

Office of Accessibility and Disability Support

Division or Department: Student Affairs

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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 Student Experience Mission Statement: The Student Experience provides the University community with programs and services to support the academic mission of creating, disseminating and acquiring knowledge through teaching, research and service while empowering a diverse student population to achieve their highest educational potential. The Student Experience creates a stimulating and inclusive educational environment conducive to holistic personal growth. The commitment to students initiates prior to entrance, sustains throughout the college experience and continues beyond graduation. Enrollment Services provide equal access for education to potential students throughout the state and region and promote economic stability and financial access to citizens. Student Affairs enhances student development and broadens intellectual, social, cultural, ethical and occupational growth. The Student Experience works closely with faculty, staff, students, and the community to ensure graduates have the capability to promote economic development and improvements in the region.

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

The Office of Accessibility and Disability Support (OADS) is a student-centered division making students with disabilities full participants in the university program, services, and activities through its compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The OADS coordinates services, accommodates students with disabilities, serves as an information center concerning disability-related issues, and provides equal educational opportunities to diverse students. The OADS supports the university's mission through its commitment to provide services that are innovative and surpass the federal guidelines for those with disabilities.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- Data from the assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the director.
- The director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met:
- Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff.
- Individual meetings will be held with staff as required (show cause).
- The director, in consultation with the staff, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

Accessibility and Disability Support Effectiveness

Service Outcomes:

SO1: Students seeking registration with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support will receive specialized and individualized support at Northwestern State University promptly.

Measure 1.1: Students seeking services/accommodation will receive information through OADS staff outreach. The target is that 75% of students will indicate that they received information about OADS through outreach on question #12 of the OADS end of the year survey.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was not met. The admission application asked if students have received accommodations. Students selecting yes on this application question information about disability services to help identify students needing to register for disability services. The Office of Accessibility and Disability Support shifted to new staff members during this assessment cycle and were not available for summer outreach. Data was not collected for incoming freshmen thus not able to meet this measure. Furthermore, recruitment for OADS is year-round and not just focused on Freshmen.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the staff made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Measure 1.1 shifted focus to freshman students and students registered with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support. Staff sent information to students for several weeks before the start of the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters. The staff participated in outreach efforts throughout the term to include summer programs, partnered events, and departmental programming.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. OADS staff sent information to students for several weeks before the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters to increase awareness, outreach, and OADS registration. The staff participated in outreach efforts throughout the term to include summer programs, partnered events, and departmental programming. OADS participated in outreach including hosting events, programming, collaborations with student affairs offices, emails, social media, and utilizing the student messenger. On question # 10 of the end-of-semester survey, 100% of students indicated

receiving information from OADS via email, messenger, social media, or any information to promote awareness of disabilities. On question #11 of the end-of-semester survey, 92.6% of students indicated learning something new from OADS emails, messenger, social media, or outreach events. On question #12 of the end-of-semester survey, 70.4% of students indicated that they did not attend any OADS outreach events, while only 25.9% of students indicated that they had attended outreach events. Students are indicating that they are receiving information through OADS outreach, yet they are not attending OADS events/programming for outreach.

Decision:

In AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. OADS staff will send information to students for several weeks before the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters to increase awareness, outreach, and OADS registration. The staff will participate in outreach efforts throughout the term, including summer programs, partnered events, and departmental programming. This measure will shift to include Question #10 and #11 on the end of semester survey to include emails, messenger, and social media as outreach efforts. With this revision, outreach will not only include hosting events, programming, and collaborations with student affairs offices, but it will also include emails, social media, and utilizing the student messenger. Question #12 is only inclusive of students who attend OADS events, and many students are online or not housed on the Natchitoches campus, so this does not include the outreach attempts that are not face to face. This new measure now reads, "Students seeking services/accommodation will receive information through OADS staff outreach. The target is that 75% of students will indicate that they received information about OADS through outreach on questions 10-12 of the OADS end of the year survey." These changes will improve the students' ability to learn about the services offered to register with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support, continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 1.2: Upon submission of OADS registration applications and continued services applications, staff will review and approve the packets and communicate to faculty regarding student accommodations within 14-days during the Fall and Spring Semesters. The target is that 95% of new students registering will have coordinated services within 14-days of being approved for services.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was not met. The staff had the approval process for registration and approval of services completed within 14 days (about 2 weeks) and coordinated in 72 hours (about 3 days) once approved. Students received approval emails outlining their accommodations, testing policy, resources, and an email with their accommodation letter attached. The implementation of Maxient was used for student records and requests while also helping ensure services are approved and coordinated in a timely manner. The Office of Accessibility and Disability Support shifted to new staff members during this assessment cycle and data for this measure was not collected from the previous staff.

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Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the staff made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. This measure shifted based on new protocols and processes that were implemented by the new staff. The new measure now reads, "Upon submission of OADS registration applications and continued services applications, staff will review and approve the packets and communicate to faculty regarding student accommodations within 14-days during the Fall and Spring Semesters. The target is that 95% of new students registering will have coordinated services within 14-days of being approved for services.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. In AC 2023-2024 The Office of Accessibility and Disability Support ensured new registered students had services coordinated in a timely manner. OADS sent out several reminders to fill out continued services applications for the new semester, which allowed for creation/issuing of accommodation letters to be distributed early in the new semester. 100% of students who were approved of services and had submitted the continued services application had their official accommodation letter distributed within 14 days (about 2 weeks) of the new semester. On Question #7 of the OADS end-of-semester survey, 100% of students reported receiving requested services in a timely manner. These changes streamlined the process of reviewing and approving OADS packets and communicating to faculty and registered OADS students.

Decision:

In AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. OADS staff will spread awareness of and implement the protocols for registration and continued services application to maintain timely communication and 14-day approval time. The staff will review and work to approve accommodations within 14-days (pending required documents, student communication, and scheduling of intake session), and will communicate with students, faculty, and staff regarding student accommodations and office registration/continued registration processes. These changes will improve the student's ability to receive classroom and testing accommodations in a timely manner, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Service Outcome 2: Students registered with OADS are taken care of in a comprehensive and systematic manner in accordance with their specific needs.

Measure 2.1: The OADS staff will promote and educate faculty on the OADS testing process, procedures, and protocols to ensure that students testing needs are met. Success is defined as having 80% of registered faculty members following the OADS testing procedures.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was met. The OADs staff informed instructors and students of the testing policies and procedure as needed throughout the semester to push the cycle of improvement. All were reminded of proctoring availability by OADS staff. These changes improved the student's ability to utilize testing accommodations and increase the numbers of students leveraging this service. There were 180 students eligible for testing accommodations. In

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AC 2022-2023, 545 exams were requested, proctored, and administered. On the OADS assessment, 21 student responses indicated the utilization of testing accommodations. Approximately 87.5% of students completing the survey indicated utilized testing accommodations. More exams were administered for AC 2022-2023 with 545 exams completed than AC 2021-2022 with 444 exams completed. The administration and proctoring of exams were conducted by OADS, lock down browsers, and third-party agencies as assigned by instructors.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the staff made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. This measure is unnecessary due to the OADS office having limited control over the utilization of testing services. OADS students can choose not to test with the office as they may have other service areas or proctors to assist for each exam. Thus, this measure was changed to focus on the testing process from the faculty perspective. The new measure states “The OADS staff will promote and educate faculty on the OADS testing process, procedures, and protocols to ensure that students testing needs are met. Success is defined as having 80% of registered faculty members following the OADS testing procedures.”

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was not met. The OADS staff participated in a variety of outreach and education throughout this academic year.

- Participated in the new Faculty/Staff Institute in the fall semester and Professional Development opportunities to notify instructors of OADS policies and procedures.
- Enforced the new testing link that was date and time protected.
- All students taking the exams on all campus instructional sites were notified of contact personnel and testing accommodation information at the beginning of the semester.
- The OADS staff informed instructors and students of the testing policies and procedures as needed throughout the semester to push the cycle of improvement.
- All were reminded of proctoring availability by OADS staff.

OADS distributed a second survey to students after realizing the OADS end-of-semester survey does not ask questions regarding faculty/staff and distance campuses. Small numbers of OADS registered students are completing the surveys, so we are not obtaining perspective from many of our students. Questions on the second survey included “Rate your professor's assistance with accommodations, Rate your proctor's assistance with testing accommodations and proctoring, and Do you feel your professors, faculty, and/or staff administrators follow and support your accommodations and testing procedures. On this second survey, 78.6% of students who took the survey indicated they took classes in Natchitoches/exams in the OADS office, 14.3% of students indicated they took exams/classes on the Alexandria campus, and 7.1% indicated for the Leesville Campus. 53.9% of students indicated that they were satisfied with their professor's assistance with accommodations (satisfied or completely satisfied on question 2 of the second survey). 30.8% of students indicated that they were dissatisfied with their professor's assistance with accommodations (either dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied on question 2). 15.4% of respondents indicated indifferent. On question 3 of the second survey, 84.6% of students indicated that they were completely satisfied with their proctor's assistance with testing accommodations and proctoring, while 15.4% of students indicated that they were dissatisfied with their proctor's assistance. On question 5 of the survey, 69.2% of students reported “yes”, that their professors, faculty, and/or staff administrators follow and support their accommodations

and testing procedures, while 30.8% of students responded “no” their professors do not. Students are reporting that their proctors are following and supporting their accommodations and testing procedures, but that their professors/faculty members are not. These changes impacted the faculty’s ability to follow the OADS testing process and procedures.

Decision:

In AC 2023-2024 the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. OADS will work with faculty and staff to inform everyone on OADS policies and procedures for accommodations and testing. OADS will work with distance campus faculty/staff proctors and directors to ensure accommodations are being offered and supported for all students, including on our satellite campuses. OADS will be revising the end of semester survey to include the specific questions that the second survey asked regarding professors, and faculty/staff members who assist with accommodations testing and proctoring on satellite campuses. Questions will include “Rate your professor's assistance with accommodations, Rate your proctor's assistance with testing accommodations and proctoring, and Do you feel your professors, faculty, and/or staff administrators follow and support your accommodations and testing procedures.” This will help with establishing all faculty members are following OADS procedures and will help to create a positive experience for students on each campus, rather than just in Natchitoches. OADS also will begin issuing the survey earlier in the semester and offer additional reminders to reach more of our registered students. These changes will improve the testing process for faculty and students hereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 2.2: 90% of students report a positive experience as indicated on #8 of the end-of-semester survey.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024 the target was met. The OADS staff participated in the new Faculty/Staff Institute in the fall semesters and during Professional Development opportunities to notify instructors of OADS policies and procedures. The staff sent reminder emails to promote student satisfaction and positive experiences with testing accommodation. This change eliminated the delays of exams to the OADS staff. All students taking the exams on all campus instructional sites were notified of contact personnel and testing accommodation information at the beginning of the semester. Faculty were reminded to send exams when requests are received to prevent delays or interruptions for students having exams proctored by OADS staff. Previously, students could request a proctored exam at any time, which caused a challenge for the staff and faculty. The OADS staff developed a new testing link that was date and time protected. This process ensured that students had to request proctored exams at least 48 hours (about 2 days) in advance. This gave enough time for the OADS staff and faculty to prepare the exams for the students. With these changes, 98.5% of students taking the end of year assessment reported a positive experience (satisfied or completely satisfied on question 8 of the end-of-semester questionnaire. There was one incident of cheating.

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Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the staff made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Due to this measure evaluating several components, the OADS staff changed this measure to focus on student testing satisfaction based on # 8 of the end of the semester survey. The new measure will read “90% of students report a positive experience as indicated on #8 of the end-of-semester survey.”

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. The OADS staff participated in the new Faculty/Staff Institute in the fall semester and during Professional Development opportunities to notify instructors of OADS policies and procedures, and enforced the new testing link that was date and time protected. All students taking the exams on all campus instructional sites were notified of contact personnel and testing accommodation information at the beginning of the semester. Faculty were reminded to send exams when requests are received to prevent delays or interruptions for students having exams proctored by OADS staff. This process ensured that students had to request proctored exams at least 48 hours in advance. This gave enough time for the OADS staff and faculty to prepare the exams for the students. OADS also distributed several reminders regarding end-of-semester survey once final exams testing/proctoring ended to include the students’ experiences who were taking final exams in OADS. With these changes, 92% of students taking the end of year assessment reported a positive experience (satisfied or completely satisfied on question 8 of the end-of-semester questionnaire.) 84% of students indicated completely satisfied, and 8% of students indicated satisfied, totaling 92% of students testing in OADS as satisfied with completing exams in OADS. There was one incident of cheating. These changes had a direct impact on the students’ experience with the services offered by the OADS staff.

Decision:

In AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. OADS staff will spread awareness of and implement the testing policies/procedures of testing in the OADS office. OADS staff will work to communicate with students, faculty, and staff about student testing accommodations and the importance of submitting exam requests/sending exams to OADS to continue effective and timely proctoring/ exam delivery. OADS will work with distance campus proctors and directors to ensure accommodations are being offered and supported on our satellite campuses. OADS will be revising the end of semester survey to ask specific questions regarding testing and proctoring on satellite campuses. Questions will include “Rate your professor’s assistance with accommodations, Rate your proctor’s assistance with testing accommodations and proctoring, and Do you feel your professors, faculty, and/or staff administrators follow and support your accommodations and testing procedures.” This will help with establishing a positive testing experience for students testing on each campus, rather than just at OADS in Natchitoches. These changes will help improve the students’ satisfaction regarding the testing process, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements 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 AC 2022-2023 results analysis.

SO1:

1.1: Measure 1.1 shifted focus to freshman students and students registered with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support. Staff sent information to students for several weeks before the start of the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters. The staff participated in outreach efforts throughout the term to include summer programs, partnered events, and departmental programming.

1.2: This measure shifted based on new protocols and processes that were implemented by the new staff. The new measure now reads, "Upon submission of OADS registration applications and continued services applications, staff will review and approve the packets and communicate to faculty regarding student accommodations within 14-days during the Fall and Spring Semesters. The target is that 95% of new students registering will have coordinated services within 14-days of being approved for services."

SO 2:

2.1: This measure is unnecessary due to the OADS office having limited control over the utilization of testing services. OADS students can choose not to test with the office as they may have other service areas or proctors to assist for each exam. Thus, this measure was changed to focus on the testing process from the faculty perspective. The new measure states "The OADS staff will promote and educate faculty on the OADS testing process, procedures, and protocols to ensure that students testing needs are met. Success is defined as having 80% of registered faculty members following the OADS testing procedures."

2.2: Due to this measure evaluating several components, the OADS staff changed this measure to focus on student testing satisfaction based on # 8 of the end of the semester survey. The new measure will read "90% of students report a positive experience as indicated on #8 of the end-of-semester survey."

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

SO1:

1.1: OADS staff will send information to students for several weeks before the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters to increase awareness, outreach, and OADS registration. The staff will participate in outreach efforts throughout the term, including summer programs, partnered events, and departmental programming. This measure will shift to include Question #10 and #11 on the end of semester survey to include emails, messenger, and social media as outreach efforts. With this revision, outreach will not only include hosting events, programming, and collaborations with student affairs offices, but it will also include emails, social media, and utilizing the student messenger. Question #12 is only inclusive of students who attend OADS events, and many students are online or not housed on the Natchitoches campus, so this does not include the outreach attempts that are not face to face. This new measure now reads, "Students seeking services/accommodation will receive information through OADS staff

outreach. The target is that 75% of students will indicate that they received information about OADS through outreach on questions 10-12 of the OADS end of the year survey.” These changes will improve the students' ability to learn about the services offered to register with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support, continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

1.2: OADS staff will spread awareness of and implement the protocols for registration and continued services application to maintain timely communication and 14-day approval time. The staff will review and work to approve accommodations within 14-days (pending required documents, student communication, and scheduling of intake session), and will communicate with students, faculty, and staff regarding student accommodations and office registration/continued registration processes.

SO2:

2.1: OADS will work with faculty and staff to inform everyone on OADS policies and procedures for accommodations and testing. OADS will work with distance campus faculty/staff proctors and directors to ensure accommodations are being offered and supported for all students, including on our satellite campuses. OADS will be revising the end of semester survey to include the specific questions that the second survey asked regarding professors, and faculty/staff members who assist with accommodations testing and proctoring on satellite campuses. Questions will include “Rate your professor's assistance with accommodations, Rate your proctor's assistance with testing accommodations and proctoring, and Do you feel your professors, faculty, and/or staff administrators follow and support your accommodations and testing procedures.” This will help with establishing all faculty members are following OADS procedures and will help to create a positive experience for students on each campus, rather than just in Natchitoches. OADS also will begin issuing the survey earlier in the semester and offer additional reminders to reach more of our registered students.

2.2: OADS staff will spread awareness of and implement the testing policies/procedures of testing in the OADS office. OADS staff will work to communicate with students, faculty, and staff about student testing accommodations and the importance of submitting exam requests/sending exams to OADS to continue effective and timely proctoring/ exam delivery. OADS will work with distance campus proctors and directors to ensure accommodations are being offered and supported on our satellite campuses. OADS will be revising the end of semester survey to ask specific questions regarding testing and proctoring on satellite campuses. Questions will include “Rate your professor's assistance with accommodations, Rate your proctor's assistance with testing accommodations and proctoring, and Do you feel your professors, faculty, and/or staff administrators follow and support your accommodations and testing procedures.” This will help with establishing a positive testing experience for students testing on each campus, rather than just at OADS in Natchitoches.