



## Strategic Plan 2023-2028



***Assessment Cycle 2022-2023  
A New Day***

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## PREFACE

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On April 22, 2021, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System approved Dr. Marcus Jones's appointment as the interim President of Northwestern State University, effective July 1, 2021. Shortly after that, on November 8, 2021, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System voted unanimously to name Dr. Marcus Jones the 20th president of Northwestern State University. Upon entering office, Dr. Jones quickly set strategic planning and assessment as top priorities for his administration.

The University immediately initiated an honest, introspective review and study of its strategic plan and assessment practices. This year-long process took place during Assessment Cycle 2021-2022. As a result, *Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Providing Education of Enduring Value* is a more decisive, inclusive, and balanced approach to achieving the University Vision. Recognizing Northwestern cannot execute its mission nor achieve its vision unless it guarantees equitable access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff at every stage of education and career. As such, the University added a new Strategic Focus Area, *Cultural Competence* to its list of areas subject to the quantitative assessment processes, thereby facilitating a more inclusive and informed decision-making process. Assessment Cycle 2022-2023 *A New Day* closes out *Strategic Plan 2016-2023* and sets the conditions for *Strategic Plan 2023-2028*.

COVID-19 remains a driving force globally, requiring Northwestern to adapt to the increasingly complex environment and associated policy changes at the state, system, and university levels. The University is ready to continue or initiate any adjustment necessary to its academic programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning and protect the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Student learning assessments maximize the principles of honest evaluation and assure the highest quality of coursework, whether through in-person classes, online delivery, or hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources are continuously updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

The University has actively prepared for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Fifth-Year Report. The Fifth-Year Report addresses an institution's continued compliance with standards and requirements identified at the time of an institution's last review in 2017. The report was submitted to SACSCOC on February 23, 2023.

President, Dr. Marcus Jones

Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Strategic Initiatives: Mr. Cole Gentry

SFA The Student Experience: Vice President for The Student Experience, Mrs. Reatha Cox

SFA Academic Excellence: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Greg Handel

Research within Its Mission: Chair, Research Council, Dr. Margaret Cochran

Quality Enhancement Program: QEP Assessment Coordinator, Mr. Bob Jordan

SFA Market Responsiveness: Executive Director, Economic Development, Innovation, and Outreach, Mrs. Laurie Morrow

SFA Community Enrichment: Interim Vice President for External Affairs, Dr. Drake Owens

Community/Public Service:Service-Learning Coordinator, Mr. Steven Gruesbeck

University Capital Outlook and University Architecture Update: Mr. Stan Hippler

SFA Athletic Prominence: Director of Athletics, Mr. Kevin Bostian

SFA Cultural Competence: Mrs. Brittany Blackwell Broussard

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences: Dr. Frances Lemoine

Dean, Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development: Dr. Kim McAlister

Dean, College of Business and Technology: Dr. Mary Edith Stacy

Dean, College of Nursing and Allied Health: Dr. Joel Hicks

Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources, Mrs. Roni Biscoe

Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Mr. Frank Hall



## Executive Summary

October 4, 2023

We saw encouraging, exciting progress in 2022–2023, the first assessment cycle of our new five-year strategic plan, Providing Education of Enduring Value.

We developed our 2023–2028 strategic plan, "Providing Education of Enduring Value," to be a clear, steadfast compass for fostering innovative change and facilitating positive transformation at Northwestern State University of Louisiana. We designed the plan to be adaptable and responsive to the challenges and continuous pace of change we face in higher education.

As you know, we assess our progress against the strategic plan in annual cycles, structured to the academic school year. We refer to the first assessment cycle of the strategic plan, Assessment Cycle 2022-2023, as "A New Day." I am excited to review the progress we made across all focus areas of the plan over the past year, but first I want to make sure all of our readers are familiar with the wonderful tradition of excellence in higher education that we are building upon here at the university.

### 140 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Ours is a rich history spanning nearly 140 years of excellence in higher education. We cherish our traditions, core values, and status as a vital educational, cultural, economic, and social pillar in our state and the surrounding region. We are driven by a deep commitment to providing an outstanding educational journey, always looking for new and innovative ways to enhance student learning and foster transformative experiences.

As expressed so clearly in the title of our 2023–2028 strategic plan, Northwestern State University exists to provide an education of enduring value. We work every day to fulfill that purpose through dynamic academic programs that prepare learners with the foundational knowledge, hands-on experience, and innovative thinking skills necessary to build a better tomorrow, both for our graduates and the communities around them.

**Career-Focused Academics:** We are a comprehensive public regional university committed to providing quality instruction and hands-on experiential learning. Our approach centers on career-focused and job-relevant academic courses and programs across more than 100 in-demand majors that meet the always-changing needs of the modern workforce.

**Online Learning:** Our online programs are regarded and frequently recognized as some of the best and most affordable, both in the state of Louisiana and nationwide. These programs provide maximum flexibility to tailor our educational offering to the busy schedules and lifestyles of today's learners.

**Critical Technical Skills:** Technological advancements contribute to fast-evolving workplaces where people must continuously learn new skills and approaches. We create programs that equip learners with the professional and technical competencies necessary to excel in today's—and tomorrow's—jobs and

careers. We work directly with industry leaders to assess evolving workforce requirements, then we design programs and experiences that enable learners and employers to reach their full potential.

**An Enriching Student Experience:** From the first campus visit to celebrating graduation, college can and should be a life-changing experience. We demonstrate our commitment to our students by going beyond academics to make sure that university life is engaging and inspiring, purposeful and motivating, relevant and rewarding, and, just as important, fun.

**A Stellar and Growing Reputation:** We are extremely proud of the reputation this university has built through an unwavering commitment to academic excellence and innovation. A few recent highlights of rankings and other statistics that evidence our level of achievement:

- A top-ten ranking for return on investment in the state of Louisiana (*Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce*, 2022)
- #1 in Louisiana for Top Public Schools Regional Universities in the South (*US News & World Report*, 2022)
- #1 in Louisiana for Top Performers on Social Mobility among Regional Universities in the South (*US News & World Report*, 2022)
- #11 nationally for Best Online Master's Degree in Homeland Security (*onlinemastersdegrees.org*, 2022)
- #6 in the nation for Best Online Degrees in Accounting (*Forbes Advisor*, 2022)
- Top-third Best Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Programs in the Nation (*US News & World Report*, 2022)
- Highest graduation rate of students who receive Pell Grants in Louisiana (*Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce*, 2022)
- 85% of Northwestern students receive meaningful scholarships and grants.
- 95% of Northwestern's graduating class of 2021 are enrolled in graduate school or employed in a related field.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2022–2023 ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Our strategic plan is a living, breathing set of priorities and actions across the entire university aimed at providing enduring value in higher education. Our ongoing progress assessment process enables this institution to make more informed strategic choices, identify any needed changes, and advance the creation of a trusting and inclusive community. We had many noteworthy achievements during the period of 2022–2023, which I am pleased to review for you here.

**Economic Impact Analysis:** We are proud to be a driving force for economic growth, job creation, and development in our region. Our students receive an exceptional return on investment, equipping them with the skills needed for success in their careers. Taxpayers also contribute and realize a return, receiving the many benefits of a more educated workforce and social progress.

These benefits are real and measurable. I am elated to share the findings of our recent study on the economic value of our university for fiscal year 2021–2022 conducted by Lightcast, a global leader in labor market analytics. The data quantify the positive impact we have on students, taxpayers, the business community, and broader society.

- During the fiscal year 2021–2022, Northwestern contributed \$519.7 million to the economy of northwest and central Louisiana, which is roughly 1.5% of the region's total gross regional product. This economic boost supported the creation of 7,204 jobs in the region. To put this in perspective,

- the university's activities, along with our students, accounted for one out of 53 jobs in northwest and central Louisiana.
- In the fiscal year 2021-2022, we had a workforce of 993 employees, including full-time and part-time faculty and staff. The total payroll for these individuals amounted to \$73.4 million, a significant portion of which was spent within the region on groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses, all of which support local businesses.
  - The university allocated \$53.7 million toward day-to-day expenses, covering facilities, supplies, and professional services. As a result of these operational expenditures, Northwestern's activities contributed a net income of \$75 million to the regional economy during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
  - Approximately 39% of our students pursuing degrees came from outside the northwest and central Louisiana region. Some of these students chose to relocate to the area while others, known as retained students, would have otherwise left the region for alternative educational opportunities if not for Northwestern.
  - These relocated and retained students contributed to the local economy by spending money on groceries, mortgage and rent payments, and other living expenses at regional businesses. In fiscal year 2021-2022, their expenditures amounted to an income boost of \$10.1 million for northwest and central Louisiana.
  - Furthermore, tens of thousands of visitors from outside the region were attracted to northwest and central Louisiana due to activities here at the university. These visitors injected new revenue into the economy through their spending at hotels, restaurants, gas stations and other regional businesses. Visitor spending during that period added approximately \$11.8 million in income to the economy of northwest and central Louisiana.

Throughout the years, numerous students have pursued their education here and subsequently entered or re-entered the workforce, equipped with newly acquired knowledge and skills. Presently, a significant number of these former students are employed in northwest and central Louisiana.

According to alumni outcomes data provided by Lightcast, a considerable portion of our alumni can be found working in various industry sectors within the region, including Health Care & Social Assistance, Government, Education, Manufacturing, and Professional & Technical Services.

The top 10 occupations include chief executives, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, tutors, teachers and instructors, postsecondary teachers, personal service managers, general and operations managers, first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers, medical and health services managers, and social and human services managers.

The cumulative impact of Northwestern alumni currently employed in the regional workforce amounted to \$311.6 million in added income during the fiscal year 2021–2022.

These findings reflect the dedication and hard work of our students and alumni, our university, and our community. The economic value we generate inspires us to continue to build on our success through an educational experience that fosters ever-greater student and stakeholder achievements.

**Investment Analysis:** It is often said that higher education is an important investment in the future for individuals, communities, and society as a whole. But many are not aware that there are numbers, compelling numbers, that prove the benefits of this investment are real.

- In fiscal year 2021-2022, our students made a present-value investment of \$70.4 million to cover the costs of tuition, fees, supplies, and interest on student loans. Additionally, they gave up an estimated \$96.8 million that they would have earned had they been employed instead of attending college.
- In return for their investment, these students are projected to receive a cumulative present value of \$860.7 million in increased earnings over their working lives. This translates into a return of \$5.10 in higher future earnings for every dollar invested in their education, with an average annual rate of return of 16.5%.
- In fiscal year 2021-2022, taxpayers provided the university with \$24.6 million in funding. As a result, they are expected to benefit from additional tax revenue generated by the higher lifetime earnings of our students, as well as increased business output, amounting to \$50.7 million.
- Furthermore, higher education levels reduce the demand for government-funded services in Louisiana, resulting in an additional \$9.1 million in savings that benefit taxpayers. For every dollar of public money invested in our institution, taxpayers are projected to receive a return of \$2.40 over our students' working lives, more than doubling that investment with an average annual rate of return for taxpayers of 5.7%.
- The state of Louisiana invested \$248.7 million to support Northwestern in fiscal year 2021-2022. In return, the state's economy is projected to grow by \$2.6 billion over the working lives of our alumni. Society as a whole also will benefit from \$137.7 million in savings across both public and private sectors.
- For every dollar invested in this university during the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the people of Louisiana can expect a return of \$11.10 for as long as alumni from that period remain active in the state's workforce.

## ACADEMICS

To remain competitive in the landscape of higher education, we continue to place a high value on career readiness, learner goals, and the individual pursuits of our students. This is critical to providing an education of enduring value to our students throughout Louisiana and beyond. Our activities throughout the 2022-2023 assessment cycle continue to provide proof, both of our commitment and contributions.

**Five-year dual bachelor's/master's degree program:** We launched the Louisiana Scholars' College Bachelor's + Master's Degree (4+1) program, designed to enable students to graduate in five years with two degrees. 4+1 provides access to graduate programs in the last two semesters of the bachelor's degree and enables participants to gain early entrance to Doctoral programs. Eligible students can help fund participation with TOPS scholarships. Some of the degrees available are:

- Scholars' BA in Liberal Arts + MA in English
- Scholars' BA in Liberal Arts + MS in Homeland Security
- Scholars' BA in Liberal Arts + MA in Art
- Scholars' BA Liberal Arts + MS in Computer Information Systems
- Scholars' BS in Psychology + MS in Clinical Psychology

Two students completed the MA in English this assessment cycle; two additional students are enrolled in the dual program in Liberal Arts and Computer information Systems and a third is in the Liberal Arts and Homeland Security curriculum.

**Approval for a New STEM School:** Northwestern received approval from the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors to establish a School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

While we are still awaiting official approval from the Board of Regents, we fully expect the school to open new avenues for interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation across vital STEM fields.

**Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation Grant:** During the 2022-2023 assessment period, we received a \$1.8 million grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation. This exciting strategic investment enables us to expand two programs that will make it easier for paramedics, military medics, and people with undergraduate science degrees to transition into high-paying nursing jobs and address the critical shortage of nurses in Louisiana.

With this generous grant, we will be able to accommodate more students, particularly non-traditional students, with course offerings on nights and weekends and the addition of new nursing faculty and clinical sites. The \$1.8 million grant will be matched with \$1.2 million in private support from our value-added partners:

- Christus Bossier Emergency Hospital
- Christus Coushatta Health Care Center
- Natchitoches Regional Medical Center
- Christus Highland Medical Center
- Christus St. Frances Cabrini
- RoyOMartin
- Rapides Regional Medical Center
- Willis-Knighton Health System
- The NSU Foundation

We expect this collaborative partnership to add 300 nurses to the workforce in the next four years, and more than 1,000 nurses by 2032, ensuring that northwest and central Louisiana's healthcare labor market is stronger than ever.

**Outstanding NCLEX Pass Rates at the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health:** The National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) is a nationwide test for the licensing of nurses in the United States. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program posted an outstanding pass rate of 98.2% for the Fall 2022 class. The Associate of Science in Nursing pass rate is expected to land in the high 90th percentile as well.

These pass rates are compelling evidence of the excellent career preparation that our students receive in the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. Our students bring the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the nursing profession and make meaningful contributions to the healthcare sector.

**Top-5 Ranking in Louisiana for Praxis® Elementary Education Pass Rates:** During the 2022-2023 assessment period, we were pleased and proud to announce Northwestern's top-five ranking in Best Praxis Elementary Education Pass Rates in Louisiana. Our high-ranking shows that enrolling here significantly increases the likelihood of successfully passing the Praxis exams on the initial attempt, particularly for those pursuing a teaching degree.

**Veterinary Technology 100% VTNE Pass Rate:** We were proud that 100% of our Veterinary Technology students passed their first attempt at the Veterinary Technician Licensure Exam (VTNE) during 2022-2023. This extraordinary achievement is proof both of the quality of our program and, more important, of our students' hard work, perseverance, and dedication to learning.

**Approval For a New Sports and Recreation Management Degree:** The university's Department of Health and Human Performance received approval to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Sports and Recreation Management with coursework set to begin in the Fall 2023 semester. This new degree program will help students develop skills in marketing, management, and finance to excel in this rapidly growing field. The program also will offer a minor in business, which sets us apart from similar programs offered elsewhere in Louisiana.

Sports and recreation is big business in America. The degree will provide program graduates with a foundational skillset for jobs in marketing for sports and recreation, athletic administration, gameday management, sport psychology, legal and ethical issues in sport, contemporary leadership, facility management, sales and revenue generation, and sports media.

**Exclusive BSN-to-DNP Pathway Program for Nurse Anesthesia:** We are the only University of Louisiana System school to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Pathway for Nurse Anesthesia. This is just one of numerous examples of educational leadership and innovation here at the university.

**Full Cohorts In Doctorate-Level Programs:** In a testament to Northwestern's close connections to business, industry, and workforce career demands, we have full cohorts in several important programs: Doctor of Nursing Practice in Organizational Systems Leadership (DNP-OSL), Doctor of Nursing Practice in Nurse Anesthesia (DNP-NA), and Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Development (EdD). In May of 2023, the EdD cohort achieved a historic graduation class-size milestone and set a new cohort enrollment record for Fall 2023.

**Meet Our First “Call Me MISTER” Program Graduate:** Jordan Guillory is our first graduate of the Call Me MISTER program, an initiative to recruit African American males to become teachers and mentors at low-performing schools. MISTER is an acronym for Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models. As a Call Me MISTER campus, we are part of a highly acclaimed recruitment and support program that includes a national network of universities.

Call Me Mister has played a crucial role in offering financial and academic assistance to male teachers from Black and Brown communities who aspire to join the profession. Seeing men from marginalized backgrounds pursue a career in education holds significant psychological value in the larger societal framework.

Jordan is ready to make a positive impact on elementary school students. He learned a lot about himself on his journey to becoming an educator and he leaves the university and the program with a desire to continue to progress personally, build community and make a positive impact on his students.

**Our Team Wins the Pelican Cup for their “Rise & Rotate” Mobility Assistance Device:** A team from Northwestern recently took home the top prize of \$25,000 at Louisiana’s Pelican Cup competition for their "Rise & Rotate" device and business pitch. This is an outstanding accomplishment and a testament to the creativity, hard work and entrepreneurial spirit of our students.

Rise & Rotate, a product designed to help disabled users get from their beds to their wheelchairs more effectively, was the winning idea. Congratulations to team members Matthew Gamble, Hayden Stanley, Alexander Brown, and faculty advisor Dr. Elizabeth Prejean.

I am incredibly proud of our students' achievements and the unwavering dedication to pursuing their dreams that this achievement exemplifies. The Pelican Cup is a highly competitive event, with students

from all over north Louisiana showcasing their innovative ideas and prototypes. The event has now become the largest business academic competition in Louisiana, providing student inventors with a platform to share their vision with a supportive audience of like-minded individuals.

**Collaboration with ESPN+ Bringing Livestreaming to Campus:** Last year, we introduced ESPN+ to our campus and its impact on our students, faculty and community was overwhelmingly positive. Our students have been able to immerse themselves in a practical learning environment, guided by our esteemed faculty members who bring firsthand experience as former professionals in the field.

Our faculty's commitment to excellence helps to ensure maximum student engagement in various forms of media. Whether working behind the camera or within the ESPN production trailer, our students have been instrumental in broadcasting Northwestern athletic events to a global audience. Pursuing a communication degree here equips students with the skills to become professional communicators, including journalists, digital content producers, and specialists in advertising and public relations.

**LDE Contract Renewal for the Child and Family Network:** Northwestern's Child and Family Network received a renewal of its contract with Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) to provide support and services to 15 parishes in northern and central Louisiana for early learning centers.

**Major "Future of HealthC.A.R.E." Grant from the Rapides Foundation:** We were one of five organizations to be awarded a grant from the Rapides Foundation to address shortages in the central Louisiana healthcare workforce. The \$1,166,525 grant over five years will underwrite development of an ongoing pool of K-12 students who are interested in pursuing healthcare careers and prepare them academically to succeed in postsecondary training programs.

**Alternative Pathways for Graduate Admission:** During the 2022-2023 assessment period, we introduced an exciting alternative pathway for admission to graduate programs. In some instances, a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is not required—the normal GRE is replaced by other indicators of potential success in graduate study. For example, the GRE can be waived provided the undergraduate grade point average (GPA) falls within a certain criterion (such as above 3.5), or if the GPA is at least 3.0 but the student has a 3.5 or higher in 18 hours of 3000/4000-level courses in their undergraduate major. Also, the Master of Arts in Student Affairs in Higher Education no longer requires the GRE.

**Agreement with Tunica-Biloxi to Enhance Academic, Economic Development Opportunities:** We signed an agreement with the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana that will advance economic development and research opportunities for both the tribe and the university. Leaders say the five-year partnership will support the tribe's mission of developing educational opportunities for its citizens and provide vital workforce development resources for them across the country. The agreement will enhance academic opportunities through first-generation scholarships for traditional students and continuing education for adult learners.

**Zero-Cost Tuition for American Indian Students:** We announced the American Indian Opportunity Plan, which enables citizens of any federally recognized American Indian tribe to enroll at the university tuition-free. The American Indian Opportunity Plan makes it possible for eligible in-state and out-of-state students to receive a world-class college education with access to high-impact career opportunities. Beginning Fall 2023, prospective students may apply for the program at the university under the following criteria: citizen of a federally recognized American Indian tribe in any U.S. state; registered as a full-time or part-time undergraduate student; maintain a 2.0 semester GPA.

## **Collaboration with a Premier Federal Government Relations Firm to Drive Strategic Advocacy**

**Efforts:** We entered into a strategic partnership with Merchant McIntyre & Associates, a Washington D.C.-based federal government relations agency, to enhance our pursuit of federal funding opportunities in key university priority areas. Through the collaboration, this distinguished firm will provide valuable insights, consolidated findings, and recommended courses of action to support the university and maximize its chances of securing important federal funding.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**\$2.1M in SBA Funding for Entrepreneurial Innovation Center Project:** In February of 2023, we were awarded \$2.1 million in federal funds to facilitate the development of the NSU Entrepreneurial Innovation Center (NEIC), which will serve as an incubator for northwest Louisiana business and industry. The center will provide a professional business environment complete with coworking and flexible office space along with support services and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses. There are no other service offerings of this type within a 70-mile radius of the center.

We owe thanks to the leadership and direct support provided by Senator Bill Cassidy and the Small Business Administration (SBA). We expect to provide a return—the NEIC is projected to contribute to new job creation in the region and generate an economic impact of over \$3 million annually.

## **CAPITAL OUTLAY**

**Broke Ground to Build Alost Hall:** In May of 2023, we broke ground on what will be a state-of-the-art academic building named for former Northwestern President Dr. Robert Alost. At \$44 million, Alost Hall represents the largest capital project in our history. The new building will replace John S. Kyser Hall, constructed in 1968, as the university's main academic building.

The 73,200 square-foot Alost Hall will feature large multipurpose classrooms that can open into one large multi-functional area, simulation laboratories for graduate and undergraduate nursing and anesthesia programs, a social work/psychology clinic and training area, a café, a dozen 30-person classrooms, two 40-person classrooms, and three 50-person classrooms. There also will be space for 60 offices and an administrative office suite that can provide spaces for deans, department heads, and administrative assistants, as well as a large conference room and reception area.

**Athletics Facility Enhancements:** In 2022, we announced a new \$7 million annex to the fieldhouse, named the David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center in recognition of the Morgans' notable alumni status and generous contributions.

The construction of the Health Performance Center will enhance competitiveness and help foster success across various sports programs. Our athletic programs will elevate the recruiting experience, while the expanded workout area and state-of-the-art equipment will facilitate multi-sport training accessibility. The installation of an upgraded roof and HVAC system will support optimal conditions within the facility.

Named for former State Senator Donald G. Kelly, the expanded athletic fieldhouse complex will serve student athletes, coaches and other personnel in all of our university's 14 intercollegiate sports.

**Nursing Education Center Renovation:** The College of Nursing is set to undergo infrastructure enhancements valued at \$13.4 million at our Warrington Place, Shreveport Campus. Designated as a top priority by the University of Louisiana System, this initiative aims to contribute to the growth and advancement of the nursing field while alleviating healthcare disparities in underserved communities, particularly in rural areas.

The Nursing and Radiological Sciences departments will benefit from the renovations, which will include new classrooms, office space, computers, and student services facilities. The first floor of the building will accommodate the Child and Family Network, the division responsible for certifying daycare workers and facilities across north Louisiana.

## **ATHLETICS**

**\$709M earned media surge in Q4 2022:** In the less than three months after airing its first locally produced ESPN+ broadcast, we saw an influx of more than \$700 million in earned media. Earned media metrics quantify the value of exposure for entities beyond specific advertising or branding efforts.

More than 12.5% (\$89 million) of this earned media barrage came after freshman guard Hansel Emmanuel scored his first collegiate points against University of Louisiana Monroe on Dec. 10. Emmanuel's tomahawk dunk late in the Demons' 91-73 victory was named the No. 6 play of the day on SportsCenter's Top 10 feature.

The Demons have appeared five times on SportsCenter. Four of those spots have occurred in home games where broadcasts are produced by staff members and students. The experience producing ESPN+ broadcasts is another example of the hands-on experiential learning that our students can access as they pursue their degrees.

**Continued Academic Success for Our Athletes:** We achieved a remarkable score of 88% in the most recent NCAA Division-I Graduation Success Rate report, ranking us in a commendable twelfth place among all Division I universities nationwide. The women's tennis and women's volleyball teams achieved a perfect score of 100%; women's soccer and men's baseball, softball, and basketball teams all garnered scores of 90% or higher, showcasing the well-rounded accomplishments of our student-athletes both on and off the field.

**2023 Southland Conference (SLC) Indoor Track & Field Champions:** The women's Track & Field team earned its first-ever Southland Conference indoor team title on the final day of SLC Championships in Birmingham, AL. Head Coach Mike Heimerman was also named SLC Women's Coach of the Year.

**Demons First-Year Head Basketball Coach Makes History:** Men's Basketball Head Coach Corey Gipson, a finalist for several prestigious awards including the Ben Jobe Award, Hugh Durham Coach of the Year Award, and Joe B. Hall Coach of the Year Award, made history by becoming the first to lead the Demons to a 20-win season in his first year as a head coach in the university's Division I era. The Demons' 64-63 win against then-number 15 TCU marked our first triumph against an AP Top 25 team since our March 17, 2006 victory against Iowa in the NCAA Tournament that year.

**All-Southland Conference (SLC) Honors for a Trio of Student-Athletes:** Student-athletes who represent the university with noteworthy achievements demonstrate not only their athletic abilities but also their commitment to the values and principles upheld here at Northwestern. Congratulations to the following student-athletes who serve as role models for their peers, inspiring others to strive for excellence both on and off the court:

- **DeMarcus Sharp** was recognized as SLC Player of the Year, SLC Newcomer of the Year and made the SLC All-Defensive Team
- **Ja'Monta Black** was named 2nd Team All-SLC
- **Candice Parramore** made 1st Team All-SLC

## **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES**

I am pleased to announce the appointment of several individuals who will be assuming key leadership roles within our academic community. These changes come as a result of retirements, separations and changes of status, and I am looking forward to the university benefiting from the expertise and passion these talented individuals will bring to their respective areas.

- **Dr. Neeru Deep** will assume the duties as Interim Dean for the Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development
- **Dr. Charles King** will assume the duties as Interim Department Head for Psychology
- **Dr. Dean Kostantaras** will assume the duties as Interim Director of the Louisiana Scholars' College
- **Dr. Chris Lyles** will serve as the Director of the School of STEM
- **Dr. Jerry Brunson** will serve as the Department Head of Biological Sciences
- **Dr. Douglas Landry** will serve as the Department Head of Veterinary Technology
- **Dr. Shahriar Hossain** will serve as the Interim Dept. Head of Engineering Technology
- **Mr. Zebulun Marcotte** will serve as the Coordinator/Facilitator of Mathematics
- **Ms. Anna Dugas** will serve as the Facilitator of STEM Collaborations

## **A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD**

I am both proud and excited to lead this extraordinary institution. I'm proud because of our nearly 140-year legacy of excellence in higher education and positive contributions to the lives of generations of individuals and the broader community. I'm excited because of the future I see ahead.

"Providing Education of Enduring Value" could not be more apt as a name for our 2023–28 strategic plan. It is both our goal and challenge, our mandate and inspiration. In these times when education is more important than ever, our opportunity to make a difference is greater than ever. Our future is bright. Our commitment is strong. Our potential—and that of our students—is limited only by our imagination.

I look forward to continuing to update you on our progress as we execute the plan.

**Dr. Marcus Jones**

President, Northwestern State University



## Introduction

All components of our strategic plan support and enhance the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of 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.

**Vision.** Northwestern State University will become the nation's premier regional University through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences that prepare graduates for life and career success.

**Our Core Values.** Our core values capture the guiding principles for how we make decisions and work together. They are the foundation for the type of University community and regional partner we strive to become. Our guiding values are:

- **Our students are our priority.** We provide each student with transformational and experiential learning experiences to assist in the development of an ever-growing individual, scholar, and professional.
- **Diversity helps define who we are.** We welcome and respect all traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.
- **We are future focused.** We are in constant search of individual and organizational improvement by seeking new, inclusive, and innovative opportunities to develop our students and improve our University.
- **Innovation is leading the forward edge of change.** We strive to be at the forefront of all we do.
- **We honor and respect the ideals of freedom.** We protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views.
- **We are careful stewards.** We responsibly and sustainably manage the economic and natural resources entrusted to us.
- **Integrity is our cornerstone.** We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards as educators, scholars, students, and professionals.
- **We are a team.** We are a collaborative community that focuses on ensuring the success of every member.

## **Section I.**

### **Assessment Cycle 2022–2023**

**Purpose.** The University initiated an honest introspective review and study of its strategic plan and assessment practices during Assessment Cycle (AC) 2021-2022. As a result, *Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Providing Education of Enduring Value* is a more decisive, inclusive, and balanced approach to achieving the University Vision. *Assessment Cycle 2022-2023 A New Day* closes out *Strategic Plan 2016-2023* while setting the conditions for *Strategic Plan 2023-2028*. The University continues to add to its list of areas subject to our quantitative assessment processes, facilitating more informed decision-making.

On June 16, 2023, the University completed the sixth cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and its core competencies as part of *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2022-2023*. Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation allows Northwestern to maximize its strategic decisions leading to institutional improvement. The assessment includes all six strategic focus areas: Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, Athletic Prominence, and newly integrated Cultural Competency. The University is moving forward with 26 objectives, 101 metrics, 163 academic programs, administrative units, and core competency assessments underpinning our annual assessment. These strategic focus areas, programs, administrative units, and competencies continue to capitalize on their independent findings, analyses, and decisions/actions. This structured, cyclic review of our mission, objectives, and outcomes enables the University leadership to make informed decisions that continuously propel it toward its vision.

Our institutional assessment process is improving the quality of our academic programs, academic support services, administrative support services, and strategic decision-making. More importantly, it demonstrates to the region's stakeholders that Northwestern is quantifiably accomplishing its mission and striving to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the region.

**Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Model.** The Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors of the University of Louisiana System hold institutions accountable for achieving positive outcome measures in academics and support services. Our ability to offer students federally-based financial aid depends on our accreditation by SACSCOC. Accreditation requires higher education institutions to demonstrate an active assessment process that examines all programs and services, leading to improvement and mission accomplishment (Figure 1). SACSCOC adds, "Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against the mission in all aspects of an institution."

A literary backbone of policy and procedures (Figure 2) was established and structured to fully leverage its strategic planning and institutional effectiveness model to ensure participation, standardization, predictability, flexibility, and accountability.

The supporting organizational structure (figure 3) is provided through the President's Leadership Team, which provides the strategic vision and serves as the forcing function to drive the process, ensuring various model components stay aligned and mutually supportive. The University Strategic Planning Team looks over the horizon and steers the process around hazards and toward the vision. The University Assessment Committee provides for standardization, predictability, and quality in the process. The program and unit coordinators, faculty, staff, and students are the instruments in maintaining the integrity of the process. The University General Education Committee ensures Northwestern has a

**Figure 1**  
*The Institutional Effectiveness Process*



**Figure 2**  
*Literary Backbone*

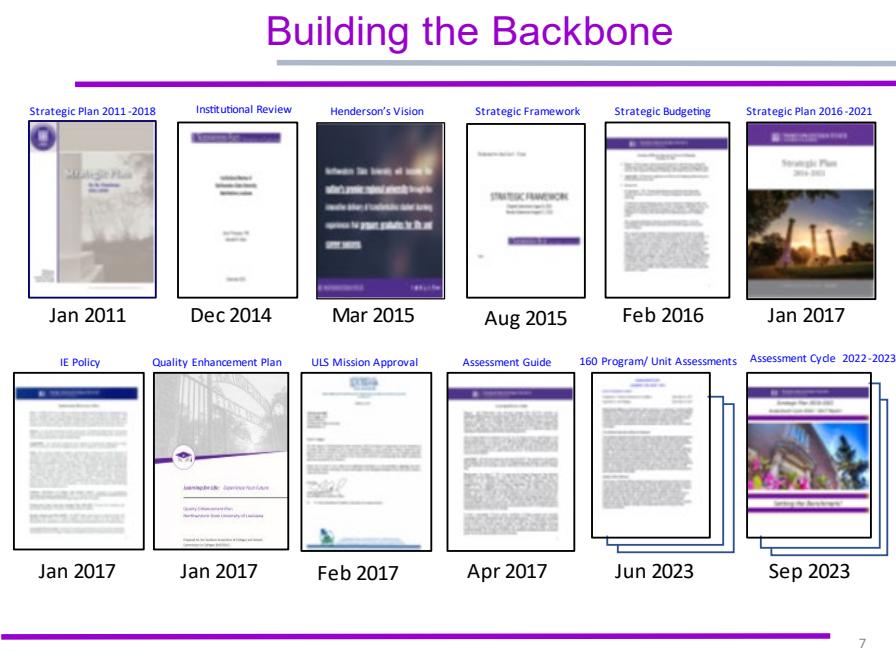
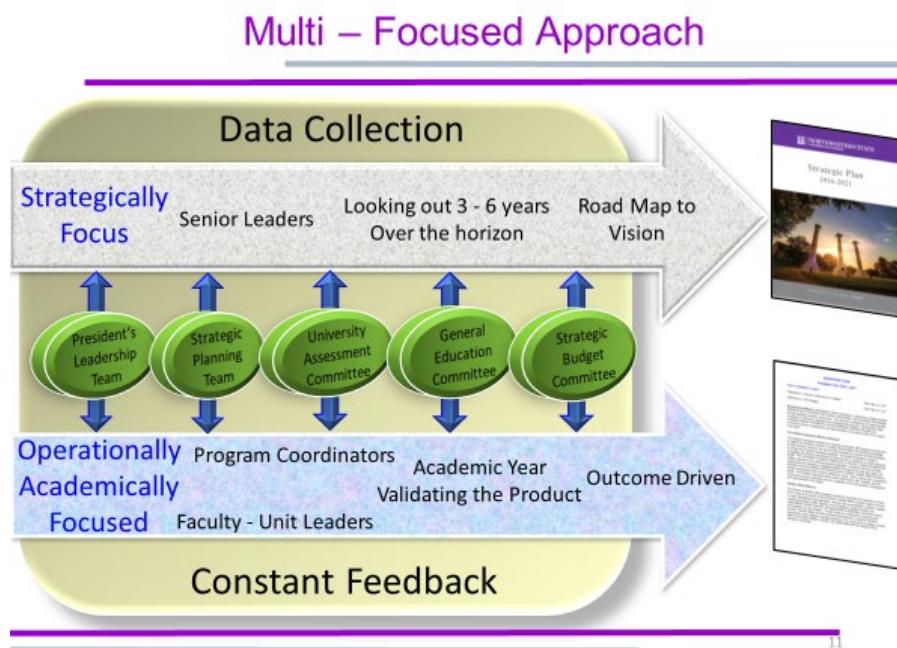


Figure 3  
Organizational structure



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broadly based core curriculum that is central to the University's mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents requirements for general education survey courses applicable to all students regardless of their major. Lastly, the Strategic Budgeting Committee helps align resources to university priorities, improve transparency, reward entrepreneurial efforts, reconcile program costs and revenue and promote improved fiscal stewardship and accountability.

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)** *Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement*, 2018. The University has apportioned each applicable standard to the appropriate authority for ownership, evaluation, and integration into the daily operations of the University.

**Northwestern Assessment of its Strategic Plans 2016-2023 and 2023-2028.** The University's strategic plans provide the framework and context for our actions from 2016-2023 through 2023-2028, allowing for adaptation, innovation, and adjustment based on the higher education and socioeconomic environments.

Each September and March, the Strategic Planning Team, University Assessment Committee, General Education Core Competency Coordinators, faculty, staff, students, and guests participate in a semiannual review of progress through an update to the President from each Strategic Focus Area (SFA) team leader and special topic area. As appropriate, the President or designated senior leader will update all faculty, staff, and community partners at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters as part of the Faculty and Staff Institute, strategic communications, or similar activity. In mid-March, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will initiate that year's assessment report in coordination with each SFA. This report captures strategic decisions made during the year and addresses adjustments to the strategic Plan moving forward. Each SFA team leader presents an update to the President and the leadership team in September as a status check of each area's progress. During these forums, the President reviews all proposed adjustments to the objectives, strategies, or metrics. The University publishes the Assessment Cycle Report within 30 days of this meeting. The report in purple below is ongoing.

Beginning with Assessment Cycle (AC) 2019-2020, each SFA determines which objectives/metrics it will assess that year based on its data collection plan. Those objectives and metrics not assessed during AC 2019-2020 were assessed in 2020-2021, thereby completing a complete assessment every two years. The University will not conduct an assessment in AC 2021-2022 to allow for a period of reflection and to enable the senior leadership to focus on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) fifth-year interim review to ensure the University is following all Federal Law and Department of Education policies.

1. Assessment Cycle 2016–2017 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Setting the Benchmark.
2. Assessment Cycle 2017–2018 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Validating Our Approach.
3. Assessment Cycle 2018–2019 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Building Momentum.
4. Assessment Cycle 2019–2020 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Sustaining Success.
5. Assessment Cycle 2020–2021 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–The Way Forward.
6. Assessment Cycle 2021–2022 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Reflection Year–No Report
- 7. Assessment Cycle 2022–2023 to Strategic Plans 2016-2023 and 2023-2028–A New Day.***
8. Assessment Cycle 2023–2024 to Strategic Plans 2023-2028–Driving Change
9. Assessment Cycle 2024–2025 to Strategic Plans 2023-2028–Making a Difference
10. Assessment Cycle 2025–2026 to Strategic Plans 2023-2028–Leading the Way
11. Assessment Cycle 2026–2027 to Strategic Plans 2023-2028–Setting the Standard

**Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Objectives:** Our objectives by strategic focus area are:

#### **The Student Experience:**

- Objective 1. Provide responsive student services that aid recruitment, retention, and student success.
- Objective 2. Create a community that fosters diversity and inclusion.
- Objective 3. Enhance co-curricular experiences to aid in retention, engagement, persistence, and completion of all NSU students.
- Objective 4. Provide a transformational learning and career preparation experience.
- Objective 5. Increase efforts to provide for the wellness of our students.

#### **Academic Excellence:**

- Objective 1. Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.
- Objective 2. Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.
- Objective 3. Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.
- Objective 4. Foster quality student-faculty interactions.
- Objective 5. Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.

#### **Market Responsiveness:**

- Objective 1. Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead.
- Objective 2. Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands.
- Objective 3. Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies.
- Objective 4. Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.

#### **Community Enrichment:**

- Objective 1. Expand world-class performing arts program.
- Objective 2. Increase robust alumni engagement.
- Objective 3. Promote mutually beneficial donor relationships.

Objective 4. Expand institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.

Objective 5. Nurture thriving town-gown relationships.

### **Athletic Prominence:**

Objective 1. Enhance marketing opportunities, game day experience, and resource acquisition.

Objective 2. Promote community service, appreciation, and engagement.

Objective 3. Enhance University and community collaboration and support.

Objective 4. Enhance recognizing and promoting success.

### **Cultural Competence:**

Objective 1. Increase diversity and equity among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.

Objective 2. Integrate diversity and inclusion throughout the academic curriculum-support programs.

Objective 3. Ensure diversity and inclusion are reflected in policies, procedures, budgeting, staffing, facility management, and other areas of university operation.

Objective 4. Develop a more inclusive campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.

**University Program and Unit Assessment Process.** In coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, all academic programs review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. They identify the degree-awarding programs (diplomas, certificates, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral) that will participate in the assessment process. Each develops program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Simultaneously, University Vice Presidents determine which administrative units must review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. Administrative and Student Support Units developed their Service Outcome Measures (SOMs) and assessment methodology.

Assessments occur during the Assessment Cycle (AC: June to May). Each academic program and administrative unit submits its assessment cycle plans for the coming year to its respective Academic or Administrative Review Committee Chair. The Dean or Vice President reviews and approves assessment plans. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) will account for each Plan as part of the assessment process. Data is collected throughout the academic year, with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each year, faculty and staff collect data and compare the results of the previous year's assessment, the target, and the effectiveness of their action plans to the current year's results providing evidence of improvement or needed improvement based on the analysis of the results.

All assessments are due to the DIE no later than mid-June, the exact date determined by the DIE in concert with senior leaders. The DIE develops the Assessment Year presentation per the July Strategic Plan update. The University uses the Institutional Effectiveness website as the primary assessment repository.

**Quality Enhancement Plan.** Developing and implementing the *Learning for Life: Experience Your Future* QEP is a seven-year process. Two years of data gathering and proposal development (2014-2016) and five years (2016-2021) of implementation are included. The timeline consists of information relative to all stages of QEP development and implementation: committee and personnel assignments, faculty and student forums, community engagement and marketing, QEP editing and submission, curricular redesign and approval, and academic program assessment. In spring 2020, the QEP was fully implemented, and its Impact Report was submitted to SACSCOC as a part of its Fifth Year Report.

**Strategic Budgeting Process.** The *Planning, Programming, and Budget Execution* (PPBE) model best fits the University's Budget Development. This model provides the appropriate incentives; it is inclusive,

emphasizes a high level of transparency in concert with the principles of our strategic intent while providing the information necessary for sound decision-making supports innovation and entrepreneurship, and helps the University maximize support from campus stakeholders and private donors.

**Student Learning Outcomes Statements.** The University takes a deliberate approach to the structure of its assessment process, particularly regarding identifying outcome measures. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides faculty and staff with a guide to standardize the development of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Service Outcomes (SOs). The University Common Core SLOs support individual degree program SLOs, which underpin the Strategic Plan's Academic Excellence Strategic Focus area.

According to the University's *Guide to Outcome-Measure Development*, SLOs should be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and tied to a specific timeframe. Each outcome addresses knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The policy requires that outcome statements specify what students will know or be able to perform or demonstrate when they have completed or participated in the program, course, project, or activity.

As described in the University's *Guide to Outcome-Measure Development*, measures combine the assessment methodology and the target for the outcome. A direct measure, which is preferred, requires a student to demonstrate the skill or knowledge. An indirect assessment measure addresses the perception of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The University encourages setting targets that are difficult to attain to drive a constant pursuit of improvement. As such, Northwestern does not rely solely on course grades as an acceptable measure for the assessment of an outcome.

Per the *University Assessment Process Guide* and in coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, each academic entity reviews, amends, or revalidates its respective missions. The foundation of this assessment process emanates from the hierarchy of the University, College, Department, Program and/or Unit mission. Each measure is mapped to a specific course from which data is collected. In most cases, multiple courses contribute to the data collection and analysis of a single measure. In 2017-2018, sixty-six (66), in 2018-2019 ninety-three (93), in 2019-2020 ninety-five (95), in 2020-2021 ninety-nine (99), in 2021-2022 one hundred (100) and in 2022-2023 one hundred and three (103) degree awarding academic programs participated in the assessment process. Each developed program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and an associated assessment methodology from which they derived their findings. Each then analyzed their results, leading to decisions or actions to promote continuous improvement.

**Evidence of Institution-level Student Learning.** Assessment data collection occurred throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each program identified its findings, completed its analysis, and collectively determined decisions/actions necessary to drive the improvement cycle. Program faculty compared current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the coming year (2023-2024). Once approved by the respective Dean, program coordinators then submitted completed assessments to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) on June 17, 2023. Please view the 2022-2023 Assessment Cycle Reports at <https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>. An Academic Review Committee, composed of program assessment coordinators, oversees the assessment process within each of the University's four Colleges. After completing all program assessments, the four Academic Review Committee Chairs provide input to the annual assessment report. The report captures the most significant findings and decisions of the past academic year, including proposed and actual changes, an analytical assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the status of new assessment plans. This

information is integrated into the Strategic Focus Area Academic Excellence findings, where recommendations for pedagogy, curriculum development, review, or adoption are made. The DIE consolidates these reports into one executive presentation for the University President's review/decision in June-July.

**Institution-level Assessment Resources.** Assessment resources are centralized on the IE website under the Assessment Process and Resources tab. In addition to the items listed, the DIE pushes best practices to program and unit coordinators as part of the monthly UAC meetings. The DIE also holds needs-based workshops and professional development sessions for organizations requiring or requesting assistance or those in coordinator transition. On average, the DIE conducts 15-20 assessment-related visits per semester.

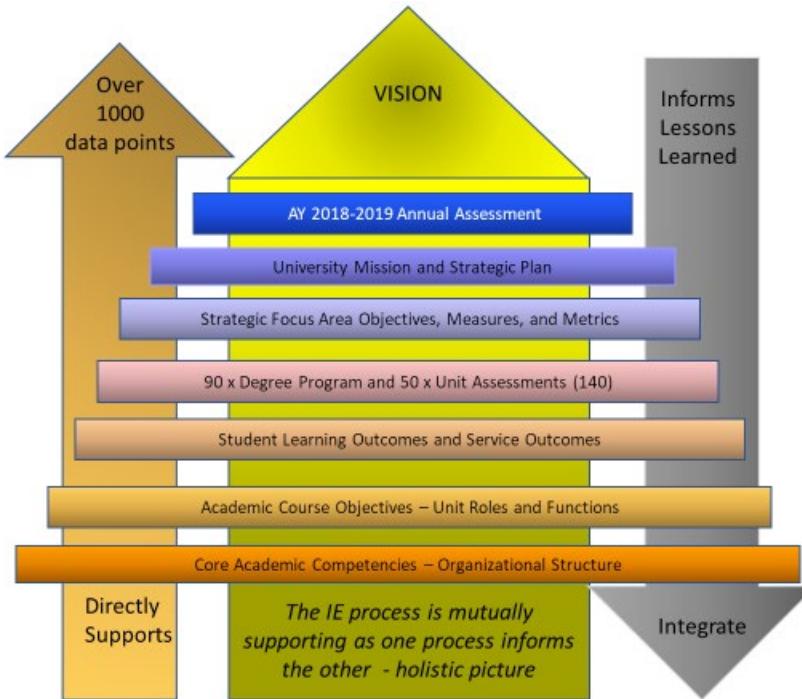
**Institution-level Assessment Activities.** As Northwestern closes in on completing its sixth iteration of the institution-wide assessment process (for all strategic focus areas, academic programs, administrative support services, and academic and student support services), assessments allow for the analytical comparison of the results between the previous year to this year and to the established target. The study of these results is the bedrock for developing executable action plans focused on improvement in student learning and institutional and program growth. The process allows the University to analyze program results across all colleges and schools to inform its strategic planning effort and make improvements based on the analysis of these results. As such, the University can provide its stakeholders with the required evidence of growth based on the review of findings.

**Use of Institutional-level Student Learning.** An informed assessment allows for enhanced environmental visualization, which drives our ability to make better decisions and navigate the future. The results indicate better-informed objectives, metrics, and associated strategies, allowing for holistic findings, comprehensive analyses, and informed strategic decisions. This cyclic analytical decision-making process will continue to require honest and, at times, sophisticated analysis of our current Plan. Through this process, we continue to find we must be flexible in modifying (including adding or deleting) objectives, metrics, and methods. The foundation of the process is organizational self-actualization and continuous assessment, adjustment, and refinement. All are focused on meeting our 2023 objectives.

At the tactical level, common core outcomes and classroom course objectives provide the data to inform the measure supporting the operational level degree program assessment measures supporting student learning outcomes, which in turn provides data to inform the metrics and objectives at the strategic level assessment of the Strategic Plan (Figure 4). This nesting of assessment data allows for a better appreciation of student learning while providing a more holistic view of progress in student learning on our strategic focus areas, specifically the Academic Excellence and Student Experience strategic focus areas. This process and the analysis of the associated results and lessons learned drive tactical, operational, and strategic decisions. The use and evidence of institution-level learning are evident in the AC 2022-2023 Assessment Cycle *Executive Summary*, which reflects the strategic decisions made across the University impacting a myriad of efforts from financial health, Board of Regents initiatives; academic programs; student, alums, and community relations; and external affairs.

**Reflection, Growth, and Improvement Plan.** Our model calls for a continuous cycle of annual assessments across multiple echelons with overlapping and mutually supporting outcomes and associated data. The process entails numerous inputs filtered through a diverse assessment structure with better-informed outputs (Table 1). The annual assessment process is not complete until the recommendations and proposed decisions reflected in the strategic assessment are mediated and agreed upon by the strategic planning committee, a final after-action review is conducted, the final report is written, and the brief presented. Each decision is discussed and closed with a consensus on the appropriate disposition.

**Figure 4**  
**Assessment Process**



The results of the after-action review, incorporating input from across the University, is integrated into the final presentation to the President. Once delivered, recommended improvements to the process are made, and all artifacts are uploaded on the Institutional Effectiveness website.

The after-action report requires everyone in the assessment process to review their actions, roles, functions, and responsibilities. It also requires them to identify what works as designed and what can be done to improve the process. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process involving the entire University, we do not have 100% faculty and student buy-in. We still have work to do convincing some faculty and students of the power of assessment. We have a few administrators who fear innovative change and are more comfortable nibbling at the edges.

We are addressing these challenges with a multifaceted approach. We now routinely hold professional development sessions with targeted groups where the comfort level for participants is such that the exchange of ideas is much improved. We are consistent in our battle rhythm of meetings and activities, maintaining assessment activities on the radar of our participants and interested parties. We have added more precise language to our University Catalog regarding the purpose of assessment, student learning outcomes, and, specifically, students' required responsibilities in participation. The University now requires specific SLO language in each academic degree course syllabus, stating how the course either directly or indirectly supports the degree program assessment. We have developed tools for faculty, such as the anatomy of assessment, assessment of a measure by the numbers, fundamentals of assessment, and the transition checklist, designed to facilitate learning. Instituting a culture of assessment and continuous improvement is a work in progress, and the approach must be balanced to ensure support, compliance, ownership, and promotion. We are not there yet, but we are making significant progress.

**Table 1.**  
*Diversity in Assessment Structure*

INPUTS	DIVERSITY IN ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE	OUTPUTS
Department of Education Policy Guidance	Board of Regents	Funding-Management Guidance/BOR
Academic Policy & Management Guidance	University of Louisiana System	Board of Supervisors Oversight
SACSCOC-BOR-ULS Guidance	Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources	SACSCOC Connectivity--provide all units' information to be used in decision-making and evidence-based planning
SACSCOC-BOR-ULS Policy Guidance	Director of Institutional Effectiveness	Advancing educational quality through assessment
Data source collection connectivity analysis	Office of Institutional Research	Support continuous review of assessment process
Higher Education Atmospherics	University President's Leadership Team	Setting the University's strategic direction
Advance transformative student learning	Provost--VP for Academic Affairs	Establish culture of Innovation and Collaboration
National-State student support initiatives	Vice President for Student Experience	Support academic experiences & promote student development outside of classroom
BOR Master Plan--National Trends--Initiatives	University Strategic Planning Team	Decisions made around assessment outcomes
SACSCOC requirements and University Policy	University Assessment Committee	Integrate culture of assessment consistent with the University mission
DOE, State, and BOR Policy	General Education	Assess institutional student learning outcomes
State and BOR Policy	Curriculum Review Committee	Advise on curricular matters including achievement of student learning outcomes
Faculty and student concerns	Deans Council	Provides info on the health of academic programs.
Faculty and leadership concerns--guidance	Faculty Senate	Liaison between faculty and admin on assessment
University, Dean, UAC, guidance	Degree Program Coordinators	Responsible for producing quality assessment reports
Discipline experts and academics	Academic Program Advisory Boards	Contributes to the currency and quality of the academic program
University department lessons learned	Degree Program Review Committee	Collect, analyze, support improvement actions
Credentialing National-State-University Policies	Degree Program Faculty	Backbone, integrity of assessment process

## **Section II.**

### **Performance Indicators and Assessment Results**

#### **(Objectives–Strategies–Metrics–Findings–Analysis–Decisions–Responsibility)**

#### **Strategic Focus Area 1–The Student Experience**

The Student Experience at Northwestern State University of Louisiana (NSU) is committed to improving student lives through the following objectives:

- Provide responsive student services.
- Create a community that fosters diversity and inclusion.
- Enhance co-curricular experiences to aid engagement and retention.
- Provide transformational learning and career experiences.
- Provide student health and wellness services.

#### **Accomplishments related to The Student Experience:**

1. In spring 2023, Northwestern State University achieved a 23% response rate to the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNLSSI). This is particularly impressive when compared to other UL System institutions who saw response rates well under 20%.
2. For the fourth year, Northwestern State University exceeded goals for students and employers using the Career Services platform, Handshake.
3. Enrollment Management and the Northwestern State Foundation expanded the Gallaspy Retention Scholarship program providing funding for 217 scholarships to help students remain enrolled.
4. NSUTV won two Gold Telly Awards for producing the ‘Distinguished Communication Professional Awards.’ The Gold Telly is the highest honor awarded in the category of Non-Broadcast General-Public Relations and Non-Broadcast Generation Educational Institution. A Bronze Telly was awarded for a Podcast series title, ‘Latino Living.’ Students were in competition with professional multimedia organizations including broadcasters such as NPR and Disney.
5. NSU Shreveport Nursing/Allied Health Campus designated as “Well-Spot.”
6. NSU was awarded the Campus Partner of the Year 2022-2023 through the ForCollegeForLife Speaking Agency.
7. NSU Cheerleaders won first place in the International Cheer Union 2023 University World Cup Cheerleading Championship in the Co-Ed Game Day division.
8. The NSU Chapter of Alpha Lambda Delta First-Year Honor Society received the Order of the Torch Award for 2022 and the Maintaining the Flame Award for 2023.
9. NSU Club Sport Rower, Victoria Dettinger, was 1 of 67 athletes invited to attend US Rowing’s 2023 Under 23 National Team selection camp. Athletes selected through the camp will represent Team USA at the 2023 World Rowing Under 23 Championships in Bulgaria.
10. NSU Junior, Makenzie Scroggs, was crowned Miss Louisiana 2023 and will compete in Miss America 2023.
11. NSU Student Government Association President, Bailey Willis, was elected as the 2023-2024 Student Member of the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System.
12. NSU Greek members Scott Fowler and Nicholas Cooksey received the 2022 Order of Omega Honor Society Parker F. Enright Scholarship and the Patrick W. Halloran Scholarship, respectively.

13. NSU students Nicholas Cooksey and Jenna Pottmeyer were awarded the Alpha Lambda Delta First-Year Honor Society TROW Scholarship for 2022. Kacy Young received the TROW Scholarship in 2023.
14. Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Chapter Advisor, Candance Grayson, received the Outstanding Undergraduate Chapter Advisor for the Southern Region for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Table 2: Metrics for The Student Experience

AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	The Student Experience Metrics	AC 2022-2023 Targets
	5.88	5.88	<i>Academic excellence and value</i>	6.3
	6.04	5.99	<i>Satisfaction with support programs</i>	6.3
	5.73	5.72	<i>Satisfaction with University policies and processes</i>	6.3
	5.67	5.67	<i>Responsive and helpful faculty and staff</i>	6.3
70%	76%	61.15%	<i>Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 2nd year</i>	76%*
61%	60%	47.88%	<i>Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 3rd year</i>	63%*
42%	44%	45.38%	<i>Graduation rates (SACSCOC-aligned)</i>	43%*
1,515	1,518	1,020	<i>Enrollment per freshman class, per year</i>	1,700
4,446	3,993	3,063	<i>Enrollment on Natchitoches campus</i>	4,500
10,900	11,447	9,389	<i>Overall Northwestern State enrollment</i>	11,360*
10	10	10	<i>Diversity represents regional demographics</i>	10
	5.83	5.78	<i>Campus climate of advocacy and inclusion</i>	6.3
	5.52	5.36	<i>Safety and security satisfaction survey</i>	6.3
	5.92	5.60	<i>On-campus facilities satisfaction survey</i>	6.3
	5.05	4.95	<i>Campus housing and dining satisfaction</i>	6.3
	9,464	4,909	<i>Students involved in Cocurricular Activities</i>	8,000
306,304	325,917	294,307	<i>Hours students engage in community service</i>	400,000
28	36	36	<i>Programs with capstone experiential learning activities</i>	36
11,273	14,735	20,194	<i>Number of students and employers using Handshake</i>	11,000
75%	75%	81%	<i>Percent graduates working w/in 6 months of graduation</i>	80%*
77	154	156	<i>Number of health-related programs and services</i>	125
	6.05	6.00	<i>Satisfaction with Support Programs</i>	6.3

Note: Outcomes for AC 2019-2020 are reflected on the far left with AC 2020-2021 to the right and AC 2022-2023 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2022-2023. Black standard text was assessed in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 or will be assessed in 2023-2024. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

\*Serves as Student Achievement Criteria.

Except for enrollment data, most metrics were assessed using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNLSSI), administered every other year (2019, 2021, 2023) by the University of Louisiana System. The RNLSSI collects data on a 7-point Likert scale. RNLSSI also allows participating universities to add unique questions, discussed in this report. Students rate the *importance* of questions in addition to rating their *satisfaction* with items. Data collection occurred in spring 2023; Northwestern State University achieved a 23% response rate to the RNLSSI. This is particularly impressive compared to other UL System institutions with response rates well under 20%.

## Objective 1:

**Provide responsive student services that aid in recruitment, retention, and student success.**

Strategies:

- Provide programs and services for achieving academic excellence.
- Better-integrate admissions processes, financial aid, registrar services, and academic advising throughout the campus.
- Streamline policies and procedures to enhance responsiveness to students' needs.
- Establish and implement programs that assist students in transition from one academic level to the next, beginning with a comprehensive first-year experience and progressing through high-impact experiences and career preparation opportunities.
- Campaign to increase male enrollment in traditionally female areas.
- Manage Natchitoches Campus class availability.
- Rebrand Dual Enrollment and DE conversions to regular enrollment.
- Increase overall number of recruiting contacts.

Metrics:

1. Academic Excellence and Value
2. Satisfaction with Support Programs
3. Satisfaction with University Policies and Processes
4. Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff
5. Retention Rates of Full-Time from First to Second Year
6. Retention Rate of Full-time First to Third Year
7. Graduation Rates
8. Enrollment per Freshman Class
9. Enrollment on the Natchitoches Campus
10. Overall Enrollment

Metric:

### 1. Academic Excellence and Value (AEV)

Findings:

Responses of NSU students to the RNLSSI Academic Advising Effectiveness scale averaged slightly higher in AC 2022-2023 ( $M = 5.90/7$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ), compared to AC 2020-2021 ( $M = 5.84$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ). Similarly, average scores on the Instructional Effectiveness scale declined in AC 2022-2023 ( $M = 5.85/7$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ), compared to AC 2020-2021 ( $M = 5.92/7$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ). Nevertheless, in both cases, the results are statistically similar between years ( $p > .05$ ). Both measures were significantly higher than the national averages for Four-Year Public Institutions ( $p < .001$ ).

Analysis:

Three items on the Academic Advising Effectiveness scale improved from AC 2020-2021, although one dropped slightly: *My academic advisor is available when I need help* decreased from 5.90/7 to 5.89/7 ( $p > .05$ ). Since students rate these items as highly important, even small negative changes warrant attention.

All seven items on the Instructional Effectiveness scale were lower in AC 2022-2023 than in AC 2020-2021, with two items decreasing significantly. *The quality of instruction I received in most of my classes is*

*excellent* decreased from 5.85/7 ( $SD = 1.36$ ) in 2020-2021 to 5.73/7 ( $SD = 1.44$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in AC 2022-2023. In terms of importance, this item was ranked fourth out of 45 items. *Faculty are usually available to students outside of the class (during office hours, by appointment)* decreased from 6.15/7 ( $SD = 1.25$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.98/7 ( $SD = 1.35$ ) in AC 2022-2023. In terms of importance, this item was ranked 16th out of 45 items.

Although satisfaction in both measures remains significantly higher than the southern and national averages for Four-Year Public Institutions ( $p < .001$ ), in a time of declining enrollment, this is an important area for improvement.

**Decision:**

- Academic Deans and Provost will discuss strategies to improve in the seven items on the Institutional Effectiveness scale.
- Provost to address faculty office hours outside of class.
- Executive Director of Academic Advising Services and Academic Deans will review the training and development of faculty advisors to align with best practices.
- Establish a relevant certificate program for faculty advisors in each college.
- Determine ways for faculty members to meet and connect with students outside of the classroom—library, dining areas, etc.

**Metric:**

**2. Satisfaction with Support Programs (SSP)**

**Findings:**

Responses to the AC 2022-2023 RNLSSI Campus Services scale include library, computer labs, tutoring services, online access, career services, counseling services, and mentoring. The scale average ( $M = 5.99/7$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) was slightly below, but statistically like, the average from AC 2020-2021 ( $M = 6.04/7$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ).

**Analysis:**

Northwestern declined slightly in overall student satisfaction compared to AC 2020-2021. Of the eight items reviewed, NSU improved on five items and declined in three; of these only one decline was significant. The item, *Computers and/or Wi-Fi are adequate and accessible* decreased from 6.25/7 ( $SD = 1.19$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.87/7 ( $SD = 1.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in AC 2022-2023. Further analysis of this item, divided into four groups based on students' living arrangements, found a significant difference between group means (one-way ANOVA,  $p < .001$ ). A follow-up test with Turkey's HSD indicated that satisfaction among students living in the residence halls hall ( $M = 5.55$ ,  $SD = 1.517$ ,  $N = 232$ ) was significantly lower than the other three groups: those owning their own home ( $M = 6.05$ ,  $SD = 1.395$ ,  $N = 200$ ), renting a room or apartment ( $M = 5.94$ ,  $SD = 1.437$ ,  $N = 194$ ), or living with their parents ( $M = 6.09$ ,  $SD = 1.255$ ,  $N = 135$ ).

**Decision:**

- Review findings with the Executive Director of University Affairs and the Director of Housing to determine a plan for upgrading Wi-Fi service in the residential communities.
- Review findings with Information Technology Services staff regarding options for improved Wi-Fi service across campus.
- Counseling Services will identify options for improving access to personal counseling.
- Explore opportunities to have intentional conversations with students regarding majors and careers—University Studies 1000, Freshman Connection, and academic seminars.

**Metric:****3. Satisfaction with University Policies and Processes (UPP)****Findings:**

In AC 2022-2023, University Policies and Procedures were evaluated using two scales on the RNLSSI, plus one item each from two additional scales.

- Responses to the Registration Effectiveness scale (processes and procedures, billing policies, class registration, and convenient times) averaged 5.81/7 ( $SD = 1.16$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.84/7 ( $SD = 1.13$ ) in AC 2020-2021.
- Responses to the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale (five items addressing admissions and financial aid) indicate a satisfaction of 5.65/7 ( $SD = 1.38$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.61/7 ( $SD = 1.40$ ) in AC 2020-2021.
- Responses to the statement, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, on the Campus Life scale averaged 5.95 ( $SD = 1.46$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 6.15/7 ( $SD = 1.29$ ) in AC 2020-2021.
- The item, *I seldom get the run-around when seeking information on this campus*, averaged 5.47 ( $SD = 1.75$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.50/7 ( $SD = 1.74$ ) in AC 2020-2021.

Averaging these 11 items results in a score of 5.72/7 for 2022-2023, compared to 5.73/7 for AC 2020-2021.

**Analysis:**

Policies and Procedures that are easy to understand and student friendly are obviously important in student satisfaction, success, and retention. Streamlining policy has been a goal in the Student Experience since the inception of the strategic plan and more work needs to be done to achieve this goal.

Comparing AC 2022-2023 to AC 2020-2021, the Registration Effectiveness scale decreased slightly. Three items, *Registration processes and procedures are convenient*, *Billing policies are reasonable*, and *I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts*, each decreased slightly, but not significantly. On the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale, one item changed significantly; *Financial aid counseling is available if I need it*, rose substantially by 0.19 points, 5.69/7 ( $SD = 1.6$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.50/7 ( $SD = 1.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in AC 2021-2022. New financial aid practices which involved personal meetings with a financial aid counselor were implemented during summer orientation for AC 2021-2022 and AC 2022-2023 may have impacted student satisfaction. Examining the data further, freshmen and sophomores rated item 11 significantly higher than juniors and seniors ( $M_{fr\_so} = 5.385$ ,  $SD = 1.404$ ,  $N = 414$ ;  $M_{jr\_sr} = 5.59$ ,  $SD = 1.709$ ,  $N = 671$ ,  $t_{999} = 2.627$ ,  $p = .004$ ).

The average for *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, decreased substantially by 0.20 points ( $p < .01$ ). Some highly-visible incidents on campus in AC 2022-2023 that involved multiple student groups may have impacted the decline in satisfaction in this service area.

**Decision:**

- Establish a policy management process to review existing policies and procedures that impact students.
- Continue to develop financial aid counseling opportunities throughout the undergraduate experience since this appears to have improved students' awareness of this service.
- Since our student body is sensitive to cost of attendance, we will continue to develop billing processes and internal communication plans about tuition and fees.
- Develop programs and awareness campaigns to educate students on the Student Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures, particularly for student organizations.
- Focus groups to review messaging in recruiting practices.

- Review and update the modules used for the Recognized Student Organization (RSO) Workshop and the University Studies 1000 course.

**Metric:**

**4. Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff**

**Findings:**

Responses to the RNLSSI Student Centeredness scale averaged 5.83/7 ( $SD = 1.38$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.81/7 ( $SD = 1.20$ ).

The RNLSSI item, *Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual*, increased slightly from 2020-2021, averaging 5.13/7 ( $SD = 1.81$ ).

Averaging the 5 items results in a score of 5.67/7 for AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.66/7 in AC 2020-2021.

**Analysis:**

The five individual items from the RNLSSI in this metric remained stable between AC 2020-2021 and AC 2022-2023. While there were some changes, none were significant. It is commendable that the largest increase was on the item, *The campus staff are caring and helpful*, which changed from 5.83/7 ( $SD = 1.28$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.92/7 ( $SD = 1.24$ ) in AC 2022-2023.

**Decision:**

- Identify and implement Customer Service Training for employees at every level.
- Coordinate focus groups with the Student Government Association, residential life, and other key programs and services on campus to gain a better understanding of student needs.
- Consider having a student representative attend Faculty Senate meetings.

**Metric:**

**5. Retention Rate of Full-time First to Second Year**

**Findings:**

The first year to second year persistence rate for first-time, full-time, baccalaureate-seeking entering freshmen decreased. The fall 2019 cohort retained 75.57% to fall 2020; fall 2020 cohort retained 63.84% to fall 2021; and fall 2021 cohort retained 61.15% to fall 2022.

**Analysis:**

NSU has a sharply falling first-year to second-year retention rate. The retention rate for full-time first to second year students in fall 2022 was 14.42% lower than fall 2020. The Demon Peer Network was established in fall 2022 to help address student retention from first to second year. A new Director of Enrollment Management was hired in fall 2022.

**Decision:**

- The Director of Enrollment Management will develop and implement strategies to impact retention of first-time students.
- Enforce policies pertaining to first and second-year students such as residency requirements.
- Explore initiatives to connect first-year students with the campus community.
- Explore modality of classes offered to include more face-to-face and fewer online classes available to first-and second-year students.
- Continue to look for scholarship dollars for full-time first-time students.

- Fully develop the Demon Peer Network to include ongoing development of the mentors.

**Metric:**

**6. *Retention Rate of Full-time First to Third Year***

**Findings:**

The persistence of students from first to third year dropped from 60% to 47.88% and did not meet the target of 63%.

**Analysis:**

This metric is like the full-time first to second year rate decline. The institution was on track pre-Covid to reach this goal. However, in fall 2020 admission requirements were adjusted state-wide and many students admitted with lower test scores were not retained. This drop is likely affected by the pandemic and financial barriers.

**Decision:**

- The Retention committee will focus on initiatives that have a greater impact on student success.
- Review of academic programs with increased loss of 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students.
- Review available scholarships and scholarship policies including GPA requirements, and opportunities for part-time students.
- Early intervention plans for academically at-risk students must be refined.
- Hire new academic retention specialist summer 2023 to address initiatives to retain at-risk students.
- Explore the continuation of the Demon Peer Network beyond the first year.

**Metric:**

**7. *Graduation Rates***

**Findings:**

The 6-year graduation target for full time degree-seeking students is 43%. The graduation rate for the fall 2016 cohort was 45.38%, resulting in a small increase.

**Analysis:**

NSU exceeded the six-year graduation target for AC 2022-2023.

**Decision:**

- Monitor IR reports to determine areas with declines.
- Work with Deans and Department Chairs to determine reasons for stop outs.
- Consider scholarship dollars for students not graduating.

**Metric:**

**8. *Enrollment Per Freshman Class Per Year***

**Findings:**

The number of entering freshmen decreased from 1,518 in fall 2020 to 1,020 in fall 2022. This number included new students who first enrolled in the summer term and continued in the fall.

**Analysis:**

The enrollment for the freshman class decreased by 498 students for fall 2022. In particular, the population of new traditional students in our service area has declined.

**Decision:**

- Focus recruiting efforts on Central LA and NW LA students.
- Focus recruiting efforts on targeted minority students.
- Emphasize low cost of enrollment in recruiting materials.
- Explore scholarships for underserved students.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.
- Implement new Board of Regents college GPA requirements for continuing Dual Enrolled students.

**Metric:**

**9. Enrollment on Natchitoches Campus**

**Findings:**

The enrollment of students taking at least one face-to-face class on the Natchitoches campus for fall 2022 was 3,063, down by 930 students from fall 2020.

**Analysis:**

The target for this metric is 4,500 which was not met in fall 2020 or 2022. NSU was on target in fall 2019 (4,446). Rising costs of on campus living and continued effects from the COVID-19 pandemic likely impacted Natchitoches campus enrollments.

**Decision:**

- Work with Institutional Research to determine geographical and academic areas with significant face-to-face declines.
- Continue to review offerings and closely monitor student requests for face-to-face classes.
- Enforce campus policies related to residential requirements.
- Explore-campus housing issues related to cost.
- VPSE/DSA will work with program directors across campus, such as athletics, creative and performing arts, etc., to determine new strategies for enrolling students in face-to-face courses on the Natchitoches campus.
- Enhance partnership with Career Compass and Beyond Graduation to identify and enroll more students from feeder parishes.
- Work closely with Club Sports staff to produce more offerings for students available on campus.
- Reevaluate the target to determine if it is appropriate.

**Metric:**

**10. Overall Northwestern State University Enrollment**

**Findings:**

Enrollment over all instructional sites and online was 9,389 in the fall of 2022. This was a decrease of 2,058 students from the fall of 2020 (11,447).

**Analysis:**

Overall Northwestern enrollment decreased by 2,058. Decreases may be attributed to reinstating standardized testing admissions standards following the relaxation of this requirement in fall 2020 due to the pandemic.

**Decision:**

- Improve leveraging of scholarships.
- Increase scholarships in areas not covered by the Gallaspay Foundation.

- Evaluate all exemption policies (e.g., tuition and fees for faculty/staff dependents; housing exemptions for freshmen and sophomores) to determine feasibility and effectiveness.
- Focus recruiting on Central LA and NW LA students.
- Focus on targeted minority students—Federally Acknowledged American Indian Tribes, Hispanic markets in Texas, and other programs such as *Call Me Mister*.
- Work with Dual Enrollment to restructure course offerings and course load capacities.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.
- Better utilize summer camp opportunities to aid in overall recruiting.
- Reevaluate the target.

## Objective 2:

*Create a community that fosters diversity and inclusion (through developing ethical and effective leadership, service, and civic engagement).*

*Strategies:*

- Continue to broaden programs and services for students, faculty, and staff geared to making the campus climate equally welcoming for all members of the community.
- Develop our students to be future leaders with a strong sense of civic responsibility, ethical reasoning, and social justice.
- Educate campus community on Disability Services.
- Highlight programs to focus on male and international students.

*Metrics:*

1. *Diversity represents regional demographics.*
2. *Campus climate of advocacy and inclusion*
3. *Safety and security satisfaction*

**Metric:**

**1. *Diversity Represents Regional Demographics***

*Findings:*

Northwestern State University student demographics mirror those of the region the University serves (Tables 3 and 4). Omitting international students, the proportion of majority students (59.4%) and minority students (40.6%) are the same as those in Louisiana, based on current population estimates. However, women are much more represented in the student body than in the state (70.0% versus 51.0%), comparable to national trends.

*Analysis:*

NSU's student body remains very diverse (Table 3). Within the minority population, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and those students indicating two or more races are more represented than expected for Louisiana ( $p < .001$ ; Table 4). In addition, both the Black or African American and Asian categories are significantly lower than the statewide percentages. Compared to AC 2020-2021, the percent of students not indicating an Ethnicity is increasing ( $p < .001$ ). The majority population at NSU mirrors the State of Louisiana White Ethnicity classification.

The disparity between NSU's distribution of students by gender (Table 3) mirrors the nationwide trend for more women to attend college than men, as well as the popularity of traditionally female-dominated majors, such as nursing and education, at the Northwestern State University.

**Table 3**  
*NSU Fall and Spring Enrollment by Gender and Ethnicity AC 2022-2023.*

Gender	Total	White, nonhispanic	Unknown	Two or more races	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Foreign	Asian	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaskan Native
F	93	95	1,989	111	394	8	320	143	4,369	7,522
% of F	1.2%	1.3%	26.4%	1.5%	5.2%	0.1%	4.3%	1.9%	58.1%	70.0%
M	42	45	689	82	196	4	149	89	1,859	3,155
% of M	1.3%	1.4%	21.8%	2.6%	6.2%	0.1%	4.7%	2.8%	58.9%	30.0%
NSU	135	140	2,678	193	590	12	469	232	6,228	10,677
% of NSU	1.3%	1.3%	25.1%	1.8%	5.5%	0.1%	4.4%	2.2%	58.3%	100.0%

*Derived from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Census files, unduplicated.*

**Table 4**  
*State of Louisiana Demographics for AC 2019-2020\**

Gender	Total	White, nonhispanic	Unknown (Some Other Race)	Two or more races	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Foreign*	Asian	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaskan Native
F	15,330	35,408	761,756		86,166	917	36,971	28,480	1,349,052	2,314,080
% of F	0.7%	1.5%	32.9%		3.7%	0.04%	1.6%	1.2%	58.3%	51.0%
M	15,249	34,724	690,640		106,394	1,046	35,912	40,747	1,294,580	2,219,292
% of M	0.7%	1.6%	31.1%		4.8%	0.05%	1.6%	1.8%	58.3%	49.0%
LA	30,579	70,132	1,452,396		192,560	1,963	72,883	69,227	2,643,632	4,533,372
	0.7%	1.5%	32.0%		4.2%	0.04%	1.6%	1.5%	58.3%	

*Derived from <https://suburbanstats.org/population/how-many-people-live-in-louisiana>.*

#### Decision:

- Support new initiatives to increase the enrollment of males in traditionally female-dominated majors.
- Work with local Native American Tribes.
- Continue to create and support programs that target enrollment of Black or African American students.
- Develop strategies to increase Asian population at Northwestern.

#### Metric:

#### **2. Campus Climate of Advocacy and Inclusion**

#### Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Campus Climate scale averaged 5.78 ( $SD = 1.20$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.83/7 ( $SD = 1.28$ ) in AC 2020-2021.

### **Analysis:**

In AC 2022-2023, four items improved, and two declined minimally, although none of the changes were statistically significant. Of particular concern were the metrics exhibiting significant declines between AC 2020-2021 and AC 2022-2023. The item, *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, dropped from 5.88/7 ( $SD = 1.43$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.75/7 ( $SD = 1.39$ ) in AC 2022-2023, a significant decline ( $p < .05$ ); Both the Southern regional norms and the national norms for this item were significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ). The item, *On the whole, the campus is well-maintained*, dropped from 5.92/7 ( $SD = 1.42$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.60/7 ( $SD = 1.61$ ) in AC 2022-2023, also a significant decline ( $p < .001$ ). The Southern regional and national norms for this item were significantly higher than the NSU average ( $p < .001$ ).

### **Decision:**

- Develop and implement new programs to educate the campus community on safety and security initiatives.
- Address campus safety initiatives at cabinet and leadership level.

### **Metric:**

#### **3. Safety and Security Satisfaction**

### **Findings:**

Responses to the RNLSSI Safety and Security scale averaged 5.36/7 ( $SD = 1.36$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.52/7 ( $SD = 1.35$ ;  $p < .001$ ) for AC 2020-2021.

### **Analysis:**

Three items in this metric declined significantly in satisfaction. As discussed in the previous metric, one item of concern, *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, declined from 5.88/7 ( $SD = 1.43$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.75/7 ( $SD = 1.39$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in AC 2022-2023. This trails both the southern norm of 5.86/7 ( $SD = 1.41$ ) and the national norm, 5.87/7 ( $SD = 1.35$ ) for Four-Year Public Institutions. The item, *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate*, also declined from 4.96/7 ( $SD = 1.96$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 4.72/7 ( $SD = 2.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in AC 2022-2023; and the item, *Parking lots are well-lighted and secure*, declined from 5.36/7 ( $SD = 1.69$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.19/7 ( $SD = 1.72$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Parking issues are unexplained, as there are fewer vehicles registered on campus than in AC 2020-2021. In terms of importance, the item *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, was ranked 15th of 45 items and was an area of concern in AC 2020-2021.

### **Decision:**

- University Safety Committee will review campus lighting and make suggestions for improvement.
- University Parking and Traffic Committee will review parking spaces on campus.
- Director of Campus Safety will be apprised of RNSSI findings.
- Address safety at cabinet and leadership team level.

### **Objective 3:**

**Enhance co-curricular experiences to aid in retention, engagement, persistence, and completion of all NSU students.**

### **Strategies:**

- Transform campus spaces to create a unique and engaging campus environment, which adapts to the changing trends of a diverse student body.

- Expand the number of living-learning programs and activities.
- Rebrand programming as Alma Mater programs to build affinity for NSU.
- Develop award program for civic engagement.

**Metrics:**

1. *On Campus Facilities Satisfaction*
2. *Campus Housing and Dining Satisfaction*
3. *Students involved in Co-Curricular Activities*
4. *Hours Students Engage in Community Service*

**Metric:**

**1. *On-Campus Facilities Satisfaction***

**Findings:**

The RNLSSI item, *On the whole, the campus is well maintained*, was used to measure satisfaction with campus facilities. The mean score decreased from 5.92/7 ( $SD = 1.42$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.60/7 ( $SD = 1.61$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in AC 2022-2023. Satisfaction is below both the southern norm (5.83/7;  $SD = 1.47$ ) and the national norm 5.89/7 ( $SD = 1.40$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

An additional local survey from the Event Management System (EMS) assessing facilities in the Student Union is conducted annually. Of 35 entities answering the survey, 21 represented Recognized Student Organizations. The EMS survey for AC 2022-2023 (Table 5) indicates almost total satisfaction for the process of reserving facilities in the Student Union. Data for Student Union utilization indicates high traffic in most of the building throughout the years. This is especially true for the Ballroom and the Lucile M. Hendrick Room, two large multi-purpose rooms used by NSU and members of the Natchitoches community.

**Table 5**  
*Friedman Student Union survey*

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
It was convenient to book the facility through the Event Management System.	2.86% 1	0.00% 0	11.43% 4	80.00% 28	35.71% 2	3.5	3.79
The contract, rules, and booking details were clear and easy to understand	2.86% 1	0.00% 0	14.29% 5	77.14% 27	5.71% 2	35	3.76
Pricing for the venue was reasonable.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.71% 2	34.29% 12	60.00% 21	35	3.86
Confirmation for my event was received in a reasonable time.	2.86% 1	0.00% 0	17.14% 6	77.14% 27	2.86% 1	35	3.74
My experience with the booking staff was satisfactory.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	14.29% 5	82.86% 29	2.86% 1	35	3.85

**Analysis:**

The decrease in the RNLSSI item regarding facility maintenance is a clear indicator that students are not satisfied with how the campus is maintained overall. There is a significant decline in satisfaction with the item, *On the whole, the campus is well-maintained*, from AC 2020-2021 (5.92/7;  $SD = 1.42$ ) to AC 2022-2023 (5.60/7;  $SD = 1.61$ ); a decline of 0.32 points.

In the spring 2023, the Career Services Center was relocated to the first floor of the Student Union, making the space more visible and easily accessible to students. The Director of Student Affairs was moved to the first floor of the Student Union, and the Center for Inclusion and Diversity was renamed the Gail Metoyer Jones Center for Inclusion and Diversity. In addition to minor repairs such as paint and window screens in high traffic areas, a lactation room will open in fall 2023. Although the local survey shows high satisfaction with the Student Union facilities and the interactions with staff, there is a great deal of work to be done to improve overall satisfaction with the campus facilities.

**Decision:**

- Cabinet will be apprised of RNLSSI findings concerning student satisfaction with facilities.
- Continually reevaluate the Student Union's ability to meet the service, spatial, equipment, and technology needs of the University and greater community.
- Develop a five-year plan for furniture and equipment replacement and allocate funding to upgrade when opportunities exist.
- Student Experience staff will report facility renovations, maintenance issues, and quality improvements in the Student Union, the courtyard, and all entrances to the building.
- Student Experience staff will identify new spaces for development and improvement to meet the changing needs of our students.
- Conduct satisfaction surveys for summer camp directors.

**Metric:**

**2. *On-Campus Housing and Dining Satisfaction***

**Findings:**

The RNLSSI Campus Life scale contains three items that directly address housing and dining experiences: *Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable*, *Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual*, and *There is an adequate selection of food available on campus*. The average of these items was used to measure satisfaction with on-campus housing and dining satisfaction. The mean score decreased from 5.05/7 in AC 2020-2021 to 4.95/7 in AC 2022-2023.

**Analysis:**

The three items from the RNLSSI included two which decreased significantly and one which improved, but not significantly. Student responses to the item, *Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable*, decreased from 5.05/7 ( $SD = 1.82$ ;  $p < 0.16$ ). Student ratings of the item, *There is an adequate selection of food available on campus*, significantly decreased from 5.01/7 ( $SD = 1.97$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 4.82/7 ( $SD = 2.01$ ) in AC 2022-2023. Student ratings of resident hall staff remained stable.

In response to the question *Residence Hall staff care about me as an individual*, the satisfaction rate improved only by a little, however, the importance rate also increased by 2%. Satisfaction with auxiliary services such as residence halls and food service greatly impact student retention and it is obvious that there is a great deal of work to be done in these areas.

**Decision:**

- Roundtables with students regarding Housing staff.
- Improve housing staff training.
- Discuss Housing and Food Service rates with cabinet and auxiliary partners.
- Discuss additional Living Learning Communities with Housing Director and Provost; reimagine the residential college in Varnado Hall.

- Roundtables with students and staff regarding campus dining.
- Explore housing scholarships.

**Metric:**

**3. Students Involved in Co-Curricular Activities**

**Findings:**

Data for this metric was obtained from the NSU Presence platform, an online computer program related to activity for Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs). The number of students involved in Co-Curricular Activities, as determined by Presence, is the overall measure for this metric. Students and faculty/staff use Presence to record activity, membership, leadership opportunities, schedules, by-laws, regulations, and other information required of student organizations on campus. Additional data comes from the Event Management System (EMS) managed by the Director of the Student Union.

In AC 2022-2023, 6,362 currently enrolled students were registered in Presence, which allows students in organizations to see events, check in for events, and communicate with others in their organizations.

In AC 2022-2023, RSOs reserved on-campus facilities 1,863 times through the Event Management System (Table 6). Student bookings increased by eight from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 and by 388 from 2021-2022 compared to 2022-2023. Considering facility use guidelines were back to normal post pandemic, an increase in bookings was anticipated.

Table 6

*Event Management System Reservations for Recognized Student Organizations*

EMS Data	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Total Bookings (all EMS facilities)	1,467	1,475	1,863
Estimated Attendance at Booking	50,538	62,649	65,655

Presence recorded attendance (face to face and online) at student events in 2022-2023. Students hosted 485 events (fundraisers, leadership training, organizational meetings, networking, recreational activities, service events, sisterhood/brotherhood events, socials, virtual events, welcomes, and Esports activities). Events were attended by 29,306 students. The unduplicated headcount was 4,909.

A question on the RNLSSI (item #45), *Student activity fees are put to good use*, relates to student involvement in co-curricular activities. The importance of this item remained the same from AC 2020-2021 to 2022-2023 (6.29/7) however, satisfaction increased slightly, averaging 5.18/7 (SD = 1.89).

**Analysis:**

Student participation increased and surpassed the target. Campus bookings have increased over the past years. The AC 2022-2023 increase is undoubtedly due to a reduction in restrictions on the use of campus facilities, the availability of programming, and types of events allowed post-pandemic. New data in Presence also includes events and student activities with online programming. While comparative data is not exact, the number of students involved in co-curricular activities and events surpasses university expectations. The fact that students feel their fees are put to good use at NSU is also reassuring.

**Decision:**

- Streamline data collection for student experience events and programs.

- Provide quality co-curricular experiences and events that focus on a variety of topics that will allow students to enhance their NSU Experience.
- Create RSO leadership development initiatives that foster a sense of community, encourage collaboration and communication, and instill responsible decision-making and critical thinking skills to advance and celebrate individualized, high-level student engagement.

**Metric:**

**4. Hours Students Involved in Community Service**

**Findings:**

Northwestern State University students, including students in recognized student organizations, Greeks, athletes, freshmen, First Year Experience, and students participating in academic projects, volunteered for a total of 294,307.5 community/public service hours in 2022-2023 (Table 7). This is approximately 9.5% fewer hours than AC 2020-2021's grand total of 325,916.5.

Table 7

*Student Volunteer Service Hours*

Unit	Hours
Academic Affairs	269,375
Student Experience	21,332.5
Athletics	3,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>294,307.5</b>

Included in the total are hours Northwestern students volunteered at the Natchitoches Campus Food Pantry. Over 80 volunteers worked a total of 798 hours in the campus food pantry, serving 206 students who experienced food insecurity. Northwestern students continue to volunteer in crisis situations such as clean-ups and repair following natural disasters (hurricanes and tornadoes) in communities outside Natchitoches, and individual students and student groups are responsive to requests in the community.

**Analysis:**

Reporting for this metric involves tracking and reporting from three major divisions of the university: Academic Affairs, The Student Experience, and Athletics. More can be done in terms of Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) efficiently reporting, as information is missing from many of our organizations. Even with the missing data, Northwestern students clearly engage in service at a very high rate.

Northwestern has not reached the target of 400,000 community service hours and data shows a decrease in service hours in 2022-2023 from the previous reporting period of about 31,600 hours. This decrease can be attributed to the decline in enrollment on the Natchitoches campus. Even with the decrease, it remains evident that NSU students are dedicated to student engagement and development through volunteerism.

**Decision:**

- The university will continue to provide safe opportunities for students to engage in service activities. These include options for participating in-person and remotely.
- Identify a system to better track and record service hours for student organizations and individual students.

- Establish and implement a student engagement roadmap to help students identify meaningful learning experiences that lead to competency development, leadership training, and civic engagement.
- Increase the number of volunteer service opportunities and high impact practices.
- Implement a recognition program for students achieving excellence in service.

#### **Objective 4:**

**Provide a transformational learning and career preparation experience (through advising, mentorships, experiential learning, and co-curricular involvement).**

**Strategies:**

- Develop a series of high-impact experiential learning activities designed to engage students beginning their first year.
- Incorporate a required capstone experiential learning activity, such as internships, research, or performance-based events, in each baccalaureate degree program.

**Metrics:**

1. *Number of baccalaureate degree programs with capstone experiential learning activities*
2. *Number of students and employers using Handshake*
3. *Percent of graduates working within 6 months of graduation*

**Metric:**

**1. *Baccalaureate Degree Programs with Capstone Experiential Learning Activities***

**Findings:**

“Learning for Life: Experience Your Future” reached its conclusion in AC 2022-2023. The grant, implementation, and assessment teams completed their work, and all academic programs are delivering capstone coursework. In AC 2022-2023, the Learning for Life initiative focused on utilizing University and program quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report, which was submitted in Spring 2023.

**Analysis:**

The Impact Report included four parts: initial goals, changes made, impact on student learning, and lessons learned. The third part identified four components for measuring impact on student learning. The QEP successfully addressed each of these components:

- All baccalaureate programs will incorporate at least six hours of capstone coursework aligned with best practices in experiential education. *The QEP achieved this goal.* All 36 programs (and 1 concentration) developed, identified, or revised capstone coursework for: Performance (13), Research (12), Internship (12), and Study Abroad (0).
- *Learning for Life* coursework will align with best practices in experiential education. *The QEP achieved this goal.* The process revealed that “programs should be more purposeful about program orientation programming and acknowledgment of faculty, staff, and student accomplishments.”
- Direct Assessment/SLOs. *The QEP achieved both targets for each SLO.*
- Indirect Assessment/Student Surveys. Students from each type of capstone experience indicated that “Time Management” and “Problem Solving” improved. Other improved skills common to multiple capstone types were “Presentation” and “Oral Communication.”

Seventy-seven courses are associated with the QEP. By Fall 2022, all 77 had been offered at least once.

### **Decision:**

With the completion of *Learning for Life*, it is time for the University to begin planning for the next Quality Enhancement Plan. Based on timelines used by other Universities, the QEP Director recommended the following: Northwestern should have a QEP roadmap in place by Spring 2024 and a QEP director in place by Spring 2025 to prepare for submission in January 2027.

### **Metric:**

#### **2. Number of Students and Employers Using Handshake**

### **Findings:**

As of June 2023, 20,194 Northwestern students, alumni and employers are using the Handshake platform:

Employers	9,783
Undergraduate Students	7,949
Graduate Students	600
Alumni	<u>1,862</u>
Total	20,194

RNLSSI item #24, *I receive the help I need to apply my academic major to my career goals*, increased in satisfaction from 6.01/7 in 2020-2021 to 6.07/7 in 2022-2023.

### **Analysis:**

Handshake is an online career platform for NSU students and alumni designed to assist in career decision making and in matching employers with students. Undergraduate and graduate students are loaded into the system when they register at the University, however, students must activate their accounts to use the features.

Activity for 2020-2021 showed 14,735 students, alumni, and employees using Handshake. For 2022-2023 there was an increase of 5,459 Handshake users, totaling 20,194.

The connection between the classroom and career goals is clearly important to students. Increases in satisfaction are minimal and should continue to be addressed to improve satisfaction and retention.

### **Decision:**

- Career Services will grow Graduate and Career Fairs for employment opportunities.
- Career Services will work with Academic Affairs to provide services via the classroom.
- Career Services works with employers in the community to increase employment and internship opportunities.
- Create a campaign to grow the Handshake program as students progress.

### **Metric:**

#### **3. Percent of Graduates Working Within 6 Months of Graduation**

### **Findings:**

At the end of May 2023, 81% of our students who reported said they were working. This number is fluid and changes daily. The survey closes each year on October 5.

### **Analysis:**

Handshake is the NSU platform for recording and disseminating career and employment information to NSU students and alumni. Data reported for AC 2022-2023 is preliminary since the survey will not close for

this cohort until October 2023 and may not be comparable from year to year. Emails are sent periodically to remind graduates to respond. For students answering *Working* as their primary occupation, follow-up questions ask for details of the specific job, including start date, to distinguish between the intention to seek employment and employment itself.

Efforts to increase responses immediately after graduation resulted in a decrease from 19.9% in 2021-2022 to 18.9% in 2022-2023. Therefore, this effort should be revised, and final results (at the six-month point) should be reported for the previous Assessment Cycle.

**Decision:**

- Efforts to increase response rates need to be revisited.
- The survey to be completed through Capstone courses prior to graduation.
- This metric will be applied to the final data for the cohort in the previous assessment cycle.

**Objective 5:**

**Provide for student health and wellness (through physical, emotional, spiritual, and environmental health initiatives).**

**Strategies:**

- Expand and maintain campus and community partnerships which enhance student health and wellness.
- Create and implement appropriate outreach efforts which address the changing developmental needs of students.
- Provide health and wellness initiatives at off-campus instructional sites. Add health services at other off-campus instructional sites.

**Metrics:**

1. *Number of Health-Related Programs and Services*
2. *Satisfaction with Support Programs (Counseling)*

**Metric:**

**1. *Number of Health-Related Programs and Services and Community Partnerships***

**Findings:**

In 2022-2023 Northwestern sponsored 156 health-related programs compared to 154 in 2020-2021. In addition, more than 100 posts on social media, student messenger, text messages, and print media were shared with students, faculty, and staff.

Events, programs, resources, and services are used for this metric and the majority are hosted by departments and Recognized Student Organizations in The Student Experience division. For AC 2022-2023, 109 health-related events were held, along with 37 educational programs, and 10 services, for a total of 156 health-related programs.

Over 100 resources shared on social media, Student Messenger, and text messages.

**Analysis:**

Northwestern recognizes the connection between health and student success. In AC 2018-2019 Northwestern set a target of providing 45 health-related programs and events which has been surpassed

every year of the report. Since the establishment of this metric, Northwestern has grown health-related programming every year.

A signature program, the NSU Wellness Fest, is held annually in November and involves more than 40 collaborative partners on campus and in the Natchitoches community to provide free health screenings, resources, and programs for students, faculty, and staff. Over 300 students attended the event.

**Decision:**

- Continue to expand the campus-wide Wellness Fest to include more services.
- Work with food service to provide healthy meal options for the dining halls.
- Work with Natchitoches community to develop additional resources, partnerships, and grant options.
- Reevaluate existing committees to develop additional health-related programs.
- Develop a marketing campaign to elevate The NSU Pantry and Swipe Out Hunger initiative.
- Enhance the work of the “Hunger-Free Campus” Designation committee.

**Metric:**

**2. Satisfaction with Support Programs (Counseling)**

**Findings:**

The RNLSSI item (#26), *Counseling services are available if I need them*, from the Campus Services scale was used to measure satisfaction with the counseling component of support programs in AC 2020-2021 and AC 2022-2023. The mean score decreased from 6.05/7 ( $SD = 1.44$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 6.00/7 ( $SD = 1.50$ ) in AC 2022-2023, which was not significant. NSU’s average on this measure remained significantly higher than the national average for Four-Year Public institutions ( $M = 5.83$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Analysis:**

On the RNLSSI this item is a campus strength, with both high importance and high satisfaction and student satisfaction with counseling services remains high. Although on average students ranked the availability of counseling services 24th out of 55 local and national items, the availability of such services for students in need can be essential to their well-being, success, and retention. Monitoring satisfaction in this area will help us maintain high quality service for our students. Some assistance with counseling services was provided through a collaborative partnership with the Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development, with licensed, professional counselors, assisting with the caseload throughout AC 2022-2023.

**Decision:**

- Counseling staff and leadership need to continue to find ways to make counseling services more available to students during peak times.
- Reevaluate the mental health module delivered in University Studies 1000 courses to educate first-year students.
- Reimagine the Counseling Center to better utilize space available and to create a more welcoming environment.

## Comprehensive Summary

For AC 2022-2023, all metrics for the Student Experience were assessed. Northwestern has opportunities for growth and improvement in almost every metric related to the Student Experience.

### **1. Responsive Student Services**

Northwestern State University students continue to rate *services, policies, support programs and support personnel* above the national average. While declines were not statistically significant, areas that can be improved include:

#### *a. Academic Excellence and Value*

- Ensure Academic Deans and Department Heads review the RNLSSI responses and implement strategies to improve student satisfaction in the classroom and availability of faculty outside of the classroom.
- Enhance the development of faculty advisors.

#### *b. Satisfaction with Support Programs*

- Technology and adequate Wi-Fi service in the residential communities must be a priority.

#### *c. Satisfaction with University Policies and Processes*

- Establishing a policy management system to review existing policies and procedures that impact student success is crucial.
- Develop educational programs and campaigns to educate students on expectations, policies, and responsibilities.
- Too many university policies and procedures related to the enrollment and registration processes are siloed and information is not communicated effectively to students.

#### *d. Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff*

- Discuss rates, additional LLCs, and community expectations with housing staff.
- Continue to improve the application, leasing, and roommate assignment process.

### **2. Community that Fosters Diversity and Inclusion/Enrollment Demographics**

These issues are addressed above under student support programs and other metrics. However, the Northwestern student population continues to reflect the demographics of the state of Louisiana.

- Continue to support new initiatives to increase the enrollment of males in traditionally female-dominated majors.
- Focus on targeted minority students—Federally Acknowledged American Indian Tribes, Hispanic markets in Texas, and other programs such as *Call Me Mister*.

### **3. Enhanced Co-Curricular Experiences**

The Student Experience continues to develop new spaces on the NSU campus that are inviting and build a shared affinity for the institution. The Student Union had several renovations including relocating the Career Center, Ballroom facelift, lactation room, lighting updates, and minor outdoor improvements in landscaping. Satisfaction with campus being well-maintained overall significantly declined and is below the national average on the RNLSSI.

- Continually reevaluate the Student Union's ability to meet the service, spatial, equipment, and technology needs of the University and greater community.
- Campus facilities maintenance and grounds upkeep must be a priority and continually addressed.
- Continue to provide safe opportunities for students to engage in service activities.
- Increase the number of volunteer service opportunities and high impact practices.
- Implement recognition program for students and recognized student organizations.
- Increase opportunities for students to engage in clubs, organizations, and activities.

#### **4. Transformational Learning and Career Experiences**

Satisfaction with Support Services at Northwestern continues to be above the national average and has improved with each administration of the RNLSSI. Career Services at Northwestern continues to have high ratings from students and are included in the Responsive Student Services objective above.

Northwestern again surpassed the goal for students and employers using Handshake. The number of students with employment 6 months after graduation is a fluid figure. Efforts to increase student participation in the Final Destination Survey need to be increased. Students asked for stronger links between classroom and careers.

- Career Services will work with Academic Affairs to provide services via the classroom.
- Create a campaign to grow the Handshake program as students progress.

#### **5. Health and Wellness**

Research shows that students who focus on their physical and mental health are more likely to be retained and graduate. The Student Experience continues to make strides towards a healthier student population. In fall 2023, Northwestern partnered with the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center to provide after-hours care for students at the walk-in clinic. Decisions related to this metric include:

- Continue to expand the campus-wide Wellness Fest to include more services.
- Work with food service to provide healthy meal options for the dining halls.
- Work with Natchitoches community to develop additional resources, partnerships, and grants.
- Reevaluate existing committees to develop additional health-related programs.
- Develop a marketing campaign to elevate The NSU Pantry, Swipe Out Hunger, and other initiatives related to food insecurity.

#### **6. Enrollment Data**

Enrollment is not a stated objective for the Student Experience but is the most important by-product of the goals and activities of the Student Experience strategic plan. NSU has a sharply falling retention rate and enrollment data is included in the metrics for the Student Experience because of the importance of recruitment and retention.

##### *a. Retention rate of full-time students first to second year*

- Enrollment management efforts (freshman support, processes, advocacy for appeals, scholarships, diversity, and re-enrollment efforts) will continue.
- Policies pertaining to residency requirements must be enforced.
- Explore modality of classes offered to include more face-to-face and fewer online classes available to first- and second-year students.
- Mentoring relationships, faculty connections, and opportunities for engagement must be a priority.

##### *b. Retention rates of full-time first to third year students*

This metric dropped drastically. Efforts to increase this rate will include:

- The Retention Committee will focus on initiatives having a greater impact on student success.
- Early intervention plans for academically at-risk students will be refined.
- The Demon Peer Network will advance beyond the first year.

##### *c. Graduation rates*

Rates have improved slightly. Efforts to foster graduation rates will include:

- Faculty/Student Affairs focus groups to determine reasons for stop outs.
- Request IR reports to determine areas with declines.
- Leverage scholarship dollars for students not graduating.

*d. Enrollment per freshman class per year*

The number of entering freshmen has decreased. Efforts to increase the freshman class will include:

- Refocusing on NSU's feeder parishes and schools.
- Identifying new populations of students.
- Converting Dual Enrollment students to campus.

*e. Enrollment on the Natchitoches Campus*

These declines must be addressed. A strong Natchitoches campus enrollment is vital to athletics, student life, CAPA, and Northwest Louisiana.

- Enforce campus policies related to residential requirements.
- Explore on-campus housing issues related to cost.
- VPSE/DSA will work with program directors across campus, such as athletics, creative and performing arts, etc., to determine new strategies for enrolling students in face-to-face courses on the Natchitoches campus.
- Enhance partnership with Career Compass and Beyond Graduation to identify and enroll more students from feeder parishes.

The Student Experience staff will continue to find ways to engage students, improve services, and increase enrollment, thereby meeting targets. The entire university will be called upon to provide responsive services, streamline processes, and support students in their academic and personal goals. Efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of students will include:

- Evaluate all exemption policies to determine feasibility and effectiveness.
- Focus on targeted minority students—Federally Acknowledged American Indian Tribes, Hispanic markets in Texas, and other programs such as *Call Me Mister*.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.
- Reconsider enrollment targets.

To achieve its envisioned future, Northwestern State University must be committed to refining and strengthening the student experience. Students succeed when we devote our energies to continuously improving all aspects of student life—academic, well-being, physical, social, and support. A better coordinated approach between all entities that engage and support students will ensure the delivery of services, programs, and experiences that meet the needs of all students on all campuses.

## **Student Government Association**

The Student Government Association (SGA) focused on several initiatives this past assessment cycle, which included 1) mental health and wellness, 2) campus safety, and 3) increased university collaboration. Student Government members implemented a mental health and wellness statement for university syllabi, created suicide and crisis lifeline stickers for university identification cards, and partnered with the NSU Counseling Center to bring awareness to suicide prevention resources through tabling events, awareness walks/runs, a candlelight vigil, and various professional speakers.

The safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors was a high priority of the Student Government Association members. Each semester, members of the campus community participated in night walks to identify areas of campus that could be unsafe, such as roads, sidewalks, and low-light areas. The sites were identified and brought to the university administration's attention for review, repair, and replacement.

Student Government is comprised of student leaders who advocate on behalf of NSU students, but the organization also works with various departments on campus. Students involved in Student Government can interact with the college administration, staff, and faculty and work collaboratively to better the institution. The SGA increased their collaboration efforts this year through its academic and student affairs committee structure. In addition, Northwestern's SGA President Bailey Willis is now a student representative to the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System. Bailey Willis will be a full voting member of the 16-member board that manages the University of Louisiana System. The Student Government Association presidents of the UL System selected her for the position.

Moving forward, it is a priority of the Student Government Association to be more of an advocate and voice for students. In this assessment cycle, outreach, collaboration, and university resource education will be top priority for SGA. Initiatives such as intentional student representation on university committees, working with appropriate academic campus partners to identify solutions to increase face-to-face class offerings, student and academic affairs resource education, and budget transparency will guide the Senate's work.

## Student Achievement

Our assessment processes are continuously improved, refined, and expanded. Northwestern measures student success by addressing specific components of its mission: ***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.*** As such, the University examines eight appropriate criteria for Student Achievement (Table 8).

Table 8  
Criteria for Student Achievement

Criteria	Goal for Fall 2023	Threshold of Acceptability	Reporting Period Outcome					
			2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Fall Enrollment	11,000	9,000	10,572	10,979	10,900	11,447	10,735	9,389
1 <sup>st</sup> Fall to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fall Retention	73%	60%	76%	71%	71%	76%	64%	61%
1 <sup>st</sup> Fall to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fall Retention	61%	48%	59%	63%	60%	60%	60%	48%
Baccalaureate Completers	1,345	1,045	1,239	1,197	1,249	1,370	1,344	1,445
Graduate Completers	315	225	304	323	302	292	293	309
** KSCI ** SACSCOC Graduation Rate	53%	40%	35%	37%	44%	43%	47%	45%
Licensure Pass Rate	75-100%	50-98%	63-98%	59-98%	69-98%	66-98%	64-100%	83-100%
Job Placement Rates	80%	70%	N/A	75%	75%	70%	74%	78%

Source: nsula.edu/oir/studentachievement/

<span style="background-color: #2e7131; color: white; padding: 2px;">Met the Fall 2023 goal</span>
<span style="background-color: #c6e2ff; color: black; padding: 2px;">Above threshold but below the Fall 2023 goal (within the band of acceptability)</span>
<span style="background-color: #ffd700; color: black; padding: 2px;">Below threshold</span>

Northwestern annually measures student achievement inclusive of all students, instructional sites, and modes of delivery. This measurement is part of the ongoing, integrated, institutional effectiveness process to evaluate mission achievement, progress toward the vision, and adherence to core values.

All eight criteria reflect elements covered by State and Federal-mandated reporting. Northwestern regularly reports against these criteria in various ways through State (Board of Regents-BOR) and Federal portals (IPEDS), where the data reported is consolidated, compared, and published on State (BOR Dashboard) and Federal websites (College Scorecard; National Center of Educational Statistics).

Based on data submitted by institutions, the BOR's Data and Publications webpage provides interactive reports, extending the granularity of the BOR Dashboard. These reports and the BOR Factbook display Louisiana's post-secondary metrics at the institutional level. Northwestern's student achievement can be compared with other regional peer universities within the University of Louisiana System (ULS).

The criteria developed and approved by the University's Strategic Planning Team serve as key indicators of mission success. The criteria are aligned to the goals and objectives in the Board of Regents Strategic Plan for *Northwestern State University FY 2023-2024 through FY2027-2028*. As such, the criteria are integrated into the University's Strategic Plan.

Northwestern uses these criteria to internally compare performance outcomes over time, compare outcomes to BOR-designated peer regional institutions (McNeese State University, Nicholls State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, and University of Louisiana-Monroe), and evaluate state/federal benchmarks. In addition, Northwestern leadership employs the data collected for these criteria to identify trends, isolate potential issues, and drive decision-making.

The student achievement criteria guide the institution and ensure it meets its mission to "prepare its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation. "When targets are not achieved, improvement plans are devised, implemented, and re-analyzed to promote continuous improvement.

The data indicate that Northwestern's students are enrolled and retained at a comparable rate to our peer institutions (enrollment and retention metrics) and appropriately progress through the curriculum (course completion metrics). Northwestern graduates leave the University with honed critical thinking and communication skills that allow them to be future leaders and serve their communities (graduation rates). Most importantly, Northwestern graduates successfully gain employment upon graduation (licensure/job placement metrics) and thereby make a difference in the region, state, and nation.

Northwestern has taken several steps over the last 6-12 months to maximize its strategic planning and assessment activities:

Reviewed and updated the strategic plan: The university has reviewed and updated its strategic plan to ensure that it is aligned with its current goals and objectives. This involved conducting a SWOT analysis, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and identifying new opportunities and challenges.

Increased stakeholder engagement: The university actively engages stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners, in the planning and assessment process. This involved holding meetings, focus groups, and other forums for feedback and input.

Enhanced data collection and analysis: The university reviewed and enhanced its data collection and analysis methods to ensure that it is gathering relevant and accurate data. This involved investing in new technology or software, hiring additional staff, or partnering with external organizations.

Used data to inform decision-making: The university continues to use data to inform its decision-making processes. This involved creating data dashboards, presenting data in visual formats, and establishing data-informed decision-making processes.

Established a culture of continuous improvement: The university continues to enhance its culture of continuous improvement, where assessment data is used to make ongoing improvements to programs and services. This involved creating a process for regularly reviewing and updating programs and services, as well as celebrating successes and recognizing areas for improvement.

By taking these steps, Northwestern State University of Louisiana continues to maximize its strategic planning and assessment activities and ensures it is providing high-quality programs and services to its students and stakeholders.

The awarding of The Excellence in Assessment Designation to Northwestern State University of Louisiana demonstrates that the university has a strong commitment to assessment and has implemented effective assessment practices to improve student learning and program outcomes.

The Excellence in Assessment (EIA) Designation is awarded by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) to institutions that have successfully implemented comprehensive, institution-wide assessment practices. The designation recognizes institutions that have demonstrated excellence in the design and implementation of assessment processes and have used assessment data to improve student learning and program outcomes.

The fact that Northwestern State University of Louisiana has received this designation indicates that the university has established a culture of assessment, with a focus on continuous improvement. It shows that the university is committed to using data to inform decision-making and to making improvements to programs and services to better meet the needs of its students.

Overall, the awarding of The Excellence in Assessment Designation to Northwestern State University of Louisiana is a testament to the university's commitment to excellence and its dedication to ensuring that its students receive a high-quality education of value.

## Strategic Focus Area 2-Academic Excellence

The Academic Excellence (AE) strategic focus area made substantive progress towards meeting AC 2022-2023 targets in eight (8) of the ten (10) metrics measured in this cycle. Results in several areas are the best seen since AC 2019-2020; academic program evaluations reflect improvement in student learning outcomes, with 260 of 318 showing positive results; the number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting increased by 20%; faculty/staff receiving external grants increased by 433%; and 1,452 faculty/staff (140 more than previous year) attended University, department and or college-sponsored professional development workshops including lunch and learn, to mention just a few.

As we enter AC 2023-2024 with mature processes in place, the University must identify and leverage the correct metrics to drive improvement, continue to support and elevate Academic portfolios by introducing new workforce-required programs, seek collaborative grant opportunities, and develop flexible ways students access programs and engage in scholarly dialogue and presentation. The mechanics of doing so are below (Table 9).

Table 9: *Metrics for Academic Excellence*

AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2022-2023 Targets
84/95 (100% of eligible programs)		86/103 (100% of eligible programs)	<i>Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes to help drive effective and innovative instruction</i>	100% Degree and Certificate Programs
	N > 96		<i>Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching</i>	35-50
4.33/5 (C) 4.41/5 (I) (36% response rate)		4.30/5 (C) 4.39/5 (I) (36 % response rate)	<i>Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness)</i>	4.5/5.0 (90%) (35.2% response rate)
	28.26		<i>Average class size in University core courses</i>	28
4.65/5 (C) 4.56/5 (I) (30% response rate)		4.23/5 (C) 4.30/5 (I) (36% response rate)	<i>Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses</i>	4.5/5.0 (90%) (42% response rate)
	17/17	16/17	<i>Number of University core classes with a designated course steward</i>	99% of multi- section courses
278 42 Prof. Conf. Presentations		270 44 Prof. Conf. presentations	<i>Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty</i>	400 80 Prof. Conf. Presenters
70 (42 G; 24 UG) Prof. Conf. Presentations 68 NSU Research Day		109 (44 G; 65 UG) Prof. Conf. Presentations 50 NSU Research Day	<i>Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting</i>	154 (20% increase)

AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2022-2023 Targets
	GRE Verbal: M = 146 (28%) GRE Quan. M = 142 (11%) LSAT: M = 144 (22%) MCAT: M = 495 (33%)		Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT)	90% to score 280 GRE; Increase the # of students scoring above national median for LSAT & MCAT by one/year
4.60/5 4.57/5 4.67/5		4.58/5 4.57/5 4.66/5	<i>Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., encouraged interactions between faculty and students; gave prompt feedback; and displayed an appropriate demeanor)</i>	<i>Improve scores in courses below 4.5/5.0</i>
	N > 185	N > 200	<i>Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together</i>	200+
25 Faculty Grants 74 (EPs/Chairs) 18 (QEP Grants) 42 (ULS PD Conf)			<i>Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.</i>	45 Faculty Grants 70 EPs/Chairs
	1.5% (N=5)	8% (N = 26)	<i>Number of faculty/staff receiving external grants</i>	10% faculty (32 PIs)
	1,304	1,452	<i>Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including lunch and learn</i>	1,600+
27			<i>Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies</i>	42
	128 press releases	132 press releases	<i>Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service</i>	200+

Note: Outcomes for AC 2019-2020 are reflected on the far left with AC 2020-2021 to the right and AC 2022-2023 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2022-2023. Black standard text was assessed in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 or will be assessed in 2023-2024. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Five objectives support Academic Excellence.

### Objective 1:

#### Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.

##### Strategies:

- Foster the assessment of expected outcomes for the improvement of instruction
- Provide online and face-to-face instruction on technology/techniques that will improve the educational experience of our students and professional development of our faculty
- Create a program of faculty-led workshops for tutors in key areas (English, Mathematics, Sciences) to better equip peer tutors to meet the needs and expectations of our students
- Develop a plan for online and off-campus students so these students have the same level of academic support and access to tutoring as our main campus students
- Use student fee accounts for upgrading consumable classroom and laboratory equipment and supplies

- Ensure that faculty and staff are well-informed about the services offered by the Academic Success Center so they may direct students who would benefit from these opportunities for academic support
- Provide stipends for faculty to design new or to re-design established courses that focus on integrating technology with content to improve student learning

**Metrics:**

1. *Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction.*
2. Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.
3. *Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).*

**Metric:**

1. *Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction.*

**Findings:**

During Assessment Cycle 2022-2023, 100% (86/86) of academic degree and certificate programs completed the annual assessment or reviewed their assessments plans: this includes two newer programs that first reached an appropriate size or age to be assessed. The remaining 17 programs, some just recently approved by the Board of Regents and the others experiencing low enrollment, created or updated their assessment plan; this category increased by six since AC 2019-2020. AC 2022-2023 assessment results reflect a maturing of the assessment process seeking to improve student learning.

**Analysis:**

Northwestern identifies student learning outcomes for all degree and certificate educational programs. It assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and it provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results moving forward. This validation of mission accomplishment is a testament to the tremendous work of the entire University community and reflects a sincere commitment to excellence.

On June 16, 2023, the University completed the sixth cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and its core competencies as part of *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2022-2023*. Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation allows Northwestern to maximize its strategic decisions leading to institutional improvement. The assessment includes all six strategic focus areas: Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, Athletic Prominence, and newly integrated Cultural Competence.

The 86 academic degree programs assessed in 2022-2023 generated 318 SLOs, and 537 measures, averaging almost two (1.69) measures per SLO. Of the 318 SLO's, 82% were met. Of the 537 measures, 76% were met. The change rate was 9%, 4% positive and 5% negative. Five programs failed to meet the majority of their SLOs, two programs met 50% of their SLOs.

**Decision:**

Program faculty will compare current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the upcoming year (2023-2024). The most significant findings and decisions, including evidence of improvement (actual changes), assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the initiation of new assessment plans will be integrated into pedagogy, experiential learning experiences, curriculum development, and course review or adoption—all designed to improve our programs and student learning.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and degree program coordinators.

**Metric**

**2. Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.**

**Findings:**

Each college reported multiple courses using technologies or best practices (Table 10).

Table 10

*Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices, by College*

<b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>	
ART 2160, 3560, 3960, 4560, & 4960	Adobe Creative Suite, Manual and software application of design principles in project-based curriculum aimed at <b>print-based</b> media.
ART 3410, 3810, 4610-New Media I, II, III, & IV	Adobe Creative Suite, Manual and software application of design principles in project-based curriculum aimed at <b>kinetic-based</b> media.
ART 4980-Prof. Practice	Assembling resume, artist statement, personal identity system, exhibition proposal in preparation for senior exhibition and professional practice
CHEM 3011, 3021- Org. Chem. Lab 1 & 2	Organic chemistry laboratories incorporating new techniques for chemical analysis
COMM 2530-Visual Communication	Uses Adobe software to help students develop applicable industry-relevant skills
COMM3260 Social Media Management	Uses Adobe software and social media platforms to create industry-relevant web pages and other social media output
COMM 2440, 3480, 4420-Basic and advanced Video Prod. & Digital Video Prod.	Uses video equipment, Adobe software to help students develop applicable, industry-relevant skills
COMM 2610-Photojournalism	Uses DSLR camera equipment to help students develop applicable industry-relevant skills
COMM3430 News producing	Uses rundown software to create public affairs programming
COMM2400 Audio Production	Uses Adobe software and state of the art recording equipment to produce podcasts and other audio programming.
COMM 4230 Digital Content Production	Uses video equipment, Adobe software, online magazine formats that incorporates all digital skills
NMJCA	Renovated TV Studio with state-of-the-art control room, virtual set, cameras, lighting, etc.
NMJCA	New podcast studio with state-of-the-art audio equipment allowing students to produce/create podcasts, etc.
CJ, History, & Social Sciences	New laboratory equipment provides hands-on experiences in forensic science courses; new courses in history and social sciences, such as American Indians & the Law and Adv. Legal Research & Writing, provides relevant knowledge to students; and updated rubrics for writing assignments to give students the tools they need to succeed.
ENGL 1010, 1020, & 3230-Comp & Rhetoric I & II; Technical Comp.	New technologies installed in two classrooms for student and faculty use. Laptops and iPads are stored on mobile recharging carts, allowing use in other English classrooms.
ENGL 3500, 3510, 3520, 3530, 3540, 3610, 3620, 4710, 4870, 4970, 4980, 5340 & 5870 ENGL Film Studies	New technologies added to the Content Creation Lab including a digital audio recorder, a mini-beam projector, and other technology upgrades to support student learning in the Film Study program.
MATH 1020, 1021; 1035, 1036-College Algebra & Contemp. Math	Co-requisite program for students with math ACT score of 16-18. Students enrolled in 3-hrs lecture, 2-hrs lab with the same instructor and had Inclusive Ed access to software and text materials on the first day of class. High student success (pass) rate as a result.
MATH 2030, 2040, 4050-Elem/Middle Math; Informal Geometry/Measurement; & Math Content & Concepts	Best practices to pre-service teachers: using various manipulatives to explore, develop, and dissect mathematical concepts and skills for place value numbers, fractions and percentages, and the four basic operations; expanding concepts learned in Math 2030 to measurement and geometry in 2040, building substantial starting questions and using available tools to obtain appropriate theoretical and practical answers; using different algorithms in Math 4050 where students investigate and invent numerical topics presented in class and prepare to meet the needs and aptitudes of their future students.

<b>College of Arts and Sciences (continued)</b>	
MUS 4150/5150-Pedagogy	Projects implementing best practice principles in applied teaching to small groups or individual instruments.
MUS 4110 & 4130- Elem Music Meth; Music Ed for Stud. w/Special Needs	Music education techniques and technologies focusing on elementary aged students; group discussions and projects focusing on assisting students with special needs.
MUS 5870, 5880, 5890-McClosky Technique Intro, I&II	Seminars and projects focusing on using the McClosky Vocal Technique.
MUS 4400- Sound Recording	Students are introduced to the basic physics of sound including hands-on experiments with transverse wave/longitudinal wave, amplitude, frequency, overtone, reflection/diffraction using software such as sound analyzers and sound frequency generator with recording hardware. Other projects include demonstrations using analysis of sound emission for different instruments/human voice in various spaces and with various frequencies to be able to select appropriate microphone to match the appropriate sound quality for the space. Additionally, students are assigned to record recital/concerts in Magale or other formal concert spaces. Lastly, students learn setup and running of PA systems for live events and often assist recording and setup for NSU Jazz Orchestra concerts. Software: Avid Pro Tools HD, iZotope RX, Frequency Sound Generator 1.80, Fast Fourier Transform Sound Analyzer on N-Track Tuner Pro, NewTek TriCaster Internet Streaming System. Hardware: MacBook Pro, Mbox Pro Audio Interface, Rockit 6 monitor speakers, Selected microphones, Bose F1PA system, and Shure UHF Wireless Mic System.
SBIO 1831 & 1851–Honors Biology Lab 1 & 2	Adoption of McGraw-Hill Connect Virtual Labs to provide for a safer laboratory experience during COVID.
SMAT 1820, 1830, 2000, & 2010 and SSTA 3810 - Honors Math: Pre-Calculus, Pure Math, Applied Calculus 1 & 2, & Applied Statistics	Adoption of Cengage WebAssign as a homework tool to provide individualized assignments and instruction for remediation and enrichment, direct access to instructors, and secure testing.
SBUS 482T, SFPA 482T, SHUM 482T, & SSCI 482T–Undergraduate Thesis	Requirement of student presentations of undergraduate theses incorporating presentation software and delivery through WebEx or Teams in addition to or in lieu of face-to-face delivery.
SBIO 3890 & SERV 3850–Honors Dir. Study in Biology and Service Learning	Training, preparation, and 10-day medical mission trip serving underserved populations in the U.S. and abroad.
SECL 1910-1911 & 1920-1921–Honors Ecology 1 & 2	Required and optional field work and service on and off campus, including work in Dogwood Valley and Briarwood Nature Preserve.
THEA 3390, 4270-Sound Reinforcement & Recording; Special Prob. In Design, DAN 4660, Dance & Technology	Projects in sound design, reinforcement, and recording using dance theatre technologies. This class was taught online and was the first time it was implemented. Final Cut Pro was purchased to help teach the students the proper way to create a dance film.
THEA 3340, 3360, 4420, 4430, 4310, 4450	Costuming construction; make-up for stage; advanced costumes; costume, lighting, and scene designs for stage; and visual techniques. Use of Auto-Cad Smart-Room Software. The Costume shop received new equipment with grant money that would assist in learning new building techniques for dance costumes. With the closing of a Casino in Shreveport we were able to purchase a bunch of new lighting instruments to update our inventory as well as have up to date technology that is current in the industry.
School of Biological and Physical Sciences	1) Board of Regents Electronic Learning Grant provided funds to create online learning videos for biology and chemistry classes. This was very important during the pandemic as we had to move skill-based learning online. This impacted multiple classes in both BIOL and CHEM 2) Board of Regents Enhancement Grant allowed the school to purchase a new gas chromatography mass spectrometry instrument for skill-based learning.
<b>College of Business and Technology</b>	
ACCT 4080-Auditing	Practice cases focusing on developing students' critical thinking skills and core technological competencies in order to tackle a real-world audit scenario.
BUAD 3250-Business Law I	In online classes, Internet videos are used. Instructor has video-taped all lectures and placed class notes online for student use.
BUAD 3270-International Bus.	Use of McGraw-Hill Connect, Teams, WebEx, Microsoft Sway, Google Forms, VIC, and Google Maps. Instructor also created a Facebook page to provide supplementary and up-to-date materials for class discussion and assignments.

<b>College of Business and Technology (continued)</b>	
BUAD 4900-Senior Seminar	Presentation software allowing high-resolution photographs, diagrams, video, and sound files to augment text and verbal lecture content; use of course management and lecture-capture tools.
CIS Courses	All Computer Information Systems courses are based on the idea of utilizing current technologies to improve the operations of an organization.
CULA & HMT courses	Service learning incorporated with Columns Café and local opportunities; use of guest speakers and field trips; volunteer experiences at Academy of Country Music Annual Awards and local/statewide events and festivals.
FIN 3090-Business Finance	Uses Excel, Connect, and Moodle. Through assignments and projects, students apply knowledge and skills gained through classroom lectures to demonstrate an understanding of the material. Instructor uses the scaffolding method of instruction.
MGT 3220- Organization and Mgt; MGT 3580–Operations Mgt; MGT 4300–Strategic Mgt. & Policy; MGT 4320–Advanced Mgt.; MGT 4270–Human Resources Mgt.	Uses casework and other class activities to teach professional behavior and principles of management; ties to other management courses to show how to manage products through a business. Technology use includes McGraw-Hill Connect, Teams, WebEx, Microsoft Sway, Google Forms, and VIC. MGT 3580 Instructor also created a Facebook page to provide supplementary and up-to-date materials for class discussion and assignments.
MKTG 3230–Principles of Marketing	Uses online videos from outside sources and instructor videos. Students present a marketing plan for a new product (active learning–learning through engagement) and the instructor makes heavy use of Moodle for online quizzes, testing, and turning in assignments.
<b>College of Education and Human Development</b>	
PSYC 3010-Physiological Psychology	Neuroscience videos are included to enhance the understanding of students; use of NSUs library online database to research four required assignments; use of Stanford University Medical School's website for better understanding of stress and how stress influences the body.
PSYC 4420, 4490-Senior Research Seminar	New courses developed to support the QEP. The courses were designed to support academic scholarship of UG students who will initiate a research project and publicly present their findings.
PSYC 4500-Psy. of Business & Industry	Assignments are designed to mimic many activities that Industrial/Organizational Psychologists encounter at work, including Career/Interest Assessments, using Public Relations for Crisis Management, Critical Analysis of Products and Training Programs. Students also complete a personal reflection assignment on 'models of change' within the context of personal and professional change theories.
PSYC 5300-Intellectual Assessment	APA ethical guidelines for psychology assessment; professional conduct competency expectations for working with adults and children in the assessment process; industry standards and best practices in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of standardized intelligence measures. The learning experience includes intensive instruction regarding standardized intelligence measures with skills demonstration, student skill building, peer reviews, mock professional settings for student hands on assessment administration with volunteer examinees to simulate the experience of professional psychological assessment in the world of work. Practice assessment activities include skills development with clinical interviews, mental status examinations, and professional report creation. Additional learning experiences connect to current industry sources for assessment materials, professional development training, and continuing education.
Synchronous-online Psychology courses	In this format, students and teachers logged onto a virtual meeting platform and class was conducted every class period for all 16 weeks. This style of virtual class offered a benefit over Hyflex classes because everyone had their own computer terminal, speaker, and audio input at all times, making clear communication easy for all parties. This class style also offered a benefit over traditional online classes because all of us were able to interact in real-time.
SOWK 2000-Exploring Soc. Work	Use of pod casts, power points, online articles, interviews, and You Tube videos
SOWK 3030-Human Behavior & the Social Environment	Using Team-Based learning and Problem-Based learning. Developed multimodal videos on all materials utilizing power points with voice overlay that included YouTube videos, podcast, TEDx Talks, and Sage text resources.
SOWK 3070-Social Work Values and Ethics	Uses a program called Geopro for students to create genograms—a generational mapping of family patterns used in social work.
SOWK 4030-Statistics in Social Work Research	Utilized NSU Virtual Machines and Laerd Digital Services for students to learn and use SPSS in the classroom. Utilized Team-Based learning and Problem-Based learning. Developed multimodal instructional videos through Microsoft stream on all materials utilizing PowerPoints with voice overlay that included YouTube videos, TEDx Talks, and Kahn Academy.

<b>College of Education and Human Development (continued)</b>	
SOWK 2000-Exploring Soc. Work	Use of pod casts, power points, online articles, interviews, and You Tube videos
SOWK 3030-Human Behavior & the Social Environment	Using Team-Based learning and Problem-Based learning. Developed multimodal videos on all materials utilizing power points with voice overlay that included YouTube videos, podcast, TEDx Talks, and Sage text resources.
SOWK 3070-Social Work Values and Ethics	Uses a program called Geopro for students to create genograms—a generational mapping of family patterns used in social work.
SOWK 4030-Statistics in Social Work Research	Utilized NSU Virtual Machines and Laerd Digital Services for students to learn and use SPSS in the classroom. Utilized Team-Based learning and Problem-Based learning. Developed multimodal instructional videos through Microsoft stream on all materials utilizing PowerPoints with voice overlay that included YouTube videos, TEDx Talks, and Kahn Academy.
ASN and BSN didactic courses	Utilized one-on-one tutoring or small group remediation sessions via face-to-face, phone calls, WebEx, or distance learning classrooms; Utilized ATI online resources such as case studies, demonstration videos, learning templates, custom quizzes, and proctored exams; Utilized textbook online resources such as case studies, virtual simulation, and computer adaptive testing.
<b>College of Nursing and School of Allied Health</b>	
ASN & BSN clinical courses	Participated in real-time simulation at Willis Knighton Innovation Center, CHRISTUS Cabrini, Virtual Simulations, Case Studies, & NSU Skills Lab, including preparatory assignments, pre- and post-brief conferences; students utilized age-appropriate & culturally appropriate health teaching for their patients.
ASN & BSN Clinical courses, All Levels	Utilized iPads and Exam Soft (a secure testing platform) for proctored exams.
NURB 3050-Pathophysiology	Utilized Anatomage virtual reality for visualization of anatomical structures.
NURB 3160-Research in Nursing	Interprofessional course with School of Allied Health faculty and students.
NURB 3220-Child Health	Assessed real-time knowledge of students using Socrates or Kahoot, a mobile response system.
NURB 3223-Health Assessment for RNs	Utilized Shadow Health Virtual Simulation for RN to BSN nursing physical assessments.
MSN & DNP didactic courses	Utilized WebEx, FlipGrid, Quizlet, YouTube, and PlayPosit (platform for making interactive presentations) to increase student engagement; Utilized current research through NSUs Library's online databases.
NURG 5700-Methods of Clinical Nursing Assessment	Utilized Shadow Health Virtual Simulation for advanced practice nursing physical assessments
NURG 7010-7012; 7015	Use of Typhon for Digital Portfolio and Clinical Hour Tracking
NURG 7012	Use of ProQuest for electronic repository of scholarly work; dissemination of scholarship
DNP Courses	Use of ExamSoft for secured testing (Exams and Quizzes); ExamSoft for performance assessment via rubric feature for all assignments
RADS 5210 -Development & Teaching Methods in Radiologic Sciences	Module describing best practice principles to include teaching theories and models and applying those in the course; assignment requiring students to provide examples of effective technology use in the classroom.
RADS 5220-Assessemnt in Radiologic Sciences	Assignment requiring students to apply best practices in student assessment.
MSRS program	Used Teams, Webex, faculty created videos, YouTube, Wakelet, Eduflow, and Flipgrid throughout program to increase student engagement and interaction.
ALHE 4520 & NURB 3160	Created interdisciplinary course utilizing faculty created videos, Eduflow, Teams, Flipgrid, Wakelet throughout the course. This was done to promote student interaction across disciplines and increase engagement with course content.
BSRS program	Using iPads and Exam Soft (testing platform). Use Anatomage and Shaderware to help students with anatomy and physics principles. Cahoot is used to review concepts in class. RadTech bootcamp is used to help students reinforce concepts presented in class and review material from previous semesters.
ALHE 4610	Used Teams, faculty created videos, Wakelet, Flipgrid, and Eduflow for more student engagement and interaction.

### **Analysis:**

As requested by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic administrators submitted ***all*** courses that implemented current technologies or best practices, and Table 10 represents a selected sampling of courses presented. The request was to submit all in honor of the major shift that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. The samples were selected to demonstrate how faculty expect their students to use current technologies to learn or to apply the subject matter. Also, courses were sampled to illustrate how faculty use best practices in teaching the subject matter.

This year's sample of courses was higher than the sample sizes in prior years. COVID-19 necessitated that all courses convert to the online environment in some way; it was felt that the higher number this year was a better representation of what occurred.

### **Decision:**

The technologies and best practices highlighted in Table 10 clearly illustrate effective and innovative instruction occurring at Northwestern during the academic year. The target for 2021 was a sample of 35-50 courses. This year's target was exceeded. We will continue the upward trajectory and will continue to evolve the current technologies and best practices in Academics.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty.

### **Metric:**

- 3. *Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).***

### **Findings:**

Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 summative results for courses and instructors from the Student Evaluation of Instruction are given in Table 11.

### **Analysis:**

Results of student surveys distributed at the end of fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters are consistent with results from fall 2019, but about 0.06 pts lower than spring 2020. The higher results may be attributed to changes in student expectations and faculty effort during the transition to online delivery of all courses in Spring 2020 due to COVID. In any event they indicate one of the potential issues with using Student Evaluation of Instruction as a reliable (i.e., stable, and repeatable) measure.

Nevertheless, evaluations revealed students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard, with over 86% of respondents rating both course and instructor either *Good* or *Superior*.

### **Decision:**

Due to the current national attention on issues associated with using the Student Evaluation of Instruction as a measure of course and instructor quality, we will seek an alternative metric for this objective for the next assessment cycle. Likewise, face-to-face dialogue between the Provost and departmental faculty during on-call week revealed some faculty dissatisfaction with the evaluation rubric and questions, and pushed for a more granular approach that allows some customization for a more impactful result, and the ability to play a more proactive role in the evolving of the delivery of instruction. It will be a challenge to figure out how to assess this in this report.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, and Faculty.

Table 11

*a. Fall 2022 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	166	1.25%
Poor	(2)	332	2.50%
Fair	(3)	1314	9.88%
Good	(4)	5079	38.18%
Superior	(5)	6411	48.20%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.30</b>	0.84	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	163	1.23%
Poor	(2)	320	2.41%
Fair	(3)	1165	8.78%
Good	(4)	4153	31.29%
Superior	(5)	7470	56.29%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.39</b>	0.84	5.00

*b. Spring 2023 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	162	1.47%
Poor	(2)	265	2.41%
Fair	(3)	1013	9.22%
Good	(4)	4102	37.32%
Superior	(5)	5450	49.58%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29145 (35.34%)	<b>4.31</b>	0.85	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	165	1.51%
Poor	(2)	258	2.36%
Fair	(3)	875	8.00%
Good	(4)	3489	31.88%
Superior	(5)	6156	56.26%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29145 (35.34%)	<b>4.39</b>	0.85	5

## Objective 2:

### Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.

#### Strategies:

- Expand the online resources available through the Academic Success Center to include discipline-specific links to useful websites and resources/tutorials
- Appoint course stewards for each course in the University core curriculum
- Review and strategically monitor the size of classes in the University core curriculum
- Review student satisfaction with instruction in core classes
- Evaluate the measure(s) for each core competency to insure alignment
- Develop a proactive advising system for students not successful in University core classes, beginning with procedures to follow for students not passing the first exam or first major assignment.

#### Metrics:

1. Average class size in University core courses.
2. *Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses.*
3. *Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.*

#### Metric:

##### 1. Average class size in University core courses.

#### Findings:

Since the University teaches multiple Dual Enrollment classes, especially in the core, these sections were removed from the data. In addition, multiple sections taught synchronously via compressed video were combined, as were paired sections taught in HyFlex mode in AC 2020-2021. The average class size over 44 University core courses in fall 2020 was  $M = 29.67$  ( $SD = 12.28$ ,  $N = 432$ ) and spring 2021 was  $M = 26.63$  ( $SD = 11.76$ ,  $N = 374$ ; Table 12).

#### Analysis:

A strategic goal for Academic Excellence has been to decrease the average size of the University core courses to better achieve our student learning objectives. With the implementation of the redesigned University core curriculum in 2018-2019, the number of courses offered for each baccalaureate curriculum has decreased (51 to 44 courses). Forty-four University core courses were offered in fall 2020 and spring 2021. Fall 2020 courses with the largest enrollment included Chemistry 1030 ( $M = 47.67$ ), Sociology 1010 ( $M = 45.50$ ), Physics 2030 ( $M = 44.00$ ), Psychology 1010 ( $M = 40.81$ ), and SCI 1020 ( $M = 40.13$ ). For Spring 2021, the highest enrollments occurred in Physics 2030 ( $M = 50$ ), Science 1020 ( $M = 46.67$ ), Chemistry 1030 ( $M = 42$ ), Philosophy 1010 ( $M = 40$ ), and Sociology 1010 ( $M = 38.80$ ). For both semesters, core courses with the lowest enrollments were Math 1100, 1810, 2100, and 2110 with an average of 8.43 students for the year ( $SD = 5.22$ ,  $N = 7$ ).

Several trends were discovered. In AC 2020-2021, the mean class size in University core courses fell significantly in both fall and spring semesters, compared to AC 2018-2019: fall semester courses dropped on average 11.9% (from 33.7 to 29.7,  $p < .001$ ), while average enrollment in spring semester courses dropped 8.59% (from 29.1 to 26.6,  $p = .006$ ). In fall 2020, only three courses experienced an increase in average class size of more than one; in 32 of the 43 courses taught both years, the average class size dropped by one or more, with nine courses reducing average class size by 10 or more students. In spring 2021, average class sizes increased by 1 or more students in nine courses, with the greatest increase occurring in Physics 1030; 23 courses had average enrollment drop by one or more students, with the greatest decrease occurring in Biology 1020, where average enrollment dropped by more than 50%. The

Table 12

Average Class Size in University Core Courses, Fall 2019 and Spring 2020

Course	Fall 2020			Spring 2021			Course	Fall 2020			Spring 2021		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N		M	SD	N	M	SD	N
ANTH1510	34.13	4.52	8	32.29	5.02	7	HIST1020	34.00	1.73	3	34.33	0.58	3
ANTH2020	13.00		1	21.00	12.17	3	HIST2010	38.44	12.82	9	33.63	4.21	8
BIOL1010	33.13	6.75	8	28.75	3.10	4	HIST2020	25.40	10.53	10	23.17	16.85	6
BIOL1020	22.33	9.02	3	28.00	22.84	5	MATH1020	26.43	8.49	35	20.52	9.35	21
BIOL2250	38.41	13.97	17	32.73	15.07	11	MATH1035	23.00	8.29	7	30.67	12.58	3
BIOL2260	30.00	16.39	8	28.23	13.31	13	MATH1060	32.33	8.67	18	26.42	9.54	31
BUAD2200	25.80	5.07	5	24.40	5.13	5	MATH1090	25.00	9.97	4	23.50	6.61	4
CHEM1030	47.67	25.58	3	42.00		1	MATH1100	6.00		1			
CHEM1040	39.00		1	28.67	14.29	3	MATH1810	19.00		1	7.00		1
CHEM1070	36.83	18.85	12	36.50	19.09	8	MATH2010	31.50	2.12	2	21.67	6.11	3
COMM1010	25.12	3.10	26	22.11	5.99	27	MATH2100	9.00		1	10.00		1
COMM2500	24.55	3.50	11	24.75	2.06	4	MATH2110	3.00		1	5.00		1
ECON2000	33.71	9.03	7	30.80	8.29	5	PHIL1010	32.67	9.29	3	40.00		1
ENGL1010	21.05	5.38	40	18.94	5.67	16	PHYS2030	44.00	15.56	2	50.00		1
ENGL1020	21.45	6.40	20	19.56	6.63	34	PSCI2010	32.33	5.09	6	35.25	0.50	4
ENGL2070	16.00		1	14.50	0.71	2	PSYC1010	40.81	15.51	16	32.33	10.10	12
ENGL2110	23.38	4.19	37	22.37	5.49	30	PSYC2050	32.75	6.52	12	21.40	8.40	15
EPSY2020	29.50	10.32	8	22.00	12.30	7	SCI1010	37.47	13.13	15	36.80	18.67	10
FA1040	35.45	18.79	31	29.83	11.80	24	SCI1020	40.13	13.84	8	46.67	23.57	6
GEOG1010	37.38	5.01	8	37.75	8.92	8	SCI2010	30.14	12.05	7	28.11	12.67	9
GEOG1020	22.00	21.21	2	28.67	10.12	3	SCI2020	20.25	8.34	4	30.33	0.58	3
HIST1010	35.33	5.82	6	35.00	1.55	6	SOC1010	45.50	11.70	4	38.80	7.43	5

only course with consistently higher enrollment in both semesters was English 2070, which was taught in three sections in each assessment cycle. In AC 2020-2021, enrollment increased to 15 students per class from 13.7 in AC 2018-2019, still a reasonable class size. This increase may have been brought on by the opening of seats to any majors across campus as opposed to restriction to English majors only.

#### Decision:

NSU is pleased to report an average class size of 28.26 in University core courses. During 2019-20, Dept. Heads, School, Directors, Academic Deans, Course Stewards, and the Provost/VPAAs, along with the General Education Committee, reviewed University core data from 2017-2019, such as the number of sections, class size, and student success rates, to evaluate cost efficiency and instructional quality across all baccalaureate programs. We have also paid careful and cautious attention to class sizes to be cognizant of any changes that might relate to COVID-19. Committee members should continue to evaluate to determine whether core courses should have a minimum enrollment per semester or year, and if the course is meeting general education requirements. The 2021 target will remain a mean of 28 in University core courses, as a result of the recommendation provided in this section. While it would be easy to adjust this target, caution must be made for how the data might have been affected through new and innovative ways we delivered instruction during the pandemic, as well as considering section numbers and limitations.

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans/Directors/Department Heads, and Institutional Research.

**Metric:**

**2. Mean student evaluation of instruction for core courses (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).**

**Findings:**

Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 summative results for courses and instructors from the Student Evaluation of Instruction are given in Table 13.

Table 13

*a. Fall 2022 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor in Core Courses*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	61	1.62%
Poor	(2)	120	3.18%
Fair	(3)	443	11.74%
Good	(4)	1501	33.79%
Superior	(5)	1647	43.66%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
3857/10626 (36.30%)	<b>4.21</b>	0.89	4

Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	69	1.83%
Poor	(2)	118	3.12%
Fair	(3)	426	11.27%
Good	(4)	1271	33.62%
Superior	(5)	1896	50.16%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
3857/10626 (36.30%)	<b>4.27</b>	0.91	4

*b. Spring 2023 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor in Core Courses*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	35	1.15%
Poor	(2)	72	2.38%
Fair	(3)	331	10.92%
Good	(4)	1239	40.88%
Superior	(5)	1354	44.67%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
3092/8654 (35.72%)	<b>4.26</b>	0.83	4.00

Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	31	1.03%
Poor	(2)	63	2.09%
Fair	(3)	297	9.85%
Good	(4)	1094	36.27%
Superior	(5)	1531	50.76%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
3092/8654 (35.72%)	<b>4.34</b>	0.82	5.00

### **Analysis:**

Results of student surveys, distributed at the end of fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters, revealed students hold Northwestern core courses and instructors in high regard. The response rates have been consistent, although they did drop under 40 % after being at 43% in 2018-2019. The number of students rating courses and instructors as ‘Good’ or ‘Superior’ is strong.

### **Decision:**

Nearly 85% of students rated core courses/instructors as superior or good. We reached our target in 2021-2022, and with continued professional development of faculty and students, we will maintain our target in course/instructor effectiveness moving forward. We will continue to encourage students to participate in course/instructor evaluations and raise the overall response rate to 45% by 2024. Likewise, Academic Affairs will work collaboratively with the Student Experience to more proactively engage with students in what their expectations are for instruction and instructors. We will work together to make continuous improvement.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, and Faculty.

### **Metric:**

#### **3. Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.**

### **Findings:**

Sixteen University core courses had a designated course steward in AC 2022-2023 (Table 14).

### **Analysis:**

Based on recommendations from 2017-2018, the University’s course steward plan was revised to give priority to core courses with multiple sections and large student enrollment (400+ students). In fall 2018, 11 such courses were identified, including Biology 2250; Chemistry 1070; Communication 1010; English 1010, 1020, 2110;

Table 14

*Course Stewards for AC 2020-2021*

Course #/Title	Course Steward
COMM 1010–Oral Communication	Emily Zering
COMM 2500–Interpersonal Communication	Dorian Eaton
ENGL 1010/1011–Composition & Rhetoric I/Enrichment	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 1010–Composition & Rhetoric I	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 1020–Composition & Rhetoric II	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 2110–Introduction to Literature	Dr. Lilly Berberyan
FA 1040–Introduction to Fine Arts	Dr. John Dunn
MATH 1020–College Algebra	Ms. Carrie Maggio
PSYC 1010–General Psychology	Ms. Holley Shivers
PSYC 2050–Developmental Psychology	Ms. Shannon Wall-Hale
SCI 1010–Basic Concepts Physical Science	Dr. Duminda Samarakoon
CHEM 1070–Fundamentals of Chemistry for Nursing and Allied Health Majors	Vacant
BIOL 2250–Anatomy and Physiology I For Nursing and Allied Health Majors	Dr. Jerry Brunson
NUTR 1030–Human Nutrition	Mrs. Catherine Bass (all fall under one course steward contract)
NUTR 1050–Child Nutrition	
NUTR 1070–Nutrition for Children and Families	
EPSY 2020–Introduction to child and adolescent psychology	Dr. Greg Bouck

Geography 1010; Psychology 1010, 2050; Fine Arts 1040; and Science 1010. In 2018-2019, we were unable to find course stewards for several courses due to faculty shortages and overloads in departments. The situation improved for 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 (Table 14), and we provided course stewards for 17 courses with the addition of several crucial stewards (SCI 1010 and the ENGL 1010/1011 co-requisite). Course stewards were given an extra services contract and were expected to complete an effort schedule to show their level of stewardship. The use of course stewards has remained consistent, leading to improved integrity and rigor in our General Education core. Oversight for consistency in teaching, as well as SLO measures has been centralized to the course steward and has resulted in improved consistency and outcomes across all classes with a designated course steward.

Only one course, CHEM 1070, did not have a course steward for AC 2022-2023; in that instance, the Director of the School of Biological and Physical Sciences acted as the course steward.

The purposes of naming course stewards are to ensure course goals/objectives/key assessments are the same across all course sections offered and to ensure that instructors are engaging with students and responsive in meeting their learning needs.

#### **Decision:**

The General Education Committee should review data findings from 2022-2023 and recommend any changes or upgrades to the course steward process. If there are better or additional solutions for better meeting the purpose and goals of metric three, objective two, they should be considered, and changes made accordingly. The consensus has been that the course steward system is working very well.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

### **Objective 3:**

#### **Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Establish a workshop series to prepare students for graduate/professional school admission exams.
- Support student and mentor travel to present research at professional conferences.
- Offer workshops on test-taking skills, tips on the application process, and interview preparation.
- Offer discipline-specific courses focused on student transition from undergraduate to graduate/professional school.

#### **Metrics:**

1. *Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.*
2. *Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.*
3. Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (GRE, LSAT, MCAT).

#### **Metric:**

1. ***Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.***

#### **Findings:**

Graduate students presented 8 papers and posters at four conferences. Thirty-three graduate students were accepted to deliver 12 presentations at NSU Research Day and three presented service-learning outcomes for a project in Nepal at the ULS Academic Summit.

The number of graduate research products required for graduation (summer 2022-spring 2023) included: graduate theses ( $N=19$ ), field studies ( $N=3$ ), performance documents ( $N=4$ ), scholarly projects ( $N=13$ ), creative research projects ( $N=7$ ), and Papers-in Lieu of Thesis ( $N=224$ ).

Approximately 23.5% of Northwestern's full-time faculty were engaged in directing or assessing the capstone research of graduate students. This is an increase from the previous assessment cycle.

#### **Analysis:**

The Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice Conference is held during the spring of even-numbered years, typically resulting in lower numbers of presentations in odd numbered years.

This year, overall, the number of graduate students engaging in research and scholarly activities remains comparable to AC 2019-2020, despite changes in the way conferences are conducted. As more and more conferences transition from virtual to face-to-face or hybrid platforms, the monetary and time costs of participating in conferences may once again become a hurdle for increasing participation.

#### **Decision:**

The target for 2021 will remain at 80 graduate presenters at professional conferences and 29 presentations. To facilitate mastery of this goal, faculty across all graduate programs will mentor their students by recommending professional conferences to attend and will encourage them to submit their student research for consideration. Additionally, to obtain a yearly increase in the number of graduate presentations, Northwestern will partially fund (e.g., registration or travel) graduate students whose proposals are accepted to a national, regional, or state professional conference. Faculty mentors will have internal funding opportunities, such as endowed professorships or faculty grants, to support their scholarship.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Faculty Grants Chair, Research Council Chair, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

#### **Metric:**

**2. Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.**

#### **Findings:**

Seventy-seven students (66 undergraduates, 11 graduates) were accepted to present papers and posters at professional meetings this year. NSU Research Day included 12 presentations by 33 graduate students and 11 presentations by 17 undergraduate students. Student presenters and faculty mentors represented all four colleges.

#### **Analysis:**

The number of undergraduate students making conference presentations was lower than the number accepted to present in AC 2019-2020. Northwestern undergraduates presented at 8 other conferences, including the Spring 2023 Meeting of the American Chemical Society. All undergraduates attended conferences either virtually or with one or more faculty mentors.

Research Day provides a venue for students to present thesis research and research projects in progress that may not yet be ready to present at a conference. In AC 2022-2023, Research Day was held one week prior to the University of Louisiana Academic Summit, which Northwestern hosted, and two weeks prior to the end of Spring semester classes. This was our first face-to-face event after cancelling Research Day and the ULS Summit in 2020 due to the pandemic and holding both conferences virtually in the following

two years. Higher than usual participation by Northwestern undergraduates in the Academic Summit may have reduced the number of participants available for Research Day.

#### Decision:

Northwestern will continue to emphasize the importance of graduate and undergraduate research/scholarship by providing partial or full funding to conduct research or to travel to professional meetings to present research findings.

Although most presentations will be made in person, we will continue to offer the ability to present at Research Day via WebEx so our distance learning students and students and faculty attending classes at our off-campus instructional sites can more easily participate, both by viewing presentations and by presenting posters and talks virtually.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Faculty Grants Chair, Research Council Chair, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

#### Metric:

### 3. Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT).

#### Findings:

Test scores on graduate or professional school exams were verified for 99 undergraduates and graduating seniors for tests administered during the period June 1, 2020, to May 31, 2021. The largest number of students took the GRE (Verbal:  $145.6 \pm 0.947$ , Quantitative:  $142.2 \pm 0.947$ ,  $N = 43$ )

From June 1, 2020-May 31, 2021, 20 current students and graduates completing their degree after June 2019 took the LSAT at least once. The average score was 143.9 ( $SD = 9.25$ ), while the average percentile rating was 28.2 ( $SD = 24.4$ ). The percentile ranking of the average score is 22.2%. LSAT scores ranged from 128 to 160.

In the evaluation period, 11 graduating seniors, 1 senior, 2 juniors, and 22 graduates from 2019 or later took the MCAT (95% confidence interval--Total:  $495.3 \pm 2.9$ , CBPS:  $122.7 \pm 0.88$ , CARS:  $124.7 \pm 0.71$ , BBFL:  $123.6 \pm 0.85$ , and PSBB:  $124.3 \pm 0.92$ ,  $N = 36$ ).

#### Analysis:

In AC 2020-2021, 12 (28%) of those completing the GRE scored above the national median on the verbal component, while one (2.3%) scored above the median on the quantitative reasoning component, both statistically comparable to last year. Northwestern's Graduate School requires a composite score (V + Q) of at least 280; 31 (72%) attained this benchmark, a significantly smaller proportion than AC 2018-2019 ( $p < .001$ ). However, the distribution of test scores may not have been representative, since 40% fewer undergraduates took the GRE compared to AC 2018-2019, possibly because many graduate programs nationwide waived this requirement for applicants, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LSAT scores range from 120-180; the median over the last three years is 152. Four of this year's test-takers (20%) scored above the median. In the 2020 application year, 21 students completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to law school. Fourteen (66.7%) were accepted by one or more schools. All 14 (100%) matriculated to a law school in fall 2020, five more than in 2019.

The majority of the MCAT scores and sub-scores were below the national median. The best performance was on the CARS sub-score where 22 (61%) scored above the national median. Overall, nine (25%) scored

above median, a percentage comparable to AC 2018-2019; the highest score improved from the 88<sup>th</sup> to the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile. In the 2021 application year, 13 students completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to medical school. Five of these (38%) were accepted by at least one medical school, including three early admissions to LSUHSC-Shreveport; three applicants remain on the alternate list at this time. This is not significantly different from the national average acceptance rate.

#### **Decision:**

The 2021 target for GRE test takers this year was not attained. Fewer than 90% earned verbal and quantitative scores acceptable for admission into graduate schools. In subsequent evaluation periods, the target for GRE scores will remain at least 90% of test takers to score at or above the level of 280, combined verbal and quantitative.

On the LSAT, just over half of the scores (55%) were in the first quartile, a small improvement over AC 2018-2019. However, the number scoring above the national median improved from one to four, more than meeting the target. The target for subsequent evaluation cycles will be to raise the number of students scoring above the national median by one each year. Acceptance data for the current cohort lags one year behind the application data.

Curricular and advising changes were made two years ago by the two academic units advising pre-medical students, but these changes will not be fully reflected in the performance of medical school applicants for another year. (The 2021 cohort as the first to complete the new curriculum.) The target for subsequent evaluation periods is to raise the number of students scoring above the national median on the total score for the MCAT (*Median = 500*) by one each year.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Graduate School, Institutional Research, and Deans/Department Heads/Directors.

## **Objective 4:**

### **Foster quality student-faculty interactions.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Create and utilize program-specific advising packets to improve/streamline the advising process
- Establish a Meet the Faculty program
- Identify successful/meaningful student-faculty interactions
- Provide transportation or other funds for faculty and students who take educational trips or engage in experiential learning activities
- Reward faculty who serve as recognized student organization sponsors
- Create a space for faculty/staff and students to meet in informal gatherings and engage in conversations about educational and social topics
- Create and promote opportunities for faculty to interact with students and their families such as academic recognition ceremonies or extracurricular activities

#### **Metrics:**

1. *Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).*
2. *Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together.*

**Metric:**

- Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).*

**Findings:**

Just over a third of student enrollments rated their instructors in the fall 2022 (Table 15) and Spring 2023 (Table 16) Student Evaluation of Instruction. University-wide, the response rate for student evaluation of instruction for fall was 36.18% and 35.34% for spring.

**Analysis:**

Student evaluations for fall 2022 and spring 2023 indicate superior student-faculty interactions. Response rates and frequencies of responses appear relatively stable compared to the most recent results in AC 2019-2020 and exceed the target values. Overall, 72.87% of students indicated Northwestern teachers *always* encourage interaction between faculty and students; 10.53% stated their teachers *usually* encourage interaction. The mean for both semesters was 4.58/5.

For the criterion, *my teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments*, 74.33% responded *always* and 11.75% answered *usually*. The mean for both semesters was 4.57/5.

Table 15  
Fall 2022 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	367	2.75%
Occasionally	(2)	365	2.73%
Sometimes	(3)	655	4.90%
Usually	(4)	1392	10.42%
Always	(5)	9724	72.79%
Not Applicable	(0)	856	6.41%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12,170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.58</b>	0.94	5.00
My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	333	2.50%
Occasionally	(2)	456	3.42%
Sometimes	(3)	616	4.62%
Usually	(4)	1524	11.43%
Always	(5)	9960	74.69%
Not Applicable	(0)	447	3.35%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12,170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.58</b>	0.93	5.00
My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	286	2.16%
Occasionally	(2)	309	2.34%
Sometimes	(3)	488	3.69%
Usually	(4)	1154	8.72%
Always	(5)	10056	75.99%
Not Applicable	(0)	940	7.10%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12,170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.65</b>	0.86	5.00

Table 16  
*Spring 2023 Student Evaluation of Instruction*

<b>My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.</b>			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	282	2.56%
Occasionally	(2)	317	2.87%
Sometimes	(3)	515	4.67%
Usually	(4)	1175	10.65%
Always	(5)	8049	72.97%
Not Applicable	(0)	692	6.27%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29,145(35.34%)	4.59	0.92	5.00
<b>My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.</b>			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	296	2.10%
Occasionally	(2)	422	2.99%
Sometimes	(3)	660	4.68%
Usually	(4)	1650	11.70%
Always	(5)	10724	76.02%
Not Applicable	(0)	355	2.52%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29,145(35.34%)	4.56	0.95	5.00
<b>My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.</b>			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	231	2.11%
Occasionally	(2)	235	2.15%
Sometimes	(3)	352	3.22%
Usually	(4)	1024	9.37%
Always	(5)	8348	76.40%
Not Applicable	(0)	736	6.74%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29,145(35.34%)	4.67	0.84	5.00

Seventy-six percent of students believed their teachers *always* displayed an appropriate demeanor both inside and outside the learning environment; 9.02% stated their teachers *usually* displayed an appropriate demeanor. Overall, the mean for this criterion was 4.66/5.

#### Decision:

The results from this metric remain robust, both between successive semesters and from year to year. Due to the current national attention on issues associated with using the Student Evaluation of Instruction as a measure of course and instructor quality, in the next assessment cycle we will either seek an alternative metric for this objective or focus on a different criterion.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty, and Institutional Research.

#### Metric:

2. ***Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together.***

#### Findings:

Faculty, students, and (many times) family members of students participated in more than 200 events during AC 2022-2023. This compares to an average of 152 events documented in 2017-2020, and 93

events during the baseline year. The Covid-19 pandemic caused a significant dip in events, and there has been a steady uptick since we returned to campus full-time for face-to-face classes and activities. While it would be too haphazard to list all events, the following is a sampling across all disciplines that shows innovative practices:

- **The Walter Porter Experience** is a comprehensive and immersive three-day event that expands upon the traditional Walter Porter Forum. By integrating industry leader engagements, tailored activities for CoBT students, a business etiquette luncheon to include students from all disciplines, a field experience in business, and networking opportunities, this experience provides students with a well-rounded awareness of career after college. This experience will grow to include more internal and external stakeholders.
- Another enhancement of a new activity was our participation in the **Pelican Cup**. The fall of 2022 initiated our 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Inferno Pitch dynamic business plan competition. Student teams competed showcasing their entrepreneurial and business planning skills. The top 5 teams were announced and provided the opportunity to continue onto the University of Louisiana at Monroe's Pelican Cup. NSU's top finisher, Rise and Rotate, took first place at the statewide event. Our student team came away with \$25,000 in support for further development of the product concept as well as business development opportunities.
- **Watson Memorial Library 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** - held on April 24, 2023, University Libraries faculty and staff held a rededication ceremony to honor the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library. Light refreshments were served, with remarks from Donna Baker, Head Archivist, and Dr. Megan Lowe, Director of University Libraries.
- **The Veterinary Technology Department** had a lunch and learn that fits the first category on October 12, 2022. Shelly Morris with National Veterinary Associates (NVA) visited NSU and presented a lunch and learn Continuing Education program on the "Top 10 Veterinary Emergencies" that involved our faculty, staff, and students. This was also a career recruiting event for our students as they are a corporate veterinary group that have associated practices throughout the US that are interested in hiring Registered Veterinary Technicians.
- Student Appreciation Day was originally hosted in the **School of Education**, but this year grew into a college-wide event with every department and school participating in conjunction with the **GCEHD Honors Convocation**.
- Ten **NSU Saxophonists** attended the Biennial NASA Conference held at USM in March. Eight of the students were invited to perform at the conference, Whatever the Case May Be—Derek Brown.
- **CAPA On the Cane**
- Demon Challenge – **NSU's Demon Battalion** hosted an all-day, 10-event competition for JROTC programs across Louisiana. Nineteen teams tackled a series of physical and leadership-based tasks designed to build relationships between schools and inspire Cadet excellence. NSU's Cadets served as instructors and graders.
- **Freshman Connection Sessions** held summer 2022 to register freshman for fall classes, make connections between students and their families and university faculty/staff, and acquaint them with the NSU campus and services; six separate events occurred.
- **McCutcheon Honors Recital:** Each year the recital participants are chosen by the applied faculty in their respective areas as the most outstanding based on their fall juries, January 2022.

#### **Analysis:**

Adhering to the recommendation from the baseline year, academic units in 2022-2023 kept better records of events hosted for faculty, students, and families. As a result, events documented by colleges or

departments/schools increased 80% during 2022-2023. These events serve an important purpose for faculty and students interacting with one another in both social and academic settings.

#### **Decision:**

This measure contributes to the purpose of objective four. During AC 2019-2020 and AC 2020-2021, academic units improved their record-keeping, and will continue to do so. The target of 180 events was met in 2021 and was exceeded in 2022. It will be important to continue to capture events and promote them using social media. Academic Departments are playing a more active and evolved role in the Freshman Connection sessions, as well as during events and programming offered by the Student Experience. We will need to capture that data for the next reporting period.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, Director of Marketing, and NSU Press.

### **Objective 5: Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Survey faculty to determine needs in teaching, research, and service.
- Establish policies for internal research and travel funding opportunities.
- Participation (directly/indirectly) in the strategic budgeting process.
- Promote the goals/activities/outcomes of The Center for Faculty Excellence in Research and Teaching.
- Develop methods for establishing faculty workload policies.
- Ensure that faculty across the University are equitably compensated for their rank, expertise, and service to the University, profession, and/or community.
- Inform faculty of University endowed professorship policies and encourage their participation in the application process.
- Recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, and service.
- Ensure that all classroom/laboratory technologies are functional and updated and that faculty are trained on their usage.

#### **Metrics:**

1. Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.
2. *Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.*
3. *Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including lunch and learn.*
4. Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies.
5. *Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service.*

#### **Metric:**

1. **Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.**

#### **Findings:**

In AC 2019-2020, 25 faculty were awarded research or travel grants by the Office of Academic Affairs; 16 utilized the award. Five faculty received research or instructional enhancement grants and 11

received travel grants to support their participation in professional meetings during the year. A total of \$25,000 was budgeted for this purpose; a total of \$17,000 was used. Due to COVID-19, many spring conferences and symposiums were cancelled, or research trips interrupted.

QEP Learning for Life Coordinators ( $N=8$ ) were awarded up to \$2,000 each to redesign their curricula to include experiential learning as a capstone course. QEP implementation Team ( $N=5$ ) were awarded \$2,000 each, and the QEP Assessment Team ( $N=5$ ) were awarded \$1,250 each. Up to \$35,250 was budgeted to support this work.

The Office of Academic Affairs was set to host the ULS Academic and Performing Arts Summit, but the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. Fifteen undergraduates were slated to present 9 undergraduate research projects; 1 student was selected to perform on the performing arts showcase; and 2 students had 5 pieces selected for the visual arts showcase. Additionally, Academic Affairs paid registration fees for 42 faculty to attend the *ULS For Our Future Conference*, January 30-31, 2020, at the University of Louisiana Monroe. Approximately \$5,000 was used to support these events, which focused on undergraduate research, service learning, visual and performance arts exhibits, and higher education topics.

Seventy-one faculty received endowed professorships and three faculty were endowed chair recipients. Seven endowed scholarships were awarded. The 74 honorees were provided \$821,444 to support their professional development during the year. An additional \$260,539 was utilized from the spend-down requirement from the Louisiana Board of Regents. A total of \$1,119,652 was funded through Endowed Professor and Chair monies.

The Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (18 members) did not receive budget enhancement requests in 2019-2020 due to budget restrictions. In 2018-2019, 40 enhancement requests totaling \$692,048 were funded. Using the committee's recommended priority list as well as the recommendations of the President's advisory team, NSU directly funded 11 initiatives totaling \$102,848 in new resources awarded in the 2019-2020 year. Additionally, by leveraging other sources of funding, two other requests were partially funded. For AC 2017-2018, 14 initiatives were funded for approximately \$500,000.

#### **Analysis:**

Due to COVID-19 in Spring 2020, many of the faculty research support fund grants were not utilized. The faculty grants committee reviewed applications twice during 2019-2020. Due to over-awarding of faculty grants in 2017-2018, the faculty grants chairperson and committee members were encouraged to monitor their budget more carefully in 2018-2019. Thus, \$25,000 was allocated for 25 faculty recipients, whereas 34 faculty were awarded in 2017-2018 for a total of \$29,829. The faculty grants committee reviewed applications two times during 2018-2019 and three times during 2017-2018. During the baseline year, 31 faculty grants were awarded, including four grants involving students' research projects.

The number of faculty awarded endowed professorships increased by nine this year (48 to 57–18.75%). Of the funds available to faculty (\$764,141), 86.5% was used for professional development purposes (\$661,304) and 13.5% (\$102,837) will carry-over to the 2019-2020 year. In comparison, over \$1 million was available to faculty in endowed spending for 2017-2018, as compared to \$562,009 in the baseline year, 2016-2017.

#### **Decision:**

Monies dedicated to support faculty in their research and professional development should be increased during 2020-2021. For example, a budget of \$30,000 or 30 recipients for the new year. The target will remain as 45 faculty grants for the year 2021.

Endowed professor recipients will be encouraged to mentor new faculty, including adjuncts, during 2020-2021 by financially assisting them in professional development activities. Examples include using

endowment funds to pay a new or adjunct faculty member's expenses for participating in a professional meeting where their research findings are co-presented; or inviting a nationally recognized content expert to campus to inform or update faculty knowledge and skills. NSU needs to secure 13 additional endowments to reach our 2021 target of 70.

**Responsibility:** NSU Foundation, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

**Metric:**

**2. *Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.***

**Findings:**

In AC 2022-2023, 254 proposals were submitted, and 40 new grants from 18 PIs were funded for a total of **\$10,855,627.46** (Table 17). The largest grants went to the Child and Family Network, NCPTT, and the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. An additional **\$5,136,750.32** was brought to the University by continuations of multiyear grants first awarded in previous years to eight additional PIs not represented in the new awards (Table18). Thus, total grant income in AC 2022-2023 was **\$15,997,377.78**.

**Table 17**  
*Newly funded grants in 2022-2023*

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program-Amendment 3	2,023,858.80
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program-Amendment 6	2,000,000.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program-Amendment 5	1,899,750.12
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Child Care Resource and Referral for Region 8 and Part of Region 7	741,165.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Career Development Program	367,873.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Additional Funds for Outdoor Learning Enhancement Opportunities	168,399.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	State Matching Funds for Child Care Tuition	51,000.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	2022 Believe! Funding for Expanding Early Childhood Network for Bienville Parish (combined with K. Duncan's)	22,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Community Supply Building and Access Expansion Grant	600,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Birth to Three Seats 2022 for Bossier Parish	503,445.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	2022 Believe! Funding for Expanding Early Childhood Network for Bossier Parish	375,250.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start Cohort 4 for 2022	100,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	2022 Community Supply Building and Access Expansion Grant	100,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Bossier Lead Agency for Early Childhood	81,900.00
Brunson, Michelle	College of Education and Human Development	Supporting the Cradle to College Pipeline through Early Literacy	4,000.00
DeBose, Myra Michelle	College of Nursing	TAKE on HIV	7,000.00
Hicks, Joel	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Expanding Hybrid Education Models for Nontraditional Nursing Students to Impact Louisiana Workforce - Year 1	360,000.00
Hicks, Joel	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	CHRISTUS - NSU MOU for Undergraduate Nursing Faculty Support -Year 1 of 2	72,000.00

Table 17 (continued)  
*Newly funded grants in 2022-2023*

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Hicks, Joel	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	CHRISTUS - NSU MOU for Undergraduate Radiology Faculty Support - Year 1 of 2	65,000.00
Pearce, Leah	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Increasing the BSN Workforce in Alexandria by Expanding Clinical Admissions - Year 1 of 4	102,800.00
Peacock, Kent	Creole Heritage Center	Creole Heritage Center at NSU	10,000.00
Longlois, Julie	EDIO/Carl D. Perkins Program	Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Perkins V Basic Grant	50,149.33
Longlois, Julie	EDIO/Carl D. Perkins Program	The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) Basic Carryover Funds	8,619.82
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2023 Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	11,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	42nd Annual Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	8,742.50
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2023 Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	8,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2023 Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	7,500.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	43rd Annual Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	3,500.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	43rd Annual Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	3,360.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	43rd Annual Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	2,500.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	12th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference	1,065.00
Ammons, Kevin	NCPTT	Partnering for Preservation 2020 Modification 1	450,051.99
Ferrell, Andrew	NCPTT	Tenant Cabin Documentation	259,424.40
Gruesbeck, Steven	Office of Service Learning	Healthcare Academic and Career Exploration (A.C.E.) - Year 1 of 5	251,940.50
King, Charles	Psychology and Addiction Studies	South Southwest Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network Grant	28,200.00
Cox, J.D.	School of Biological and Physical Sciences	Natchitoches Soil and Water Conservation District and NSU Feral Swine Satellite Telemetry	50,000.00
Dugas, Anna	School of Biological and Physical Sciences	DemonSats-4: Continued Student Payload Design Program at NSULA	11,058.00
Penrod, Curtis	School of Business	Central Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Enhancement Program	40,125.00
Gregory, Hiram F.	School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs	Williamson Museum THPO's Initial Meeting	3,400.00
Kelly, Jennifer	University Affairs/NCPTT	Isabella's Ghost	1,550.00
<b>NEW GRANTS</b>			
<b>TOTAL 2022-2023</b>			<b>\$ 10,855,627.40</b>

\*Awarded but awaiting fully executed agreement

#### Analysis:

Compared to AC 2020-2021, the number of NSU employees initially receiving grants from external agencies increased from 4 to 18 and the number of new grants funded doubled. This year's grant total represents a 79% increase from AC 2020-2021. However, the average amount per grant (\$445,895 in AC 2020-2023 versus \$296,155 in AC 2022-2023) declined, in large part due to greater participation by individual faculty members and a return of the Louisiana Folk Festival and the Louisiana Studies Conference, which are typically funded by multiple smaller grants. The Child and Family Network continues to be an impactful program that garners tremendous grant support; in AC 2022-2023 they accounted for 83% of grant funds received.

#### Decision:

Due to the increase in the number of new NSU grant recipients and the fact that more faculty and staff are applying for external grant funding, it was recommended for Northwestern to dedicate at least one full-time

**Table 18**  
*Continuation of multiyear grants 2022-2023*

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	WKHS - NSU MOU to Support BSN to DNP-CRNHA Program - Year 4 of 6	644,700.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	MOU Addendum to extend the Joint Venture for BSN Nursing in Alexandria between RRMC & NSU - Year 4 of 5	150,000.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	CHRISTUS-NSU MOU NP Faculty Support (2 Years) to Transition to Undergraduate Faculty Support (2 Years) Year 7 of 7	138,878.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	Extend MOU between Christus Health Louisiana/St. Frances Cabrini Health System and NSU, Year 5 of 5	98,538.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	Christus Health LA & NSU for Undergraduate Nursing Faculty Support in Alexandria, Year 4 of 4	98,538.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Natchitoches Regional Medical Center/NRMC Foundation -NSU MOU for BSN Faculty Support - Year 5 of 5	80,370.00
Simmons, Pamela	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	PHMHNP: Bridging the Behavioral Healthcare Gap - Year 2 of 4	382,115.00
Gruesbeck, Steven	Psychology	NSU/Louisiana GEAR-UP Experiential Learning Program - Year 4 of 4	250,000.00
Erikson, Van	Recruiting	Career Compass of LA "Beyond Graduation" - Year 2 of 4	40,750.00
Penrod, Curtis	School of Business/CIS	CIS - Louisiana Economic Development Agreement, Year 9 of 10	170,875.00
Perez-Mira, Begona	School of Business/CIS	Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership (CLIP), Year 5 of 5	24,051.00
Weinzettle, Ruth	Social Work	Title IV-E Child Welfare Scholars Program - Year 3 of 3	2,501,914.00
Welch, Frances	Student Support Services	Office of Postsecondary Education: Student Support Services Program - Year 3 of 5	481,134.00
McAlister, Kimberly	Teaching, Leadership and Counseling	Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership (CLIP), Year 5 of 5	74,887.32
<b>CONTINUATIONS TOTAL 2022-2023</b>			<b>\$ 5,136,750.32</b>

person to grant writing or to provide release time for one faculty member in each College for discipline specific grant writing. Northwestern hired a firm based in Washington, D.C., Merchant McIntyre, to assist in the grant writing process for federal grants, and to provide lobbying support with Congress. It is recommended that we continue our partnership with Merchant McIntyre to assist in federal grant writing and submission of applications. The potential for additional external grants through this partnership is promising, and we are excited about the potential. A committee of internal Faculty/Staff worked collaboratively with MM to submit a Title I grant, and in the upcoming year, the School of STEM will work with MM to revise and submit an NSF grant that was very close to being funded this past year. Being awarded these grants would be a significant boost for Northwestern, and we look forward to our continued working relationship with MM. While we did not meet our target, the results are promising in evidence in the number of faculty/staff receiving grant funding. In AC 2020-2021, a cross-college grants committee was formed with representatives for each College. Their charge is to work collaboratively for professional development and grants opportunities within and across colleges. While this committee has been successful in supporting faculty with feedback and editing, as well as supporting local initiatives (IGNITE, Faculty Development Communities, and Demonology), the committee will work further to provide specific support and present grant opportunities for faculty/staff. It is also suggested that we develop additional criteria to track the efficacy of working with Merchant McIntyre.

**Responsibility:** Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

**Metric:**

**3. Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including lunch and learn.**

**Findings:**

This metric experienced a nice rebound post-pandemic. The Fall on-call week focused on re-engagement and moving beyond the virtual experiences of the pandemic era, as well as Department, School, and College workshops on engaging with a new generation of students, expectations, and approaches to learning. Likewise, Faculty and Staff had opportunities to participate in sessions sponsored by the Center for Inclusion and Diversity, and the Council of Academic Deans took part in leadership training with the President's Leadership Team.

In addition to innovative, discipline-specific professional development activities offered by colleges or departments, Northwestern provided other professional development opportunities during the year. A sampling of the sessions and participation numbers for each session are provided below.

- **Faculty Institute**, August 2023; *Referenced above.*
- **Demonology 101: A New Approach to Onboarding New Faculty**, AY 2022-2023; Required for all new faculty. As part of the initiative to support the Center for Faculty Excellence in Teaching and Scholarship, a group of 'Demonologists' conducted orientation sessions throughout the AY to better accommodate and impact the onboarding of new faculty. Several social events were held in addition to pertinent topics. Topics included: Human Resources & Payroll Policies and Procedures; Required Annual Trainings; Academic Resources; Student Conduct and Accommodations; and Academic Affairs Policy and Procedures. **100** participants. *Held face-to-face and virtually.*
- **IGNiTE**: a cohort of 12 individuals from all areas of the University were chosen to participate in this leadership training for those who wish to explore leadership development at Northwestern.
- **Faculty Development Communities**: designed to engage faculty in meaningful, impactful, goal-oriented, cross-disciplinary collaborations in support of the University's mission.
- **Technology and Innovation Professional Development Sessions** offered to faculty and staff (small groups and individual classes); taught by staff in the Office of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development. **170** participants.
- **Research Day**, April 13, 2023. Faculty and students reported their research findings in oral presentations and posters ( $N=18$  faculty;  $N=11$  UG;  $N=12$  GR). There were 55 presenters, and 83 authors. Eighteen faculty served as mentors to one or more oral student presentations.

**Analysis:**

As sessions were held virtually, and F/S double-counted in some instances, it is difficult to estimate the total number of faculty and staff who participated. However, 1,304 F/S attended virtual on-call week in professional development sessions sponsored by the Provost/VPA and Dean of Graduate Studies, the Vice President of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development, the Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity, or the President. The sessions support University efforts, such as accreditation, research, e-learning, or student recruitment. Keeping faculty current on higher education and K-12 topics is essential for academic program growth. Showcasing faculty expertise is also helpful for student recruitment and retention and maintaining community relations.

Participation in these opportunities is trending upward, and returning to face-to-face activities has been a productive element. We saw more diverse offerings this year, better opportunities, and more impactful events. Prior trend analysis for this metric reveals the following: During 2016-2017, 730 faculty (full-time; part-time) and staff participated in University and/or college, department, or school professional development workshops. Participation rates increased 96% ( $N = 1,434$ ) in 2017-2018, but a slight decline has been noted for the 2018-2019 year ( $N = 990$ ). However, the total number of faculty participating in metrics three and four was 1,883. During 2020-2021, data was spotty due to virtual attendance.

Rewording metrics three and four (objective five) occurred in 2017-2018 and may have accounted for the 96% increase. However, it remains challenging to keep an accurate headcount of faculty participation in professional development activities. There must be a clear distinction and better understanding of what is being measured in both the third and fourth metrics of objective five. It is hoped that during the next cycle, a return to in-person events will stabilize numbers across all measurements.

**Decision:**

Professional development opportunities will continue to be a priority for Northwestern. The 2022 target for this metric will remain at 1,600 participants. While we did meet this target, it is understood that a return to in-person gatherings, meetings, and PD sessions will continue to push this number upward. The university will continue to emphasize Professional Development, as well as UG and Graduate research and research collaborations.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

**Metric:**

**4. Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies.**

**Findings:**

Twenty-seven campus sites acquired new classroom or laboratory technologies in AC 2019-2020 (Table 19).

**Analysis:**

In AC 2019-2020, the number of departments or sites acquiring new or upgraded classroom or laboratory technologies decreased. This was likely due to strategic budget enhancement grants not being awarded and freezes on other funding sources due to COVID-19. In 2018-2019 the number of departments or sites acquiring new or upgraded classroom or laboratory technologies increased from 17 units (2017-2018) to 38 units (2018-2019), and from 27 (2016-2017) to 38 (2018-2019). Data collected for this measure was obtained from department heads/directors, deans, and the student technology coordinator.

**Decision:**

Computer and classroom laboratories located in on- and off-campus instructional sites will receive upgrades on an annual basis, typically every three years with funding provided by student technology fees. The Louisiana Board of Regents provides a cycle of funding for most academic disciplines.

Although the application is competitive, Northwestern faculty have been successful in receiving funds to support technology use in the classroom. Private donations, including endowed professorships, also contributed to classroom upgrades this year. A systematic University-wide process (Jump Start) was established in 2018-2019 and will provide computer upgrades for faculty on a rotational basis. Our target is adjusted by 10% or 42 departments or units by the year 2021.

Table 19  
*New Technologies Acquired in AC 2019-2020*

<b>Site Name/Location</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>	
Biological and Physical Sciences	New Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GCMS)
Biological and Physical Sciences	LabQuest Equipment/Chemistry
Biological and Physical Sciences	Polarimeter/Organic Chemistry
Biological and Physical Sciences	Computer for A&P Lab/Biopac Software
Biological and Physical Sciences	Drones and TV Studio Equipment/Natural Science and Physics
Biological and Physical Sciences	Software updates for GIS computers (w/CJHSS)
Biological and Physical Sciences	Robotics Equipment
English, Foreign Languages, & Cultural Studies, 327, 329 & 331 Kyser Hall	116 Chromebooks; four charging cabinets; three cell-phone charging stations
English, Foreign Languages, & Cultural Studies, 316-J Kyser Hall	Purchased Content Creation
English, Foreign Languages, & Cultural Studies, Kyser Hall	5 professional-level camcorders; 5 media storage cards for camcorders; podcast studio equipment and software
Mathematics, 401-G Kyser Hall	8 iPads and 8 Apple Pencils; Math software
CAPA: Fine and Graphic Arts; Sculpture Lab	Plastic recycling, Glowforge, Blacksmith Forge
CAPA: Music, Magale Recital Hall	Projector and video upgrades to livestreaming system
CAPA: New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts; Kyser 400 and 404	Upgrade computers, software, and AV system
CAPA: Theatre/Dance	Computer Numerical Control Machine; Computerized Stage Turntable
CAPA: Theatre/Dance	Theatre History classroom technology upgrades
Scholars'/Morrison Hall 221 and 223	Microsystem with wireless keyboard and mouse
Scholars'/Morrison 115, and 146	New projector, webcam
<b>College of Business and Technology</b>	
HMT, Rooms 119 and 230	Instructor podium upgrades
HMT, Room 225	Wall mount TV, microcomputer
<b>College of Education and Human Development</b>	
HHP 113, 115, 117, 123	New projector upgrades for Smart Boards
HHP 119	Screen, projector, podium, computer
HHP 125 (Dance Studio)	Big screen TV and sound system
Social Work, Kyser 310	Upgrade to WebEx video conferencing suites
<b>College of Nursing and School of Allied Health</b>	
Warrington/Rapides Radiology Labs monitors and Codec equipment	
Alexandria/Air Park Clinical Lab	
203 and 205 Distance Education Upgrades	
Other Units and Off-Campus Instructional Sites	

**Responsibility:** Office of Information Technology Systems, Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors/Department Heads.

**Metric:**

**5. Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service.**

**Findings:**

This metric was not measured during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are pleased to see recognition ceremonies and events make a return in 2022-2023. All areas in Academics used the pandemic to reimagine how they recognize faculty for their contributions. For example, the outstanding research awards and recipients were recognized during the Fall Faculty Institute which assisted in making the recognitions

more impactful. Likewise, the Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development held an event honoring their Endowed Professors. During the event, those who attended were given a three-minute presentation by the Endowed Professors, after which, the participants rotated to the next presentation. Other Colleges and Academic Departments and Schools held similar events.

#### **Analysis:**

The University recognizes outstanding teachers for each College and one or two advisors of the year at its first fall semester workday, *Faculty Institute*, followed by the University-wide luncheon. The NSU News Bureau distributes a press release, which is printed by local newspapers and shared by social media platforms. This year, 132 press releases related to faculty teaching, research, and professional service were filed. The outstanding teachers of the year were also recognized at halftime for a home football game. For colleges hosting a reunion during Homecoming, such as Education and Business, the distinguished faculty member was presented to a different audience.

At the fall luncheon following Faculty Institute, faculty and staff are recognized for their years of service to the University (25, 30, 35, etc.).

During Northwestern's Faculty Institute, faculty were selected for outstanding contributions in three areas: research, lifetime achievement, and Louisiana Studies. The criteria for each award are published and nominations are presented to the Research Council for review. The outstanding Research Award, named to honor Dr. Mildred Hart Bailey, began in 1989; the Lifetime Achievement Award, named for Dr. Jean D'Amato Thomas, began in 2011; and the Louisiana Studies Award, first given in 2012, honors Dr. Marietta LeBreton.

The President sponsored breakfast and luncheon events to honor faculty and staff for their contributions to NSU. The President also honored Faculty who had earned Tenure or Promotion during 2022-2023 with a reception at the President's Residence. Likewise, NSU Press submitted a News Release to honor and recognize these same Faculty. NSU Press also recognized new Faculty with a press release during the first full week of the semester.

During the baseline year, eight events or activities recognized faculty accomplishments. Twenty-one events were documented in 2017-2018 and 199 in 2018-2019. While there were fewer events during 2022-2023, the events were more global in approach, more impactful in presentation, and presented in a more succinct manner in which Faculty are recognized. Obviously, awareness and better record-keeping by academic and University leaders resulted in the number increase. In AC 2020-2021, the number of press releases ( $N = 128$ ) by NSU News Bureau also contributed to the increase. From 2016 to 2019, the number of events or activities for recognizing NSU faculty and staff increased markedly (2,387%). This trend continued during 2022-2023, and we aspire to continue celebrating our Faculty.

#### **Decision:**

Northwestern values its faculty and staff members and will continue the tradition of honoring faculty/staff for their excellence in teaching, research, and service to the University or to their profession. Our target is adjusted to 20 impactful and global events or activities in 2023-2024.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads; and NSU News Bureau.

## Comprehensive Summary

For AC 2022-2023, it is good to state, all Academic Excellence (AE) objectives experienced a good recovery following a difficult few years of the pandemic. We assessed 100% of eligible programs (N = 86) with strong indicators of success. Of 318 SLOs assessed across programs, 82% were met, and of 537 measures assessed, 76 % were met. Furthermore, programs are showing excellent trends toward consistency in measurement, ability to evaluate results, and creativity in making adjustments and decisions to move forward. Working in tandem with academic advisory committees, program faculty continue to evaluate how best to deliver instruction, be responsive to the preparedness necessary for moving into the profession after graduation and develop new ways to assess students and instruction. The Faculty Research Support Fund funds were expended as travel and presentation at conferences experienced an uptick; data indicated we were on par to stay consistent or exceed prior AC numbers. The response rate of students evaluating course and instructor effectiveness remained consistent, as did satisfaction with instructors and instructions with most students rating this 'Good' or 'Superior.'

Reporting for AE also showed encouraging trends in the number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty, and the number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting. It is the feeling that, while we did not meet the target this year, we can return to pre-pandemic numbers and see an increase during the next reporting period. With the return of face-to-face conferences, the opportunities will likely increase. It is also worth noting that the winners of CoBT's 'Inferno Pitch' went on to win the 'Pelican Cup' which included a \$25,000 cash prize. Likewise, ten Saxophone Students from the Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts performed at the biennial North American Saxophone Association Conference. All departments in the Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development helped to evolve the student appreciation day into the GCoEHD Honors Convocation which recognized student and faculty honors and highlighted their collaborative activities throughout the academic year (see Objective 4, metric 2).

Further encouraging trends are in an increased number of departmental and/or college-wide professional development activities to encourage faculty collaboration, and the opportunity to dialogue about cross-discipline potential activities. It should be noted that an increased focus on gathering assessment results in this area provided the increase, but it is recommended that we measure specific outcomes of these activities in the future. Furthermore, we will encourage faculty to participate in the grant process to increase participation, and we will seek more opportunities to recognize our stellar faculty for their many contributions.

## Research Within Its mission

The *Research Council* enables, supports, enhances, recognizes, and promotes research activities by undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff across all academic units of the University. The Council advises the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Provost on guiding principles and policies for the OSP, as well as on policies and guidelines for administering competitive grant programs, Research Day, research awards, participation in undergraduate research conferences, and other research activities.

Within the University's mission, research plays multiple roles. *Undergraduate Research* is a pedagogical tool to increase understanding of theory through practice and to prepare students for success in graduate and professional programs, business, and other career paths. As stated in the Graduate School's *Guidelines for Preparing Your Final Research Document at Northwestern State University*, Graduate Research, "provides

graduate students an opportunity to design and implement research, explore historical and current trends, create new designs and products, and engage in problem-solving” as a component of their professional training. Both undergraduate and graduate research activities represent best practices in higher education. The research activities of *Faculty and Staff* contribute to the generation of new knowledge in their disciplines and to innovation, best practices, and problem-solving in applications ranging from Northwestern’s traditional strengths in education and nursing to newer areas such as computer information system and engineering technology. Collectively, research activities at Northwestern contribute to a more capable workforce, service to the community and industry, innovation in the classroom, and an increase in scholarly knowledge. Thus, it is important to foster a culture of scholarship at all levels (faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students).

### **AC 2022-2023 Key Findings (in comparison to AC 2020-2021):**

- Northwestern students presented at
  - 4 national conferences: American Chemical Society, American Microbiology Society, Industrial Engineering in Operations Management, and Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society
  - 9 regional conferences: American Society of Microbiology South Central Branch, Louisiana Academy of Sciences, LA/MS Section of the Mathematical Association of America, Louisiana Education Research Association, Louisiana Studies Conference, Mid-South Educational Research Association, Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Conference, Southwest Psychology Association, and ULL Undergraduate Research Conference
- 9 presentations by 11 graduate students at 4 scholarly conferences.
- 47 presentations by 71 undergraduates at 9 conferences (up 78%), including the ULS Academic Summit.
- NSU hosted the University of Louisiana Academic Summit and was able to fill vacancies in the program, for a total of 28 research and service-learning presentations, 87% higher than our usual quota of 15.
- Research Day returned to a face-to-face format with virtual presentations to accommodate distance learning presenters and students at other off-campus instructional sites.
  - 12 presentations were presented by 23 graduate students (down 42%).
  - 11 presentations were presented by 34 undergraduate students (down 44%).
  - 18 faculty members presented their work.
  - 14 additional faculty were coauthors on student papers.

### **Plan of Action Moving Forward.**

- Develop a new system using Teams to document faculty and student presentations and publications.
- Launch Undergraduate Research Fellows and Undergraduate Research Mentors programs to better capture student presentations and publications and faculty mentoring efforts.
- Secure funding for supplies and equipment necessary to produce research posters for conference and Research Day presentations for students and faculty.

### **General Education Competencies**

Northwestern’s broad-based core curriculum leverages six key competencies central to the University’s mission and is consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents’ requirements for general education. The selection of courses encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. The requirements are designed to improve students’ writing and speaking skills; provide students with mathematical skills at the level of college algebra and above; strengthen students’ understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences; and develop an appreciation and

knowledge of the arts and humanities. These courses provide the breadth of a student's educational program while the degree program requirements provide the depth of education.

The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their respective degree programs, to obtain appropriate learning outcomes for the general education competencies. The effort in Fall 2018 was to validate the tool/method of assessment while cataloging the number of students being tested. In some cases, no formal assessment was completed other than as mentioned. In Spring 2019, all core competencies conducted a full assessment of the student learning outcomes. The only exception was in Behavioral and Social Sciences, where the data for each measure was not specified/reported. Nonetheless, the data collected did reflect whether the student met or failed to meet the student learning outcome. AC 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 were complete (fall/spring) iterations of assessing the University's core competencies.

The AC 2022-2023 core competency assessment is located on the University Institutional Effectiveness website under Assessment Cycle Reports, AY 2022-2023, General Education Core Competencies.

The AC 2022-2023 Core Competency assessment results: *14,992 student assessments were completed, representing a 20% decrease from the 18,804 assessments in AC 2021-2022.* (Note. Some courses have more than one assessment and some students may have been assessed in more than one course.) Nine of 12 Student Learning Outcomes (75%) were met in AC 2022-2023 same as in AC 2021-2022. Of the 29 measures, 23 (79%) were positive as compared to 19 (66%) last year. A total of 6 measures (21%) were not met this year as compared to 10 measures (34%) last year. The findings for each competency are provided below.

**English.** To demonstrate writing as a purpose-driven process of communication within specific contexts. *639 students were assessed (210 were Dual Enrollment) a 23% decrease over AC 2021-2022.*

**SLO 1.** Students will write a variety of types of texts for diverse audiences, purposes, and contexts. *Results include 210 dual enrollment students.*

**Measure 1.1. Target:** *80%* of student portfolios assessed from ENGL 1010 in the fall semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 1.1.

**Findings:** Target met. 578 of 639, 90.4% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, less than 1% decrease from AC 2021-2022.

**Measure 1.2. Target:** *80%* of student portfolio letters assessed from ENGL 1010 in the fall semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 1.2.

**Findings:** Target met. 580 of the 639, 90.7% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the evaluation, a 3% decrease from AC 2021-2022.

**SLO 2.** Students will perform writing as a process of planning, researching, prewriting, drafting, evaluating, and revising to develop and strengthen their compositions.

**Measure 2.1. Target:** *80%* of student portfolios assessed from ENGL 1020 in the spring semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 2.1.

**Findings:** Target met. 545 of 577, 94.4% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, showing a 6.9% improvement over AC 2021-2022.

**Measure 2.2. Target:** *80%* of student portfolio letters assessed from ENGL 1020 in the spring semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 2.2.

**Findings:** Target met. 526 of 577, 91% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, showing a 2.5% improvement over AC 2021-2022.

Findings from AC 2022-2023 provide evidence that the English program successfully fulfills SLO 2 through Measure 2.1, with 91% of students scoring 2+ on the rubric.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results and to improve reporting of assessment of instruction at all NSU instructional sites, in 2023-2024 the Writing Program Administrator will work with the Dual Enrollment areas on campus to improve reporting from instructors credentialed through NSU but employed by and working in K12 settings. Training will be increased and refined at all instruction sites as part of the effort to increase collection and reporting of assessment data to ensure instruction is consistent across the program.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results the following changes will be implemented to drive improvement in 2023-2024. Refined training will be provided to further assist faculty in collecting and reporting assessment data. Additional outreach will be made to encourage dual enrollment instructors working in the K-12 setting to submit assessment reports. Additional training in teaching critical reading and source integration will be provided to drive improvements in SLOs 1020.10 and 1020.11.

**Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning.** To apply mathematical and analytical reasoning skills. Overall, 1,236 students were assessed (of which 250 were Dual Enrollment) representing a 7% decrease over AC 2021-2022.

**SLO 1** Students will apply mathematics/analytical reasoning skills by translating a word problem into an appropriate mathematical model and translating the solution of a model into an answer to a practical problem.

**Measure 1.1. Target:** 90% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on the questions that ask the student to pick an appropriate mathematical model for a problem.

**Finding.** Target met. 1,236 students (of whom 250 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed; 1,147 met the goal (92.8%). Target met, showing a 5.4% increase over AC 2021-2022.

**Measure 1.2. Target:** 80% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on questions that ask the student to interpret the solution to a mathematical model as an answer to a practical problem. Further, in each course, at least 70% of students will attain a score of 2.

**Finding.** Target met. 1,238 students (of whom 250 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed; 1,188 met the goal (96%). Target met, showing a 4.7% increase over AC 2021-2022.

**SLO 2** Students will demonstrate the ability to solve a mathematical problem through algebraic, graphical/geometrical, or numerical/statistical methods as appropriate.

**Measure 2.1 Target:** 95% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on the questions that ask a student to solve a problem stated in mathematical symbology. Further in each course, at least 80% of students will attain a score of 2.

**Finding.** Target not met. 1,239 students (of whom 250 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed; 1,210 met the goal (97.7%). Math 2110 maintained its 100% success rate. Math 1020, 1035, 1060, 1090, 2010, and 2100 all saw improvement. Only one course

did not meet the individual course goal of 80% success, but if 1 student more had scored 2 or better, the goal would have been achieved.

**Measure 2.2. Target:** 90% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on the questions that ask a student to solve a word problem.

**Finding.** Target not met. 1,238 students (of whom 250 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed. 1,117 met the target score or better (90.2%). While our overall target of 90% success was met, individual courses varied significantly. Math 1035 and 1060 showed improvement; Math 1090, 1810, and 2100 all dropped. Once again, Math 2110 had a 100% success rate. The changes we implemented had mixed results. Clearly, students find measure 2.2 more challenging than the others.

**Natural Sciences.** To understand the universe through the study of life and physical sciences. 835 students were assessed (100 were Dual Enrollment) representing a 12% decrease over AC 2021-2022.

**SLO 1.** Students will identify the parts of the scientific method and design scientifically-sound experiments.

**Measure 1.1. Target,** 80% of students will identify the parts of the scientific method. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn about the parts of the scientific method including observations, hypotheses, and the various forms of experimental variables. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is for 80% of students to attain a quiz grade of  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. 584 of 835, 69.94% of students failed to meet the target of scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-10.06%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz but higher (+8.06%) than the AC 2021-2022 assessment.

**Measure 1.2. Target,** 80% of students will demonstrate the ability to recognize scientifically-sound experiments. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn how to use their knowledge of the parts of the scientific method to design scientifically-sound experiments. This will require the ability to identify relevant dependent and independent variables and understand how to use them to design appropriate experiments to test a given hypothesis. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is to have 80% of students attain a quiz grade  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. 442 of 835, 52.93% of students failed to meet the target of scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-27.07%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz; this is higher (+8.5%) than the AC 2020-2021 assessment.

**SLO 2.** Students will analyze scientific data to draw conclusions about the natural and physical world.

**Measure 2.1. Target,** 80% of students will demonstrate their ability to make experimental predictions. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn how to use their knowledge of the scientific method and experimental design to make predictions of experimental results. This will require the ability to interpret experimental design and use those interpretations to predict the results of the executed experiments. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is to have 80% of students attain a quiz grade  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. 381 of 835, 45.62% of students failed to meet the target of scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-34.38%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz and is above (+6.02%) the AC 2021-2022 assessment.

**Measure 2.2. Target, 70%** of students will analyze scientific data to draw conclusions about the natural and physical world. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn how to use their knowledge of the scientific method and experimental design to analyze scientific data and to make conclusions based on that data analysis. This will require the ability to interpret scientific data presented in verbal, tabular, or graphic form then use those interpretations to provide scientific explanations for those results. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is to have 70% of students attain a quiz grade  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. 368 of 835, 44.07% of students failed to meet the target of scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-35.93%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz and is above (+7.62%) the AC 2021-2022 assessment.

**Humanities.** To understand the diversity of human knowledge and experience across cultures as examined through the humanities. A total of 2304 students were assessed; 577 were dual enrollment representing a 33% decrease over AC 2021-2022.

**SLO 1.** Students will communicate an understanding of the diversity of human experience, including issues such as nationality, ethnicity, race, language, gender, sexuality, exceptionalities, religion, and culture. This SLO was assessed by at least one measure in 2,745 students.

**Measure 1.1. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110. The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic awareness and understanding of cultural differences (behaviors, expressions, etc.). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. A total of 851 students were assessed; 139 were dual enrollment. 817 out of 851 students (96%) in ENGL 2110 and ENGL 2070 scored a 3 or above on the standardized rubric.

**Measure 1.2. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students taught will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110 (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of social, literary, and historical contexts. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. A total of 782 students were assessed; 89 were dual enrollment. 719 out of 782 students (92%) scored a 3 or higher on the standardized rubric for this measure. This measure was only assessed in ENGL 2110 courses.

**Measure 1.3. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students taught will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110 (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine students' ability to analyze literary material and show

understanding of diversity through that literary analysis. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. A total of 851 students were assessed; 139 were Dual Enrollment. 800 out of 851 students (94%) scored a 3 or higher on the standardized rubric for this measure.

**Measure 1.4. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110. The writing will be evaluated to determine if students demonstrate a basic understanding of the relationships between identities and writing. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. A total of 782 students were assessed; 89 were dual enrollment. 719 out of 782 students (92%) scored a 3 or higher on the standardized rubric for this measure. Only students in ENGL 2110 were assessed for this measure. The course steward found it challenging to collect data from dual enrollment sections.

**Measure 1.5. Target 70%.** Students will demonstrate competence in researching and delivering an effective oral persuasive presentation designed for diverse audiences and contexts. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. A total of 638 students were assessed; 261 were Dual Enrollment. 530 out of 638 students (83%) scored a 3 or higher on the standardized rubric for this measure. Additional practice opportunities fostered increased confidence in students, and more frequent communication with COMM 1010 faculty helped them to provide consistent course experiences to students.

**Measure 1.6. Target 70%.** Students will recognize and analyze how verbal and nonverbal communication styles vary across cultures and affect the way people communicate by completing a Culture Project and Presentation. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. A total of 53 students were assessed; 2 were Dual Enrollment. Students scored an average of 88% on the research paper portion of the assessment project, and an average of 84% on the presentation portion of the project. Faculty observed an increased interest in students' desire to learn more about the way people interact with them in social situations. Students have reported an increased level of social anxiety since the COVID experience, so they have taken a concentrated interest in understanding themselves, others, and the impact of actions from either or both parties. Challenges continued with the same instructor from last year in terms of accurate data collection, so his sections could not be included in this year's assessment, leaving us with 62/79 students in viable sections, and 53 of the 62 completing the assessment assignment.

**Measure 1.7. Target 70%.** One team-created written assignment and one team or individual presentation of the written assignment from all BUAD 2200 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members. The writing and oral presentation will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic awareness and understanding of cultural differences (socialized norms, politics, religion, etc.). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** A Target met. A total of 194 students were assessed; 0 (zero) were Dual Enrollment. 160 (83%) of the students completed at least one part of the assessment and were included in the data report; 34 students (17%) were removed from data analysis because they did not attempt the assessment project. Of the 160 assessed, 93% completed the project with an average score above 70%. This figure is a 1% decrease from AC 2021-2022. Though this score seems to indicate a high percentage of passing students and a stable passing result, it must be noted that of the 194 students enrolled in nine sections of BUAD 2200, only 160 students could be included in the data collection process. The 34 students that did not complete the assessment piece for this objective continue to be a concern for the instructors of the course. However, the percentage removed for nonparticipation increased only 1% from 16% during the 2021-2022 cycle to 17% for this cycle.

**SLO 2.** Students will demonstrate an understanding of how various political, economic, social, and cultural movements emerge, evolve, and influence human thought and experience over time. This SLO was assessed by at least one measure in 640 students.

**Measure 2.1. Target 70%.** Students will demonstrate their understanding of political, economic, social, and cultural movements. Comprehension of how human thought and historical concepts emerge over time will be evaluated in a post-class survey, in each of the four core classes (HIST 1010, 1020, 2010, and 2020). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met for HIST 1010, 1020, 2010, and 2020. A total of 500 students were assessed; 174 were dual enrollment. In HIST 1010, the 157 assessed students earned an 86% achievement of target. In HIST 1020, 59 assessed students earned an 82% achievement of target. In HIST 2010, the 185 assessed students earned an 84% achievement of target. In HIST 2020, the 99 assessed students earned 80% achievement of target.

**Measure 2.2. Target 70%.** The specific assessment is to be chosen by the instructor of each section of PHIL 1010, consisting of a written assignment of at least 400 words integrated into some part of the course. The writing can be obtained in several ways: as a Discussion Forum posting, as an essay question on an exam, a journal entry, or something similar. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding:** Target not met. A total of 102 students were assessed; 0 (zero) were Dual enrollment. 64 of 102, 63% students scored 75% or higher.

**Social/Behavioral Sciences.** To demonstrate an understanding of human behavior and the relationship between individuals and their societies. A total of 8,501 students were assessed; 424 were dual enrollment representing a 19% decrease over AC 2021-2022.

**SLO 1.** Number of assessments: 5,967. Students will develop the skills to think critically, analyze, and discuss geographical, political, economic, and cultural variances in today's global environment.

**Measure 1.1. Target 70%.** Number of Assessments: 2,979. Number students will demonstrate their critical thinking skills through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum of 70% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 77% of students, or 2,303 out of 2,979, scored 70% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	74%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	73%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	61%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	98%	Fall/Spring
Social Science	ANTH 1510	Question Bank	58%	Fall
	ANTH 2020	Question Bank	100%	Spring
	ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	61%	Fall/Spring
	GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	95%	Fall
	GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	99%	Spring
	PSCI 2010	Question Bank	89%	Fall/Spring

**Measure 1.2. Target 70%.** Number of Assessments 2,988. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the concept of culture and its importance through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 79% of students, or 2,347 out of 2,988, scored 70% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	74%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	84%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	61%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	95%	Fall/Spring
Social Science	ANTH 1510	Question Bank	50%	Fall
	ANTH 2020	Question Bank	100%	Spring
	ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	61%	Fall/Spring
	GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	96%	Fall
	GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	96%	Spring
	PSCI 2010	Question Bank	95%	Fall/Spring

**SLO 2.** Number assessed: 2,534. SLO 2 applies to the Behavioral Science Core courses. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and socialization, thereby developing the skills necessary to navigate professional and personal landscapes.

**Measure 2.1. Target 70%.** Number assessed 1,267. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and its impact on group and individual interactions through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 77% of students, or 976 out of 1,267, scored 70% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	74%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	90%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	73%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	64%	Fall/Spring

**Measure 2.2. Target 70%.** Number assessed 1,267. Student will demonstrate their understanding of the socialization process and traditional and contemporary theoretical schools of thought through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 83% of students, or 1,056 out of 1,267, scored 70% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70%or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	74%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	92%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	74%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	96%	Fall/Spring

**Fine Arts.** To explore purposes and processes in the visual and performing arts and the ways in which fine arts conceive and express the human experience. 1,477 students were assessed (380 were Dual Enrollment) representing a 19% decrease from AC 2021-2022.

**SLO 1.** Students identify genres, artists, works, techniques, and trends within the arts.

**Measure 1.1. Target 40% growth, 70% participation.** The student will recognize important terminology used in describing the arts, important individual works of art, famous composers, playwrights, artists, choreographers, and performers, and identify important historical periods and trends in the arts. **Target:** 40% growth between the two tests with at least 70% of the students enrolled taking the exam. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of basic terminology, important artists, and critical moments in the history of art.

**Finding.** Target met. 1,377 of 1,477 (380 Dual Enrollment) 93% pretest student participation a 48% growth from last year. Post-test: 1,164 of 1477, 79% student participation. Target met for growth percentage and Pre-test Participation. Target met for growth percentage and Pre-test participation, and Post-test participation.

**Measure 1.2. Target 40% growth, 70% participation.** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the arts in European culture as well as the arts and culture of other countries. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of European and non-European cultural trends and important examples and people in the artistic community.

**Finding:** Target met. 1,377 of 1,477 (380 Dual Enrollment) 93% pretest student participation a 48% growth from last year. Post-test: 1,164 of 1,477, 79% student participation. Target met for growth percentage and Pre-test Participation. Target met for growth percentage and Pre-test participation, and Post-test participation.

**SLO 2.** Students will examine the arts through event attendance and reflection.

**Measure 2.1.** Students will attend, review, and analyze a music event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the music performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a musical performance.

**Finding:** Target met. 1,120 out of 1,525 students completed the assignment, with 380 of those total students (24.92%) being dual enrollment students.

**Measure 2.2. Target 70%** of students will attend, review, and analyze a theater event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the theater performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a theatrical performance.

**Finding:** Target met. 1,058 out of 1,152, 92% of students completed the assignment during the 2022-2023 AY, with 380 (24.92%) of those total students being dual enrollment students.

**Measure 2.3. Target 70%** of students will attend, review, and analyze an art gallery using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques: By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the visual art performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on going to an art gallery.

**Finding.** Target was met. 1,106 out of 1,525 students, or 73%, completed the assignment during AC 2022-2023, with 380 of those total students being Dual Enrollment students.

**Measure 2.4. Target 70%** of students will attend, review, and analyze a dance event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the dance performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a live dance performance or viewing of a pre-approved list of dance films.

**Finding.** Target was met. 1,162 out of 1,525 students, or 76%, completed the assignment during AC 2022-2023, with 380 of those total students being Dual Enrollment students.

**Plan of Action Moving Forward.** Each core competency will implement strategies for improvement ensuring standardization in the application of the measures to the variety of courses applicable. Each competency will deliberately integrate dual enrollment students into the assessment process.

## Quality Enhancement Plan

“*Learning for Life: Experience Your Future*” reached its conclusion in AC 2022-2023. The grant, implementation, and assessment teams have completed their work, and all academic programs have begun delivering capstone coursework. In AC 2022-2023, the *Learning for Life* initiative focused on utilizing University and program quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report, which was submitted in Spring 2023.

The Impact Report included four parts: initial goals; changes made; impact on student learning; and lessons learned. The third part identified four components for measuring impact on student learning. The QEP successfully addressed each of these components. (1) All baccalaureate programs will incorporate at least six hours of capstone coursework aligned with best practices in experiential education. *The QEP achieved this goal.* All 36 programs (and 1 concentration) developed, identified, or revised capstone

coursework for: Performance: 13; Research: 12; Internship: 12; Study Abroad: 0. (2) *Learning for Life* coursework will align with best practices in experiential education. *The QEP achieved this goal.* The process revealed that “programs should be more purposeful about program orientation programming and acknowledgment of faculty, staff, and student accomplishments.” (3) Direct Assessment / SLOs. *The QEP achieved both targets for each SLO.* (4) Indirect Assessment / Student Surveys. Students from each type of capstone experience indicated that “Time Management” and “Problem Solving” improved. Other improved skills common to multiple capstone types were “Presentation” and “Oral Communication.”

The fourth part of the Impact Report identified and explained 12 “lessons learned” to guide the development and implementation of future QEPs in the region and particularly at Northwestern. In short title format, these include: Think of the QEP as a research project; Establish stability in leadership; Join professional organizations; Be flexible about QEP SLOs; Respect professional expertise; Address challenges directly; Be realistic about data; Establish baseline data; Seek a timely conclusion; Remember community partners; Prepare for the future; Allow for impact.

Quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate that *Learning for Life* was successfully designed, developed, implemented, and assessed. The University—and particularly those involved in the QEP—completed the responsibilities and timeline established in 2016 and approved in 2017. One form of data illustrates the remarkable nature of this achievement better than any other: the alignment, implementation, and delivery of courses associated with the QEP. Seventy-seven courses are associated with the QEP. By Fall 2022, all 77 had been offered at least once.

With the completion of *Learning for Life*, it is time for the University to begin planning for the next Quality Enhancement Plan. Based on timelines used by other Universities, the QEP Director recommended the following: Northwestern should have a QEP roadmap in place by Spring 2024 and a QEP director in place by Spring 2025 to prepare for submission in January 2027.

## Strategic Focus Area 3—Market Responsiveness

Education will change significantly over the next decade as competitiveness becomes increasingly driven by learning and the need to deliver a highly productive workforce. Institutions are positioning themselves to redesign to deliver the skills required for the disruptions ahead. These changes have the potential to offer more inclusive economic growth and innovation through technology. In the context of the transformation to knowledge and learning that technologies have created, universities are developing new models and strategies that include the expansion of experiential learning and new learning formats for students.

Universities are building more collaborative environments in which the need for a broader perspective and open dialogue between the institution and business and industry partners.

Northwestern State University often has acted as a connector by establishing partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and employers to ensure students are aware of and reach the educational options most relevant to their goals. These collaborations create experiences and build programs that provide them with the skills they need as technology and the job market changes.

We engage industry partners to solicit input on current and future needs. Their feedback is invaluable as we enact changes that involve continuous assessment of programs and reflection about the needs of graduates.

Established in year one of our assessment cycle, clear benchmarks (Table 20) provide quantifiable measures to assess our progress and gauge our success. Progress towards meeting these targets in 2022-2023 include:

- 73% or 77 programs, concentrations or certifications were new or redesigned and approved the Curriculum Review Council in AC 2022-2023
- 153 industry partnerships were identified, an increase of 19% as reported AC 2019-2020
- One new post baccalaureate certificate and two new baccalaureate degree programs were approved for Northwestern State by the Board of Regents
- Northwestern State responded to workforce and industry needs through the assessment and data collection of the graduating senior survey, review of departmental advisory councils, newly approved degrees, and an increase in current academic industry partnerships.
- 100% of academic departments have active advisory councils.

We understand that the university's role is vital in developing a productive and dynamic labor force to meet the demands of the global economy. The processes being established will continue and be refined as we continue our dialogue with alumni and our workforce partners in this process to identify key indicators required for market responsiveness.

Table 20: Metrics for Market Responsiveness

AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	Market Responsiveness Metrics	AC 2022-2023 Target
87%		73%	<i>New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet workforce needs</i>	100%
	11		Number of faculty funded for faculty development	45
129		153	<i>Number of industry partnership agreements</i>	30
	91%		Percent of recent graduates who feel they are well-prepared upon graduating (increased knowledge in academic field)	100%
	86%		Percent satisfaction of recent graduates who feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field	100%
	56%		Percent of recent graduates who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation	100%
	10.0%		Percent of recent graduates who will pursue an advanced degree	50% Target Met
5		3	<i>Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts</i>	3 (Annually)
Target Met		Target Met	<i>Processes for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs</i>	4 Target Met
100%		100%	<i>Number of departments that have active advisory councils or established processes</i>	100%

Note: Outcomes for AC 2019-2020 are reflected on the far left with AC 2020-2021 to the right and AC 2022-2023 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2022-2023. Black standard text was assessed in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 or will be assessed in 2023-2024. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Four objectives support our efforts to respond to our market needs.

### Objective 1:

**Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.**

Strategies:

- As required, increase the number of faculty members with industry-recognized certifications and competencies.
- Analyze current and projected academic program needs.
- Develop University funding opportunities for faculty development, education, certifications, and skill development.

Metrics:

1. *New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.*
2. Number of faculty funded for faculty development.

**Metric:**

- 1. New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.**

**Findings:**

Of the 105-degree programs currently offered at NSU, 77 or 73% were modified in AC 2022-2023.

The major changes submitted to and approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents during AC 2022-2023 included one new post baccalaureate certificate and two new undergraduate degree programs submitted to and approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents.

- Ultrasound concentration in Radiologic Sciences
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre
- Bachelor of Science in Sport and Recreation Management

**Analysis:**

Departmental curriculum review is a process that employs data and feedback from internal and external constituents to guide curriculum development and redesign.

Curriculum development and redesign has become an economic-endorsed effort since curricula should mirror the needs of the global economic market. To produce well equipped and professionally skilled graduates for the 21st century work environment, the University collaborates with internal and external stakeholders to identify and understand the skills required by employers. Northwestern State University has created a forum by which business and industry partners can be actively engaged and communicate their knowledge of required skills.

The University and its partners consult and revise programs and courses as necessary as we work to realize a shared vision for the region. University departments assess local industry and business needs and set forth strategies for the region's workforce development system consistent with the state's strategic workforce system goals. The University is deeply committed to the economic vitality of the community and has confidence in our ability to redesign programs and curricula to meet workforce needs and evolving talent demands in local and global economies. Unless approval by outside agencies is required, departments can revise or develop new courses, concentrations, and minors internally, with the approval of the Curriculum Review Council; new majors, degrees, and certificate programs require additional approval from the Board of Regents. It is evident by the analysis of data that the University is deeply committed to responding to workforce needs.

**Decision:**

This process provides relevant information for decision making by academic departments. Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to remain at the forefront of leading trends. As a result, the institution remains focused on activities that lead to the production of relevant programs and courses that are taught by highly qualified faculty while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today's economic opportunities. Based on historical data, the target goal will be revised to 70% instead of 100%.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/ Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

**Metric:****2. Number of faculty funded for faculty development.****Findings:**

Institutional professional development opportunities during AC 2020-2021 included:

1. The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) offered 155 workshops to enable faculty to design or redesign online courses and learn more about the latest teaching practices and quality standards in online education.
2. In 2020-2021, 11 faculty received funding through the Provost's Professional Development Program.
3. In addition to the professional development offered by the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education, special sessions were offered during Faculty On-Call Week in advance of the start of classes. Three sessions were conducted in the fall, and each were attended by 316, 222, and 211 faculty. During the spring term, two sessions were held in which 169 faculty participated in session one and 173 faculty participated in session two.

**Analysis:**

Our work in faculty development is aimed at continuous improvement of our faculty, and this guides sustainable engagement. Professional development is generally initiated by faculty but may be provided at the institutional level or arranged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 2). Professional development is also viewed as a scholarly activity and emphasis is placed on these types of activities (*Faculty Handbook*, pp. 36-37).

The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) provides monthly professional development workshops for faculty that are offered face-to-face, via WebEx, and online. Of the 155 workshop opportunities offered, 122 were conducted, based on faculty demand. An extended program engages faculty in the design or redesign of online courses and provides media and instructional support as they learn more about the latest teaching practices and quality standards in online education. *The Tech Toolbox* was added to the website in 2018 to archive the monthly newsletters available for faculty which include new upcoming technology and tools for course improvement and productivity.

The Faculty Research Support Grant program prioritized funding for faculty grants for 2020-2021. Eleven faculty members, representing all four colleges, received a total of \$8,319.00 for professional development, awarded on a competitive basis. Proposals were evaluated on the benefit to the individual faculty member, their students, their department, and the University, in addition to their budget justification.

In addition to the professional development offered by the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education, special sessions were offered during Faculty On-Call Week in advance of the start of classes. Three sessions were conducted in the fall, and each was attended by 316, 222, and 211 faculty respectively. During the spring term, two sessions were held in which 169 and 173 faculty participated.

Additional opportunities continue to be initiated at the college and departmental levels and through external funding agencies. However, sustaining faculty development initiatives can be a challenge considering budget constraints. Continued work will glean opportunities to identify practices that best support the faculty and departments in their efforts to remain at the forefront of leading pedagogical practices and workforce trends.

**Decision:**

The university has embraced technological advancements and is proactive in its efforts to provide opportunities for faculty development, education, certification, and skills development. Professional development is important

because education is an ever-growing, ever-changing field. Professional development allows teachers to learn new teaching styles, techniques, and tips and interact with educators from other areas to improve their own teaching. Additional professional development for faculty and staff will be provided as new technology and software become available to the university. Moving forward, the university will continue to explore professional development needs and develop opportunities that support faculty in their professional growth.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/ Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

## Objective 2:

### Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands.

**Strategies:**

- Review current degree programs for productivity and connection to workforce.
- Monitor the development of public and private agreements.
- Develop or redesign programs to align with workforce demands.
- Monitor graduate success and preparedness using alumni and employer feedback.

**Metrics:**

1. *Number of industry partnership agreements*
2. Percent of recent graduates who feel they are well-prepared upon graduating (increased knowledge in academic field)
3. Percent satisfaction of recent graduates who feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field.
4. Percent of recent graduates who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation
5. Percent of recent graduates who will pursue an advanced degree.

**Metric:**

#### 1. *Number of industry partnership agreements*

**Findings:**

An additional 24 industry partnerships were added in AC 2022-2023 to help strengthen the relationships which ultimately have an impact on students.

**Analysis:**

Industry partnerships can be defined as those entities that serve on advisory councils, hire Northwestern State graduates, or provide scholarships, donations, internships, or training programs. As of Spring 2023, the University has 153 industry partnerships across four academic colleges. These business and industry relationships are vital to students' success upon graduation.

**Decision:**

Collaboration between the university and its partners is a critical driver of the innovation economy. These agreements provide financial assistance to students or academic departments in the form of services or donations. Forging long-term relationships with industry partners provides opportunities for students through internships, cooperatives, and research. Further, these relationships provide firsthand knowledge about the immediate and long-term needs for an industry's workforce. In the broadest sense, these relationships create public good while satisfying the mission and objectives of each partner.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Department Heads, Deans

**Metric:**

**2. Percent of recent graduates who feel they are well-prepared upon graduating (increased knowledge in academic field)**

**Findings:**

The Graduating Student Survey is administered to graduating seniors through the Handshake platform. Although data collection is not complete until October following a spring graduation, preliminary results from data available in May are used for this metric. In AC 2020-2021, of the 477 graduates completing the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey by May 25, 2021, 91% (432) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way their experiences at NSU increased their knowledge in their chosen academic field.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2018-2019, only 108 graduating seniors completed the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey by the end of the assessment cycle. Of the initial 108, 97.2 % (105) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way their experiences at NSU increased their knowledge in their chosen academic field. On the other hand, in AC 2020-2021 over four times as many graduates completed their assessment in the first month after graduation, compared to AC 2018-2019, potentially due to more frequent reminders sent to students who had not submitted their surveys. Of the 477 respondents, 432 (90.56%) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the attainment of knowledge in their chosen academic field. While this represents a significant decrease ( $p = .023$ ), the difference in survey administration may have been a contributing factor, with the most highly satisfied graduates more likely to respond without prompting, thus making up a larger proportion of the AC 2018-2019 results.

**Decision:**

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

**Metric:**

**3. Percent satisfaction of recent graduates who feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field.**

**Findings:**

In AC 2020-2021, 409 of the 477 graduates completing the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey (86%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way their experiences helped them complete job or career requirements.

**Analysis:**

Of the 108 graduating seniors completing the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey in AC 2018-2019, 104 (96.3 %) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way their experiences at NSU helped them complete job or career requirements. Although a high proportion of students (86%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” in AC 2020-2021, satisfaction level dropped considerably ( $p = .003$ ). Reductions in experiential learning opportunities due to COVID-19 restrictions may have affected student satisfaction with career preparation, especially for majors in Education, Nursing, and Allied Health, all of which depend upon internship and clinical experiences.

**Decision:**

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

**Metric:****4. Percent of recent graduates who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation****Findings:**

The *First Destination* module of the Graduation Student Survey asks respondents about their plans in the first six months following graduation. In AC 2020-2021, of the 477 graduates completing the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey, 56.4% (269) indicated that their principal activity upon graduation would be full-time employment.

**Analysis:**

Of the 108 graduating seniors completing the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey in AC 2018-2019, 60.8 % (66) planned to work full-time following graduation. The proportion of students planning full-time employment (56.4%) in AC 2020-2021 was similar to AC 2018-2019 ( $p = .371$ ) The slight reduction in the proportion of Spring 2021 graduating seniors planning to work full-time may reflect continued challenges as Louisiana emerges from pandemic restrictions.

**Decision:**

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

**Metric:****5. Percent of recent graduates who will pursue an advanced degree.****Findings:**

In AC 2020-2021, of the 477 graduates who completed the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey, 10.0% (46) indicated that they would enter graduate or professional school to pursue an advanced degree.

**Analysis:**

Of the 108 graduating seniors completing the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey in AC 2018-2019, 64.5% (70) planned to attend graduate school following graduation. The large drop in this proportion in AC 2020-2021 is significant ( $p < .001$ ). While employers continue to demand master's level credentials, graduates may be concerned about debt and have an increased interest in the attainment of micro-credentials in lieu of advanced degrees.

**Decision:**

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/ Vice President Academic Affairs, Department Heads, Deans

**Objective 3:****Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies.****Strategies:**

- Evaluate and implement employer recommendations on competencies needed into curriculum and program development.
- Use results to create or redesign programs aligned with workforce demands.

**Metrics:**

- 1. Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.*

**Metric:**

- 1. Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.*

**Findings:**

During AC 2022-2023, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved two undergraduate graduate degrees in Sport and Recreation Management and Musical Theatre. A new post baccalaureate certificate in Ultrasound within the Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences was also approved.

**Analysis:**

During 2022-2023, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved one post baccalaureate certificate and two new undergraduate degree programs for Northwestern State (Table 21). The process involves a review of market demand data and input from stakeholders by departments to determine changes that are needed to existing curriculum and future academic needs.

Table 21

*New Programs Submitted on Behalf of Northwestern State University and Approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents for 2022-2023 (Fiscal Year 07/2022–07/2023)*

CIP Code	Degree	Subject/ Discipline	Approved
310504	BS	SPORT & RECREATION MANAGEMENT	2023/03
500509	BFA	MUSICAL THEATRE	2022/08
510910	PBC	ULTRASOUND	2022/08

The post baccalaureate ultrasound concentration within the Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences provides students with the skills necessary to operate sonographic equipment and control images through various enhancements. Medical imaging studies have been a cornerstone in medical diagnosis for decades; however, technological advances and the addition of new imaging modalities now place radiologic sciences as one of the most dynamic, expanding, and high demand fields of studies. This program will prepare students to practice competently, safely, and effectively as in the specialized area of ultrasound.

The approval of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre was a significant addition to the Northwestern State University Department of Theatre and Dance, which is one of only 150 programs in the United State accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The program immerses students in a variety of performance techniques and styles in acting, dancing, voice, speech, and singing, as well as the studies of multicultural plays and musicals, music theory and the collaborative process. As the only standalone program offered by a public institution in Louisiana, BFA in Musical Theatre graduates can define their own unique path to a meaningful career and life in the performing arts including Broadway, national tours, and regional theaters.

In March 2023, the university received approval for the Bachelor of Science degree in Sport and Recreation Management. The program was established to provide completers with entry into the sport and recreation field and jobs in marketing for sport and recreation, athletic administration, gameday management, sport psychology, legal and ethical issues in sports, contemporary leadership, facility

management, sales and revenue generation, and sports media. The degree will help graduates develop skills in maintenance marketing, management, and finances in the sport and recreation industry. The program differs from similar programs offered elsewhere in Louisiana because it includes a minor in business.

The addition of the post baccalaureate certificate and two baccalaureate programs approved in 2022-2023 combined with programs previously approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents includes 26 programs or certificates approved in the last six years.  $2016-2017 (11) + 2017-2018 (2) + 2018-2019 (1) + 2019-2020 (5) + 2020-2021 (3) + 2021-2022 (1) + 2022-2023 (3) = 26$

The development and proposal of new programs and certificates require an analysis to determine current and future program needs and may be driven by the department, by alumni input, or by employers. At all levels of the continuum, academic departments and employers work closely together to analyze workforce needs and develop curriculum and training to meet those needs.

**Decision:**

Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to remain at the forefront of leading trends. As a result, the institution remains engaged in activities that lead to the production of relevant programs while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today's economic opportunities.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

## **Objective 4:**

**Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead.**

**Strategies:**

- Increase efficiency in which information is collected, analyzed, and disseminated that is needed to make institutional decisions that affect our graduates' abilities to work, learn, lead, and achieve success in their chosen careers.
- Create a process for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.
- Collect feedback from alumni, advisory councils, and employers.

**Metrics:**

1. *Processes for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.*
2. *Number of departments that have active advisory councils or established processes.*

**Metric:**

1. ***Processes for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.***

**Findings:**

Systematic data collection includes:

- Graduating Senior Survey
- Review of departmental advisory councils
- Newly approved degrees and certificates
- Current academic and industry partnerships

### **Analysis:**

During AC 2022-2023, data was collected by individual departments. This represents data acquired from state and national workforce authorities, departmental advisory councils, surveys, a compilation of newly created degrees and certificates, and an analysis of existing academic and industry partnerships.

The departments have established advisory councils or processes to assist in providing input for programmatic alignment with workforce needs. Business and industry partners assist academic departments by advising on relevant industry expectations, identifying experiential work-based learning and mentorship opportunities for students, actively participating on committees to enhance curricula and student achievement, strengthening career and college pathways by linking the integration of academic instruction and industry needs to real jobs, or participating as guest lecturers to share their professional expertise with students and give credibility to the curriculum. Departmental processes also include the use of data sources and research to inform curricular change and opportunities for innovation.

### **Decision:**

Faculty and administrators at colleges and universities are accountable to stakeholders for the relevance and quality of academic programs. Advisory boards support academic program accountability by providing guidance and feedback and serving as partners in community collaborations. The data collected provides appropriate and relevant information for academic departments, and the process by which the data is collected and made available has been established. Annually, data will continue to be collected and analyzed by departments. Further discussion regarding advisory boards will be conducted to determine how best to improve upon or establish new processes in the engagement of industry and community partners.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

### **Metric:**

#### ***2. Number of departments that have active advisory councils or established processes.***

### **Finding:**

100% of academic departments have active advisory councils or processes which include employer representation.

### **Analysis:**

All departments at the University have established advisory councils or processes to provide guidance on workforce needs. Some, such as the School of Nursing or School of Business advisory councils, have been established for a long time and enable their departments to be particularly nimble in identifying new trends in workforce needs.

### **Decision:**

Efforts will continue to engage business and community partners and refine processes that provide input into the future of workforce needs to prepare graduates to be job ready upon commencement.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

### **Comprehensive Summary**

The University is evolving and becoming an even greater partner in our state's and nation's economic vitality.

The analysis reveals a united effort in the responsiveness of university departments across specific occupations and degree programs combined with alumni who reveal satisfaction with preparation and preparedness for the workforce.

The University eagerly engages in partnerships with employers, embraces curriculum alignment and redesign, and prepares alumni to enter the workforce to embark upon long-lasting, successful careers as educators, engineers, law enforcement personnel, lawyers, doctors, nurses, artists, authors, business owners, chief executive officers, legislators, military service members, and other professions of elite status. Our institution has a long history of being a responsive university.

Maintaining and enhancing the institution's responsiveness to students and employers is important. Activities targeted for development are based on the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to make informed and effective decisions about the alignment of Northwestern's program offerings to market demand. The University's efforts must be agile to meet the needs of constituents.

The institution must continue to build upon its existing partnerships to provide additional pathways for students, engage business and industry partners through its advisory councils and solicit their feedback for program alignment with workforce needs. To this end, the institution will maintain and enhance strategies that allow it to be market responsive and deliver educational programs that directly address the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

#### **Supporting Documentation and References:**

Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>

National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=561>

## Strategic Focus Area 4–Community Enrichment

This strategic focus area is benchmarked by world-class performing arts programming, robust alumni engagement, mutually beneficial donor relationships, institutional culture of collaboration and accountability, and thriving town-gown relationships in cities where University instructional sites are located. We surveyed more than 6,700 alumni, business and industry representatives, educators, appointed and elected officials, and others to determine their interest in our existing community enrichment programs and the effectiveness of these activities. We also requested their recommendations for expansion of community enrichment efforts. Based on survey results, we have numerous new initiatives under way and existing programs have been enhanced to address various aspects of our plan for continued and increased community enrichment, shared governance, and the engagement of University stakeholders.

Growth in AC 2022-2023 includes:

- Frequency of e-communications and number of participants has increased along with a continued focus on outreach and data mining strategies.
- Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets has increased due to continued promotions and relevancy of content.
- For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, the NSU Foundation secured \$6,606,623.86 in private funding for the institution, an increase of 32% from \$5,010,624.29 recorded during the 2019-2020 cycle.
- The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, was 1,861, an increase of 8% from 1,724 recorded during the 2019-2020 cycle.
- As of June 30, 2023, the “DemoNSUnite” platform for alumni networking and mentoring has been reestablished.
- For AC 2022-2023 students collaborated with 191 campus and community partners, an increase of 21% compared to 2020-2021.
- Key stakeholders are currently engaging on the new alumni networking and mentoring platform in preparation for launch to the full alumni base in fall 2023.
- An economic impact study was completed in 2022-2023 serving as a precursor to the brand perception survey being developed for dissemination in 2023-2024.

By 2028, we will have experienced tremendous growth and expansion in all areas of community enrichment. World-class performance arts programming will be evidenced through increased participation and widespread program awareness. Robust alumni engagement and mutually beneficial donor relationships will be revealed through increases in communication, participation, and financial support. An institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability, as well as thriving town-gown relationships, will be illustrated through the growth of internal and external partnerships and increased brand identity and awareness. By achieving success in community enrichment, the institution will move ever closer to becoming “the nation’s premier regional university.”

We will continue our dialogue with all stakeholders to best identify and modify the key indicators of program improvement (Table 22).

Table 22: Metrics for Community Enrichment

AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	Community Enrichment Metrics	AC 2022–2023 Target
27,050			Number of patrons attending recitals, concerts, art exhibits, theater/dance productions	35,000
31			Number of patrons attending off-campus performances	1,000
15,433			Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets	16,000
	29,841	30,288	<i>Frequency of e-communications and number of participants</i>	30,000
			Number of alumni and chapter events held nationwide	35
	977		Number of Alumni Association members	1,500
8,995		9,813	<i>Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets</i>	9,500
5,010,624.29		6,606,623.86	<i>Amount of annual private support</i>	\$5,250,000
1,724		1,861	<i>Number of individual contributors</i>	2,000
\$44,294,756.67			Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets	\$50,000,000/ \$500,000
\$284,487.26				
	67		Number of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies	40
		Complete	<i>Reestablish platform for alumni networking and mentoring</i>	Complete
		64	<i>Number of registered users on "DemoNSUnite"</i>	1,000
		In progress	<i>Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines</i>	Complete
	97		Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off campus instructional sites	100
306,304/157		294,307.5	<i>Number of hours students spend serving the community through projects and internships/number of community partners</i>	300,000/400

Note: Outcomes for AC 2019-2020 are reflected on the far left with AC 2020-2021 to the right and AC 2022-2023 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2022-2023. Black standard text was assessed in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 or will be assessed in 2023-2024. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Five objectives support community enrichment.

### Objective 1: *World Class Performing Arts Program*

#### Strategies:

- Increase emphasis in Natchitoches and other communities on the excellence of Creative and Performing Arts at the University.
- Increase regional and national recognition of “The Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band.”
- Expand advertising for other groups such as the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, NSU Jazz Orchestra, and the NSU Dance Company.
- Expand performance schedules to include state conferences, community events, arts festivals, and master classes for citizens from Natchitoches and surrounding communities.

- Increase regional and national recognition of our Creative and Performing Arts programs through events such as the President's Command Performance, a high-profile program that attracts alumni and other friends from the local community and far beyond.
- Induct distinguished alumni into the Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame each year, which focuses widespread positive attention on the University and its music, dance, theater, and visual arts programs.
- Expand social media activities to increase attention in the community and develop stronger relationships between the University and stakeholders who have an interest in Creative and Performing Arts.

**Metrics:**

1. Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions
2. Number of off-campus performances
3. Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets

**Metric:**

**1. Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions**

**Findings:**

The number of patrons attending on-campus events in AC 2019-2020 are down from 2018-2019 (Table 23):

Table 23  
*Attendance at Campus Events*

Event	Attendance			Decrease 2018-2019 to 2019-2020
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	
Classic on the Cane Marching Contest	9,500	9,500	9,500	0.0%
GALA	15,000	15,000	10,000	33.3%
GALA at the Strand			1,100	
Theatre/Dance Mainstage	6,700	6,700	3,700	44.8%
Journalism Day	130	130	(cancelled)	
Symphony Concerts	2,200	3,000	1,500	50.0%
Art Exhibits	2,500	2,500	1,250	50.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,030</b>	<b>36,830</b>	<b>27,050</b>	<b>26.6%</b>

**Analysis:**

The number of patrons attending on campus events is down due to cancellations related to COVID-19. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, renovations to A.A. Fredericks Auditorium required the annual Christmas to be held off campus, reducing the capacity for attendance.

**Decision:**

The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to host events that are currently at capacity. To increase annual participation, additional performances would require increases in faculty/staff resources.

**Metric:**

**2. Number of off-campus performances**

**Findings:**

Number of off-campus events are down from 2018-2019 (Table 24):

**Table 24**  
*Attendance at Off-Campus Events*

Event	Performances			Change 2018-2019 to 2019-2020
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	
Musical Theatre @ Civic Organizations	5	10	10	0.0%
Design Center Students with outside contracts	6	6	8	0.0%
Voice Faculty @ Community Events	1	4	4	0.0%
Regional Symphony Performances	8	8	4	50.0%
Modern in Motion Dance Concert	2	2	2	0.0%
Mardi Gras Balls Performance	2	2	2	0.0%
The Natchitoches Christmas Parade	1	1	1	0.0%
CAPA on the Cane		1	(cancelled)	
Total	25	34	31	8.8%

**Analysis:**

The number of off-campus performances is down due to COVID-19 event cancellations. However, the number of off campus events still exceeded the target.

**Decision:**

The number of off campus performances has a healthy window for growth and the School of Creative and Performing Arts will seek more opportunities in this area, as well as a stronger way to track such performances. The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to explore strategies to become more visible throughout the state and region. GALA at the Strand will be held in Shreveport in December 2019.

**Metric:**

**3. Number of users on CAPA social media outlets**

**Findings:**

Number of users on CAPA social media outlets are up from AC 2018-2019 (Table 25).

**Analysis:**

The number of users on CAPA social media outlets continues to rise and is significantly above the target.

**Table 25**  
*Users on CAPA Social Media Outlets*

Organization/Platform	Users			Increase 2018-2019 to 2019-2020
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	
CAPA Facebook	2,866	3,448	3,718	7.8%
SON Facebook	4,492	5,061	5,801	14.6%
Theatre/Dance Facebook	1,698	1,773	1,863	5.1%
NSU Choirs Facebook	176	1,011	1,121	10.9%
CAPA Twitter	1,194	1,414	1,425	0.8%
SON Twitter	829	951	1,003	5.5%
NSU Theatre Alumni Facebook	350	1,750	320	400.0%
NSU Choirs Alumni Facebook			182	
Total	11,605	15,408	15,433	0.2%

## **Decision:**

Promotions of special events and increased financial investments will help social media outlets continue to grow.

**Responsibility:** Director of Creative and Performing Arts, Vice President External Affairs, Director of Marketing and Branding

## **Objective 2:**

### **Robust Alumni Engagement**

#### **Strategies:**

- Expand communications through online initiatives such as the “Purple Pulse” e-newsletter and “DemoNSUnite” networking platform to provide opportunities and information to alumni and to increase membership and participation in alumni activities.
- Utilize the Natchitoches Alumni Chapter as a model to expand the role and involvement of community chapters across the state and nation in University alumni initiatives; increase the number of chapter events nationwide.
- Increase social media activities such as Twitter Chats, Alumni Spotlights, “Why I Love NSU” campaigns, and other programs.
- Inform soon-to-be graduates of opportunities for participation in alumni events and endeavors through expansion of the Gradfest program, free first-year Alumni Association membership, and the new Fork ‘em Farewell program.
- Establish programs to better connect graduates with careers and jobs through social media and websites, new databases, links to Fast Start, partnerships with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, electronic and magazine advertising and the establishment of a career-based Speakers Bureau and Directory.
- Maintain a dues-based Alumni Association program to include expanded benefits and a membership card with tracking capabilities.
- Increase number of active chapters, alumni events, and activities throughout Louisiana and across the nation.

#### **Metrics:**

1. *Frequency of e-communications and number of participants*
2. *Number of Alumni and chapter events held nationwide*
3. *Number of Alumni Association members*
4. *Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets*

#### **Metric:**

1. *Frequency of e-communications and number of participants*

#### **Findings:**

The Purple Pulse e-newsletter is sent monthly to 30,288 alumni (number of alumni with active email addresses on file). This is up 1.5% from 29,841 reported during AC 2020-2021.

#### **Analysis:**

Continued growth of verified e-mail addresses is attributed to utilizing data mining strategies. Monthly e-communications to alumni and supporters continue to assist in fundraising and event awareness activities. Open and click rates are reviewed on an ongoing basis and changes were made to increase interactions.

**Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to utilize data mining strategies to capture valid email addresses. A third-party data mining firm will be contracted every three years to assist with updates and membership renewals.

**Metric:**

**2. Number of alumni and chapter events nationwide**

**Findings:**

NSU has 24 active alumni chapters nationwide. No new chapters were established during AC 2020-2021.

**Analysis:**

Efforts to add additional chapters have continued but did not result in the establishment of new chapters during the 2020-2021 cycle. Staff resources were dedicated to sustaining the 24 chapters currently in place and increasing database capabilities for future engagement efforts. (Table 26).

Table 26

*NSU Alumni Chapters*

City	State	Name	City	State	Name
Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles Chapter	Monroe	LA	Northeast LA Chapter
Washington, DC	DC	Washington DC Chapter	Natchitoches	LA	Natchitoches Chapter
Orlando	FL	Orlando Chapter	New Orleans	LA	New Orleans Chapter
Pensacola	FL	Emerald Coast Chapter	Shreveport	LA	Northwest LA Chapter
Atlanta	GA	Atlanta, GA Chapter	Raleigh	NC	Carolina's Chapter
Bloomington	IL	Bloomington, IL Chapter	New York	NY	New York Chapter
Alexandria	LA	Central LA Chapter	Seattle	OR	Pacific Northwest Chapter
Baton Rouge	LA	Baton Rouge Chapter	Austin	TX	Austin Chapter
Houma	LA	South Louisiana Chapter	Dallas	TX	DFW Chapter
Lafayette	LA	Lafayette Chapter	Houston	TX	Houston Chapter
Lake Charles	LA	Southwest LA Chapter	San Antonio	TX	San Antonio Chapter
Mandeville	LA	Northshore Chapter	Tyler	TX	East Texas Chapter

**Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to identify opportunities to add chapters in areas where alumni are concentrated. A focus on sustaining existing chapters will continue as post COVID event activities have resumed and staff members are actively traveling to chapter events. Self-sustaining activity will continue to be a focus at chapter events to ensure a strong base of consistent support is established.

**Metric:**

**3. Number of Alumni Association Members**

**Findings:**

Since January 1, 2021, 977 alumni have renewed their membership, up 56% from 627 reported in 2018.

**Analysis:**

Consulting with a third party to assist with membership efforts has proven successful. The PCI data campaign was effective in securing updates and membership renewals.

#### **Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will utilize the strategies employed by PCI and appeal to a larger base through the addition of appended contact information. A third-party consultant will be contracted every three years to secure updates and assist with membership efforts.

#### **Metric:**

##### **4. Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets**

#### **Findings:**

The NSU Alumni Association *Facebook* “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2023 were 6,572. The NSU Alumni Association *Twitter* page has 2,077 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2023. The *Instagram* page has 1,164 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2023. Total active users among the three outlets number 9,813. Each has increased in numbers during AC 2022-2023.

#### **Analysis:**

Growth of social media outlets is attributed to increased participation of volunteers and additional funds dedicated to advertising. Budget reductions led to the elimination of the university advancement marketing position and required a shift in social media responsibilities to other staff.

#### **Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will continue the use of social media platforms with a focus on increasing exposure. Paid advertisement and sponsored posts on these platforms will continue to be utilized to increase engagement. We will add a marketing position for university advancement when financially feasible.

**Responsibility:** Director of Alumni Affairs

## **Objective 3:**

### **Mutually Beneficial Donor Relationships**

#### **Strategies:**

- Increase number of staff members with job duties directly related to the cultivation and stewardship aspects of fundraising.
- Promote an “every contribution counts” concept to engage supporters not currently giving back to the University.
- Rebrand the “Columns Fund” annual giving program to provide an income stream to support non-scholarship needs at the University and endow a portion of revenue and contributions to generate perpetual earnings.
- Increase focus on income-generating initiatives such as the acquisition of property contiguous with the campus that will create new revenues and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area.
- Increase on-campus and off-campus events for prospective and current donors with a focus on recognition and awareness of giving opportunities.
- Showcase the positive impact of private funding through messages to alumni and public.

#### **Metrics:**

1. *Amount of annual private support*
2. *Number of individual contributors*
3. *Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets*

**Metric:****1. Amount of annual private support****Findings**

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, the NSU Foundation secured \$6,606,623.86 in private funding for the institution. This is up 32% from \$5,010,624.29 recorded during AC 2019-2020.

**Analysis:**

Non-revenue contributions continue to increase. New sources of non-revenue contributions include additional grant funding and public-private partnerships. Existing donors' average gift amounts have also increased.

**Decision:**

Development officers will continue to seek contributions from both current and new donors. As development officers build relationships through the cultivation process, more opportunities for solicitation will arise, resulting in increased contributions. Reductions in the number of development positions will restrict overall capacity to secure non-revenue contributions. It is recommended that additional development positions be added as soon as financially feasible.

**Metric:****2. Number of individual contributors****Findings:**

The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, was 1,861. This is up 8% from 1,724 recorded during the 2019-2020 cycle.

**Analysis:**

The number of individual donors has increased. The increase is primarily due to past donors re-engaging post COVID. Efficient donor relations staffing has also played a role in retaining existing donors through timely statement processing and increased benefit promotion.

**Decision:**

Donor relations staff will continue to focus on retention strategies and assist with promoting mutually beneficial donor relationships. Additional fundraising staff is recommended to increase the number of individual donors.

**Metric:****3. Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets****Findings:**

As of June 30, 2020, restricted endowment assets totaled \$44,294,756.67 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled \$284,487.26. Totals are up from approximately \$40,000,000 and \$181,000 reported during the previous cycle.

**Analysis:**

Restricted endowment growth has continued by securing large, endowed gifts and the anticipated surge of \$520,000.00 in state matching funds. Unrestricted endowment growth has continued, but not at the level needed to meet the target. While Columns Fund giving has increased, increased expenditures requiring the use of unrestricted funds has limited the ability to increase the unrestricted endowment.

#### **Decision:**

The NSU Foundation will continue to promote the “Columns Fund” by educating donors on the purpose and importance of giving to the unrestricted account. As increases in unrestricted giving are realized, and expenses are mitigated, an annual percentage will be set aside and added to the NSU Foundation endowment to ensure perpetuity. Annual yield from the endowment will be applied to the corpus to grow the fund until annual unrestricted budgetary needs can be paid through interest earnings.

**Responsibility:** Vice President External Affairs, Director of Development

#### **Objective 4:**

#### **Institutional Culture of Collaboration and Mutual Accountability.**

##### **Strategies:**

- Enter partnerships with business, industry, government agencies, and especially cities where NSU instructional sites are in an effort to increase collaboration and mutually beneficial relationships with entities associated with the school.
- Expand decision-making at the administrative level through an internal Leadership Team structure that includes more than 20 individuals from across the campus.
- Encourage alumni, supporters, and other stakeholders to act in an advisory capacity for University activities.
- Develop an overarching communications strategy designed to expand validation of the University’s brand, core goals, and mission directed at all stakeholders.

##### **Metrics:**

1. Number of partnerships with business, industry, and government agencies
2. *Re-establish platforms for alumni networking and mentoring*
3. *Number of registered users on “DemoNSUnite”*
4. *Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines*

##### **Metric:**

##### **1. Number of partnerships with business, industry, and government agencies**

##### **Findings:**

NSU is currently engaged in 67 cooperative endeavors with public and private entities, up 16% since AC 2018-2019. These include relationships such as those with the Building our Region’s Future organization to invest in startup companies, the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance to promote manufacturing in the region, the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development, the Bossier Parish Chamber of Commerce to promote military events, and numerous state agencies and institutions, comprising 50 articulation and partnership agreements: <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/articulation-partnership-agreements/>. The potential for growth in this area is large, as the benefits the University can provide to private partners are vast and readily available.

##### **Analysis:**

Growth of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies is healthy. Cooperative endeavors with private partners allow for shared cost and mutual invested interest. Growth of articulation and partnership agreements allow for expanded academic flexibility and assist greatly in increasing the

number of transfer students. The NSU Campus Marketplace has proven successful as a model for future real estate investments and private revenue streams.

**Decision:**

The University will continue to seek partnerships with business, industry, and government agencies and work closely with the recently formed special committee of the NSU Foundation board of directors to identify investment, industry, regional support groups, and peer institutions to enhance opportunities for mutual growth.

**Metric:**

**2. *Re-establish platforms for alumni networking and mentoring.***

**Findings:**

As of June 30, 2023, the “DemoNSUnite” platform for alumni networking and mentoring was reestablished. The site has been beta tested and a “soft launch” is in progress engaging key stakeholders, including Alumni Association and Foundation board members, to assess end user experience and provide feedback.

**Analysis:**

Reestablishing the platform was challenging with limited staff resources. Collaboration with the NSU Career Center and support from the NSU Alumni Association board of directors increased production bandwidth and accelerated progress.

**Decision:**

The site will be launched to the public in October of 2023 to coincide with marketing and promotions for Homecoming week.

**Responsibility:** Director of Alumni Affairs; University Advancement Database Manager

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of registered users on “DemoNSUnite”***

**Findings:**

As of June 30, 2023, 64 users were registered on the “DemoNSUnite” alumni networking and mentoring platform.

**Analysis:**

The 64 users consist of Alumni Association and Foundation board members engaging with one another as part of the “soft launch”. The site will be made available to the full alumni base and registered users will be counted as pre-entered alumni activate their accounts.

**Decision:**

Continue to adjust the site in preparation for the October launch.

**Responsibility:** Director of Alumni Affairs; University Advancement Database Manager

**Metric:**

**4. *Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines***

**Findings:**

In progress. A brand perception survey was not conducted during 2022-2023. An economic impact study was conducted instead and will serve as a tool to further develop the brand perception survey.

#### **Analysis:**

An economic impact study was conducted prior to the development of the brand perception survey. The brand perception survey is scheduled for completion and dissemination in 2023-2024.

#### **Decision:**

Proced with the development of the brand perception survey; administer in 2023-2024.

**Responsibility:** Executive Assistant to the President/Director of Strategic Initiatives; Director of Marketing and Branding

### **Objective 5:**

#### **Thriving Town-Gown Relationships**

##### **Strategies:**

- Plan activities such as athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs to increase awareness of the University at sites away from the main campus.
- Identify and establish a database of graduates who earned degrees online or at sites other than the main campus to help provide a network to expand town-gown relationships at all the University's educational sites.
- Promote increased involvement of online and off-campus learners in both community and University events and programs.
- Expand community service projects and internships involving Northwestern students with a focus on youth programs, food bank initiatives, beautification, preservation, economic development, literacy, improved health, and other initiatives that provide valuable experiences for students, positive recognition for the University, and beneficial assistance to the communities.
- Increase cooperative programs with the community and technical colleges, public schools, business and industry, and other entities that cultivate town-gown relationships for the University, not just at its main campus in Natchitoches but also in Shreveport-Bossier City, Leesville-Fort Polk, Alexandria, and Marksville, where the University offers classes at the Tunica Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resources Center.

##### **Metrics:**

1. Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off-campus instructional sites
2. *Number of hours students spend serving the community through projects and internships.*

##### **Metric:**

1. **Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off-campus instructional sites**

##### **Findings:**

Ninety-seven events were held in AC 2020-2021 at off-campus instructional sites, up from 81 in AC 2018-2019.

#### **Analysis:**

Event and activity growth at our off-campus instructional sites continues to thrive. Many events previously exclusive to the main campus, such as Freshman Connection, Welcome Week, Gradfest, and Student Activity

Board events, are now held at our off-campus instructional sites. Other activities include events such as the “Victory Tour” promoting athletic events, “Transfer Day” highlighting students transferring in from 2-year institutions, and “Military Appreciation Day” at instructional sites located on military installations.

**Decision:**

The University will continue to develop strategic initiatives and activities and host events at off-campus instructional sites. Growth in this area is possible and increases will continue with proper planning and adequate funding.

**Metric:**

**2. Number of hours students spend serving the community through projects and internships.**

**Findings:**

During AC 2022-2023, NSU students spent 294,307.5 hours serving the community. The economic impact of these hours (calculated at \$7.25 per hour) is \$2,133,729. For AC 2022-2023 students collaborated with 191 campus and community partners.

**Analysis:**

While the number of campus and community partnerships rose by 21% compared to AC 2020-2021, the number of service hours declined approximately 9%. Three major divisions of the university provide key information for the annual service report: Academic Affairs, The Student Experience, and Athletics. Administrators within each division work with the university’s Director of Service-Learning to efficiently track and report student service hours as well as the campus and community partners that benefit. Academic Affairs produces the largest number of these service hours. Most of the service hours are derived from the (unpaid) field experience required of students majoring in the disciplines of Education, Nursing, and Allied Health.

All undergraduate Teacher Education Seniors undertake a two semester “internship” termed a Residency. During AC 2022-2023, residents began receiving a \$3300 stipend from Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). Whereas these internship hours used to be included among the (unpaid) service hour reports years ago, they are now excluded because of the compensation that residents receive. This \$3300 stipend is a testament to the economic value placed on service to the community.

**Decision:**

The Office of Service-Learning will continue to gather information from the three major divisions of the university and will continue to provide data in the form of total hours served and number of campus and community service partners.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, Vice President External Affairs

**Comprehensive Summary**

Community Enrichment is essential in increasing the major growth areas of enrollment and funding. Every aspect plays a unique role in achieving success in these areas. Whether it be national recognition for world class performing arts or local prestige through regional outreach and community service, the identity and reputation of the institution are crucial to continued success.

To ensure Community Enrichment initiatives continue to thrive, respective increases in financial investments will be required. As state funding decreases, funding from private sources will be necessary to sustain growth. By building the perpetual endowment fund and investing in programs that provide a return on investment, the institution will be able to achieve financial independence and continue toward the goal of becoming the nation’s premiere regional university.

## Community and Public Service within the Mission

**Community/Public Service Mission Statement:** Northwestern is committed to serving the citizens in its region through organized community and public service projects that are relevant and meaningful to the volunteers and to those being served. Service projects that target community-identified needs enhance (and are enhanced by) university-community partnership.

**Purpose:** Community/Public Service projects provide an avenue for students to gain direct experience working on projects that address one or more of these eleven community/public service focus areas:

- Healthcare (Physical & Emotional)
- Sports & Fitness
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Development
- Creative & Performing Arts
- Event Planning & Entertainment
- Historical & Cultural Preservation
- Community Safety & Emergency Preparedness
- Protection of Vulnerable Children & Adults
- Combatting Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness

**Data Collection:** The University has an efficient plan for tracking and reporting student participation in Community/Public Service. These service hours come from three major divisions of the university:

- Academic Affairs
- The Student Experience
- Athletics

Administrators within each division assist the Director of Service Learning with compiling this data at the end of each Spring semester.

### AY 2022-2023 Key Findings (with comparisons to AC 2020-2021)

- For AY 2022-2023, the grand total of students' community/public service hours was **294,307.5**. This is approximately 9.5% fewer hours than AC 2020-2021's grand total of 325,916.5.
- For AY 2022-2023, NSU's service hours have an estimated economic impact of \$2,133,729 calculated at federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.
- For AC 2022-2023, the number of Campus and Community Partners with whom students collaborated was 191. This is approximately 21% more than the 158 Campus and Community Partnerships reported for AC 2020-2021.
- For AC 2022-2023, NSU's Community/Public Service projects addressed all eleven focus areas, unchanged from AC 2020-2021.
- For AC 2022-2023, NSU students made twelve service-learning presentations at the University of Louisiana System Academic Summit on Experiential Learning. A total of 29 NSU students participated in making these presentations. This is four times the number of presentations and over seven times the number of students as there were during AC 2020-2021 when a total of four NSU students made three service-learning presentations.

## **Plan of action moving forward.**

1. The university will continue to provide safe opportunities for students to engage in service activities. These include options for participating in-person or remotely. The opportunities align with the current Student Affairs Event and Activity Guidelines, first introduced in Fall 2020.
2. NSU Director of Service-Learning will continue to serve on the University of Louisiana System's Service-Learning Council and Academic Summit Committee. The Director will continue to advocate for NSU students to make presentations about their outstanding community/public service projects at the Summit. Each Spring, one of the nine UL-System Schools hosts the Academic Summit.
3. Faculty and staff will have access to resources with which to track, enhance, and promote their students' involvement in community/public service.
4. Director of Service-Learning will collaborate with administrators within each major division of the university to streamline the data compilation and reporting process at the end of each Spring semester.

## **University Capital Outlook**

The University Affairs Office works with the University President and administration to develop capital outlay, deferred maintenance, and small capitalization projects that meet the University's Strategic Plan and Strategic Focus Areas' (SFAs) needs. It is also responsible for maintaining a five-year plan for facilities compliant with the State Legislature's capital outlay program.

Over the last several years, the State has directed capital outlay resources to new construction and deferred maintenance projects. In support of these efforts, the University Affairs Office identified and addressed several critical deferred maintenance needs using resources from the State and the University General Fund. Completed projects in 2022-2023 include the demolition of Caddo Hall and repairs to the cart paths and sidewalks at the Wilson Recreational Complex. The resurfacing of Caspari Drive and the replacement of the Wellness Recreation and Activity Center roof were also completed during AC 2022-2023. Due to a wet winter, several potholes have been repaired across campus this spring.

Projects in progress include the Health & Human Performance Roof, Fournet Hall Roof, Turpin Stadium lighting, and Prather Coliseum lighting. Also in progress are four new elevators to be installed: two in Kyser Hall, one in the Watson Library, and one on the Shreveport campus in the Nursing building. The ULS has approved naming the new academic building Robert Alost Hall, and the construction documentation phase is underway. Groundbreaking for Alost Hall was held on Tuesday, March 14, 2023. The new Health Performance Center is in the design phase. We anticipate the new Health Performance Center groundbreaking in the Fall 2023 semester. These projects address all five of the University's SFAs. The University also continues to address ADA components of the Five-Year Plan at all instructional sites.

## **Technology at Northwestern State University 2023**

In the realm of technological advancements and campus improvements, a series of projects were underway at Northwestern, each contributing to enhancing its systems and services. These projects are in three categories: completed, in progress, and planned.

Among the completed projects was the implementation of Multifactor Authentication (MFA) for all students, faculty, and staff. MFA added an extra layer of security to protect sensitive information. Additionally, the university had successfully transformed the Banner 9 Employee Self-Service into a mobile-ready interface, ensuring easy accessibility for users on the go. The successful implementation

of Banner 9 Employee Self-Service allows employees a mobile-friendly interface to Payroll-related items such as time entry, deductions, pay stubs, and W2's.

A wireless upgrade was also completed. The Natchitoches, Shreveport, Alexandria, and Leesville campuses have new wireless access points. This upgrade aimed to enhance connectivity and provide a more efficient wireless network experience. As part of the upgrade, a new guest wireless was implemented to allow visitors and visiting students with wireless access without having accounts.

In terms of ongoing projects, all the necessary components for replacing the telephone system have been acquired, but the installation is waiting on the arrival of trunks from AT&T.

Training and installation have commenced for implementing the Banner Document Management System. It is anticipated to go live in September 2023. This system will streamline document management processes across the university.

Several initiatives are scheduled for completion within six months. Several new Banner 9 Self-Service modules have been successfully installed and are currently undergoing testing and configuration to ensure seamless functionality. Finance Self Service, Faculty Self Service, and Student Self Service are aimed to empower faculty and students with more efficient self-service options. Additionally, the university plans to introduce the Ellucian Experience Portal, which will replace the existing myNSU platform and mobile app, providing an enhanced, unified, and modern user experience.

Another significant undertaking is rebuilding the Disaster Recovery Center in Shreveport, as some critical equipment dates to 2004. This project will modernize the center's infrastructure and improve its disaster recovery capabilities.

A series of longer-term projects are scheduled for completion within 12 months. The university aims to upgrade its connection to the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) from the current 10 Gb to a faster 100 Gb connection. It will significantly enhance network speed and capacity. The Ellucian SaaS Cloud migration is being analyzed to determine its feasibility and requirements.

The university is reviewing the status of campus network switches and video hardware for potential replacement. These upgrades are needed to ensure a robust and efficient network infrastructure and improve video systems across the campus.

As the university continues its commitment to technological advancements and campus improvements, these completed, in-progress, and planned projects would undoubtedly pave the way for a more secure, efficient, and connected educational environment for its students, faculty, and staff.

## Strategic Focus Area 5–Athletic Prominence

It is often said that an athletic program is the “front porch of a university” based on the exposure that success can provide for an institution. Achieving the identified goals associated with the *Athletic Prominence* component of NSU’s Strategic Framework will result in outcomes for student-athletes that emphasize academics, leadership, service learning, competitiveness, and an experience that will ultimately prepare them for life after NSU. The athletic prominence area will also provide all students, community members, and alumni with entertainment and pride at an unmatched value.

Several individual and team highlights during 2022-2023 generated positive publicity and a high level of alumni/community pride. Furthermore, the academic and citizenship emphases continued to produce positive results. Specifically, the athletic department’s three core values all yielded levels of success:

### Academic Achievement

- 12 of the 14 teams exceeded the 930 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmark.
- The most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rate report reflected that NSU student-athletes set yet another all-time high—88%.
- Four teams—men’s cross country, women’s soccer, women’s tennis and volleyball—recorded perfect 1,000 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores as reported this spring for the 2021-2022 academic year.
- Three teams—men’s cross country, volleyball, and women’s tennis—earned “Public Recognition” for recording five consecutive years of perfect scores on the NCAA Academic Progress Rate.
- NSU had 72 student-athletes graduate during the 2022-2023 Academic Year.

### Personal Responsibility

- Northwestern State was awarded the Community Service Award, which is presented annually to an institutional Student-Athlete Advisory Committee that has exhibited exceptional community service.
- NSU student-athletes registered 3,600+ hours of community/campus service and engagement for the 2022-2023 year.

### Competitive Success

- NSU’s Athletics finished tied for 4<sup>th</sup> in the Southland Conference Commissioner’s Cup, their highest finish since 2014-15.
- Seven of the 14 teams finished in the top 3 of the Southland Conference (Football, Women’s Soccer, Men’s Basketball, Men’s Indoor Track, Men’s Outdoor Track, Women’s Indoor Track, and Women’s Outdoor Track). Football had their first conference winning season (4-2) since 2010.
- The women’s track and field team won the Southland Conference Indoor Championship, a program first. They also finished second in the Southland Conference Outdoor Championship. Head Women’s Track and Field Coach Mike Heimerman was named the Indoor Track and Field Coach of the Year.
- Sprinter Zach Beard earned second-team All-American honors in the indoor 60 meters, becoming Northwestern State’s first All-American indoor sprinter since 1998.
- Sanaria Butler was named SLC Outdoor Track and Field Athlete of the year and SLC Indoor Track Freshman of the Year. Sanaria also broke the school 400-meter record twice in two weeks enroute to earning honorable mention All-American honors in the event. Butler qualified for

the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in the event, becoming NSU's first freshman to reach the national meet since 2011.

- Vanessa Balde was named the SLC Outdoor Freshman of the Year.
- Djimon Gumbs set a school record in the men's discus.
- Across the indoor and outdoor seasons, the NSU track program set 5 new school records and produced 68 marks that rank in the school's top 10.
- Baseball third baseman Michael Dattalo produced one of the best rookie seasons in school history enroute to earning Freshman All-American honors from Collegiate Baseball magazine. Dattalo batted .372 and set a school freshman single-season record with 83 hits, which tied for fourth in program history. Dattalo's Freshman All-American selection made him the third such awardee in the past four years.
- Jeffrey Elkins became NSU's all-time home run king as he capped his NSU career with 36 home runs, five more than the previous mark.
- The Demon men's basketball team enjoyed a turnaround season, eclipsing the 20-win mark and reaching the Southland Conference Tournament title game for the first time since the 2012-13 season. The Demons enjoyed a 13-win increase and tied for third nationally in terms of improvement.
- DeMarcus Sharp produced the No. 4 scoring season in school history enroute to earning Southland Conference Player of the Year, All-Louisiana Newcomer of the Year, and first-team NABC All-District 22 honors. Sharp's 40-point performance in a Feb. 25 loss at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi was the Demons' first 40-point game since Billy Reynolds hit that mark Dec. 4, 1976.
- Men's Basketball's Ja'Monta Black, whose 122 made 3-pointers established a new single-season school record and stand as the second-most single-season 3-pointers in Southland Conference history. Black finished the season fourth nationally in total 3-pointers, 3-pointers made per game and 3-point attempts (325).
- Football wide receiver Zach Patterson earned Southland Conference Newcomer of the Year honors after catching 83 passes, the second-most in school single-season history.
- Gracie Armstrong was named conference player of the year in Soccer; in addition, Olivia Draguicevich was awarded forward of the year.
- Volleyball reached the semifinals in the conference tournament.

The Athletic Department continued to expand the program's external scope and brand by increasing social media reach, generating revenue, and expanding the program's profile through enhanced community service efforts. Furthermore, noticeable facility updates were completed.

Table 27: Metrics for Athletic Prominence

AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	Athletic Prominence Metrics	2022-2023 Target
69,326		70,292	Yearly event attendance for all sports	151,361
\$2,434,233		\$2,939,068	Yearly revenue (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships, game guarantees)	\$2,380,264
	11/97	44/101	Number of merchandise outlets/licensees	18/110
	20,614	21,250	Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes	25,458
	10,700	11,541	Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers	11,511
\$44,683		\$39,065	Licensing royalties (LRG)	\$70,746
	210/\$8,385	156/\$18,720	N-Club membership/revenue	182/\$14,000
	182	186 (Holders) 792 (Tix)	Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e., Leesville, Shreveport, Alexandria, Bossier City)	405
	7	11 (data incomplete)	Camps and clinics for area youth	20
500		50 (data incomplete)	Establish transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors, current/potential donors) and sustain/grow annually.	60
	30	36	Student-athlete participation in campus activities, (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM)	20
	1,544	3,624	Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).	4,000
	2.979	2.952	Student-athlete GPA	3.11
246		147	Number of Dean's/President's List honorees per year.	250
217		187	Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees per year.	200
971/979		959/970	Single- and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores.	940
17		11	Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.	10
3/9		7/14	Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or finish in the upper third of the conference standings.	14

Note: Outcomes for AC 2019-2020 are reflected on the far left with AC 2020-2021 to the right and AC 2022-2023 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2022-2023. Black standard text was assessed in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 or will be assessed in 2023-2024. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Four objectives support our efforts to gain and retain athletic prominence.

### Objective 1:

#### Enhance Marketing Opportunities, Game Day Experience, and Resource Acquisition

##### Strategies:

- Increase external assertiveness in terms of NSU Athletics brand awareness and merchandise availability through increased advertising and affinity.
- Improve product variety and availability of merchandise through regional merchants, as well as informing fans of media coverage and outlets with which to engage dynamic content, to enhance school pride.
- Increase the visibility and awareness of student-athletes and coaches representing NSU, as well as adding opportunities for the department to connect with former student-athletes, to help to keep those alumni engaged and cultivate supporters.

- Improve the game day experience with continuous attention to concessions and merchandise offerings, revamped tailgating amenities/options, and strategic in-game activities and giveaways to foster an environment that expands fan satisfaction, leading to heightened attendance and loyalty.
- Focus on the Northwest Louisiana market, inviting members of the Shreveport nursing campus and Fort Polk to participate in events both on the main campus and on-site in Shreveport and Central Louisiana, if appropriate. These locations will add new segments to our fan base.

**Metrics:**

1. *Yearly event attendance for all sports*
2. *Yearly revenue for all sports*
3. *Number of merchandise outlets*
4. Social media exposure (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)
5. *Licensing royalties*
6. *N-Club membership and revenue*
7. *Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)*

**Metric:**

**1. Yearly event attendance for all sports**

**Findings:**

Compared to AC 2021-2022, overall total attendance was up slightly (1%) in 2022-2023. Despite low attendance for football (down 42%), volleyball, men's and women's basketball, and baseball all increased in both total attendance and average attendance in 2022-2023 (Table 28).

**Analysis:**

With the success of the men's basketball team both men's and women's basketball nearly doubled their attendance number from AC 2021-2022. Both softball and baseball increased total attendance despite finishing fifth and sixth in the Southland Conference respectively, which was below preseason predictions. However, the lack of a winning season for football, which was their 15<sup>th</sup> straight losing season, affected the athletic department's bottom line, specifically as it related to ticket sales.

**Table 28**

*Change in Game Attendance by Sport, 2018-2019 to 2022-2023.*

Sport	2018-2019			2019-2020			2021-22			2022-23		
	Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance	
		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average
Football	5	38,914	7782.8	5	33,122	6624.4	5	32,828	6565.6	5	18,843	3768.6
Soccer	10	1,981	198.1	2	238	119.0	7	1,564	223.4	8	1,149	143.6
Volleyball	10	2,721	272.1	9	2,891	321.2	9	1,167	129.7	10	1,333	133.3
M-Basketball	14	17,988	1284.9	14	15,722	1123.0	12	10,115	842.9	13	17,205	1323.5
W-Basketball	15	10,585	705.7	15	10,072	671.5	12	5,399	449.9	14	9,220	658.6
Softball	26	7,395	284.4	4	1,061	265.3	15	3,769	251.3	18	4,172	213.8
Baseball	23	12,790	556.1	12	6,220	518.3	28	14,722	525.8	26	18,370	706.5
Total		92,374			69,326			69,564			70,292	

**Metric:****2. Yearly revenue for all sports****Findings:**

Revenue totals for AC 2022-2023 were \$2,939,068, including \$219,603 for ticket sales (season and single game), \$1,083,121 for Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted and restricted gifts (cash and in-kind), \$389,844 for sponsorships and game guarantees of \$1,246,500.

**Analysis:**

Ticket revenue in AC 2022-2023 was reported at \$236,257, representing a \$13,622 increase (6%) from the previous year's total of \$222,635. Men's Basketball recorded \$31,596.59 in total ticket sales, the highest total since the 2015-2016 season. Women's Basketball increased to a respectable \$26,216.59 in total ticket sales, the highest total since the 2016-2017 season. Soccer, a non-ticketed sport, reported \$3,486 in total ticket sales due to hosting the 2022 Southland Conference Tournament. This is the highest total reported since the Ticket Sales Comparison Chart has been kept and the third consecutive year that total tickets sales increased in the NSU Athletic Department. The athletic endowment fund surpassed the \$2.4 million mark for the first time with an increase of over \$300,000; N-Club membership revenue was at an all-time high even though the number of members was down due to the increase in membership amount; and the annual fund surpassed the previous year's total.

**Metric:****3. Number of merchandise outlets/licensees****Findings:**

- The total number of merchandise outlets carrying NSU has drastically increased from 11 in AY21 to 44 in AY23. These outlets include Wal-Mart, Walgreen's, Lids, NSU Marketplace, Barnes & Noble, Posey's, Super 1 (2), Hibbett (Natchitoches and Leesville), and Simply Chic.
- The total number of licensees authorized to produce items featuring the NSU logo increased from 97 in AY21 to 101 in AY23. Those vendors request approval to sell the NSU brand through Collegiate Licensing Company (NSU's licensing partner), which in turn confirms approval from NSU.

**Analysis:**

The increase in number of vendors desiring to sell merchandise (i.e., glassware, apparel) bearing an NSU logo reflects an increase in recognition and awareness of the NSU brand.

**Metric:****4. Social media exposure (i.e., Facebook, Twitter)****Findings:**

During 2022-2023, a 7.8% gain from the previous year was recorded on the main Twitter account (@NSUDemons), averaging more than 16,000 impressions per month. Followers on the main account increased to 11,541, with cumulative followers across 10 sport-specific accounts increasing by 62.5% to over 54,000. Facebook registered 3.1% growth for content shared on the platform throughout the academic year.

**Analysis:**

The continuing effectiveness of the athletic department's social media connectivity, which was impacted positively by a partnership with BoxOut Sports Graphics, combined with an enhanced level of social media presence by each sport has expanded the NSU brand. Also, the department's partnership with Mobile Cause continues to enhance on-line giving and text to give campaigns (text "Demons" to 71777 to donate). Finally, credit

for an uptick in social media numbers partly belongs to men's basketball student-athlete Hansel Enmanuel, whose 4.2 million social media followers helped NSU gain several new followers on the various platforms.

**Metric:**

**5. Licensing royalties**

**Findings:**

Licensing revenues through the Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC), based on the last three quarters of calendar year 2022 and the first quarter of 2023 reflected a decrease of \$1,753 (4.3%) over the previous year (Table 29).

**Analysis:**

The decline in licensing revenue since its peak of \$47,146 in 2016-2017 is probably a result of a couple of factors: football's continued losing season record, the decline in enrollment (not as many students buying NSU logo merchandise), and the relative stagnant number of licensees.

Table 29

*Licensing Resource Group Revenue/CLC by Academic Year*

AY	4th Qtr. (prior yr.)	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	Total
2015-2016	8,495.75	8,312.63	7,977.94	9,757.60	34,543.92
2016-2017	12,508.86	18,009.30	10,580.81	6,047.17	47,146.14
2017-2018	10,040.00	10,144.24	7,973.51	7,475.91	35,633.66
2018-2019	9,294.65	8,917.83	6,744.10	10,738.22	35,694.80
2019-2020	13,177.43	10,381.34	15,627.44	5,496.60	44,682.81
2021-2022	9,415.62	12,616.94	7,764.38	11,021.47	40,818.41
2022-2023	9,826.22	10,716.93	8,173.66	10,348.44	39,065.25

**Metric:**

**6. N-Club membership and revenue**

**Findings:**

N-Club revenue increased from \$8,385 in 2021-2022 to \$18,720 in 2022-2023 but membership decreased from 210 to 156.

**Analysis:**

The increase in N-Club revenue is a direct result of the Demon Unlimited Foundation increasing the membership from \$60 to \$120. The reason for the decrease in N-Club membership could also be due to the increase in the yearly membership fee.

**Metric:**

**7. Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)**

**Findings:**

The number of season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parish increased from 182 in AY 2021-2022 to 186 AY 2022-2023. The 186 season ticket holders collectively purchased 792 season tickets.

**Analysis:**

The small increase in season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parish is a result of the football program's not having a winning season record since 2008. I have heard from people in the community

that they want to support a program that will win. Once the football program gets turned around there will be an increase in season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parish.

#### **Decision:**

The Athletic Department must come up with creative ways to increase season ticket sales outside of Natchitoches. The Athletic Department will make a concerted effort to market and promote the program outside of Natchitoches Parish. As always, winning will help sell tickets but the athletic department must think outside of the box in an era where it is easy to stay at home on watch the game on your couch in front of a big HD television with the bathroom and kitchen within arms' length. Attendance at football games has declined over the last several years outside of the Power 5 schools, but Northwestern State must overcome this trend and increase the number of season ticket holders outside of the immediate area.

**Responsibility:** Vice President External Affairs, Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Operations, Director of Marketing and Digital Media, Assistant Athletic Director for Ticketing and Annual Fund, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, and Assistant Sports Information Director.

## **Objective 2:**

### **Promote Campus/Community Service, Appreciation, and Engagement**

#### **Strategies:**

- Establish a community service approach through heightened interaction between coaches/ student-athletes and the NSU campus and the Natchitoches community.
- NSU Athletics will collaborate with youth organizations to offer special products and opportunities and look for ways to provide low-income families scholarship-like offers to summer camps on a limited basis.
- To take the department's community service efforts to a new level, opportunities for campus and community organizations to partner with athletic teams for service projects will be explored and encouraged. Appreciation efforts will include the continued addition of strategic touches, giving student-athletes the chance to thank supporters, boosters, faculty, and students.
- Increased transparency of budgets and spending will increase appreciation and spur engagement.

#### **Metrics:**

1. Camps and clinics for area youth
2. Establish transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.

#### **Metric:**

##### ***1. Camps and clinics for area youth***

#### **Findings:**

Eleven total camps (two each by men's basketball, women's basketball, softball and football with baseball, volleyball and soccer conducting one camp) were held in June 2023. Data for July 2022 is unavailable due to administrative and staff turnover.

#### **Analysis:**

June and July are the "camp heavy" months with baseball and softball conducting other camps (i.e., Christmas break) throughout the school year.

**Metric:****2. Establish transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.****Findings:**

Communication with donors that went beyond soliciting donations but also focused on increasing transparency and awareness of Athletic Department and Demons Unlimited Foundation budget numbers and mechanics—and how those dollars are spent—continued to be a focus and reflected increased engagement during the 2022-2023 year on several levels. During this assessment cycle the Athletic Director

- met with all head coaches and executive staff members monthly for eight department meetings.
- met with Student-Athlete Advisory Council on six occasions.
- met with all teams at the beginning of each semester and his talk included information about the importance of the Demons Unlimited Foundation and N-Club as it relates to providing resources for the department.
- met quarterly with the CEO of the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center to discuss the department and, in particular, its sports medicine program.
- discussed budget mechanics with Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors at four official meetings.
- provided details about the department's financial profile and need for increased revenue via social media and media (i.e., newspaper, radio) interviews.

A meeting with football alumni and supporters in June assessed ways in which the football program can be more successful. Participants presented with the athletic department's mission and vision, the overall athletic department budget and the football budget. The goal of the meeting was to show the football alumni that we need their financial support to help provide the resources necessary for the football program to be a winning program and consistent contender in the Southland Conference.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2022-2023, the Athletic Director and Associate Athletic Director for External Operations have tried to prioritize meeting with donors to cultivate and solicit financial support for the athletics department. However, with staff turnover it was very difficult to make these contacts on a regular basis. Now that staffing is stable, we expect our financial support and the number of donor cultivation meetings to dramatically increase during AC 2023-2024. Our head coaches continue to make great strides in cultivating donors and soliciting support. Our coaches understand that fundraising is needed to survive based on our state funding.

The Athletic Director's efforts to provide transparency regarding the Athletic Department's direction, especially as it relates to finances, were well received and appreciated by the various interest groups. The health and human performance center (weight room) facility campaign provided further opportunities to engage and inform investors about the inner workings of the athletic program.

**Decision:**

Engagement on all levels must continue to be a focus of the Athletic Department whether it be donors, community members, youth, on-campus faculty and staff, student-athlete alumni, and more. Some of these outreach efforts will result in revenue generation while others will either serve as "friend raisers" which will provide opportunities for the athletic program to be seen in a positive light or as avenues through which transparency can attest to the integrity of the athletic department.

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Operations, Director of Ticketing and Annual Fund, Head Coaches

### **Objective 3:**

#### **Enhance University and Community Collaboration and Support.**

##### **Strategies:**

- Develop a more cohesive bond between the Athletic Department and the campus.
- Improve Athletics' participation in University initiatives and activities.
- Collaborate with University entities to conduct research for Athletics' projects and partnerships through academic programming to educate about Athletics' traditions.
- Create a presence on-campus and in the community by student-athletes, coaches, and staff.

##### **Metrics:**

1. *Identify and sustain/grow annually student-athlete participation in campus activities.*
2. *Complete a minimum of 4,000 community service hours (coaches, staff, and student-athletes) annually.*

##### **Metric:**

1. *Identify and sustain/grow annually student-athlete participation in campus activities.*

##### **Finding:**

Student-athletes participated in many campus organizations, activities and initiatives during AC 2022-2023 including many of the Demon Days activities, Addiction Studies Club, African American Caucus, Alpha Epsilon Delta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Alpha Phi Alpha, Alpha Omicron Pi, Baptist Student Ministry, Beta Beta Biological Honor Society, Blue Key Honor Society, Catholic Student Organization, Demon Dental Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Helping Hands, Kappa Alpha Order, Kappa Alpha Psi, Kappa Psi, Kappa Phi, Kappa Sigma, NSU Freshman Connectors, NSU Psychology Club, NSULA Pride, Pi Kappa Alpha, Presidential Ambassadors, Sigma Sigma Sigma, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Student Government Association, University Programming Council, and Zeta Phi Beta.

Also noteworthy is the creation of the “Demons4Equality” student-athlete group to create awareness of and sensitivity to inclusion and diversity inequities. Vice-President for Inclusion and Diversity, Dr. Michael Snowden, also engaged the group on several occasions.

Campus and community groups in which coaches and staff participated or engaged in AC 2022-2023 included civic clubs, community events and boards, church functions, and charity/non-profit events and functions.

Two members of the athletic department also attended and Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development presented at the “Black Male Summit” hosted by the University of Louisiana System on the campus of the University of New Orleans.

##### **Analysis:**

Community and campus engagement continued to be a focus within the Athletic Department. It is important for our department to be involved in campus activities other than athletics. He helps campus moral and exposure for each other their own programs.

##### **Metric:**

2. *Complete a minimum of 4,000 community service hours (coaches, staff, and student-athletes) annually*

##### **Finding:**

NSU student-athletes compiled 3,624 hours of community service during the 2022-2023 year (Table 30).

Table 30

*Community Service Hours Contributed by NSU Athletics by Team, 2017-2018 to 2022-2023*

NSU ATHLETICS COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS				
TEAM	2017-2018	2018-2019	2020-2021	2022-2023
Soccer	230.25	347	122	122
Men's Basketball	418.5	397	125	742
Women's Basketball	648	502	45	562
Football	211.5	1086.5	425	525
Baseball	239.25	193.5	84	301
Softball	1159.225	289.5	75	203
Tennis	53	74.5	60	68
Men's Track	699.5	306.5	64	152
Men's Cross Country	(with Track)	30.5	0	26
Women's Track	400.5	166	45	152
Women's Cross County	(with Track)	14	0	26
Volleyball	317	666.5	147	298
ALL TEAMS	N/A	385	352	447
Total Hours	4376.725	4458.5	1544	3624

#### Analysis:

Our student-athletes for the first time in several years were able to get out and engage in community service during AC 2022-2023; all 14 teams participated during the year. Community service is one of the three pillars athletics has for our student-athletes. Our goal is to help holistically develop all of our student-athletes so that they support whichever community they serve upon their graduation from Northwestern State University.

#### Decision:

With the ability to interact with and engage with community constituents more regularly, a renewed focus on this area will continue to be our focus for the upcoming academic year. A dynamic related to this for student-athlete involvement will be the fact that Bryn Edmundson, the new Athletic Academic Counselor, will oversee this area.

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development and staff, Head and Assistant Coaches

#### Objective 4:

#### Enhance Success and Avenues to Recognize/Promoting It.

##### Strategies:

- Revise the plan for publicizing the Student-Athlete of the Month as well as Dean's and President's List honors, drawing more attention to the academic success of student-athletes.
- New programming, which may include speeches or seminars and social media pieces, will help highlight the real-world success of former and current Student-athletes. Rewards and incentives will remain in place to reward success on the playing surface, in the classroom, and in the community (as allowed by NCAA, University, and UL System regulations), including for some staff and coaches.
- Athletics will increase emphasis on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities in any way possible. Discussion will be initiated regarding a facility campaign to be underwritten through private support.

**Metrics:**

1. *Retain or improve student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0*
2. *Number of Dean's/President's List and Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees.*
3. *Increase single year and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores (always above the 930 threshold).*
4. *Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.*
5. *The eight teams that register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, women's tennis) will compile a winning percentage of .600 or better in Southland Conference play annually. The cross-country and indoor/outdoor track teams will finish in the top one-third of the standings at the conference championship meet.*

**Metric:**

1. *Retain or improve student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0*

**Finding:**

The athletic department GPA for the 2022-2023 academic year was 2.952 (Table 31).

**Table 31**

*Average Cumulative Grade Point Average for Student-Athletes, AC 2022-2023*

2022-2023 (Fall/Spring GPA)			
	Total Quality Points	Total Quality Hours	GPA
Fall 2022	13,423	4,656	2.882
Spring 2023	12,064	3,979	3.031
Combined GPA	25,487	8,635	2.952

**Analysis:**

Our student-athletes were not able to exceed the goal of a cumulative department GPA of 3.0 or better for AY 2022-2023 as the cumulative GPA was 2.952. However, our cumulative GPA increased from the previous year, and this was achieved despite the academic staff functioning with one less staff member for most of the fall and spring semesters. Several staff members went the “extra mile” to fill the personnel shortage to help our student-athletes achieve their academic success.

**Metric:**

2. *Number of Dean's/President's List and Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees.*

**Finding:**

The number of student-athletes on the President's List and Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll was in line with past years except for AC 2019-2020 which is an outlier with the onset of the pandemic and Spring grades tended to be higher than in normal years (Table 32). The Dean's List numbers were down for AC 2022-2023 from where they are traditionally.

**Analysis:**

Despite the overall numbers being a little lower for the President's List, Dean's List and the Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll, the academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong on an individual basis as well as collectively. The profile will only be stronger next year as we are fully staffed in Academic Services for the first time in over two years.

Table 32

*Student-Athletes Receiving Academic Honors AC 2014-2015 to AC 2022-2023*

Term	President's List	Dean's List	Total	Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll
Fall 2014	27	76	103	71
Spring 2015	32	60	92	86
Fall 2015	34	72	106	99
Spring 2016	40	69	109	101
Fall 2016	49	67	116	101
Spring 2017	38	65	103	107
Fall 2017	47	82	129	111
Spring 2018	46	67	113	101
Fall 2018	41	77	118	93
Spring 2019	44	60	104	104
Fall 2019	44	67	111	95
Spring 2020	60	75	135	122
Fall 2022	37	41	78	84
Spring 2023	33	36	69	103

**Metric:**

3. *Increase single year and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores (always above the 940 threshold).*

**Finding:**

NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) numbers are officially reported in the spring following an academic year. In the report for 2021-2022, we increased our benchmark from 930 to 940. All but three NSU teams' APR exceeded the 940 benchmarks on a single year level and all but one on a multi-year level. As a department, NSU's 2021-2022 APR was 959. This is down from the previous couple of years mainly due to the transfer portal and its increased use by student-athletes. Furthermore, four NSU teams—women's soccer, men's cross country, volleyball, and women's tennis—received "Public Recognition" from the NCAA for having a perfect 1,000 APR score (Table 33). This marked the second straight year that three NSU sports were so recognized. Despite the relatively good numbers, Men's Track & Field continues to be a concern in this area, with their score marking the third consecutive year the 930 target has not been met. Meetings were held with the Track and Field coaching staff, again warning of future consequences with the NCAA APP program regarding penalties if these scores continue to be substandard.

The NCAA Academic Performance Unit, funded by the 15-year multi-billion-dollar NCAA television agreement for rights to air the NCAA men's basketball tournament and Final Four, was awarded for the 2021-2022 academic year. Division I institutions are eligible to earn the unit on a year-by-year basis and qualify for the academic unit disbursement by meeting one of three criteria (APR, GSR or Federal Graduation Rate). NSU qualified for two of the three units (qualifying for more than one unit does not result in any additional funding) and thus, was to receive approximately \$70,000 for its 2022-2023 budget. NSU will not know if it qualified to receive the award for the 2022-2023 year until graduation rates are announced in the fall.

**Analysis:**

The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong across most teams, as evidenced by the NCAA Academic Progress Rate, which exceeded the national benchmark. The NCAA Academic Performance Unit "ups the ante" for making academic achievement a priority for Division I athletic programs.

Table 33

*Three Year NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) by Sport, AC 2019-2020 to AC 2021-2022*

Teams	Year	APR	
		Multi-Year	Single-Year
Baseball	2019-20	988	1,000
	2020-21	981	952
	2021-22	979	970
Men's Basketball	2019-20	976	1,000
	2020-21	981	958
	2021-22	975	961
Women's Basketball	2019-20	986	1,000
	2020-21	977	926
	2021-22	967	960
Football	2019-20	957	961
	2020-21	955	946
	2021-22	950	936
Soccer	2019-20	972	981
	2020-21	975	975
	2021-22	981	1,000
Softball	2019-20	992	1,000
	2020-21	992	989
	2021-22	979	942
Tennis	2019-20	982	1,000
	2020-21	983	1,000
	2021-22	983	1,000
Men's Cross Country	2019-20	1,000	1,000
	2020-21	987	929
	2021-22	985	1,000
Women's Cross Country	2019-20	988	1,000
	2020-21	986	1,000
	2021-22	957	882
Men's Track	2019-20	957	927
	2020-21	945	909
	2021-22	931	913
Women's Track	2019-20	991	1,000
	2020-21	979	921
	2021-22	970	944
Volleyball	2019-20	979	958
	2020-21	990	1,000
	2021-22	989	1,000
Institutional	2019-20	979	970
	2020-21		
	2021-22	970	959

**Metric:**

4. *Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with funding availability*

**Finding:**

The NSU athletic program has made a lot of progress in making the David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center a reality. This \$10 million project will provide new and expanded areas for the strength and conditioning, sports medicine, and equipment divisions of the athletic department. These three areas, located in an athletic fieldhouse constructed in 1977, are significantly undersized to accommodate the growth in number of teams and student-athletes. David and Sherry Morgan have supported the project with a lead gift of \$1.5 million. In all, the athletic department has raised \$2.25 million to go with the \$8 million that the state invested in the project. Its “crown jewel” will be an 11,600 square foot annex to the back of the fieldhouse. Once the annex is

completed, the current weight room will be converted to the athletic training room, the current weight room will become a high-tech rehab center, and the current athletic training room will be the new equipment room.

The baseball program also renovated its locker room at a cost of \$50,000 through privately funded gifts.

The Athletic Department has identified several facility projects that need to be completed for liability, student-athlete experience and Title IX reasons. These projects will cost approximately \$5.2 million and include new video boards in Prather Coliseum, as well as new video boards for the baseball, softball, soccer and track & field complexes, turfing the baseball and softball fields, new mondo track surface as well as a new locker room and coaches' offices for women's tennis. Prices have been obtained and the next step will be securing sponsors to underwrite the cost of these projects.

Facility projects started, completed, or in process during AY 2022-2023 include:

- Turpin Stadium-removed old turf and put new turf down (\$500,000)
- Soccer Field-removed old field, laser graded, and put down new sod (\$300,000); purchased new soccer goals (\$20,000)
- Men's Basketball Locker Room (\$50,000)
- ESPN+ Broadcasts-purchased all the equipment and wired all the facilities to run ESPN+ broadcasts for all home events (\$900,000)
- Prather Coliseum Lights-new LED lights (\$400,000)
- Turpin Stadium Lights-new LED lights (\$500,000)
- Baseball Dugouts-dugouts were updated with brick exterior walls (\$30,000)
- Fieldhouse Weigh Room-renovated the current weight room with new paint, new flooring, new weights and racks (\$125,000)

Facility projects in the future:

- Volleyball Locker Room (\$100,000)
- Softball Hitting/Pitching Cage—adding two pitching lanes and enclosing it with HVAC (\$100,000)
- New LED Digital Video Boards (Prather Coliseum, Baseball, Softball, Soccer, and Track & Field (\$1.5M)
- Baseball Field Turf (\$1.3M)
- Softball Field Turf (\$500,000)
- Track Mondo Surface (\$1.2M)
- Tennis Locker Room/Coaches Offices (\$600,000)
- Baseball Operations Building (\$3.2M)
- Track Locker Room/Coaches Offices (\$1 M)
- Soccer Locker Room/Coaches Offices (\$750,000)

**Total of Projects Completed or Pending = \$23,075,000**

### **Analysis:**

Facility upgrades are essential for the athletic department to continue to be competitive in the Southland Conference. The university and athletic department have continued to push forward to raise the funds necessary to complete these projects. A lot of progress has been made but there is still a lot to be done.

### **Metric:**

5. *The eight teams that register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, women's tennis) will compile a winning percentage of .600 or better in Southland Conference play annually. The cross-country and indoor/outdoor track teams will finish in the top one-third of the standings at the conference championship meet.*

### **Finding:**

Seven teams met our performance goals. The football team finished 4-2 (.667) record in conference play. This was football's first winning Southland Conference season since 2010. The men's basketball team finished 13-5 (.722) in conference play, finishing second and losing in the championship game by four points. AC 2022-2023 was the best men's basketball season since AC 2013-14. The soccer team registered an 8-2-2 (.750) record in conference play. In track and field/cross country, the women's indoor team claimed their first ever trophy at the Southland Conference Indoor Championships. The women's outdoor team finished second as well as both the men's indoor and outdoor teams.

### **Analysis:**

AC 2022-2023 the athletic department did extremely well athletically. NSU finished T-4 in the Southland Commissioner's Cup. Last year, NSU was 7<sup>th</sup> out of 8 school while this year it is 4<sup>th</sup> out of 10 schools. This is despite having the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest budget in Southland Conference; thus, the ROI is very high. Looking at the AC 2023-2024 season, NSU is primed to have big years in most sports. The future is bright.

### **Decision:**

The Athletic Department academic support staff (academic coordinators, compliance coordinators, and Faculty Athletic Representative) will continue to meet monthly to assess academic performance with the intention of monitoring success/problems and sustaining the high level of academic performance in place. Regular interaction with coaches, especially for programs which traditionally have student-athletes who may need additional guidance, will also continue. The Demons Unlimited Foundation Board in collaboration with the NSU athletic administration must continue to secure resources to enhance current student-athlete experience as well as impact the recruiting process and ultimately, impact the program's level of competitiveness.

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Deputy Athletic Director for Special Projects, Senior Woman Administrator, Associate Athletic Director of External Operations, Associate Athletic Director of Internal Operations, Athletic Business Manager, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, and staff.

### **Comprehensive Summary of findings and changes/decisions because of the above**

Despite the challenges with revenue shortfalls (student athletic fees have decreased \$600,000 over the last two years due to a decrease in enrollment), staff vacancies, and turnover the 2022-2023 year was a success. NSU graduated 72 student athletes, had an overall GPA just under 3.0 and had 7 teams finish in the top one-third of the Southland Conference Standings. NSU finished T-4<sup>th</sup> in the Southland Commissioner's Cup which is the highest finish in 8 years (2014-2015). The athletic department must continue to increase revenue with the university's uncertain enrollment. NSU is a blue-collar institution, and all staff and coaches must continue to have their hands in the dirt and grind to make sure we provide our student-athletes the best experience possible. NSU is set up to have a great 2023-2024 academic year in the classroom, on the field/court, and in the community.

## Strategic Focus Area 6—Cultural Competence

Diversity is a Northwestern core value: “diversity helps define who we are. We welcome and respect everyone traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.” The University is not just an institution but also a community, defined by the diversity of its members, dependent on how well that community respects and supports the rich differences of students, staff, faculty, and the broader community around it. Northwestern’s commitment to its strategic plan—to strengthen the student experience, attain academic excellence, meet the demands of a global economy, achieve athletic prominence, and enrich the local and regional community—requires the University to cultivate its diversity and cultural competence. Northwestern cannot accomplish its mission unless it guarantees equitable access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff at every stage of education and career.

Northwestern’s commitment to this effort is reflected in its establishment of the position of Vice President of Inclusion and Diversity. The Board of Regents approved Dr. Michael Snowden’s appointment by the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System, effective May 1, 2021. Dr. Snowden departed the University in June 2023, leaving a solid foundation for growth and a more diverse and culturally competent community. In June of 2023, Dr. Jones selected Brittany Blackwell Broussard as the Director of Culture and Climate (DCC) to continue the work of growing cultural competency in our ever-increasing diverse community at Northwestern.

The overarching goal is to foster a sense of institutional belonging where everyone can thrive and become their best. To that end, the University must promote cultural competence by promulgating diversity, equity, and inclusion across campus and in all activities to close the gap in recruitment and retention. To quantitatively measure its progress, Northwestern established benchmarks for its Cultural Competence Metrics (Table 34) in AC 2022-2023 with corresponding AC 2027-2028 targets.

The following objectives will drive this process:

- Increasing cultural competence among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.
- Integrating cultural competence throughout the academic curriculum and support programs.
- Developing a more inclusive campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.

In addition to the development of Cultural Competence, plans must include campus-wide inclusive coaching sessions (training/workshops); the addition of Harbor Institute training for first-time students; the continuation of the NCORE Webinar Series, faculty Institutes, and speaker series; a University Inclusive Excellence Conference; and the establishment of Affinity Groups and donning of the Stoles Event.

Table 34: Metrics for Cultural Competence

AC 2022-2023	Cultural Competence Metrics	AC 2027-2028 Targets
42%	<i>Percentage of Students of Color</i>	50%
24%	<i>Percentage of Faculty of Color</i>	30%
16%	<i>Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color</i>	30%
29%	<i>Percentage of Administrators of Color</i>	30%
53%	<i>Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> year</i>	80%
39%	<i>Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> year</i>	65%
3,897	<i>Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment</i>	5,000
44%	<i>Graduation rates of Students of Color</i>	50%
13	<i>Number of students in Ethnic Studies</i>	75
43%	<i>Percentage of Students of Color in student organizations</i>	50%
	<i>Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant</i>	100%
	<i>Percent of Positive Responses on NSU Campus Climate Survey</i>	80%
10	<i>Frequency of CC programs and initiatives sponsored by CID or any Dept/Org Yr</i>	15
25%	<i>Percent of Students of Color graduates working within 6 months of graduation</i>	75%

Note: Outcomes for AC 2022-2023 are benchmarks with the objective of reaching the AC 2027-2028 targets. Grey items were not measured.

Three objectives support our efforts in Cultural Competence.

### Objective 1:

#### Increase diversity and equity among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.

##### Strategies:

- Partner with student recruitment and human resources to provide attractive recruitment options for all under-represented populations.
- Provide engaging events and programs for campus constituents that will increase their understanding, cultural competence, and belonging.

##### Metrics:

1. *Percentage of Students of Color*
2. *Percentage of Faculty of Color*
3. *Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color*
4. *Percentage of Administrators of Color*
5. *Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> year*
6. *Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> year*
7. *Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment*
8. *Graduation rates of Students of Color*

**Metric:****1. Percentage of Students of Color****Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 42%. The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

**Analysis:**

The University is leading the region in the diversity of its student body. *Student of Color* will be defined as any student identifying as a race/ethnicity of Black/African American, Hispanic Non-White, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and Foreign. The category Foreign may include individuals who identify as *White*; however, they do increase the campus's cultural diversity. As of Fall 2022, there were 3,897 Students of Color.

**Decision:**

Continue to work with recruiting and retention to increase the percentage of Students of Color.

**Metric:****2. Percentage of Faculty of Color****Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 24%.

**Analysis:**

The target percentage is 30% by the year 2028. Of the 644 faculty members, 154 faculty members identify as a race/ethnic group of either Black/African American, Hispanic Non-White, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and US Nonresident.

The institution must provide more strategic initiatives to close the gap between Faculty of Color and the target. Some suggestions are:

- Attend the SREB Institute on Teaching and Mentoring.
- Consider utilizing the cluster hiring method.
- Provide Faculty of Color in residency programs.

**Decision:**

Continue to work with human resources, the Office of the Provost to increase the percentage of faculty of color.

**Metric:****3. Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color****Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 16%.

**Analysis:**

The target percentage is 30% by the year Fall 2028.

Of the 156 tenured faculty members, only 25 of the faculty members are People of Color. The institution must invest in different practices for different results. The percentage of Faculty of Color should start to resemble the student population. A retention plan should be adopted to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color being tenured and promoted.

**Decision:**

Continue to work with human resources, the Office of the Provost to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color.

**Metric:**

**4. Percentage of Administrators of Color**

**Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 29%.

**Analysis:**

The target percentage is 30% by the year Fall 2028. As the institution is close to reaching the goal, we must continue to invest in the diversification of administrators. We are currently in our targeted area, but when we have a transition of administrators, we must make considerable efforts to attract and retain Administrators of Color.

**Decision:**

Continue to work with human resources and the Office of the Provost to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color.

**Metric:**

**5. Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> year**

**Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 53%.

**Analysis:**

The target percentage is 80% by the year Fall 2028. Of the 580 first year Students of Color from the Fall 2021 cohort, 306 (52.76%) of these were retained to the second year. We should focus on connecting students to the institution and continuing the evolution of our inclusive campus community. Continue to build the mentoring program with enrollment management. Continue to connect the students with the Gail Metoyer Jones Center.

**Decision:** The Office of Inclusion and Diversity will continue to work with student affairs, enrollment management, and student organizations to provide more opportunities for students to connect with the institution.

**Metric:**

**6. Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> year**

**Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 39%.

**Analysis:**

The target percentage is 65% by the year 2028. Of the 659 first year Students of Color from the Fall 2020 cohort, 385 (39.00%) were retained to the third year. Target efforts on connections of the students to the institution. Continue to build the mentoring program with enrollment management. Continue to connect the students to the Gail Metoyer Jones Center.

**Decision:** Continue to work with student affairs, enrollment management, and student organizations to provide more opportunities for students to connect with the institution.

**Metric:****7. Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment****Findings:**

In AC 2022-2023, the enrollment of Northwestern State University included 3,897 Students of Color. The target is 5,000 students by the year 2028.

**Analysis:**

We are making great strides to increase the number of enrolled Students of Color. Current efforts by the recruiting office and academic departments are proving successful. Recruitment efforts must be intentional for Students of Color, such as initiatives/agreements with local tribes and community colleges with high populations of minority students, and hosting recruitment days at high schools with high populations of minority students. A more diverse recruitment staff that reflects the people we want to recruit must be acquired to grow in these diverse populations.

**Decision:**

Continue to work with recruiting office/enrollment management and the Office of the Provost to recruit Students of Color and initiate articulation agreements with community colleges.

**Metric:****8. Graduation rates of Students of Color****Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 44%.

**Analysis:**

The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

Of the 594 that graduated in the Fall 2016 cohort, 271 (45.62%) were Students of Color. Currently, the graduation rate for Students of Color is comparable to the total graduation rate of approximately 45% ( $p = .76$ ). However, we want to strive to surpass this rate. To achieve this, outreach with resources that address the specific needs of Students of Color must occur. We will further build the mentoring program with enrollment management. Connecting more students with TRIO services, if they qualify, will provide critical support for students.

**Decision:** Work with recruiting office/enrollment management, TRIO support services and Academic Success Center to ensure Students of Color are connected with resources and support to succeed.

**Objective 2:****Integrate Diversity and Cultural Competence throughout the academic curriculum and support programs.****Strategies:**

- Increase course offerings and establish programs in ethnic studies areas.
- Strengthen cultural competence in classroom management.
- Provide more visibility and support for the Creole Center and Williamson Museum.
- Identify curriculum gaps and continue expanding current programs.
- Integrate diverse perspectives and analysis across the entire University curriculum.

**Metrics:**

1. *Number of students in Ethnic Studies*
2. *Percentage of Students of Color in student organizations*

**Metric:**

1. ***Number of students in Ethnic Studies***

**Findings:**

In AC 2022-2023, 13 students have declared one of the Ethnic Studies minors (American Indian and Indigenous Studies, Black Studies, and Creole Studies). The target is 75 by the year 2028.

**Analysis:**

The Black Studies minor is new and has already graduated two students. There was media coverage about their success with this minor, which will draw more interest in the program. During the last year, we collaborated with the Ethnic Studies advisory board to host a lecture series that attracted all NSU constituents and highlighted the minor. Lastly, the naming of a Coordinator specifically for the Black Studies minor, Dr. Jasmine Wise, has helped to increase the number of course offerings and another faculty member to focus strictly on the program.

**Decision:**

We will continue collaborating with the Ethnic Studies Advisory Board. Drs. Jasmine Wise, Rebecca Riall, and the Office of the Provost will host programming to draw students and increase interest in the program.

**Metric:**

2. ***Percentage of Students of Color in student organizations***

**Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 43%. The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

**Analysis:**

Although the percentage of Students of Color in student organizations is approaching the target, it remains suspect as it depends on student organization leaders to report members on their roster every semester accurately and students to have accurate demographic information in the system. When looking at the ethnic/racial breakdown, there seems to be a high number of students that report being Hispanic/Other (27%), more than the actual ratio of those that indicate Hispanic in the overall NSU ethnicity breakdown (5%). We will work with the Director of Student Affairs and Director of Registered Organizations to ensure more accurate data reporting and discuss ways to recruit and diversify membership in campus organizations.

**Decision:**

Work with the personnel in the Student Experience to ensure diversity in student organizations and programming is approached deliberately and consistently.

## **Objective 3:**

**Develop a more inclusive campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.**

### **Strategies:**

- Establish a system providing actionable feedback (climate survey) regarding perception data on the treatment of students, faculty, and staff of color from various campus areas.
- Increase Cultural Competence programs and initiatives per year.
- Increased emphasis on a DCC marketing strategy

### **Metrics:**

1. *Percent of Positive Indicators on DCC Campus Climate Survey*
2. *Frequency of Cultural Competence programs and initiatives sponsored by CID and any campus department or organization.*
3. *Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant*
4. *Percentage of Students of Color graduates working within six months of graduation*

### **Metric:**

1. ***Percent of Positive Responses on NSU Campus Climate Survey***

### **Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 0%, and the survey is incomplete. The target percentage is 50%+ by the year 2028.

### **Analysis:**

We are looking into different survey instruments to assess campus climate. The hope is to disseminate a survey by the end of the Fall or early Spring semester and then analyze the data. Upon analysis of certain items from the RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory, it was ascertained that there was no significant difference among students of different races/ethnicities on the following:

Campus safety and security, a strong commitment to Diversity on campus, freedom to express ideas on campus, disciplinary procedures being fair, faculty treatment of students being fair and unbiased, students made to feel welcome here, college students showing respect for different perspectives, personnel show respect for different perspectives, students from different backgrounds feel comfortable here, and the college provides opportunities to learn about diverse groups.

Black/African American students who completed the survey scored most items lower than other groups. Further analysis is needed from faculty and staff and more directed questions for other types of minority groups, such as LGBTQ, and assessment from the aspect of those with disabilities.

### **Decision:**

We will work with institutional research and the university-wide diversity committee to decide on an instrument and disseminate it to all NSU faculty, staff, and students.

**Metric:**

2. ***Frequency of Cultural Competence programs and initiatives sponsored by Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID) and any campus department or organization per Academic Year.***

**Findings:**

In AC 2022-2023, the frequency was 10 programs. The target is 15 per year by 2028.

**Analysis:**

With the limited staff in the CID, 10 programs were feasible to execute. Collaboration with other departments/offices was crucial in execution. In the future, we will continue collaborating with departments and student organizations to provide quality diversity and multicultural programs and initiatives.

**Decision:**

We will continue to attend departmental browses hosted by the Department of Student Experience so NSU constituents can be aware of our offerings. We will also reach out to departments to initiate partnerships.

**Metric:**

3. ***Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant.***

**Findings:**

The current number of facilities requiring ADA accommodations must be determined—we will need to address the current status with Jennifer Kelly.

**Analysis:**

There are areas needing updating as this is federal law, but it also will help those with a disability feel included and valued.

**Decision:**

Work with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services and Executive Director for University Affairs to ensure all NSU buildings are ADA compliant.

**Metric:**

4. ***Percentage of Students of Color graduates working within six months of graduation***

**Findings:**

AC 2022-2023 percentage is 25%. The target percentage is 75% by the year 2028.

**Analysis:**

Working with Alumni Affairs and Career Services to continue growing connections with students/alums will result in more accurate data.

**Decision:**

Reach out to Alumni Affairs and Career Services to maintain connections with Students of Color. Work with career services to promote ways to assist students before and after graduation with resources to help them attain their next academic/professional goal.

## Section III.

### College Performance and Assessment Cycle AC 2022-2023

#### The College of Arts and Sciences (COAS)

The College of Arts and Sciences is a diverse community of scholars, educators, artists, and students working collaboratively to connect varied ideas and themes across a wide range of academic disciplines grounded in the liberal arts and natural and applied sciences. The College uses transformational, high-impact, experiential learning practices, research, and service to equip students with the skills needed to reason and analyze as well as express their creativity and thoughts. Our graduates progress through an education that builds on itself throughout life and serves to promote economic and social development while improving the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, mathematics, engineering technology, 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 Heritage Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and the preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

As the largest of the Colleges at the university, it is also one of the most diverse from several perspectives. Comprised of three large Schools (Biological and Physical Sciences, Creative and Performing Arts, and Social Sciences and Applied Programs), the state's designated Honor's College, and Departments that complete the Humanities/Liberal Arts and Sciences experience, we span a diversity of degrees and concentrations available, activities presented, outreach completed, and courses offered/taken.

#### COAS Degree Programs

The COAS enrolls over 2700 undergraduate and graduate students in 28 Degree programs with 59 concentration areas within those degrees. The Louisiana Scholars' College, housed within the COAS, has joint degree programs with all other Colleges, Departments, and Schools at Northwestern State University. In addition, the vast majority (39/43 or 91%) of the University's general education CORE classes are nested within the COAS, thus serving the entire academic population of the University and reaching all students multiple times during their academic career.

More than 150 full-time faculty and 40 part-time faculty teach courses throughout the College. The Faculty and Degree Programs offered by the COAS spans three Schools, 11 Departments, and the Louisiana Scholars' College, and includes the following:

**Associate Degree:** Veterinary Technology

**Associate of Science:** Engineering Technology

**Associate of General Studies**

**Bachelor of Arts:** Communication, Criminal Justice, English, History, and Liberal Arts

**Bachelor of Fine Arts:** Dance, Fine and Graphic Arts; Musical Theatre, and Production and Design

**Bachelor of General Studies**

**Bachelor of Science:** Applied Microbiology, Biology, Electronics Engineering Technology, Industrial Engineering Technology, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Theatre, and Unified Public Safety Administration

**Bachelor of Music**

## **Bachelor of Music Education (*offered in conjunction with the School of Education*)**

**Master of Arts:** Art, and English

**Master of Science:** Homeland Security

**Master of Music:** Performance and Music Education

In the Academic Year 2016-2017 (Summer, Fall, Spring) the COAS awarded 585 degrees, 606 degrees in AY 2017-2018, 612 degrees in AY 2018-2019, 682 degrees AY 2019-2020, 631 during AY 2020-2021 (Summer, Fall, Spring) and 750 during AY 2021-2022 (Summer, Fall, Spring). During AY 2022-2023, the COAS awarded 738 degrees.

### **Alumni and Student Success**

Alumni of the College have been very successful in professional engagements and state that the hands-on involvement of faculty, linked with the outstanding field-experiences and internships while at NSU, have allowed them to make professional connections, take auditions, transition from intern to full-time employee, and enroll in graduate/professional school. A few recent alumni successes are highlighted here:

#### **Alumni**

- Aleisa Hudlow (2007, Music Education) was inducted in the Louisiana Music Teachers Association – Outstanding Band Director in Louisiana.
- Jeff Mathews (1990, Music Education) was inducted into the American Bandmasters' Association and recognized as one of the best college band directors in the nation.
- Emily Adams Whitney (2021, Music-Vocal Performance) was selected as an Emerging Artist and cover for Alexandra Batsios, soprano at the St. Petersburg Opera Company for the 2023-2024 season in St. Petersburg, Florida.
- David Green, DDS (2008, BS in Biology) just completed his orthodontics residency at the University of Maryland and will be joining the Swapp Orthodontics practice in Mansfield, TX.
- Kali Ann Broussard, MD (2013, BS in Biology) completed her pediatric infectious disease fellowship at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, OH. Dr. Broussard, an LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans graduate (2017), had previously completed her pediatrics residency at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (2020). She has recently joined the staff of Our Lady of Lourdes in Lafayette.
- Larry Justin Doughty, MD (2012, BS in Biology) is an Interventional Pain Management Specialist with Mid State Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Center in Alexandria, LA. Dr. Doughty, an LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans graduate (2017), was the former Chief Fellow of Pain Medicine at LSU Health Science Center in New Orleans.
- Matthew Yerby (2011, minor in Theatre) returned to Natchitoches to film his original screenplay *The Dirty South* which has distribution agreements with Bleiberg Entertainment and Cinedigm. During its production, Yerby's film employed several NSU students.
- Crystal Veronie (2015, Master of Art in English) earned her Ph.D. in English at Southern Mississippi University and has accepted a position as an instructor at the University of Alabama.
- Shari Wilson (2021, English) worked as a production assistant on the new Amazon Prime series 'I'm A Virgo' directed by writer/director Boots Riley.
- Roneeka Allyce Hill Bailey, JD (English) published her new book, *How to Try an Auto-Wreck Case: The Basics from Start to Finish*. She holds a BA in English from NSU and a JD from Southern University Law Center. She now serves as the Deputy County Attorney in Richland County, SC and is a member of the alumni advisory committee for the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies.

- Ashley Benjamin Rodriguez (2017, Graduate Certificate in TEOSL and 2018, Master of English) has been accepted into the Doctorate in Leadership for Educational Justice program at the University of Redlands in California.
- Caddo educator Caroline Landon (2010, Mathematics Education and 2018, Master of Education) has been selected as a state finalist for a national award given to math and science educators. Landon, who teaches at University Elementary in Shreveport, is one of three Louisiana educators to be selected as finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). This award is the highest of honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics and/or computer science teaching. The awards were established by Congress in 1983. The President may recognize up to 108 exemplary teachers each year. At NSU, Landon was also a Division 1 soccer player.
- Fourteen (14) graduates of the School of Biological and Physical Sciences have been accepted into their professional school of choice for medical school, veterinary medicine school, dental school, physician assistant school, or graduate school.
  - Grace Dean – LSU Health Shreveport Medical School
  - Makenzie Chaffin – LSU Health Shreveport Medical School
  - Caitlin Cutrer – LSU Health Shreveport Me
  - Erin Blanchard – LSU Veterinary Medicine School
  - Adam Trupp – UT Health Science Medical Branch Galveston Medical School
  - Catherine VanWinkle – LSU Veterinary Medicine School
  - Cameron Kelly – Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine – Monroe, LA
  - Devon Smith – Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine – Monroe, LA
  - Chloe Farrar – LSU Health Shreveport Physician Assistant
  - Addison Lasater – LSU Health Shreveport Physician Assistant
  - Chance Queen – LSU Health Shreveport Physician Assistant
  - Alara Faulkner – LSU Health Shreveport Occupational Therapy
  - Cameron Kelly – Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine – Monroe, LA
  - Devon Smith – Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine – Monroe, LA

### **Current Students**

- Ella Aubrey Castro (Master of Music) served as the conducting intern for Spotlight on Opera in Shreveport, LA. Ella was just accepted to DMA conducting program at University of Texas Denton which will begin Fall 2023.
- Steven Whimberly (Master of Music) was accepted into the DMA performance program at Louisiana State University.
- Taylor Pettus (Master of Music) was accepted to the DMA performance program at University of Southern Mississippi.
- Douglas Flores (Music Performance) and Emilie Comeaux (Music Education) were both selected as a Young Artist in Opera for the International Performing Arts Training Institute in Germany.
- Jordan Bevels (Music Business) was selected as a Young Artist in Musical Theater for the International Performing Arts Training Institute in Germany.
- NSU-TV, a student led media broadcast, won two Gold Telly Awards for producing the ‘Distinguished Communication Professional Awards.’ The Gold Telly is the highest honor awarded in the category of Non-Broadcast General-Public Relations and Non-Broadcast Generation Educational Institution. A Bronze Telly was awarded for a Podcast series title, ‘Latino Living,’ which had a tremendous impact in local Hispanic communities. Students were in competition with professional multimedia organizations including broadcasters like NPR and Disney.

- Kelston Antoine (Mathematics) earned third place in the student presentation competition at the Louisiana/Mississippi Mathematical Association of America section meeting held at the University of Mississippi March 2-4, 2023. Antoine's paper and presentation were on "Candy Crush Combinatorics," in which she examined calculating the number of different valid Candy Crush boards that can exist. The Mathematical Association of America is the world's largest community of mathematicians, students, and enthusiasts. Members further their understanding of the world through mathematics because mathematics drives society and shapes people's lives.
- Kasey Moore (Biology) was awarded first place oral presentation in the Division of Zoology/Botany at the Louisiana Academy of Sciences annual meeting on March 4, 2023.
- Derek Dupree (Biology and Physical Sciences double major) was a member of the Northwestern State/LSMSA DemonStats-4 team that defended their space payload as part of the Louisiana Aerospace Catalysts Experiences for Students (LaACES). The team earned permission from NASA officials to launch their payload into space via sounding balloon on Tuesday, May 23, 2023.
- Jenna Caswell (Biology and Physical Sciences double major) has her research abstract selected for publication in the American Chemical Society's Annual Meetings & Expositions archive and repository in April 2023.
- Anna Kate Duplanits (Communications) won First Place in Animation at the 2022 College Media Association's Annual Film and Audio Festival in Washington, DC for her film "Anything for You".
- Matthew Lovelady, Nickolas Tramel, and Tanner Funderburk (Engineering Technology majors) won first place in the Undergraduate Research Competition at the Industrial Engineering in Operations Management Conference in June 2023. Their presentation entitled "ID367 Motion and Time Study for Increasing Efficiency, Productivity, and Safety for an Unloading Facility" was based on a research design project they conducted as part of their program's capstone course, Project Design.
- Twenty-three Theatre & Dance students have secured employment for the summer of 2023 in various venues:
  - Four students working on Broadway
  - One student in the STREB Dance Company
  - Fourteen students working on cruise ships
  - Three students are working in supervisor/management roles
  - Two students are working in choreography and directing
- NSU-TV News Service reporter, Colin Vedros (Communications) had four of his stories aired on KTBS (Shreveport, LA). Each story covered NSU athletics. Following his graduation in May 2023, Colin began an advanced level multimedia journalist job.
- Many Creative Writing students had their work published this year:
  - Austin Warren (English), poem "in which i am a bird" in Ice Lolly Review
  - Carly Chandler (Master of Arts in English)
    - poem "My Mother's Hands Have Never Known Magic" in Toil and Trouble Literary Magazine
    - prose "Virtuoso" in Trash to Treasure Literary Magazine and in Ice Lolly Review
    - creative nonfiction "Turriptopsis Dohrnill" in Trash to Treasure Literary Magazine
    - poetry "Pen Names" in Trash to Treasure Literary Magazine
    - monologue "Donkey Skin" in Spellbinder
  - Abigail Whitham, (Creative Writing minor), creative nonfiction "Too Good To Not Believe" in Agape Review
  - Clara Guidry (English), short story "The Bad Thing" in All Existing Literary Magazine (May)
- In April 2023, six English majors attended the 2023 Sigma Tau Delta International English Honors Society convention held in Denver, CO. The students were actively involved in the event, either presenting original research and creative work, sharing activities developed by NSU's Nu Iota chapter, or serving as student leadership for the convention.

- In March 2023, Northwestern State students from the staff of Argus (the campus literary publication) and Demon Writers Guild (the creative writing student organization) attended the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference in Seattle, WA.
- Four Northwestern State English majors presented scholarly and creative work at the Sigma Tau Delta International Honors Society Southern Regional Conference on Oct. 22, 2022.
  - Christopher Doney delivered "A Phonological Description of Tajiki-English: An Emerging English Dialect."
  - Catelyn Errington read "My Mother Taught Me the Virtue of Patience" and other poems.
  - Carly Chandler shared their creative work "A Poem's Story."
  - Angela Saldivar presented the paper "Environmental Racism in British Literature: How Literary Studies Can Foster Change in Our Communities."
- Catelyn Errington (English) was named Associate Student Representative to the U.S. Southern Region of Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honors Society. She also served as president of NSU's Nu Iota Chapter.

## **Academic Engagement**

### **National Rankings**

- Northwestern State has been recognized as one of the best schools for online learning at the master's level by [OnlineMastersDegrees.org](https://www.onlinemastersdegrees.org) (OMD). NSU's English programs were ranked 13th and earned top honors for overall quality, affordability, and commitment to student success.

The COAS participates in several current and future activities and initiatives to ensure student success, maintain rigor, emphasize integrity, encourage student responsibility, and promote recruitment, retention, graduation, employment, and professional/graduate school acceptance. Included in our efforts is a continued emphasis on and promotion of academic advising throughout the semester, assessing our general education CORE classes, early interventions for students struggling in classes, and promotion of the Academic Success Center.

In addition, several specific strategies have taken place to bring increased visibility and impactful meaning to our programs. These include:

### **New Programs/Initiatives**

- Two May 2023 graduates were our first to complete our new Black Studies minor offered in the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs.
- Implemented a co-requisite program for Music Theory Classes that allows students who do not meet the minimum requirements for Music Theory 1 to continue in the Theory 1 class while simultaneously taking a companion Music Theory Lab. The program means that students are not delayed in moving forward with the Theory, Aural, Skills, and piano series and can progress through their degree with the rest of their cohort.
- The Williamson Museum has begun updating and digitizing all catalog and archival materials.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies has begun offering an undergraduate minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies and has recently received approval to begin offering (in 2023-2024) a graduate concentration in Creative Writing, and undergraduate minors in Spanish for Healthcare as well as Film Studies. The Film Studies minor is an interdisciplinary offering in collaboration with the Departments of Fine + Graphic Arts and New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance has received approval to begin offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre

- The Master of Music in Music Education has been modified such that it can now be completed online. The first cohort of students begin Summer 2023.
- Several events highlighted Northwestern State's COAS dedication to international student recruiting:
  - In September 2023, three COAS administrators visited the Conservatorio de Música de Puebla in Puebla City, Puebla, Mexico where they auditioned 15 students and met with school administrators to begin creating a MOU between our institutions.
  - In June 2023, Scott Burrell (Director of the Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts), along with two of current Honduran international students (Jelsson Flores and Maudiel Aguilar) spent five days in San Pedro Sula Honduras, visiting 12 schools, meeting with teachers and administrators, auditioning prospective students, and meeting with government officials.
  - The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts has drafted a memorandum of understanding for a 3+1 program with Sichuan Jincheng in China and the Beijing Prepare agency.
  - The Department of Mathematics has begun drafting a memorandum of understanding with Mathematical Grammar School, Belgrade, Serbia
  - The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs has begun drafting cooperative programs with Liberty University in Cartagena as well as several institutions in Belize.
- Students within the Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts established Northwestern State's Hispanic Student Journalism Association. One of their initiatives has been a podcast series called "Latino Living." Each episode focuses on a Hispanic NSU student who is making a difference here at Northwestern State and in the local community. In addition to this successful podcast, the students hold awareness events and cultural meetings. As stated above, this podcast won a Bronze Telly award.
- The COAS has recently received approval to reorganize some of its existing academic units into a new School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The School of STEM (which will include the previous School of Biological and Physical Sciences, the Department of Engineering Technology, and the Department of Mathematics) will focus on instructional strategies that support student mastery of learning in any content area as well as preparation for a career or for additional, professional education. School of STEM students will learn how to question, investigate, problem solve, interpret data and information, present ideas, and listen to others with the end goal of being able to develop, support, and analyze explanations. This School of STEM will be tasked with educating the next generation of scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and technologists. As STEM graduates earn higher salaries and have a much lower unemployment rate than other fields, this will have a positive impact on our state and region.
- The COAS has recently received approval to begin establishing (in 2023-2024) a faculty collaboration incubator called **CREATE** – the Center for Research, Education, and Artistic Teamwork Exploration. CREATE will be a place for faculty/staff/students to share ideas for collaboration and to establish and nurture professional working relationships that are necessary to produce outstanding, interdisciplinary activity.

## **Community Engagement/Recognitions**

- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies' LA Folklife Center hosted the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival on Saturday July 23, 2022. The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival will be held on Saturday, July 22, 2023.
- The 14th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest, a contest open to all Louisiana students in grades 9-12 regardless of the type of school institution, held its award ceremony on September 17, 2022. The 2023 15th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest theme is "Louisiana Futures."

- Northwestern State hosted the 14th annual Louisiana Studies Conference on Saturday, Sept. 17, 2022. The event's keynote was a live performance by the Winnsboro Easter Rock Ensemble, recipients of the 2021 National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Award.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies' LA Folklife Center celebrated Louisiana Folklife Month with a presentation by Rhonda Gauthier on Saturday, October 8, 2023, at the LA Sports Hall of Fame.
- Northwestern State hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Lessons and Carols on December 6, 2022 (Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception) and Multicultural Christmas Concert (Treen Auditorium, LSMSA) on December 7, 2022. These events are free and open to the public.
- Melody Gilbert, Assistant Professor of Communications, hosted Edward Buckles, an award-winning documentary filmmaker, on the Natchitoches campus. Mr. Buckles was available for a Q&A session following the viewing of his film "Katrina Babies" on Monday, February 6, 2023. This event was free and open to the public. "CAPA on the Cane is one way we have of giving back to the community," said Scott Burrell, Director of the School of Creative and Performing Arts. "We receive so much support throughout the year. This is one way of saying thank you while promoting our programs to a new audience. We thank Jill Leo and the City of Natchitoches for this opportunity."
- The Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts presented CAPA on the Cane on the Natchitoches riverfront on Saturday, March 11, 2023. This event was free and open to the public.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies held several events that were open to the community:
  - Reading by Louisiana Poet Laureate Dr. Mona Lisa Saloy in the Varnado Hall Ballroom on Tuesday, September 20, 2022
  - Cane River Reading Series - featuring Jill Talbot (October 2022), Julie Kane at Sports Hall of Fame (February 2023), and Jesse DeLong (March 2023)
  - Monthly Open Mic events at the Storybrew Coffee Café, a collaboration between the Creative Writing program and this local business
  - LitCon 2023 on Friday, April 14, and Saturday, April 15, in Orville Hanchey Gallery.
- JD Cox, Assistant Professor of Biology, completed an interactive digital map of the outdoor recreational areas for the Cane River National Heritage Area.
- The Department of Fine + Graphic Arts received a grant from the Cane River National Heritage Center to create a mural on the Ben Johnson Shopping Center. James Zamora led a group of students in this project.
- Dominique Taylor, Assistant Professor of Communications, received a grant from the University of Vermont's Center for Community News (CCN). The goal of the grant is to identify and support student-led university programs which produce local news and share those stories with local media outlets. Richard Watts, Director of CCN, said, "CCN is pleased to recognize NSU's NSU-TV News Service for their outstanding work leading innovative and creative solutions that engage their students in addressing the local news crisis. We are pleased to name Dr. Nick Taylor as a Faculty Champion – a faculty leader in developing hands-on learning experiences for their students that also provide much needed local stories – stories that no one else is telling".
- The NSU-TV News Service is a student led RSO producing news focused on Northwestern State and the local community. The News Service produces stories for local stations such as KTBS, an ABC affiliate out of Shreveport, LA, and KALB out of Alexandria, LA. Comprised of students who are completing their internship requirements and volunteers, the News Service has between 10 and 11 stories (nearly one a week) aired on regional news per semester.

- The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts hosted a marketing campaign competition on behalf of Neblett, Beard & Arsenault, a law firm in Alexandria, LA. One lucky group of students (Ashley Duffus, Naydu Daza Maya, Tahirah Forte, Kira Raymond, and Katy Rigol) won the competition with a prize of \$1500. One additional student, Anna McMillon, received a \$250 award for outstanding individual.
- COAS received a grant from Northwestern State's Student Government Association to purchase water bottles for distribution to COAS students. The reusable water bottles were specially designed with a campus map highlighting the locations of bottle refill stations across the Natchitoches main campus. The Dean of the COAS hosted several "Meet your academic dean events" in March/April 2023 aimed at getting students pre-registered for the Fall 2023 semester.

### **Program Successes**

- The Louisiana Scholars' College hosted 45 faculty and students from Grambling State University on February 10-11, 2023, for an Honors' College Summit. This was the first meeting of its kind in over 10 years.
- The COAS continues to realize great success in our MATH and ENGL co-requisite course programs. We lead the state of Louisiana in this Board of Regents initiative. In 2022-2023, our courses realized over a 90% success rate on our student learning outcomes for our own assessment cycle and an over 85% successful pass rate for students in those co-requisite courses.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies had a successful 2022-2023 year with the following highlights:
  - More than \$30,000 in funded grants
  - More than 15 faculty publications of academic and creative works
  - More than 20 faculty presentations at academic conferences and public readings
  - More than 50 press releases, news articles, and tv and radio interviews and stories tied to programs
- The Veterinary Technology program, part of the new School of STEM, reported a 100% pass rate (13/13) for VTEC students successfully passing their first attempt at the Veterinary Technician National Exam, the national licensure exam for VTECs.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance Department received a very large costume donation to their Design Shop from Broadway Wardrobe Master Robert Guy.
- The Creole Heritage Center has completed a year-long self-study process and has launched CHC 2.0 with significant increases in community involvement. Planning is underway for an anniversary celebration this year.

In addition, departments and schools host several events, annually, that strengthen our recruiting and retention efforts. To highlight a few:

- *STEM Robotics Summer Camp*: The Department of Engineering Technology offered the STEM Robotics summer camp for middle school and high school age students.
- *Annual Robotics Competition and Smart Structures Show*: The Department of Engineering Technology offers this competition for middle school students in the region.
- *Classic on the Cane*: The Spirit of Northwestern hosts a statewide marching band competition at Turpin Stadium each October.
- *JaM Day*: The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts hosts this annual event that attracts over 150 high school students to participate in various journalism, communication, and new media contests.
- *Scholars' Day*: The Louisiana Scholars' College hosts this event that is held once each semester to showcase its offerings and accomplishments. Potential students sit in Scholars' classes taught by

faculty, engage with current students in the program, and gain insight into what daily life is like as a Scholars' student.

- *Writing/Coloring Contests*: The Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies facilitated two brand-new community outreach programs: the Annual Easter Writing and Coloring contest (grades K through 5), and the Annual St. Patrick's Day Creative Writing Contest (grades 6 through 8). Over 300 students from regional schools participated.
- *Annual Destination Science Camp*: The School of Biological and Physical Sciences hosts the annual Destination Science Camp each June. The camp immerses children from ages 8-15 to various workshops/activities in anatomy, physiology, microbiology, chemistry, physics, veterinary science, drone technology, and natural sciences. Over 30 children from the community attended.
- *Demon Math Classic*: The Department of Mathematics hosts this annual event each March that attracts over 200 high school students to participate in various mathematics-related contests.

## **College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning**

### **Responsiveness and Future Innovations**

As we continue to work collaboratively as scientists and artists, we strive to transform the human experience while blurring the lines between liberal arts and applied and natural science education. To do this, we must continue to evaluate our students' learning, in both the traditional and experiential senses, to maximize its impact on our students as they prepare themselves for lives in the Arts and Sciences professions. It will be imperative that we develop students' communication and critical thinking skills; it is essential that we continue to encourage and support faculty and students as they work collaboratively on research that has the potential to bring greater meaning to our work in the Arts and Sciences; and it is critical that we engage in deeper conversations with our alumni and advisory committees who serve as valuable resources as we continue to evolve as a responsive College. These goals will be realized with the development of innovative and responsive programming (such as an interdisciplinary undergraduate certificate in scientific communication) as well as with the establishment of collaborative centers focused on creating cross-disciplinary and professional works.

We will continue to engage in crucial conversations, in which we realize that the work of the between liberal arts and applied and natural science—though difficult and demanding—is critical to our lives as we create graduates who are responsive and respectful, and stellar contributors to their chosen professions. As we continue to look at best practices for delivery of instruction, we will constantly evaluate how education delivered in a residential, online, or blended format can best serve the students, programs, and departments within the COAS, and how we can continue to evolve in the scope of our influence.

## **The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD)**

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD) is a community of eclectic students, faculty, and staff, working to increase knowledge, skills and dispositions through teaching, research, and service. The GCEHD offers a wide variety of exemplary undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare candidates for career success across the spectrum of professional roles and settings. These programs include teacher education, child and family studies, adult learning and development, educational technology leadership, educational leadership, special education, student affairs in higher education, counseling, health and exercise science, health promotion, psychology, addiction studies, social work, and military science. GCEHD consists of nine academic and support units

(School of Education, Department of Health and Human Performance, Department of Psychology, Department of Social Work, Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, Military Science, NSU Child and Family Network, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, and NSU Middle Laboratory School).

The Mission of the college states the GCEHD is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the academic and support units within GCEHD, the College produces knowledgeable, innovative, and inspired graduates ready for lifelong learning and endeavors that contribute to the communities in which they reside.

Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their parents related to learning and development.

During AC 2022-2023, the GCEHD is proud to reflect on the myriad revisions to field work, increased opportunities for internships, and modifications to internships and residency placements. The resilience and flexibility of GCEHD faculty and students was evident in every program and classroom. In comparing AC 2021-2022 to AC 2022-2023, GCEHD students and faculty are persistent in their pursuit of educational attainment.

### GCEHD Degree Programs

In fall 2022, the GCEHD enrolled 1909 undergraduate and graduate students in thirty-two-degree programs and thirteen certificate programs. 512 students (ages 3-14) were enrolled in the NSU Elementary and Middle Laboratory schools and Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center (CDC). 33 military cadets were enrolled as full-time students in fall 2022.

More than 100 full-time faculty and 40 adjunct faculty teach courses throughout the GCEHD. The Faculty and Degree Programs offered by GCEHD includes the following:

**Bachelor of Music Education** (offered in conjunction with the School of Creative and Performing Arts)

**Bachelor of Social Work:** Social Work

**Bachelor of Science:** Addiction Studies, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Child & Family Studies, Health & Exercise Science, Health & Physical Education, Psychology, Secondary Education and Teaching

**Master of Arts:** Adult Learning and Development, Counseling, Student Affairs in Higher Education

**Master of Arts in Teaching:** Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Elementary & Special Education, Middle School Education, Middle & Special Education Mild/Moderate, Secondary Education, Secondary & Special Education Mild/Moderate

**Master of Education:** Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Education, Educational Leadership, Educational Technology Leadership, Special Education

**Master of Science:** Health and Human Performance

**Educational Specialist:** Educational Leadership and Instruction

**Doctor of Education:** Adult Learning and Development

Within the GCEHD, academic success is measured through multiple metrics including overall grade point average, number of degrees awarded, and student retention (persistence).

During 2022, the GCEHD awarded 461 undergraduate and graduate degrees. Five cadets were commissioned as 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenants in the U.S. Army during 2022-2023. In 2021, the number of earned degrees totaled 512 and in 2020, it was 508.

For AC 2022-2023, retention rates for departments within GCEHD ranged from 69.76% to 76.10%. Overall retention across the GCEHD averaged 71.89%.

## Alumni and Student Success

### *Alumni:*

Alumni of the GCEHD have been remarkably successful in their chosen professions. A few recent alumni successes are highlighted below:

- Jonathan Daigle, Health and Human Performance (HHP) Outstanding Male Athlete for 2022-2023 was accepted into PT school at Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University.
- Jillian Palmer (MS, 2022) and Chance Creppel (BS, 2017) work for the New Orleans Saints organization. In March 2023, they provided a tour to Facility and Event Management graduate students of the Caesar's Superdome and the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans.
- The largest cohort of graduates completed the Ed.D in Adult Learning and Development in Spring 2023. Eight graduates were hooded as part of the spring 2023 commencement ceremonies.
- Robert Raines (MEd, 2000) has been named interim director of intercollegiate athletics at Alcorn State University beginning June 2023.
- Renae Myles Payne (MEd, 2000) has been named as Fort Valley State University Athletic Director, after more than 20 years in intercollegiate athletics at Winthrop, University of Miami, Alabama A & M, Southwest Baptist, Delaware State, San Jose State, Pittsburg, and Connecticut. Dr. Payne is the current president of the Minority Opportunities Athletic Association (MOAA).
- Faith McFadden (PREP, 2022) was named Pointe Coupee Parish New Teacher of the Year.
- Victoria Hebert (BS, 2022) was named Caddo Parish New Teacher of the Year for high schools.
- Dr. Becky Wilson (Ed.D, 2022) was named Webster Parish Principal of the Year.
- Waylon Bates (BS, 1999) was named Associate Superintendent of Bossier Parish in early 2023.

### *Current Students:*

- Michelle Shirley (M.Ed. in Educational Technology) was recently named a finalist for the 2023 Louisiana State Teacher of the Year. Ms. Shirley teaches science at the NSU Middle Laboratory School.
- Katie Reid (BS 2023) and Taylor Womack (BS 2023) are serving as national judges for Educators Rising at the National Conference in Orlando, June 2023. Both recently completed programs in Secondary Education and Teaching and will begin as teachers in fall 2023.
- Cohort 4 of the Central Louisiana Instructional Program (CLIP) will graduate in August 2023 as middle mathematics and science teachers. This is the final cohort of the U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Program (TQP) grant awarded to the Orchard Foundation in 2018. Dr. Marjorie Taylor, Orchard Foundation and Dr. Kimberly McAlister, NSU are co-principal investigators.
- Seven SOWK students were awarded the Child Welfare Scholars Program with a stipend of \$7500 to intern and enter the career path of Child Welfare.
- 100% of the graduate students in Clinical Psychology presented their research at the NSU Research Day. Additionally, 2 students presented at the Southwest Psychology Association Annual Conference.
- Dr. Patrice Moulton led a group of current graduate students and alumni to present at the U.S. Embassy in Katmandu, Nepal.
- Twenty students were inducted into Psi Chi-International Honor Society in Psychology.

## **Academic Engagement**

The Bachelor of Science in Addiction Studies at NSU has been named among the top online programs for both quality and affordability according to [guidetoonlineschools.com](https://guidetoonlineschools.com).

The EdD program in Adult Learning and Development is recognized as number 1 by Great Value Colleges. NSU was selected not only for the program's affordability but also for the institution's overall outstanding reputation, its faculty's excellence, and the unerring commitment to providing non-traditional students a high-quality education and in doing so, giving them the tools needed to achieve their future career goals.

The School of Education hosted a Red Apple Pinning Ceremony, celebrating all candidates formally admitted into Teacher Candidacy. Hosted in May 2023, this ceremony honored more than 40 undergraduate students.

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development honored more than 30 students at the GCEHD Spring Convocation. Awards were given in each department, determined by criteria established and voted on by the respective faculties.

### ***New Initiatives:***

Flat rate pricing and heavy recruiting have resulted in increased enrollment in the alternative certification program PREP and Educational Leadership. Both certification areas are classified as high need by the state of Louisiana during 2022-2023.

The Social Work department in conjunction with the Center for Inclusion and Diversity sponsored a "Voices of Diversity" series in 2022-2023.

The Department of Health and Human Performance secured approval to begin offering a Bachelor of Science degree in Sport and Recreation Management in fall 2023. Recruiting for the new program began in fall 2022 with special attention to student athletes.

### ***Faculty and Staff Awards/Recognition:***

- Dr. Charles King (Psychology) and Dr. Neeru Deep (Psychology) received the SWAATC grant for their work with addiction studies.
- Psychology faculty presented 18 presentations at the local, regional, national, and international levels during the 2022-2023 academic year.
- Steven Gruesbeck (Psychology) is serving as Executive Director of La Gear Up projects at Northwestern, administering a multi-year, \$3.2 million grant for programming across NSU departments for first generation students. This program is completed in June 2023.
- The Social Work Department submitted a 3-year renewal of the Title IVE Child Welfare Scholars program grant during 2022-2023. NSU's role in this statewide initiative continues to grow and includes 4 faculty/staff positions who contribute to the statewide program and Northwestern's program of study. For the next three-year cycle, July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026, the grant amount totals over \$9 million dollars.
- Members of the NSU Title IV-E Child Welfare team, including Andrew Fultz, Jennifer Shaw, Sherrie Roberson, and Lisa Mount, assisted in hosting the National Title IV-E Roundtable in May 2023 on the Southern University New Orleans (SUNO) campus.

## **College of Nursing & School of Allied Health**

Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH) is comprised of a diverse group of staff and health professionals dedicated to providing the highest quality nursing and allied health education in our state and region. To accomplish this goal, CONSAH strives to be an innovator and pacesetter in the educational preparation of individuals in nursing and allied health. CONSAH is guided by its mission statement:

*Northwestern State University College of Nursing and School of Allied Health serves an increasingly diverse student population while advancing the mission of the University by offering excellent and innovative undergraduate, graduate, certificate, and continuing education programs that are designed to assist individuals in achieving their goals to become responsible and contributing members of an interprofessional global community that improves the health of our region, state, and nation.*

To support the mission, CONSAH has dedicated resources, faculty, staff, to increasing the number of graduates from the traditional ASN and BSN programs by increasing partnerships with healthcare agencies. CON has also increased support of the various nursing bridge programs, including the military medic/paramedic-RN, LPN-RN and LPN-BSN, and RN-BSN nursing routes. Additionally, the number of post-master's nursing students has increased, which provides more multi-skilled nurse practitioners in our state. Finally, the BSN-DNP nurse anesthesia program has reached its full capacity with three simultaneously enrolled cohorts, with the first cohort set to graduate in December 2023.

Within the allied health programs, similar initiatives have occurred to increase the diversity of student backgrounds. Both the Bachelor of Science in Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAH) and the RT-BSRS programs provide an upward mobility track for allied health practitioners. The post-bachelors' certificates were converted to undergraduate certificate programs to provide more opportunities for the associate-prepared students in our state. Finally, the ultrasound program became the first program in north Louisiana and accepted its first cohort in spring 2023.

A part of the CONSAH's mission is to assist individuals to *"become responsible and contributing members of an interprofessional global community that improves the health of our region, state, and nation."* As part of their clinical rotations, each student provides over 1000 hours of direct patient care in area hospitals, clinics, and community health agencies. Additionally, students participate in community service throughout their programs. These services include vaccine clinics, health fairs, translation services, and addressing the health needs of vulnerable populations in north and central Louisiana.

During the upcoming 2023-2024 Academic year, the CONSAH will continue to produce graduates who recognize the holistic needs of those in their care. Faculty will continue to model for all students the CONSAH values of excellence in all things, respect for others, open communication and teamwork, empathy and caring, integrity and ethical behaviors, and being passionate members of an interprofessional healthcare team.

### **Degree Programs**

The CONSAH offers 8 degree-programs spanning from the associate degree to the practice doctorate, 3 post masters certificates in nursing, 3 undergraduate certificates in radiologic sciences, and 1 post-baccalaureate certificate in ultrasound. The CONSAH currently enrolls over 2500 undergraduate and graduate students in these degree programs. Many of these programs are located on off-campus learning sites in Alexandria, Leesville, Natchitoches, and Shreveport.

CONSAH has 87 full-time faculty members, and 78 adjunct faculty members who teach courses throughout CONSAH. Degrees offered through the College of Nursing include:

1. Associate of Science Degree in Nursing (ASN)
  - a) Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to ASN
  - b) Paramedic/Military Medic to ASN
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
  - a) LPN to BSN
  - b) RN (ASN) to BSN
  - c) BS to BSN
3. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
  - a) Nurse Educator
  - b) Nurse Administrator
  - c) Nurse Practitioner
    1. Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
    2. Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
    3. Family Nurse Practitioner
    4. Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
    5. Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
    6. Women's Health Nurse Practitioner
4. Post-master's Certificate Programs
  - a) PMC Family Nurse Practitioner
  - b) PMC Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
  - c) PMC Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
5. Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
  - a) MSN to DNP: Organizational Systems Leadership
  - b) BSN to DNP: Nurse Anesthesia

Degrees offered through the School of Allied Health (SAH) include:

1. Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Science (BSRS)
  - a) RT to BSRS
2. Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences w/Ultrasound Concentration
3. Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAH)
4. Undergraduate Certificate Programs
  - a) UG Cardiac Radiology Intervention
  - b) UG Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Therapy
  - c) UG Computed Tomography (CT)
5. Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
  - a) PBC Ultrasound
6. Master of Science in Radiologic Science (MSRS)

The Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) has approved all four nursing degree programs and all concentrations of each degree program. The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) nationally accredits the ASN program through 2030. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) nationally accredits the BSN, MSN, PMC, and DNP degree programs. All programs are accredited by the CCNE through 2030. The BSN to DNP-NA degree program received full accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) for the maximum time of five years (2026). The CON is also accredited as a

provider of Continuing Education in nursing by the American Nurses' Credentialing Center on Accreditation (ANCC). CON underwent an ANCC accreditation visit in 2023 and is awaiting a final award notification.

The BSRS degree program is nationally accredited through the Joint Review Commission on Education in Radiologic Technology (JCERT) through 2025.

In the Academic Year 2019-2020 the CONSAH awarded 587 degrees (CON-504; SAH 83). In AC 2020-2021, the CONSAH awarded 641 degrees (CON-554; SAH 87). In AC 2021-2022, the CONSAH awarded 657 degrees (CON-527; SAH 130). In AC 2022-2023, the CONSAH awarded 579 degrees (CON-481; SAH-98).

### Program Growth

The need for nurses and allied health professionals continues to remain at an all-time high. To drive enrollment, CONSAH sought multiple grants to expand nursing and allied health pathways. These include a \$1.8 million grant from the Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation to increase the number of students in the military medic/paramedic-RN and accelerated BSN nursing programs. A \$780,000 grant from the Rapides Foundation helped to expand the number of BSN nursing cohorts accepted on the CENLA campus. Another \$69,000 grant from the Rapides Foundation was received to increase retention among ASN students in Natchitoches and Alexandria. Finally, the Rapides Foundation awarded NSU \$750,000 to establish the first ultrasound program in north Louisiana. Housed in Natchitoches, the ultrasound program accepted its first clinical cohort in spring 2023.

### Alumni, Faculty, and Student Success

#### *Alumni:*

CONSAH alumni are successful professionals who bring regional and national imminence to NSU through their achievements. CONSAH alumni are involved in professional organizations, inpatient and outpatient healthcare management, and are engaged with current NSU students as mentors. Examples of recent alumni successes include:

- *Dr. Anna Morris* elected as 'Director at Large' for Louisiana Council of Administrators in Nursing Education (LaCANE).
- *Shaun Wheat*, recognized with 2022-2023 CONSAH 'Educator of the Year.'
- *Becky Farmer*, recognized with 2022-2023 CONSAH 'Educator of the Year.'
- *Dr. Kelli Haynes*, elevated to Fellow of the Association of Educators in Imaging and Radiologic Sciences
- *Debbie McGinnis*, recognized as the 2022-2023 CONSAH 'Nurse of the Year.'
- *Debbie McGinnis*, recognized with "Nightingale Award" at 2023 Shreveport District Nurses Association annual meeting.
- *Sheri Wilson*, named as Director of Dialogue on Race for Nursing
- *Dr. Angela Hardy*, selected University of Louisiana Management & Leadership Institute

#### *Faculty:*

CONSAH faculty members are interprofessional collaborators committed to the development of graduates who demonstrate the characteristics of resilient critical thinkers, compassionate and empathetic caregivers, and healthcare professionals who demonstrated this year, that their capability and flexibility of handling healthcare challenges. CONSAH's commitment to excellence continues to be exemplified through faculty members who constantly strive to promote students' success in their pursuit of academic and professional career goals. To maintain the mandated faculty to student ratios within the CONSAH, each year external funding for faculty positions must be obtained. Currently the CONSAH has 22 externally funded faculty/staff positions, which represents 23% of the CONSAH faculty/staff positions.

Examples of CONSAH Faculty achievements for 2020-2021 include:

- 10 Faculty earned doctorates.
- 5 Faculty serve on board of Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
- 1 Faculty serving as President-Elect of Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 1 Faculty is CCNE on-site reviewer.
- 1 Faculty is ACEN accreditation evaluator.
- 1 Faculty is COA on-site reviewer.
- 3 Faculty are JRCERT on-site reviewers.
- 1 Faculty served as panelist for the National Association of Diversity Officers in Education (NADOE)
- 6 Faculty received academic rank promotion.
- 1 Faculty received tenure.
- 16 Faculty published peer-reviewed articles.
- 1 Faculty published textbook.
- 27 podium presentations
- 1 Faculty elevated to Fellow of the Association of Educators in Imaging and Radiologic Sciences (AEIRS)
- 1 Faculty received research grant from American Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 18 Endowed Professors

#### *Students:*

CONSAH Student achievements for 2022-2023 include:

- Participated in multiple vaccination clinics throughout Northwest Louisiana
- 3 undergraduate students selected to join Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists' Leadership Academy
- Produced over 25 scholarly project practice change projects (DNP capstone projects)
- 2 undergraduate students inducted into Lambda Nu National Honor Society for Radiologic Science
- 50 nursing students inducted in Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

#### *Program Success*

Measures of program success include passage rates on licensure and certification examinations, national program rankings, progression from admission to graduation data and employment data. Additionally, alumni and employer ratings of program and graduates are used to evaluate program success. The following are indicators of program success:

#### *Licensure/Certification Examination Passage Rates AC 2022-2023:*

Licensure as a registered nurse occurs when students successfully complete their national council licensure examinations. Licensure as a radiologic technologist occurs when students successfully complete their registry examinations. Certification as an advanced practice registered nurses occurs when master's degree students successfully complete certification exams specific to a patient population. Accreditation for all programs is based on the first-time pass rates in each respective examination. All CONSAH programs exceed accreditation standard minimums and enjoy a first-time pass rate higher than both state and national averages:

Program	Clinical certifying Exams	Job Placement	Clinical Completion
ASN	96.36% state: 84.56% national: 77.91%	100%	68%
BSN	89.73% state 88.28% national 82.32%	100%	79%
MSN	97% national: 84%	100%	88-100%
DNP-NA	1st cohort will graduate Fall 2023		
BSRS	90% state: 86% national: 83.5%	100%	90.20%

#### CONSAH Employer & Alumni Satisfaction:

- CONSAH alumni satisfaction rates above 90% for the past five years
- CONSAH employer satisfaction rates above 90% for the past six years

#### National Program Rankings and Recognition:

- #1 ranked online allied health program in US (intelligent.com).
- #1 Most Affordable RN-BSN program in Louisiana (RNtoMSN.org)
- #1 ranked online RT-BSRS program in US (intelligent.com).
- #11 best Radiologic Science program in U.S. (bestvalueschools.org)
- #12 ranked online RN-BSN program in US (intelligent.com)
- #1 Producer of licensed registered nurses in Louisiana (2022 LSBN report)
- #1 Single Producer of Nurse Practitioners in Louisiana (2022 LSBN Report)

#### The Future

Like other programs and universities across the state, CONSAH has seen a decline in overall enrollment since 2021. To address these challenges, CONSAH has increased its recruiting and retention efforts. Looking ahead, CONSAH will continue to actively recruit high school students, as well as nontraditional students looking to return to the classroom in one of the many bridge programs. Regarding retention, CONSAH has and will continue to implement “bootcamps” to promote successful transition from one clinical level to the next. Additionally, CONSAH will continue to leverage relationships to grow bridge and nontraditional programs, such as the military medic/paramedic-RN, LPN-RN, and accelerated nursing programs.

Last year, CONSAH’s strategic plan included the following short-term goals: 1) have successful ACEN accreditation visit 2) Continue transition of CON director positions as tenured faculty plan for retirement; 3) enroll first cohort of sonography students in spring 2023; 3) retain >90% of first sonography cohort 4) Post all program outcomes to web page; 5) Continue fund-raising for CONSAH building on Shreveport off-campus learning site; 6) develop 4<sup>th</sup> Alumni “Nursing Columns”

In the 2022-2023 academic year, the CONSAH was accredited by the ACEN for the maximum of 10 years. The first ultrasound clinical cohort was accepted in the spring 2023 semester, and 9/10 students have matriculated from spring to summer. Secession plans have been established to replace the current CON undergraduate nursing director and CONSAH Director of Assessment and Planning. Program outcomes have been posted to the web page and the 4<sup>th</sup> Alumni "Nursing Columns" was published in Spring 2023. Finally, efforts to fundraise for a new academic building have shifted to the renovation of the existing Warrington Building in Shreveport. Combined with the new Alost Hall in Natchitoches and the lease of a new academic building in Alexandria, CONSAH will have state of the art facilities for years to come.

**Short/Long term Goals:** 1) Successfully transition to new CON undergraduate nursing director; 2) successfully transition to new CONSAH Director of Assessment and Planning 3) transition nursing to competency-based education; 4) increase Interprofessional Education (IPE) in nursing and allied health curricula; increase practice partnerships; 5) seek additional external funding sources through partners and grants; 6) develop research opportunities for college and faculty; 7) create dedicated evening/weekend cohorts for students; 8) continue fundraising for renovation of Warrington building in Shreveport; 9) seek funding for high fidelity lab equipment in Alost Hall

### **Innovation**

Four new distance classrooms were renovated in Shreveport and one distance classroom was renovated in Alexandria. These new classrooms provide expanded opportunities for nursing and allied health classes.

The use of 'Examsoft' software has enabled faculty to load test questions into a test bank based on program goals and outcomes. The benefit of this software and question implementation is that faculty can more accurately perform test analyses based on course objectives and program goals/outcomes.

The centralized application system used by the DNP program for the past three years is now being used by the MSN program. This system provides a way for students to use a single online application, streamlining the process of admittance.

CONSAH piloted a centralized IRB application system during the fall 2023 semester. Based on the success of the pilot program, the university has determined that it will adopt the same system to begin fall 2023.

## **College of Business and Technology**

The College of Business and Technology (CoBT) employs 28 full-time faculty members, 2 part-time faculty member, 2 twelve-month coordinators/administrators with teaching release time, 1 nine-month coordinator, 2 administrative support staff members and one twelve-month dean. The CoBT serves 905 (14-day count Fall 2022) undergraduates and graduate students enrolled in the following degrees:

### **The School of Business:**

- BS in Accounting (ACCT)
- BS in Business Administration (BUAD) with concentrations in business analytics, e-sports management, entrepreneurship, finance, human resources, international business, management, and marketing
- BS in Computer Information Systems (CIS) with concentrations in application development, cyber security, information systems management, and networking and system management
- BS in Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT) with concentrations in culinary arts, hospitality services, and travel & tourism

- Minors in accounting, business administration, computer information systems, hospitality management and tourism, and culinary arts.
- MS in Computer Information Systems
- Undergraduate certificate and post baccalaureate certificate in business analytics

The CoBT faculty are providing an engaging, applied learning environment for our students.

### **Academic Success**

At the College, academic success means our students are meeting university, college, and school expectations. One measure of student academic success is being in good standing [GPA of 2.0 overall and in major]. For the fall 2022 semester 80% of the students achieved a GPA of 2.0 and above. In spring 2023, 81% of students achieved a GPA of 2.0 and above.

Another measure of student academic success is academic progress, moving towards earning a degree. In AC 2022-2023, 45.26% of the CoBT fall 2016 cohort had earned degrees. Academic progress is also determined by the number of credit hours earned by our students per semester. In fall 2022, the average number of credit hours earned for CoBT students was 12.34 with 11.25 earned credit hours in spring 2023. Minimal to no variance was found between the hours attempted and hours earned. Students are successfully persisting in courses which they are pursuing.

To assist with ensuring academic success, we provide our students with access to the following:

1. Proper prerequisites for course success.
2. Supplemental instruction. Instructors provide supplemental instruction, video captured lectures, and students can also access tutors in our 24-hour Lab.
3. Relevant connections between what our students are learning in college and their current or future life by providing reality-based learning experiences such as guest speakers, business cases, problem-based or project-based learning, role plays, and simulations.
4. Experiential learning opportunities such as internships and service-learning programs. (i.e., Fastenal Company, Hancock Whitney Bank, NSU Career Counseling Center).
5. Relevant course lectures and assignments enhance our students' knowledge and skills.
6. Connecting students with key academic support and student development through involvement with the Student Advisory and Outreach Board activities and guest speakers.
7. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Please see SACSCOC document for more information.

The CoBT has designated a faculty member as an enrollment and advising strategist. This laser focused approach on advising practices, degree paths, and identifying hurdles that students face will facilitate a more seamless and accessible educational journey.

Accreditation is also a reflection of academic success. In Spring 2021, the School of Business was reaccredited by AACSB. The School of Business is currently in the process of preparing for the reaccreditation process in Spring 2025.

### **Student Success**

The College also defines student success as:

1. student retention (persistence). In AC 2022-2023 the School of Business persistence rate for all students was 66% and the persistence rate for our full-time entering freshman (1st to 2nd year) was 48%

2. number of graduating students. In AC 2022-2023, the annual CoBT graduation rate was 45.26%. This rate represents 183 CoBT students that earned degrees.

The College and faculty participate in the following events and activities that also contribute to student success: (1) first-year convocation ceremonies; (2) enhanced advisor/instructor/student relationships (Registration Round-up Event); (3) student recognition (Phi Beta Lambda, Beta Alpha Psi, Student Advisory and Outreach Board, Honor Societies, competitive events, and leadership award ceremonies); and (4) student engagement with and participation in Walter Porter Experience, and the College of Business and Technology Advisory Board meeting. HMT hosts several social events such as the Columns Cafe dinner events and lunch events, athletic tailgating, and special luncheon demonstrations each semester.

#### **Research and Innovation:**

The CoBT faculty continue to incorporate experiential simulation projects (ESP) and community service projects and activities as innovative and engaging assignments within the course curricula. During spring 2023, a group of business management students assisted the Sabine High Revitalization Project in formulating a marketing plan which included an on-site tour of the facility in Many, Louisiana.

The fall of 2022 initiated our 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Inferno Pitch dynamic business plan competition. Student teams competed showcasing their entrepreneurial and business planning skills. The top 5 teams were announced and provided the opportunity to continue onto the University of Louisiana at Monroe's Pelican Cup. NSU's top finisher, Rise and Rotate, took first place at the statewide event. Our student team came away with \$25,000 in monetary support for further development of the product concept as well as business development opportunities.

During AC 2022-2023, HMT resumed regular Columns Cafe operations with seated, fine dining-style dinners. With this experiential learning component, students developed themes for most dinners. In addition, students planned, prepared, and served the meals. Further, HMT debuted two new additional events through a required project in HMT 4200- Marketing in Hospitality Management & Tourism in which two student groups developed "Chef's Table" and "Ties and Tiaras".

The faculty continue to embrace technological advancements and adapt teaching methods to meet the needs of today's students. The use of platforms like Webex, Teams, Moodle, and proprietary courseware to connect with students remotely and outside of a traditional classroom allows for increased flexibility and inclusivity. Overall, the integration of technology, incorporation of real-world scenarios, and guest speakers contribute to an enriched learning environment that prepares students for the demands of the modern workforce.

The CIS faculty and the College of Education faculty continued to provide STEM training to seven middle-school math and science teachers in high-need schools within the Central Louisiana School Districts-CLIP initiative. Each resident was provided with a set of technology items that included Chromebooks, raspberry PI's, MicroBits, Amazon Fire tablets, Lego Spike Prime Robots, a Wacom tablet, and/or a set of Quest 2 virtual reality goggles. As a final showcase, the CLIP residents delivered live presentations that exemplified some of the technology and how it was implemented in the classroom. The CIS area participated in the LA GearUp initiative for summer 2022 and summer 2023. The College has also been awarded a grant from the Cyber Security Talent Initiative Fund along with continuing the partnership with Real Vision Software during Spring 2023.

## **Outlook-Action Plan**

Supporting innovation and educational success, we continually seek feedback from our stakeholders and make appropriate changes to our curriculum. Faculty will continue to advise and promote the **15 to Finish** during advising sessions with our students.

A concerted effort is being made for faculty to align their courses with the Quality Matters standards. Financial Incentives are offered to motivate faculty to engage in the process and invest time and effort into enhancing their courses.

Moving forward the college will continue to develop additional programs identified as needed by the workforce and that link and support our business and industry partners. The CoBT is exploring the creation, revision, and implementation of appropriate programs that will enhance our students' skillsets and are highly sought after by business and industry.

The Walter Porter Experience represents a comprehensive and immersive three-day event that expands upon the traditional Walter Porter Forum. By integrating industry leader engagements, tailored activities for CoBT students, a business etiquette luncheon to include students from all disciplines, a field experience in business and networking opportunities, this experience provides students with a well-rounded awareness of career after college. This experience will grow to include more internal and external stakeholders.

HMT has achieved the goal of two faculty members with terminal qualifications and will be seeking to align with a different accrediting body. HMT is evaluating adding a four-year degree in culinary arts to provide opportunities for necessary certifications in the industry.

At this time the CoBT has faculty and staff positions frozen, unfunded and/or not provided due to current enrollment conditions. This can and has put additional pressure on existing faculty members who must handle increased workloads. A primary concern is that faculty members may have less time to dedicate to individual students, potentially affecting student retention rates. While addressing these challenges, the CoBT is employing several strategies: (1) prioritizing workload distribution; (2) providing support, resources, tools, and professional development; and (3) encouraging collaboration and exploring alternative teaching methods. The strategies will evolve as necessitated by internal and external factors. The CoBT will advocate for financial and human resources to assist faculty and staff in performing duties that lead to the success of the student, school, college, and university.

## Moving Forward

Assessment Cycle 2022-2023 completes the University's sixth iteration of holistic assessment closing out Strategic Plan 2016-2023-*Dedicated to One Goal—Yours* and seamlessly initiates Strategic Plan 2023-2028-*Providing Education of Enduring Value*. Organizationally, we have learned much about ourselves over the past year as we prepare for Assessment Cycle 2023-2024. The University can move forward into AC 2023-2024 with confidence knowing its commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in the progress made toward our vision.

COVID-19 is still active across the globe. The virus was a driving force requiring Northwestern to adapt to the increasingly complex environment and associated policy changes at the system and state levels. The University remains ready to continue or initiate any adjustment necessary to its academic programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning and protect the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Student learning assessments maximize the principles of honest evaluation and assure the highest quality of coursework, whether through in-person classes, online delivery, or hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources are continuously updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

The annual assessment process is incomplete until the recommendations and proposed decisions are mediated and agreed upon, the final report is written, and the briefing is presented. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process, we still have work to do in convincing faculty and students of the power of assessment.

Based on our analysis of assessment activities, we have identified four strategic goals/challenges for the next five years:

- **Improving analysis of assessment results to improve critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and writing skills across all degree and certificate programs regardless of discipline.**
- **Expansion of External Stakeholders' participation and knowledge** of SLO assessment so they better understand the process and can offer more relevant and timely feedback. The initiative would require a mix of surveys and evaluation rubrics.
- **Assessment of High-Impact Practices—Lessons Learned** requires a collaborative effort between academic and student affairs focused on service/experiential learning. The QEP assessment results are critical in evaluating these co-curricular student experiences.
- **Increasing all aspects of diversity and inclusion by** understanding, accepting, and valuing differences between people while removing all barriers, discrimination, and intolerance so that everyone feels included and supported.

As a road map to the future, we have also identified immediate (3 x months), near-term (6 x months), and short-term (12 x months) activities to guide our efforts.

Immediate:

- Capture the 2022-2023 lessons learned and implement decisions.
- Update AC 2023-2024 Assessment Plans as necessary

- Finalize AC 2022-2023 assessments—data collection at the degree and unit level.
- Continue to assess recommendations—build consensus and establish predictability.

Near Term:

- October—Receive President's guidance on Strategic Plan 2023-2024
- December—Annual SACSCOC Conference
- Azimuth check on AC 2023-2024 assessment process (SFA/Program/Unit)
- Maintain continuity in data collection.

Short Term:

- October and beyond—thinking about the way forward—reshaping the Strategic Plan
- May 8-9, 2024—Commencement ends the assessment cycle.
- June 21, 2024—AC 2023-2024 Degree, Unit, Core Assessments complete and submitted to DIE.
- August—Assessment Cycle AC 2023–2024 Report—*Leading the Way* published.
- September—Brief to President

Through the commitment of our entire University community, we will realize our vision of becoming the nation's premier regional University.