

Assessment Cycle 2023 – 2024

Institutional Research

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources

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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.

Within the **Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources**, the **Office of Institutional Research (OIR)** focuses on the analysis and provision of data to both internal and external constituents for the purposes of decision-making, accreditation, academic research, strategic planning, grant proposal and post-award reporting, as well as mandated governmental reporting. Strong ties with NSU's Office of Information Technology ensure that OIR continues to exploit the latest tools, data structures and methods to provide leadership and customer service in NSU's data analysis function. Strong ties with NSU's Internal Auditor allow OIR to:

- process data that is properly processed through University-approved methods
- work with the auditor and functional departments to address deficiencies in those methods to promote data integrity
- assist in designing enhanced methods to allow the most accurate and effective data sources for analysis and decision-making.

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

Institutional Research (OIR)

Service Outcomes:

<p>SO 1. Provide expertise and support for strategic planning, assessment, program design, and continuous improvement.</p>

Measure 1.1. Complete 100% of data requests for unit and program assessments. The OIR regularly interprets, validates, and manages student and program assessment data at predetermined intervals to facilitate organizational planning and program design.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2022-2023, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, OIR proposed to prototype a dashboard for Strategic Focus Area **Academic Excellence** in consultation with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE). The first step, to identify standard sources and timing of update for Academic Excellence metrics, required input from VPAA and VPSE to identify sources.

As a result, in 2023-2024, OIR determined that seven (7) of the metrics are sourced from EvaluationKit student survey results. OIR requested assistance from the VPAA and VPSE to identify the sources for the remaining twenty (20) metrics. Feedback indicated that this data is collected from varying sources as needed by the VPAA primarily.

After reviewing the metrics and previous results, OIR found that many, though quantitative, are reported in a non-standard way. A subset of eighteen (18) metrics was selected for inclusion in the prototype dashboard.

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A prototype dashboard was developed to display measures reported from AC20-21, AC22-23 along with Targets. AC21-22 was a year of reflection and therefore has no data. AC23-24 data can be added in July 2024.

The dashboard, if desired by DIE, could be made available internally in July.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2023-24 results, OIR sees limited usefulness for a Strategic Plan Academic Excellence dashboard for two reasons:

1. Data is only refreshed annually.
2. Data is already compiled into an annual assessment document.

In contrast, specific units may have more frequently updated metrics. For 2024-25 IR will review program and unit assessments submitted in June 2024 and determine whether any patterns suggest a dashboard (or dashboards) might be helpful to the responsible organization(s).

Measure 1.2. – One hundred percent (100%) completion of federal and state reports. The University consistently utilizes historical enrollment, retention, and completion data to analyze performance trends and develop forecasts to assist leadership with strategic and operational planning decisions. The OIR contributes data for the University Strategic Plan and University Operating Plan on an annual basis utilizing enrollment, retention, and graduation rate data. The University submits enrollment, finance, facilities, human resources, financial aid, library, graduate, and completer data reports each semester and annually to the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System. The information submitted is reviewed at the system level to ensure data accuracy and to monitor compliance with and the attainment of state and system level goals and objectives. Additional reports of significance include the Statewide Student Profile System, the Facilities and Space Utilization Report, Louisiana Performance Accountability reports, and the Board of Regents Strategic and Operational Plans.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2022-2023, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, OIR proposed to work with ECE to publish tutorial video(s) to assist University personnel in the use of the dashboards. OIR worked with ECE to identify platform options to publish these videos and discussed appropriate length of such videos.

As a result, in 2023-2024, OIR identified several subject areas that could merit video tutorials.

- Overview of OIR Dashboards
- Intro to Institutional Facts Dashboard
- Using the OIR Student Enrollment Dashboard – Filtering

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- Using the OIR Student Enrollment Dashboard – Display Options
- Using the OIR Student Retention Dashboard

OIR tested PowerPoint recording and Microsoft Stream options and received feedback and suggestions from ECE as part of peer review process. “Intro to Institutional Facts Dashboard” video was completed, published to Stream, and will be incorporated into the OIR website.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the 2023-24 results, OIR will publish additional videos covering use of OIR website elements.

<p>SO 2. Develop, provide, and maintain timely and accurate institutional data to internal and external audiences.</p>

Measure 2.1. – One hundred percent (100%) of data source files will be documented for federal and state reports to enable responsiveness to all inquiries, requests, and audits. Complete any audits with no substantial findings. The OIR ensures accuracy, consistency, and timeliness among federal, state, and internal reports (IPEDS, Louisiana Board of Regents, Louisiana Performance and Accountability System, and internal assessment reports) through data validation protocols and audit and balancing of state and federal standardized reports. The Louisiana Legislative Auditors, (the independent audit body for the state of Louisiana), has the authority to audit as they deem appropriate to verify data accuracy.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2022-2023, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, OIR met with GLBA consultants, received an analysis of findings from their study, and made plans to address those findings.

As a result, in 2023-2024, OIR began reviewing physical files and shredding those containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) that are older than 5 years. This task continues. OIR has drafted a retention policy (“Retention of Files and Documents in Institutional Research”) and is developing procedures to support the timely archival and deletion of files according to the policy.

OIR evaluated alternatives to emailing files for distributing output to requestors, in the instance that the output contains PII. Both OneDrive and Teams were considered. IT, in response to ticket #69976, recommended Teams. However, in most cases, output from IR is aggregated and does not require secure transmission.

OIR evaluated alternative storage methods for files containing PII. Currently, .csv files

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are created at census and end of term and stored on the shared N: drive. While this drive is secure, the consultant recommended that we discontinue storing any PII in .csv files. To meet this objective, IR is designing and implementing a data warehouse structure which will contain this data. Original .csv files can be uploaded and stored in their own archival database for disaster recovery purposes.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, OIR will load data to the Snowflake data warehouse.

Measure 2.2. – One hundred percent (100%) compliance with Board of Regents' modifications to report specifications. The OIR consistently reviews data collection and reporting processes to identify relationships among reports and across departments to synchronize data reporting and to validate accuracy employing different data extraction and reporting methods in compliance with reporting standards as established by the Louisiana Board of Regents. Report procedures exist for all major state reports that are compiled by the OIR, however, the Board of Regents often issues modifications to specifications for the required reports. The Office of Institutional Research will implement continuous improvement processes to continuously revise reporting methods to comply with Board of Regents reporting specification revisions.

Findings. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2022-2023, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, OIR re-engineered the systems that gather and report Student Profile data to accommodate the new collection of Prior Learning data (also known as "PLA" data). PLA data is stored in Banner primarily, and only that data which is stored in Banner is being reported on Student Profile. Other PLA data collected under non-credit programs and continuing education is not currently stored in Banner. Further, current collection and storage processes for that data make it infeasible to include in PLA reporting.

As a result, in 2023-2024, OIR reviewed the PLA submissions to determine if further analysis at the institutional level was warranted. Economic Development and Innovation Office (EDIO) is responsible for non-credit programs, continuing education, and portfolio evaluation. OIR discussed with EDIO the structure of PLA reporting and agreed that the first step was to align the catalog description of PLA types with the BoR definitions. Catalog changes were developed and accepted for the 2024-24 University Catalog.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, OIR will conduct an analysis of NSU's 2022-2023 PLA data that has been submitted to BoR and develop a profile of typical student prior learning.

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SO 3. Conduct project-based research and analyses.

Measure 3.1 – Eighty percent (80%) overall completion of requests for ad hoc data reports and surveys. One hundred percent (100%) completion of all requests for ad hoc and recurring data requests related to **accreditation, planning and compliance**. The OIR compiles, analyzes, and reports student and program data in a timely and accurate manner to assist departments with new program initiatives, grant applications, compliance/accreditation, recruiting, and other strategic and planning initiatives as appropriate.

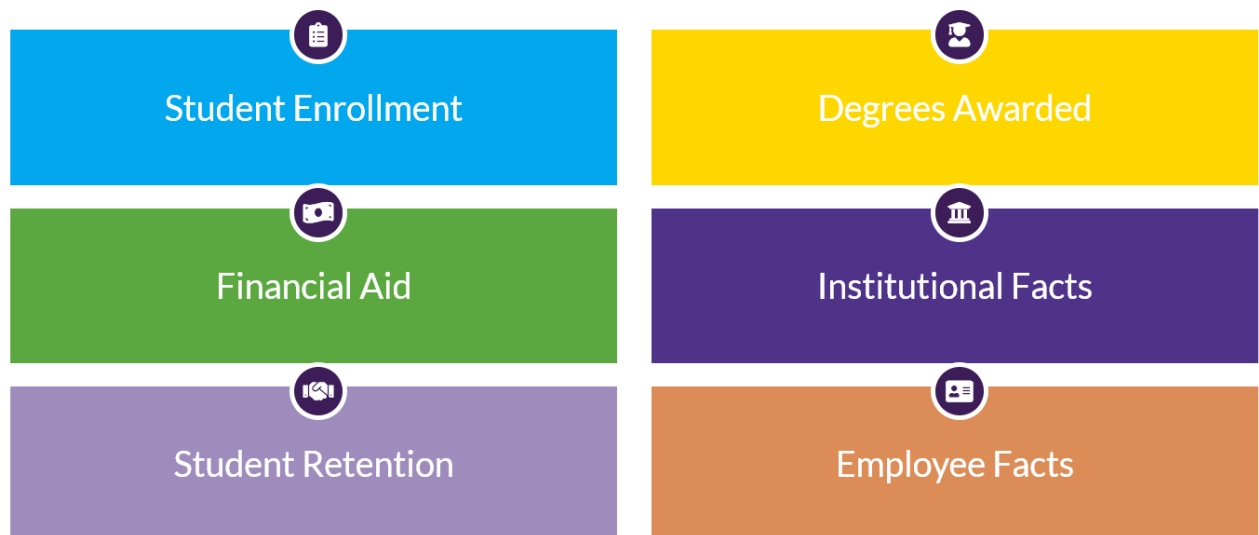
Finding.

Analysis. In 2022-2023, the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, OIR planned to develop and deploy an Employee or Faculty dashboard on the OIR website. The design of the dashboard should allow disaggregation at the rank, tenure, and fulltime/parttime dimensions.

As a result, in 2023-2024, the draft Faculty dashboard was developed and internally reviewed. A major enhancement requested during this review, to be able to look at Faculty information by college and department, required significant data analysis, collection, and system planning. The Employee/Faculty dashboard has been added to the selection of dashboards publicly available at: <https://www.nsula.edu/oir/dashboards/>

DASHBOARDS



Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2023-24 results, OIR has evaluated the existing OIR website. OIR will enhance the IR Student Achievement webpage display for Key Student Completion Indicator (“SACSCOC Grad Rate”) to incorporate disaggregation functionality, similar to the capabilities available for IPEDS Grad Rate.

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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 2023-2024. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2022-2023 results.

SO	Measure	Key Evidence
1	1.1	Reviewed sources and frequency of Academic Excellence metrics. Developed list of reportable metrics.
1	1.1	Drafted a prototype dashboard for reporting Academic Excellence metrics located at N:\Departments\InstitutionalResearch\Dawn Working Area\KPIs.
1	1.2	Published “Intro to Institutional Facts Dashboard” tutorial on Stream.
2	2.1	Worked with GLBA consultant to review IR compliance and identified two areas for improvement. Began implementation of Snowflake to address replacement of most N: drive files containing PII. Outlined Teams model for sharing data and reports instead of emailing. Drafted archival policy for IR files.
2	2.2	Submitted PLA data at the detailed design level throughout all SSPS reporting cycles. Reviewed possible institutional use of PLA data to improve grad rates and time to graduate.
3	3.1	Developed and published Employee/Faculty dashboard.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

SO	Measure	Plan
1	1.1	IR will review program and unit assessments (submitted in June 2024) and determine whether any patterns suggest a dashboard (or dashboards) might be helpful to the responsible organization(s).
1	1.2	OIR will publish additional videos covering use of OIR website elements.
2	2.1	OIR will load data to the Snowflake data warehouse.
2	2.2	OIR will conduct an analysis of PLA data that has been submitted to BoR and develop a profile of typical student prior learning.
3	3.1	IR will enhance the IR Student Achievement webpage display for Key Student Completion Indicator (“SACSCOC Grad Rate”) to incorporate disaggregation functionality, similar to the capabilities available for IPEDS Grad Rate.