

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Program: (BS) Unified Public Safety Administration (256)

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

College of Arts and Sciences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 2400: Introduction to Corporate and Municipal Emergency Management

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UPSA 2550: Hazards Risk Assessment Methods

UPSA 2700: Planning and Decision-Making in Public Organizations

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

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met. UPSA 2400 was offered during B term of the Spring 2023 semester. The class with eight (8) students was a success with all but two students presenting an above-average understanding of the concepts and principles of this class. Students were interactive, ready, and prepared to participate in class activities. There were 4 assignments for this class. The SLO requires 75% of students to score 70% or better. For all but one assignment and the final project, the 75% threshold (6/8) was achieved. For the remaining assignment, 62.5% (5/8) of the target was realized. Students were able to use correct terminology and produced exceptional results in their final projects. The weekly assignments reflected their understanding of various readings done for the class. The class responded to various questions and produced "mini" essays about how their understanding of the readings applied to this class. The final project could be redone to be more supportive of the SLO. UPSA 2400 and UPSA 2700 did not have textbooks, relying upon professional journals, academic journals, and governmental and internet sources for course content.

Based on the AC 2022-2023 analysis results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024. During AC 2023-2024, only one of the three courses tied to the course map for this objective was offered (UPSA 2700). Grades and scores throughout the course were higher than normal. The faculty updated the course content to ensure the information available was accurate and the most modern information available.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Seven of nine students ($7/9 = 77.8\%$) met the required performance level, thereby exceeding the 75% threshold for the standard. Students exceeding the threshold did so throughout the semester.

Decision: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. The target for the objective will remain unchanged, as only one in three courses was measured, and this is the first time the standard has been met in four years. Course content will be examined for the inclusion of content as appropriate, consistent with university standards, curricular elements of cultural representation, equity, disparity, and compassion within the subject matter, and to ensure content in this rapidly evolving subject matter is representative of best current practices.

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

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. One hundred percent (100%) of students (4 of 4) completed the capstone projects and courses properly, presenting critical thinking expectations specified in the objective. Students were able to complete projects enhancing public safety by working with a community partner. Projects were diverse and unique and met an identified need to achieve the goals of the partner and the partner's purpose. In UPSA 4700 (a capstone companion course), one hundred percent (100%) of students (4 of 4) completed the capstone projects and showed critical thinking skills specified in the objectives of the courses. All students (100%) who completed the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024. During AC 2023-2024, the two courses tied to this objective were offered: UPSA 4700 in Fall 2023 and UPSA 4480 in both Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters. Six students were enrolled in UPSA 4700, and a total of five students in UPSA 4480 (2 Fall and 3 Spring). For UPSA 4700, all students were successful in achieving all course measures for this course. The same was true for both UPSA 4480 offerings. Given that these courses constitute the capstone exercise for this degree, these results were not surprising. Senior seminar projects continue to be impressive individual feats and allow "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. New reflection exercises incorporated diversity elements into the curriculum.

As a result of these changes in AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Decision: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the AC 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. The

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faculty will revise the curriculum delivery to include a restructuring of UPISA 4480 to provide more descriptive and guided assignments.

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

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

UPISA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPISA 4700: Event and Venue Security

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

Findings: The target was not met.

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

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024. Students were not able to return to formal, live presentations as the majority of UPISA majors are internet-based and not available for live presentations such as the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, and other professional conferences. The lack of these opportunities and various student schedules inhibited the students from meeting this target.

As a result of these changes in AC 2023-2024, the target was not met.

Decision: In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. The objective will be revised to permit a live presentation of findings to a formal academic audience or audiences of peers or faculty, or audiences for which a unit of instruction has been created.

Measure: 2.2. (Indirect – Attitude): At the end of the term students will be administered

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a survey asking: "In my public safety administration courses I was provided a collegiate level of understanding of homeland security policy, strategy, threat assessment and trends, associated law and procedures, and how the various agencies interact across the spectrum of operations." The target is that at least 85% of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. All four (4/4 = 100%) of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement. Conversations conducted as "exit interviews" with all graduating students found satisfaction with the program and, in many cases, testimonials to the strength of the curriculum and ability to work directly with faculty during the capstone project.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024. The faculty redesigned the rubric for use in the evaluation of projects that went beyond the presentation itself.

As a result of these changes in AC 2023-2024, the target was met. All students in exit interviews (6/6 = 100%) expressed satisfaction with the structure and level of instruction and expressed that the experience met and fulfilled their needs. All stated varying levels of gratitude for learning opportunities presented by the personal nature of the senior seminar.

Decision: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. A restructuring of the format and delivery of UPSA 4480 will be implemented.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement Based on Analysis of Results: The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2024-2025. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2023-2024 results.

- In Measure 1.1, only one of the three courses tied to the course map for this objective was offered (UPSA 2700) during the academic year. Grades and scores throughout the course were higher than normal. The faculty updated the course content to ensure the information available was accurate and the most modern information available.
- In Measure 1.2, two courses tied to this objective were offered, UPSA 4700 in the Fall and UPSA 4480 in both the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters. Six students were enrolled in UPSA 4700, and a total of five students in UPSA 4480 (2 Fall and 3 Spring). For UPSA 4700, all students were successful in achieving all course measures for this course. The same was true for both offerings of UPSA 4480. Given that these courses constitute the capstone exercise for this degree, these results were not surprising. Senior seminar projects continue to be impressive individual feats and allow "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. New reflection exercises incorporated diversity elements into the curriculum.

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- In Measure 2.1, Students were not able to return to formal, live presentations as the majority of UPSA majors are internet-based and not available for live presentations such as the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, and other professional conferences. The lack of these opportunities and various student schedules inhibited the students from meeting this target.
- In Measure 2.2, The faculty redesigned the rubric for use in the evaluation of projects that went beyond the presentation itself.

Plan of Action moving forward:

- In Measure 1.1, the target for the objective will remain unchanged, as only one of three courses measured, and this is the first time the standard has been met in four years. Course content will be examined for the inclusion of content as appropriate, consistent with university standards curricular elements of cultural representation, equity, disparity, and compassion within the subject matter, and to ensure content in this rapidly evolving subject matter is representative of best current practices.
- In Measure 1.2, The faculty will revise the curriculum delivery to include a restructuring of UPSA 4480 to provide more descriptive and guided assignments.
- In Measure 2.1, The objective will be revised to permit a live presentation of findings to a formal academic audience or audiences of peers, faculty, or audiences for which a unit of instruction has been created.
- In Measure 2.2, A restructuring of the format and delivery of UPSA 4480 will be implemented.