistic. With decreased enrollment trends, the Office of First Year Experience does not expect to see 100 students applying for a leadership role in the Freshman Connection program for AC 2023-2024. Our recruitment for the application process will consist of speaking to students about the process, more informational meetings, and social media pushes. The Office of First Year Experience traditionally hosts two informational meetings for those students interested in serving as Freshman Connectors. The staff plans to increase this number to three or four meetings to meet the needs of more students and their different schedules. They will be hosted on a variety of days of times. The staff will plan to do social media pushes with previous Connectors to show what the experience of serving as a Connector is like.

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SO 3	3.2	In the upcoming year, the Director of First Year Experience will provide more intentional programming at the spring retreat to promote teambuilding. Through current programming on campus like Leadership NSU, the Freshman Connectors will be provided opportunities to grow in their leadership skills to better prepare them to serve on the orientation team.
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