

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources

Division or Department: Institutional Effectiveness

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Date: May 28, 2024

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Date: May 30, 2024

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

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources is a responsive administrative service and support unit that provides University leaders with information to be used in strategic planning and evidence-based decision-making and human resource programs and services. The Office assesses, collects, analyzes, reports, and disseminates data on behalf of the University and supports all University units in assessment-based improvement efforts. Reporting of information is in accordance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and federal and state regulations. The Office develops and delivers innovative human resource programs and services designed to support the mission of the University, including its core services and competencies such as staffing, employee relations, organizational and employee development, risk management, compensation and benefits, human resource information management, and regulatory compliance.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness assists university leaders with strategic planning, assessment, and evidence-based decision-making. The Office assesses, collects, analyzes, reports, and disseminates data on behalf of the University and supports all university units in assessment-based improvement efforts. Assists in the reporting of information per the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), federal and state regulations.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (direct & indirect and quantitative & qualitative) are collected and returned to the executive director.
- (2) The executive director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met:
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff;

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- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required (show cause);
- (5) In consultation with the staff and senior leadership, the executive director will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, and, where needed, service changes.

Institutional Effectiveness

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. Ensures the institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

Measure 1.1.

The University compiles and publicizes its documented institutional effectiveness process. The target is an informed approach, with 100% of the 162 academic and administrative units completing the process annually per the published timelines for annual assessment submission while meeting the requirements of the assessment element (s). Once complete, the assessments are available on the Director of Institutional Effectiveness website <https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>.

Finding. Target Met

Analysis. In 2022-2023 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed a more visible tracker/process for senior administrators as an incentive for timely submissions, provided direct assistance to programs and units having issues in completing their reports and developed additional tools to help streamline report construction. As a result, in 2023-2024, the target was met.

Decision, action or recommendation. In AC 2023-2024 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024 -2025. The DIE will leverage the SACSCOC Review Committee tracking tool and knowledge gained in support of the University long range planning calendar.

These changes will improve and prepare the University to maintain a viable, sustained effort to comply with all SACSCOC reports and maintain an almost real-time picture of the University's mission accomplishment.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality

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Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
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Measure 1.2.

The University has established a systematic review of the institutional mission, goals, and outcomes. We request revalidation and/or approval of the university mission, vision statement, and core values through our Board of Trustees once every five years per the Strategic Plan development process. The target is to conduct at least one comprehensive annual analysis of the mission, goal, and standards.

Finding. Target Met

Analysis. In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. Based on the 2022-2023 results analysis 2023-2024, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness briefed the new University President on the strategic planning process and the mission analysis that led to the University's new mission statement. During the mission analysis process, the University determined it would be better served by extending its current strategic 2016-2023 to seamlessly transition to the new University Strategic Plan 2023-2028. 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. The University continues to add to its list of areas subject to our quantitative assessment processes, facilitating more informed decision-making. Assessment Cycle 2022-2023 *A New Day* closes out *Strategic Plan 2016-2023* and sets the conditions for *Strategic Plan 2023-2028*.

This extension facilitates the nesting of the University Strategic Plan with the Board of Regents' Strategic goals for Northwestern while improving the alignment with their recently published master plan. The drafting of a new updated strategy continues to drive organizational improvement. As a result, in 2023-2024, the target was met.

Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, the University will refine the comprehensive timeline/plan for integrating the new strategic plan spanning 2023-2028 into the institutional effectiveness model, thereby establishing it as an unfiltered view of how well the University is accomplishing its mission in AC 2023-2024.

Decision, action or recommendation. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. The University will submit its mission statement, vision, and core values for revalidation by the ULS in preparation for its SACSCOC Decennial Review in 2026.

These changes will ensure the University's mission maintains congruence with the Board of Regents and the University of Louisiana Systems strategic framework while demonstrating to SACSCOC the continuous nature of the University's

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strategic planning efforts.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
Louisiana Board of Regents Higher Education Bylaws

Measure 1.3.

University senior leaders brief the University President on the findings of the strategic plan assessment cycle to better inform strategic decision-making, thereby ensuring the University accomplishes its mission and maximizes resources for targeted improvement in institutional quality. The target is to conduct and document the annual assessment briefing capturing and actioning areas of concern.

Finding. Target Not Met.

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. Based on the 2022-2023 results analysis, in 2023-2024, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, in coordination with the University President, conducted a very informative AC 2022-2023 Assessment Briefing. The brief was conducted on April 19, 2023, and included updates, ongoing initiatives, and priorities moving forward from each of the six strategic focus areas, updates from Deans, Academic and Administrative Support activities, including academic program and unit assessments, and addressed additional areas of scholarship, infrastructure, innovation, and potentially budget.

Based on the 2022-2023 results analysis, the University refined the comprehensive timeline/plan for integrating the new strategic plan spanning 2023-2028 into the institutional effectiveness model, thereby establishing a new Strategic Focus Area, associated objectives, and metrics. These latest results improved how the University sees and measures its progress. As a result, the target was met in AC 2023-2024.

Decision, action or recommendation. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024 -2025. The Key findings brief will take place in early September to facilitate the completion of the University Strategic Plan and set the conditions for SACSCOC Compliance certification preparation in 2024-2025.

These changes will allow the SACSCOC Review Committee (SRC) to devote more time to completing accreditation standards associated with its decennial review.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors

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SO 2. Assist with the identification of key indicators of performance related to the strategic plan, academic programs, and academic support units.

Measure 2.1.

Each of the 164 academic programs and administrative units has identified expected outcomes, assessed the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provided evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results. The target is 100% compliance.

Finding. Target Met

Analysis. In 2022-2023, the target was met. Based on the 2022-2023 results analysis, in 2023-2024, to drive the cycle of improvement, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed additional support material to facilitate the development of degree and unit assessments. In addition, support material to facilitate the development of the University's Strategic Plan was developed in concert with the support of the University's senior leadership.

As a result, the target was met in AC 2023-2024, 164 academic programs and administrative units have identified expected outcomes, assessed the extent to which they achieve these outcomes, and provided evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results. The target is 100% compliance.

Decision, action or recommendation.

In 2023-2024 the target was met. Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, in 2024-2025, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will update the "by the numbers" assessment tool for unit and program coordinators to ensure they write to the requirement in the correct format using SACSCOC language, thereby driving continuous improvement.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
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Measure 2.2.

The University will produce a holistic University assessment report using the Strategic Plan AC 2022-2023 assessment findings and the 162 separate academic programs and administrative unit assessments. The assessment report will highlight key findings in strategic decision-making and resource allocation. The report and briefing will be completed in June of each Academic Year. The target is to leverage a completed Strategic Plan Assessment and 100% of individual program and unit assessments in developing and presenting an annual assessment report by August 30 of the academic year.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2022-2023, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024, to drive the cycle of improvement, more efforts was spent on developing new/enhanced strategies to improve Strategic Focus Areas and developing a new Strategic Focus area, Cultural Competence.

Decision, action or recommendation.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, in 2024-2025, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will refocus the brief on those areas needing improvement instead of those of success. By focusing time and resources on areas that need attention, we should be able to drive continuous improvement.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
Louisiana Board of Regents Higher Education Bylaws

SO 3. Facilitate all aspects related to accreditation, including standards compliance, applications, reviews, and self-evaluation processes and documents.

Measure 3.1.

All SACSCOC Standards are apportioned to the appropriate university office for incorporation and integration into daily operations.

Finding. Target met.

Analysis. In 2022-2023 the target was met. Based on the 2022-2023 results analysis, in 2023-2024, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed a comprehensive approach to producing either a differentiated or decennial SACSCOC report. Each standard was placed in a folder with a draft and the

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associated reference material. The plan is designed to maximize what was produced in the Fifth-Year Report, focusing on those new standards comprising the Differentiated Review Process. The plan includes the remaining standards to be produced in a timely manner should the differentiated report not be an option. As a result, in 2023-2024, the target was met.

Decision, action or recommendation. In AC 2023-2024 the target was met. Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024 -2025. The new approach will be documented to establish a standard for future compliance certifications.

These changes will improve the ability of the University to produce required compliance reports based on the system that allows for continuous updates if appropriately leveraged.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
Louisiana Board of Regents Higher Education Bylaws

Measure 3.2.

All university strategic planning and assessment documents will be stored so that the information remains secure and accessible from any location via the Internet.

Finding. Target Met

Analysis. In 2022-2023 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, in 2023-2024, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness redesigned portions of the IE Website to document the submission of the SACSCOC Fifth Year Report. As a result, in 2023-2024, the target was met.

Decision, action or recommendation. In AC 2023-2024 the target was met. Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2024 -2025. The DIE has maintained a process to ensure documents are updated as new versions are produced.

These changes will improve the relevance of the document library as it pertains to planning, assessment, and SACSCOC compliance.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
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Comprehensive Summary of Key evidence of improvement based on the analysis of results. (Needs Updating)

- The Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed a more visible tracker/process for senior administrators as an incentive for timely submissions, provided direct assistance to programs and units having issues completing their reports, and developed additional tools to help streamline report construction.
- During the mission analysis process, the University determined it would be better served by extending its current strategic 2016-2023 to seamlessly transition to the new University Strategic Plan 2023-2028. 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. The University continues to add to its list of areas subject to our quantitative assessment processes, facilitating more informed decision-making. Assessment Cycle 2022-2023 *A New Day* closes out *Strategic Plan 2016-2023* and sets the conditions for *Strategic Plan 2023-2028*.
- In coordination with the University President, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness conducted a very informative AC 2022-2023 Assessment Briefing. The brief was conducted on April 19, 2023, and included updates, ongoing initiatives, and priorities moving forward from each of the six strategic focus areas, updates from Deans, Academic and Administrative Support activities, including academic program and unit assessments, and addressed additional areas of scholarship, infrastructure, innovation, and potentially budget.
- The Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed additional support material to facilitate the development of degree and unit assessments. In addition, support material to facilitate the development of the University's Strategic Plan was developed in concert with the support of the University's senior leadership.
- To drive the cycle of improvement, more efforts was spent on developing new/enhanced strategies to improve Strategic Focus Areas and in the development of a new Strategic Focus area, Cultural Competence.
- The Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed a comprehensive approach to producing either a differentiated or decennial SACSCOC report. Each standard was placed in a folder with a draft and the associated reference material. The plan is designed to maximize what was produced in the Fifth-Year Report, focusing on those new standards comprising the Differentiated Review Process. The plan includes the remaining standards to be produced in a timely manner should the differentiated report not be an option.
- The Director of Institutional Effectiveness redesigned portions of the IE Website to document the SACSCOC Fifth Year Report submission.

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Plan of action moving forward.

The University Leverages the Institutional Effectiveness Model systematically and comprehensively to push closer to its vision. The University's senior leadership remains the force behind establishing a culture of continuous assessment. The assessment's purpose, reasoning, and value is slowly becoming clear to university administrators, faculty, and staff. The tangible value in this process directly impacts organizational improvement and is being more understood across campus. The University continues to right-size the assessment process. The University has completed seven iterations, so its leadership has a far better understanding of what should/needs to be assessed. The task is to fine-tune what needs to be assessed, determine how best to assess it and leverage the results to drive continuous improvement.