

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Student Support Services

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.

TRIO Student Support Services Mission:

TRIO Student Support Services (TRIO SSS) empowers first-generation, modest income students, and students with disabilities to develop the skills, knowledge, and attributes to overcome the cultural, academic, economic, and social barriers to success in higher education. TRIO Student Support Services provides resources to enhance students' maximum academic achievement and career readiness to become contributing members of the global community.

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Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) will be collected and returned to the director.
- (2) The director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes were met.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required to determine actions necessary.
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.
- (6) The director, along with the staff, will use quantitative data to formulate an Annual Performance Report for the US Department of Education to determine if SLOs have been achieved, and for modifying, as needed, services offered by TRIO SSS Department.

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. The TRIO Student Support Services Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) will promote student success by helping first year students become socially and academically integrated into the NSU community. Mentees will be recruited from the three sections of ACSK1010 taught by TRIO SSS Instructors. Junior/Senior TRIO SSS Project participants will serve as mentors.

Measure 1.1 Mentors will help mentees access the necessary resources, such as tutoring, academic advising, study groups, and meeting with instructors, to increase academic achievement. Success will be defined as 1) 82% or more mentees will persist from one academic year to the next; and 2) 80% of mentees will successfully complete their first year in college with a GPA of 2.0 or above.

Finding. Target was met.

Stated Objectives	AC 2021-2022	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024
82% or more mentees will persist from one AC to the next (Based upon registration for Fall)	85%	87%	83%
80% of mentees will successfully complete their first year in college with a GPA of 2.0 or above	96%	87%	87%

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023 the target was met. The staff implemented monthly group study sessions for mentors and mentees in the SSS lab, utilizing tutors and Advisors, as needed. Healthy snacks were provided. The staff planned a Teams meeting with professors of mentees to tell them about our SSS

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program, reintroduced the *Academic Progress Report*, and discussed with them the merits of the report (retention) and how it could conveniently fit into their busy schedules. The Peer Mentoring Program started out with forty-four (49) mentees, however, by the end of the first semester, there were only twenty-three (23) active mentees participating in the program. All prior initiatives were being utilized, along with the new initiative of conducting monthly group study sessions for mentors and mentees. Although the group study sessions were well received and embraced by the mentees, the PMP Coordinator received suggestions from both mentors and mentees to improve upon the sessions. The common complaint was that the sessions should not be general study sessions but should focus on a specific subject, like math or biology. For this reason, some mentors conducted individual study/tutor sessions with their mentees. The goal to have Teams meeting with the professors of the mentees did not go well. There was not much interest, nor cooperation with meeting and discussing the mentee's progress, or lack of progress. Despite this setback, we were still able to meet the target, due largely to the mentors' dedication and involvement. The mentors worked hard to build genuine and meaningful relationships with their mentees and to encourage them to reach their academic goals. TRIO SSS staff, through the monitoring of 5-week and mid-term grades, were able to intervene and help those students that were not performing up to standards. With these interventions and positive changes, 87% of the mentees made satisfactory academic progress (earned a 2.0 or above) and 87% returned for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 data, the staff implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement.

- Implemented bi-weekly course/subject specific study sessions for core classes such as Math 1020, 1060, Chemistry 1070, etcetera.
- Implemented bi-weekly homework nights to reinforce good study habits and teach study skills and strategies. This will also promote a sense of belonging and form better connections between mentors and mentees.
- Ensured that mentees were aware of how to request tutoring services. When tutoring services were utilized, tutors informed PMP Coordinator and the mentee's SSS Advisor on the results of the tutoring session(s) for further action, if needed.
- As the mentee progressed through the first academic year, an open line of communication was maintained between the mentor, mentee, tutor, and TRIO SSS advisor, forming a hub of support.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. This Academic Cycle twenty-three (23) mentees were recruited into the Peer Mentoring Program. The changes listed above were implemented, but were not lasting, except for the utilization of tutoring services. Bi-weekly study sessions were scheduled, along with homework nights. There was such a low turnout for both activities, that they were quickly discontinued. Mentors and Advisors continued to encourage mentees to seek tutoring services, of which many took advantage of the free service. SSS Advisors closely monitored the 5-week and mid-term grades and followed up with mentees that earned a letter grade of C or below. Those students were required to meet with an SSS advisor to determine what resources were needed to assist the student in bringing up their grade(s). With these interventions, 87% of the mentees made satisfactory academic progress (earned a 2.0 GPA or above) and 83% of the mentees will return for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Decision:

In AC 2023-2024 the target was met.

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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.

- Bi-weekly course/subject specific study sessions will be re-introduced. This time tutors will be utilized to assist mentors facilitate the sessions.
- A new incentive will be introduced to “spotlight” the mentor/mentee team that most improves academically each month. Analysis of core class test scores will be used to determine improvement.

These changes will improve the student’s ability to remain in good academic standing and persist from one academic year to the next, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 1.2 Through relationship building with mentors, one-on-one and group meetings/activities, 90% of mentees will have an enhanced ability to cope with the challenges of college life (non-cognitive attributes) and will become comfortable in expressing questions and concerns in a safe environment. Pre and Post-test, using the *LASSI* will measure mentee’s motivation and self-regulation. Success will be defined as 90% of mentees showing improvement based upon the *LASSI* post-test.

Finding. Target was not met.

Stated Objectives	AC 2021-2022	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024
90% of mentees will have an enhanced ability to cope with challenges of college life (non-cognitive attributes) and will be comfortable in expressing questions and concerns in a safe environment.	50%	90%	78%

Analysis:

In 2022-2023 the target was met. Targeted sessions each month to address one or two of the ten scales of the *LASSI*. These sessions were facilitated by the mentors and GA and supervised by SSS Staff. For each of the ten categories, information and skills were presented and discussed to help mentees reach specific learning goals and objectives. Since this initiative relies so heavily on the results of the *LASSI* Post-Test and since Mentors have, in most cases, established a good relationship with their mentees, mentors were asked to meet with their mentees in April and have them take the *LASSI* post-test. This will be done either on a one-on-one basis, or at a planned end of semester event for both Mentors and Mentees. Social Engagement will no longer be addressed in this measure because it is extensively addressed in Measure 1.3. The PMP Coordinator and GA implemented the following changes in 2022-2023 to drive continuous improvement. Sessions were scheduled throughout the academic year to address the non-cognitive attributes covered on the *LASSI* scales. These sessions were not well attended and in the second semester (spring) were phased out. The scales were, however, covered and discussed during the first semester (fall) in the

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TRIO SSS taught ACSK 1010 classes. TRIO SSS advisors also discussed with mentees during scheduled meetings items on the LASSI scales where the mentees scored low. As planned the LASSI Post-test was administered during the month of April. The PMP Coordinator emailed and texted mentees in GroupMe to ask them to take the LASSI post-test. Reminders were sent out each week, Mentors encouraged mentees to take the post-test. At the final mentor/mentee activity in April, mentees attending the activity were asked to complete the post-test before leaving the activity. Of the twenty-three active mentees, 16 (70%) took the LASSI Post-test. Of the sixteen mentees taking the post-test, improvement was shown on seven of the eight scales being measured which resulted in a ninety percent (90%) improvement.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results, the TRIO SSS Staff implemented the following changes in 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Mentees, along with Mentors, were required to attend the Mentoring Retreat the weekend before classes started in the fall. During the retreat, mentees would learn the purpose of the program, how mentoring can help them be more successful, and to begin to build rapport with their Mentor and the TRIO SSS staff. Mentors would be assigned mentees prior to the beginning of the academic year and would be present to assist their mentees' move into the resident halls. Mentors will invite mentees on a personalized tour of the campus, preview their fall schedule of classes to show mentees where the classes are located, and to answer any questions. Mentors will host at least two activities per month to address both non-cognitive and social issues. Activities will be presented in a relaxed, fun environment, rather than in a classroom-type setting. Non-cognitive attributes to be addressed in this measure on the LASSI scale are motivation and self-regulation. The following attributes fall under self-regulation: anxiety, attitude, concentration, self-testing, time management, and using academic resources. These changes will improve the student's non-cognitive attributes thus, enabling the student to better cope with the challenges of college life and further enhance the student's comfort in asking questions and expressing concerns to others, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement further.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was not met. Due to staff changes, including the departure of the PMP Coordinator, mentees were not selected until the second and third week of the fall semester. Therefore, the fall retreat only included mentors, and mentors were not assigned mentees until the fourth (4th) week of the semester. This delay caused a critical breakdown in the plan for mentor and mentees to start the bonding process prior to the start of the semester. Activities were planned, but it always seemed like something occurred to either postpone or cancel the activities. Even when activities took place, the attendance was low. Fortunately, many of the mentors were able to build a strong relationship with their mentees which kept them engaged. Unfortunately, this was not enough to show an overall improvement in non-cognitive attributes for at least 90% of the mentees.

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.

- During the fall retreat, mentees, along with mentors, will develop and plan activities for the semester, thereby fostering ownership and accountability.
- An off-campus teambuilding activity or outing will be planned for the beginning of the semester to promote rapport.

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Measure 1.3 Students participating in the TRIO SSS Peer Mentoring Program will have an elevated level of socialization, as evidenced by their participation in campus activities and/or student organizations. Questionnaires on campus involvement, Presence, as well as reports from mentors, and meetings with TRIO SSS Advisors will be utilized to determine if target is met. Success will be defined as 90% of mentees regularly participating in campus activities and/or joining at least one student organization.

Finding. Target was not met.

Stated Objectives	AC 2021-2022	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024
90% of mentees will regularly participate in campus activities and/or join at least one student organization.	96%	91%	85%

Analysis:

In 2022-2023 the target was met. PMP Coordinator and mentors planned a speed dating event, but due to unforeseen circumstances, the event was cancelled and never rescheduled. In lieu of RSO representatives being invited to SSS ACSK 1010 classes, the ACSK 1010 instructors provided information on several RSO's and answered questions. Students were told about the benefits of joining an RSO, given tips on selecting an RSO, and encouraged to join an RSO. The PMP Coordinator planned a Vision Board Session that was well attended. Students were asked to select an RSO that they were interested in either joining or gathering more information on and put that RSO on their vision board. Mentors invited mentees to accompany them to various RSO meetings. During meetings with mentees, TRIO SSS Advisors encouraged mentees to join an RSO, or at least attend an interest meeting. The Presence platform will be introduced during the mentor/mentee retreat. Presence will be incorporated into the ACSK 1010 curriculum as a follow-up measure to the introduction during the retreat. The end of year exit questionnaire will be revised and utilized both semesters to determine if mentees are participating in campus activities and joining RSO's. The PMP Coordinator will create an *Engagement Report* form to be used by mentors within the first four weeks of each semester. Mentors will submit the results to the PMP Coordinator, who will meet with TRIO SSS staff to analyze results and determine what type of action should be taken.

Based on the analysis of the 2022-2023 results the TRIO SSS staff implemented the following changes in 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Presence platform was introduced during the mentor/mentee retreat and incorporated into the ACSK 1010 curriculum as a follow-up measure to the introduction during the retreat. The end of year exit questionnaire was revised and utilized both semesters to determine if mentees were participating in campus activities and joining RSO's. The PMP Coordinator created an Engagement Report form used by mentors within the first four weeks of each semester. Mentors submitted the results to the PMP Coordinator, who in turn met with TRIO Staff to analyze results and determine what type of action should be taken.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was not met. Due to staff changes, including the PMP Coordinator leaving the department, mentees were not selected until the second and third week of the fall semester. Therefore, mentees were not present at the fall retreat, thus the

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mentees were not introduced to Presence until the fourth meeting of the ACSK 1010 class. The exit questionnaire was revised and used both semesters which allowed Advisors to have a better view of which mentees were becoming involved with organizations and participating in campus activities. With this knowledge, Advisors and mentors spoke with mentees that were not involved and further encouraged them. The Engagement Report form was created but was not utilized until the fourth week due to the late identification and selection of mentees.

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.

- RSO representatives will be invited to Mentor Mentee meetings or activities to pitch their organization and answer questions.
- Mentors will take their mentees to the RSO Browse held each semester. This way mentees can meet officers and members of the respective RSOs to hear their reasons for joining said RSO.

These changes will improve the student's ability to become more easily involved in campus activities and organizations, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive Summary of Key evidence of seeking 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 AC 2022-2023 results analysis.

1.1: Implemented bi-weekly course/subject specific study sessions for core classes such as Math 1020, 1060, Chemistry 1070, etcetera. Implemented bi-weekly homework nights to reinforce good study habits and teach study skills and strategies. This was designed to promote a sense of belonging and form better connections between mentors and mentees. Ensure that mentees were aware of how to request tutoring services. When tutoring services were utilized, tutors informed PMP Coordinator and the mentee's SSS Advisor on the results of the tutoring session(s) for further action, if needed. As the mentee progressed through the first academic year, an open line of communication was maintained between the mentor, mentee, tutor, and TRIO SSS advisor, forming a hub of support.

1.2: Mentees, along with Mentors, were required to attend the Mentoring Retreat the weekend before classes started in the fall to learn the purpose of the program, how mentoring can help them be more successful, and to begin to build rapport with their Mentor and the TRIO SSS staff. Mentors were to be assigned mentees prior to the beginning of the academic year and be present to assist their mentees' move into the resident halls. Mentors invited mentees on a personalized tour of the campus, previewed their fall schedule of classes to show mentee's where the classes are located, and answered any questions. Mentors hosted at least two activities per month to address both non-cognitive and social issues. Non-cognitive attributes addressed in this measure on the LASSI scale were motivation and self-regulation. The following attributes fall under self-regulation: anxiety,

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attitude, concentration, self-testing, time management, and using academic resources Engagement will no longer be addressed in this measure because it is extensively addressed in Measure 1.3.

1.3: The Presence platform was to be introduced during the mentor/mentee retreat. Presence was incorporated into the ACSK 1010 curriculum as a follow-up measure to the introduction during the retreat. The end of year exit questionnaire was revised and utilized both semesters to determine if mentees were participating in campus activities and joining RSO's. The PMP Coordinator created an *Engagement Report* form that was used by mentors within the first four weeks of each semester. Mentors submitted the results to the PMP Coordinator, who in turn met with TRIO SSS staff to analyze results and determine what type of action should be taken.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

1.1: Bi-weekly course/subject specific study sessions will be re-introduced. This time tutors will be utilized to assist mentors facilitate the sessions. A new incentive will be introduced to "spotlight" the mentor/mentee team that most improves academically each month. Analysis of core class test scores will be used to determine improvement.

1.2: During the fall retreat, mentees, along with mentors, will develop and plan activities for the semester, thereby fostering ownership and accountability. An off-campus teambuilding activity or outing will be planned for the beginning of the semester to promote rapport.

1.3: RSO representatives will be invited to Mentor Mentee meetings or activities to pitch their organization and answer questions. Mentors will take their mentees to the RSO Browse which is held each semester. This way mentees can meet officers and members of the respective RSOs to hear their reasons for joining said RSO.