

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships

Prepared by: Lauren Jackson

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Approved by: Vanner Erickson

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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 that is conducive to holistic personal growth. The commitment to students initiates prior to entrance, sustains throughout the college experience and continues beyond graduation. Enrollment Services provides equal access to education for potential students throughout the state and region and promotes 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.

Enrollment Management:

The Office of Enrollment Management is a student-centered division that is future focused providing educational access to students in our region to improve the lives of our citizens. High School Relations, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Admissions work collaboratively with University faculty and staff to provide services and programming that are innovative and surpasses state and federal guidelines. Enrollment Management fulfills the university's mission and commitment to academic quality, diversity, equity, and inclusion

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships Mission:

Our mission is to find the best possible aid package for a diverse student body to enable each of our students the financial ability to achieve their educational goal. Our office offers a wide variety of programs that are available from federal, state, and institutional funds under the general headings of loans, grants, third party funds and work opportunities. The Office of Financial Aid will keep students informed of all current federal regulations and changes in those regulations. We are dedicated in providing all students and their families with counseling and the services necessary to gain access to educational funds by promoting financial aid awareness, ensuring compliance with federal, state and institutional regulations and guidelines, while committing to honesty, fairness, equality and integrity in all aid awarded to all students of our university. We will be a leader among our campus community for high quality and innovative student

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services, which includes a more effective use of technology for both our processing and communication with students.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the director.
- (2) The 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 director, in consultation with the staff, will determine and propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships Effectiveness
Service Outcomes:

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. *Achieve 100% satisfaction rate with students for services provided.*

Measure 1.1.

Our office strives to, not only accomplish our duties accurately and efficiently, but to achieve complete satisfaction with each student that we assist. A student survey was used to determine a base satisfaction rate, so that we can determine what areas of service in need of improvement. We will give the students a chance to provide feedback on ways they feel our office could improve. This data will help us to strengthen areas of weakness within our procedures, so that we may better serve each one of our students and improve our satisfaction rate beyond just an acceptable rate of 75%, until we meet our target of 100% satisfaction.

Finding: Target was not met

Analysis: In 2019-2020 results the customer satisfaction survey was enhanced to better capture areas needing improvement after the target was not met with an 83% satisfaction rate and 553 survey completions. In 2020-2021 we received a total of 380 surveys and an overall satisfaction rate of 77.89%. In 2021-2022 we received a total of 388 surveys and an overall satisfaction rate of 87%. During 2022-2023 we received a total of 351 surveys and an overall satisfaction rate of 90%. In 2023-2024, we collected

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a total of 199 surveys, resulting in a satisfaction rate of 87%. Although our satisfaction rate decreased, we believe it was due to the reduced number of surveys completed.

Decision – Decision or Recommendation: For the 2024-2025 academic year, we plan to improve our customer satisfaction by continuing to gather feedback from potential, incoming, current, and transfer students, as well as parents. We will provide survey requests during in-person events, through email, and other electronic communication channels. The data collected will be used to identify areas needing additional staff training and to enhance customer service interactions. Our goal is to achieve 100% satisfaction, and we aim to reach it by implementing in-service programs throughout Enrollment Management areas. Even though our satisfaction rate decreased, we believe this was due to the reduced number of surveys completed.

Measure 1.2.

To better assist students and help them understand the rules and regulations of what is required of our office, we aim to improve job performance of all our financial aid administrators. To accomplish this, our office administrators will receive continued training and education through the Federal Student Aid Toolkit, which provides federal student aid training and outreach tools for Financial Aid Administrators. Our target is to have 100% of Financial Aid Administrators complete all training courses (basic and fundamental) available. This will increase the satisfaction rate by ensuring that our employees are able to offer the most current and accurate information to students and parents. Employees will also complete all trainings made available by the US Department of Education, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SWASFAA) and Louisiana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA).

Finding: Target Met

Analysis: During 2022-2023 fifteen staff members within the financial aid office completed a total of 119, both in person and virtual, trainings from the US Department of Education (ED), National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SWASFAA) and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA). In 202302024 14 staff members completed the Better FAFSA, Better Future webinar series that included 13 individualized training courses. Staff also completed an additional 107 training courses hosted by NASFAA, LASFAA and SWASFAA.

Decision – Financial Aid Staff will attend conferences, workshops, and online training to ensure that all staff are aware of changes to financial aid program regulations and processes through Federal Student Aid (ED), NASFAA, LASFAA, and SWASFAA conference, as funding is available. Financial Aid staff will use these trainings to stay informed about changes to federal and state regulations and policies related to the awarding and delivery of financial aid funds.

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SO 2. *Increase Financial Aid Requirements Awareness to students by increasing workshops, presentations, and notifications.*

Measure 2.1.

Increase the number of students receiving Financial Aid information to a broader populace of the student body. Present and host informational opportunities for students to inform them of the financial aid process. The target is to conduct six sessions, three per semester.

Finding: Target met

Analysis: In 2019-2020, we conducted 4 informational sessions. In 2020-2021, only one in-person session was conducted due to the novel Coronavirus and the disruption of in-person campus events. However, during 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024, we conducted six sessions.

Decision – Decision or Recommendation: In the 2024-2025 academic year, we aim to uphold our target by hosting six events (three per semester) and expanding informational opportunities to provide students with every possible chance to understand the importance of financial aid requirements and responsibilities. We plan to continue reaching out to all departments campus-wide to present financial aid materials to students through both in-person and virtual sessions. This strategy will help ensure that students are well-informed about their financial aid options.

Measure 2.2

Create a more tangible awareness of the Financial Aid Requirements, Federal Regulations and School policy to the student body through presentations, workshops and student notifications. Our target is to increase presentations, workshops and student notifications each year, until we reach a minimum of 75% of student organizations and athletic groups.

Finding: Target Met

Analysis: In 2019-2020 year, our office provided Financial Aid requirements and policies to 20 orientation classes, including Shreveport and Leesville campuses. In addition, information was also provided during athletic student programming, Housing events, First Year Experience students and High schools events throughout Natchitoches parish. In 2020-2021 in-person presentations were limited due to the novel Coronavirus. During 2021-2022 we were able to conduct in-person Financial Aid presentations to LA Gear Up Initiative, Freshman Connectors, Graduate Student Classes, Student Support Services (TRIO), Spring N-Side View, South Louisiana Community College transfer students, NSU Career Center Teacher Job Fair, and the

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Winter Bridge Program. Our presentations were also created in a virtual format and published not only on our website, but also through email to students and parents. During 2022-2023 we were able to conduct in person and virtual presentations to all University Studies students, Freshman Connection, N-Side View, LA Gear Up Initiative, Athletics, LOSFA Fly Tour, Nurse Anesthetist Orientation, and attended five NSU Recruiting Receptions. Our online Financial Aid Overview presentations also received 75 views during the 2022-2023 year. All presentations collectively allowed us to meet our 75% target of student and athletic groups. In the 2023-2024 academic year, we were able to continue our efforts in presenting financial aid materials to students through both in-person and virtual sessions. This approach allowed us to reach a broader audience and ensure that students received crucial information about their financial aid options.

Decision – Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, we will implement the following changes in 2024-2025 to further improve our outreach efforts. We will provide our virtual presentation to all students via email in addition to our in-person events, such as FAFSA Completion events, Housing, athletic student programming, Creative and Performing Arts Departments, and all NSU activities. This will allow us to ensure that students across various departments and programs have access to important financial aid information.

Measure 2.3

A Financial Aid knowledge questionnaire for students to complete each academic year to use the data, from year to year, to track the improvement of Financial Aid knowledge and awareness. We can also use the information to determine what areas we need to focus on in the presentations and workshops mentioned in Measure 2.1 Our target is to have students score 85% or higher on accurate responses received through the questionnaire.

Finding: Target met

Analysis: In 2020-2021 we provided a survey to all students requesting feedback on items of interest that could be used to provide additional processes that could help students understand the financial aid processes. The survey only resulted in 203 responses from students. In 2021-2022 we provided the survey to students requesting feedback on items of interest that could be used to provide additional processes that could help students understand the financial aid processes. Unfortunately, the survey only resulted in 100 responses from students. During 2022-2023, the financial aid office attended specific in-person events to help raise financial aid awareness. Throughout the 2023-2024, the financial aid office actively engaged in six in-person events to ensure students received comprehensive financial aid information. This was achieved through one-on-one interactions with students and various financial aid knowledge games.

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Decision – The analysis of the 2023-2024 results has revealed the need to enhance our workshop offerings for the 2024-2025 period in order to have a positive impact on the upcoming financial aid knowledge survey. To boost student engagement, we will be introducing both virtual and in-person sessions covering a range of topics including FAFSA completion, Types of Federal Aid, Cost of Attendance, Summer Aid eligibility, Satisfactory Academic Progress, Return to Title IV and the Verification process. These mini sessions will be accessible to students via email, social media, and our website. Furthermore, we plan to collaborate with University 1000 courses to integrate the financial aid knowledge survey into our presentations on policies and federal regulations. To ensure comprehensive feedback, financial aid knowledge questionnaires will be available at our office and all in-person events.

SO 3. *Decrease Cohort Default Rate*

Measure 3.1.

Increase contact and notifications with students who have either graduated or ceased half-time enrollment. Our goal is to increase the number of completed exit counseling sessions to a minimum of 75% completion. We will do this by reaching out to all students who have graduated or ceased half-time enrollment and have not completed the exit counseling.

Finding: Not met

Analysis: For 2020-2021 only 286 students of the 1728 students required to complete EXIT requirements completed the process. This 16% completion rate is a 5% increase to the prior year, it still falls well below our 75% targeted completion rate. For 2021-2022 only 214 students out of 1618 (13% completion rate) students required to complete EXIT requirements completed the process, which was a 3% decrease from the prior year. For 2023-2024 only 428 students out of 1941 (22% completion rate) students required to complete EXIT requirements have completed the process. For 2023-2024 students were provided exit counseling requirements through Grad Fest to 300 students individually. We also emailed directly to 787 graduating seniors detailed information regarding Exit requirements and repayment options for their student loan debt. Students are also notified through our automated email process every 21 days until requested items are satisfied. As a result, only 358 students out of 3177 students required to complete EXIT requirements have completed the process. This 11% completion rate is an 11% decrease to the prior year and falls well below our 75% targeted completion rate.

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Decision – Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 in the 2024-2025 academic year, we will streamline our exit counseling process by eliminating it from the generic "unsatisfied requirement" email and creating a specific "action required" email for the completion of exit counseling. Additionally, we will send a follow-up email every 21 days to students who have not completed the requirement after the initial notification.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results: Based on the analysis of 2022-2023 results the following represents evidence of improvement based on those results in 2023-2024.

- Financial Aid revealed in 2023-2024 a 3% decrease in our satisfaction rate as we continue to strive for a total of 100% satisfaction rate.
- Financial Aid staff were able to complete in person and virtual trainings held by ED, NASFAA, SWASFAA and LASFAA which included topics regarding Professional Judgment, FAFSA updates, Verification, Homeless Youth, Cash Management, Cybersecurity, Over awards and Overpayments, plus many more topics.
- Based on the comparison from the 2022-2023 Assessment Cycle in 2023-2024 we were able to successfully meet our target goal by conducting our six session (3 per semester) of Financial Aid Awareness events.
- Based on the comparison from the 2022-2023 Assessment Cycle in 2023-2024 we were able to successfully meet our target goal by reaching our target of 75% of tangible awareness of the Financial Aid Requirements, Federal Regulations and School policy to the student body through presentations, workshops and student notification.
- The Financial Aid office was able to meet our target goal of 85% response rate on Financial Aid Knowledge and Awareness in 2023-2024. Financial Aid knowledge questionnaires will continue to be provided within the office and at all in person events.
- Individual email notices were sent to 787 graduating students regarding loan repayment and exit counseling requirements. Students are notified of exit counseling requirements at the time the student has ceased enrollment and will be notified every 21 days until they completed the Exit requirements.

Plan of action: We are taking decisive steps to significantly enhance the student experience and boost satisfaction rates at the Office of Student Financial Aid. Our approach involves leveraging free trainings provided by organizations such as ED, NASFAA, SWASFAA, and LASFAA to bolster our staff's knowledge and expertise. We will persist in offering in-person financial aid knowledge surveys during all financial aid events, ensuring that students receive immediate and personalized assistance.

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Moreover, we will confidently remove the exit counseling requirement from the generic "unsatisfied requirement" email and assertively introduce a specific "action required" email, providing students with clear and precise guidance to facilitate completion. Additionally, we will implement a robust follow-up system, sending reminders and guidance at regular intervals to ensure that all students fulfill the exit counseling requirement. These strategic initiatives will undoubtedly streamline the process and significantly improve overall student satisfaction with our financial aid services.