

## Strategic Plan 2023-2028



***Assessment Cycle 2023-2024***  
***Driving Change***

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## PREFACE

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Northwestern State University of Louisiana's (NSU) *Strategic Plan 2023-2028* provides the framework and context for our actions in 2023-2028. While the plan is designed to be flexible and responsive to the challenges of the landscape of higher education, it remains the steadfast guide for innovative change and positive transformation. It embraces and builds upon the history, traditions, and core values of a University that has been the educational, cultural, economic, and social bedrock of this region for 135 years. *Assessment Cycle 2023-2024, Driving Change* is the tangible evidence Northwestern is a learning institution committed to holistic organizational improvement. Northwestern is on a path of growth, adaptation, and innovation in providing the highest caliber educational experience in the region through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences. Northwestern is unmatched in preparing its graduates for life and career success. On 3 December 2023, the Board of Trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approved Northwestern's Fifth-Year Interim Report, recognizing its continued compliance. This commitment to excellence by the entire University community will continue to drive Northwestern towards securing its vision of becoming the nation's premier regional university. This document reflects the strategic guidance of President, Dr. Marcus Jones, and Northwestern's senior leadership. Members of the leadership team have ownership of the Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs) and their associated objectives and strategies:

President, Dr. Marcus Jones

Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Strategic Initiatives: Mr. Cole Gentry

SFA The Student Experience: Vice President for The Student Experience, Mrs. Reatha Cox

SFA Academic Excellence: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Greg Handel

Research within Its Mission: Chair, Research Council, Dr. Margaret Cochran

Quality Enhancement Program: QEP Assessment Coordinator, Mr. Bob Jordan

SFA Market Responsiveness: Executive Director, Economic Development, Innovation, and Outreach, Mrs. Laurie Morrow

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University Capital Outlook and University Architecture Update: Mr. Stan Hippler

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Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Mr. Frank Hall



## **Executive Summary**

September 26, 2024

At Northwestern State University, our strategic plan is not just a document; it's a dynamic blueprint driving our mission to provide enduring value in higher education. This living, breathing framework prioritizes actions across our entire university, ensuring we remain adaptable, innovative, and committed to excellence.

Our assessment process drives improvement and empowers us to make informed strategic choices, identify necessary changes, and foster a trusting, inclusive community. This ongoing evaluation ensures we are always aligned with our goals and responsive to the needs of our students, faculty, and stakeholders.

The Assessment Cycle (AC) 2023-2024 period has been marked by significant achievements, reflecting our dedication and hard work. I am proud to share these highlights with you, showcasing our commitment to academic excellence, community building, and strategic growth. Together, we are shaping the future of higher education, one milestone at a time.

University graduates excel in critical fields such as healthcare; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); business; and education. They fill essential workforce gaps and propel industry advancements, securing high-paying jobs, enhancing Louisiana's economic competitiveness, and strengthening national security.

The Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts continues to evolve as the cultural heartbeat of our campus and a hub of activity for Natchitoches and the surrounding region. Our graduates consistently make their mark in various fields, such as: Music educators and performers in schools across Louisiana and on stages worldwide; Journalists navigating an ever-evolving media landscape; Actors and dancers on Broadway, cruise ships, and theaters globally; and Artists and designers shaping the visual world.

We have made tremendous strides in recruiting and retaining high-quality students. Enrollment applications continue to rise, with ACT scores and GPAs of incoming freshmen surpassing the state average. Our academic focus areas—Nursing and Allied Health, Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), STEM, and Education—are more than just fields of study. They are the cornerstones of future career success and community impact. By cultivating talent in these crucial disciplines, we are directly meeting the primary drivers of workforce demand.

The ElevateU initiative, supported by a \$2 million Title III Grant, aims to increase retention and graduation rates by supporting first-generation and Pell recipients. This grant will provide academic and student success support through advising, career engagement, and improving the student experience beyond the first year. ElevateU will help students grow academically, be involved socially and professionally across campus organizations, and learn strategies that lead to employment after graduation.

The NSU Foundation secured \$7 million in private contributions, leading to transformative changes across campus. Coupled with a 16% return on our endowment, this generosity fuels our historic growth. The NSU Entrepreneurial Innovation Center (NEIC), a \$2.1 million federally funded project, is set to

emerge as the epicenter of entrepreneurial development in northwest Louisiana. In partnership with the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, the NEIC will provide a polished business setting with co-working spaces, adaptable office accommodations, support services, and networking opportunities tailored to emerging ventures and small enterprises.

A \$1.8 million grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, combined with over \$2 million in contributions from our healthcare partners, will alleviate nursing shortages. This initiative has the potential to help us contribute over 1,000 nurses to the state by 2032. The College of Nursing continues to excel, boasting a 100% job placement rate for graduates in 2023 and exceptional NCLEX pass rates of 99% for BSN students and 98% for ASN students.

Our academic profile saw significant strides in 2023 with the establishment of the School of STEM, uniting efforts in Biology/Microbiology, Veterinary Technology, Physical Sciences, Engineering Technology, and Math. Veterinary Technology achieved a 100% pass rate on the Veterinary Technology National Exam. The School of STEM has increased participation in events that allow prospective students to engage in experiential learning in Sciences, Robotics, and Math activities.

Innovative degree programs launched include the BFA in Dance (2018), the BFA in Production and Design (2020), and the BFA in Musical Theatre (Fall 2023). These stand out as comprehensive professional degree offerings at a regional university level. The inaugural cohort of Nurse Anesthetists graduated in Fall 2023, with 16 out of 17 passing their state boards to become Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists. Our teacher preparation programs rank among the top five in Louisiana for Praxis® Elementary Education pass rates.

The economic impact of Northwestern on our region is substantial. In the 21-22 fiscal year, NSU contributed \$519.7 million to the local economy, supporting 7,200 jobs. Ongoing capital projects, including the \$45 million Alost Hall and the \$11 million David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center, will significantly enhance our academic and athletic facilities. A high-priority capital outlay request for Warrington Place in Shreveport, valued at \$15 million, is in the pipeline. This project will benefit the Nursing and Radiological Sciences departments and the Child and Family Network, which certifies daycare workers and facilities throughout north Louisiana.

Our Accessibility and Disability Support services accommodated 263 students and administered 521 exams in Fall 2023. The NSU Food Pantry assisted 85 registered students with over 800 individual visits, and in collaboration with Sodexo, Swipe Out Hunger distributed 1,148 complimentary meal swipes to 83 students facing food insecurity. In Fall 2023, the Division of the Student Experience and TRIO Student Support Services hosted the First-Generation College Student Celebration. NSU alumna Dr. Mary Blanchard Wallace, author and 2024 NASPA Pillar of the Profession recipient, provided the keynote address, while Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, Louisiana's Commissioner of Higher Education, facilitated a panel of first-generation students and alumni.

Collaborating with University Athletics, New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts students successfully launched ESPN+ live streaming for NSU athletic events. This collaboration is a transformative venture that equips our students with practical skills beyond the classroom, preparing them for the dynamic and competitive media landscape. Our achievements extend beyond academics. Recognized Student Organizations hosted 218 events with 2,150 students participating, and the Student Union saw an estimated 131,234 attendees at various programs, meetings, and activities in 2023. Service-learning and community involvement are essential responsibilities, and in Fall 2023 alone, NSU

students contributed thousands of hours to community impact projects addressing the environment, literacy, public health and wellness, mental health, and many other needs.

Career Services hosted two successful career fairs in 2023 with 70 employers and 366 student participants. On the international front, the President's Leadership Program (PLP) took students to France, showcasing the global reach of Northwestern State University. In January 2024, our University Police unveiled the Campus Shield Safety App to anonymously submit tips and safety concerns with photos and videos, as well as activate an emergency button slider. On February 24, 2024, the restructured Northwest Literary Rally Committee welcomed over 3,000 high school students to our vibrant campus.

The University continues to provide diverse leadership-focused programs for students outside the classroom, enhancing employability upon graduation. State-of-the-art technology continues to be implemented through the Student Technology Fee, upgrading over 200 classrooms and 68 computer labs. Thirteen of the fourteen teams exceeded the 930 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmark, and NSU continues to excel in graduating student-athletes with an 86% mark in the most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rate report. Our student-athletes registered 3,764 hours of community and campus service for the 2023-2024 year, an increase over the previous year.

Seven of our 14 teams finished in the Top 4 of the Southland Conference (Baseball, Women's Soccer, Men's Indoor Track, Men's Outdoor Track, Women's Indoor Track, Women's Outdoor Track, and Women's Tennis). The women's track and field team won the Southland Conference Indoor Championship for the second consecutive year and the Outdoor Championship for the first time. Head Coach Mike Heimerman was named Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Coach of the Year. Sprinter Zach Beard earned first-team All-American honors in the outdoor 100 meters, and Sanaria Butler was named Southland Conference Indoor Track and Field Athlete of the Year.

The Student Experience expanded divisional revenues through gifts, grants, sponsorships, and in-kind donations, receiving more than \$50,000 in external funding. Northwestern students made significant contributions at the 2024 University of Louisiana System Academic Summit. Thirty-five Northwestern undergraduate authors shared their work in nine research presentations and five multi-author service-learning projects involving 13 presenters. Two musical theater students represented the University in the Performing Arts Showcase and five students created art pieces selected for the visual arts show.

Student Government advocates for students, prioritizing campus safety through initiatives like night walks to identify and address potential hazards. Hospitality Management and Tourism faculty and students traveled to Orlando, Florida, to compete in the inaugural Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AHOAA) Collegiate Championship: Hotel Turnaround Competition Program. Eleven elite teams from seven universities participated, making decisions mirroring real-life challenges in hotel management.

The College of Business and Technology remains at the forefront of community outreach, conducting Emergenetics® workshops to improve communication, teamwork, and management techniques for local industries and organizations. Nineteen graduates of the School of STEM were accepted into professional schools for medical, veterinary, dental, and other healthcare fields. Additionally, five alumni from the Department of Theatre and Dance performed on Broadway, showcasing the exceptional talent nurtured at NSU.

Our collective accomplishments in innovation, student success, and community impact are a testament to the dedication and hard work of our faculty, staff, students, graduates, and expansive network of 62,000 living alumni. Together, we continue to make Northwestern a beacon of excellence and a premier institution of higher learning.

Serving Northwestern State University for the past 25 years has been an immense pleasure and a profound honor. In June 2024, I announced my departure as President of Northwestern State University (NSU) to serve as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the University of Louisiana System. I will also serve as a senior advisor to Dr. Rick Gallot, President of the University of Louisiana System.

With my decades of experience within the University of Louisiana System and commitment to advancing student success across Louisiana's public higher education institutions, I am excited to collaborate with President Gallot in innovating and re-envisioning the future of higher education in our state.

I am both proud and excited about the future of this extraordinary institution. I am proud of our 140-year legacy of excellence in higher education and our lasting impact on countless lives and the broader community. I am excited because of the future I see ahead for Northwestern State University.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your 20th president. I am deeply grateful to the NSU community for your support and look forward to witnessing and contributing to the continued success of this remarkable institution.

Dr. Marcus Jones



## Introduction

All components of our strategic plan support and enhance the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of Northwestern State University.

**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.

**Vision.** Northwestern State University will become the nation's premier regional university through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences that prepare graduates for life and career success.

**Our Core Values.** Our core values capture the guiding principles for how we make decisions and work together. They are the foundation for the type of university community and regional partner we strive to become. Our guiding values are:

- **Our students are our priority.** We provide each student with transformational and experiential learning experiences to assist in the development of an ever-growing individual, scholar, and professional.
- **Diversity helps define who we are.** We welcome and respect all traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.
- **We are future focused.** We are in constant search of individual and organizational improvement by seeking new, inclusive, and innovative opportunities to develop our students and improve our University.
- **Innovation is leading the forward edge of change.** We strive to be at the forefront of all we do.
- **We honor and respect the ideals of freedom.** We protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views.
- **We are careful stewards.** We responsibly and sustainably manage the economic and natural resources entrusted to us.
- **Integrity is our cornerstone.** We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards as educators, scholars, students, and professionals.
- **We are a team.** We are a collaborative community that focuses on ensuring the success of every member.



## Section I.

### Assessment Cycle 2023–2024

**Purpose.** The University initiated an honest introspective review and study of its strategic plan and assessment practices during Assessment Cycle (AC) 2021-2022 with further refinement as part of AC 2023-2024. 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. Assessment Cycle 2023-2024—*Driving Change* is the first full quantitative assessment of Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

On June 21, 2024, the University completed the seventh cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and its core competencies as part of *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2023-2024*. Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation allows Northwestern to maximize its strategic decisions leading to institutional improvement. The assessment includes all six strategic focus areas: Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, Athletic Prominence, and newly integrated Cultural Competency. The University is moving forward with 26 objectives, 100 metrics, 165 academic programs, administrative units, and core competency assessments underpinning our annual assessment. These strategic focus areas, programs, administrative units, and competencies continue to capitalize on their independent findings, analyses, and decisions/actions. This structured, cyclic review of our mission, objectives, and outcomes enables the University leadership to make informed decisions that continuously propel it toward its vision.

Our institutional assessment process is improving the quality of our academic programs, academic support services, administrative support services, and strategic decision-making. More importantly, it demonstrates to the region's stakeholders that Northwestern is quantifiably accomplishing its mission and striving to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the region.

**Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Model.** The Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors of the University of Louisiana System hold institutions accountable for achieving positive outcome measures in academics and support services. Our ability to offer students federally-based financial aid depends on our accreditation by SACSCOC. Accreditation requires higher education institutions to demonstrate an active assessment process that examines all programs and services, leading to improvement and mission accomplishment (Figure 1). SACSCOC adds, "Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against the mission in all aspects of an institution."

A literary backbone of policy and procedures (Figure 2) was established and structured to fully leverage its strategic planning and institutional effectiveness model to ensure participation, standardization, predictability, flexibility, and accountability.

The supporting organizational structure (figure 3) is provided through the President's Leadership Team, which provides the strategic vision and serves as the forcing function to drive the process, ensuring various model components stay aligned and mutually supportive. The University Strategic Planning Team looks over the horizon and steers the process around hazards and toward the vision. The University Assessment Committee provides for standardization, predictability, and quality in the process. The program and unit coordinators, faculty, staff, and students are the instruments in maintaining the integrity of the process. The University General Education Committee ensures Northwestern has a

Figure 1  
The Institutional Effectiveness Process

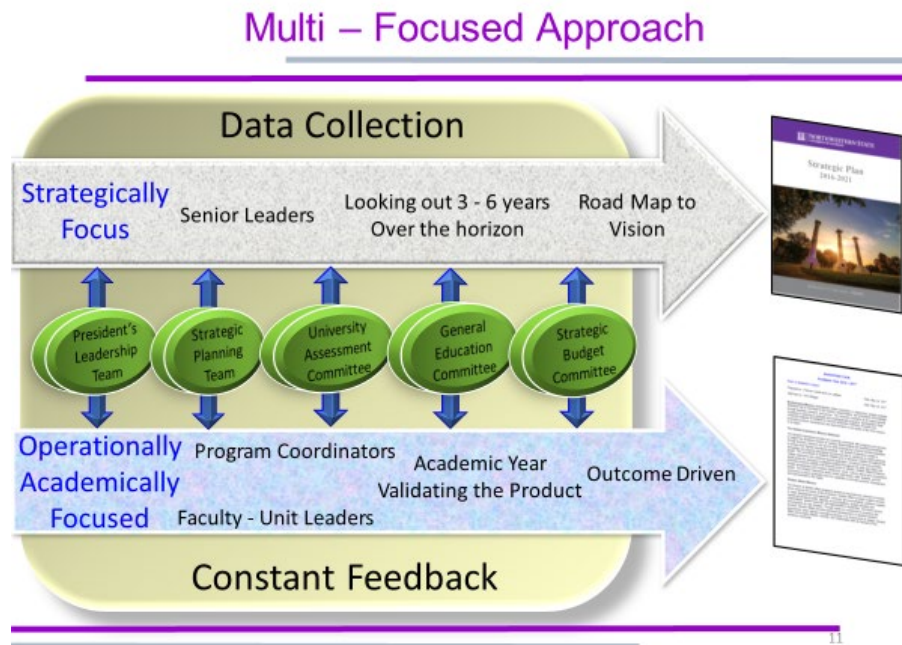


Figure 2  
Literary Backbone

### Building the Backbone



Figure 3  
Organizational structure



broadly based core curriculum that is central to the University's mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents requirements for general education survey courses applicable to all students regardless of their major. Lastly, the Strategic Budgeting Committee helps align resources to university priorities, improve transparency, reward entrepreneurial efforts, reconcile program costs and revenue and promote improved fiscal stewardship and accountability.

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement**, 2018. The University has apportioned each applicable standard to the appropriate authority for ownership, evaluation, and integration into the daily operations of the University.

**Northwestern Assessment of its Strategic Plan 2023-2028.** The University's strategic plans provide the framework and context for our actions through 2023-2028. The annual assessment of that plan, Assessment Cycle 2023–2024 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Driving Change, allows for adaptation, innovation, and adjustment based on the findings and the higher education and socioeconomic environments.

Each September and March, the Strategic Planning Team, University Assessment Committee, General Education Core Competency Coordinators, faculty, staff, students, and guests participate in a semiannual review of progress through an update to the President from each Strategic Focus Area (SFA) team leader and special topic area. As appropriate, the President or designated senior leader will update all faculty, staff, and community partners at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters as part of the Faculty and Staff Institute, strategic communications, or similar activity. In mid-March, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will initiate that year's assessment report in coordination with each SFA. This report captures strategic decisions made during the year and addresses adjustments to the strategic Plan moving forward. Each SFA team leader presents an update to the President and the leadership team in September as a status check of each area's progress. During these forums, the President reviews all

proposed adjustments to the objectives, strategies, or metrics. The University publishes the Assessment Cycle Report within 30 days of this meeting. The report in purple below is ongoing.

Beginning with Assessment Cycle (AC) 2019-2020, each SFA determines which objectives/metrics it will assess that year based on its data collection plan. Those objectives and metrics not assessed during AC 2019-2020 were assessed in 2020-2021, thereby completing a complete assessment every two years. The University will did not conduct an assessment in AC 2021-2022 to allow for a period of reflection and to enable the senior leadership to focus on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) fifth-year interim review to ensure the University is following all Federal Law and Department of Education policies.

1. Assessment Cycle 2016–2017 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Setting the Benchmark.
2. Assessment Cycle 2017–2018 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Validating Our Approach.
3. Assessment Cycle 2018–2019 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Building Momentum.
4. Assessment Cycle 2019–2020 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Sustaining Success.
5. Assessment Cycle 2020–2021 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–The Way Forward.
6. Assessment Cycle 2021–2022 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Reflection Year–No Report
7. Assessment Cycle 2022–2023 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023 and 2023-2028–A New Day.
- 8. Assessment Cycle 2023–2024 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Driving Change**
9. Assessment Cycle 2024–2025 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Making a Difference
10. Assessment Cycle 2025–2026 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Leading the Way
11. Assessment Cycle 2026–2027 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Setting the Standard

**Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Objectives:** Our objectives by strategic focus area are:

### **The Student Experience:**

- Objective 1. Strategic and sustainable practices are utilized to achieve and maintain optimum enrollments.
- Objective 2. Provide efficient and appropriate use of resources in support of enrollment and student success.
- Objective 3. Foster student engagement through co-curricular experiences by providing multiple means of access and opportunity.
- Objective 4. Provide an enhanced second-year experience through advising, living-learning communities, and mentorship.
- Objective 5. Promote behaviors that enhance holistic health and safety.

### **Academic Excellence:**

- Objective 1. Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.
- Objective 2. Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.
- Objective 3. Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.
- Objective 4. Foster quality student-faculty interactions.
- Objective 5. Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.

### **Market Responsiveness:**

- Objective 1. Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead.
- Objective 2. Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands.
- Objective 3. Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies.
- Objective 4. Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.

## Community Enrichment:

- Objective 1. Expand world-class performing arts program.
- Objective 2. Increase robust alumni engagement.
- Objective 3. Promote mutually beneficial donor relationships.
- Objective 4. Expand institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.
- Objective 5. Nurture thriving town-gown relationships.

## Athletic Prominence:

- Objective 1. Enhance marketing opportunities, game day experience, and resource acquisition.
- Objective 2. Promote community service, appreciation, and engagement.
- Objective 3. Enhance University and community collaboration and support.
- Objective 4. Enhance recognizing and promoting success.

## Cultural Competence:

- Objective 1. Increase diversity and equity among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.
- Objective 2. Integrate diversity and inclusion throughout the academic curriculum-support programs.
- Objective 3. Ensure diversity and inclusion are reflected in policies, procedures, budgeting, staffing, facility management, and other areas of University operation.
- Objective 4. Develop a more inclusive campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.

**University Program and Unit Assessment Process.** In coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, all academic programs review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. They identify the degree-awarding programs (diplomas, certificates, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral) that will participate in the assessment process. Each develops program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Simultaneously, University Vice Presidents determine which administrative units must review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. Administrative and Student Support Units developed their Service Outcome Measures (SOMs) and assessment methodology.

Assessments occur during the Assessment Cycle (AC: June to May). Each academic program and administrative unit submits its assessment cycle plans for the coming year to its respective Academic or Administrative Review Committee Chair. The Dean or Vice President reviews and approves assessment plans. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) will account for each Plan as part of the assessment process. Data is collected throughout the academic year, with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each year, faculty and staff collect data and compare the results of the previous year's assessment, the target, and the effectiveness of their action plans to the current year's results providing evidence of improvement or needed improvement based on the analysis of the results.

All assessments are due to the DIE no later than mid-June, the exact date determined by the DIE in concert with senior leaders. The DIE develops the Assessment Year presentation per the July Strategic Plan update. The University uses the Institutional Effectiveness website as the primary assessment repository.

**Quality Enhancement Plan.** Developing and implementing the *Learning for Life: Experience Your Future* QEP is a seven-year process. Two years of data gathering and proposal development (2014-2016) and five years (2016-2021) of implementation are included. The timeline consists of information relative to all stages of QEP development and implementation: committee and personnel assignments, faculty and student forums, community engagement and marketing, QEP editing and submission, curricular redesign

and approval, and academic program assessment. In spring 2020, the QEP was fully implemented, and its Impact Report was submitted to SACSCOC as a part of its Fifth Year Report.

**Strategic Budgeting Process.** The *Planning, Programming, and Budget Execution* (PPBE) model best fits the University's Budget Development. This model provides the appropriate incentives; it is inclusive, emphasizes a high level of transparency in concert with the principles of our strategic intent while providing the information necessary for sound decision-making supports innovation and entrepreneurship, and helps the University maximize support from campus stakeholders and private donors.

**Student Learning Outcomes Statements.** The University takes a deliberate approach to the structure of its assessment process, particularly regarding identifying outcome measures. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides faculty and staff with a guide to standardize the development of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Service Outcomes (SOs). The University Common Core SLOs support individual degree program SLOs, which underpin the Strategic Plan's Academic Excellence Strategic Focus area.

According to the University's *Guide to Outcome–Measure Development*, SLOs should be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and tied to a specific timeframe. Each outcome addresses knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The policy requires that outcome statements specify what students will know or be able to perform or demonstrate when they have completed or participated in the program, course, project, or activity.

As described in the University's *Guide to Outcome–Measure Development*, measures combine the assessment methodology and the target for the outcome. A direct measure, which is preferred, requires a student to demonstrate the skill or knowledge. An indirect assessment measure addresses the perception of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The University encourages setting targets that are difficult to attain to drive a constant pursuit of improvement. As such, Northwestern does not rely solely on course grades as an acceptable measure for the assessment of an outcome.

Per the *University Assessment Process Guide* and in coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, each academic entity reviews, amends, or revalidates its respective missions. The foundation of this assessment process emanates from the hierarchy of the University, College, Department, Program and/or Unit mission. Each measure is mapped to a specific course from which data is collected. In most cases, multiple courses contribute to the data collection and analysis of a single measure. In 2017-2018, sixty-six (66), in 2018-2019 ninety-three (93), in 2019-2020 ninety-five (95), in 2020-2021 ninety-nine (99), in 2021-2022 one hundred (100), in 2022-2023 one hundred and three (103), and in 2023-2024 one hundred and four (104) degree awarding academic programs participated in the assessment process. Each developed program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and an associated assessment methodology from which they derived their findings. Each then analyzed their results, leading to decisions or actions to promote continuous improvement.

**Evidence of Institution-level Student Learning.** Assessment data collection occurred throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each program identified its findings, completed its analysis, and collectively determined decisions/actions necessary to drive the improvement cycle. Program faculty compared current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the coming year (2024-2025). Once approved by the respective Dean, program coordinators then submitted completed assessments to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) on June 21, 2024. Please view the 2023-2024 Assessment Cycle Reports at <https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>. An

Academic Review Committee, composed of program assessment coordinators, oversees the assessment process within each of the University's four Colleges. After completing all program assessments, the four Academic Review Committee Chairs provide input to the annual assessment report. The report captures the most significant findings and decisions of the past academic year, including proposed and actual changes, an analytical assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the status of new assessment plans. This information is integrated into the Strategic Focus Area Academic Excellence findings, where recommendations for pedagogy, curriculum development, review, or adoption are made. The DIE consolidates these reports into one executive presentation for the University President's review/decision in June-July.

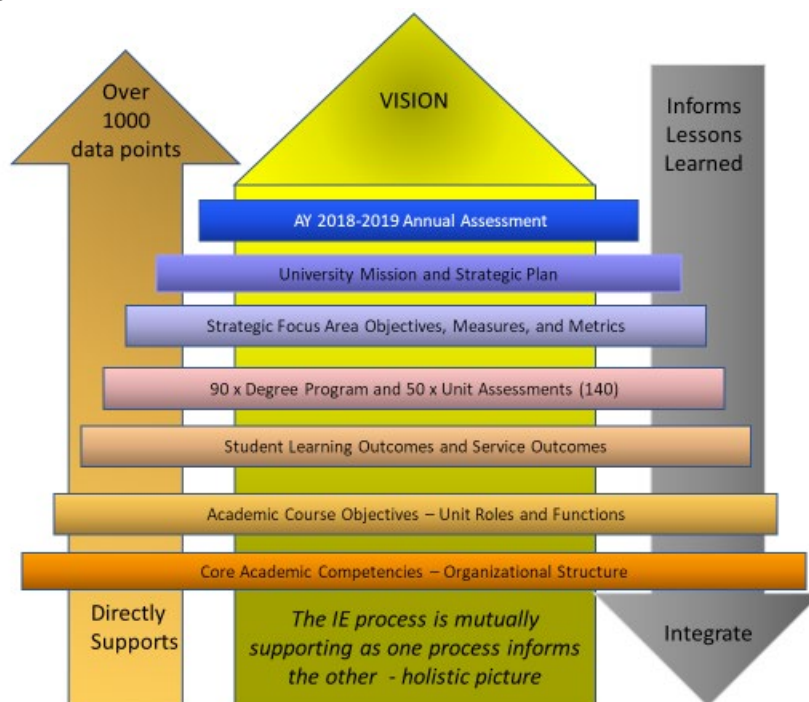
**Institution-level Assessment Resources.** Assessment resources are centralized on the IE website under the Assessment Process and Resources tab. In addition to the items listed, the DIE pushes best practices to program and unit coordinators as part of the monthly UAC meetings. The DIE also holds needs-based workshops and professional development sessions for organizations requiring or requesting assistance or those in coordinator transition. On average, the DIE conducts 15-20 assessment-related visits per semester.

**Institution-level Assessment Activities.** As Northwestern closes in on completing its sixth iteration of the institution-wide assessment process (for all strategic focus areas, academic programs, administrative support services, and academic and student support services), assessments allow for the analytical comparison of the results between the previous year to this year and to the established target. The study of these results is the bedrock for developing executable action plans focused on improvement in student learning and institutional and program growth. The process allows the University to analyze program results across all colleges and schools to inform its strategic planning effort and make improvements based on the analysis of these results. As such, the University can provide its stakeholders with the required evidence of growth based on the review of findings.

**Use of Institutional-level Student Learning.** An informed assessment allows for enhanced environmental visualization, which drives our ability to make better decisions and navigate the future. The results indicate better-informed objectives, metrics, and associated strategies, allowing for holistic findings, comprehensive analyses, and informed strategic decisions. This cyclic analytical decision-making process will continue to require honest and, at times, sophisticated analysis of our current Plan. Through this process, we continue to find we must be flexible in modifying (including adding or deleting) objectives, metrics, and methods. The foundation of the process is organizational self-actualization and continuous assessment, adjustment, and refinement. All are focused on meeting our 2024 objectives.

At the tactical level, common core outcomes and classroom course objectives provide the data to inform the measure supporting the operational level degree program assessment measures supporting student learning outcomes, which in turn provides data to inform the metrics and objectives at the strategic level assessment of the Strategic Plan (Figure 4). This nesting of assessment data allows for a better appreciation of student learning while providing a more holistic view of progress in student learning on our strategic focus areas, specifically the Academic Excellence and Student Experience strategic focus areas. This process and the analysis of the associated results and lessons learned drive tactical, operational, and strategic decisions. The use and evidence of institution-level learning are evident in the AC 2023-2024 Assessment Cycle *Executive Summary*, which reflects the strategic decisions made across the University impacting a myriad of efforts from financial health, Board of Regents initiatives; academic programs; student, alums, and community relations; and external affairs.

Figure 4  
Assessment Process



**Reflection, Growth, and Improvement Plan.** Our model calls for a continuous cycle of annual assessments across multiple echelons with overlapping and mutually supporting outcomes and associated data. The process entails numerous inputs filtered through a diverse assessment structure with better-informed outputs (Table 1). The annual assessment process is not complete until the recommendations and proposed decisions reflected in the strategic assessment are mediated and agreed upon by the strategic planning committee, a final after-action review is conducted, the final report is written, and the brief presented. Each decision is discussed and closed with a consensus on the appropriate disposition. The results of the after-action review, incorporating input from across the University, is integrated into the final presentation to the President. Once delivered, recommended improvements to the process are made, and all artifacts are uploaded on the Institutional Effectiveness website.

The after-action report requires everyone in the assessment process to review their actions, roles, functions, and responsibilities. It also requires them to identify what works as designed and what can be done to improve the process. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process involving the entire University.

We are addressing these challenges with a multifaceted approach. We now routinely hold professional development sessions with targeted groups where the comfort level for participants is such that the exchange of ideas is much improved. We are consistent in our battle rhythm of meetings and activities, maintaining assessment activities on the radar of our participants and interested parties. We have added more precise language to our University Catalog regarding the purpose of assessment, student learning outcomes, and, specifically, students' required responsibilities in participation. The University now requires specific SLO language in each academic degree course syllabus, stating how the course either directly or indirectly supports the degree program assessment. We have developed tools for faculty, such as the anatomy of assessment, assessment of a measure by the numbers, fundamentals of assessment, and the



transition checklist, designed to facilitate learning. Instituting a culture of assessment and continuous improvement is a work in progress, and the approach must be balanced to ensure support, compliance, ownership, and promotion. We are not there yet, but we are making significant progress.

Table 1  
*Diversity in Assessment Structure*

INPUTS	Diversity in Assessment Structure	OUTPUTS
Department of Education Policy Guidance	Board of Regents	Funding-Management Guidance/BOR
Academic Policy & Management Guidance	University of Louisiana System	Board of Supervisors Oversight
SACSCOC-BOR-ULS Guidance	Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources	SACSCOC Connectivity--provide all units' information to be used in decision-making and evidence-based planning
SACSCOC-BOR-ULS Policy Guidance	Director of Institutional Effectiveness	Advancing educational quality through assessment
Data source collection connectivity analysis	Office of Institutional Research	Support continuous review of assessment process
Higher Education Atmospherics	University President's Leadership Team	Setting the University's strategic direction
Advance transformative student learning	Provost--VP for Academic Affairs	Establish culture of Innovation and Collaboration
National-State student support initiatives	Vice President for Student Experience	Support academic experiences & promote student development outside of classroom
BOR Master Plan--National Trends--Initiatives	University Strategic Planning Team	Decisions made around assessment outcomes
SACSCOC requirements and University Policy	University Assessment Committee	Integrate culture of assessment consistent with the University mission
DOE, State, and BOR Policy	General Education	Assess institutional student learning outcomes
State and BOR Policy	Curriculum Review Committee	Advise on curricular matters including achievement of student learning outcomes
Faculty and student concerns	Deans Council	Provides info on the health of academic programs.
Faculty and leadership concerns--guidance	Faculty Senate	Liaison between faculty and admin on assessment
University, Dean, UAC, guidance	Degree Program Coordinators	Responsible for producing quality assessment reports
Discipline experts and academics	Academic Program Advisory Boards	Contributes to the currency and quality of the academic program
University department lessons learned	Degree Program Review Committee	Collect, analyze, support improvement actions
Credentialing National-State-University Policies	Degree Program Faculty	Backbone, integrity of assessment process

## **Section II.**

### **Performance Indicators and Assessment Results**

#### **(Objectives–Strategies–Metrics–Findings-Analysis-Decisions-Responsibility)**

#### **Strategic Focus Area 1–The Student Experience**

The Student Experience staff at Northwestern State University (NSU) are committed to providing the best possible experience for the students we serve. Our efforts are focused on providing a student experience in which every student is supported, connected, and prepared for the challenges of today and tomorrow. Five objectives support The Student Experience:

- Utilize strategic and sustainable practices to achieve and maintain optimum enrollments.
- Provide efficient and appropriate use of resources in support of enrollment and success.
- Foster student engagement through co-curricular experiences by providing multiple means of access and opportunity.
- Provide an enhanced second-year experience through advising, living-learning communities, and mentorship.
- Promote behaviors that enhance holistic health and safety.

#### **Accomplishments related to The Student Experience:**

1. NSU was the recipient of a Federal Title III Grant for the “Elevate-U Program.” \$2,072,425 was awarded for the five-year program.
2. A collaborative team approach was implemented for the facilitation of the Northwest Literary Rally. Designed to provide a better experience for more than 1,700 high school participants, the initiative involved a streamlined registration process, enhanced communication, and an engaging event.
3. In fall 2023, the Division of the Student Experience hosted the First-Generation College Student Celebration. Dr. Mary Blanchard Wallace, NSU alumni, author, and 2024 NASPA Pillar of the Profession recipient, provided the keynote address and Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, Louisiana’s Commissioner of Higher Education, facilitated a panel of first-generation students and alumni.
4. In spring 2024, The Student Experience hosted the inaugural Honors Reception recognizing approximately 30 students, recognized student organizations, faculty, and staff, who have distinguished themselves in academics, leadership and service. More than 350 attended the event.
5. The Student Experience expanded divisional revenues in gift, grant funding, sponsorships, and in-kind donations to support various initiatives throughout the AC 2023-2024 year. In total, more than \$50,000 in external funding was received.

Table 2  
*Metrics for The Student Experience*

AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	The Student Experience Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
76%	61%	70%	<i>Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 2nd year</i>	73%*
60%	48%	48%	<i>Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 3rd year</i>	61%*
44%	43%	46%	<i>Graduation rates (SACSCOC-aligned)</i>	53%*
1,518	1,020	1,067	<i>Enrollment per freshman class, per year</i>	1,300
3,933	3,063	2,905	<i>Enrollment on Natchitoches campus</i>	3,700
11,447	9,389	8,847	<i>Overall Northwestern State University enrollment</i>	9,500*
6.04	5.99		Satisfaction with support services and resources	6.3
5.67	5.67		Responsive and helpful staff	6.3
5.73	5.72		Understanding of University policies and procedures	6.3
78%	80%	84%	<i>Percentage of grads working within 6 months of graduation</i>	80%*
5.92	5.60		On-campus facilities satisfaction survey	6.3
9,464	4,909	6,423	<i>Number of students involved in co-curricular activities</i>	7,000
325,917**	24,933	22,060	<i>Hours students engage in volunteer community service</i>	25,000
14,735	20,194	23,376	<i>Number of students &amp; stakeholders using career services platform</i>	11,000
		105	<i>Number of 1<sup>st</sup> year students participating in living-learning communities</i>	TBD
		17	<i>Number of eligible 2<sup>nd</sup> year students participating in leadership programming</i>	TBD
		27/49=55%	<i>Percentage of students completing a leadership program who assume a peer leadership role within one academic year</i>	TBD
		42/49=86%	<i>Satisfaction with 1<sup>st</sup> year leadership programs</i>	TBD
154	156	196	<i>Number of health-related programs and services</i>	125
6.05	6.00		Satisfaction with health-safety related support programs	6.3
5.52	5.36		Safety and security satisfaction survey	6.3

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2020-2021 are reflected on the far left with AC 2022-2023 to the right and AC 2023-2024 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2023-2024. Black standard text was assessed in 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured. Yellow is a change in metric.

Note 2: AC 2021-2022 was a year of reflection therefore no Annual Report was generated.

\*Serves as Student Achievement Criterion.

\*\* Total for volunteer and professional service hours

Except for enrollment data, most metrics were assessed using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNLSSI), administered spring every other year (2019, 2021, 2023) by the University of Louisiana System. The RNLSSI collects data on a 7-point Likert scale. RNLSSI also allows participating universities to add unique questions, discussed in this report. Students rate the *importance* of questions in addition to rating their *satisfaction* with items. Data collection occurred in spring 2023; Northwestern State University achieved a 23% response rate to the RNLSSS. This is particularly impressive compared to other UL System institutions with response rates well under 20%.

## Objective 1:

***Utilize strategic and sustainable practices to achieve and maintain optimum enrollments.***

### Strategies:

- Provide programs and services for achieving academic excellence.
- Better-integrate admissions processes, financial aid, registrar services, and academic advising throughout the campus.
- Streamline policies and procedures to enhance responsiveness to students' needs.
- Develop programs and collaborate with Academic Affairs to boost Natchitoches campus enrollment.
- Develop practices to enhance Dual Enrollment conversions and matriculation rates.
- Increase overall number of recruiting contacts through lead generation best practices with a focus on the nine (9) parishes within the central Louisiana parish area.
- Implement Enrollment Management Plan developed throughout the prior year using Meauxmentum framework concepts.

### Metrics:

1. *Retention rate (full-time) first to second year*
2. *Retention rate (full-time) first to third year*
3. *Graduation rates (SACSCOC-aligned)*
4. *Enrollment per freshman class per year*
5. *Enrollment on the Natchitoches campus*
6. *Overall Northwestern State University enrollment*

### Metric:

1. ***Retention rate (full-time) first to second year***

### Findings:

The first year to second year persistence rate for first-time, full-time, baccalaureate-seeking entering freshmen increased for the first time over a three-year period. The fall 2020 cohort retained 63.84% to fall 2021; the fall 2021 cohort retained 61.15% to fall 2022; and the fall 2022 cohort retained 70.42% to fall 2023.

### Analysis:

In recent years, NSU has had a sharply falling first-year to second-year retention rate. The retention rate for full-time first to second year students in fall 2023 was 9.27 percentage points higher than fall 2021. The Demon Peer Network, established in fall 2022 and enhanced in fall 2023, was implemented to help address student retention from first to second year. The Faculty Led Assistance in My Education (FLAME) was developed as a cross-curricular initiative to assist with tutoring services.

### Decision:

- The Director of Enrollment Management will develop and implement strategies to impact retention of first-time students.
- Enforce policies pertaining to first and second-year students such as residency requirements.
- Explore modality of classes offered to include more face-to-face and fewer online classes available to first-and second-year students.
- Explore initiatives to connect first-year students with the campus community.

- Explore options for better financial aid packaging related to scholarship awards for full-time first-time students.
- Fully develop the Demon Peer Network to include ongoing development of the mentors.

**Metric:**

**2. Retention rate (full-time) first to third year**

**Findings:**

The persistence of students from first to third year increased from 47.88% ( $n = 1297$ ) for the fall 2020 cohort to 48.37% ( $n = 1135$ ) for the fall 2021 cohort, and did not meet the target of 63%.

**Analysis:**

This metric is like the full-time first to second year rate increase, although the increase on first to third year will take time to compound. In fall 2022 admission requirements were adjusted state-wide to include a more holistic approach to the admissions process, utilizing no test scores. This created a cohort of students that needed more resources and assistance on academic matters. Initiatives such as FLAME (Faculty Led Assistance in My Education) and Beyond Graduation were created to fill the resource gap. Through FLAME, students receive academic help directly from professors in their area of expertise. Beyond Graduation serves low-socioeconomic students from a nine-parish area through their college years to support with questions, financial assistance, and guidance. The Beyond Graduation cohort is now 567 students strong. Through the efforts of initiatives like FLAME and Beyond Graduation, persistence of students from first to third year will grow over the next few years

**Decision:**

- The Enrollment Committee will focus on initiatives that impact student success more.
- Review of academic programs with increased loss of 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students.
- Review available scholarships and scholarship policies including GPA requirements, and opportunities for part-time students.
- Early intervention plans for academically at-risk students must be refined.
- The Title III Grant: Elevate-U Program and Beyond Graduation will prioritize meeting critical needs of low-income, at-risk students.
- Explore the continuation of the Demon Peer Network beyond the first year, including development of the mentors.

**Metric:**

**3. Graduation rates (SACSCOC aligned)**

**Findings:**

The 6-year graduation target for full time degree-seeking students is 53%. The graduation rate for the Fall 2016 cohort was 46.3%, a statistically significant increase from Fall 2015 cohort's graduation rate of 43% ( $p = .046$ ). (Source: <https://www.nsula.edu/oir/studentachievement/>). As a reminder, SACSCOC graduation rates are determined by a calculation in the SACSCOC annual report (submitted each January) and based on the prior Spring IPEDS Grad Rates reporting. Therefore, the SACSCOC graduation rate reports Fall 2016 cohort a year later than IPEDS.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2022-2023, NSU exceeded the six-year graduation target of 43%. For AC 2023-2024, the target has increased to 53%. Although the target was not met, the graduation rate improved over the previous cohort.

#### Decision:

- Monitor IR reports to determine majors with declines.
- Work with Deans and Department Chairs to determine reasons for stop outs.
- Consider scholarship assistance for students not graduating through the Gallaspy Retention and Crow-Allen Scholarships.

#### Metric:

#### **4. Enrollment per freshman class per year**

#### Findings:

The number of entering freshmen increased from 1,020 in fall 2022 to 1,067 in fall 2023. This number included new students who first enrolled in the summer term and continued in the fall.

#### Analysis:

In AC 2021-2022, the number of entering freshmen was 1,246. In AC 2022-2023 the incoming class decreased by 226 students, for a total of 1,020 entering freshmen. In AC 2023-2024, the class increased by 47 students, for a total of 1,067. In particular, the number of new traditional students in our service area has increased slightly. Despite an increase of 4.7 percentage points, the result still falls short of the enrollment goal. Based on the analysis of these results and utilizing the recommendations from the American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Consultant Report, a continued review of recruiting strategies and tactics will be required to achieve and maintain optimum enrollment.

#### Decision:

- Focus recruiting efforts on Central LA and NW LA students.
- Emphasize the low cost of enrollment in recruiting materials.
- Review the effectiveness of scholarship packages utilizing ACT superscores.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.
- Implement new Board of Regents college GPA requirements for continuing Dual Enrolled students.

#### Metric:

#### **5. Enrollment on the Natchitoches campus**

#### Findings:

The enrollment of students taking at least one face-to-face class on the Natchitoches campus for fall 2023 was 2,905, down by 158 students from fall 2022 (-5.16%), which is slightly less than the overall enrollment decline for the University (-5.78%).

#### Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target for this metric was 4,500 which was not met in the three previous academic years. In AC 2023-2024, the goal was adjusted to 3,700, to reflect the current state of enrollment. Rising costs of on campus living and other costs associated with higher education continue to impact Natchitoches campus enrollments. This led the University to reevaluate how we classify Natchitoches students. Factors include students taking face-to-face classes, as well as students classified as high school, and students classified as online, both residing in Natchitoches. With this redefined classification of Natchitoches students, the total number is 3,910 for fall 2023.

### Decision:

- Work with Institutional Research to determine geographical and academic areas with significant face-to-face declines.
- Review class offerings and closely monitor demand for face-to-face classes on the Natchitoches campus.
- Ensure first-year students are registered in face-to-face classes through the Freshman Connection orientation program.
- Review and enforce campus policies related to residential requirements.
- Explore-campus housing issues related to cost.
- VPSE/DSA will work with program directors across campus, such as athletics and creative and performing arts, to determine new strategies for enrolling students in face-to-face courses on the Natchitoches campus.
- Enhance partnership with Career Compass and Beyond Graduation to identify and enroll more students from feeder parishes.
- Work closely with Club Sports staff to produce more offerings for students available on campus.
- Reevaluate the target to determine if it is appropriate.

### Metric:

#### 6. Overall Northwestern State University enrollment

### Findings:

Enrollment over all instructional sites and online was 8,847 in the fall of 2023. This was a decrease of 542 students from the fall of 2022 (9,389).

### Analysis:

Overall Northwestern enrollment decreased by 542 students. Decreases may be attributed to relaxed admissions standards fall 2022, which negatively impacted retention of continuing students (metric 2), the focus on Dual Enrollment in high school, the duplication of academic programs among regional and state institutions, and the rising cost of higher education. As a result, the target for overall enrollment was adjusted to 9,500 students in AC 2023-2024, from 11,360 previously.

### Decision:

- Improve leveraging of scholarships.
- Increase scholarships in areas not covered by the Gallaspy Foundation.
- Evaluate all exemption policies (e.g., tuition and fees for faculty/staff dependents; housing exemptions for freshmen and sophomores) to determine feasibility and effectiveness.
- Focus recruiting on Central LA and NW LA students.
- Focus on targeted minority students—Federally Acknowledged American Indian Tribes, Hispanic markets in Texas, and other programs such as *Call Me Mister*.
- Work with Dural Enrollment to restructure course offerings and course load capacities.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.
- Better utilize summer camp opportunities to aid in overall recruiting.
- Reevaluate the target.

## Objective 2:

***Provide efficient and appropriate use of resources in support of enrollment and student success.***

### Strategies:

- Broaden programs and services for students, faculty, and staff geared to making the campus climate equally welcoming for all members of the community.
- Develop our students to be future leaders.
- Educate campus community on available services, such as accessibility and disability support, career counseling, job location, food pantry, faculty-led academic mentoring, and prior learning assessments.
- Local recruiting to meet local economic development strategies.

### Metrics:

1. Satisfaction with support services and resources.
2. Responsive and helpful staff
3. Understanding of University policies and processes
4. *Percentage of graduates working within 6 months of graduation*

### Metric:

#### 1. Satisfaction with support services and resources

### Findings:

Responses to the AC 2022-2023 RNLSSI Campus Services scale include library, computer labs, tutoring services, online access, career services, counseling services, and mentoring. The scale average ( $M = 5.99/7$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) was slightly below, but statistically like, the average from AC 2020-2021 ( $M = 6.04/7$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ).

### Analysis:

Northwestern declined slightly in overall student satisfaction compared to AC 2020-2021. Of the eight items reviewed, NSU improved on five items and declined in three; of these only one decline was significant. The item, *Computers and/or Wi-Fi are adequate and accessible* decreased from 6.25/7 ( $SD = 1.19$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.87/7 ( $SD = 1.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in AC 2022-2023. Further analysis of this item, divided into four groups based on students' living arrangements, found a significant difference between group means (one-way ANOVA,  $p < .001$ ). A follow-up test with Turkey's HSD indicated that satisfaction among students living in the residence halls ( $M = 5.55$ ,  $SD = 1.517$ ,  $N = 232$ ) was significantly lower than the other three groups: those owning their own home ( $M = 6.05$ ,  $SD = 1.395$ ,  $N = 200$ ), renting a room or apartment ( $M = 5.94$ ,  $SD = 1.437$ ,  $N = 194$ ), or living with their parents ( $M = 6.09$ ,  $SD = 1.255$ ,  $N = 135$ ).

### Decision:

- Review findings with the Executive Director of University Affairs and the Director of Housing to determine a plan for upgrading Wi-Fi service in the residential communities.
- Review findings with Information Technology Services staff regarding options for improved Wi-Fi service across campus.
- Counseling Services will identify options for improving access to personal counseling.
- Explore opportunities to have intentional conversations with students regarding majors and careers—University Studies 1000, Freshman Connection, and academic seminars.



**Metric:**

**2. Responsive and helpful staff**

**Findings:**

Responses to the RNLSSI Student Centeredness scale averaged 5.83/7 (*SD* = 1.38) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.81/7 (*SD* = 1.20).

The RNLSSI item, *Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual*, increased slightly from 2020-2021, averaging 5.13/7 (*SD* = 1.81).

Averaging the 5 items results in a score of 5.67/7 for AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.66/7 in AC 2020-2021.

**Analysis:**

The five individual items from the RNLSSI in this metric remained stable between AC 2020-2021 and AC 2022-2023. While some changes occurred, none were significant. It is commendable that the largest increase was on the item, *The campus staff are caring and helpful*, which changed from 5.83/7 (*SD* = 1.28) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.92/7 (*SD* = 1.24) in AC 2022-2023.

**Decision:**

- Identify and implement Customer Service Training for employees at every level.
- Coordinate focus groups with the Student Government Association, residential life, and other key programs and services on campus to gain a better understanding of student needs.

**Metric:**

**3. Understanding of University policies and procedures**

**Findings:**

In AC 2022-2023, University Policies and Procedures were evaluated using two scales on the RNLSSI, plus one item each from two additional scales.

- Responses to the Registration Effectiveness scale (processes and procedures, billing policies, class registration, and convenient times) averaged 5.81/7 (*SD* = 1.16) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.84/7 (*SD* = 1.13) in AC 2020-2021.
- Responses to the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale (five items addressing admissions and financial aid) indicate a satisfaction of 5.65/7 (*SD* = 1.38) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.61/7 (*SD* = 1.40) in AC 2020-2021.
- Responses to the statement, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, on the Campus Life scale averaged 5.95 (*SD* = 1.46) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 6.15/7 (*SD* = 1.29) in AC 2020-2021.
- The item, *I seldom get the run-around when seeking information on this campus*, averaged 5.47 (*SD* = 1.75) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.50/7 (*SD* = 1.74) in AC 2020-2021.

Averaging these 11 items results in a score of 5.72/7 for 2022-2023, compared to 5.73/7 for AC 2020-2021.

**Analysis:**

Policies and Procedures that are easy to understand and student friendly are obviously important in student satisfaction, success, and retention. Streamlining policy has been a goal in the Student Experience since the inception of the strategic plan and more work needs to be done to achieve this goal.

Comparing AC 2022-2023 to AC 2020-2021, the Registration Effectiveness scale decreased slightly. Three items, *Registration processes and procedures are convenient*, *Billing policies are reasonable*, and *I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts*, each decreased slightly, but not significantly. On the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale, one item changed significantly; *Financial aid counseling is available if I need it*, rose substantially by 0.19 points, 5.69/7 ( $SD = 1.6$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.50/7 ( $SD = 1.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in AC 2021-2022. New financial aid practices which involved personal meetings with a financial aid counselor were implemented during summer orientation for AC 2021-2022 and AC 2022-2023 may have impacted student satisfaction. Examining the data further, freshmen and sophomores rated item 11 significantly higher than juniors and seniors ( $M_{fr\_so} = 5.385$ ,  $SD = 1.404$ ,  $N = 414$ ;  $M_{jr\_sr} = 5.59$ ,  $SD = 1.709$ ,  $N = 671$ ,  $t_{999} = 2.627$ ,  $p = .004$ ).

The average for *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, decreased substantially by 0.20 points ( $p < .001$ ). Some highly-visible incidents on campus in AC 2022-2023 that involved multiple student groups may have impacted the decline in satisfaction in this service area.

#### Decision:

- Establish a policy management process to review existing policies and procedures that impact students.
- Continue to develop financial aid counseling opportunities throughout the undergraduate experience since this appears to have improved students' awareness of this service.
- Since our student body is sensitive to cost of attendance, we will continue to develop billing processes and internal communication plans about tuition and fees.
- Develop programs and awareness campaigns to educate students on the Student Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures, particularly for student organizations.
- Focus groups to review messaging in recruiting practices.
- Review and update the modules used for the Recognized Student Organization (RSO) Workshop and the University Studies 1000 course.

#### Metric:

#### 4. Percentage of graduates working within 6 months of graduation

#### Findings:

The First Destination Survey in Handshake is given to all students graduating each semester. To be consistent with NACE reporting standards, this metric uses the responses submitted by recipients awarded associate's and bachelor's degrees in the period from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. At the end of June 2024, 294 of 1148 undergraduates (25.6%) had completed the survey. Of those, 258 (87.8%) indicated they were working (i.e., employed, continuing their education, or serving in the military).

#### Analysis:

Handshake is the NSU platform for recording and disseminating career and employment information to NSU students and alumni. Emails are sent periodically to remind graduates to respond. For students answering *Working* as their primary occupation, follow-up questions ask for details of the specific job, including start date, to distinguish between the intention to seek employment and employment itself.

Respondents are expected to *submit* their surveys when they are complete; however, close examination of responses *in progress* indicates that many respondents simply save their document without formally submitting. Thus, both submitted and in progress surveys are included in our analysis. In AC 2023-2024, 185 (16.1%) of those surveyed submitted their forms while 109 (9.5%) merely saved their responses.

The Spring survey closes each Assessment Cycle on October 5. However, few graduates respond near the end of the cycle, so by June 30 each year, the response rate is comparable for the August, December, and May graduations. The response rate for AC 2023-2024 was statistically similar to that for AC 2022-2023 (371/1401 = 26.5%). This is considered a “good” response rate. The proportion of respondents in the *working* category increased significantly from AC 2022-2023 to AC 2023-2024 (two proportion z test,  $p = .020$ ).

#### Decision:

- Although the current response rate is adequate, review efforts to increase response rates.
- Address the First Destination Survey in Capstone courses prior to graduation each semester.

### Objective 3:

**Foster student engagement through co-curricular experiences by providing multiple means of access and opportunity.**

#### Strategies:

- Transform campus spaces to create a unique and engaging campus environment, which adapts to the changing trends of a diverse student body to promote on-campus enrollment.
- Rebrand programming and initiatives to build affinity for NSU.
- Develop and implement a program to recognize students, faculty, staff, and student organizations.

#### Metrics:

1. *On Campus Facilities Satisfaction*
2. *Number of students involved in co-curricular activities*
3. *Hours students engage in volunteer community service*
4. *Number of students and stakeholders utilizing career services platforms*

#### Metric:

##### 1. *On-campus facilities satisfaction*

#### Findings:

In AC 2022-2023, the RNLSSI item, *overall, the campus is well maintained*, was used to measure satisfaction with campus facilities. The mean score decreased from 5.92/7 ( $SD = 1.42$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.60/7 ( $SD = 1.61$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in AC 2022-2023. Satisfaction is below both the southern norm (5.83/7;  $SD = 1.47$ ) and the national norm 5.89/7 ( $SD = 1.40$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

An additional local survey from the Event Management System (EMS) assessing facilities in the Student Union is conducted annually. Of 26 entities answering the survey, 13 represented Recognized Student Organizations. The EMS survey for AC 2023-2024 (Table 3) shows total satisfaction for reserving facilities in the Student Union. Data for Student Union utilization indicates high traffic throughout most of the building throughout the years. This is especially true for the Ballroom and the Lucile M. Hendrick Room, two large multi-purpose rooms used by NSU and members of the Natchitoches community.

#### Analysis:

The decrease in the RNLSSI item regarding facility maintenance is a clear indicator that students are not satisfied with how the campus is maintained overall. Satisfaction declined significantly on the item,

Table 3  
*Friedman Student Union survey*

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
It was convenient to book the facility through the Event Management System.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	30.77% 8	65.38% 17	3.85% 1	26	3.68
The contract, rules, and booking details were clear and easy to understand	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	19.23% 5	76.92% 20	3.85% 1	26	3.80
Pricing for the venue was reasonable.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 4	26.92% 7	57.69% 15	26	3.64
Confirmation for my event was received in a reasonable time.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.92% 7	69.23% 18	3.85% 1	26	3.72
My experience with the booking staff was satisfactory.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.85% 1	96.15% 25	0.00% 01	26	3.96

*On the whole, the campus is well-maintained*, from AC 2020-2021 (5.92/7; SD = 1.42) to AC 2022-2023 (5.60/7; SD = 1.61), a decline of 0.32 points.

During AC 2023-2024, the following projects were completed in the Student Union: Office of Student Advocacy and Title IX moved into a newly renovated suite; the Parenting Room was completed; on the third floor three (3) meeting rooms got new flooring, Room 312 was converted from a storage room to a meeting room, Room 320 was upgraded with a new audio-visual system, new carpeting was installed through the Counseling Center, and a teleconferencing system was installed in Room 314. Additionally, a paint refresh was conducted in high traffic areas throughout the building.

**Decision:**

- The Cabinet and facilities manager will utilize RNLSSI findings concerning student satisfaction with facilities to drive improvement.
- Continually reevaluate the Student Union’s ability to meet the service, spatial, equipment, and technology needs of the University and greater community.
- Develop a five-year plan for furniture and equipment replacement and allocate funding to upgrade when opportunities exist.
- The Student Union Director will provide input on facility renovations, maintenance issues, and quality improvements in the Student Union, the courtyard, and all entrances to the building.
- Student Experience staff will identify new spaces for development and improvement to meet the changing needs of our students.
- Conduct satisfaction surveys for summer camp directors.
- Develop and implement a workshop for faculty, staff, and student organizations who host events in the Student Union.

**Metric:**

**2. Number of students involved in co-curricular activities**

**Findings:**

Data for this metric was obtained from the online NSU Presence platform, related to activity for Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs). The number of students involved in Co-Curricular Activities, determined

by Presence, is the overall measure for this metric. Students and faculty/staff use Presence to record activity, membership, leadership opportunities, schedules, by-laws, regulations, and other information required of student organizations on campus. Additional data comes from the Event Management System (EMS) managed by the Director of the Student Union.

In AC 2023-2024, 6423 currently enrolled students were registered in Presence, which allows students in organizations to see events, check in for events, and communicate with others in their organizations.

In AC 2023-2024, RSOs reserved on-campus facilities 1924 times through the Event Management System (Table 4). Student bookings increased by 61 from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 and by 449 from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024. The number of meetings, events, and activities across campus continues to increase.

Table 4  
*Event Management System Reservations for Recognized Student Organizations*

EMS Data	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Total Bookings (all EMS facilities)	1,475	1,863	1,924
Estimated Attendance at Booking	62,649	65,655	65,667

In AC 2023-2024, 102 Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) and Club Sports opportunities were available to students. RSOs hosted 544 reported events (fundraisers, leadership training, organizational activities and meetings, networking opportunities, recreational activities, service events, socials, and athletic programming), as recorded on the Presence platform and departmental attendance rosters. Recorded attendance at campus events was 18,643 students utilizing Presence swipes and event rosters. Participation in Greek organizations grew by 61 new members (73.5%) from 169 in AC 2022-2023 to 230 in AC 2023-2024. The unduplicated number of students in a Recognized Student Organization (RSO) is 1207. However, this does not consider the number of students involved in athletics (359), performance groups, RSOs that do not use the Presence system, or for activities and events where attendance is not taken.

**Analysis:**

While campus bookings have increased in AC 2023-2024, the comparative data for students involved in co-curricular activities is not exact. A consistent method of data collection has not been utilized. The fact that students feel their fees are put to good use as indicated on the RNLSSI (item #45) AC 2022-2023 is also reassuring.

**Decision:**

- Define co-curricular involvement to encompass all areas of campus engagement.
- Streamline data collection for student experience events and programs by promoting the use of the Purple Portal Presence platform among campus departments and Recognized Student Organizations.
- Provide quality co-curricular experiences and events that focus on various topics that will allow students to enhance their NSU Experience.
- Conduct a staff and alumni talent inventory to assist with student organization programming and member development.
- Create RSO leadership development initiatives that foster a sense of community, encourage collaboration and communication, and instill responsible decision-making and critical thinking skills to advance and celebrate individualized, high-level student engagement.

**Metric:**

**3. Hours students involved in volunteer community service**

**Findings:**

Community and public service hours involves both volunteer service and required professional service. The Student Experience coordinates volunteer service activities. Northwestern State University students, including students in RSO's, Greeks, freshmen, and First Year Experience, and student-athletes volunteered for a total of 22,060 community service hours in AC 2023-2024 compared to 24,933 community service hours in 2022-2023.

The Student Experience offers two campus-wide community service days, the [1 of 7] Service Kickoff in the fall and the V. L. Roy Day of Service in the spring for a combined total of 762 hours. in AC 2023-2024, over 65 student volunteers worked 828 hours in the campus food pantry, serving 344 students who experienced food insecurity. Northwestern students continue to volunteer in crisis situations such as clean-ups and repair following natural disasters (hurricanes and tornadoes) in communities outside Natchitoches, and individual students and student groups are responsive to requests in the community.

**Analysis:**

More can be done in terms of Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) reporting, as information is missing from many of our organizations. In addition, many individual students participate in service initiatives independently, and this is not often reported. Even with the missing data, Northwestern students clearly engage in community service at a very high rate.

Previously, both volunteer and professional service were reported together. Beginning AC 2023-2024, volunteer service will be reported separately from professional service, which is in Strategic Focus Area Community Enrichment. The benchmark for AC 2022-2023 was derived from archival data and the target was adjusted for volunteer community service in AC 2023-2024 to 25,000 hours.

**Decision:**

- Identify a system to better track and record service hours for student organizations and individual students.
- Establish and implement a student engagement toolkit to help students identify meaningful learning experiences that lead to competency development, leadership training, and civic engagement.
- Provide more opportunities for connecting students with the external community through public and community service.
- Explore the implementation of a program to recognize students who achieve 100 hours of community service.

**Metric:**

**4. Number of students and employers using Handshake**

**Findings:**

As of June 2024, 23,376 Northwestern students, alumni and employers are using the Handshake platform:

Employers	11,685
Undergraduate Students	9,098
Graduate Students	687
Alumni	<u>1,906</u>
Total	23,376

### Analysis:

Handshake is an online career platform for NSU students and alumni designed to assist in career decision making and in matching employers with students. Undergraduate and graduate students are loaded into the system when they register at the University, however, students must activate their accounts to use the features.

Activity for 2022-2023 showed 20,194 students, alumni, and employees using Handshake. For 2023-2024 the number of Handshake users increased by 3,182, totaling 23,376.

The connection between the classroom and career goals is clearly important to students. Increases in satisfaction are minimal and should continue to be addressed to improve satisfaction and retention.

### Decision:

- Career Services will grow Graduate and Career Fairs for employment opportunities.
- Career Services will work with Academic Affairs to provide services via the classroom.
- Career Services works with employers in the community to increase employment and internship opportunities.
- Create a campaign to grow the Handshake program as students progress.

## Objective 4:

**Provide an enhanced second year experience through advising, living-learning communities, and mentorship.**

### Strategies:

- Develop a series of high-impact experiential learning activities designed to engage students beginning their second year.
- Expand the number of living-learning programs and activities.
- Establish and implement programs that assist students in transition from one academic level to the next, beginning with a comprehensive first-year experience and progressing through high-impact experiences and career preparation opportunities.
- Streamline data collection for student experience events and programs.
- Establish resident mentors program.

### Metrics:

1. *Number of first-year students participating in living-learning communities*
2. *Number of eligible second-year students participating in leadership programming*
3. *Percent of students completing a leadership program who assume a peer leadership role*
4. *Satisfaction with 1<sup>st</sup> year leadership programs*

### Metric:

1. ***Number of first-year students participating in living-learning communities***

### Findings:

Northwestern currently has three communities: Leadership Living Learning, for students enrolled in the President's Leadership Program (PLP), and Scholars' College at University Place, and the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) for CAPA majors living in Varnado Hall. In AC 2023-2024, the baseline was established with 105 first-year students participating in a living-learning community (LLC).

### Analysis:

The Student Experience had planned to work collaboratively with the Title III grant's Student Engagement Coordinator during this assessment cycle to move this initiative forward. Within the Title III grant, Activity #2 is dedicated to expanding the first- and second-year experience. A major component of this activity is to:

*"...create first- and second-year living learning communities with specifically designed academic, co-curricular, leadership, and career programming that will address topics and challenges faced by low-income students. Services will include tutoring, peer mentor support, financial guidance, health and wellness, community-building, and proactive academic advising. Resident Mentors will work in the residential community to create an inclusive environment that promotes personal development, citizenship, and campus involvement and connects students with resources. Resident Mentors will participate in weekly meetings and host community enrichment, success workshops, and seminars."* (Title III ElevateU grant proposal, Section A)

Title III grant-funded personnel are intended to spearhead and coordinate this activity. Delayed hiring of personnel has impacted progress this year; however, significant strides are expected in the coming academic year. This will require a collaborative approach among Housing and Residential Life, The Student Experience, and Academic Affairs to recruit participants, integrate academic life, and develop programming initiatives and activities. LLC's are not consistently marketed and promoted, and students do not have the option to choose an LLC at the time of housing application or leasing.

### Decision:

- Consider expanding LLC's to meet the interests of the diverse student body (ROTC, women, first-generation, International)
- LLC participants need to be identified and selected earlier in the recruiting and housing processes.
- Develop a marketing plan for all LLC's.

### Metric:

#### **2. Number of eligible second-year students participating in leadership programming**

### Findings:

The baseline AC 2022-2023 PLP cohort of 49 was used as the population. Of those 49, 17 participated in AY 2023-2024 leadership programming. Leadership programming is defined as Leadership NSU, PLP Mentor program, and the Demon Peer Network mentoring program. As a sidenote, accurate record-keeping for Leadership NSU attendees was not consistent over the two-day conference.

### Analysis:

Within the Title III grant, Activity #2 is dedicated to expanding the first- and second-year experience. This metric is an annual performance indicator within Activity #2. Year 1 of the grant has been established as the timeframe for baselining grant metrics.

One challenge has been to define specific events and development activities that will be considered "leadership programming". An initial list was gathered to establish a baseline.



Another challenge was to determine “eligible” second-year students. For this reason, those students who had completed PLP training as freshmen were selected as the initial population. For the coming assessment cycle, “eligibility” will be more clearly defined in collaboration with the Title III Student Engagement Coordinator.

**Decision:**

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the student leadership development opportunities and define leadership programming.
- Define “eligible second-year students.”
- Develop a leadership track (bi-monthly workshops, a retreat, 15 hours of leadership programming, assessment)

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of students completing a leadership program who assumed a peer leadership role***

**Findings:**

The baseline AC 2023-2024 PLP cohort of 49 was used as the population. At the end of the year, a comprehensive survey was administered to those who have completed both SAHE 1020 and SAHE 1030. Of those 49, 27 responded that they had assumed leadership roles throughout the year. This annual survey gathers each student’s description of peer leadership role(s) he or she has undertaken during the year.

**Analysis:**

The baseline of 27 students who assumed a peer leadership role is 55% of the AY23-24 PLP cohort. As of June 2024, PLP is the only formal leadership program at NSU. If other programs are identified or developed, these cohorts will be included in the population studied

In the coming months, with the expansion of living-learning communities and advising services, more structured opportunities for peer leadership will be available.

**Decision:**

- Survey sophomores in the beginning of the fall 2024.
- Investigate the benefits and costs for administering The National Survey of Student Engagement.
- Discuss with academic units the potential for nurturing other formal leadership programs.

**Metric:**

**4. *Satisfaction with first year leadership programs***

**Findings:**

The baseline AY23-24 PLP cohort of 49 was used as the population. At the year's end, a comprehensive survey was administered to those who have completed SAHE 1020 and SAHE 1030. This annual survey measures students’ feelings about their sense of belonging, community, and support, especially as it relates to the first-year leadership program. Satisfaction is measured on a 5-point Likert scale. In AC 2023-2024, 86% of respondents indicated that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

**Analysis:**

Within the Title III grant, Activity #2 is dedicated to expanding the first- and second-year experience. Within Activity #2, an annual performance indicator is similar to this one; however, the population to be surveyed is all first-year students.

The set of questions developed for the first-year leadership program could be used to craft the data gathering for the greater population. Alternatively, the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) may frame the questions nicely. This task will be a collaboration between PLP leadership and the Title III Student Engagement Coordinator.

**Decision:**

- Review NSSE for potential data source.
- Determine survey mechanism.
- Administer survey in AC24-25 to selected population.

## Objective 5:

### Promote behaviors that enhance holistic health and safety.

**Strategies:**

- Expand and maintain campus and community partnerships which enhance student health and wellness.
- Create and implement appropriate outreach efforts which address the changing developmental needs of students.
- Provide health and wellness initiatives at off-campus instructional sites. Add health services at other off-campus instructional sites.

**Metrics:**

1. *Number of Health-Related Programs and Services*
2. *Satisfaction with Support Programs*
3. *Safety and security satisfaction*

**Metric:**

1. *Number of health-related programs and services*

**Findings:**

In AC 2023-2024 Northwestern sponsored 196 health-related programs compared to 156 in AC 2022-2023. Events, programs, resources, and services are used for this metric, and most are provided by departments and Recognized Student Organizations in The Student Experience division.

**Analysis:**

Northwestern recognizes the connection between health and student success. Northwestern has grown health-related programming every year. Presentations, events, and activities cover the following topics: hazing prevention, mental health and wellbeing, fitness, suicide prevention, self-care, international travel and safety, on-campus and residential safety, sexual assault advocacy and awareness, alcohol and substance abuse, self-defense, financial wellness, first-aid, sexual health, managing stress, internet safety, food insecurity and wellness, academic success, fitness, dealing with trauma, conflict resolution, mindfulness, risk management prevention, and healthy eating habits.

A signature program, the NSU Wellness Fest, is held annually in November and involves more than 44 collaborative partners on campus and in the Natchitoches community to provide free health screenings, resources, and services for students, faculty, and staff. Over 400 students attended the event.

### Decision:

- Expand and enhance the campus-wide Wellness Fest to include additional services and resources.
- Work with Campus Dining to provide healthy meal options in the dining halls and to promote healthy eating habits among students.
- Work with the Natchitoches community to develop additional resources, partnerships, and grant options.
- Evaluate existing university committees to reimagine current and develop additional health-related initiatives.
- Develop a marketing campaign to elevate The NSU Pantry and Swipe Out Hunger initiative.
- Enhance the work of the “Hunger-Free Campus” Designation committee.
- Boost our current partnership with Vector Solutions for training to include the following educational modules: Sexual assault prevention, alcohol and drug misuse and prevention, wellness and safety, career readiness and personal development, and diversity, inclusion, and belonging. This will encompass over 90 educational modules for students.

### Metric:

#### **2. Satisfaction with health- and safety-related support programs**

### Findings:

In AC 2022-2023, the RNLSSI item (#26), *Counseling services are available if I need them*, from the Campus Services scale was used to measure satisfaction with the counseling component of support programs. The mean score decreased from 6.05/7 ( $SD = 1.44$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 6.00/7 ( $SD = 1.50$ ) in AC 2022-2023, which was not significant. NSU’s average on this measure remained significantly higher than the national average for Four-Year Public institutions ( $M = 5.83$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### Analysis:

On the RNLSSI this item is a campus strength, with both high importance and high satisfaction and student satisfaction with counseling services remains high. Although on average students ranked the availability of counseling services 24th out of 55 local and national items, the availability of such services for students in need can be essential to their well-being, success, and retention. Monitoring satisfaction in this area will help us maintain high quality service for our students. Some assistance with counseling services was provided through a collaborative partnership with the Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development, with licensed, professional counselors, assisting with the caseload throughout AC 2022-2023.

### Decision:

- Counseling staff and leadership need to continue to find ways to make counseling services more available to students during peak times.
- Reevaluate the mental health module delivered in University Studies 1000 courses to educate first-year students.
- Reimagine the Counseling Center to better utilize space available and to create a more welcoming environment.

## Metric:

### 3. *Safety and security satisfaction*

#### Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Safety and Security scale averaged 5.36/7 ( $SD = 1.36$ ) in AC 2022-2023, compared to 5.52/7 ( $SD = 1.35$ ;  $p < .001$ ) for AC 2020-2021.

#### Analysis:

Three items in this metric declined significantly in satisfaction. As discussed in the previous metric, one item of concern, *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, declined from 5.88/7 ( $SD = 1.43$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.75/7 ( $SD = 1.39$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in AC 2022-2023. This trails both the southern norm of 5.86/7 ( $SD = 1.41$ ) and the national norm, 5.87/7 ( $SD = 1.35$ ) for Four-Year Public Institutions. The item, *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate*, also declined from 4.96/7 ( $SD = 1.96$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 4.72/7 ( $SD = 2.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in AC 2022-2023; and the item, *Parking lots are well-lighted and secure*, declined from 5.36/7 ( $SD = 1.69$ ) in AC 2020-2021 to 5.19/7 ( $SD = 1.72$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Parking issues are unexplained, as fewer vehicles are registered on campus than in AC 2020-2021. In terms of importance, the item *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, was ranked 15th of 45 items and was an area of concern in AC 2020-2021.

#### Decision:

- University Safety Committee will review campus lighting and make suggestions for improvement.
- University Parking and Traffic Committee will review parking spaces on campus.
- Director of Campus Safety will be appraised of RNLSSI findings.
- Address safety at cabinet and leadership team level.

#### Comprehensive Summary

As the Division of The Student Experience, our top priority is our students and how we can provide the best experience for them during their time at NSU. Our staff are committed to enhancing the student experience by removing barriers to success, providing activities, leadership opportunities, services, and resources necessary to support the academic environment. Whether that is providing the resources students need to be successful in the classroom, services that promote and enhance holistic health and safety, or the opportunity to find fulfillment outside of the classroom through meaningful relationships and involvement, we are tasked with actively engaging and serving students.

Although enrollment declines are not as steep as in previous years, the decrease in student population on the Natchitoches campus has numerous significant implications for the University. Although the first to second year retention rates were lower than desired in AC 2022-2023 and that lower retention rate is reflected in the first to third year rate in AC 2023-2024, first to second year retention rebounded in AC 2023-2024. Mentoring relationships, support programs, and opportunities for engagement are a priority, along with early intervention plans for academically at-risk students. Developing educational programs and campaigns to educate students on expectations, policies, and responsibilities improves each year.

In AC 2023-2024, the division focused on processes that improve the student experience. The Demon Peer Network launched programs for peer counselor development, an audit and training program for the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) was implemented, and a taskforce to review the Student Code of Conduct was established, with a rollout of the new Code set for AC 2024-2025. Development of prevention strategies and programs promoting emotional well-being is a top priority for student affairs practitioners.

In this assessment cycle, The Student Experience has added a new objective to assess our efforts in leadership training, living-learning communities, and peer mentoring. The division will work collaboratively with the Title III grant's Student Engagement Coordinator to move the initiative of expanding the first- and second-year experience forward.

To achieve its envisioned future, Northwestern State University must be committed to refining and strengthening the student experience. Students succeed when we devote our energies to continuously improving all aspects of student life—academic, well-being, physical, social, and support. A better coordinated approach between all entities that engage and support students will ensure the delivery of services, programs, and experiences that meet the needs of all students on all campuses.

## Student Government Association

The Student Government Association (SGA) focused on several initiatives during AC 2023-2024, which included 1) mental health and wellness, 2) campus safety, and 3) increased University collaboration. Student Government members implemented a mental health and wellness statement for University syllabi, created suicide and crisis lifeline stickers for University identification cards, and partnered with the NSU Counseling Center to bring awareness to suicide prevention resources through tabling events, awareness walks/runs, a candlelight vigil, and various professional speakers.

The safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors was a high priority of the Student Government Association members. Each semester, members of the campus community participated in night walks to identify areas of campus that could be unsafe, such as roads, sidewalks, and low-light areas. The sites were identified and brought to the University administration's attention for review, repair, and replacement.

Student Government is comprised of student leaders who advocate on behalf of NSU students, but the organization also works with various departments on campus. Students involved in Student Government can interact with the college administration, staff, and faculty and work collaboratively to better the institution. The SGA increased its collaboration efforts this year through its academic and student affairs committee structure.

Moving forward, it is a priority of the Student Government Association to be more of an advocate and voice for students. In the 2024-2025 assessment cycle, student technology, campus engagement, transparency, and campus safety will be top priorities for SGA. Initiatives such as making strides to bring back the NSU app, supporting the betterment of all registered student organizations by creating event planning templates that make campus events more effective, implementing advisor surveys, advertising campus improvement grants for RSOs, and increasing awareness on the benefits of the Campus Shield App.

## Student Achievement

Our assessment processes are continuously improved, refined, and expanded. Northwestern measures student success by addressing specific components of its mission: ***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.*** As such, the University examines eight appropriate criteria for Student Achievement (Table 5).

Table 5  
*Criteria for Student Achievement*

Criteria	Goal for Fall 2028	Threshold of Acceptability	Reporting Period Outcome					
			2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Fall Enrollment	11,000	9,000	9,389	8847				
1 <sup>st</sup> Fall to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fall Retention Rate	73%	60%	61%	71%				
1 <sup>st</sup> Fall to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fall Retention	61%	48%	48%	48%				
Baccalaureate Completers	1,345	1,045	1,445	1308				
Graduate Completers	315	225	309	298				
** KSCI ** SACSCOC Graduation Rate	53%	40%	43%	47%				
Licensure Pass Rate	75-100%	50-98%	83-100%	82-100%				
Job Placement Rates	80%	70%	78%	80%				

Source: [nsula.edu/oir/studentachievement/](https://nsula.edu/oir/studentachievement/)

	<i>Met the Fall 2023 goal</i>
	<i>Above threshold but below the Fall 2023 goal (within the band of acceptability)</i>
	<i>Below threshold</i>

Northwestern annually measures student achievement inclusive of all students, instructional sites, and modes of delivery. This measurement is part of the ongoing, integrated, institutional effectiveness process to evaluate mission achievement, progress toward the vision, and adherence to core values.

All eight criteria reflect elements covered by State and Federal-mandated reporting. Northwestern regularly reports against these criteria in various ways through State (Board of Regents-BOR) and Federal portals (IPEDS), where the data reported is consolidated, compared, and published on State (BOR Dashboard) and Federal websites (College Scorecard; National Center of Educational Statistics).

Based on data submitted by institutions, the BOR's Data and Publications webpage provides interactive reports, extending the granularity of the BOR Dashboard. These reports and the BOR Factbook display Louisiana's post-secondary metrics at the institutional level. Northwestern's student achievement is comparable to other regional peer universities within the University of Louisiana System (ULS).

The criteria developed and approved by the University's Strategic Planning Team serve as key indicators of mission success. The criteria align with the goals and objectives in the Board of Regents Strategic Plan for *Northwestern State University FY 2023-2024 through FY2027-2028*. As such, the criteria are integrated into the University's Strategic Plan.

Northwestern uses these criteria to internally compare performance outcomes over time, compare outcomes to BOR-designated peer regional institutions (McNeese State University, Nicholls State

University, Southeastern Louisiana University, and University of Louisiana–Monroe), and evaluate state and federal benchmarks. In addition, Northwestern leadership employs the data collected for these criteria to identify trends, isolate potential issues, and drive decision-making.

Student achievement criteria guide the institution and ensure it meets its mission to "prepare its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation." When targets are not achieved, improvement plans are devised, implemented, and re-analyzed to promote continuous improvement.

The data indicates that Northwestern's students are enrolled and retained at a comparable rate to our peer institutions (enrollment and retention metrics) and appropriately progress through the curriculum (course completion metrics). Despite herculean efforts, Northwestern fell short (-538) of its acceptability level (9,000). Enrollment and retention remain the President's top priority as the University reviews its approach, means, and methods. Northwestern graduates leave the University with honed critical thinking and communication skills that allow them to be future leaders and serve their communities (graduation rates). Most importantly, Northwestern graduates successfully gain employment upon graduation (licensure/job placement metrics) and thereby make a difference in the region, state, and nation.

Northwestern has taken several steps over the last 6-12 months to maximize its strategic planning and assessment activities:

Reviewed, updated, and assessed the strategic plan: The University has reviewed and updated its strategic plan to ensure that it is aligned with its current goals and objectives. This involved conducting a SWOT analysis, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and identifying new opportunities and challenges. The University completed the seventh cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and its core competencies as part of *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2023-2024*. Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation allows Northwestern to maximize its strategic decisions leading to institutional improvement.

Increased stakeholder engagement: The University actively engages stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners, in the planning and assessment process. This involved holding meetings, focus groups, and other forums for feedback and input.

Enhanced data collection and analysis: The University reviewed and enhanced its data collection and analysis methods to ensure that it is gathering relevant and accurate data. This involved investing in new technology or software, hiring additional staff, or partnering with external organizations.

Used data to inform decision-making: The University continues to use data to inform its decision-making processes. This involved creating data dashboards, presenting data in visual formats, and establishing data-informed decision-making processes.

Established a culture of continuous improvement: The University continues to enhance its culture of continuous improvement, where assessment data is used to make ongoing improvements to programs and services. This involved creating a process for regularly reviewing and updating programs and services, as well as celebrating successes and recognizing areas for improvement.

By taking these steps, Northwestern State University of Louisiana continues to maximize its strategic planning and assessment activities and ensures it is providing high-quality programs and services to its students and stakeholders.

The awarding of The Excellence in Assessment Designation to Northwestern State University of Louisiana demonstrates that the University has a strong commitment to assessment and has implemented effective assessment practices to improve student learning and program outcomes.

The Excellence in Assessment (EIA) Designation is awarded by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) to institutions that have successfully implemented comprehensive, institution-wide assessment practices. The designation recognizes institutions that have demonstrated excellence in the design and implementation of assessment processes and have used assessment data to improve student learning and program outcomes.

The fact that Northwestern State University of Louisiana has received this designation indicates that the University has established a culture of assessment, with a focus on continuous improvement. It shows that the University is committed to using data to inform decision-making and to making improvements to programs and services to better meet the needs of its students.

Overall, the awarding of The Excellence in Assessment Designation to Northwestern State University of Louisiana is a testament to the University's commitment to excellence and its dedication to ensuring that its students receive a high-quality education of value.



## Strategic Focus Area 2–Academic Excellence

The Academic Excellence (AE) strategic focus area made substantive progress towards meeting AC 2023-2024 targets in four (4) of the five (5) metrics measured in this cycle. Results in those four (4) metrics continue to show strength of improvement, and the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) shows positive trends. It is most encouraging to see the focus on incorporating new technologies across all academic areas, upgrading of technology infrastructure that results in state-of-the-art facilities and programming for students, and faculty engagement in professional development opportunities. In addition, it is encouraging to see the average class size in University Core classes trend downward, which directly correlates with improved student success in these classes.

As we enter AC 2024-2025 with mature processes in place, the University must identify and leverage the correct metrics to drive improvement, continue to support and elevate Academic portfolios by introducing new workforce-required programs, seek collaborative grant opportunities, and develop flexible ways students access programs and engage in scholarly dialogue and presentation. The mechanics of doing so are below (Table 6).

Table 6  
*Metrics for Academic Excellence*

AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
	86/103 (100% of eligible programs)		Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes to help drive effective and innovative instruction	100% Degree and Certificate Programs
N > 96		N > 102	<i>Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching</i>	35-50
	4.30/5 (C) 4.39/5 (I) (36% response rate)		Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness)	4.5/5.0 (90%) (35.2% response rate)
28.26		27.63	<i>Average class size in University core courses</i>	28
	4.23/5 (C) 4.30/5 (I) (36% response rate)		Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses	4.5/5.0 (90%) (42% response rate)
17/17	16/17		Number of University core classes with a designated course steward	99% of multi-section courses
	270 44 Prof. Conf. presentations		Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty	400 80 Prof. Conf. Presenters
	115 (44 G; 71 UG) Prof. Conf. Presentations 50 NSU Research Day		Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting	154 (20% increase)

Table 6 (cont.)  
Metrics for Academic Excellence

AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
GRE Verbal: M = 146 (28%) GRE Quan. M = 142 (11%) LSAT: M = 144 (22%) MCAT: M = 495 (33%)		GRE Verbal: M = 150 (41%) GRE Quan. M = 147 (24%) LSAT: M = 148 (32%) MCAT: M = 492 (25%)	<i>Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT)</i>	90% to score 280 GRE; Increase the # of students scoring above national median for LSAT & MCAT by one/year
	4.58/5 4.57/5 4.66/5		Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., encouraged interactions between faculty and students; gave prompt feedback; and displayed an appropriate demeanor)	Improve scores in courses below 4.5/5.0
N > 185	N > 200		Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together	200+
		27 Faculty grants 69 Eps/Chairs 33 ULS attendees	<i>Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.</i>	45 Faculty Grants 70 EPs/Chairs
1.5% (N=5)	8% (N = 26)		Number of faculty/staff receiving external grants	10% faculty (32 PIs)
1,304	1,452		Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including <i>Lunch and Learn</i>	1,600+
		74	<i>Number of rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies</i>	42
128 press releases	132 press releases		Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service	200+

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2020-2021 are reflected on the far left with AC 2022-2023 to the right and AC 2023-2024 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2023-2024. Black standard text was assessed in 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Note 2: AC 2021-2022 was a year of reflection therefore no Annual Report was generated.

Five objectives support Academic Excellence.

### Objective 1:

**Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.**

Strategies:

- Foster the assessment of expected outcomes for the improvement of instruction
- Provide online and face-to-face instruction on technology/techniques that will improve the educational experience of our students and professional development of our faculty
- Create a program of faculty-led workshops for tutors in key areas (English, Mathematics, Sciences) to better equip peer tutors to meet the needs and expectations of our students

- Use student fee accounts for upgrading consumable classroom and laboratory equipment and supplies
- Develop a plan for online and off-campus students so these students have the same level of academic support and access to tutoring as our main campus students
- Ensure that faculty and staff are well-informed about the services offered by the Academic Success Center so they may direct students who would benefit from these opportunities for academic support
- Provide stipends for faculty to design new or to re-design established courses that focus on integrating technology with content to improve student learning

#### Metrics:

1. Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction.
2. *Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.*
3. Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).

#### Metric:

1. **Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction.**

#### Findings:

During Assessment Cycle 2022-2023, 100% (86/86) of academic degree and certificate programs completed the annual assessment or reviewed their assessments plans: this includes two newer programs that first reached an appropriate size or age to be assessed. The remaining 17 programs, some just recently approved by the Board of Regents and the others experiencing low enrollment, created or updated their assessment plan; this category increased by six since AC 2019-2020. AC 2022-2023 assessment results reflect a maturing of the assessment process seeking to improve student learning.

#### Analysis:

Northwestern identifies student learning outcomes for all degree and certificate educational programs. It assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results moving forward. This validation of mission accomplishment is a testament to the tremendous work of the entire University community and reflects a sincere commitment to excellence.

On June 16, 2023, the University completed the sixth cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and its core competencies as part of *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2022-2023*. Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation allows Northwestern to maximize its strategic decisions leading to institutional improvement. The assessment includes all six strategic focus areas: Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, Athletic Prominence, and newly integrated Cultural Competence.

The 86 academic degree programs assessed in 2022-2023 generated 318 SLOs, and 537 measures, averaging almost two (1.69) measures per SLO. Of the 318 SLO's, 82% were met. Of the 537 measures, 76% were met. The change rate was 9%, 4% positive and 5% negative. Five programs failed to meet the majority of their SLOs, two programs met 50% of their SLOs.

#### Decision:

Program faculty will compare current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the upcoming year (2023-2024). The most significant findings and decisions, including evidence of

improvement (actual changes), assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the initiation of new assessment plans will be integrated into pedagogy, experiential learning experiences, curriculum development, and course review or adoption—all designed to improve our programs and student learning.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and degree program coordinators.

**Metric**

**2. Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.**

**Findings:**

Each college reported multiple courses taught in Fall 2023 or Spring 2024 using current technologies or best practices (Table 7). This list is not exhaustive; however 102 courses are documented.

Table 7  
Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices, by College

College of Arts and Sciences	
ART 2160, 3560, 3960, 4560, 4960	Adobe Creative Suite, Manual and software application of design principles in project-based curriculum aimed at <b>print-based</b> media.
ART 3410, 3810, 4610-New Media I, II, III, & IV	Adobe Creative Suite, Manual and software application of design principles in project-based curriculum aimed at <b>kinetic-based</b> media.
ART 4980-Prof. Practice	Assembling resume, artist statement, personal identity system, exhibition proposal in preparation for senior exhibition and professional practice
COMM 2400 Audio Production COMM 2440, 3480, 4420-Basic. & adv. Video Prod. & Digital Video Prod COMM 2530-Visual Communication COMM 3000 Student Media Practice & Mgt. COMM 3260 Social Media Mgt	Uses Adobe software to help students develop applicable industry-relevant skills using a variety of technologies (e.g., audio, video, photography, social media). NSU’s license for Adobe Creative Suite is updated continuously, so our students are always using the most recent version available
COMM 4230 Digital Magazine Production	Uses video equipment, Adobe software, online magazine formats that incorporate all digital skills. Updated 2022-2023.
BIOL 2030/31- GEOG 2030/31 Intro. to Geographic Information Systems	Uses industry standard GIS software for the course and lab.
School of Social Sciences: RSST 2010 Intro to RSST, RSST 3010 Remote Systems Operations Law and Policy	Terrestrial, aerial, and aquatic remote systems (RSST certificate program). The latest laws and policy regarding remote systems operations. (Preparation for the FAA 107 Drone Pilot licensure test.)
ENGL 4800, 4810 Capstone Courses	Increased focus on applying for graduate/professional schools and professionalization.
SPAN 1010, 1020 Introductory Spanish courses	Updated technology used for audio and video presentations and testing in online courses and, following best practices, increased attention to the study of Hispanic cultures.
IET 1400 Technical Drafting 1	Added FUSION 360, a versatile cloud-based computer aided design and manufacturing software.
IET 4910 Modelinig and Simulation	Introduced Semio software
MUS 4150/5150-Pedagogy	Implementing applied teaching best practices to small groups or individual instruments.
MUED 4110 Elem Music Methods	Music education techniques and technologies focusing on elementary aged students.
MUS 4400- Sound Recording	Intro to basic acoustics; experiments with transverse wave/longitudinal wave, amplitude, frequency, overtone, reflection/diffraction using sound analyzers and frequency generators with recording hardware. Analysis of sound emission for instruments/human voice in various spaces and with various frequencies to select appropriate microphones. Students record recitals/concerts in formal concert spaces. Setup and use of PA systems.
SBIO 1831 & 1851 Honors Biology Lab 1 & 2	Revised to include basic molecular biology techniques, including UGENE software; agent-based modeling in NetLogo.

<b>College of Arts and Sciences (continued)</b>	
SECL 1911 & 1921 Honors Ecology 1 & 2 Lab	Use of iNaturalist to document plant and animal diversity in Dogwood Valley, Grady Erwin Nature Preserve, and Briarwood Nature Preserve.
SMHU 4000-Honors Seminar in Medical Humanities	Capstone course in the emerging cross-disciplinary field of medical humanities; topics vary. (Required for Undergraduate Certificate in Medical Humanities.).
THEA 4270 Special Prob. In Design	Projects in sound design, reinforcement, and recording using dance theatre technologies. Final Cut Pro was used to help teach the students the proper way to create a dance film.
THEA 4430 Lighting Design 1 THEA 4450 Scenic Rendering	Lighting, and scene designs for stage. Use of Auto-Cad Smart-Room Software.
<b>College of Business and Technology</b>	
ACCT 4320/FIN 4320-Data Analytics in Accounting/Finance	Data analytics is an emerging field in both Accounting and Finance
CIS 4910/5810 Emerging Technologies and Human Computer Interaction Design	Students choose technologies to research, including 3-D Displays and Printing, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Drones, Internet of Things, Nanomaterials, Sustainable IS, Blockchain, and other trending topics.
CIS 2980 Database Systems.	Redesigned to increase coverage of topics pertinent to Cyber Security and Networking students.
CIS 3800 Enterprise Operating Systems	Certification for CompTIA Linux+.
CIS 3980 Intro. to Information Security	Updated to support the newest version of the CompTIA Security+ certification
CIS 5820 Mobile Applications Devel.	Students partnered with an alumni owned business to create a mobile application supporting job scheduling.
CIS 5830 Information Assurance	Students created policies and procedures related to cyber security for various industries.
CULA & HMT courses	Service learning incorporated with Columns Café and local opportunities; use of guest speakers and field trips; volunteer experiences at Academy of Country Music Annual Awards and local/statewide events and festivals.
MGT 4280.-SHRM Essentials of Human Resources	The Society for Human Resources Management provides support for Human Resources professionals and students can get certified by SHRM to showcase their skills. New course.
MKTG 3300–Sports and Entertainment Marketing	The sports/entertainment field is a hot topic right now with topics such as NIL changing the landscape of the area.
<b>College of Education and Human Development</b>	
CFS 2500 Classroom Observation in Child Development EDUC 2020 Foundations in Multicultural Ed. ECED 2020 Foundations of Diverse Early Childhood Ed. EPSY 3000 Classroom Assessment LIS 4160 Literature and Related Materials for Children	Use of Atlas, Teacher Tube, and Teaching Channel to virtually observe teaching and planning as well as to provide virtual field experiences in child development and educational psychology. Students observe lessons being taught as well as the interactions between the adults and the children. Students then complete a variety of assignments based on their observations.
ETEC 3010 Technology Integration for P-12 Digital Age Learning	Google Suite for Google Educator Level 1 Certification (Google Docs, Slides, Classroom), Screencastify, WebEx web conference software, Kahoot/Quizizz/Quizlet online assessment tools, Microsoft Teams, NearPod, ClipChamp to create various activities designed for classroom use.
HED 1010 First Aid & CPR	Video Content demonstrating various First Aid & CPR techniques (provided by American Red Cross YouTube Channel)
HP 5160 Legal Issues in Sport and Physical Education	Students listen to podcasts and watch video recordings of livestreamed NCAA meetings and respond to each in discussion board. Also incorporate guest speakers via Zoom/Webex
AS 3010 Addiction Counseling Skills	Case vignettes and counseling videos were added to enhance the experiential learning components of the course.
AS 3020 Dynamics of Group Counseling	Motivational Interviewing videos added to promote higher-order thinking and create an experiential learning environment for Addiction Studies students.

College of Education and Human Development (continued)	
PSYC 4400 Statistics for Psychology	Based on current research, professors developed tutoring videos to enhance students' understanding of abstract statistical concepts. The visualization tool bridged the gap between abstract concepts and practical significance.
PSYC 4500-Psychology of Business & Industry	Assignments mimic activities that Industrial/Organizational Psychologists encounter at work, including Career/Interest Assessments, using Public Relations for Crisis Management, Critical Analysis of Products and Training Programs.
PSYC 5320-Personality Assessment	iPads were added to increase students' learning experience and enhance their skills and understanding of various forms of personality tests. New classroom technology increased student engagement and improved learning related to current industry sources for assessments, professional development, and continuing education.
SOWK 3140 Generalist Practice with Communities and Organizations	Students collaborate with community partners to implement an enrichment activity within their community. Students present their projects to the instructor &
SOWK 4260 Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect SOWK 4270 Child Welfare and the Law	Problem-Based learning. Developed multimodal videos on all materials. Currently under development with the use of an Advisory Team. There is potential to expand the use of Title IVE resources to further enhance this course, including collaboration with the Pelican Center and Sim lab developed with Title IVE funds.
College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	
NURB 3041, 3061	DocuCare aids students learning computerized charting.
NURB 3041 & 3061	DocuCare with scanner aids students to administer medications safely using EBP computerized scanning processes
NURA 1110, 1510, 1080 NURB 3041, 3061	Gastronomy tube feeding pumps, care fusion pumps, new defibrillators are used in lab demonstrations and student hands on learning
RADS 3320,3300, 3830, 4510, 3310, 3820, 4530	Nearpod is a presentation platform where faculty can collaborate with students
RADS 3830	Photoshop to edit xrays for learning
RADS 3810, 3811, 3911, 4510	New Digital radiography lab allow more space and opportunity for hands on learning
RADS 3310, 3830, 3820	Dr.X-ray (lab equipment)
RADS 3310, 3820	Jam Board is a collaboration platform
RadSci Program	Digital Film Library- old x-ray films were digitized to facilitate better presentations
Sonography Program	5 ultrasound machines for hands on learning; 1 cordless probe; ScanTrainer
SONO 4600	OB Phantom mannequin simulates ultrasounding OB patients
SONO 3810, 3900, 4600, 4700	Ultraling (PACS) platform used to security of images
SONO 3910	Padlet website allows for collaborative presentations faculty/students
SONO 3320, 3300	Ken Hub program used to teach anatomy

### Analysis:

As requested by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic administrators submitted courses taught during AC 2023-2024 that newly implemented or updated current technologies or best practices (Table 7). The courses included in the table were screened to apply similar standards across colleges and disciplines and represent a wide variety of updated teaching practices.

Despite narrowing the submissions included, this year's sample of courses was higher than the sample size in AC 2020-2021, during which most courses in the University applied technology in new ways to assist in changes in course delivery due to COVID-19 protocols.

### Decision:

The technologies and best practices highlighted in Table 7 clearly illustrate effective and innovative instruction occurring at Northwestern during the academic year and show that the evolution of course content and delivery is sustained from year to year. The target for AC 2023-2024 remained a sample of 35-50 courses, which was exceeded. We will adjust the target to reflect the upward trajectory in incorporating current technologies and best practices in Academics.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty.

**Metric:**

**3. Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor’s effectiveness).**

**Findings:**

Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 summative results for courses and instructors from the Student Evaluation of Instruction are given in Table 8.

**Analysis:**

Results of student surveys distributed at the end of fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters are consistent with results from fall 2019, but about 0.06 pts lower than spring 2020. The higher results may be attributed to changes in student expectations and faculty effort during the transition to online delivery of all courses in Spring 2020 due to COVID. In any event they indicate one of the potential issues with using Student Evaluation of Instruction as a reliable (i.e., stable, and repeatable) measure.

Nevertheless, evaluations revealed students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard, with over 86% of respondents rating both course and instructor either *Good* or *Superior*.

**Decision:**

Due to the current national attention on issues associated with using the Student Evaluation of Instruction as a measure of course and instructor quality, we will seek an alternative metric for this objective for the next assessment cycle. Likewise, face-to-face dialogue between the Provost and departmental faculty during on-call week revealed some faculty dissatisfaction with the evaluation rubric and questions, and pushed for a more granular approach that allows some customization for a more impactful result, and the ability to play a more proactive role in the evolving of the delivery of instruction. It will be a challenge to figure out how to assess this in this report.

Table 8

*a. Fall 2022 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	166	1.25%
Poor	(2)	332	2.50%
Fair	(3)	1314	9.88%
Good	(4)	5079	38.18%
Superior	(5)	6411	48.20%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.30</b>	0.84	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	163	1.23%
Poor	(2)	320	2.41%
Fair	(3)	1165	8.78%
Good	(4)	4153	31.29%
Superior	(5)	7470	56.29%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.39</b>	0.84	5.00

Table 8 (cont.)

*b. Spring 2023 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	162	1.47%
Poor	(2)	265	2.41%
Fair	(3)	1013	9.22%
Good	(4)	4102	37.32%
Superior	(5)	5450	49.58%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29145 (35.34%)	<b>4.31</b>	0.85	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	165	1.51%
Poor	(2)	258	2.36%
Fair	(3)	875	8.00%
Good	(4)	3489	31.88%
Superior	(5)	6156	56.26%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29145 (35.34%)	<b>4.39</b>	0.85	5

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, and Faculty.

**Objective 2:**

**Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.**

**Strategies:**

- Expand the online resources available through the Academic Success Center to include discipline-specific links to useful websites and resources/tutorials
- Appoint course stewards for each course in the University core curriculum
- Review and strategically monitor the size of classes in the University core curriculum
- Review student satisfaction with instruction in core classes
- Evaluate the measure(s) for each core competency to insure alignment
- Develop a proactive advising system for students not successful in University core classes, beginning with procedures to follow for students not passing the first exam or first major assignment.

**Metrics:**

1. *Average class size in University core courses.*
2. Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses.
3. Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.



**Metric:**

**1. Average class size in University core courses.**

**Findings:**

Since the University teaches multiple Dual Enrollment classes, especially in the core, these sections were removed from the data. In addition, multiple sections taught synchronously via compressed video were combined. The average class size over 43 University core courses in fall 2023 was  $M = 29.41$  ( $SD = 12.44$ ,  $N = 432$ ) and spring 2024 was  $M = 25.68$  ( $SD = 13.68$ ,  $N = 265$ ; Table 9).

**Analysis:**

A strategic goal for Academic Excellence has been to decrease the average size of the University core courses to better achieve our student learning objectives. With the implementation of the redesigned University core curriculum in 2018-2019, the number of courses offered for each baccalaureate curriculum has decreased (51 to 43 courses). Forty-three University core courses were offered in fall 2023 and spring 2024. Fall 2023 courses with the largest enrollment per section included Science 1010 ( $M = 49.29$ ), History 1010 ( $M = 44.60$ ), Psychology 1010 ( $M = 44.00$ ), Geography 1020 ( $M = 43.00$ ), and Geography 1010 ( $M = 40.50$ ). For Spring 2024, the highest enrollments occurred in Science 1010 ( $M = 47.00$ ), Science 1020 ( $M = 44.25$ ), History 1010 ( $M = 42.20$ ), Geography 1010 ( $M = 41.33$ ), and Sociology 1010 ( $M = 40.33$ ). Four core courses averaged 10 or fewer students each semester: Anthropology 2020, English 2070 (offered both semesters), Math 1035, Math 1100, Math 2100, and Math 2110 (offered both semesters); for these courses, average enrollment was  $M = 6.60$  ( $SD = 4.20$ ,  $N = 10$ ).

Table 9

*Average Class Size in University Core Courses, Fall 2023 and Spring 2024*

Course	Fall 2020			Spring 2021		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
ANTH1510	34.60	12.90	5	34.50	10.38	4
ANTH2020	17.50	7.78	2	7.00		1
BIOL1010	23.13	14.52	8	25.67	2.08	3
BIOL2250	35.73	18.85	11	33.29	23.06	7
BIOL2260	28.14	16.07	7	32.33	23.46	9
BUAD2200	24.25	11.35	4	21.60	9.53	5
CHEM1030	32.00	10.54	3	53.00		1
CHEM1040	26		1	22.67	13.32	3
CHEM1070	36.56	22.25	9	29.14	16.49	7
COMM1010	30.13	5.60	15	23.93	10.87	14
COMM2500	26.29	10.64	7	23.60	10.85	5
ECON2000	29.20	10.13	5	28.33	12.80	6
ENGL1010	22.77	5.11	26	14.27	7.63	15
ENGL1020	23.62	5.47	13	21.65	7.40	23
ENGL2070	10.00		1	5		1
ENGL2110	23.20	6.47	25	20.39	7.60	23
EPSY2020	23.25	6.70	4	20.20	9.34	5
FA1040	35.67	11.43	18	29.14	13.40	14
GEOG1010	40.50	7.06	6	41.33	9.14	6
GEOG1020	43		1	26.50	24.75	2
HIST1010	44.60	2.97	5	42.20	4.09	5
HIST1020	33.50	3.54	2	28.50	23.33	2
HIST2010	38.80	15.85	5	39.50	6.86	4
HIST2020	33.67	15.50	3	25.50	13.03	4
MATH1020	27.72	10.28	25	12.29	7.08	17
MATH1035	20.17	2.56	6	33.67	15.50	3
MATH1060	30.19	11.53	16	25.73	9.73	26
MATH1090	33.67	15.50	3	24.50	5.45	4
MATH1100	4		1			
MATH1810	13.00		1			
MATH2010	19.00	7.07	2	19.67	6.03	3
MATH2100	6		1	12		1
MATH2110	3		1	5		1
PHIL1010	25		1	19		1
PHYS2030	37.00	7.07	2			
PSCI2010	25.50	13.03	4	12.00	6.93	3
PSYC1010	43.88	12.99	8	34.50	8.19	8
PSYC2050	32.57	3.46	7	28.50	10.39	8
SCI1010	49.29	13.63	7	32.57	3.46	7
SCI1020	30.29	6.24	7	44.25	10.53	4
SCI2010	35.00	5.35	4	28.50	7.42	4
SCI2020	18.25	6.65	4	22.67	7.51	3
SOC1010	34.50	10.66	4	40.33	6.35	3

Compared to AC 2020-2021, the number of sections of core courses remained the same or dropped in AC 2023-2024. The number of sections increased by one in either fall or spring semester in only three courses: Anthropology 2020, Communications 2500, and Economics 2000. Compared to AC 2020-2021, the mean class size in University core courses was not significantly different from AC 2020-2021 in either fall or spring semester; approximately one-third of courses had averages higher than the previous cycle by at least one. As the number of sections drop it becomes more difficult to target specific class sizes.

**Decision:**

NSU is pleased to report an average class size of 27.62 in University core courses. Each semester the number of sections, class size, and student success rates is assessed by Dept. Heads, School, Directors, Academic Deans, Course Stewards, and the Provost/VPAA, along with the General Education Committee to evaluate cost efficiency and instructional quality across all baccalaureate programs. Committee members should continue to evaluate to determine whether core courses should have a minimum enrollment per semester or year, and if the course is meeting general education requirements. The current target will remain a mean of 28 in University core courses, as a result of the recommendation provided in this section.

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans/Directors/Department Heads, and Institutional Research.

**Metric:**

**2. Mean student evaluation of instruction for core courses (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor’s effectiveness).**

**Findings:**

Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 summative results for courses and instructors from the Student Evaluation of Instruction are given in Table 10.

Table 10

*a. Fall 2022 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor in Core Courses*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	61	1.62%
Poor	(2)	120	3.18%
Fair	(3)	443	11.74%
Good	(4)	1501	33.79%
Superior	(5)	1647	43.66%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
3857/10626 (36.30%)	<b>4.21</b>	0.89	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	69	1.83%
Poor	(2)	118	3.12%
Fair	(3)	426	11.27%
Good	(4)	1271	33.62%
Superior	(5)	1896	50.16%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
3857/10626 (36.30%)	<b>4.27</b>	0.91	4

Table 10 (cont.)

*b. Spring 2023 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor in Core Courses*

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	35	1.15%
Poor	(2)	72	2.38%
Fair	(3)	331	10.92%
Good	(4)	1239	40.88%
Superior	(5)	1354	44.67%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
3092/8654 (35.72%)	<b>4.26</b>	0.83	4.00
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	31	1.03%
Poor	(2)	63	2.09%
Fair	(3)	297	9.85%
Good	(4)	1094	36.27%
Superior	(5)	1531	50.76%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
3092/8654 (35.72%)	<b>4.34</b>	0.82	5.00

**Analysis:**

Results of student surveys, distributed at the end of fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters, revealed students hold Northwestern core courses and instructors in high regard. The response rates have been consistent, although they did drop under 40 % after being at 43% in 2018-2019. The number of students rating courses and instructors as ‘Good’ or ‘Superior’ is strong.

**Decision:**

Nearly 85% of students rated core courses/instructors as superior or good. We reached our target in 2021-2022, and with continued professional development of faculty and students, we will maintain our target in course/instructor effectiveness moving forward. We will continue to encourage students to participate in course/instructor evaluations and raise the overall response rate to 45% by 2024. Likewise, Academic Affairs will work collaboratively with the Student Experience to more proactively engage with students in what their expectations are for instruction and instructors. We will work together to make continuous improvement.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, and Faculty.

**Metric:**

**3. Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.**

**Findings:**

Sixteen University core courses had a designated course steward in AC 2022-2023 (Table 11).

**Analysis:**

Based on recommendations from 2017-2018, the University’s course steward plan was revised to give priority to core courses with multiple sections and large student enrollment (400+ students). In fall 2018, 11 such courses

Table 11

*Course Stewards for AC 2020-2021*

Course #/Title	Course Steward
COMM 1010—Oral Communication	Emily Zering
COMM 2500—Interpersonal Communication	Dorian Eaton
ENGL 1010/1011—Composition & Rhetoric I/Enrichment	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 1010—Composition & Rhetoric I	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 1020—Composition & Rhetoric II	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 2110—Introduction to Literature	Dr. Lilly Berberyan
FA 1040—Introduction to Fine Arts	Dr. John Dunn
MATH 1020—College Algebra	Ms. Carrie Maggio
PSYC 1010—General Psychology	Ms. Holley Shivers
PSYC 2050—Developmental Psychology	Ms. Shannon Wall-Hale
SCI 1010—Basic Concepts Physical Science	Dr. Duminda Samarakoon
CHEM 1070—Fundamentals of Chemistry for Nursing and Allied Health Majors	Vacant
BIOL 2250—Anatomy and Physiology I For Nursing and Allied Health Majors	Dr. Jerry Brunson
NUTR 1030—Human Nutrition	Mrs. Catherine Bass (all fall under one course steward contract)
NUTR 1050—Child Nutrition	
NUTR 1070—Nutrition for Children and Families	
EPSY 2020—Introduction to child and adolescent psychology	Dr. Greg Bouck

were identified, including Biology 2250; Chemistry 1070; Communication 1010; English 1010, 1020, 2110; Geography 1010; Psychology 1010, 2050; Fine Arts 1040; and Science 1010. Only one course, CHEM 1070, did not have a course steward for AC 2022-2023; in that instance, the Director of the School of Biological and Physical Sciences acted as the course steward.

Course stewards are named to ensure course goals/objectives/key assessments are the same across all course sections offered and to ensure that instructors are engaging with students and responsive in meeting their learning needs. In 2018-2019, we were unable to find course stewards for several courses due to faculty shortages and overloads in departments. The situation improved for 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 (Table 11), and we provided course stewards for 17 courses with the addition of several crucial stewards (SCI 1010 and the ENGL 1010/1011 co-requisite). Course stewards were given an extra services contract and were expected to complete an effort schedule to show their level of stewardship. The use of course stewards has remained consistent, leading to improved integrity and rigor in our General Education core. Oversight for consistency in teaching, as well as SLO measures has been centralized to the course steward and has resulted in improved consistency and outcomes across all classes with a designated course steward.

**Decision:**

The General Education Committee should review data findings from 2022-2023 and recommend any changes or upgrades to the course steward process. If there are better or additional solutions for better meeting the purpose and goals of metric three, objective two, they should be considered, and changes made accordingly. The consensus has been that the course steward system is working very well.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

### Objective 3:

#### Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.

##### Strategies:

- Establish a workshop series to prepare students for graduate/professional school admission exams.
- Support student and mentor travel to present research at professional conferences.
- Offer workshops on test-taking skills, tips on the application process, and interview preparation.
- Offer discipline-specific courses focused on student transition from undergraduate to graduate/professional school.

##### Metrics:

1. Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.
2. Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.
3. ***Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (GRE, LSAT, MCAT).***

##### Metric:

1. **Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.**

##### Findings:

Graduate students presented 8 papers and posters at four conferences. Thirty-three graduate students were accepted to deliver 12 presentations at NSU Research Day and three presented service-learning outcomes for a project in Nepal at the ULS Academic Summit.

The number of graduate research products required for graduation (summer 2022-spring 2023) included: graduate theses ( $N=19$ ), field studies ( $N=3$ ), performance documents ( $N=4$ ), scholarly projects ( $N=13$ ), creative research projects ( $N=7$ ), and Papers-in Lieu of Thesis ( $N=224$ ).

Approximately 23.5% of Northwestern's full-time faculty were engaged in directing or assessing the capstone research of graduate students. This is an increase from the previous assessment cycle.

##### Analysis:

The Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice Conference is held during the spring of even-numbered years, typically resulting in lower numbers of presentations in odd numbered years.

This year, overall, the number of graduate students engaging in research and scholarly activities remains comparable to AC 2019-2020, despite changes in the way conferences are conducted. As more and more conferences transition from virtual to face-to-face or hybrid platforms, the monetary and time costs of participating in conferences may once again become a hurdle for increasing participation.

##### Decision:

The target for 2021 will remain at 80 graduate presenters at professional conferences and 29 presentations. To facilitate mastery of this goal, faculty across all graduate programs will mentor their students by recommending professional conferences to attend and will encourage them to submit their student research for consideration. Additionally, to obtain a yearly increase in the number of graduate presentations,

Northwestern will partially fund (e.g., registration or travel) graduate students whose proposals are accepted to a national, regional, or state professional conference. Faculty mentors will have internal funding opportunities, such as endowed professorships or faculty grants, to support their scholarship.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Faculty Grants Chair, Research Council Chair, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty

**Metric:**

**2. Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.**

**Findings:**

Seventy-seven students (66 undergraduates, 11 graduates) were accepted to present papers and posters at professional meetings this year. NSU Research Day included 12 presentations by 33 graduate students and 11 presentations by 17 undergraduate students. Student presenters and faculty mentors represented all four colleges.

**Analysis:**

The number of undergraduate students making conference presentations was lower than the number accepted to present in AC 2019-2020. Northwestern undergraduates presented at 8 other conferences, including the Spring 2023 Meeting of the American Chemical Society. All undergraduates attended conferences either virtually or with one or more faculty mentors.

Research Day provides a venue for students to present thesis research and research projects in progress that may not be ready to present at a conference. In AC 2022-2023, Research Day was held one week prior to the University of Louisiana Academic Summit, which Northwestern hosted, and two weeks prior to the end of Spring semester classes. This was our first face-to-face event after cancelling Research Day and the ULS Summit in 2020 due to the pandemic and holding both conferences virtually in the following two years. Higher than usual participation by Northwestern undergraduates in the Academic Summit may have reduced the number of participants available for Research Day.

**Decision:**

Northwestern will continue to emphasize the importance of graduate and undergraduate research/scholarship by providing partial or full funding to conduct research or to travel to professional meetings to present research findings.

Although most presentations are made in person, we will continue to offer the ability to present at Research Day via WebEx so distance learning students and students and faculty attending classes at our off-campus instructional sites can more easily view presentations and present posters and talks virtually.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Faculty Grants Chair, Research Council Chair, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

**Metric:**

**3. Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT).**

**Findings:**

Test scores on graduate or professional school exams were verified for 79 undergraduates, graduating seniors, and recent graduates. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)

were assessed for students graduating May 2023 or later taking tests administered during the period June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024. Because students applying to medical school often take a gap year, scores on the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) were assessed for students graduating in 2022 or later. Annually, the largest number of students take the GRE (Verbal:  $149.9 \pm 2.522$ , Quantitative:  $147.0 \pm 3.128$ ,  $N = 24$ )

From June 1, 2023-May 31, 2024, 18 current students and graduates completing their degree in May 2023 or later took the LSAT at least once. The average score was 147.4 ( $SD = 6.58$ ), while the average percentile rating was 32.8% ( $SD = 19.7\%$ ). The percentile ranking of the average score is 28.5%. LSAT scores ranged from 134 to 158.

Between June 1, 2022 and May 31, 2024, 37 continuing students, graduating seniors, and graduates from 2022 or later took the MCAT (95% confidence interval--Total:  $492.5 \pm 2.67$ , CBPS:  $122.2 \pm 0.78$ , CARS:  $123.6 \pm 0.76$ , BBFL:  $123.0 \pm 0.83$ , and PSBB:  $123.7 \pm 0.83$ ,  $N = 37$ ).

### Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, 10 (42%) of those completing the GRE scored above the national median on the verbal component, while two (8.3%) scored above the median on the quantitative reasoning component, both numerically higher but statistically comparable to AC 2020-2021 ( $p = .125$  and  $.127$ , respectively). Northwestern's Graduate School requires a composite score (V + Q) of at least 280; 22 (92%) attained this benchmark, a significantly larger proportion than in AC 2020-2021 ( $p = .029$ ).

LSAT scores range from 120-180; the national median over the last three years increased to 153. With this change, only three of this year's test-takers (17%) scored above the median, with an additional student scoring 153. Although numerically higher, the average score did not increase significantly ( $p = .092$ ); One fewer student (3) scored above the median compared to last year, so the target was not met. However, the admissions outcomes for NSU students applying to law school continue to improve. In the 2022 application year, 19 students recently completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to law school. Eighteen (94.7%) were accepted by one or more schools, a significant increase above the previous assessment ( $p = .013$ ). All 18 (100%) matriculated to a law school in fall 2023, four more than in 2021.

The majority of the MCAT scores and sub-scores were below the national median. Although numerically the average scores were slightly below those for AC 2020-2021, only the CARS subscore dropped significantly ( $p = .018$ ). Nevertheless, the best performance was on the CARS sub-score where 14 (38%) scored above the national median. Overall, eight (22%) scored above median, a percentage comparable to AC 2020-2021; the highest score dropped from the 96<sup>th</sup> to the 67<sup>th</sup> percentile. In the 2023 application year, 11 students completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to medical school. Three of these (27%) were accepted by at least one medical school, including two early admissions to LSUHSC-Shreveport. This is not significantly different from the national average acceptance rate.

### Decision:

The 2024 target for GRE test takers this year was attained. More than 90% earned verbal and quantitative scores acceptable for admission into graduate schools. In subsequent evaluation periods, the target for GRE scores will remain at least 90% of test takers to score at or above the level of 280, combined verbal and quantitative.

On the LSAT, the number scoring above the national median dropped from four to three, in part because the median score has increased. The target for subsequent evaluation cycles will be to raise the number of students scoring above the national median by one each year. Acceptance data for the current cohort lags one year behind the application data.

Curricular and advising changes were made five years ago by the two academic units advising pre-medical students, but due to some students delaying their applications until the year after graduation, these changes may not be fully reflected in the performance of medical school applicants yet. (The 2021 cohort is the first to complete the new curriculum.) The target for subsequent evaluation periods is to raise the number of students scoring above the national median on the total score for the MCAT (*Median* = 500) by one each year.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Graduate School, Institutional Research, and Deans/Department Heads/Directors.

## Objective 4:

### Foster quality student-faculty interactions.

#### Strategies:

- Create and utilize program-specific advising packets to improve/streamline the advising process
- Establish a Meet the Faculty program
- Identify successful/meaningful student-faculty interactions
- Provide transportation or other funds for faculty and students who take educational trips or engage in experiential learning activities
- Reward faculty who serve as recognized student organization sponsors
- Create a space for faculty/staff and students to meet in informal gatherings and engage in conversations about educational and social topics
- Create and promote opportunities for faculty to interact with students and their families such as academic recognition ceremonies or extracurricular activities

#### Metrics:

1. Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).
2. Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together.

#### Metric:

1. **Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).**

#### Findings:

Just over a third of student enrollments rated their instructors in the fall 2022 (Table 12) and Spring 2023 (Table 13) Student Evaluation of Instruction. University-wide, the response rate for student evaluation of instruction for fall was 36.18% and 35.34% for spring.

#### Analysis:

Student evaluations for fall 2022 and spring 2023 indicate superior student-faculty interactions. Response rates and frequencies of responses appear relatively stable compared to the most recent results in AC 2019-2020 and exceed the target values. Overall, 72.87% of students indicated



Table 12  
*Fall 2022 Student Evaluation of Instruction*

<b>My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.</b>			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	367	2.75%
Occasionally	(2)	365	2.73%
Sometimes	(3)	655	4.90%
Usually	(4)	1392	10.42%
Always	(5)	9724	72.79%
Not Applicable	(0)	856	6.41%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12,170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.58</b>	0.94	5.00
<b>My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.</b>			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	333	2.50%
Occasionally	(2)	456	3.42%
Sometimes	(3)	616	4.62%
Usually	(4)	1524	11.43%
Always	(5)	9960	74.69%
Not Applicable	(0)	447	3.35%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12,170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.58</b>	0.93	5.00
<b>My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.</b>			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	286	2.16%
Occasionally	(2)	309	2.34%
Sometimes	(3)	488	3.69%
Usually	(4)	1154	8.72%
Always	(5)	10056	75.99%
Not Applicable	(0)	940	7.10%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
12,170/33635 (36.18%)	<b>4.65</b>	0.86	5.00

Northwestern teachers *always* encourage interaction between faculty and students; 10.53% stated their teachers *usually* encourage interaction. The mean for both semesters was 4.58/5.

For the criterion, *my teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments*, 74.33% responded *always* and 11.75% answered *usually*. The mean for both semesters was 4.57/5.

Seventy-six percent of students believed their teachers *always* displayed an appropriate demeanor both inside and outside the learning environment; 9.02% stated their teachers *usually* displayed an appropriate demeanor. Overall, the mean for this criterion was 4.66/5.

**Decision:**

The results from this metric remain robust, both between successive semesters and from year to year. Due to the current national attention on issues associated with using the Student Evaluation of Instruction as a measure of course and instructor quality, in the next assessment cycle we will either seek an alternative metric for this objective or focus on a different criterion.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty, and Institutional Research.

Table 13  
 Spring 2023 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	282	2.56%
Occasionally	(2)	317	2.87%
Sometimes	(3)	515	4.67%
Usually	(4)	1175	10.65%
Always	(5)	8049	72.97%
Not Applicable	(0)	692	6.27%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29,145(35.34%)	4.59	0.92	5.00
My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	296	2.10%
Occasionally	(2)	422	2.99%
Sometimes	(3)	660	4.68%
Usually	(4)	1650	11.70%
Always	(5)	10724	76.02%
Not Applicable	(0)	355	2.52%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29,145(35.34%)	4.56	0.95	5.00
My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	231	2.11%
Occasionally	(2)	235	2.15%
Sometimes	(3)	352	3.22%
Usually	(4)	1024	9.37%
Always	(5)	8348	76.40%
Not Applicable	(0)	736	6.74%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>Median</b>
10300/29,145(35.34%)	4.67	0.84	5.00

**Metric:**

**2. Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together.**

**Findings:**

Faculty, students, and (many times) family members of students participated in more than 200 events during AC 2022-2023. This compares to an average of 152 events documented in 2017-2020, and 93 events during the baseline year. The Covid-19 pandemic caused a significant dip in events, and there has been a steady uptick since we returned to campus full-time for face-to-face classes and activities. While it would be too haphazard to list all events, the following is a sampling across all disciplines that shows innovative practices:

- **The Walter Porter Experience** is a comprehensive and immersive three-day event that expands upon the traditional Walter Porter Forum. By integrating industry leader engagements, tailored activities for CoBT students, a business etiquette luncheon to include students from all disciplines, a field experience in business, and networking opportunities, this experience provides students with a well-rounded awareness of career after college. This experience will grow to include more internal and external stakeholders.
- Another enhancement of a new activity was our participation in the **Pelican Cup**. The fall of 2022 initiated our 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Inferno Pitch dynamic business plan competition. Student teams competed showcasing their entrepreneurial and business planning skills. The top 5 teams were announced and provided the

opportunity to continue onto the University of Louisiana at Monroe's Pelican Cup. NSU's top finisher, Rise and Rotate, took first place at the statewide event. Our student team came away with \$25,000 in support for further development of the product concept as well as business development opportunities.

- **Watson Memorial Library 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**—held on April 24, 2023, University Libraries faculty and staff held a rededication ceremony to honor the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library. Light refreshments were served, with remarks from Donna Baker, Head Archivist, and Dr. Megan Lowe, Director of University Libraries.
- **The Veterinary Technology Department** had a lunch and learn that fits the first category on October 12, 2022. Shelly Morris with National Veterinary Associates (NVA) visited NSU and presented a lunch and learn Continuing Education program on the "Top 10 Veterinary Emergencies" that involved our faculty, staff, and students. This was also a career recruiting event for our students as they are a corporate veterinary group that have associated practices throughout the US that are interested in hiring Registered Veterinary Technicians.
- Student Appreciation Day was originally hosted in the **School of Education**, but this year grew into a college-wide event with every department and school participating in conjunction with the **GCEHD Honors Convocation**.
- Ten **NSU Saxophonists** attended the Biennial NASA Conference held at USM in March. Eight of the students were invited to perform at the conference, Whatever the Case May Be—Derek Brown.
- **CAPA On the Cane**
- **Demon Challenge—NSU's Demon Battalion** hosted an all-day, 10-event competition for JROTC programs across Louisiana. Nineteen teams tackled a series of physical and leadership-based tasks designed to build relationships between schools and inspire Cadet excellence. NSU's Cadets served as instructors and graders.
- **Freshman Connection Sessions** held summer 2022 to register freshman for fall classes, make connections between students and their families and University faculty/staff, and acquaint them with the NSU campus and services; six separate events occurred.
- **McCutcheon Honors Recital**: Each year the recital participants are chosen by the applied faculty in their respective areas as the most outstanding based on their fall juries, January 2022.

#### Analysis:

Adhering to the recommendation from the baseline year, academic units in 2022-2023 kept better records of events hosted for faculty, students, and families. As a result, events documented by colleges or departments/schools increased 80% during 2022-2023. These events serve an important purpose for faculty and students interacting with one another in both social and academic settings.

#### Decision:

This measure contributes to the purpose of objective four. During AC 2019-2020 and AC 2020-2021, academic units improved their record-keeping, and will continue to do so. The target of 180 events was met in 2021 and was exceeded in 2022. It will be important to continue to capture events and promote them using social media. Academic Departments are playing a more active and evolved role in the Freshman Connection sessions, as well as during events and programming offered by the Student Experience. We will need to capture that data for the next reporting period.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, Director of Marketing, and NSU Press.

## Objective 5:

### Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.

#### Strategies:

- Survey faculty to determine needs in teaching, research, and service.
- Establish policies for internal research and travel funding opportunities.
- Participation (directly/indirectly) in the strategic budgeting process.
- Promote the goals/activities/outcomes of The Center for Faculty Excellence in Research and Teaching.
- Develop methods for establishing faculty workload policies.
- Ensure that faculty across the University are equitably compensated for their rank, expertise, and service to the University, profession, and/or community.
- Inform faculty of University endowed professorship policies and encourage their participation in the application process.
- Recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, and service.
- Ensure that all classroom/laboratory technologies are functional and updated and that faculty are trained on their usage.

#### Metrics:

1. *Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.*
2. Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.
3. Number of faculty/staff attending University, department, or college-sponsored professional development workshops including *Lunch and Learn*.
4. *Number of rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies.*
5. Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service.

#### Metric:

1. *Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.*

#### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024, 27 faculty were awarded research or travel grants by the Office of Academic Affairs. A total of \$25,358.56 was awarded, an average of \$939.21 per awardee.

The Office of Academic Affairs supported registration and travel expenses to Ruston, LA, April 11-12 for undergraduate student presenters and faculty mentors to attend the ULS Academic Summit, a system-wide conference showcasing undergraduate research, service-learning activities, and fine and performing arts. Thirty-five student authors were slated to present 10 undergraduate research projects and 4 service-learning projects; 2 students were selected to perform in the performing arts showcase; and 5 students had pieces selected for the visual arts showcase. Seven faculty mentors attended at a cost of \$627.00. Additionally, Academic Affairs supported 26 faculty and nine staff and administrators to attend the *ULS For Our Future Conference*, in New Orleans, February 25-27. Registration fees and travel expenses for the NSU attendees were \$15,029.13.

Sixty-six faculty received endowed professorships, and three faculty were endowed chair recipients. The 69 honorees were provided \$675,088. to support their professional development during the year.

The Strategic planning and budgeting process was not used to support faculty initiatives this year, due to a lack of discretionary funds.

#### Analysis:

Faculty development grants have rebounded from the difficulties encountered during AC 2019-2020 and AC 2020-2021. Conferences have returned and are once again held in mostly face-to-face formats; the concomitant increase in conference expenses have increased the importance of these grants.

Expenditures for the two ULS conferences vary from year to year because they are hosted by system members on rotation. This year costs associated with the Academic Summit were low, since Ruston is a short drive away (under two hours) and most participants chose to attend on a single day, avoiding housing costs. On the other hand, New Orleans is distant (over four hours), and hotel rates are high.

Ten new professorships have been endowed since 2018; since the last time this metric was reported (AC 2018-2019), the number of faculty awarded endowed professorships has gradually increased from 57 to 69 (21%). In most accounts excess earnings and unused funds have been spent down; in this assessment cycle, approximately \$9,873 was available per professorship for faculty use.

#### Decision:

Monies dedicated to support faculty in their research and professional development play an important role and should be continued during AC 2024-2025. For faculty without support from their departments or from a professorship, even a modest grant (less than \$1,000) can be significant.

Supporting participation in the ULS Academic Summit and in the ULS For Our Future Conference ensures that the University will be well-represented at these multidisciplinary conferences. Therefore, monies budgeted for System-wide events should be adjusted each year to cover fluctuations in expenses as the conferences rotate.

Endowed professor recipients will be encouraged to mentor new faculty, including adjuncts, during AC 2024-2025 by financially assisting them in professional development activities. Examples include using endowment funds to pay a new or adjunct faculty member's expenses for participating in a professional meeting where their research findings are co-presented; or inviting a nationally recognized content expert to campus to inform or update faculty knowledge and skills.

**Responsibility:** NSU Foundation, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

#### Metric:

### 2. Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.

#### Findings:

In AC 2022-2023, 254 proposals were submitted, and 40 new grants from 18 PIs were funded for a total of **\$10,855,627.46** (Table 14). The largest grants went to the Child and Family Network, NCPTT, and the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. An additional **\$5,136,750.32** was brought to the University by continuations of multiyear grants first awarded in previous years to eight additional PIs not represented in the new awards (Table15). Thus, total grant income in AC 2022-2023 was **\$15,997,377.78**.

**Analysis:**

Compared to AC 2020-2021, the number of NSU employees initially receiving grants from external agencies increased from 4 to 18 and the number of new grants funded doubled. This year’s grant total represents a 79% increase from AC 2020-2021. However, the average amount per grant (\$445,895 in AC 2020-2023 versus \$296,155 in AC 2022-2023) declined, in large part due to greater participation by individual faculty members and a return of the Louisiana Folk Festival and the Louisiana Studies Conference, which are typically funded by multiple smaller grants. The Child and Family Network continues to be an impactful program that garners tremendous grant support; in AC 2022-2023 they accounted for 83% of grant funds received.

**Table 14**  
*Newly funded grants in 2022-2023*

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program-Amendment 3	2,023,858.80
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program-Amendment 6	2,000,000.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program-Amendment 5	1,899,750.12
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Child Care Resource and Referral for Region 8 and Part of Region 7	741,165.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Statewide Early Learning and Career Development Program	367,873.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Additional Funds for Outdoor Learning Enhancement Opportunities	168,399.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	State Matching Funds for Child Care Tuition	51,000.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	2022 Believe! Funding for Expanding Early Childhood Network for Bienville Parish (combined with K. Duncan's)	22,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Community Supply Building and Access Expansion Grant	600,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Birth to Three Seats 2022 for Bossier Parish	503,445.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	2022 Believe! Funding for Expanding Early Childhood Network for Bossier Parish	375,250.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start Cohort 4 for 2022	100,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	2022 Community Supply Building and Access Expansion Grant	100,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Bossier Lead Agency for Early Childhood	81,900.00
Brunson, Michelle	College of Education and Human Development	Supporting the Cradle to College Pipeline through Early Literacy	4,000.00
DeBose, Myra Michelle	College of Nursing	TAKE on HIV	7,000.00
Hicks, Joel	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Expanding Hybrid Education Models for Nontraditional Nursing Students to Impact Louisiana Workforce–Year 1	360,000.00
Hicks, Joel	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	CHRISTUS–NSU MOU for Undergraduate Nursing Faculty Support -Year 1 of 2	72,000.00
Hicks, Joel	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	CHRISTUS–NSU MOU for Undergraduate Radiology Faculty Support–Year 1 of 2	65,000.00
Pearce, Leah	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Increasing the BSN Workforce in Alexandria by Expanding Clinical Admissions–Year 1 of 4	102,800.00
Peacock, Kent	Creole Heritage Center	Creole Heritage Center at NSU	10,000.00
Longlois, Julie	EDIO/Carl D. Perkins Program	Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Perkins V Basic Grant	50,149.33
Longlois, Julie	EDIO/Carl D. Perkins Program	The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) Basic Carryover Funds	8,619.82

Table 14 (cont.)

*Newly funded grants in 2022-2023*

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2023 Natchitoches–NSU Folk Festival	11,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	42nd Annual Natchitoches–NSU Folk Festival	8,742.50
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2023 Natchitoches–NSU Folk Festival	8,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2023 Natchitoches–NSU Folk Festival	7,500.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	43rd Annual Natchitoches–NSU Folk Festival	3,500.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	43rd Annual Natchitoches–NSU Folk Festival	3,360.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	43rd Annual Natchitoches–NSU Folk Festival	2,500.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	12th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference	1,065.00
Ammons, Kevin	NCPTT	Partnering for Preservation 2020 Modification 1	450,051.99
Ferrell, Andrew	NCPTT	Tenant Cabin Documentation	259,424.40
Gruesbeck, Steven	Office of Service Learning	Healthcare Academic and Career Exploration (A.C.E.)– Year 1 of 5	251,940.50
King, Charles	Psychology and Addiction Studies	South Southwest Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network Grant	28,200.00
Cox, J.D.	School of Biological and Physical Sciences	Natchitoches Soil and Water Conservation District and NSU Feral Swine Satellite Telemetry	50,000.00
Dugas, Anna	School of Biological and Physical Sciences	DemonSats-4: Continued Student Payload Design Program at NSULA	11,058.00
Penrod, Curtis	School of Business	Central LA Cybersecurity Talent Enhancement Program	40,125.00
Gregory, Hiram F.	School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs	Williamson Museum THPO's Initial Meeting	3,400.00
Kelly, Jennifer	University Affairs/NCPTT	Isabella's Ghost	1,550.00
<b>NEW GRANTS: TOTAL 2022-2023</b>			<b>\$ 10,855,627</b>

*\*Awarded but awaiting fully executed agreement*

**Decision:**

Due to the increase in the number of new NSU grant recipients and the fact that more faculty and staff are applying for external grant funding, it was recommended for Northwestern to dedicate at least one full-time person to grant writing or to provide release time for one faculty member in each College for discipline specific grant writing. Northwestern hired a firm based in Washington, D.C., Merchant McIntyre, to assist in the grant writing process for federal grants, and to provide lobbying support with Congress. It is recommended that we continue our partnership with Merchant McIntyre to assist in federal grant writing and submission of applications. The potential for additional external grants through this partnership is promising, and we are excited about the potential. A committee of internal Faculty/Staff worked collaboratively with MM to submit a Title I grant, and in the upcoming year, the School of STEM will work with MM to revise and submit an NSF grant that was very close to being funded this past year. Being awarded these grants would be a significant boost for Northwestern, and we look forward to our continued working relationship with MM. While we did not meet our target, the results are promising in evidence in the number of faculty/staff receiving grant funding. In AC 2020-2021, a cross-college grants committee was formed with representatives for each College. Their charge is to work collaboratively for professional development and grants opportunities within and across colleges. While this committee has been successful in supporting faculty with feedback and editing, as well as supporting local initiatives (IGNiTE, Faculty Development Communities, and Demonology), the committee will work further to provide specific support and present grant opportunities for faculty/staff. It is also suggested that we develop additional criteria to track the efficacy of working with Merchant McIntyre.

Table 15  
Continuation of multiyear grants 2022-2023

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	WKHS–NSU MOU to Support BSN to DNP-CRNHA Program–Year 4 of 6	644,700.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	MOU Addendum to extend the Joint Venture for BSN Nursing in Alexandria between RRMCC & NSU–Year 4 of 5	150,000.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	CHRISTUS-NSU MOU NP Faculty Support (2 Years) to Transition to Undergraduate Faculty Support (2 Years) Year 7 of 7	138,878.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	Extend MOU between Christus Health Louisiana/St. Frances Cabrini Health System and NSU, Year 5 of 5	98,538.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing	Christus Health LA & NSU for Undergraduate Nursing Faculty Support in Alexandria, Year 4 of 4	98,538.00
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Natchitoches Regional Medical Center/NRMC Foundation–NSU MOU for BSN Faculty Support–Year 5 of 5	80,370.00
Simmons, Pamela	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	PHMHNP: Bridging the Behavioral Healthcare Gap–Year 2 of 4	382,115.00
Gruesbeck, Steven	Psychology	NSU/Louisiana GEAR-UP Experiential Learning Program–Year 4 of 4	250,000.00
Erikson, Van	Recruiting	Career Compass of LA "Beyond Graduation"–Year 2 of 4	40,750.00
Penrod, Curtis	School of Business/CIS	CIS–Louisiana Economic Development Agreement, Year 9 of 10	170,875.00
Perez-Mira, Begona	School of Business/CIS	Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership (CLIP), Year 5 of 5	24,051.00
Weinzettle, Ruth	Social Work	Title IV-E Child Welfare Scholars Program–Year 3 of 3	2,501,914.00
Welch, Frances	Student Support Services	Office of Postsecondary Education: Student Support Services Program–Year 3 of 5	481,134.00
McAlister, Kimberly	Teaching, Leadership and Counseling	Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership (CLIP), Year 5 of 5	74,887.32
<b>CONTINUATIONS: TOTAL 2022-2023</b>			<b>\$ 5,136,750.32</b>

**Responsibility:** Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

**Metric:**

**3. Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including *Lunch and Learn*.**

**Findings:**

This metric experienced a nice rebound post-pandemic. The Fall on-call week focused on re-engagement and moving beyond the virtual experiences of the pandemic era, as well as Department, School, and College workshops on engaging with a new generation of students, expectations, and approaches to learning. Likewise, Faculty and Staff had opportunities to participate in sessions sponsored by the Center for Inclusion and Diversity, and the Council of Academic Deans took part in leadership training with the President’s Leadership Team.

In addition to innovative, discipline-specific professional development activities offered by colleges or departments, Northwestern provided other professional development opportunities during the year. A sampling of the sessions and participation numbers for each session are provided below.



- **Faculty Institute**, August 2023; *Referenced above*.
- **Demonology 101: A New Approach to Onboarding New Faculty**, AY 2022-2023; Required for all new faculty. As part of the initiative to support the Center for Faculty Excellence in Teaching and Scholarship, a group of ‘Demonologists’ conducted orientation sessions throughout the AY to better accommodate and impact the onboarding of new faculty. Several social events were held in addition to pertinent topics. Topics included: Human Resources & Payroll Policies and Procedures; Required Annual Trainings; Academic Resources; Student Conduct and Accommodations; and Academic Affairs Policy and Procedures. **100** participants. *Held face-to-face and virtually*.
- **IGNiTE**: a cohort of 12 individuals from all areas of the University were chosen to participate in this leadership training for those who wish to explore leadership development at Northwestern.
- **Faculty Development Communities**: designed to engage faculty in meaningful, impactful, goal-oriented, cross-disciplinary collaborations in support of the University’s mission.
- **Technology and Innovation Professional Development Sessions** offered to faculty and staff (small groups and individual classes); taught by staff in the Office of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development. **170** participants.
- **Research Day**, April 13, 2023. Faculty and students reported their research findings in oral presentations and posters ( $N=18$  faculty;  $N=11$  UG;  $N=12$  GR). There were 55 presenters, and 83 authors. Eighteen faculty served as mentors to one or more oral student presentations.

#### Analysis:

As sessions were held virtually, and F/S double-counted in some instances, it is difficult to estimate the total number of faculty and staff who participated. However, 1,304 F/S attended virtual on-call week in professional development sessions sponsored by the Provost/VPAA and Dean of Graduate Studies, the Vice President of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development, the Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity, or the President. The sessions support University efforts, such as accreditation, research, e-learning, or student recruitment. Keeping faculty current on higher education and K-12 topics is essential for academic program growth. Showcasing faculty expertise is also helpful for student recruitment and retention and maintaining community relations.

Participation in these opportunities is trending upward, and returning to face-to-face activities has been a productive element. We saw more diverse offerings this year, better opportunities, and more impactful events. Prior trend analysis for this metric reveals the following: During 2016-2017, 730 faculty (full-time; part-time) and staff participated in University and/or college, department, or school professional development workshops. Participation rates increased 96% ( $N = 1,434$ ) in 2017-2018, but a slight decline has been noted for the 2018-2019 year ( $N = 990$ ). However, the total number of faculty participating in metrics three and four was 1,883. During 2020-2021, data was spotty due to virtual attendance.

Rewording metrics three and four (objective five) occurred in 2017-2018 and may have accounted for the 96% increase. However, it remains challenging to keep an accurate headcount of faculty participation in professional development activities. There must be a clear distinction and better understanding of what is being measured in both the third and fourth metrics of objective five. It is hoped that during the next cycle, a return to in-person events will stabilize numbers across all measurements.

#### Decision:

Professional development opportunities will continue to be a priority for Northwestern. The 2022 target for this metric will remain at 1,600 participants. While we did meet this target, it is understood that a return to in-person

gatherings, meetings, and PD sessions will continue to push this number upward. The University will continue to emphasize Professional Development, as well as UG and Graduate research and research collaborations.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Dept. Heads, and Faculty.

**Metric:**

**4. Number of rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies.**

**Findings:**

Seventy-four campus sites acquired new classroom or laboratory technologies in AC 2023-2024 (Table 16).

Table 16

*New Technologies Acquired in AC 2023-2024*

Site Name/Location	Purpose
Student Union 101/155/222/305; Watson Library 109/112b/311/201/215/301/311	Computer lab workstations
<b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>	
Biological and Physical Sciences	*Refrigerator for student laboratory sample storage/Biology
Biological and Physical Sciences	*Refrigerator and -20C Freezer for PCR samples/Biology
Biological and Physical Sciences	*One drone and 2 sensor payloads/Biology-Remote Systems Science
Biological and Physical Sciences, Bienvenue 213	Computer lab workstations
Biological and Physical Sciences, Keyser 229	Micropipettors, Qubit fluorometer, and ducted fume hood/Microbiology.
Biological and Physical Sciences, Bienvenue 102/106	Canine positioning mannikin and accessories/Vet Tech
Engineering Technology, Williamson 122	Introduced Semio software to IET 4910 Modeling and Simulation
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Kyser 314, 316, 318.	*New iPads and laptops with docking stations provided to each full-time faculty member.
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Kyser 311, 313.	*New iPads for student use in classroom lockers and a mobile cart to support foreign language instruction.
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Kyser 341.	*New seminar room with video conferencing technology, projector, computer, audio equipment, and flexible seating.
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Kyser 408.	*New classroom with video conferencing technology, projector, computer, and audio equipment.
CAPA: Fine and Graphic Arts; New Arts 205b/206/207, Print Shop 105	Computer lab workstations
CAPA: Fine and Graphic Arts; New Arts 218/207	*4 Meta Quest 2 and 1 Meta Quest 3 Virtual Reality viewers
CAPA: Fine and Graphic Arts; New Arts 116	*Hobart TIG welder and a Hell's Forge for sculpture/crafts classes
CAPA: Fine and Graphic Arts (shared between areas)	*new hand tools: 2 palm sanders, 2 jig saws, 2 impact drivers, nail gun, electric chain saw, 6 cordless hot glue guns, 2 hot knives, plastic welder, heat gun, and tufting gun.
CAPA: Old Arts 228	Instructor workstation
CAPA: New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts; Kyser 225H	Video equipment to upgrade podcast studio
CAPA: Theatre/Dance, 100 A A Fredricks	Theatrical lighting equipment
CAPA: Music, New Arts 116	Recording equipment
Mathematics, Kyser 450	*Three 3-D printers for modeling
Scholars'/Morrison Hall 227-230	Instructor workstation
Scholars'/Kyser 132	*Thermo Cycler (PCR) and Safe Imager 2.0 Blue-Light Trans Illuminator
<b>College of Business and Technology</b>	
HMT, FACS 117 and 228	Instructor workstation
Business, Russell 104A/101D/Leesville 7/Cenla 261	*Student computers
Business, Russell 115/218/223	*Teaching station
Business, Russell 101D	*Promethean Board
Business, Russell 101C (Networking/Cyber Security lab)	*equipment upgrades
Business, Russell 217 (AR/VR lab)	*VR equipment

Table 16 (cont.)

*New Technologies Acquired in AC 2023-2024*

College of Education and Human Development	
HHP 123c (Physiology lab)	Projector, Smartboard, Apple TV, and computer
Psychology, Bienvenue 338	Instructor workstation
College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	
Shreveport 101/105/112	Computer lab workstations
Shreveport 101	Instructor workstation
Shreveport 213/217/219 (nursing skills lab)	Headwall vertical package
ASN, BSN, MSN, DNP (all campuses)	*Contract Safe
Shreveport 205/212/221 (RadSci Skills Lab/classes))	*New radiography lab. Nearpods, Photoshop, Digital Library, Ken Hub (anatomy app)
Shreveport (Sonography class)	*Padlet
Shreveport (Sonography skills lab)	*5 Ultrasound machines and 1 wireless ultrasound probe, Phantom Pregnancy Scan simulator
Off-campus Instructional Sites	
CENLA, new classroom building, Rad Tech (7 classrooms, meeting area)	Compete classroom technology installations (infrastructure plus student and instructor workstations)
Leesville, 121	12 Charging tables for multipurpose room
Leesville 22	Computer lab workstations
Alexandria/Shreveport, Rad Tech	whole-body X-ray radiography phantom
Alexandria & Leesville (Nursing Skills Lab)	*DocuCare with Scanner, Gastronomy tube feeding pumps, Care Fusion Pump, new glucometers
Sonography Program (Class)	*Nearpods, Microsoft Whiteboard, Ken Hub platform, Ultraling medical imaging platform

Note: \*items not funded by Tech Fees

**Analysis:**

In AC 2023-2024, the number of departments or sites acquiring new or upgraded classroom or laboratory technologies increased. Data collected for this measure was obtained from department heads/directors, deans, and the student technology coordinator. Of the 74 newly equipped or updated rooms, 22 (30%) were funded exclusively by departmental funds, external grants, or donations, such as endowed professorships. An additional three rooms in the College of Nursing were funded by a combination of Technology Fee and other sources.

The pace at which technology becomes outdated or new technology is introduced, as well as its cost, varies by discipline; the University attempts to distribute funds to provide state-of-the-art equipment equitably across the various academic units as well as encourage units with higher costs to secure external funding. This distribution of funds is particularly commendable because the allocation of Student Technology Fee monies is overseen by students, with turnover in the committee every year.

**Decision:**

We will continue to upgrade computer and classroom laboratories located in on- and off-campus instructional sites on an annual basis, typically on a three-year rotation, with funding provided by student technology fees.

In addition, the Louisiana Board of Regents provides a cycle of course enhancement funding for most academic disciplines, also on rotation. Although the application is competitive, Northwestern faculty have received funds to support technology use in the classroom from this program; the RFP is distributed to all faculty each year and grant-writing support is provided by our Office of Sponsored Programs.

**Responsibility:** Office of Information Technology Systems, Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors/Department Heads.

**Metric:****5. Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service.****Findings:**

This metric was not measured during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are pleased to see recognition ceremonies and events make a return in 2022-2023. All areas in Academics used the pandemic to reimagine how they recognize faculty for their contributions. For example, the outstanding research awards and recipients were recognized during the Fall Faculty Institute which assisted in making the recognitions more impactful. Likewise, the Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development held an event honoring their Endowed Professors. During the event, those who attended were given a three-minute presentation by the Endowed Professors, after which, the participants rotated to the next presentation. Other Colleges and Academic Departments and Schools held similar events.

**Analysis:**

The University recognizes outstanding teachers for each College and one or two advisors of the year at its first fall semester workday, *Faculty Institute*, followed by the University-wide luncheon. The NSU News Bureau distributes a press release, which is printed by local newspapers and shared by social media platforms. This year, 132 press releases related to faculty teaching, research, and professional service were filed. The outstanding teachers of the year were also recognized at halftime for a home football game. For colleges hosting a reunion during Homecoming, such as Education and Business, the distinguished faculty member was presented to a different audience.

At the fall luncheon following Faculty Institute, faculty and staff are recognized for their years of service to the University (25, 30, 35, etc.).

During Northwestern's Faculty Institute, faculty were selected for outstanding contributions in three areas: research, lifetime achievement, and Louisiana Studies. The criteria for each award are published and nominations are presented to the Research Council for review. The outstanding Research Award, named to honor Dr. Mildred Hart Bailey, began in 1989; the Lifetime Achievement Award, named for Dr. Jean D'Amato Thomas, began in 2011; and the Louisiana Studies Award, first given in 2012, honors Dr. Marietta LeBreton.

The President sponsored breakfast and luncheon events to honor faculty and staff for their contributions to NSU. The President also honored Faculty who had earned Tenure or Promotion during 2022-2023 with a reception at the President's Residence. Likewise, NSU Press submitted a News Release to honor and recognize these same Faculty. NSU Press also recognized new Faculty with a press release during the first full week of the semester.

During the baseline year, eight events or activities recognized faculty accomplishments. Twenty-one events were documented in 2017-2018 and 199 in 2018-2019. While we held fewer events during 2022-2023, the events were more global in approach, more impactful in presentation, and presented in a more succinct manner in which Faculty are recognized. Obviously, awareness and better record-keeping by academic and University leaders resulted in the number increase. In AC 2020-2021, the number of press releases ( $N = 128$ ) by NSU News Bureau also contributed to the increase. From 2016 to 2019, the number of events or activities for recognizing NSU faculty and staff increased markedly (2,387%). This trend continued during 2022-2023, and we aspire to continue celebrating our Faculty.

### Decision:

Northwestern values its faculty and staff members and will continue the tradition of honoring faculty/staff for their excellence in teaching, research, and service to the University or to their profession. Our target is adjusted to 20 impactful and global events or activities in 2023-2024.

**Responsibility:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads; and NSU News Bureau.

### Comprehensive Summary

For AC 2022-2023, all Academic Excellence (AE) objectives that were measured showed an excellent For AC 2023-2024, four (4) of five (5) Academic Excellence (AE) objectives that were measured showed an excellent pattern of growth, and the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) shows positive trends; all continue to build upon the strong indicators of success experienced over the last several cycles and years. Furthermore, programs continue to show excellent trends toward consistency in measurement, ability to evaluate results, and creativity in making adjustments and decisions to move forward. Working in tandem with academic advisory committees, program faculty continue to evaluate how best to deliver instruction, be responsive to the preparedness necessary for moving into the profession after graduation and develop new ways to assess students and instruction.

The Faculty Research Support Fund funds were expended as travel and presentation at conferences experienced an uptick; data indicated we were on par to stay consistent or exceed prior AC numbers.

A downward trend in average class size in University Core classes presents a positive trend for continuing to aspire to smaller classes in an effort to increase student success by allowing instructors to focus on delivery of content and evaluation of student progress. Data on the GRE and LSAT are consistent from previous cycle measured, with some encouraging upward trends, and it is noted that we will see a full picture of the MCAT results when an entire cohort of students utilizing a new and innovative curriculum design have finished the program.

We continue to see positive trends in new technologies instituted across colleges, in curriculums, and in classrooms. In particular, new technologies have assisted in developing better experiences, responsiveness, and communications in the healthcare industries, and have connected our faculty in students in ways that were not possible several years ago. We are seeing upgrades in requisite equipment in the Sciences, as well as the continued development of our Remote Systems curriculum and drone fleet.

### Research Within Its mission

The *Research Council* enables, supports, enhances, recognizes, and promotes research activities by undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff across all academic units of the University. The Industrial Engineering in Operations Management Conference Council advises the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Provost on guiding principles and policies for the OSP, as well as on policies and guidelines for administering competitive grant programs, Research Day, research awards, participation in undergraduate research conferences, and other research activities.

Within the University's mission, research plays multiple roles. *Undergraduate Research* is a pedagogical tool to increase understanding of theory through practice and to prepare students for success in graduate and

professional programs, business, and other career paths. As stated in the Graduate School's *Guidelines for Preparing Your Final Research Document at Northwestern State University*, Graduate Research, "provides graduate students an opportunity to design and implement research, explore historical and current trends, create new designs and products, and engage in problem-solving" as a component of their professional training. Both undergraduate and graduate research activities represent best practices in higher education. The research activities of *Faculty and Staff* contribute to the generation of new knowledge in their disciplines and to innovation, best practices, and problem-solving in applications ranging from Northwestern's traditional strengths in education and nursing to newer areas such as computer information system and engineering technology. Collectively, research activities at Northwestern contribute to a more capable workforce, service to the community and industry, innovation in the classroom, and an increase in scholarly knowledge. Thus, it is important to foster a culture of scholarship at all levels (faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students).

### AC 2023-2024 Key Findings (in comparison to AC 2022-2023):

Northwestern students presented at

- 1 national conference: Industrial Engineering in Operations Management.
- 7 regional conferences: Louisiana Academy of Sciences, Louisiana Education Research Association, Louisiana Studies Conference, Mid-South Educational Research Association, Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Conference (English), Southeastern Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, and Southwest Psychology Association.
- 46 presentations by 111 graduate students at 6 scholarly conferences.
- 19 presentations by 49 undergraduates at 5 conferences, including the ULS Academic Summit.
- 87 Master's students made 23 presentations of Evidence Based Practice Research at the Beta Chi Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International & NSU College of Nursing Research Carousel, a continuing education program for Registered Nurses.
- The University of Louisiana Academic Summit was held at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston. Thirty-five Northwestern undergraduate authors shared their work in 10 research presentations and four multi-author service-learning projects. Two musical theater students represented the University in the Performing Arts Showcase and five students created art pieces selected for the visual arts show.
- Research Day was held on April 18, 2024 in a face-to-face format with virtual presentations to accommodate distance learning presenters and students at other off-campus instructional sites. Oral presentations were streamed live via WebEx to allow virtual attendance for audience members who could not attend face-to-face. Presentations included 11 posters, 49 oral presentations (15 minutes), and an additional 13 brief oral presentations (5 minutes). Three oral presentations were made virtually. Overall, presentations were up 73% over AC 2022-2023.
  - 20 presentations were presented by 26 graduate students (up 67%).
  - 30 presentations were presented by 42 undergraduate students (up 173%).
  - 1 LSMSA student presented his work both orally and as a poster
  - 26 faculty members presented their work (up 44%).
  - 6 additional faculty were coauthors or copresenters on one or more student papers (down 43%).

### Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- Develop a new system using Teams to document faculty and student presentations and publications.

- Launch Undergraduate Research Fellows and Undergraduate Research Mentors programs to better capture student presentations and publications and faculty mentoring efforts.
- Secure funding for supplies and equipment necessary to produce research posters for conference and Research Day presentations for students and faculty.

## General Education Competencies

Northwestern’s broad-based core curriculum leverages six key competencies central to the University’s mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents’ requirements for general education. The selection of courses encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. The requirements are designed to improve students’ writing and speaking skills; provide students with mathematical skills at the level of college algebra and above; strengthen students’ understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences; and develop an appreciation and knowledge of the arts and humanities. These courses provide the breadth of a student’s educational program while the degree program requirements provide the depth of education.

The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their respective degree programs, to obtain appropriate learning outcomes for the general education competencies. The effort in Fall 2018 was to validate the tool/method of assessment while cataloging the number of students being tested. In some cases, no formal assessment was completed other than as mentioned. In Spring 2019, all core competencies conducted a full assessment of the student learning outcomes. The only exception was in Behavioral and Social Sciences, where the data for each measure was not specified/reported. Nonetheless, the data collected reflected whether the student met or failed to meet the student learning outcome. AC 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 were complete (fall/spring) iterations of assessing the University’s core competencies.

The AC 2023-2024 core competency assessments are located on the University Institutional Effectiveness website under Assessment Cycle Reports, AY 2023-2024, General Education Core Competencies.

The AC 2023-2024 Core Competency assessment results: *15,615 student assessments were completed, representing a 4% increase from the 14,992 assessments in AC 2022-2023.* (Note. Some courses have more than one assessment and some students may have been assessed in more than one course.) Eight of 12 Student Learning Outcomes (67%) were met in AC 2023–2024. Of the 31 measures, 22 (71%) were positive as compared to 23 (74%) last year. A total of 09 measures (29%) were not met this year as compared to 07 measures (23%) last year. The findings for each competency are provided below.

**English.** To demonstrate writing as a purpose-driven process of communication within specific contexts. **768 students were assessed (381 were Dual Enrollment) a 17% increase over AC 2022-2023.**

**SLO 1.** Students will write a variety of types of texts for diverse audiences, purposes, and contexts. *Results include 210 dual enrollment students.*

**Measure 1.1. Target 80%** of student portfolios assessed from ENGL 1010 in the fall semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 1.1.

**Findings:** Target met. 706 of 768, 91.9% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, a 1.5% increase from AC 2022-2023.

**Measure 1.2. Target: 80%** of student portfolio letters assessed from ENGL 1010 in the fall semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 1.2.

**Findings:** Target met. 618 of the 718, 86.1% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the evaluation, a 4% decrease from AC 2022-2023.

**SLO 2.** Students will perform writing as a process of planning, researching, prewriting, drafting, evaluating, and revising to develop and strengthen their compositions.

**Measure 2.1. Target: 80%** of student portfolios assessed from ENGL 1020 in the spring semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 2.1.

**Findings:** Target met. 566 of 609, 92.9% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, showing a slight 1.5 decrease from AC 2022-2023.

**Measure 2.2. Target: 80%** of student portfolio letters assessed from ENGL 1020 in the spring semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 2.2.

**Findings:** Target met. 536 of 609, 88% of students met the target scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, showing a 3% improvement over AC 2022-2023.

Findings from AC 2023-2024 provide evidence that the English program successfully fulfills SLO 2 through Measure 2.1, with 88% of students scoring 2+ on the rubric.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results and to improve reporting of assessment of instruction at all NSU instructional sites, in AC 2024-2025 Writing Program Administrator will work with the Dual Enrollment areas on campus to improve reporting from instructors credentialed through NSU but employed by and working in K12 settings. Training will be increased and refined at all instruction sites as part of the effort to increase collection and reporting of assessment data to ensure instruction is consistent across the program.

Furthermore, based on the analysis of these results, the Department will maintain the expectation that 80% of students will score a 2 (acceptable) or higher on the evaluation in AC 2024-2025. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results the following changes will be implemented to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. Refined training will be provided to further assist faculty in collecting and reporting assessment data. Additional outreach will be made to encourage dual enrollment instructors working in the K-12 setting to submit assessment reports. Additional training in teaching source integration will be provided to drive improvement on SLOs 1020.11 and 1020.10.

**Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning.** To apply mathematical and analytical reasoning skills. Overall, 1,112 students were assessed (of which 72 were Dual Enrollment) representing a 11% decrease *over AC 2022-2023*.

**SLO 1** Students will apply mathematics/analytical reasoning skills by translating a word problem into an appropriate mathematical model and translating the solution of a model into an answer to a practical problem.

**Measure 1.1. Target:** 90% of students will attain a score of 2 (acceptable) on the questions that ask the student to pick an appropriate mathematical model for a problem. 80% of students in each course attain a score of 2.

**Finding.** Target not met. 1112 students were assessed (of which 72 were Dual Enrollment); 1071 met the target score or better. 96.3% of students reached the assessment goal. We saw meaningful improvement in Math 1035, 1060, 1090, 2010, and 2100. Math 2110 decreased, but the number of students being assessed increased



by more than double. Only one student in 2110 did not meet the target. Math 1020 experienced a slight decrease in success, but nothing significant enough to cause concern. Math 1810 was the only course that did not meet the individual course goal of 80%. If this specific class achieved their objective, the overarching target would have been achieved. It is worth noting that only 3 students were assessed. The drop in students being assessed for 1810, can most likely be attributed to the number of students entering their freshman year with a dual enrollment credit for their first college math course.

**Measure 1.2. Target:** 80% of students will attain a score of 2 (acceptable) on questions that ask the student to interpret the solution to a mathematical model as an answer to a practical problem. Further, in each course, at least 70% of students will attain a score of 2.

**Finding.** Target not met. 1112 students were assessed (of which 72 were Dual Enrollment); 1072 met the target score or better. 96.4% of students reached the assessment goal. Two courses (1810 / 2110) did not reach the individual course goal of 80% success. As stated previously, only three students were assessed in 1810, a root cause of the decrease in success. Math 2110 had a significant drop in success as the number of students assessed doubled. Math 1020 and 1060, the University core classes with the highest population, maintained strong success rates.

**SLO 2** Students will demonstrate the ability to solve a mathematical problem through algebraic, graphical/geometrical, or numerical/statistical methods as appropriate.

**Measure 2.1 Target:** 95% of students will attain a score of 2 (acceptable) on the questions that ask a student to solve a problem stated in mathematical symbology. Further in each course, at least 80% of students will attain a score of 2.

**Finding.** Target not met. 1112 students were assessed (of which 72 were Dual Enrollment); 1083 met the target score or better. 97.4% of students reached the assessment goal. Two courses (1810 and 2110) did not meet the individual goals of 80% in each course. Math 1020 and 1060 continued to show excellent scores for this measure. Math 1090 and Math 2100 showed improvement, while Math 2010 and 2110 decreased.

**Measure 2.2. Target:** 90% of students will attain a score of 2 (acceptable) on the questions that ask a student to solve a word problem.

**Finding.** Target not met. 1112 students were assessed (of which 72 were Dual Enrollment); 1040 met the target score or better. 93.5% of students reached the assessment goal. only three courses met the individual course goal of 80%. In addition, the individual courses' success varied significantly. Math 1020, 1060, 1090, and 2100 showed improvement; Math 1035, 2010, 1810, and 2110 dropped. The changes we implemented had mixed results. Clearly, students find measure 2.2 more challenging than the others.

**Natural Sciences.** To understand the universe through the study of life and physical sciences. 835 students were assessed (100 were Dual Enrollment) representing a 12% decrease over AC 2022-2023.

**SLO 1.** Students will identify the parts of the scientific method and design scientifically-sound experiments.

**Measure 1.1. Target, 80%** of students will identify the parts of the scientific method. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn about the parts of the scientific method including observations, hypotheses, and the various forms of experimental variables. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is for 80% of students to attain a quiz grade of  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met with 51.771% (380/734) of students scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-28.23%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz and lower (-18.17%) than the AC 2022-2023 assessment.

**Measure 1.2. Target, 80%** of students will demonstrate the ability to recognize scientifically-sound experiments. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn how to use their knowledge of the parts of the scientific method to design scientifically-sound experiments. This will require the ability to identify relevant dependent and independent variables and understand how to use them to design appropriate experiments to test a given hypothesis. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is to have 80% of students attain a quiz grade  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met with 37.96% (339/893) of students scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-42.04%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz; this is lower (-14.97%) than the AC 2022-2023 assessment.

**SLO 2.** Students will analyze scientific data to draw conclusions about the natural and physical world.

**Measure 2.1. Target, 80%** of students will demonstrate their ability to make experimental predictions. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn how to use their knowledge of the scientific method and experimental design to make predictions of experimental results. This will require the ability to interpret experimental design and use those interpretations to predict the results of the executed experiments. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is to have 80% of students attain a quiz grade  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met with 37.33% (274/734) of students scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-42.67%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz and is lower (-8.29%) than the AC 2022-2023 assessment.

**Measure 2.2. Target, 70%** of students will analyze scientific data to draw conclusions about the natural and physical world. Throughout the indicated courses, students will learn to use their knowledge of the scientific method and experimental design to analyze scientific data and to make conclusions based on that data analysis. This will require ability to interpret scientific data presented in verbal, tabular, or graphic form then use those interpretations to provide scientific explanations for those results. Each student is required to pass a quiz covering these concepts. The target is for 70% of students to attain a quiz grade  $\geq 70\%$ .

**Finding.** Target not met. In AC 2023-202, the target was not met with 43.32% 44.072% (318/734) scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-36.68%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring  $\geq 70\%$  on the quiz and is lower (-0.75%) the AC 2022-2023 assessment.

**Humanities.** To understand the diversity of human knowledge and experience across cultures as examined through the humanities. A total of 2898 students were assessed; 424 were dual enrollment representing a 20.5% increase over AC 2022-2023.

**SLO 1.** Students will communicate an understanding of the diversity of human experience, including issues such as nationality, ethnicity, race, language, gender, sexuality, exceptionalities, religion, and culture. This SLO was assessed by at least one measure in 2,745 students.

**Measure 1.1. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110. The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic awareness and understanding of cultural differences (behaviors, expressions, etc.). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. In 2023-24, the target was met. Students in ENGL 2110 achieved an 83.65% rate of scores at 3 or above on the standardized rubric. Students in ENGL 2070 achieved a 96.65% rate of scores at 3 or above on the standardized rubric. Dual enrollment sections scored slightly lower than their counterparts but still exceeded the target. ENGL 2110 dual enrollment students achieved a 79.2% rate of scores at 3 or above, while non-dual enrollment sections achieved a rate of 88.1%. ENGL 2070 dual enrollment students achieved a 93.3% rate of scores at 3 or above, while non-dual enrollment sections achieved a rate of 100%.

**Measure 1.2. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students taught will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110 (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of social, literary, and historical contexts. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. In 2023-2024, the target was met. Assessment analysis shows that 83.35% of students scored a 3 or higher on the standardized rubric for this measure. ENGL 2070 demonstrated a 100% achievement of earning a score of 3 or above on the assessment assignment. No dual enrollment sections were evaluated for this measure. In ENGL 2110, dual enrollment sections scored slightly lower than their counterparts but still exceeded the target. ENGL 2110 dual enrollment students achieved a 78.3% rate of scores at 3 or above, while non-dual enrollment students achieved a rate of 88.4%.

**Measure 1.3. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students taught will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110 (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine students' ability to analyze literary material and show understanding of diversity through that literary analysis. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. In 2023-2024, the target was met. Assessment analysis shows that 85.45% of ENGL 2110 students and 92.1% of ENGL 2070 scored a 3 or above on the standardized rubric used to evaluate this measure. In ENGL 2070, 90.9% of non-dual enrollment students and 93.3% of our dual-enrollment students scored a 3 or higher on

the assessment assignment. In ENGL 2110, 86.9% of non-dual enrollment students and 84% of dual-enrollment students scored a 3 or higher on the assessment.

**Measure 1.4. Target 70%.** One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110. The writing will be evaluated to determine if students demonstrate a basic understanding of the relationships between identities and writing. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. in 2023-2024, the target was met. Assessment analysis shows that 86.7% of students scored at least 3 or higher on the standardized rubric used to evaluate this measure. Both students in ENGL 2110 and ENGL 2070 were evaluated. Dual enrollment sections existed only for ENGL 2110. In ENGL 2110, 85.7% of non-dual enrollment students and 74.5% of dual enrollment students scored a 3 or higher on this assessment. In ENGL 2070, 100% of students scored a 3 or higher on this assessment.

**Measure 1.5. Target 70%.** Students will demonstrate competence in researching and delivering an effective oral persuasive presentation designed for diverse audiences and contexts. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. In 2023-24, the target was met. Students scored an average of 87.2% on the persuasive speech assessment. Efforts to emphasize the importance of good research and a high level of preparedness seemed to positively impact our students.

**Measure 1.6. Target 70%.** Students will recognize and analyze how verbal and nonverbal communication styles vary across cultures and affect the way people communicate by completing a Culture Project and Presentation. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** Target met. in 2023-24, the target was met. Students scored an average of 75.5% on the research paper portion of the assessment project, and an average of 75.8% on the presentation portion of the project. The faculty found that students demonstrated improved application of the seven cultural dimensions. Updates to the project instructions and increasing class time focused on this project resulted in stronger understanding demonstrated in final projects. However, students struggled with conducting and applying research effectively. This includes correctly citing sources internally. Faculty also noticed a lack of familiarity with MLA formatting, possibly indicating a gap in their foundational education.

**Measure 1.7. Target 70%.** One team-created written assignment and one team or individual presentation of the written assignment from all BUAD 2200 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members. The writing and oral presentation will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic awareness and understanding of cultural differences (socialized norms, politics, religion, etc.). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** A Target met. A total of 147 students were enrolled in 7 sections of BUAD 2200 during the fall and spring semesters of AC 23-24. Twenty (14%) of the students did not complete the assessment, so data was collected from 127 students. Of the 127 students assessed 90% scored

a grade of 70% or better on the assessment. This is a decrease of 3% from the previous year. The participation rate did improve from 83% during 22-23 to 86% in AC 23-24. One other note about participation, though 86% of the students were assessed 12 students chose to complete only one part of the two-part assessment. Some turned in the written assignment only while some did only the presentation part. Since the grades are combined to get one score these students were 12 of the students who did not make the 70% target for the assessment.

**SLO 2.** Students will demonstrate an understanding of how various political, economic, social, and cultural movements emerge, evolve, and influence human thought and experience over time. This SLO was assessed by at least one measure in 640 students.

**Measure 2.1. Target 70%.** Students will demonstrate their understanding of political, economic, social, and cultural movements. Comprehension of how human thought and historical concepts emerge over time will be evaluated in a post-class survey, in each of the four core classes (HIST 1010, 1020, 2010, and 2020). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding.** In 2023-24, the target was met in all assessed history courses. In HIST 1010, the 209 assessed students earned an 87% achievement of target. In HIST 1020, the 122 assessed students earned an 85% achievement of target. In HIST 2010, the 157 assessed students earned a 78% achievement of target. In HIST 2020, the 113 assessed students earned an 83% achievement of target. Compliance with assessment for dual enrollment courses also has improved. Faculty focused on improving course development, design, and delivery. To drive improvement in World History courses, history faculty participated in a Board of Regents eLearning grant project that focused on developing podcast-style course materials to accompany the Regents-sponsored OER textbook for World History. One faculty member fully implemented the new OER textbook in all their sections of HIST 1010. Gathering data from dual enrollment courses taught at off-campus instructional sites proved to be challenging.

**Measure 2.2. Target 70%.** The specific assessment is to be chosen by the instructor of each section of PHIL 1010, consisting of a written assignment of at least 400 words integrated into some part of the course. The writing can be obtained in several ways: as a Discussion Forum posting, as an essay question on an exam, a journal entry, or something similar. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

**Finding:** Target not met. In 2023-24, the target was not met. Of the students who completed the assessment, 70% met the target (the goal was 75% or higher). Dr. Keele notes that 70% is significantly closer to the target of 75% compared to last year's 63%. Drs. Keele and Dromm made some substantial changes that positively affected student competency for this measure. Dr. Keele found that completely redoing the video lectures proved challenging; he replaced four major lectures only, rather than the planned eight. Dr. Keele began collecting data again in the spring semester.

**Social/Behavioral Sciences.** To demonstrate an understanding of human behavior and the relationship between individuals and their societies. Of the 8,668 students assessed, 424 were dual enrollment, a 2% increase over AC 2022-2023. While results varied widely depending upon the course (from 56% to 100%), 81% met the Competency Target Score of 75% or higher. These results include all assessments given, including pretest and posttest assessments which are designed to assess how students understood the material prior to exposure to the content and subsequent exposure to the content, as

measured by the assessment tools. This result is higher than the result from the AC2022-2023, which was 79%, and the difference can be viewed as significant since the target has changed from 70% on the assessment tool to 75% on the assessment tool and indicates that student performance on the assessment program is improving.

**SLO 1.** Number of assessments: 5,848. Students will develop the skills to think critically, analyze, and discuss geographical, political, economic, and cultural variances in today’s global environment.

**Measure 1.1. Target 75%.** Number of Assessments: 2,915. Number students will demonstrate their critical thinking skills through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum of 75% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 80% of students (2,332 of 2,915) scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70%or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	78%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	91%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	73%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	81%	Fall/Spring
Social Science	ANTH 1510	Question Bank	56%	Fall
	ANTH 2020	Question Bank	100%	Spring
	ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	60%	Fall/Spring
	GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	94%	Fall
	GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	97%	Spring
	PSCI 2010	Question Bank	92%	Fall/Spring

**Measure 1.2. Target 75%.** Number of Assessments 2,933 Students will demonstrate their understanding of the concept of culture and its importance through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 81% of students, or 2,378 out of 2,933, scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70%or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	74%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	84%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	61%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	95%	Fall/Spring
Social Science	ANTH 1510	Question Bank	50%	Fall
	ANTH 2020	Question Bank	100%	Spring
	ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	61%	Fall/Spring
	GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	96%	Fall
	GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	96%	Spring
	PSCI 2010	Question Bank	95%	Fall/Spring

**SLO 2.** Number assessed: 2,820. SLO 2 applies to the Behavioral Science Core courses. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and socialization, thereby developing the skills necessary to navigate professional and personal landscapes.

**Measure 2.1. Target 75%.** Number assessed 1,410. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and its impact on group and individual interactions through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 75% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 77% of students, or 1,090 out of 1,410, scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	78%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	94%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	74%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	91%	Fall/Spring

**Measure 2.2. Target 75%.** Number assessed 1,410. Student will demonstrate their understanding of the socialization process and traditional and contemporary theoretical schools of thought through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

**Finding:** Target Met. Overall, 85% of students, or 1,203 out of 1,410, scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 70% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	78%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	94%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	74%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	91%	Fall/Spring

**Fine Arts.** To explore purposes and processes in the visual and performing arts and the ways in which fine arts conceive and express the human experience. 1,477 students were assessed (380 were Dual Enrollment) representing an 11% decrease from AC 2022-2023.

**SLO 1.** Students identify genres, artists, works, techniques, and trends within the arts.

**Measure 1.1. Target 40% growth, 70% participation.** The student will recognize important terminology used in describing the arts, important individual works of art, famous composers, playwrights, artists, choreographers, and performers, and identify important historical periods and trends in the arts. **Target:** 40% growth between the two tests with at least 70% of the students enrolled taking the exam. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of basic terminology, important artists, and critical moments in the history of art.

**Finding.** Target met. 1311 students were enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040, and 366 of them (28%) were dual enrollment. Out of these 1311 students, 1159 students, or 88%, participated in the pre-test and 991 students (76%), participated in the post-test. The pre-test average was 18.41/50 and the post-test average was 41.29/50, leading to a growth rate of 45%. The 2023-2024 targets were 40% growth rate with participation rates at 70% of the total students enrolled. The growth rate for the AY 2023-2024 assessment cycle was 45%, which meets the ideal target for the year. The Pre-Test participation rate was 88%, and the Post-Test participation rate was 76%, which met the adjusted target of 70%.

**Measure 1.2. Target 40% growth, 70% participation.** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the arts in European culture as well as the arts and culture of other countries. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of European and non-European cultural trends and important examples and people in the artistic community.

**Finding:** Target met. 1311 students were enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040, and 366 of them (28%) were dual enrollment. Out of these 1311 students, 1159 students, or 88%, participated in the pre-test and 991 students (76%), participated in the post-test. The pre-test average was 18.41/50 and the post-test average was 41.29/50, leading to a growth rate of 45%. In AY 2023-2024, all three targets were met. Dual enrollment, online, distance learning, and face-to-face students had similar results, since everyone takes the same assessment in the same format. Students are given the online Pre-test at the beginning of the semester and the same exam as the Post-test at the end of the semester.

**SLO 2.** Students will examine the arts through event attendance and reflection.

**Measure 2.1.** Students will attend, review, and analyze a music event using Standard American English with 7% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the music performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a musical performance.

**Finding;** Target met. 1079/1311 (82%) students completed the assignment, with 366 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students. Because of the switch to online during the COVID-19 pandemic, music opportunities were given in an online format, making the process of doing the assignment much easier for the student. This format will likely continue in the future.

**Measure 2.2. Target 70%** of students will attend, review, and analyze a theater event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the theater performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a theatrical performance.

**Finding:** Target met. 1077/1311 (82%) students completed the assignment, with 366 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students. Because of the switch to online during the COVID-19 pandemic, theater opportunities were given in an online format, making the process of doing the assignment much easier for the student.

**Measure 2.3. Target 70%** of students will attend, review, and analyze an art gallery using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques: By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the visual art performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on going to an art gallery.

**Finding.** Target was met. 1116/1311 (88%) students completed the assignment, with 366 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students. Because of the switch to online during the COVID-19 pandemic, art opportunities were given in an online format, making the process of doing the assignment much easier for the student.



**Measure 2.4. Target 70%** of students will attend, review, and analyze a dance event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the dance performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a live dance performance or viewing of a pre-approved list of dance films.

**Finding.** Target was met. 1054/1311 (80%) students completed the assignment, with 366 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

**Plan of Action Moving Forward.** Each core competency will implement strategies for improvement ensuring standardization in the application of the measures to the variety of courses applicable. Each competency will deliberately integrate dual enrollment students into the assessment process. More details can be found in AC 2023-2024 Assessment Report located on the Institutional Effectiveness website, <https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>

## Quality Enhancement Plan

*Beyond the First Year Experience: Perspective, Perseverance, and Persistence* will be the next Quality Enhancement Plan for Northwestern State University.

It focuses on the holistic student experience beyond the first year, and seeks to promote student perspective, perseverance, and persistence to improve long-term personal, fiscal, and academic health. It will assist in supporting student success and achievement as students navigate a period in their collegiate experience where they encounter increasing demands in their academic and social lives; face barriers to progressing through gate-keeping courses before moving on to upper-level and discipline-specific coursework; and experience increased stress from involvement in student activities and organizations, the need to work off campus, and other internal and external influences that act as barriers to persistence.

While institutions generally provide and support experiences during the first year to promote success, students are often left to start the second year and beyond without the support systems that helped them persist through their first year. This QEP will look at all angles of student retention and persistence from a holistic perspective.

## Strategic Focus Area 3–Market Responsiveness

Higher education will change significantly over the next decade as competitiveness becomes increasingly driven by learning and the need to deliver a highly productive workforce. Institutions are positioning themselves to redesign to deliver the skills required for the disruptions ahead. These changes have the potential to offer more inclusive economic growth and innovation through technology. In the context of the transformation to knowledge and learning that technologies have created, universities are developing new models and strategies that include the expansion of experiential learning and new learning formats for students. Universities are building more collaborative environments in which the need for a broader perspective and open dialogue between the institution and business and industry partners.

Northwestern State University often acts as a connector by establishing partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and employers to ensure students are aware of and reach the educational options most relevant to their goals. These collaborations create experiences and build programs that provide them with the skills they need as technology and the job market changes.

We engage industry partners to solicit input on current and future needs. Their feedback is invaluable as we enact changes that involve continuous assessment of programs and reflection about the needs of graduates.

Established in year one of our assessment cycle, clear benchmarks (Table 17) provide quantifiable measures to assess our progress and gauge our success. Progress towards meeting these targets in 2023-2024 include:

- ECE staff were provided 10 professional development opportunities to advance knowledge to faculty
- ECE provided faculty 120 professional development workshops encompassing 32 unique topics for continuous improvement and support of online course delivery
- Online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation continues to rise
- Continuing Education offered 1278 distinct non-credit courses
- Northwestern State administration and students continue to engage with business and industry partners to ensure graduates are prepared for the workforce
- The University continues to provide diverse leadership focused programs for students outside the classroom which, combined with academics, enhances employability upon graduation
- State-of-the-art technology continues to be implemented through the Student Technology Fee: over 200 classrooms and 68 computer labs were upgraded

The University's role is vital in developing a productive and dynamic labor force to meet the demands of the global economy. The processes being established will continue and be refined as we continue our dialogue with alumni and our workforce partners in this process to identify key indicators required for market responsiveness.

Table 17

Metrics for Market Responsiveness

AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	Market Responsiveness Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Target
	73%		<i>New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce</i>	75%
5		10	<i>Number of professional development opportunities ECE support staff participated in to advance knowledge</i>	12
155		32	<i>Number of distinct professional development courses provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of on-line course delivery.</i>	36
	153		<i>Number of bona-fide industry partners</i>	250 (total)
78.5%		85.4%	<i>Percent of online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation</i>	85%
11.0%		20.2%	<i>Percent of recent graduates pursuing an advanced degree</i>	25%
	3		<i>Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts</i>	3
		1278	<i>Number of distinct non-credit courses offered annually through Continuing Education.</i>	1350
		38	<i>Number of engagements between administration and business industry partners</i>	48
		268	<i>Number of classrooms and labs managed by Student Technology Funds to provide students state-of-the art technology</i>	300
		12	<i>Number of specialized programs designed to develop leadership skills (outside the classroom)</i>	15
		197	<i>Number of interactions offered to engage students with business and industry partners</i>	250

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2020-2021 are reflected on the far left with AC 2022-2023 to the right and AC 2023-2024 to the far right. Blue italicized text were assessed in 2023-2024. Black standard text was assessed in 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Note 2: AC 2021-2022 was a year of reflection therefore no Annual Report was generated.

Four objectives support our efforts to respond to our market needs.

**Objective 1:**

**Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.**

Strategies:

- As required, increase the number of faculty members with industry-recognized certifications and competencies.
- Analyze current and projected academic program needs.
- Develop University funding opportunities for faculty development, education, certifications, and skill development.

### Metrics:

1. New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.
2. *Number of professional development opportunities ECE support staff participated in to advance knowledge.*
3. *Number of distinct professional development courses provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of online course delivery.*

### Metric:

1. **New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.**

### Findings:

Of the 105-degree programs currently offered at NSU, 77 (73%) were modified in AC 2022-2023. The major changes submitted to and approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents during AC 2022-2023 included one new post baccalaureate certificate and two new undergraduate degree programs submitted to and approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents.

- Ultrasound concentration in Radiologic Sciences
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre
- Bachelor of Science in Sport and Recreation Management

### Analysis:

Departmental curriculum review is a process that employs data and feedback from internal and external constituents to guide curriculum development and redesign. Curriculum development and redesign has become an economic-endorsed effort since curricula should mirror the needs of the global economic market. To produce well equipped and professionally skilled graduates for the 21st century work environment, the University collaborates with internal and external stakeholders to identify and understand the skills required by employers. Northwestern State University has created a forum by which business and industry partners can be actively engaged and communicate their knowledge of required skills.

The University and its partners consult and revise programs and courses as necessary as we work to realize a shared vision for the region. University departments assess local industry and business needs and set forth strategies for the region's workforce development system consistent with the state's strategic workforce goals. The University is committed to the economic vitality of the community and has confidence in our ability to redesign programs and curricula to meet workforce needs and evolving talent demands in local and global economies. Unless external approval is required, departments can revise or develop new courses, concentrations, and minors internally, with the approval of the Curriculum Review Council; new majors, degrees, and certificate programs require additional approval from the Board of Regents. It is evident by the analysis of data that the University is deeply committed to responding to workforce needs.

### Decision:

This process provides information for decision making by academic departments. Input from internal and external constituents allows the institution to remain at the forefront of leading trends. As a result, the institution remains focused on developing relevant programs and courses taught by highly qualified faculty, while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today's economic opportunities. Many CRC items involve new or revised courses that count towards degree requirements but are not required; to reflect this, the target will be revised to 75% instead of 100%.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

**Metric:**

**2. *Number of professional development opportunities for ECE support staff to advance knowledge to faculty.***

**Findings:**

During AC 2023-2024, Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) staff participated in 10 professional development opportunities, including conference and webinar offerings by the Louisiana Board of Regents, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, American College of Education, and third-party contractors for services such as Respondus and Moodle.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2020-2021, ECE captured data related to special sessions offered during Faculty On-Call Week, the year of the pandemic and the target was three annually. Based on the analysis of AC 2023-2024, ECE staff participated in 10 professional development opportunities.

It is critical that ECE staff remain current with the ever-evolving technological advancements and are proactive in developing meaningful content for faculty and staff. Opportunities for continuing education through internal and outside agencies will be initiated by staff within budget constraints. For a more consistent analysis moving forward, the number of professional development opportunities that ECE support staff participate in to advance knowledge will be measured instead of special sessions offered during Faculty On-Call Week.

**Decision:**

Due to advances in technology and software updates, ECE staff will participate in continuing education opportunities as available by the Louisiana Board of Regents, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and other reputable organizations. In turn, this will improve the quality of produced content by the ECE Staff.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of professional development courses provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of on-line course delivery.***

**Findings:**

During AC 2023-2024, 120 workshops were offered, encompassing 32 unique topics. ECE served 89 non-duplicated faculty or 172 duplicated attendees for this assessment cycle (Table 18). Based on feedback from participants, new workshops were developed which included: Creating Turnitin Assignments in Moodle, H5P Interactive Video, Creating Groups in Moodle, Stream Interactivity, and Microsoft Clipchamp.

Table 18  
*ECE Workshop Enrollment, AC 2020-2021 to AC 2023-2024.*

Assessment Cycle	Duplicated enrollment	Non-duplicated enrollment
2020-2021	500	200
2021-2022	360	192
2022-2023	187	97
2023-2024	172	89

### Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was 30 annual professional development courses for faculty and staff. ECE maintains a goal of 120 non-duplicated attendees per year in professional development sessions. Based on the analysis, 32 distinct professional development courses were provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of online course delivery.

For a more consistent analysis, the number of professional developments that ECE support staff provide year-round to faculty and the number of non-duplicated faculty and staff attendees will be measured. Professional development is generally initiated by ECE staff but may be provided at the institutional level or arranged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Professional development is also viewed as a scholarly activity and emphasis is placed on these types of activities (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 67).

### Decision:

Based on the analysis of AC 2023-2024 results, the following changes will be implemented:

- Develop new ways of delivering workshops and new topics to offer.
- Improve scheduling strategies, considering both topic selection and timing to increase attendance. This includes courses covering the Moodle upgrade, artificial intelligence, and video development

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

## Objective 2:

### Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands.

#### Strategies:

- Review current degree programs for productivity and connection to workforce.
- Monitor the development of public and private agreements.
- Develop or redesign programs to align with workforce demands.
- Monitor online learners' success and preparedness.

#### Metrics:

1. Number of bona-fide industry partners.
2. ***Percent of online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation.***
3. ***Percent of recent graduates pursuing an advanced degree.***

#### Metric:

### 1. Number of bona-fide industry partners

#### Findings:

An additional 24 industry partnerships were added in AC 2022-2023 to help strengthen the relationships which ultimately have an impact on students.

#### Analysis:

Industry partnerships are defined as those entities that serve on advisory councils, hire Northwestern State graduates, or provide scholarships, donations, internships, or training programs. As of Spring 2023, the University has 153 industry partnerships across four academic colleges. These business and industry relationships are vital to students' success upon graduation.

### Decision:

Collaboration between the University and its partners is a critical driver of the innovation economy. These agreements provide financial assistance to students or academic departments in the form of services or donations. Forging long-term relationships with industry partners provides opportunities for students through internships, cooperatives, and research. Further, these relationships provide firsthand knowledge about the immediate and long-term needs for an industry's workforce. In the broadest sense, these relationships create public good while satisfying the mission and objectives of each partner.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Department Heads, Deans

### Metric:

#### 2. *Percent of online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation.*

### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024, 96 of 332 (28.9%) online students completing an associate or bachelor's degree responded to the First Destination Survey on Handshake. To be consistent with NACE reporting standards, this metric uses the responses of recipients awarded associate and bachelor's degrees in the period from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Of these, 82 (85.4%) indicated that they would have a full-time job working in their degree field after graduation (i.e., employed, continuing their education, or serving in the military).

### Analysis:

Respondents are expected to *submit* their surveys through the platform when they are complete; however, a close examination of responses *in progress* indicates that many respondents simply save their document without formally submitting. Thus, both submitted and in progress surveys are included in our analysis, as was done for all undergraduates in SFA1: The Student Experience.

The overall response rate for AC 2023-2024 ( $96/332 = 28.9\%$ ) was statistically similar to that for AC 2022-2023 ( $168/494 = 34.0\%$ ); both response rates would be considered "good." The proportion of respondents in the *working* category also was statistically similar in both AC 2022-2023 ( $138/168 = 82.1\%$ ) and AC 2023-2024 ( $82/96 = 85.4\%$ ; two proportion z test,  $p > .05$ ).

### Decision:

Based on the results of AC 2023-2024, we will refine the process for collecting this data to improve the response rate of our graduating students. The University will continue to monitor students' preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends. These changes will improve the likelihood of students obtaining a full-time job working in their degree field.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Department Heads, Deans

### Metric:

#### 3. *Percent of recent graduates who are pursuing an advanced degree.*

### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024, all students graduating in August, December, and May, including 972 students earning a bachelor's degree were sent the First Destination Survey. Of those, 263 (27.1%) responded; 53 (20.2%) indicated they will pursue a master's or doctoral degree immediately after graduation.

### Analysis:

Both graduates submitting their survey and those with surveys still categorized as *in progress* are included in this analysis. The AC 2022-2023 response rate ( $327/1215 = 26.9\%$ ) was comparable to that in AC 2023-2024.

Although the proportion of students pursuing further education was higher in AC 2023-2024 than in AC 2022-2023 (20.2% vs. 16.2%), due to a small sample size this difference was not significant. However, over the two-year period from AC 2021-2022 to AC 2023-2024 this trend has been sustained and significant. In AC 2021-2022, the proportion seeking an advanced degree was 39 out of 355 (11.0%), significantly lower than the current rate of 53/263 (20.2%; 2-proportion z test,  $p < .001$ ).

### Decision:

Based on the analysis of AC 2023-2024, the process for collecting this data will be refined to better capture recent graduates pursuing an advanced degree. One potential feature that may interfere with measuring these results is that Handshake lumps together professional degrees (e.g., JD, MD, DPT) with other doctorates (e.g., PhD, EdD). Better instructions may reduce this potential confusion.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Department Heads, Deans

## Objective 3:

**Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies.**

### Strategies:

- Evaluate and implement employer recommendations on competencies needed in curriculum and program development.
- Use results to create or redesign programs aligned with workforce demands.

### Metrics:

1. Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.
2. *Number of distinct non-credit courses offered annually through Continuing Education.*
3. *Number of engagements between administration and business industry partners.*

### Metric:

1. **Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.**

### Findings:

During AC 2022-2023, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved two undergraduate graduate degrees in Sport and Recreation Management and Musical Theatre. A new post baccalaureate certificate in Ultrasound within the Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences was also approved (Table 19).

### Analysis:

During 2022-2023, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved one post baccalaureate certificate and two new undergraduate degree programs for Northwestern State. This process involves a review of market demand data and input from stakeholders by departments to determine changes needed to existing curriculum and future academic needs.



Table 19

*New Programs Submitted on Behalf of Northwestern State University and Approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents for 2022-2023 (Fiscal Year 07/2022–07/2023)*

CIP Code	Degree	Subject/ Discipline	Approved
310504	BS	SPORT & RECREATION MANAGEMENT	2023/03
500509	BFA	MUSICAL THEATRE	2022/08
510910	PBC	ULTRASOUND	2022/08

The post baccalaureate ultrasound concentration within the Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences provides students with the skills necessary to operate sonographic equipment and control images through various enhancements. Medical imaging studies have been a cornerstone in medical diagnosis for decades; however, technological advances and the addition of new imaging modalities now place radiologic sciences as one of the most dynamic, expanding, and high demand fields of studies. This program will prepare students to practice competently, safely, and effectively as in the specialized area of ultrasound.

The approval of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre was a significant addition to the Northwestern State University Department of Theatre and Dance, one of only 150 programs in the United State accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The program immerses students in a variety of performance techniques and styles in acting, dancing, voice, speech, and singing, as well as the studies of multicultural plays and musicals, music theory and the collaborative process. As the only standalone program offered by a public institution in Louisiana, BFA in Musical Theatre graduates can define their own unique path to a meaningful career and life in the performing arts including Broadway, national tours, and regional theaters.

In March 2023, the University received approval for the Bachelor of Science degree in Sport and Recreation Management. This program provides completers with entry into the sport and recreation field and jobs in marketing for sport and recreation, athletic administration, gameday management, sport psychology, legal and ethical issues in sports, contemporary leadership, facility management, sales and revenue generation, and sports media. The degree will help graduates develop skills in maintenance marketing, management, and finances in the sport and recreation industry. The program differs from similar programs offered elsewhere in Louisiana because it includes a minor in business.

The addition of the post baccalaureate certificate and two baccalaureate programs approved in 2022-2023 combined with programs previously approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents includes 26 programs or certificates approved in the last six years.

The development and proposal of new degree programs and certificates require an analysis to determine current and future program needs and may be driven by the department, by alumni input, or by employers. At all levels of the continuum, academic departments and employers work closely together to analyze workforce needs and develop curriculum and training to meet those needs.

#### Decision:

Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to continue to remain at the forefront of leading trends. As a result, the institution remains engaged in activities that lead to the production of relevant programs while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today's economic opportunities.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

**Metric:**

**2. *Number of distinct non-credit course offerings annually through continuing education.***

**Findings:**

AC 2023-2024 is the first year to assess non-credit course offerings offered through ECE. During this period, ECE offered 1278 distinct face to face course offerings and online career training opportunities.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2023-2024, the target was 1200 continuing education offerings. Continuing education is an opportunity for students to pursue learning opportunities not focused on a degree outcome. It also provides professional and community enrichment by delivering innovative, quality education and support services to learners in pursuit of lifelong learning, professional development, or career advancement.

A diverse range of courses were offered during AC 2023-2024 totaling 1278, which included face to face and online course offerings. Third party agencies are contracted through ECE to provide on-demand training on a wide range of topics including real estate license preparation, human resource management, computer skills, and stress management. ECE also solicits regional and University professionals to offer courses locally, including ceramics, notary public exam preparation, painting, water aerobics, and dancing. Through a partnership with the Office of Motor Vehicles, the University also offers a driver's education course. Customized training and refreshers for business and industry partners are administered within the ECE.

**Decision:**

Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to advance opportunities in this area. As a result, the institution remains engaged in activities that lead to the production of relevant continuing education programs while preparing students to have validated skills in learning.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of engagements between administration and business industry partners.***

**Findings:**

During AC 2023-2024, 38 engagements between administration and business industry partners occurred.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2023-2024, the target number of engagements between administration and business industry partners was 10 annually. To be responsive to our business industry partners, engagement with local and regional economic development entities must occur. Industry and academic leaders work together to drive innovation, solve problems, and create solutions. These strong partnerships help stimulate local economies and develop a more skilled workforce. The University-industry partnership also focuses on upskilling current employees to bridge the skills gaps in the workforce.

The engagement that the University had with local and regional chamber boards and economic development boards and Louisiana Economic Development (38 in total), nurtures innovation and initiative within the team while contributing to the success of a skilled and adaptable workforce. The result is potential for all parties to forge lasting partnerships to their mutual benefit.

### Decision:

The institution will continue to strengthen and build upon these relationships by systematically tracking and following up on each engagement. To enable this, in AC 2024-2025, we will develop a template for collecting data on engagements with business and industry partners.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach; Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs; Deans; Department Heads

## Objective 4:

### Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead.

#### Strategies:

- Increase efficiency in which information is collected, analyzed, and disseminated that is needed to make institutional decisions that affect our graduates' abilities to work, learn, lead, and achieve success in their chosen careers.
- Create a process for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.
- Collect feedback from alumni, advisory councils, and employers.

#### Metrics:

1. *Number of classrooms and labs managed by Student Technology funds to provide students with state-of-the art technology.*
2. *Number of specialized programs or organizations designed to develop leadership skills outside of the classroom.*
3. *Number of interactions offered to engage students with business and industry partners.*

#### Metric:

1. *Number of classrooms and labs managed by Student Technology Funds to provide students with state-of-the art technology.*

#### Findings:

During AC 2023-2024, 200 classrooms and 68 computer labs were managed through the Student Technology Fee to provide students with state-of-the-art technology solely for the purpose of supporting and improving student life and learning.

#### Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the Office of Instructional Technology and Student Support provided both on and off-campus support for various aspects of technology utilized by the student population. In addition to user support, the University managed and maintained 68 computer labs across all NSULA instructional sites and library research stations. The office is also tasked with the design, installation, and maintenance of 200 classrooms spread across all instructional sites with a majority being either distance learning dedicated or distance learning capable.

A Student Technology Fee is assessed to all students registered at the University and students exercise the primary decision over how the money will be spent. This process is executed through a self-sustaining student advisory committee.

**Decision:**

Technology is ever-changing, and the University implements a plan of action to maintain these technologies. This plan, referring to Student Technology Fees, will continue to be evaluated to ensure that students are better prepared for the workplace.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

**Metric:**

**2. *Number of specialized programs or organizations designed to develop leadership skills outside of the classroom***

**Finding:**

During AC 2023-2024, 12 unique specialized programs were identified that aim to develop leadership skills outside the classroom. These include College Panhellenic Council, Demon Mentor Network, Demon Volunteers in Progress (V.I.P.), Demons in Government, Leadership NSU, National Honor Society of Leadership and Success, NSU Freshman Connectors, Presidential Ambassadors, Presidential Leadership Program and Alumni, Purple Jacket Honor Society, Student Government Association, and Student-Athlete Advisory Council.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2023-2024, the target number of specialized leadership programs (10) was exceeded. Throughout the various programs, students engaged with professional staff, peer mentors, and like-minded individuals. Through the diverse leadership programs students could positively contribute to campus life at NSU and the community at large.

These organizations discussed leadership principles and topics like ethics, communication, conflict-resolution and working in groups. Students engaged in productive self-reflection, and learned to create inclusive environments, while learning about various leadership styles. Intensive, hands-on learning is a critical component of these leadership programs.

**Decision:**

The University believes that leadership can be taught, learned, and practiced. As a result, leadership training has been incorporated in a wide variety of settings. In AC 2024-2025, we will search for additional programs offered by the University, especially those associated with academic units, to include in this effort.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of interactions offered to engage students with business and industry partners***

**Finding:**

During AC 2023-2024, all four colleges at the University reported interactions for students to engage with business and industry partners. These 197 opportunities included career fairs, guest speakers and presentations, field trips to visit business and industry partners, class, and service-learning projects.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2023-2024, interaction with business and industry leaders enhanced student knowledge about their chosen career path. Students learned about the appropriate working environment in the industry

and interacted with current employees. It provided students with better clarity about the real-world experience of work and current trends in the market.

#### Decision:

The University will create a standard reporting template for Deans and Department Heads to gather accurate and consistent data to evaluate this metric. This template will be distributed each semester and will gather students' interactions with business industry partners in the areas of career fairs, guest speakers, field trips, auditions, interviews, and service-learning projects.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director for Economic Development, Innovation and Outreach, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

#### Comprehensive Summary

The University is evolving and becoming an even greater partner in our state's and nation's economic vitality. The analysis reveals a united effort in the responsiveness of University departments across specific occupations and degree programs combined with alumni who reveal satisfaction with preparation and preparedness for the workforce.

The University eagerly engages in partnerships with employers, embraces curriculum alignment and redesign, and prepares alumni to enter the workforce to embark upon long-lasting, successful careers as educators, engineers, law enforcement personnel, lawyers, doctors, nurses, artists, authors, business owners, chief executive officers, legislators, military service members, and other professions of elite status. Our institution has a long history of being a responsive university.

Maintaining and enhancing the institution's responsiveness to students and employers is important. Activities targeted for development are based on the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to make informed and effective decisions about the alignment of Northwestern's program offerings to market demand. The University's efforts must be agile to meet the needs of constituents.

The institution must continue to build upon its existing partnerships to provide additional pathways for students, engage business and industry partners through its advisory councils, and solicit their feedback for program alignment with workforce needs. To this end, the institution will maintain and enhance strategies that allow it to be market responsive and deliver educational programs that directly address the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

#### Supporting Documentation and References:

Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>

National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=561>

## Strategic Focus Area 4–Community Enrichment

This strategic focus area is benchmarked by world-class performing arts programming, robust alumni engagement, mutually beneficial donor relationships, institutional culture of collaboration and accountability, and thriving town-gown relationships in cities where University instructional sites are located. We surveyed alumni, business and industry representatives, educators, appointed and elected officials, and others to determine their interest in our existing community enrichment programs and the effectiveness of these activities. We also requested their recommendations for expansion of community enrichment efforts. Based on survey results, we have numerous new initiatives under way and existing programs have been enhanced to address various aspects of our plan for continued and increased community enrichment, shared governance, and the engagement of University stakeholders.

Growth in AC 2023-2024 includes:

- The number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions has increased by 17.24% since AC 2019-2020 surpassing pre-COVID totals.
- The number of off campus performances has increased substantially through the addition of numerous music and voice faculty performances regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Number of users on CAPA social media outlets has more than doubled since AC 2019-2020 through promotional efforts and the addition of new accounts.
- Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets has increased due to continued promotions and relevancy of content.
- For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, the NSU Foundation secured \$9,319,869.04 in private funding for the institution. This is up 41% from \$6,606,623.86 recorded during AC 2022-2023.
- The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, was 1,936. This is up 4% from 1,861 recorded during the 2022-2023 cycle.
- As of June 30, 2024, restricted endowment assets totaled \$71,102,958 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled \$881,520. Totals are up from approximately \$44,294,756 and \$284,487 reported during the previous cycle.
- As of June 30, 2024, 34,123 users were registered on the “DemoNSUnite” alumni networking and mentoring platform.
- For AC 2023-2024, the grand total of students’ community/public service hours was 272,792; the number of Campus and Community Partners with whom students collaborated was 194.
- A brand perception survey was completed in 2023-2024, results will be used to set baselines for AC 2024-2025.

By 2028, we will have experienced tremendous growth and expansion in all areas of community enrichment. World-class performance arts programming will be evidenced through increased participation and widespread program awareness. Robust alumni engagement and mutually beneficial donor relationships will be revealed through increases in communication, participation, and financial support. An institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability, as well as thriving town-gown relationships, will be illustrated through the growth of internal and external partnerships and increased brand identity and awareness. By achieving success in community enrichment, the institution will move ever closer to becoming “the nation’s premier regional university.”

We will continue our dialogue with all stakeholders to best identify and modify the key indicators of program improvement (Table 20).

Table 20  
*Metrics for Community Enrichment*

AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	Community Enrichment Metrics	AC 2023–2028 Target
		31,713	<i>Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions</i>	35,350
		196	<i>Number of off-campus performances</i>	350
		36,996	<i>Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets</i>	50,000
29,841	30,274	31,426	<i>Frequency of e-communications and number of participants</i>	33,000
24		24	<i>Number of Alumni and chapter events held nationwide</i>	40
977		1,321	<i>Number of Alumni Association members</i>	2,000
	9,813	10,027	<i>Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets</i>	11,000
	6,606,623.86	\$9,319,869	<i>Amount of annual private support</i>	\$7,000,000
	1,861	1,936	<i>Number of individual contributors</i>	2,200
		\$71,102,958	<i>Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets</i>	\$70,000,000/ \$1,000,000
		\$881,520		
	In progress	Complete	<i>Reestablish platform for alumni networking and mentoring</i>	Complete
		34,123	<i>Number of registered users on “DemoNSUnite”</i>	1,500
	In progress	Contracted and designed	<i>Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines</i>	Complete
97		10347	<i>Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off campus instructional sites</i>	100
	294,307	250,732	<i>Number of hours students spend providing professional services (internships)</i>	350,000
		58	<i>Number of institutional partners with articulation agreements</i>	100
	In progress	Complete	<i>Establish context experts in respective fields to serve as editors</i>	Complete/Complete
	In progress	In progress	<i>Launch an enhanced website designed to meet the needs of 21st century learners</i>	Complete/Complete
	In progress	In progress	<i>Assess website traffic and set baselines</i>	Complete/Complete

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2020-2021 are reflected on the far left with AC 2022-2023 to the right and AC 2023-2024 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2023-2024. Black standard text was assessed in 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Note 2: AC 2021-2022 was a year of reflection therefore no Annual Report was generated.

Five objectives support community enrichment.

## Objective 1:

### Expand world class performing arts program

#### Strategies:

- Increase emphasis in Natchitoches and other communities on the excellence of Creative and Performing Arts at the University.
- Increase regional and national recognition of “The Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band.”
- Expand advertising for other groups such as the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, NSU Jazz Orchestra, and the NSU Dance Company.
- Expand performance schedules to include state conferences, community events, arts festivals, and master classes for citizens from Natchitoches and surrounding communities.
- Increase regional and national recognition of our Creative and Performing Arts programs through events such as the President’s Command Performance, a high-profile program that attracts alumni and other friends from the local community and far beyond.
- Each year induct distinguished alumni into the Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame, focusing widespread positive attention on the University and its music, dance, theater, and visual arts programs.
- Expand social media activities to increase attention in the community and develop stronger relationships between the University and stakeholders who have an interest in Creative and Performing Arts.

#### Metrics:

1. *Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions*
2. *Number of off-campus performances*
3. *Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets*

#### Metric:

1. *Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions*

#### Findings:

The number of patrons attending on-campus events are up from 2019-2020. (Table 21)

#### Analysis:

The number of patrons attending on campus events has now surpassed pre-COVID totals. Art exhibit events have contributed heavily to the overall increase in attendance.

Table 21

#### *Attendance at Campus Events*

Event	Attendance				% change 2019-2020 to 2023-2024
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	
Classic on the Cane Marching Contest	9,500	9,500	9,500	10,000	5.26%
GALA	15,000	15,000	10,000	12,000	20.0%
GALA at the Strand			1,100	-	-
Theatre/Dance Mainstage	6,700	6,700	3,700	3,743	1.16%
Journalism Day	130	130	(cancelled)	200	-
Symphony Concerts	2,200	3,000	1,500	1,500	0.00%
Art Exhibits	2,500	2,500	1,250	4,270	241.60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,030</b>	<b>36,830</b>	<b>27,050</b>	<b>31,713</b>	<b>17.24%</b>



**Decision:**

The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to host annual on campus events with a goal of reaching capacity for each venue. To increase annual participation, additional performances would require increases in faculty/staff resources.

**Metric:**

**2. Number of off-campus performances**

**Findings:**

Number of off-campus performances are up from 2019-2020. (Table 22):

**Analysis:**

The number of off-campus performances in 2023-2024 has increased substantially from the total recorded in 2019-20. The increase is driven by music and voice faculty performances regionally, nationally, and internationally. The only area in which there has been a decrease is musical theatre performances which were all cancelled during COVID, the practice of which has not resumed.

**Decision:**

The number of off campus performances has a healthy window for growth and the School of Creative and Performing Arts will seek more opportunities in this area, as well as a stronger way to track such performances. The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to explore strategies to become more visible throughout the state and region.

Table 22

*Number of off-campus performances*

Event	Performances				Change 2018-2019 to 2019-2020
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	
Musical Theatre @ Civic Organizations	5	10	10	0	100%
Design Center Students with outside contracts	6	6	8	8	0.0%
Voice Faculty @ Community Events	1	4	4	33	725%
Music Faculty Regional/National Symphony Performances	8	8	4	122	2,950%
Modern in Motion Dance Concert	2	2	2	4	100%
Mardi Gras Balls Performance	2	2	2	2	0.0%
The Natchitoches Christmas Parade	1	1	1	1	0.0%
CAPA on the Cane		1	(cancelled)	1	-
Voice Faculty @ Regional/National Performances				9	-
Music Faculty @International Performances				16	-
Total	25	34	31	196	532%

**Metric:**

**3. Number of users on CAPA social media outlets**

**Findings:**

Number of users on CAPA social media outlets are up from AC 2019-20120 (Table 23).

Table 23  
Users on CAPA Social Media Outlets

Organization/Platform	Users				Increase 2019-2020 to 2023-2024
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	
CAPA Facebook	2,866	3,448	3,718	5,700	53.31%
SON Facebook	4,492	5,061	5,801	9,829	69.44%
Theatre/Dance Facebook	1,698	1,773	1,863	8,300	345.52%
NSU Choirs Facebook	176	1,011	1,121	1,900	69.49%
CAPA Twitter	1,194	1,414	1,425	1,461	2.53%
SON Twitter	829	951	1,003	1,056	5.28%
NSU Theatre Alumni Facebook	350	1,750	320	500	56.25%
NSU Choirs Alumni Facebook			182	340	139.72%
NSU Choir Instagram				1,700	-
NSU Flute Studio				4,410	-
NSU Horn Studio				1,800	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,605</b>	<b>15,408</b>	<b>15,433</b>	<b>36,996</b>	<b>139.72%</b>

**Analysis:**

The number of users on CAPA social media outlets continues to rise and is significantly above the target.

**Decision:**

Promotions of special events and increased financial investments will help social media outlets continue to grow. The 2023-2028 target will be adjusted to 50,000 users.

**Responsibility:** Director of Creative and Performing Arts, Vice President External Affairs, Director of Marketing and Branding

**Objective 2:**

**Increase robust alumni engagement**

**Strategies:**

- Expand communications through online initiatives such as the “Purple Pulse” e-newsletter and “DemoNSUnite” networking platform to provide opportunities and information to alumni and to increase membership and participation in alumni activities.
- Utilize the Natchitoches Alumni Chapter as a model to expand the role and involvement of community chapters across the state and nation in University alumni initiatives; increase the number of chapter events nationwide.
- Increase social media activities such as Twitter Chats, Alumni Spotlights, “Why I Love NSU” campaigns, and other programs.
- Inform soon-to-be graduates of opportunities for participation in alumni events and endeavors through expansion of the Gradfest program, free first-year Alumni Association membership, and the new Fork ‘em Farewell program.

- Establish programs to better connect graduates with careers and jobs through social media and websites, new databases, links to Fast Start, partnerships with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, electronic and magazine advertising and the establishment of a career-based Speakers Bureau and Directory.
- Maintain a dues-based Alumni Association program to include expanded benefits and a membership card with tracking capabilities.
- Increase number of active chapters, alumni events, and activities throughout Louisiana and across the nation.

**Metrics:**

1. *Frequency of e-communications and number of participants*
2. *Number of Alumni and chapter events held nationwide*
3. *Number of Alumni Association members*
4. *Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets*

**Metric:**

1. *Frequency of e-communications and number of participants*

**Findings:**

The Purple Pulse e-newsletter is sent monthly to 31,426 alumni (number of alumni with active email addresses on file). This is up 3.8% from 30,274 reported during AC 2021-2022.

**Analysis:**

Continued growth of verified e-mail addresses is attributed to utilizing data mining strategies. Monthly e-communications to alumni and supporters continue to assist in fundraising and event awareness activities. Open and click rates are reviewed on an ongoing basis and changes were made to increase interactions.

**Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to utilize data mining strategies to capture valid email addresses. A third-party data mining firm will be contracted every three years to assist with updates and membership renewals.

**Metric:**

2. *Number of alumni and chapter events nationwide*

**Findings:**

NSU has 24 active alumni chapters nationwide. No new chapters were established during AC 2023-2024.

**Analysis:**

Efforts to add additional chapters have continued but did not result in the establishment of new chapters during the 2023-2024 cycle. Staff resources were dedicated to sustaining the 24 chapters currently in place and increasing database capabilities for future engagement efforts. (Table 24).

**Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to identify opportunities to add chapters in areas where alumni are concentrated. A focus on sustaining existing chapters will continue as post COVID event activities have resumed and staff members are actively traveling to chapter events. Self-sustaining activity will continue to be a focus at chapter events to ensure a strong base of consistent support is established.

Table 24

*NSU Alumni Chapters*

City	State	Name
Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles Chapter
Washington, DC	DC	Washington DC Chapter
Orlando	FL	Orlando Chapter
Pensacola	FL	Emerald Coast Chapter
Atlanta	GA	Atlanta, GA Chapter
Bloomington	IL	Bloomington, IL Chapter
Alexandria	LA	Central LA Chapter
Baton Rouge	LA	Baton Rouge Chapter
Houma	LA	South Louisiana Chapter
Lafayette	LA	Lafayette Chapter
Lake Charles	LA	Southwest LA Chapter
Mandeville	LA	Northshore Chapter

City	State	Name
Monroe	LA	Northeast LA Chapter
Natchitoches	LA	Natchitoches Chapter
New Orleans	LA	New Orleans Chapter
Shreveport	LA	Northwest LA Chapter
Raleigh	NC	Carolina’s Chapter
New York	NY	New York Chapter
Seattle	OR	Pacific Northwest Chapter
Austin	TX	Austin Chapter
Dallas	TX	DFW Chapter
Houston	TX	Houston Chapter
San Antonio	TX	San Antonio Chapter
Tyler	TX	East Texas Chapter

**Metric:**

**3. Number of Alumni Association members**

**Findings:**

Since January 1, 2024, 1,321 alumni have renewed their membership, up 35% from 977 reported in 2021.

**Analysis:**

Consulting with a third party to assist with membership efforts has proven successful. The most recent data campaign was effective in securing updates and membership renewals.

**Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will utilize data mining strategies to append contact information. A third-party consultant will be contracted every three years to secure updates and assist with membership efforts.

**Metric:**

**4. Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets**

**Findings:**

The NSU Alumni Association *Facebook* “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2024 were 6,800. The NSU Alumni Association *Twitter* page has 2,016 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2023. The *Instagram* page has 1,211 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2024. Total active users among the three outlets number 10,027, an increase of 2.2% from 9,813 reported for the fiscal year ending 2023.

**Analysis:**

Growth of social media outlets is attributed to increased participation of volunteers and additional funds dedicated to advertising. Budget reductions led to the elimination of the University advancement marketing position and required a shift in social media responsibilities to other staff.

**Decision:**

The NSU Alumni Association will continue the use of social media platforms with a focus on increasing exposure. Paid advertisement and sponsored posts on these platforms will continue to be utilized to increase engagement. We will add a marketing position for University Advancement when financially feasible.

**Responsibility:** Director of Alumni Affairs

## Objective 3:

### Promote mutually beneficial donor relationships

#### Strategies:

- Increase number of staff members with job duties directly related to the cultivation and stewardship aspects of fundraising.
- Promote an “every contribution counts” concept to engage supporters not currently giving back to the University.
- Rebrand the “Columns Fund” annual giving program to provide an income stream to support non-scholarship needs at the University and endow a portion of revenue and contributions to generate perpetual earnings.
- Increase focus on income-generating initiatives such as the acquisition of property contiguous with the campus that will create new revenues and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area.
- Increase on-campus and off-campus events for prospective and current donors with a focus on recognition and awareness of giving opportunities.
- Showcase the positive impact of private funding through messages to alumni and public.

#### Metrics:

1. *Amount of annual private support*
2. *Number of individual contributors*
3. *Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets*

#### Metric:

##### **1. Amount of annual private support**

#### Findings

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, the NSU Foundation secured \$9,319,869.04 in private funding for the institution. This is up 41% from \$6,606,623.86 recorded during AC 2022-2023.

#### Analysis:

Non-revenue contributions continue to increase. New sources of non-revenue contributions include additional grant funding and public-private partnerships. Existing donors’ average gift amounts have also increased.

#### Decision:

Development officers will continue to seek contributions from both current and new donors. As development officers build relationships through the cultivation process, more opportunities for solicitation will arise, resulting in increased contributions. Reductions in the number of development positions will restrict overall capacity to secure non-revenue contributions. It is recommended that additional development positions be added as soon as financially feasible.

#### Metric:

##### **2. Number of individual contributors**

#### Findings:

The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, was 1,936. This is up 4% from 1,861 recorded during the 2022-2023 cycle.

### Analysis:

The number of individual donors has increased. The increase is primarily due to past donors re-engaging post COVID. Efficient donor relations staffing has also played a role in retaining existing donors through timely statement processing and increased benefit promotion.

### Decision:

Donor relations staff will continue to focus on retention strategies and assist with promoting mutually beneficial donor relationships. Additional fundraising staff is recommended to increase the number of individual donors.

### Metric:

#### **3. Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets**

### Findings:

As of June 30, 2024, restricted endowment assets totaled \$71,102,958 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled \$881,520. Totals are up from approximately \$44,294,756 and \$284,487 reported during the previous cycle.

### Analysis:

Restricted endowment growth has continued by securing large, endowed gifts and state matching funds. Unrestricted endowment growth has continued and is now on track to reach the target. While reporting on both principal and market values of the restricted and unrestricted portion of the endowment illustrates accurate values, it is only a snapshot that is subject to market volatility. Reporting on principal values would better illustrate growth and fundraising performance.

### Decision:

The NSU Foundation will continue to promote the “Columns Fund” by educating donors on the purpose and importance of giving to the unrestricted account. As increases in unrestricted giving are realized, and expenses are mitigated, an annual percentage will be set aside and added to the NSU Foundation endowment to ensure perpetuity. Annual yield from the endowment will be applied to the corpus to grow the fund until annual unrestricted budgetary needs can be paid through interest earnings. Principal values will be reported in AC 2024-2025.

**Responsibility:** Vice President External Affairs, Director of Development

## **Objective 4:**

### **Expand institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.**

#### Strategies:

- Expand decision-making at the administrative level through an internal Leadership Team structure that includes more than 20 individuals from across the campus.
- Encourage alumni, supporters, and other stakeholders to act in an advisory capacity for University activities.
- Develop an overarching communications strategy designed to expand validation of the University’s brand, core goals, and mission directed at all stakeholders.

Metrics:

1. *Re-establish platform for alumni networking and mentoring*
2. *Number of registered users on “DemoNSUnite”*
3. *Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines*

**Metric:**

**1. *Re-establish platform for alumni networking and mentoring.***

Findings:

As of June 30, 2023, the “DemoNSUnite” platform for alumni networking and mentoring was reestablished. The site was beta tested through a soft launch through October of 2023 and now has 34,123 active users.

Analysis:

Reestablishing the platform was challenging with limited staff resources. Collaboration with the NSU Career Center and support from the NSU Alumni Association board of directors increased production bandwidth and accelerated progress.

Decision:

The site has been re-established and registered users will be actively tracked as an ongoing performance metric.

**Responsibility:** Director of Alumni Affairs; University Advancement Database Manager

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of registered users on “DemoNSUnite”***

Findings:

As of June 30, 2024, 34,123 users were registered on the “DemoNSUnite” alumni networking and mentoring platform.

Analysis:

Initially comprised of 64 Alumni Association and Foundation board members who engaged in the “soft launch”, the site went live in October of 2023 and now has 34,123 registered users.

Decision:

Continue to promote the site and increase the number of registered users.

**Responsibility:** Director of Alumni Affairs; University Advancement Database Manager

**Metric:**

**4. *Conduct Brand Perception Survey and set baselines***

Findings:

NSU has partnered with Hanover Research to conduct a comprehensive brand perception analysis. The target populations have been identified, including current faculty and staff, current students, former students (non-completers), alumni within 25 years of graduation, Foundation Board members, and Alumni Board members. Survey items have been selected.

### Analysis:

Since the survey has not been launched, no analysis has been completed.

### Decision:

- Launch the survey in August 2024, targeting 39,500 participants. The survey will close in November 2024.
- Set baselines and targets for brand perception based on the results of the survey.
- Identify actions based on analysis of the results.

**Responsibility:** Executive Assistant to the President/Director of Strategic Initiatives; Director of Marketing and Branding

## Objective 5:

### Nurture thriving town-gown relationships

#### Strategies:

- Plan activities such as athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs to increase awareness of the University at sites away from the main campus.
- Identify and establish a database of graduates who earned degrees online or at sites other than the main campus to help provide a network to expand town-gown relationships at all the University's educational sites.
- Promote increased involvement of online and off-campus learners in both community and University events and programs.
- Expand community service projects and internships involving Northwestern students with a focus on youth programs, food bank initiatives, beautification, preservation, economic development, literacy, improved health, and other initiatives that provide valuable experiences for students, positive recognition for the University, and beneficial assistance to the communities.
- Increase cooperative programs with the community and technical colleges, public schools, business and industry, and other entities that cultivate town-gown relationships for the University, not just at its main campus in Natchitoches but also in Shreveport-Bossier City, Leesville-Fort Polk, Alexandria, and Marksville, where the University offers classes at the Tunica Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resources Center.

#### Metrics:

1. *Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off-campus instructional sites.*
2. *Number of hours students spend serving the community through projects and internships.*
3. *Number of institutional partners with articulation agreements.*
4. *Establish content experts in respective fields to serve as editors.*
5. *Launch an enhanced website designed to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.*
6. *Assess website traffic and set baselines.*

#### Metric:

1. ***Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off-campus instructional sites***

#### Findings:

103 events were held in AC 2023-2024 at off-campus instructional sites, up from 97 in AC 2020-2021.



### Analysis:

Event and activity growth at our off-campus instructional sites continues to thrive. Many events previously exclusive to the main campus, such as Freshman Connection, Welcome Week, Gradfest, and Student Activity Board events, are now held at our off-campus instructional sites. Other activities include events such as the “Victory Tour” promoting athletic events, “Transfer Day” highlighting students transferring in from 2-year institutions, and “Military Appreciation Day” at instructional sites located on military installations.

### Decision:

The University will continue to develop strategic initiatives and activities and host events at off-campus instructional sites. Growth in this area is possible and increases will continue with proper planning and adequate funding.

### Metric:

## ***2. Number of hours students spend serving the community through professional projects and internships.***

### Findings:

For AC 2023-2024, students’ professional community/public service effort involved at least 250,732 hours of work. This category of community service includes activities that draw upon students’ professional skills and training, such as classroom assistance (pre-K through 12) and healthcare clinicals, and is usually connected to enrollment in specific courses. The bulk of NSU’s community and public service contributions (92%) involve students performing and polishing their professional skills. Students in this category collaborated with 132 Campus and Community Partners.

For AC 2023-2024, NSU’s professional skills service hours have an estimated economic impact of at least \$1,817,807; even though this is skilled labor, its value has been calculated at federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.

### Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024 we documented approximately 6.92% fewer professional hours than AC 2022-2023’s total of 269,375. This decline is only slightly greater than the decrease in enrollment for the same period (-5.77%). Nevertheless, the total number of campus and community partners has increased slightly, from 191 to 193, providing additional community/public service opportunities in 2024-2025.

### Decision:

The University will:

- Develop new opportunities for students to learn and practice professional skills in community/public service activities through classes, practica, and internships
- Provide faculty and staff resources with which to track, enhance, and promote student community/public service.
- Efficiently compile and report university-wide community/public service data at the end of each Spring semester.

**Responsibility:** Executive Director of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, Vice President of External Affairs, Director of Service-Learning, Deans and Department Heads.

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of institutional partners with articulation agreements.***

**Findings:**

NSU is currently engaged in 89 cooperative endeavors agreements with 58 government agencies and institutions: <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/articulation-partnership-agreements/>. The potential for growth in this area is large, as the benefits the University can provide to private partners are vast and readily available.

**Analysis:**

Growth of articulation and partnership agreements allow for expanded academic flexibility and assist greatly in increasing the number of transfer students.

**Decision:**

The University will continue to seek partnerships with other institutions and government entities.

**Responsibility:** Director of Economic Development, Innovation, and Outreach

**Metric:**

**4. *Establish content experts in respective fields to serve as editors.***

**Findings:**

Content experts were identified in 2022-2023 to help with messaging and communication of value propositions to prospective students and their families. For 2023-2024 content experts were reengaged.

**Analysis:**

Northwestern State University engaged Ted Stoik and Paul F. Brown, both accomplished higher education content writers, to handle tasks related to student recruitment. They effectively communicated the University's value propositions and detailed the program descriptions and career opportunities for over 70 degree programs.

**Decision:**

Continue to utilize the services of content experts in respective fields to serve as editors and copywriters on an as-needed basis.

**Responsibility:** Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Strategic Initiatives

**Metric:**

**5. *Launch an enhanced website designed to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.***

**Findings:**

Northwestern State University contacted three website development agencies and selected a primary agency for the website redevelopment project.

**Analysis:**

Push10 is the preferred agency for website development for Northwestern State University. We are in the initial stages of contract negotiation and identifying funding sources. Three conference calls have been conducted with Push10, and negotiations and site surveys are underway.

**Decision:**

Continue to utilize the services of Push10 and develop a project roadmap for website development, outlining phases of implementation after contract approvals.

**Responsibility:** Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Strategic Initiatives

**Metric:**

**6. Assess website traffic and set baselines.**

**Findings:**

The website redevelopment project is currently in the contract negotiation phase, so no assessment of traffic and baselines has been completed.

**Analysis:**

The redevelopment of the Northwestern State University website has shifted from an internal to an external initiative. Once the contract is approved and funding sources are identified, the preferred website development agency, Push10, will begin the redevelopment phases. During the implementation and rollout of the new website, traffic sources and baselines will be established at the domain and subdomain levels to ensure effective monitoring of website traffic and flow, benefiting SEO and SEM.

**Decision:**

Proceed with the website development initiative and install monitoring tools from Google, Bing, and Moz on the new Northwestern State University website.

**Responsibility:** Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Strategic Initiatives

### Comprehensive Summary

Community Enrichment is essential in increasing the major growth areas of enrollment and funding. Every aspect plays a unique role in achieving success in these areas. Whether it be national recognition for world class performing arts or local prestige through regional outreach and community service, the identity and reputation of the institution are crucial to continued success.

To ensure Community Enrichment initiatives continue to thrive, respective increases in financial investments will be required. As state funding decreases, funding from private sources will be necessary to sustain growth. By building the perpetual endowment fund and investing in programs that provide a return on investment, the institution will be able to achieve financial independence and continue toward the goal of becoming the nation's premiere regional university.

## Community and Public Service Within Its Mission

**Community/Public Service Mission Statement:** Northwestern is committed to serving the citizens in its region through organized community and public service projects that are relevant and meaningful to the volunteers and to those being served. Service projects that target community-identified needs enhance (and are enhanced by) University-community partnership.

**Purpose:** Community/Public Service projects provide an avenue for students to gain direct experience working on projects that address one or more of these 11 community/public service focus areas:

- Healthcare (Physical & Emotional)
- Sports & Fitness
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship

- Economic Development
- Creative & Performing Arts
- Event Planning & Entertainment
- Historical & Cultural Preservation
- Community Safety & Emergency Preparedness
- Protection of Vulnerable Children & Adults
- Combatting Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness

**Data Collection:** The University has an efficient plan for tracking and reporting student participation in Community/Public Service. These service hours come from three major divisions of the University:

- Academic units
- The Student Experience
- Athletics

Administrators within each division assist the Director of Service Learning with compiling this data at the end of each Spring semester. Despite this systematic approach, it is likely that some service contributions have been overlooked; thus, please consider the totals below as minimum estimates.

### **AC 2023-2024 Key Findings (with comparisons to AC 2022-2023)**

- For AC 2023-2024, students' total community/public service hours was at least 272,792, approximately 7.5% fewer hours than AC 2022-2023's grand total of 294,307.5. This decline is greater than the decrease in enrollment (-5.77%).
- As a result, the estimated economic impact of NSU's service hours declined from AC 2022-2023's grand total of \$2,133,729 to \$1,977,742 for AC 2023-2024, both calculated at federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.
- For AC 2023-2024, students collaborated with 194 Campus and Community Partners, an increase of 3 over AC 2022-2023.
- For AC 2023-2024, NSU's Community/Public Service projects addressed all 11 focus areas, unchanged from AC 2022-2023.
- For AC 2023-2024, 13 NSU students made four service-learning oral presentations and one service-learning poster presentation at the 2024 University of Louisiana System Academic Summit on Experiential Learning. At this conference, each institution is usually limited to five service-learning presentations. During AC 2022-2023 when NSU hosted the conference, 29 NSU students made 12 service-learning presentations to help fill vacancies in the program, an indication of the vitality of this effort.

### **Plan of action moving forward.**

1. The University will continue to provide opportunities for students to engage in community/public service activities through avenues found in academic affairs, the student experience, and athletics.
2. Faculty and staff will have access to resources with which to track, enhance, and promote student community/public service.
3. Director will advocate for NSU students to present their community/public service projects at the ULS Academic Summit.
4. Director of Service-Learning will collaborate with key personnel from academic affairs, the student experience, and athletics to efficiently compile and report university-wide community/public service data at the end of each Spring semester.

## University Capital Outlook

The University Affairs Office works with the University President and administration to develop capital outlay, deferred maintenance, and small capitalization projects that meet the University's Strategic Plan and Strategic Focus Areas' (SFAs) needs. It is also responsible for maintaining a five-year plan for facilities compliant with the State Legislature's capital outlay program.

Over the last several years, the State has directed capital outlay resources to new construction and deferred maintenance projects. In support of these efforts, the University Affairs Office identified and addressed several critical deferred maintenance needs using resources from the State and the University General Fund. Completed projects in 2023-2024 include the repairs to steam lines around Russell Hall, Elementary Lab School, and NSU Power Plant. Two elevators have been repaired/replaced in Kyser Hall and one has been replaced on the Shreveport Campus. The installation of a new lighting system for Prather Coliseum has also been completed.

Projects in progress include Fournet Hall Roof replacement as well as the replacement of vent hoods in the science classrooms, and Turpin Stadium lighting. Also, in progress are repairs to the three elevators in Watson Library. The design phase of a new rigging system for A A Frederick's is in progress. The ULS has approved naming the new academic building Robert Alost Hall, and the 18-month construction project is underway. The new Health Performance Center is in the early construction phase with a 24-month completion timeline. These projects address all six of the University's SFAs. The University also continues to address ADA components of the Five-Year Plan at all instructional sites. Sidewalks were replaced on the Natchitoches campus around Russell Hall, Theatre West, and Central Avenue at the main entrance to campus.

## Technology at Northwestern State University 2024

In the realm of technological advancements and campus improvements, Northwestern was engaged in a series of projects, each contributing to enhancing its systems and services offered to the University stakeholders. These projects are classified as completed, in progress, and planned.

Among the completed projects was implementing a Security Operations Center (SOC). By partnering with our Internet Service Provider, LONI, and their customers across the state, NSU has added a critical extra layer of security to protect the University's investment in its technology infrastructure. The SOC is managed by security analysts 24x7x365 who review the activity on NSU's systems for suspicious behavior. Additionally, the University had successfully deployed Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) software to all workstations and servers. EDR is an endpoint security solution that continuously monitors end-user devices to detect and respond to cyber threats like ransomware and malware.

The implementation of a new technology department ticketing system was also completed. This new system provides more customization options for the ITS staff and provides a more modern interface for our end users. Moving this solution to the cloud also provides greater benefits for remote users who need to access the system with less management overhead.

Regarding ongoing projects, several initiatives are scheduled for completion within six months. All the necessary components for replacing the telephone system have been acquired. ITS staff have been

working with the Louisiana Office of Telecommunications Management (OTM) and AT&T to transition the University's phone number inventory to the new phone system platform. So far, over 80% of the voice phone numbers have been transferred, with the remaining expected to be completed by the end of October 2024.

Training and installation have commenced for implementing the Banner Document Management System. It is anticipated to go live later this academic year. This system will streamline document management processes across the University.

Several new Banner 9 Self-Service modules have been successfully installed and are currently undergoing testing and configuration to ensure seamless functionality. Finance Self Service, Faculty Self Service, and Student Self Service are aimed to empower faculty and students with more efficient self-service options. Additionally, the University plans to introduce the Ellucian Experience Portal, which will replace the existing myNSU platform and mobile app, providing an enhanced, unified, and modern user experience.

A series of longer-term projects are scheduled for completion within 12 months. The University aims to upgrade its primary Internet connection to the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) from the current 10 Gb to a faster 100 Gb connection. Additionally, we plan to upgrade the CENLA and Leesville campus to 500 Mb from 100 Mb. These bandwidth increases will significantly enhance network speed and capacity. The Ellucian SaaS Cloud migration is being analyzed to determine its feasibility and requirements.

Another significant undertaking is rebuilding the Disaster Recovery Center in Shreveport, as some critical equipment dates to 2004. This project will modernize the center's IT infrastructure and improve its disaster recovery capabilities.

The University is reviewing the status of the campus network and video hardware for potential replacement. These upgrades are needed to ensure a robust and efficient network infrastructure and improve video systems across the campus.

As the University continues its commitment to technological advancements and campus improvements, these completed, in-progress, and planned projects will undoubtedly create a more secure, efficient, and connected educational environment for its students, faculty, and staff.

## Strategic Focus Area 5–Athletic Prominence

It is often said that an athletic program is the “front porch of a university” based on the exposure that success can provide for an institution. Achieving the identified goals associated with the *Athletic Prominence* component of NSU’s Strategic Framework will result in outcomes for student-athletes that emphasize academics, leadership, service learning, competitiveness, and an experience that will ultimately prepare them for life after NSU. The athletic prominence area will also provide all students, community members, and alumni with entertainment and pride at an unmatched value.

Several individual and team highlights during 2023-2024 generated positive publicity and a high level of alumni/community pride. Furthermore, the academic and citizenship emphases continued to produce positive results. Specifically, the athletic department’s three core values all yielded levels of success:

### Academic Achievement

- Thirteen of the 14 teams exceeded the 930 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmark.
- NSU continues to excel in graduating their student-athletes with a mark of 86% in the most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rate report.
- Four teams—men’s cross country, women’s cross country, women’s tennis, and volleyball—achieved perfect 1,000 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores reported this spring for the 2022-2023 academic year.
- Three additional teams—women’s soccer, men’s track & field, and softball—earned an APR above 975.
- NSU had 104 student-athletes graduate during the 2023-2024 Academic Year.
- NSU had 114 student-athletes named to the Spring Southland Conference Honor Roll. This was the highest percentage of student-athletes to do so since 2020.
- NSU had 24.85% of its student-athletes achieve a 3.5+ GPA, the highest semester percentage since 2018.

### Personal Responsibility

- NSU student-athletes registered 3,764 hours of community/campus service and engagement for the 2023-2024 year. This was an increase over AC 2022-2023.
- Some of the events included were:
  - Reading to elementary school kids
  - Reading to summer camps at the library
  - Special Olympics
  - Volunteering to work community Festivals
  - Basketball clinics for low-income kids in the community
  - NSU Community service day
  - Louisiana Sports HOF Camp Clinic (Football and Basketball)

### Competitive Success

- Seven of the 14 teams finished in the top 4 of the Southland Conference (Baseball, Women’s Soccer, Men’s Indoor Track, Men’s Outdoor Track, Women’s Indoor Track, Women’s Outdoor Track, and Women’s Tennis).
- The women’s track and field team won the Southland Conference Indoor Championship for the second consecutive year.
- The women’s track and field team won the Southland Conference Outdoor Championship, a program first.

- Head Women’s Track and Field Coach Mike Heimerman was named the Indoor Track and Field Coach of the Year AND the Outdoor Track and Field Coach of the Year.
- Sprinter Zach Beard earned first-team All-American honors in the outdoor 100 meters.
- Sanaria Butler was named SLC Indoor Track and Field Athlete of the year.
- NSU sent 10 student-athletes to the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships
  - Djimon Gumbs in the men's discus.
  - Zach Beard in the men’s 100-meter dash
  - Men’s 4 x 100 M relay
  - Women’s 4 x 400 M relay
- Reagan Thompson with volleyball was named the Southland Conference’s Volleyball Student-Athlete of the Year. This award combines both academic and athletic achievement.

The Athletic Department continued to expand the program’s external scope and brand by increasing social media reach, generating revenue, and expanding the program’s profile through enhanced community service efforts. Furthermore, noticeable facility updates were completed.

Table 25  
Metrics for Athletic Prominence

AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	Athletic Prominence Metrics	2023-2028 Target
	70,292	69,868	<i>Yearly event attendance for all sports</i>	75,000
	\$2,939,068	\$3,101,784	<i>Yearly revenue (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships, game guarantees)</i>	\$2,380,264
20,614	21,250	23,472	<i>Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes</i>	25,458
10,700	11,541	11,786	<i>Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers</i>	11,511
	\$39,065	43,811.04	<i>Licensing royalties (LRG)</i>	\$50,000
182	186 (holders) 792 (tix)	192 (holders) 812 (tix)	<i>Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e., Leesville, Shreveport, Alexandria, Bossier City)</i>	300
7	11*	15	<i>Camps and clinics for area youth</i>	20
	50*	84	<i>Transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and DUF BoD, current/potential donors)</i>	60
30	36	37	<i>Student-athlete participation in campus activities. (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM)</i>	20
1,544	3,624	3,764	<i>Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).</i>	4,000
2.979	2.952	3.064	<i>Student-athlete GPA</i>	3.11
	147	161	<i>Number of Dean’s/President’s List honorees per year</i>	250
	187	197	<i>Southland Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll honorees per year.</i>	200
	959/970	961/972	<i>Multi and single-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores.</i>	940
	11	6	<i>Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.</i>	8
	7/14	4/14	<i>Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or finish in the upper third of the conference standings.</i>	10

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2020-2021 are reflected on the far left with AC 2022-2023 to the right and AC 2023-2024 to the far right. *Blue italicized text was assessed in 2023-2024. Black standard text was assessed in 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.*

Note 2: AC 2021-2022 was a year of reflection therefore no Annual Report was generated.

\* data collection incomplete in AC 2022-2023



Four objectives support our efforts to gain and retain athletic prominence.

## Objective 1:

### Enhance Marketing Opportunities, Game Day Experience, and Resource Acquisition

#### Strategies:

- Increase external assertiveness in terms of NSU Athletics brand awareness and merchandise availability through increased advertising and affinity.
- Improve product variety and availability of merchandise through regional merchants, as well as inform fans of media coverage and outlets with which to engage dynamic content, to enhance school pride.
- Increase the visibility and awareness of student-athletes and coaches representing NSU, as well as adding opportunities for the department to connect with former student-athletes, to help keep those alumni engaged and cultivate supporters.
- Improve the game day experience with continuous attention to concessions and merchandise offerings, revamped tailgating amenities/options, and strategic in-game activities and giveaways to foster an environment that expands fan satisfaction, leading to heightened attendance and loyalty.
- Focus on the Northwest Louisiana market, inviting members of the Shreveport nursing campus and Fort Polk to participate in events both on the main campus and on-site in Shreveport and Central Louisiana, if appropriate. These locations will add new segments to our fan base.

#### Metrics:

1. *Yearly event attendance for all sports*
2. *Yearly revenue for all sports (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships, game guarantees)*
3. *Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes*
4. *Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers*
5. *Licensing royalties*
6. *Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)*

#### Metric:

1. *Yearly event attendance for all sports*

#### Findings:

Compared to AC 2022-2023, overall total attendance was down slightly (0.6%) in 2023-2024. Despite low overall attendance for football (due to cancellation of season) football did increase in average attendance. In addition, volleyball, softball, and baseball increased in both total attendance and average attendance in 2023-2024 (Table 26).

#### Analysis:

Despite cancelling two football games, attendance for AC 2023-2024 was on par with AC 2022-2023. Average football attendance did increase due to early season optimism and playing close rival SFA. Volleyball's increase in attendance was helped by hosting 4-time National Champion UCLA. More than 1,000 fans filled Prather Coliseum to watch the match which was the largest attended match in NSU volleyball's history. A nice year on the field along with great weather helped baseball to increase both their total and average number from AC 2022-2023. However, the men's and women's basketball teams both dropped in total attendance and average attendance as they finished in the lower half of the conference.

Table 26

*Game Attendance by Sport, 2019-2020 to 2023-2024.*

Sport	AC 2019-2020			AC 2021-22			AC 2022-23			AC 2023-24		
	Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance	
		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average
Football	5	33,122	6624.4	5	32,828	6565.6	5	18,843	3768.6	3	14,742	4,914
Soccer	2	238	119.0	7	1,564	223.4	8	1,149	143.6	7	882	126
Volleyball	9	2,891	321.2	9	1,167	129.7	10	1,333	133.3	13	3,588	276
M-Basketball	14	15,722	1123.0	12	10,115	842.9	13	17,205	1323.5	13	13,455	1,035
W-Basketball	15	10,072	671.5	12	5,399	449.9	14	9,220	658.6	11	5,434	494
Softball	4	1,061	265.3	15	3,769	251.3	18	4,172	213.8	16	6,576	411
Baseball	12	6,220	518.3	28	14,722	525.8	26	18,370	706.5	27	25,191	933
Total		69,326			69,564			70,292			69,868	

**Metric:**

**2. *Yearly revenue for all sports***

**Findings:**

Revenues for AC 2023-2024 were \$3,101,784, including \$174,703 for ticket sales (season and single game), \$1,740,081 for Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted gifts, restricted gifts (cash) and sponsorships and game guarantees of \$1,187,000.

**Analysis:**

Ticket revenue in AC 2023-2024 was reported at \$174,703, representing a \$44,900 decrease (20%) from the previous year’s total of \$219,603. The decrease in ticket sales is due to the cancellation of the last two home football games. The Demons Unlimited Foundation cash revenue increased by 18%. In addition, the Foundation received a pledge of \$1,900,000 (to be paid in 2024-25 academic year) which is the largest cash gift in NSU Athletics history. Game guarantees did decrease slightly due to a decrease in the total amount of revenue received in game guarantees in football.

**Metric:**

**3. *Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes***

**Findings:**

Facebook registered 10.4% growth for content shared on the platform throughout the academic year.

**Analysis:**

The continuing effectiveness of the athletic department’s social media connectivity, which was impacted positively by a partnership with BoxOut Sports Graphics, combined with an enhanced level of social media presence by each sport has expanded the NSU brand. Also, the department’s partnership with Mobile Cause continues to enhance on-line giving and text-to-give campaigns (text “Demons” to 71777 to donate).

**Metric:**

**4. *Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers***

**Findings:**

During 2023-2024, a modest 2.1% gain from the previous year was recorded on the main Twitter account (@NSUDemons), averaging more than 16,400 impressions per month. Followers on the main account increased to 11,786, with cumulative followers across 10 sport-specific accounts increasing to over 56,000.

**Analysis:**

As with Facebook likes, the effectiveness of the athletic department’s social media connectivity, which was impacted positively by a partnership with BoxOut Sports Graphics, combined with an enhanced level of social media presence by each sport has expanded the NSU brand. Also, the department’s partnership with Mobile Cause continues to enhance on-line giving and text-to-give campaigns (text “Demons” to 71777 to donate).

**Metric:**

**5. Licensing royalties**

**Findings:**

Due to lags in reporting, licensing revenues through the Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC), are assessed based on the last three quarters of calendar year 2023 and the first quarter of 2024. Total revenue of \$43,811.04 was 9.1% above the long-term average and a 12.1% increase from AC 2022-23 (Table 27).

**Analysis:**

Despite the continuation of negative factors (the decrease in student enrollment, football’s continued losing season record, and the cancellation of the last part of the football season), the growth in licensing revenue in the last year exceeded the rate of inflation and is significant.

Table 27

*Licensing Resource Group Revenue/CLC by Assessment Cycle*

AC	April-June (previous)	July-September	October-December	January-March	Total
2015-2016	8,495.75	8,312.63	7,977.94	9,757.60	34,543.92
2016-2017	12,508.86	18,009.30	10,580.81	6,047.17	47,146.14
2017-2018	10,040.00	10,144.24	7,973.51	7,475.91	35,633.66
2018-2019	9,294.65	8,917.83	6,744.10	10,738.22	35,694.80
2019-2020	13,177.43	10,381.34	15,627.44	5,496.60	44,682.81
2021-2022	9,415.62	12,616.94	7,764.38	11,021.47	40,818.41
2022-2023	9,826.22	10,716.93	8,173.66	10,348.44	39,065.25
2023-2024	7,444.33	15,632.29	9,362.19	11,372.13	43,811.04
<b>M</b>	<b>10,025.36</b>	<b>11,841.44</b>	<b>9,275.50</b>	<b>9,032.19</b>	<b>40,174.50</b>
<b>SD</b>	<b>1,929.11</b>	<b>3,386.77</b>	<b>2,811.78</b>	<b>2,343.21</b>	<b>4,723.63</b>

**Metric:**

**6. Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)**

**Findings:**

The number of season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parrish increased from 186 in AC 2022-2023 to 192 AC 2023-2024. The 191 season ticket holders collectively purchased 812 season tickets.

**Analysis:**

The small increase in season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parrish is a result of the Athletic Department increasing our marketing efforts in those areas. However, the football program has not had a winning season since 2008, which will continue to hamper significant growth. Early returns show that alumni and fans are impressed with new head football coach Blaine McCorkle. They understand it may take him a couple of years to get the program to a winning record but are excited about the new direction and want to support it.

### Decision:

Generating revenue is key for the athletic department as more resources are needed for our programs to cultivate long-term success. Ticket sales, licensing fees, corporate sponsorships, private donations, and crowd-sourced donations are areas of funding directly influenced by marketing efforts. By building strength in the Northwestern State Athletics brand, consistency in our presence in both online and physical spaces, and excitement for our student-athletes, coaches, and team outcomes, we can positively affect the public's commitment, and thereby support, of Northwestern State Athletics.

Specifically, in response to the current evidence, we will take the following actions in 2024–25:

- Develop marketing campaigns for each sport program that identify niche audiences with customized communication strategies for each stratum of the key publics.
- Include a strategic mix of traditional and new media platforms in each marketing plan to create a multi-impression experience for target audiences that strengthens the overall impact of each campaign
- Increase volume of posted content across all NSU Athletics social media platforms in the form of reels, traditional videos, photos, graphics, and links in accordance with the structure set up in each program marketing plan.
- Develop marketing campaigns for specific NSU Athletics initiatives, like football season tickets or Giving Day, that provide goals, objectives, content plans, and identified metrics for evaluation at the conclusion of each campaign.
- Create targeted marketing strategies including use of social media, digital billboards, in-person appearances for coaches/student-athletes/staff, email campaigns, text reminders, and any target audience-specific channels that may be applicable to effectively communicate with each key public (e.g., military, primary schools, alumni, local business owners) in an authentic and powerful manner, which we expect to result in a higher rate of return on our tracked metrics (ticket sales, social media engagement, licensing fees, for example).
- Include one-click avenues for donations and ticket sales through social media content (stories, grid posts, caption links, bio links) to simplify the purchasing/donating process for the engaged audience, thereby increasing likelihood of action completion.

**Responsibility:** Vice President External Affairs, Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Operations, Director of Marketing and Digital Media, Assistant Athletic Director for Ticketing and Annual Fund, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, and Assistant Sports Information Director.

### Objective 2:

#### **Promote Campus/Community Service, Appreciation, and Engagement**

##### Strategies:

- Establish a community service approach through heightened interaction between coaches/student-athletes and the NSU campus and the Natchitoches community.
- Collaborate with youth organizations to offer special products and opportunities and look for ways to provide low-income families scholarship-like offers to summer camps on a limited basis.
- Explore and encourage opportunities for campus and community organizations to partner with athletic teams for service projects. Appreciation efforts will include the continued addition of strategic touches, giving student-athletes the chance to thank supporters, boosters, faculty, and students.

- Increased transparency of budgets and spending will increase appreciation and spur engagement.

#### Metrics:

1. *Camps and clinics for area youth*
2. *Number of transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.*

#### Metric:

1. *Camps and clinics for area youth*

#### Findings:

Fifteen total camps (four by soccer, three by volleyball, two each by men's basketball, women's basketball, football, and baseball) were held in AC 2023-2024.

#### Analysis:

June and July are the "camp heavy" months with soccer, baseball, and softball conducting other camps (i.e., Christmas break) throughout the school year.

#### Metric:

2. *Number of transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors).*

#### Findings:

Communication with donors that went beyond soliciting donations but also focused on increasing transparency and awareness of Athletic Department and Demons Unlimited Foundation budget numbers and mechanics—and how those dollars are spent—continued to be a focus and reflected increased engagement during the 2023-2024 year on several levels. During this assessment cycle the Athletic Director

- met with all head coaches and executive staff members monthly for eight department meetings,
- met with Student-Athlete Advisory Council on six occasions,
- met with all teams at the beginning of fall semester; discussions included the importance of the Demons Unlimited Foundation and N-Club as it relates to providing resources for the department,
- discussed budget mechanics with Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors at two official meetings,
- provided details about the department's financial profile and need for increased revenue via social media and media (i.e., newspaper, radio) interviews,

We held several meetings with football alumni and supporters in the spring to introduce new head coach Blaine McCorkle and assessed ways in which the football program can be more successful. The goals of the meetings were for alums to get to know Coach McCorkle, the values he is going to instill in his program, and to show the football alumni that we need their financial support to help provide the resources necessary for the football program to be a winning program and consistent contender in the Southland Conference.

#### Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the Athletic Director and Associate Athletic Director for External Operations have tried to prioritize meetings with donors to cultivate and solicit financial support for the athletics department. Despite staff turnover we have seen progress in getting more alumni and donors involved. We recognize how important alumni and donor support is for our athletic department and we will continue to keep reaching out, cultivating and soliciting new donors. The number of donor cultivation meetings did increase during AC

2023-2024. Our head coaches continue to make great strides in cultivating donors and soliciting support. Our coaches understand that fundraising is needed to survive based on our state funding.

The Athletic Director's efforts to provide transparency regarding the Athletic Department's direction, especially as it relates to finances, continue to be well received and appreciated by the various interest groups.

#### Decision:

Engagement on all levels must continue to be a focus of the Athletic Department whether it be donors, community members, youth, on-campus faculty and staff, student-athlete alumni, and more. Some of these outreach efforts will result in revenue generation while others will either serve as "friend raisers" which will provide opportunities for the athletic program to be seen in a positive light or as avenues through which transparency can attest to the integrity of the athletic department.

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Operations, Director of Ticketing and Annual Fund, Head Coaches

### Objective 3:

#### Enhance University and Community Collaboration and Support.

##### Strategies:

- Develop a more cohesive bond between the Athletic Department and the campus.
- Improve Athletics' participation in University initiatives and activities.
- Create a presence on-campus and in the community by student-athletes, coaches, and staff.
- Collaborate with University entities to conduct research for Athletics' projects and partnerships through academic programming to educate about Athletics' traditions.

##### Metrics:

1. *Student-athlete participation in campus activities.*
2. *Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).*

##### Metric:

1. *Student-athlete participation in campus activities.*

##### Finding:

Student-athletes participated in many campus organizations, activities, and initiatives during AC 2023-2024, including many of the Demon Days activities, Addiction Studies Club, Alpha Epsilon Delta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Alpha Phi Alpha, Alpha Omicron Pi, Baptist Student Ministry, Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society, Blue Key Honor Society, Catholic Student Organization, Demon Dental Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Helping Hands, Kappa Alpha Order, Kappa Alpha Psi, Kappa Psi, Kappa Phi, Kappa Sigma, NSU Freshman Connectors, NSU Psychology Club, NSULA Pride, Pi Kappa Alpha, Presidential Ambassadors, Sigma Sigma Sigma, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Student Government Association, University Programming Council, and Zeta Phi Beta.

Campus and community groups in which coaches and staff participated or engaged in AC 2023-2024 included civic clubs, community events and boards, church functions, and charity/non-profit events and functions.

### Analysis:

Community and campus engagement continued to be a focus within the Athletic Department. It is important for our department to be involved in campus activities other than athletics. This improves team morale and integrates athletes into the larger student body. We will continue to encourage our student-athletes to engage in student and community activities. It is difficult due to their limited availability but as a department we recognize how important it is for the University and community.

### Metric:

#### 2. *Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).*

### Finding:

NSU student-athletes compiled 3,764 hours of community service during the 2023-2024 year (Table 28).

### Analysis:

Community service is one of Athletics' three pillars for our student-athletes. Our goal is to help holistically develop all our student-athletes so that they support whichever community they serve upon their graduation from Northwestern State University.

### Decision:

With the ability to interact with and engage with community constituents more regularly, a renewed focus on this area will continue to be our focus for the upcoming academic year. A dynamic related to this for student-athlete involvement will be the fact that Brittany Pajuluoma, the new Senior Women's Administrator, will oversee this area.

Table 28

*Community Service Hours Contributed by NSU Athletics by Team, 2018-2019 to 2023-2024*

	NSU ATHLETICS COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS			
TEAM	AC 2018-2019	AC 2020-2021	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-24
Soccer	347	122	122	146
Men's Basketball	397	125	742	725
Women's Basketball	502	45	562	602
Football	1086.5	425	525	430
Baseball	193.5	84	301	385
Softball	289.5	75	203	260
Tennis	74.5	60	68	73
Men's Track	306.5	64	152	141
Men's Cross Country	30.5	0	26	51
Women's Track	166	45	152	141
Women's XCcountry	14	0	26	51
Volleyball	666.5	147	298	365
ALL TEAMS	385	352	447	394
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>4458.5</b>	<b>1544</b>	<b>3624</b>	<b>3764</b>

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development and staff, Head and Assistant Coaches.

## Objective 4:

### Enhance Success and Avenues to Recognize/Promoting It.

#### Strategies:

- Revise the plan for publicizing the Student-Athlete of the Month as well as Dean's and President's List honors, drawing more attention to the academic success of student-athletes.
- New programming, which may include speeches or seminars and social media pieces, will help highlight the real-world success of former and current Student-athletes. Rewards and incentives will remain in place to reward success on the playing surface, in the classroom, and in the community (as allowed by NCAA, University, and UL System regulations), including for some staff and coaches.
- Athletics will increase emphasis on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities in any way possible. Discussion will be initiated regarding a facility campaign to be underwritten through private support.

#### Metrics:

1. *Student-athlete GPA*
2. *Number of Dean's/President's List and Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees.*
- ~~3. *Single year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores.*~~
4. *Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.*
5. *Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or who finish in the upper third of the conference standings.*

#### Metric:

1. *Student-athlete GPA*

#### Finding:

The athletic department GPA for Fall 2023 was 3.025 and Spring 2024 was 3.105; overall, the 2023-2024 academic year average GPA was 3.064.

#### Analysis:

Our student-athletes exceeded the goal of a cumulative department GPA of 3.0 or better for AC 2023-2024 as the cumulative GPA was 3.064. Our cumulative GPA increased despite a tough fall semester for our football student-athletes because of the death of a teammate and cancellation of the last half of the season. However, the football team performed remarkably better in the spring, which helped the overall spring GPA (thus the overall AC 2023-2024 GPA) to increase. Another reason for the increase was that for the first time in several years we had a full academic staff with three staff members. We are extremely proud of the staff and look forward to continuing to move the GPA needle higher.

#### Metric:

2. *Number of Dean's/President's List and Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees.*

#### Finding:

The number of student-athletes on the President's List, Dean's List, and Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll was in line with last year (Table 29).



### Analysis:

The overall numbers had modest gains for the President’s List, Dean’s List, and the Southland Commissioner’s Honor Roll. This was despite a football program that struggled academically in the fall semester because of the death of a teammate and the cancellation of half the season. The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong on an individual basis as well as collectively. The profile will only be stronger next year as we are making great strides with our football program and have an academic staff that has been together for a full year.

Table 29

*Student-Athletes Receiving Academic Honors AC 2015-2016 to AC 2023-2024*

Term	President's List	Dean's List	Total	Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll
Fall 2015	34	72	106	99
Spring 2016	40	69	109	101
Fall 2016	49	67	116	101
Spring 2017	38	65	103	107
Fall 2017	47	82	129	111
Spring 2018	46	67	113	101
Fall 2018	41	77	118	93
Spring 2019	44	60	104	104
Fall 2019	44	67	111	95
Spring 2020	60	75	135	122
Fall 2022	37	41	78	84
Spring 2023	33	36	69	103
Fall 2023	31	45	76	83
Spring 2024	39	46	85	114

### Metric:

#### 3. *Multi and Single year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR).*

### Finding:

NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) numbers are officially reported in the spring following an academic year. In the report for 2022-2023, we increased our benchmark from 930 to 940. All but three NSU teams’ APR exceeded the 940 benchmarks on a single year level and all but one on a multi-year level. As a department, NSU’s 2022-2023 APR was 972. This is up from the previous couple of years despite the increased use of the transfer portal by student-athletes. Furthermore, four NSU teams—women’s cross country, men’s cross country, volleyball, and women’s tennis—received a perfect 1,000 APR score (Table 30).

Three other teams—women’s soccer, softball and men’s track & field had APR score above 975. Men’s Track & Field increase was exceptional, as in past years we have been concerned about their progress.

The NCAA Academic Performance Unit, funded by the 15-year multi-billion-dollar NCAA television agreement for rights to air the NCAA men’s basketball tournament and Final Four, was awarded for the 2022-2023 academic year. Division I institutions are eligible to earn the unit on a year-by-year basis and qualify for the academic unit disbursement by meeting one of three criteria (APR, GSR, or Federal Graduation Rate). NSU qualified for two of the three units (qualifying for more than one unit does not result in any additional funding) and thus, was to receive approximately \$70,000 for its 2023-2024 budget. NSU will not know if it qualified to receive the award for the 2023-2024 year until graduation rates are announced in the fall.

Table 30

## Three Year NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) by Sport, AC 2020-2021 to AC 2022-2023

Teams	Year	APR	
		Multi-Year	Single-Year
Baseball	2020-21	981	952
	2021-22	979	970
	2022-23	969	951
Men's Basketball	2020-21	981	958
	2021-22	975	961
	2022-23	979	956
Women's Basketball	2020-21	977	926
	2021-22	967	960
	2022-23	962	938
Football	2020-21	955	946
	2021-22	950	936
	2022-23	936	898
Soccer	2020-21	975	975
	2021-22	981	1,000
	2022-23	985	989
Softball	2020-21	992	989
	2021-22	979	942
	2022-23	980	988
Tennis	2020-21	983	1,000
	2021-22	983	1,000
	2022-23	1,000	1,000
Men's Cross Country	2020-21	987	929
	2021-22	985	1,000
	2022-23	981	1,000
Women's Cross Country	2020-21	986	1,000
	2021-22	957	882
	2022-23	967	1,000
Men's Track	2020-21	945	909
	2021-22	931	913
	2022-23	930	976
Women's Track	2020-21	979	921
	2021-22	970	944
	2022-23	960	971
Volleyball	2020-21	990	1,000
	2021-22	989	1,000
	2022-23	989	1,000
Institutional	2020-21		
	2021-22	959	970
	2022-23	961	972

**Analysis:**

The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong across most teams, as evidenced by the NCAA Academic Progress Rate, which exceeded the national benchmark. The NCAA Academic Performance Unit “ups the ante” for making academic achievement a priority for Division I athletic programs.

**Metric:****4. *Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with funding availability*****Finding:**

The NSU athletic program has made a lot of progress in making the David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center a reality. The project officially broke ground in March with an 18-month completion timeline. This \$10 million project will provide new and expanded areas for the strength and conditioning, sports medicine, and equipment divisions of the athletic department. These three areas, located in an athletic fieldhouse constructed in 1977, are significantly undersized to accommodate the growth in number of teams and student-athletes. Once the annex is completed, the current weight room will be converted to the athletic training room, the current weight room will become a high-tech rehab center, and the current athletic training room will be the new equipment room.

The volleyball and men's basketball programs have renovated or are in the process of renovating their locker rooms at a total cost of \$100,000 through privately funded gifts.

The Turpin Stadium lights project will be finished in the next month or so. The lights are up and working but have some final checks and balances to be ironed out.

Progress has been made on the turf projects for baseball and softball. The lead gift of \$1.9M was secured by a donor to fund the projects. The design and board approval happened in the month of June with an official start date of mid-August.

The Athletic Department has identified several facility projects that need to be completed including new video boards in Prather Coliseum, in addition to new video boards for the baseball, softball, soccer, and track & field complexes (\$1.5M total); new mondo track surface (\$1.2M); and a new locker room and coaches' offices for women's tennis (\$600,000). The next step will be securing sponsors to underwrite the cost of these projects.

Facility projects started, completed, or in process during AC 2023-2024 include:

- Men's Basketball Locker Room (\$25,000)
- Turpin Stadium Lights-new LED lights (\$500,000)
- Baseball Turf and Outfield Wall (\$1.4M)
- Softball Turf (\$500,000)
- Volleyball Locker Room (\$100,000)
- Softball Hitting/Pitching Cage—adding two pitching lanes and enclosing it with HVAC (\$200,000-split between cash and GIK)

Facility projects on the radar:

- New LED Digital Video Boards (Prather Coliseum, Baseball, Softball, Soccer, and Track & Field (\$1.5M)
- Track Mondo Surface (\$1.2M)
- Tennis Locker Room/Coaches Offices (\$600,000)
- Baseball Operations Building (\$3.2M)
- Track Locker Room/Coaches Offices (\$1 M)
- Soccer Locker Room/Coaches Offices (\$750,000)

**Analysis:**

Facility upgrades are essential for the athletic department to continue to be competitive in the Southland Conference. The University and athletic department have continued to push forward to raise the funds necessary to complete these projects. A lot of progress has been made but much remains to be done.

**Metric:**

5. *Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or who finish in the upper third of the conference standings.*

**Finding:**

Eight varsity teams register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, women's tennis). Unfortunately, none of these met our performance goals. However, baseball, soccer, and volleyball all just missed out on being in the top third of the conference standings by finishing fourth, fourth and fifth respectively. In track and field/cross country, which does not generate a win/loss percentage, the women's indoor team claimed their second straight trophy at the Southland Conference Indoor Championship and claimed their first ever outdoor Southland Conference Championship trophy. The men's indoor and outdoor teams finished second in the Southland Conference Championships.

**Analysis:**

During AC 2023-2024 the athletic department took a little step back athletically. One of the factors in taking a step back is that NSU had four new head coaches during the AC 2023-24. NSU had several teams finish in the middle of the pack and good things are expected from each of them next year as most of their rosters return. NSU has a strong core of young and energetic coaches that fit the culture of NSU and the results on the court/field of play will show in the next couple of years. The future is bright.

**Decision:**

The Athletic Department academic support staff (academic coordinators, compliance coordinators, and Faculty Athletic Representative) will continue to meet monthly to assess academic performance with the intention of monitoring success/problems and sustaining the high level of academic performance in place. Regular interaction with coaches, especially for programs which traditionally have student-athletes who may need additional guidance, will also continue. The Demons Unlimited Foundation Board in collaboration with the NSU athletic administration must continue to secure resources to enhance the current student-athlete experience as well as impact the recruiting process and ultimately, impact the program's level of competitiveness.

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Deputy Athletic Director for Special Projects, Senior Woman Administrator, Associate Athletic Director of External Operations, Associate Athletic Director of Internal Operations, Athletic Business Manager, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, and staff.

**Comprehensive Summary of findings and changes/decisions because of the above**

Despite the challenges with revenue shortfalls (student athletic fees have decreased \$700,000 over the last two years due to a decrease in enrollment), staff vacancies, and turnover the 2023-2024 year was a moderate success. NSU graduated 104 student-athletes, had an overall GPA over 3.0, and dedicated 3,764 hours of community service to the University and surrounding community. The athletic department must continue to increase revenue to help with the overall budget. NSU is a blue-collar institution, and all staff and coaches must continue to have their hands in the dirt and grind to make sure we provide our student-athletes the best experience possible. NSU is set up to have a great 2024-2025 academic year in the classroom, on the field/court, and in the community.

## Strategic Focus Area 6–Cultural Competence

Diversity is a Northwestern core value: “diversity helps define who we are. We welcome and respect everyone traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.” The University is not just an institution but also a community, defined by the diversity of its members, dependent on how well that community respects and supports the rich differences of students, staff, faculty, and the broader community around it. Northwestern’s commitment to its strategic plan—to strengthen the student experience, attain academic excellence, meet the demands of a global economy, achieve athletic prominence, and enrich the local and regional community—requires the University to cultivate its diversity and cultural competence. Northwestern cannot accomplish its mission unless it guarantees equitable access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff at every stage of education and career.

Northwestern maintains a commitment to this effort with Brittany Blackwell Broussard serving as the Director of Culture and Climate (DCC) to continue the work of growing cultural competency in our ever-increasing diverse community at Northwestern. In addition to the Director of Culture and Climate, Dr. Jasmine Wise assists the department’s growth as she was appointed the Coordinator of the Center for Inclusion and Diversity.

The overarching goal is to foster a sense of institutional belonging where everyone can thrive and become their best. To that end, the University must promote cultural competence by promulgating diversity, equity, and inclusion across campus and in all activities to close the gap in recruitment and retention. To quantitatively measure its progress, Northwestern established benchmarks for its Cultural Competence Metrics (Table 31) in AC 2022-2023 and AC 2023-2024 with corresponding AC 2027-2028 targets.

Table 31:

### Metrics for Cultural Competence

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	Cultural Competence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
39%	39%	<i>Percentage of Students of Color</i>	50%
24%	23%	<i>Percentage of Faculty of Color</i>	30%
16%	18%	<i>Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color</i>	30%
29%	27%	<i>Percentage of Administrators of Color</i>	30%
53%	65%	<i>Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> year</i>	80%
39%	40%	<i>Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> year</i>	65%
3,897	3,474	<i>Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment</i>	5,000
43%	39%	<i>Graduation rates of Students of Color</i>	50%
11*	9	<i>Number of students in Ethnic Studies minors</i>	75
11	6	<i>Number of courses offered in the Ethnic Studies minors</i>	12
8	12	<i>Number of Inclusive Coaching Workshops</i>	15
43%	44%	<i>Percentage of Students of Color in student organizations</i>	50%
	65%	<i>Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant</i>	100%
		<i>Percent of Positive Responses on NSU Campus Climate Survey</i>	80%
10	60	<i>Frequency of CC programs and initiatives sponsored by CID or any Dept/Org per academic year</i>	75
25%	85%	<i>Percent of Students of Color graduates working within 6 months of graduation</i>	75%

Notes: Outcomes for AC 2022-2023 are benchmarks with the objective of reaching the AC 2027-2028 targets. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2023-2024. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured. \* corrected to exclude Creole Studies

Three objectives support our efforts in Cultural Competence:

## Objective 1:

**Increase cultural competence among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.**

### Strategies:

- Partner with student recruitment and human resources to provide attractive recruitment options for all under-represented populations.
- Provide engaging events and programs for campus constituents that will increase their understanding, cultural competence, and belonging.

### Metrics:

1. *Percentage of Students of Color*
2. *Percentage of Faculty of Color*
3. *Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color*
4. *Percentage of Administrators of Color*
5. *Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> year*
6. *Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> year*
7. *Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment*
8. *Graduation rates of Students of Color*

### Metric:

#### 1. *Percentage of Students of Color*

### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024 the student body was composed of 39.3% Students of Color. The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

### Analysis:

The University continues to lead the region in the diversity of its student body. *Student of Color* is defined as any student identifying as a race/ethnicity of Black/African American, Hispanic Non-White, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and Foreign. The category Foreign may include individuals who identify as *White*; however, they do increase the campus's cultural diversity. In Fall 2023, NSU enrolled 3,474 Students of Color. The total number of students attending NSU is 8,847. The percentage of Students of Color did not change significantly from AC 2022-2023 to AC 2023-2024. The lack of improvement may be the result of returning to selective admission post COVID-19.

### Decision:

Continue to work with recruiting and retention to increase the percentage of Students of Color. Specifically, we will support retention and academic programs focused on supporting students of color.

### Metric:

#### 2. *Percentage of Faculty of Color*

### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024 the percentage of Faculty of Color is 23.0%.

### Analysis:

The target percentage is 30% by the year 2028. Of the 543 faculty members, 125 faculty members identify as a race/ethnic group of either Black/African American, Hispanic Non-White, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and US Nonresident. This was a decrease of 1% from AC 2022-2023, however the University experienced a decrease in the overall number of faculty. Faculty of Color accounted for approximately 29% of the faculty attrition, as 29 of the 101 faculty that left were faculty of color in AC 2022-2023.

### Decision:

Continue to work with human resources, the Office of the Provost, and the Faculty Senate to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color. Also, encourage the adoption of the best practices in faculty search/hiring process manual created by a Faculty Senate Committee. Other strategic initiatives the institution can consider are to attend the SREB Institute on Teaching and Mentoring and consider utilizing the cluster hiring method.

### Metric:

#### **3. *Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color***

### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024 the percentage of tenured Faculty of Color is 18.6%.

### Analysis:

The target percentage is 30% by the year Fall 2028.

Of the 156 tenured faculty members, 29 faculty members are People of Color. The percentage of tenured faculty who are Faculty of Color increased three points from AC 2022-2023 to AC 2023-2024 with four Faculty of Color earning tenure status this year. Earning tenure is a daunting process for all faculty members with many unsure on exactly what to do. A retention plan should be adopted to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color being tenured and promoted. Also, new faculty should be encouraged to attend New Faculty Orientation and “Demonology” sessions to become more familiar with the process and requirements.

### Decision:

Continue to work with human resources and the Office of the Provost to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color that acquire tenure and promotion. Establish faculty mentorship program to assist junior faculty navigating the process.

### Metric:

#### **4. *Percentage of Administrators of Color***

### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024 the percentage of Administrators of Color is 27.2%.

### Analysis:

The target percentage is 30% by the year Fall 2028. This was a slight decline from AC 2022-2023 (2%). Of the 235 administrators, 64 are considered Administrators of Color. As the institution is close to reaching the goal, we must continue to invest in the diversification of administrators. We are currently in our targeted area, but when we have a transition of administrators, we must make considerable efforts to attract and retain Administrators of Color.

#### Decision:

Continue to work with human resources and encourage all departments to adopt the best practices in hiring manual developed by Faculty Senate Committee.

#### Metric:

##### **5. Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> year**

#### Findings:

For retention rates, students whose race/ethnicity is listed as *unknown* are excluded. In AC 2023-2024 the retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> year is 64.8%.

#### Analysis:

The target percentage is 80% by the year Fall 2028. Of the 389 first year Students of Color from the Fall 2022 cohort, 252 (64.8%) were retained to the second year. In comparison, Students who identified as White had a significantly higher retention rate of 75.2% with 364 of the 484 students returning for the second year ( $p < .001$ ). It is encouraging that the retention rate for Students of Color increased significantly from AC 2022-2023 to AC 2023-2024 ( $p < .001$ ), improving by 12 percentage points. This may be due to the mentoring program for Freshmen.

#### Decision:

The Director of Culture and Climate and Center for Inclusion and Diversity will continue to work with student affairs, enrollment management, and student organizations to provide more opportunities for students to connect with the institution. This will be done through impactful programming, peer-led initiatives like Cultural Bridge Builders, and hands-on support for student organizations, particularly those serving minority populations.

#### Metric:

##### **6. Retention rate of Students of Color 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> year**

#### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024 the retention rate of Students of Color from 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> year is 39.7%.

#### Analysis:

The target percentage is 65% by the year 2028. Of the 567 first year Students of Color from the Fall 2021 cohort, 225 (39.7%) were retained to the third year. In comparison, of the students that identified as White, 318 out of 555 (57.3%) were retained from first to third year. We must continue to investigate the causes of significant differences in retention rates ( $p < .001$ ) and close the gap for all students.

#### Decision:

The Director of Culture and Climate and Center for Inclusion and Diversity will continue to work with student affairs, enrollment management, and student organizations to provide more opportunities for students to connect with the institution. This will be done through impactful programming, peer-led initiatives like Cultural Bridge Builders, and hands-on support for student organizations, particularly those serving minority populations.

#### Metric:

##### **7. Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment**

#### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024, the Fall 2023 enrollment of Northwestern State University included 3,474 Students of Color. The target is 5,000 students by the year 2028.



### Analysis:

In comparison to AC 2022-2023, the number of Students of Color has decreased, however the University experienced an overall enrollment decrease during this period. The ratio of students of color enrolled remained the same between the years. We are making great strides to increase the number of enrolled Students of Color. Current efforts by the recruiting office and academic departments are proving successful. Recruitment efforts must be intentional for Students of Color, such as initiatives/agreements with local tribes and community colleges with high populations of minority students, and hosting recruitment days at high schools with high populations of minority students. As the population is growing more diverse, we must continue to focus on attracting and retaining all types of students. A more diverse recruitment staff that reflects the people we want to recruit must be acquired to grow in these diverse populations.

### Decision:

Continue to work with recruiting office/enrollment management and the Office of the Provost to recruit Students of Color and initiate articulation agreements with community colleges.

### Metric:

#### **8. *Graduation rates of Students of Color***

### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024 the graduation rate of Students of Color was 39.1%.

### Analysis:

The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

In the Fall 2017 cohort, 226 Students of Color out of 578 (39.1%) completed a bachelor's degree within 4 to 6 years of entering the cohort. In comparison, a significantly higher proportion of students in that cohort that identify as White graduated (332 out of 705 total; 47.1%). Graduation rates for Students of Color also declined by 4 percentage points from AC 2022-2023 to AC 2023-2024. This difference may be due to returning to normal post-COVID-19 as faculty gave more grace in grading during the pandemic. However, as seen above the two groups of students differed by 8 points. Outreach with resources that address the specific needs of Students of Color must occur. We will further build the mentoring program with enrollment management. Connecting more students with TRIO services, if they qualify, will provide critical support for students.

### Decision:

Work with recruiting office/enrollment management, TRIO support services and Academic Success Center to ensure Students of Color are connected with resources and support to succeed.

## **Objective 2:**

**Integrate cultural competence throughout the academic curriculum and support programs.**

### Strategies:

- Increase course offerings and establish programs in ethnic studies.
- Strengthen cultural competence in classroom management.
- Provide more visibility and support for the Creole Center and Williamson Museum.
- Identify curriculum gaps and continue expanding current programs.
- Integrate diverse perspectives and analysis across the entire University

#### Metrics:

1. *Number of students in Ethnic Studies*
2. *Number of courses offered in the Ethnic Studies minors*
3. *Number of Inclusive Coaching Workshops for faculty and staff*

#### Metric:

1. *Number of students in Ethnic Studies*

#### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024, nine students have declared one of the Ethnic Studies minors (American Indian and Indigenous Studies or Black Studies). The target is 75 by the year 2028.

#### Analysis:

The number of students in these minors declined slightly, but this is also due to the changing definition of “Ethnic Studies.” Creole Studies was considered in the data last year, however upon speaking with the Coordinators of all minors involved, it was discovered that the Creole Studies minor did not align with the curricula of the other two minors. Both the Black Studies minor and the American Indian/Indigenous Studies minors are relatively new and still have much potential for growth as they become more familiar to faculty and students. This year the Black Studies minor had four more students graduate with the minor. During the last year, we collaborated with the Ethnic Studies advisory board to host a lecture series that attracted all NSU constituents and highlighted the minor.

#### Decision:

We will continue collaborating with the Ethnic Studies Advisory Board, Coordinators of the minors, and the Office of the Provost to host programming to draw students and increase interest in the program. Also, we are collaborating to develop a variety of interesting course topics for the minors to attract students.

#### Metric:

2. *Number of courses offered in the Ethnic Studies Minor*

#### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024, six courses were offered in the Ethnic Studies minors.

#### Analysis:

The number of courses offered in the Ethnic Studies minors decreased this year in comparison to last academic year which had 11 different ethnic studies minor courses.

#### Decision:

Departments need more cross collaboration and cooperation to offer students a wide and diverse range of courses from different perspectives. Also, to increase courses offered, more faculty are needed to teach the courses. We will collaborate with Coordinators of the minors, and the Office of the Provost to increase the number of faculty dedicated to each program to teach a variety of courses for the programs. In addition, we are collaborating to develop more courses for the minors to attract students through a variety of interesting course topics.

### Objective 3:

**Develop a more inclusive campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.**

#### Strategies:

- Establish a system providing actionable feedback (climate survey) regarding perception data on the treatment of students, faculty, and staff of color from various campus areas.
- Increase Cultural Competence programs and initiatives per year.
- Increased emphasis on a DCC marketing strategy

#### Metrics:

1. *Percentage of Students of Color in student organizations*
2. *Percent of positive indicators on DCC Campus Climate Survey*
3. *Frequency of Cultural Competence programs and initiatives sponsored by CID and any campus department or organization per academic year.*
4. *Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant*
5. *Percentage of Students of Color graduates working within six months of graduation*

#### Metric:

##### **1. Percentage of Students of Color in student organizations**

#### Findings:

In AC 2023-2024 the percentage of Students of Color making up total participation in student organizations is 44.4%. The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

#### Analysis:

Findings show that of the 1,186 total members, 526 (44.4%) members in a Recognized Student Organization (RSO) identify as a Student of Color, an increase of 1% between AC 2022-2023 and AC 2023-2024. Moreover, this equates to 15% of the Students of Color population at NSU being involved in at least one RSO. Interestingly, this is almost 3% higher in comparison to the White student population with 12%. This figure also does not consider other forms of involvement on campus such as athletics, spirit groups, or theater (except for the Student Theater Organization). This is promising data, showing that Students of Color may be finding connection and a sense of belonging on campus. Also, we hope collaboration and the exchange of cultural competence occurs within these organizations among their members. Continued encouragement of active participation in RSOs among all students will increase retention rates of not only Students of Color but all students and foster an affinity toward the University that can lead to giving back as alumni.

#### Decision:

Work with the personnel in Student Experience to ensure diversity in student organizations and programming is approached deliberately and consistently. Conduct focus groups to understand student perspectives on campus involvement and how to increase active participation.

**Metric:**

**2. *Percent of Positive Responses on NSU Campus Climate Survey***

**Findings:**

In AC 2023-2024 the percent of positive responses on a NSU Campus Climate Survey on Cultural Competence is 0% as a survey was not selected. The target percentage is 50%+ by the year 2028.

**Analysis:**

Due to budget restrictions, we are still looking into cost efficient surveys and other methods to assess campus climate. The hope is to disseminate a survey and/or execute another method of analysis by early Spring semester and then analyze the data

**Decision:**

We will work with institutional research and the university-wide diversity committee to decide on an instrument and disseminate it to all NSU faculty, staff, and students.

**Metric:**

**3. *Frequency of Cultural Competence programs and initiatives sponsored by Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID) and any campus department or organization per Academic Year.***

**Findings:**

In AC 2023-2024, 60 Cultural Competence programs and initiatives were sponsored by the CID and campus departments. The target is 75 per year by 2028.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2023-2024, about 60 programs and initiatives were executed either by the Center for Inclusion and Diversity solely, in partnership with another University department or Recognized Student Organization (RSO), or solely by a University Department or RSO. The CID sponsored 44 of these programs. The target was exceeded! This is outstanding and we need to continue to offer such a wide variety of educational, cultural, and transformative programming. With the expansion of staff to include effective graduate assistants, student workers, and the initiation of Cultural Bridge Builders initiative which consists of student volunteers, we were able to achieve growth.

**Decision:**

Being that the original target of 15 was exceeded we will increase the target to 75 programs. We will continue to attend departmental browses hosted by the Department of Student Experience so NSU constituents can be aware of our offerings. We will also reach out to departments to initiate partnerships. In addition, we will create a method for departments and organizations to be able to report to the Office of Culture and Climate/CID programming that aligns with our mission so we can better reflect the efforts of the entire University community.

**Metric:**

**4. *Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant.***

**Findings:**

In AC 2023-2024, the percentage of buildings in 100% ADA compliance is 65%

**Analysis:**

According to the Director of the Physical Plant, approximately 65% of the buildings on campus are in 100% ADA compliance (not including dormitories, that are operated by a third party). Buildings not in

total compliance lack either an automatic door on the restroom or the entrance to the building. Plans have been set to upgrade a few buildings currently to install the proper automatic doors per request of building managers. Also, concrete sidewalks have been inspected with some getting repaired.

**Decision:**

Work with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services, Executive Director for University Affairs, and the Director of the Physical Plant to ensure all NSU buildings are ADA compliant.

**Metric:**

**5. *Percentage of Students of Color graduates working within six months of graduation***

**Findings:**

In AC 2023-2024 the percentage of Students of Color that graduated and were working or continuing education within six months of graduation is 85%. The target percentage is 75% by the year 2028.

**Analysis:**

The data was collected using the First Destination Survey that is accessed by the students on a platform known as Handshake run by the Career Services department. The survey had a total of 294 Associate and Bachelor level graduate respondents out of the 1148 graduates from AC 2023-2024 which equates to a 25.6% response rate. Based on the responses from this survey, the data shows that 102 of the 120 (85%) Students of Color that completed the survey reported working, continuing education, or in the military. In comparison, 258 out of 294 (87.8%) students in total (Associate and Bachelor level) reported working, continuing education, or in the military. Keep in mind that the window for the Spring graduates to respond is still open as this report was concluded prior to six months post-graduation for these graduates. However, experience shows this should be a small number of students and would be unlikely to change the overall percentage. This data looks promising and has surpassed the target, but continued monitoring is necessary to ensure this year is not an outlier.

**Decision:**

Reach out to Alumni Affairs and Career Services to maintain connections with Students of Color. Work with career services to promote ways to assist students before and after graduation with resources to help them attain their next academic/professional goal. Look into different data collection techniques with Vice President of Student Experience, Office of the Provost, Alumni Affairs, and Career Services to ensure more participation in the data collection and increased accuracy of the data.

## Section III.

### College Performance and Assessment Cycle AC 2022-2023

#### The College of Arts and Sciences (COAS)

The College of Arts and Sciences is a diverse community of scholars, educators, artists, and students working collaboratively to connect varied ideas and themes across a wide range of academic disciplines grounded in the liberal arts and natural and applied sciences. The College uses transformational, high-impact, experiential learning practices, research, and service to equip students with the skills needed to reason and analyze as well as express their creativity and thoughts. Our graduates progress through an education that builds on itself throughout life and serves to promote economic and social development while improving the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, mathematics, engineering technology, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Heritage Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and the preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

As the largest of the Colleges at the University, it is also one of the most diverse from several perspectives. Comprised of three large Schools (STEM, Creative and Performing Arts, and Social Sciences and Applied Programs), the state's designated Honor's College, and Departments that complete the Humanities/Liberal Arts experience, we span a diversity of degrees and concentrations available, activities presented, outreach completed, and courses offered/taken.

#### COAS Degree Programs

The COAS enrolls over 2700 undergraduate and graduate students in twenty-eight (27) Degree programs with sixty-one (61) concentration areas within those degrees. The Louisiana Scholars' College, housed within the COAS, has joint degree programs with all other Colleges, Departments, and Schools at Northwestern State University. In addition, the vast majority (39/43 or 91%) of the University's general education CORE classes are nested within the COAS, thus serving the entire academic population of the University and reaching all students multiple times during their academic career.

More than 180 full-time faculty and 40 part-time faculty teach courses throughout the College. The Faculty and Degree Programs offered by the COAS spans three (3) Schools, eleven (11) Departments, and the Louisiana Scholars' College, and includes the following:

**Associate Degree:** Veterinary Technology

**Associate of General Studies**

**Associate of Science:** Engineering Technology

**Bachelor of Arts:** Communication, Criminal Justice, English, History, and Liberal Arts

**Bachelor of Fine Arts:** Dance, Fine and Graphic Arts; Musical Theatre, and Production and Design

**Bachelor of General Studies**

**Bachelor of Science:** Applied Microbiology, Biology, Electronics Engineering Technology, Industrial Engineering Technology, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Theatre, and Unified Public Safety Administration

**Bachelor of Music**

**Bachelor of Music Education (*offered in conjunction with the School of Education*)**

**Master of Arts:** Art and English

**Master of Science:** Homeland Security

**Master of Music:** Music Education and Performance

The COAS awarded the following degrees in each of the indicated academic years (Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters included):

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Number of Degrees Awarded</b>
2016-2017	585
2017-2018	606
2018-2019	612
2019-2020	682
2020-2021	631
2021-2022	750
2022-2023	738
2023-2024	632

### **Alumni and Student Success**

Alumni of the COAS have been very successful in professional engagements and state that the hands-on involvement of faculty, linked with the outstanding field-experiences and internships while at NSU, have allowed them to make professional connections, take auditions, transition from intern to full-time employee, and enroll in graduate/professional school. A few recent alumni successes are highlighted here:

#### **Alumni**

- **Allyce Hill Bailey** (Bachelor of Arts–English, 2011) was named the recipient of the 2023 Honorable A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. Memorial Award from the National Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division. The award recognizes lawyers who exhibit legal excellence and inspire young attorneys in their local area or around the country. Hill Bailey was also named one of the 2023 Columbia Business Monthly's Best and Brightest 35 & Under honorees. Bailey earned her Juris Doctorate from Southern University Law School and serves as Deputy County Attorney for Richland County in South Carolina.
- **Brianna Corley** (Bachelor of Arts–English, 2022) completed her MFA in Creative Writing with a concentration in Fiction at The New School and will begin a Fulbright Fellowship in an English Teaching Assistant position in Norway in 2024.
- Two students have been accepted into doctoral programs in English:
  - **Juliet Ellinger** (Master of Arts–English, 2023)–Ph.D. in English (Rhetoric and Composition track) at the University of Cincinnati.
  - **Cypress Thielepape** (Bachelor of Arts–English, 2024)–Ph.D. in English (Composition, Rhetoric, and English Studies) at the University of Alabama.
- **Catelynn Errington** (Master of Arts–English, 2023) accepted a position to serve as the Graduate Writing Specialist and Success Coach at Louisiana Tech University's Academic Success Center.
- **Jonathan Gennaro** (Bachelor of Arts–English [Louisiana Scholars' College] with a minor in Professional French, 2023) has renewed his contract to serve as a teaching assistant in Nantes, France for the 2024-2025 academic year.
- **Ashlyn Guidry** (Bachelor of Arts–English and Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Arts [Louisiana Scholars' College], 2018) was named a 2023 Fellow in the Emerging Voices Directors Lab of the New Orleans Film Society.

- **Chris Jay** (Master of Arts–English, 2023) was named Coordinator of External Affairs at the Louisiana School for Math Science and the Arts. Jay also published "Man vs. Meat Pie" in *Stuffed & Busted* in which he discusses how diet guru Nathan Pritikin’s “doomed” effort to slim down the residents of Natchitoches, Louisiana wrecked his life—and created the mythos of the Natchitoches Meat Pie.
- **Meilyn Woods** (Bachelor of Arts–English [Louisiana Scholars College] with minors in both Creative Writing and English, 2023) completed a successful first year in the M.F.A. in Creative Writing program at McNeese State University in which she won the Robert Olen Butler Award for Fiction, presented at Craft Critique Culture 2024: Black Legacies. Meilyn also published her stories “Dinner Is Served” in *The Raven Review* and “The Photo Strip” in *The Global Youth Review*.
- **John Keeling** (Master of Arts–English, 2004) published a novel: *The Vatican Investigation Division* with Christian Faith Publishing. Keeling wrote the novel while studying to be a religious brother at the Oratory in South Carolina.
- **LeAndre Benton** (Bachelor of Music Education, 2015) continues to have success as a composer of concert band music. Two compositions were listed on the Carl Fisher Music 54 new top contemporary original for 2024. [www.carlfischer.com/2024band](http://www.carlfischer.com/2024band)
- **Jolie González Masmela** (Master of Music–Music Education, 2018) is currently a doctoral student in conducting at the University of Northern Colorado. In Summer 2023, Jolie was accepted into the HUB for Women Orchestra Conductors in Chile, a program that works to expand experiences for women conductors. Additionally, she was selected to be part of the 2024-25 Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship Mentoring Program. She was one of 10 conductors selected who will have the opportunity to work directly with Marin Alsop who was the first woman to lead a major American Orchestra (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra).
- **Valeria Perez Espinoza** (Bachelor of Music–Music Business, 2020) and **Valentina Perez Espinoza** (Bachelor of Art–Music Business Minor, 2020) are part of the Latin duo “Vale”. They were nominated for a Latin Grammy for Best New Artists in 2022 and were featured in Rolling Stone Magazine, [November 28, 2022](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/latin-music/news/valeria-perez-espinoza-valentina-perez-espinoza-20221128/). Most recently (in June 2024), they were featured on the Spotify playlist featuring artists from Colombia (@soptifycolombia) and have released a new single “Corazón Entero” on streaming platforms.
- **Malaina Aultman** (Master of Music–Performance Vocal, 2024) was accepted to the Asian American Music Society’s Opera Emerging Artist’s Young Artist Intensive Workshop in Washington, DC. Malaina was also accepted to Opera Seme in Arezzo, Italy where she performed the role of Asteria in Gluck’s “La Corona” (Summer 2024)
- **Alayna Charles** and **Audrey Loria Calvo** (both Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with Concentration in Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies, 2024) were accepted into their first choice of law schools.
- Two recent graduates of the Louisiana Scholars’ College, **Jackson Gregory** (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, 2024) and **Dominic Ross** (Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts with a Concentration in Humanities and Social Thought and a Minor in History, 2024), received full scholarships to attend the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center.
- Nineteen (19) graduates of the School of STEM have been accepted into their professional school of choice for medical school, veterinary medicine school, osteopathic medicine school, dental school, physician assistant school, pharmacy school, or graduate school.
  - Sarah Moore–LSU Health Shreveport Medical School
  - Zach Karzoun–LSU Health Shreveport Medical School
  - Schuyler Mason–LSU Health Shreveport Medical School
  - Haley Dahlhoff–Medical College of Wisconsin
  - Hunter Bell–St. George’s University School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies



- David Blakesley—LSU School of Veterinary Medicine
- Thando Turner—Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine
- Megan Woods—Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Julie McGeehee—Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Caitlyn Cutrer—Kansas City University Osteopathic Medical School
- Madelyn Marcotte—LSU School of Dentistry
- Lindsay Laprarie—LSU Health Shreveport School of Graduate Studies
- Grace Gosserand—LSU Health New Orleans School of Graduate Studies
- Chirstan Bates—Methodist University North Carolina Graduate School
- Addison Duet—Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy
- Hallie Bloxom—Arizona State University Graduate School
- Austin Grooms—LSU Shreveport Graduate School
- McKenzlea Wise—University of Louisiana at Lafayette Graduate School
- Abbie Boutte—LSU A&M Baton Rouge Graduate School
- **Maci Burt** (Bachelor of Fine Arts—Dance, 2021) performed with the Marigny Opera Ballet in a Jazz Nutcracker performance in New Orleans (December 8-17, 2023).
- Five (5) alumni of the Department of Theatre and Dance performed on Broadway this year:
  - Holli Conway (Bachelor of Science—Theatre, 2016)—*Lempika*
  - Michael Carrier (Bachelor of Science—Theatre, 2017)—*& Juliet*
  - Polanco Jones Jr (Bachelor of Science—Theatre, 2015)—*The Wiz*
  - Luther Brooks III (Bachelor of Science—Theatre, 2021)—*Back to the Future*
  - Casey Barrett (Bachelor of Science—Theatre, 2009)—*Book of Mormon*
- Students from the Department of Theatre and Dance attended the Southeastern Theatre Conference March 13-17, 2024, in Mobile, AL. They were able to attend a masterclass as well as consolidated auditions for regional theatres.

### Current Students

- Recent graduate **Sarah Moore** (Bachelor of Science—Biology, 2024) won first place for her oral presentation in the Division of Zoology/Botany and the Louisiana Academy of Sciences annual meeting on March 23, 2024.
- **Christopher Doney** (Master of Arts—English) was awarded a Graduate Research Grant by The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi in Spring 2024 to support his thesis research into Tajik perceptions of English ubiquity in Tajikistan and will begin a Fulbright Fellowship in an English Teaching Assistant position in Uzbekistan in the coming year.
- Three NSU students shared original research at the Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Conference on October 21, 2023, under the mentorship of Dr. Ereck Jarvis.
  - **Angela Saldivar** (Bachelor of Arts—English) presented "The Lonely Londoners and the Trinidadian Calypso."
  - **Christopher Doney** (Master of Arts—English) presented "The Expansion of English Language in Central Asia: The Case Study of Tajikistan."
  - **Trevor Williams** (Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Business Administration with a minor in English) presented "The Art of Speechlessness: A Performed Interpretation."
- **Alita Pierson Feek** (Master of Arts—English) presented research from her thesis "The World They Read: Literacy and Learning in the Charleston Negro School, 1742-1774," at the 50th annual meeting of the Southeastern Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, held at Furman University in Greenville, SC, February 29-March 2, 2024, under the mentorship of Dr. Ereck Jarvis.

- Ten students presented creative and scholarly work at 2024 LitCon on April 12-13, 2024:
  - **Logan Boline** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Fine and Graphic Arts) presented original research “Writing Superman: Humanity, Vulnerability, and Jesus Christ.”
  - **Marko Bones** (Bachelor of Arts–English, Bachelor of Science–Biology, 2023) presented original research with Instructor Khirsten Doolan “Worldbuilding and Character Creating with a Focus on TTRPGs” and an experimental film *Nostalgia Obituary*.
  - **Koby Brevelle** (Bachelor of Arts–English) presented an experimental film *surreal*.
  - **Kelsie Campbell** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication) presented an experimental film *An Involuntary Participant*.
  - **Kamryn Harris** (Bachelor of Arts–English) presented an experimental film *The Monster Everyone Loves*.
  - **Micah Lacey** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication) presented an experimental film *Unbound: Nature’s Symphony*.
  - **Ashtyn Maddox** (Bachelor of Arts–English) and **Nathan Williams** (B.A. in English) presented original creative work “The Runaway Shadows: A Reading.” Maddox also presented an experimental film *Gen Z Being Gen Z*.
  - **Isabelle Plauche** (Bachelor of Arts–English) presented an experimental film *Studio Hours*.
  - **Cypress Thielepape** (Bachelor of Arts–English) presented an experimental film *Faithful Weapons*.
- Recent graduate, **Hallie Ward** (Master of Music–Performance, 2024) and current student **Lennon Cooke** (Bachelor of Music–Performance) attended the Galway Flute Festival in Switzerland along with 1<sup>st</sup>-year Assistant Professor of Flute, Dr. Stephen Clark. The students were able to take classes, workshops, and lessons with some of the finest players in the world including Karl-Heinz Schutz (Vienna Philharmonic) and Gareth Davies (London Symphony Orchestra).
- **Brooke Jones** (Bachelor of Music–Performance Vocal) was accepted into the Summer TTU Matador Opera Workshop at Texas Tech University.
- **Leah Thompson** (Bachelor of Music–Music Business and Bachelor of Science–Biology) was crowned 3<sup>rd</sup> runner up in the 2024 Miss Louisiana Pageant.
- **Douglas Flores** (Bachelor of Music–Performance) and **Jelsson Flores** (Bachelor of Music–Performance) competed in the solo competition at the Midsouth Horn Worship in Stillwater, OK. Both students made it to the finals of the competition and Jelsson placed 4<sup>th</sup> overall.
- Twelve NSU students were National Student Audition Qualifiers at the National Association of Teachers in Singing Tri-State Conference and Voice Competition in November 2023.
  - **Lower College Music Theater- Treble**
    - Khuyen Tran, 1<sup>st</sup> place and NSA qualifier- student of Dr. Sloane Artis
    - Mia Rodriguez, NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Sloane Artis
  - **Lower College Music Theater- TBB**
    - Caleb Barton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Sloane Artis
  - **Upper College Music Theater- Treble**
    - Phoenix Woods- 2<sup>nd</sup> place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Robert Cardwell
    - Madison Anderson–NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Robert Cardwell
  - **Advanced Music Theater- TBB**
    - Nathan Gay, 1<sup>st</sup> Place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Robert Cardwell
  - **First Year Classical- Treble**
    - Clairie Parent, 1<sup>st</sup> Place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Terrie Sanders
    - Dorcia Gilliam–2<sup>nd</sup> Place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Terrie Sanders

- **Third Year Classical–Treble**
  - Brooke Jones, NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Robert Cardwell
- **Advanced Classical–Treble**
  - Malaina Aultman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Robert Cardwell
- **Advanced Classical–TBB**
  - Jayvian Bush, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Marcy McKee
- **Older Advanced Classical–Treble**
  - Rebekah Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place and NSA qualifier–student of Dr. Marcy McKee
- Lia Portillo Cantarero (Bachelor of Arts–Communication) has received multiple individual honors this year:
  - 2023 Recipient of the Orland Dodson Memorial Scholarship issued by the Shreveport Journalism Foundation
  - 2024 Creative Writing Award issued by the Creative Writing Department at NSU
  - 2024 Fellow for the Emma Bowen Foundation
- **Mason Nugent** (Bachelor of Science–History), has been hired by the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court as a paid undergraduate law clerk (intern who does substantive legal work).
- Twenty (20) students from the Department of Theatre and Dance (accompanied by 2 faculty) attended the First International Dance Festival New Orleans where they saw performances of contemporary dance artists from all over the world and was able to take classes with them as well. The festival was held September 7-10, 2023.
- **Matthew Lovelady** (Bachelor of Science–Industrial Engineering Technology), **Nickolas Tramel** (Bachelor of Science–Industrial Engineering Technology), and **Tanner Funderburk** (Bachelor of Science–Industrial Engineering Technology) won first place in the Undergraduate Research Competition at the Industrial Engineering in Operations Management Conference in June 2023. Their presentation entitled “ID367 Motion and Time Study for Increasing Efficiency, Productivity, and Safety for an Unloading Facility” was based on a research design project they conducted as part of their program’s capstone course, Project Design.
- Twenty-four (24) students from the Department of Theatre and Dance secured summer employment in their field of interest:
  - **Austin Anderson** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Musical Theatre) Tulane Summer Lyric Theatre, New Orleans, Tobias in *Sweeny Todd* in May-June 2024, Northern Lakes Arts Association, Ely, MN, understudying the roles of The Baker, Cinderella’s Prince, and Rapunzel’s Prince in *Into The Woods* in July-August
  - **Caleb Barton** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH, Vocalist in the show *The Swell Tones*
  - **Jarod Cole Becton** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Canterbury Summer Theatre, Michigan City, IN, Performer
  - **Katelyn “Liz” Bonnette** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH, Production Dresser
  - **Mackenzie Brown** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH, Laundry Tech
  - **Elizabeth Cook** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Musical Theatre)–Interlochen, Interlochen, MI, Assistant Choreographer
  - **Piper Dearing** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Production and Design)–Peach State Summer Theatre, Valdosta, GA, Assistant Technical Director

- **Cortelina “Lina” Encalada** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Production and Design) French Woods Festival, Hancock, New York, Stagecraft Counselor
- **Imani Fleury** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Production and Design)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH, Production Dresser
- **Morgan Heinzen** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Santa’s Village under RWS Entertainment, Jefferson, New Hampshire, Fred Tinker
- **Kaylee “Astrophel” Herr** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Dance)–Canterbury Summer Theatre, Michigan City, IN, Technician/Choreographer
- **Leslie Israel** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Musical Theatre)–Hershey Park, Hershey, PA, Costume Character Host
- **William Kielwasser** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–TEXAS! The Outdoor Musical, Canyon, TX, Featured Singer/Ensemble
- **Julia Kuchler** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Musical Theatre, 2024)–Missoula Children’s Theatre, Missoula, MT, Director, Music Director, Choreographer and Performer
- **Raleigh Lusignan** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Production and Design)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH, Prop Crew Hybrid Position
- **Faith Martin** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Thingamajig Theatre Company, Pegosa Springs, CO, Shirelle/Soloist, Ensemble & Ft. Ensemble
- **Damari Padilla** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Thingamajig Theatre Company, Pegosa Springs, CO, Ensemble
- **Kwincy Pierre** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Thingamajig Theatre Company, Pegosa Springs, CO, Ensemble
- **Josie Randle** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theatre (UFOMT), Logan, Utah, Cover/Standby for Crystal, Chiffon, Runette in Little Shop of Horrors, Ensemble in Guys and Dolls, Purser and Ensemble in Anything Goes as well as performing in late night Cabarets
- **Preston Rasco** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Santa’s Village under RWS Entertainment, Jefferson, New Hampshire, Performer
- **Allyce Richards** (Bachelor of Fine Arts–Musical Theatre)–Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida, Character Performer
- **Tyler Sibley** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Woodstock Playhouse, Woodstock, NY, Performer
- **Mallory Speir** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Carnival Cruise Line, The Carnival Jubilee Ship, Member of the Fun Squad
- **Kylan Williams** (Bachelor of Science–Theatre)–Thingamajig Theatre Company, Pegosa Springs, CO, Ensemble

### **Academic Engagement**

The COAS participates in several current and future activities to ensure student success, maintain rigor, emphasize integrity, encourage student responsibility, and promote recruitment, retention, graduation, employment, and professional/graduate school acceptance. Included in our efforts is a continued emphasis on and promotion of academic advising throughout the semester, assessing our general education core classes, early interventions for students struggling in classes, and promotion of the Academic Success Center.

In addition, several specific strategies have taken place to bring increased visibility and impactful meaning to our programs. These include:

## New Programs/Initiatives

- The Department of Biology and Microbiology in collaboration with the Department of Veterinary Technology held the inaugural Sciences Career Day in October 2023. More than a dozen healthcare/veterinary programs participated, as well as several wildlife vendors. Over 85 current students attended and engaged with these prospective employers or graduate/professional school recruiters and administrators.
- The School of STEM has developed memorandums of understanding with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center, Sabine Medical Center, and DeSoto Medical Center to provide medical shadowing opportunities for our current students.
- Michelle Holcomb, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, is piloting a program to provide Open Education Resources (OER) for select criminal justice courses. These OER can be used at no cost to students thereby reducing their financial investment in their education. The courses included in the pilot are CJ1100–Introduction to Criminal Justice and CJ2500–Corrections Process.
- The Department of Biology and Microbiology has developed a new internship agreement with Gator Country Louisiana (Natchitoches, LA). Two students (Blake Inabnet and Santana-Lin Lewis) completed an internship with this alligator park during the Spring 2024 semester.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies began offering a Master of Arts in English with a concentration in Creative Writing in Fall 2023 to replace its Master of Arts in English with concentrations in either Writing and Linguistics or Composition and Rhetoric.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies participated in international student recruiting as **Daniel Gordy** (Assistant Professor of English and Criminal Justice) was among presenters at Fundación Universitaria Tecnológico Comfenalco, Cartagena, Colombia, in Spring 2024. Gordy, along with NSU faculty and staff Dr. Eddie Horton, Dr. Megan Lowe, Dr. Vianka Miranda, and Dr. Beth Prejean from the School of Business shared "Artificial Intelligence: Introduction and Effects on the Business and Education Worlds."
- The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs has implemented a new set of internship/research courses that allow students to develop hands-on experiences in our surrounding community. The students who have participated along with their internship location during the 2023/2024 academic year are as follows:
  - Nicholas Cooksey–Melrose on the Cane
  - Charlie Grant–Fort Johnson Cultural Center & Museum (Leesville, LA)
  - Jordan Mack-McNair–Central Louisiana African American Historical Society
  - Halee Griffin–Central Louisiana African American Historical Society
  - Samuel Switalski–Cane River National Heritage Area (Los Adaes)
  - Kacey Young–Cane River National Heritage Area
  - Logan Penrose–Beauregard Museum (Deridder, LA)
- The Williamson Museum has completed the update and digitizing of all catalog and archival materials.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance hosted multiple guest artists who performed, conducted masterclasses, and/or engaged with students:
  - The Yeli Ensemble from African Nashville visited to teach master classes in West African Drumming and Dance for students in the percussion ensemble as well as those majoring in theatre and dance. In the evening, they performed a lecture demonstration for everyone to learn more about their art, culture, music, and dance.
  - Alumnus Terry LaVelle performed at Student Orientation to inspire the students. He also taught a master class in musical theatre dance.

- Tracey Bonner from Jacob’s Pillow (a dance center, school, and performance space located in Becket, MA) taught masterclasses in contemporary and musical theatre dance while also recruiting students for their summer internship program.
- Del Shores (an accomplished American writer, film director, and producer) was on campus for 2 days during the Fall 2023 semester teaching a masterclass in Acting for the Camera.
- Layon Gray, a guest director from New York, was on campus in April to direct the play *Intimate Apparel*. The 6 students in the cast, stage management crew and faculty and student designers all collaborated with him on this production, and it was a tremendous success. Six performances were held April 24-28, 2024.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance hosted representatives from Cedar Point Amusement Park (Sandusky, OH) in November 2023. They were here on their annual visit to recruit and audition students for Summer 2024 employment opportunities.
- The Department of Engineering Technology has redesigned their Associate Degree in Engineering Technology to include a concentration in Manufacturing. This program will provide students with one year of traditional college education and experience along with preparation for an internship which will begin during the summer between their freshman and sophomore years. The internships will be with our industry partners and will include a mentoring component. These students will be paid by the industry partners to work 3 days each week in their manufacturing facility while maintaining two days each week of traditional classroom work.
- The COAS established a faculty collaboration incubator called **CREATE**–the Center for Research, Education, and Artistic Teamwork Exploration. CREATE is a place for faculty/staff/students to share ideas for collaboration and to establish and nurture professional working relationships that are necessary to produce outstanding, interdisciplinary activity. During the 2023-2024 academic year, CREATE sponsored three different collaborative projects:
  - **Thinkers, Tinkers, and Talkers Podcast.** This podcast is a COAS-wide collaboration that seeks to highlight the varied interests and expertise of our faculty. Each episode explores a different topic related to an area of interest in the arts, the humanities, or the sciences. Listen in to learn more about what gets our faculty thinking, tinkering, and talking!
  - **A cross-Disciplinary Approach to Creating a SCI1010 Course.** Faculty from the Schools of STEM and CAPA have collaborated to create a new general physical science course tailored for music, theatre, and art majors. The new SCI1010 course will still cover the important physics and chemistry topics addressed in the traditional course, but it will utilize examples from the music, theatre, and art fields to inspire more student interest and knowledge in the science that will affect their daily lives as professional artists.
  - **Upgrading Our Virtual Campus Map.** This project involved facilitating updates to our existing campus map offered through CampusTours. Updates included the establishment of new map "layers" that depict parking lots, campus roads, accessibility parking, and building access points. The project will continue to update building information and include interior photographs and videos.

### Community Engagement/Recognitions

- The School of STEM engaged with approximately 5,000 K-12 students during the 2023-2024 academic year. These students spanned multiple parishes in our region (and beyond). The events included the following:
  - **Fall STEM Day**–216 attendees from 11 different area schools
  - **Spring STEM Day**–225 attendees from 20 different area schools
  - **Recipe for Rural STEM Day**–1403 attendees from 9 different parishes

- **Northwestern LA Literary Rally STEM Showcase**—1,735 attendees from 38 area high schools
- **LA State FFA Regional Contest**—378 attendees from 19 area high schools
- **Robotics Competition and Smart Structures Show**—53 students from 4 area middle schools
- **ET Symposium**—30 students from 4 area high schools
- **Career and Opportunity Day**—15 vendors/professional schools
- **Demon Math Classic**—80 attendees from 8 area high schools
- **Summer Robotics Camps**—30+ attendees from area elementary, middle, and high schools
- **Destination Science Camp**—40+ attendees from area elementary and middle schools
- The ARGO Laboratory (a collaboration between the School of STEM and the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs) hosted a drone workshop on the Natchitoches campus for the USDA in January 2024.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies independently hosted five public events:
  - The Cane River Reading Series hosted author Robert Lunday on September 28, 2023, in Varnado Hall.
  - The Day of the Dead Celebration on November 1, 2023, was held in Hanchey Gallery and featured a Day of the Dead altar created by students in Spanish classes, live Latin music played by NSU musicians, and Latin food.
  - #CurrentlyReading, a new event, was held on February 29, 2023. Faculty and English majors presented five-minute talks on what they were currently reading to inspire readers to explore new books and authors.
  - The Cane River Reading Series hosted poet Kimberly Ann Sedgewick on March 7, 2024, in the Student Union and via Microsoft Teams.
  - LitCon 2024, a two-day celebration of the humanities highlighting the interconnectedness of academic and artistic disciplines, was held on April 12-13 in Russell Hall. The conference featured regional scholars, authors, artists, filmmakers, and dancers.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies and the Louisiana Folklife Center hosted six joint events open to the public:
  - “Fiddlin’ with the Finest! A Celebration of Louisiana Folk Fiddling” on June 10, 2023, at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum.
  - The 43rd Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival on July 22, 2023, in Prather Coliseum, attracted more than 1,600 attendees. The Louisiana State Fiddle Championship and the annual Gumbo Cook-off were held as part of the festival.
  - The 15th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest, a contest open to all Louisiana students in grades 9-12 regardless of the type of school institution, attracted submissions from more than 40 students.
  - The 15th annual Louisiana Studies Conference on September 23, 2023, included researchers from the region and beyond. The award ceremony for the NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest was held as part of the conference.
  - An interview of and presentation from 2023 Louisiana Tradition Bearers Nicol and F.J. Delphin about Cane River Creole traditions on October 21, 2023, at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum as a celebration of Louisiana Folklife Month.
  - The 15th annual Multicultural Christmas Concert was held on November 30, 2024, at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum. The event focused on raising funds for Cane River Children’s Services.

- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies partnered with other areas for three joint events that were open to the public:
  - A collaboration with the Department of Theatre and Dance, "Beat as One: Poetry and Dance" was held on October 3, 2023, in the Natchitoches Room of Russell Hall. NSU dance students performed while poetry from various authors was read aloud.
  - A collaboration with the Louisiana Folklife Center and University Libraries, Dr. Martin Nekola presented "Czechs in the Southern USA" on October 10, 2023, in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center.
  - A collaboration with the Department of Music, "Outspoken: Collaborations in Story and Song" was held October 26, 2023, in Magale Recital Hall. Creative writers, composers, and musicians came together to write original music to accompany original creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. Narrators read live as the musicians performed. Among readers were Dr. Rebecca Macijeski who narrated the creative nonfiction piece "Of Corpses and Bloody Rivers" written by Cleo McKinlay, a Scholars' student and creative writing minor. and Izzy Plauché who narrated "Doves in Montana," fiction by English alum Chloe Blank, along with her own pieces "Don't Look at Me," "Drinking Stars," and "My Memories Like a Graveyard."
- The Department of Fine + Graphic Arts offered a Summer Teacher Workshop which served as a free professional development conference on the Natchitoches campus for K-12 art teachers. Fourteen high school art teachers from 5 surrounding parishes attended the week-long, residential workshop.
- The NSU Chamber Choir was selected to perform at the 2024 ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) Southern Region Conference in Louisville, KY in February 2024. This is a huge honor that is typically only bestowed on flagship institutions.
- Our Student Media team won multiple awards at the College Media Association annual meeting in New York City, NY, March 13-16, 2024 ([NYC 2024–College Media Association](#)).
  - **Best Crisis Coverage–The Current Sauce–Second Place Division II and III**
    - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/16619/news/some-nsu-students-dont-feel-safe-at-the-quad/>
    - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/16661/news/nsu-president-marcus-jones-stands-by-decision-search-firm-hired-to-find-new-head-football-coach/>
    - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/16673/sports/nsu-athletic-director-kevin-bostian-addresses-the-decision-to-cancel-the-season-and-the-future-of-football/>
  - **Best Multimedia package**
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> Place The Current Sauce**–<https://purplemedianetwork.com/17073/arts-living/nsu-alumna-returns-to-star-in-her-own-taylor-swift-tribute-show/>
    - **3<sup>rd</sup> Place NSU TV**–<https://purplemedianetwork.com/17173/arts-living/knwds-2nd-annual-battle-of-the-bands-competition/>
  - **Best Opinion Column–The Current Sauce–Second Place Division II**
    - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/16732/showcase/low-income-housing-coming-to-natchitoches-its-impact-and-the-response/>
  - **Best Podcast–Hispanic Student Journalists Association (Latino Living)–Second Place Division II**
    - \*Submitted reduced video: <https://youtu.be/dTfnPCxSOeE?si=0A4dJvKIYnIVAJZI>
    - Season 2 link to whole podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmKyRmhpTjb5kUCtzn9kyXwDacwo1T9U>
- The Current Sauce, another Student Media product, had multiple entries named finalists for the Society of Professional Journalists state chapter in June 2024.



- **Madelyn Murphy** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication), The Current Sauce’s Arts and Living Editor, won first place in print feature reporting.
- **Lia Portillo Cantarero** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication), the Current Sauce’s Editor-in-Chief, won second place in print news reporting.
- **Lia Portillo Cantarero** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication) and **Maria “Isabel” Juarez-Rubio** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication), the Current Sauce’s former Community Outreach Coordinator, won first place for the story of NSU alumna Sarah Jessica Rhodes’ Taylor Swift tribute show.
- **Kevin Thomas** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication), the Current Sauce’s previous Copy Editor, and **Kallie Bourgeois** (Bachelor of Arts–Communication), the Current Sauce’s previous Reporter, won second place for multimedia with their interview with NSU’s Athletic Director, Kevin Bostian.
- New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts and the University’s Hispanic Student Journalist Association’s student-driven podcast “Latino Living” has been awarded two Bronze Telly Awards in the Student–Online category. The two award winning episodes were Season 2, Episode 2 [The American Dream](#) and Season 2, Episode 5 [La Carrera](#).
- The School of Social Sciences and Applied programs hosted students from schools in surrounding parishes for the 58th annual Region IV Social Studies Fair on February 3, 2024. Students exhibited almost 70 individual and group projects in a wide variety of fields, including Anthropology, Economics, Geography, History, Louisiana History, Political Science, and Sociology. Faculty from the School served as judges for the competition, which included elementary, middle, and high school divisions. Winning entries were eligible to compete at the Louisiana State Social Studies Fair in Lake Charles.
- The Creole Heritage Center (CHC) was involved in several events/engagements:
  - The CHC held two events in October 2023 to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Over 50 individuals enjoyed fellowship, food, and the sounds of NSU music students at an evening soiree and the following day it held an open house to show off the beginnings of a new visitor experience that will utilize the CHC’s holdings to tell others about the history of the CHC and the vibrant Louisiana Creole people.
  - In October, the CHC received proclamations from Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, Louisiana Senator Louie Bernard, and Natchitoches Mayor Ronnie Williams recognizing Creole Heritage Month in the state and the role the CHC has played in expanding recognition and preservation of Louisiana Creoles and their heritage.
  - The CHC partnered with NSU’s Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts in September and October 2023 for an art exhibition called Elemental Threads. The exhibition featured three Creole-connected and highly celebrated artists, Angelbert Metoyer, Annie Moran, and Ayo Scott.
  - The CHC connected with three other Louisiana-based Creole organizations to strengthen connections and awareness of the resources available at the CHC. In October 2023, the CHC took part in the St. Augustine (Isle Brevelle) Catholic Church’s annual Creole Festival and in the following month it sponsored and gave a presentation at the Louisiana Creole Research Association (LA Creole)’s 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in New Orleans. In June 2024, the Center joined C.R.E.O.L.E., Inc. at their Creole Culture Day at Historic Vermilionville in Lafayette.
  - Dr. Kent Peacock, Assistant Professor of History and Director of the CHC, organized and presented on a roundtable at the Organization of American Historians annual conference held in New Orleans in April 2024. Other participants were from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Louisiana State University, and Amistad Research Center and all spoke about the responsibility of faculty and staff at institutions of higher education to engage with and ethically preserve the stories of the communities of which their institutions call home.

- In June 2024, the CHC partnered with Cane River Creole National Historic Park for one day of their Summer Camp for ages 9-12. The CHC brought in Rosa Ashby-Metoyer, a member of the National Association of Black Storytellers, to perform and teach attendees about folklore that is a part of Louisiana Creole and all cultures.
- Dr. Rebecca Riall, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Coordinator of American Indian and Indigenous Studies, conducted ongoing tribal outreach. She has worked with the recruiting staff and Native American Student Association to plan and carry out a visit by Jena Band of Choctaw graduating seniors, the tribal chairwoman, and other officials and attended the Tunica-Biloxi Casino's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration as invited guests. She also coordinated faculty throughout the University to attend the LaRuE economic summit on the Tunica-Biloxi Reservation.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance held Modern in Motion XI, an event open to the public. The performance was hosted at the Natchitoches LA Southern Pacific Train Depot. Over 150 members of the community attended the 4 performances.
- Students from the Department of Theatre and Dance performed at the PEO (Philanthropic Educational Organization) Sisterhood meeting held on the campus of LSMSA.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance hosted the LA Thespian Festival January 19-20, 2024. Over 900 high school students attended this event.
- Faculty and students from the Department of Theatre and Dance attended the annual American College Dance Association (ACDA) South Conference held at Belhaven University March 9-12, 2024. The event brought together 285 dance students and faculty from 21 colleges/universities from across the US. The work "falling apart, falling together" by John Alex McBride, Assistant Professor of Dance was selected for performance at the Gala Concert. It was one of only nine works showcased and received the honor of being selected to close the Gala Concert.

### Program Successes

- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies had a successful 2023-2024 year with the following highlights:
  - More than \$38,000 in funding from seven grants, including \$11,000 from the National Endowment of the Arts for a grant written by Dr. Shane Rasmussen to support the NSU-Natchitoches Louisiana Folk Festival.
  - 20 faculty publications of academic and creative works, including a chapbook of poetry by Dr. Rebecca Macijeski, *Apocryphal Girl* from Pinhole Poetry. Dr. Macijeski also had two poems nominated by publishers for the prestigious Pushcart Prize.
  - 28 faculty presentations at academic conferences, including an invited keynote by Daniel Gordy and Dr. Eddie Horton (CIS) at the 2023 Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education conference.
  - More than 50 press releases, news articles, webpage features, podcast interviews, and tv and radio interviews and stories tied to programs.
- The ARGO Laboratory facility has been completely renovated with the addition of a wheelchair lift and the networking of the laboratory's workstations. Through grants secured by JD Cox, Assistant Professor of Biology and Coordinator of the ARGO Laboratory, new drones have been purchased to increase teaching capabilities as well as to enhance the opportunities for current and future community partnerships such as the following
  - A USDA project tracking feral pigs
  - A survey of river cane areas in the region
  - An interactive map for the Williamson Museum

- Edgar Cano, Assistant Professor of Art in the Department of Fine + Graphic Arts, won best of show at his last three national/international competitions or juries. As part of one of the awards, he was featured in an article in the magazine *Juxtapoz*.
- Louisiana Scholars' College's Nicole Lobdell was awarded a summer fellowship to conduct research this summer at Oxford University to research Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.
- Louisiana Scholars' College faculty have had a successful year with publications:
  - Alexei Muravitsky
    - Review of Davide Emilio Quadrellaro, "On intermediate inquisitive and dependence logics: an algebraic study." *Ann. Pure Appl. Logic* 173 (2022), no. 10, Paper No. 103143, 43 pp. 03B60 (03B55 03C05 03G10 06D20 08B05)—commissioned by Mathematical Reviews of American Mathematical Society.
    - (with A. Citkin) "Preface to the Rejection Special Issue," *Logica Universalis*, vol. 17, 405-410 (2023).
    - "Rejection: A Historico-Epistemological View," *Logica Universalis*, vol. 17, 443--460 (2023).
    - "On Consequence and Rejection as Operators," *Logica Universalis*, vol. 17, vol. 17, 461-482 (2023).
    - Review of T. S. Lyon "Nested sequents for intermediate logics: the case of Gödel-Dummett logics," *J. Appl. Non-Class. Log.*, 33 (2023), no. 2, 121--164.
  - Robert Page
    - "Use of RT-PCR in conjunction with a Respiratory Pathogen Assay to Concurrently Determine the Prevalence of Bacteria and SARS-CoV-2 from the Nasopharynx of Outpatients." *Frontiers in Epidemiology* 3: 1274800.
  - Dean Kostantaras
    - "A Novel Turn on the 'Invention of Tradition' in the Jim Crow South" will appear in a future edition of *Cultural Geographies*.
- COAS received a grant from Northwestern State's Student Government Association to initiate a new program called **FLAME** (Faculty Led Assistance with My Education) Supplemental Instruction. The program utilized faculty volunteers from the School of STEM, the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, as well as the Department of Music to provide supplemental instruction for interested students. FLAME complements our Academic Advising Center's peer tutoring program and provides students with another avenue for receiving the academic assistance they need to be successful in their courses. The supplemental instruction provided by FLAME was offered at Watson Library, the Athletic Field House Study Hall, the Music Library, in the Veterinary Technology student computer laboratory, and online (via Microsoft Teams). The program was very well-received by participating students, and we hope to expand offerings next year.
- The COAS continues to realize great success in our MATH and ENGL co-requisite course programs. We lead the state of Louisiana in this Board of Regents initiative. In 2023-2024, our courses realized over a 73% success rate for students in our MATH co-requisite courses and a 60% success rate for students in our ENGL co-requisite courses.

### Grant Successes

- Dr. Dominique Taylor, Assistant Professor of Communication, has secured a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities to provide academic and technical assistance to the Latino Living Podcast—"Latino Living," A Podcast Series Spotighting Issues Affecting College—\$10,285.
- Dr. Hiram "Pete" Gregory, Professor of Anthropology, has secured two grants from the US Forest Service:
  - "USDA Forest Service Kisatchie National Forest—River Cane Restoration"—\$30,000.

- “NSU Student Training in Archaeological Curation”—\$7,500.
- The Creole Heritage Center (CHC) received a \$100,000 grant as part of the state’s FY23 budget surplus. These funds helped the CHC begin several programmatic goals identified in its 2023-2026 strategic plan, including the development of revised and new educational resources for all ages on Louisiana Creoles and their culture, materials for permanent and traveling exhibits, and improved communications with supporters and researchers. Additionally, the CHC updated its Resource Library and will be developing community-driven archives program focused on preserving local and family histories and objects.
- Dr. Jasmine Wise, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and Coordinator of Black Studies, along with Dr. Rebecca Riall, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Coordinator of American Indian and Indigenous Studies received a Digital Ethnic Futures Grant to incorporate digital humanities/social sciences into courses and build capacity for digital tools in the school.

In addition, departments and schools host several events, annually, that strengthen our recruiting and retention efforts. To highlight a few:

*NSU Art Camp:* The Department of Fine + Graphic Arts offers several sessions of summer arts camps for young artists (ages 5-11) as well as advanced artists (ages 12-18) to explore the own creative twists on a variety of classic and modern art.

*STEM Robotics Summer Camp:* The Department of Engineering Technology offered two different STEM Robotics summer camps for middle school (Junior) and high school (Advance) age students.

*Annual Robotics Competition and Smart Structures Show:* The Department of Engineering Technology offers this competition for middle school students in the region.

*Classic on the Cane:* The Spirit of Northwestern hosts a statewide marching band competition at Turpin Stadium each October.

*STEM Day:* The School of STEM hosts this event twice each academic year that attracts over 200 high school students to participate in STEM activities including robotics, mathematics, drone technology, physics, anatomy and physiology, botany, veterinary medicine, chemistry, and microbiology.

*JaM Day:* The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts hosts this annual event that attracts over 150 high school students to participate in various journalism, communication, and new media contests.

*Scholars’ Day:* The Louisiana Scholars’ College hosts this event that is held once each semester to showcase its offerings and accomplishments. Potential students sit in Scholars’ classes taught by faculty, engage with current students in the program, and gain insight into what daily life is like as a Scholars’ student.

*Writing/Coloring Contests:* The Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies facilitated two brand-new community outreach programs: the Annual Easter Writing and Coloring contest (grades K through 5), and the Annual St. Patrick’s Day Creative Writing Contest (grades 6 through 8). Over 300 students from regional schools participated.

*Annual Destination Science Camp:* The School of Biological and Physical Sciences hosts the annual Destination Science Camp each June. The camp immerses children from ages 8-15 to various workshops/activities in anatomy, physiology, microbiology, chemistry, physics, veterinary science, drone technology, and natural sciences. Over 30 children from the community attend.

*Demon Math Classic:* The Department of Mathematics hosts this annual event each March that attracts over 200 high school students to participate in mathematics-related contests.

## College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning

### Responsiveness and Future Innovations

As we continue to work collaboratively as scientists and artists, we strive to transform the human experience while blurring the lines between liberal arts and applied and natural science education. To do this, we must continue to evaluate our students' learning, in both the traditional and experiential senses, to maximize its impact on our students as they prepare themselves for lives in the Arts and Sciences professions. It will be imperative that we develop students' communication and critical thinking skills; it is essential that we continue to encourage and support faculty and students as they work collaboratively on research that has the potential to bring greater meaning to our work in the Arts and Sciences; and it is critical that we engage in deeper conversations with our alumni and advisory committees who serve as valuable resources as we continue to evolve as a responsive College. These goals will be realized with the development of innovative and responsive programming (such as an interdisciplinary undergraduate certificate in scientific communication) as well as with the establishment of collaborative centers focused on creating cross-disciplinary and professional works.

We will continue to engage in crucial conversations, in which we realize that the work of the between liberal arts and applied and natural science —though difficult and demanding—is critical to our lives as we create graduates who are responsive and respectful, and stellar contributors to their chosen professions. As we continue to look at best practices for delivery of instruction, we will constantly evaluate how education delivered in a residential, online, or blended format can best serve the students, programs, and departments within the COAS, and how we can continue to evolve in the scope of our influence.

### The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD)

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD) is a community of eclectic students, faculty, and staff working to increase knowledge, skills, and dispositions through teaching, research, and service. The GCEHD offers a wide variety of exemplary undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare candidates for career success and positively contribute across the spectrum of professional roles and settings. These programs include teacher education, child and family studies, adult learning and development, educational technology leadership, educational leadership, special education, student affairs in higher education, counseling, health and exercise science, health and physical education, sport and recreation management, health and human performance with sports administration and public health concentration, psychology, addiction studies, clinical psychology, social work, and military science. GCEHD consists of nine academic and support units (School of Education, Department of Health and Human Performance, Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies, Department of Social Work, Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, Military Science, NSU Child and Family Network, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, and NSU Middle Laboratory School).

The Mission of the college states the GCEHD is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the academic and support units within GCEHD, the College produces knowledgeable, innovative, and inspired graduates ready for lifelong learning and endeavors that contribute to the communities in which they reside.

Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their parents related to learning and development.

During AC 2023-2024, the GCEHD is proud to reflect on the myriad revisions to fieldwork, increased opportunities for internships, improvement in curricula, increase in scholarships, research, and service opportunities, improvement in admission procedures, more collaboration, and intentional creation of a positive environment. The resilience and positive attitude of GCEHD faculty and students were evident in every program and classroom. In comparing AC 2022-2022 to AC 2023-2024, GCEHD students and faculty are persistent in pursuing educational attainment, scholarly work, and service activities.

### GCEHD Degree Programs

In fall 2023, the GCEHD enrolled 1747 undergraduate and graduate students in 50 degree and certificate programs. Four Hundred Eighty-seven (487) students (ages 3-14) enrolled in the NSU Elementary and Middle Laboratory schools and Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center (CDC). Forty (40) military cadets were enrolled as full-time students in fall 2023.

More than 100 full-time and 40 adjunct faculty teach courses throughout the GCEHD. The Faculty and Degree Programs offered by GCEHD include the following:

**Bachelor of Music Education** (offered in conjunction with the School of Creative and Performing Arts)

**Bachelor of Social Work:** Social Work

**Bachelor of Science:** Addiction Studies, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Child & Family Studies, Health & Exercise Science, Health & Physical Education, Psychology, Secondary Education and Teaching, Sport and Recreation Management

**Master of Arts:** Adult Learning and Development, Counseling, Student Affairs in Higher Education

**Master of Arts in Teaching:** Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Elementary & Special Education, Middle School Education, Middle & Special Education Mild/Moderate, Secondary Education, Secondary & Special Education Mild/Moderate

**Master of Education:** Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Education, Educational Leadership, Educational Technology Leadership, Special Education

**Master of Science:** Clinical Psychology, Health and Human Performance

**Educational Specialist:** Educational Leadership and Instruction

**Doctor of Education:** Adult Learning and Development

The GCEHD measures academic success through multiple metrics including overall grade point average, number of degrees awarded, and student retention (persistence).

During 2023-2024, the GCEHD awarded 447 undergraduate and graduate degrees. Four cadets were commissioned as 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenants in the U.S. Army during 2023-2024. In 2022-2023, the number of degrees earned totaled 460.

For AC 2023-2024, retention rates for departments within GCEHD ranged from 45.76% to 65.08%. GCEHD had a Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 retention rate of 71.08% for Entering Freshmen.

### Alumni and Student Success

#### *Alumni:*

Alumni of the GCEHD have been remarkably successful in their chosen professions. A few alumni successes are highlighted below:

- Lieutenant Colonel John C. Hatley returned to his alma mater (2004) to serve as the guest speaker for the 2024 Spring Army ROTC Commissioning Ceremony on May 9, 2024. He was

recently selected to serve as the Assistant Chief of Staff, G1 (Personnel Officer), for the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson.

- Ms. Brittany Jeanice received the Human Resources Senior Civilian of the Year Award 2023 for the Military Personnel Division, United States Army Garrison Bavaria, headquartered in Grafenwöhr, Germany. Ms. Jeanice graduated and was commissioned from NSU in 2013. She is a member of Phi Mu NSU.
- Colonel William P. Gates, US Army Retired, was selected to serve as the Honorary Colonel of the Northwestern Demon Regiment. He is a 1975 alumnus of NSU and retired from the United States Army Reserve with over 31 years of service to the nation.
- Two ROTC alumni were inducted into the NDR Hall of Fame during the annual Military Ball co-hosted by the Department of Military Science and the Northwestern Demon Regiment on April 13<sup>th</sup>:
- Colonel Wayne R. Sears, US Army, Retired, graduated, and was commissioned from NSU in 1975. He culminated as the Chief of Staff of the Army Aviation School, Fort Rucker, Alabama, before his military retirement in 2001. He served the nation for over 26 years.
- Lieutenant Colonel Richard “Dickie” Rogers, US Army Retired, passed away in 2019 and was posthumously inducted into the NDR Hall of Fame. LTC Rogers graduated and was commissioned in 1962. He received two Silver Stars for combat actions in Vietnam and retired from the Army in 1982 with over 20 years of service to the nation.
- Melissa Kaufman (Graduated in 2016) from the School of Education with a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction was recognized as a 2024 Louisiana Exemplary Educator.
- Wendy Kyei (Graduated in 2024) from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies with a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology has been hired by the NSU TRIO program.
- Morgan Nuss (Graduated in 2024) from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies with a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology was accepted to the Counseling Psychology Doctoral Program at Louisiana Tech University.
- Makeia Hardy from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies with a Master of Science was accepted to the Clinical Psychology, Psy.D. Program at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.
- Rebel Bonnette (Graduated in 2024) from the Social Work Department was admitted to the MSW program with advanced standing at the Stephen F Austin University.
- Brandi Brinson (Graduated in 2024) from the Social Work Department was accepted into two MSW programs (LSU and Florida Atlantic University [FAU]). She will begin the FAU program in May with the status of advanced standing.
- Katelynn Messer (Graduated in 2024) from the Social Work Department was admitted to the Louisiana State University MSW program with advanced standing.
- Raegan Johnson (Graduated in 2024) from the Social Work Department was accepted into the MSW program at the Louisiana State University MSW program with advanced standing.
- Kyle Nolen (Graduated in 2024) from the Health and Human Performance Program was accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Texas Woman’s University.
- Maggie Darr (Graduated in 2024) from the Health and Human Performance Program was accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Texas State University.
- Nadia (Graduated in 2024) from the Health and Human Performance Program was accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

- Spring Atkins (Graduated in 2022) from the Health and Human Performance Program graduated in 2024 from Doctor of Chiropractic School in Dallas, Texas.
- Arica Ammons (Graduated in 2020) from the Health and Human Performance Program works as an Evoked Potential Tech at Willis-Knighton Health System in Shreveport.
- Kobe Ardoin (Graduated in 2020) from the Health and Human Performance Program is an Area Director at Boys and Girls Club Mentoring Alliance, Tyler, Texas.

#### *Current Students:*

- Second Lieutenant Peyton Bordelon graduated with academic honors with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and a Minor in Military Leadership. Working to become a MEDEVAC pilot and flight officer, he will serve as an Army Aviator in the Louisiana Army National Guard. He will attend the Basic Officer Leaders Course in September and helicopter flight school soon thereafter, where he will train to fly the UH-60 Black Hawk.
- Second Lieutenant Loren Higginbotham graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a Major Concentration in Marketing and a Minor in Military Leadership. He has assessed the Infantry and will serve in the active-duty component. He was named a Distinguished Military Graduate.
- Second Lieutenant Breanna James graduated with academic honors with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Minor in Military Leadership. She will continue to serve in the National Guard at the 528th Engineer Battalion in Monroe as an Adjutant General Officer.
- Second Lieutenant Andrew Wesley graduated with a Bachelor of General Studies with a Major Concentration in Computer and Natural Sciences and a Minor in Military Leadership. He has assessed the Chemical Corps and will serve in the active-duty component. His initial assignment will be with the 3-2 General Support Aviation Battalion, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade "Talon," 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Humphreys, Pyeongtaek, South Korea.
- Cadet Loren Higginbotham and Cadet Caiden Matthews earned Air Assault Wings after completing a 10-day course that trains Soldiers in Air Assault operations, sling-load operations, and rappelling at the US Army Sabalauski Air Assault School, Fort Campbell, Kentucky.
- Cadet Loren Higginbotham was selected to attend the George C. Marshall Leadership and Awards Seminar, Fort Knox, Kentucky, 20-24 February 2024.
- Bailey Willis, currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education and Teaching, is a superstar serving in many positions at the University and state levels. She was also Miss Lady of the Bracelet.
- Jewel Coleman, currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education GR 1-5 was chosen for Future Ed Honor roll for the Louisiana State and was the recipient of the Educators Rising Outstanding Service Award for the School of Education.
- Cassandra Hill with her faculty sponsor, Dr. MaryAnne Candley, was our first student from the Social Work Department to present at the ULS Academic Summit on Increasing Self-Care Among College Students to Support & Enhance the Collegiate Experience.
- The Social Work Department provided multiple scholarships to students. Four students were awarded the Child Welfare Scholars Program with a stipend of \$7500 to intern and enter the career path of Child Welfare. Two students were awarded Claudia Triche Memorial Scholarship in Social Work, five students were awarded Social Work Field Placement Scholarship, and one student received loan assistant scholarship, which totaled \$36,644.66.



- The Psychology Department provided multiple scholarships to students, including Thornton Family, Flourishing Junior, and Senior Success Scholarships, which totaled \$29,000.
- The GCEHD awarded \$35,000 in need-based Tuition Scholarships to NSU- Elementary Lab and Middle- Lab Students.
- A hundred percent (100%) of the graduate students in Clinical Psychology presented their research at the NSU Research Day. Additionally, two students presented at the Southwest Psychology Association Annual Conference, and one student, Wendy Kyei, presented research at the LSUS Scholars Forum and received the first-place award.
- Dr. Patrice Moulton led a group of current graduate students and alumni to present at the U.S. Embassy in Katmandu, Nepal.
- The Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology inducted 15 new members.
- The Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society inducted 20 new members.

### Academic Engagement

- The Department of Military Science hosted 70 JROTC Cadets from 9 high schools on March 1, 2024. The all-day, 10-event competition introduces high school students to a series of physical and leadership-based tasks designed to build relationships between schools and inspire Cadet excellence. Up from 6 high schools participating in 2023, in 2024, Cadets and Cadre incorporated recruiting trips with ROTC Programs to increase outreach and participation.
- The School of Education successfully hosted the NSULA Regional Educators Rising Conference; the theme was Engagement in Education. Two Hundred sixty-two (262), including 200 middle and high school, 20 teachers/sponsors, and 40 college student volunteers and presenters, participated in the conference. One hundred thirty-seven (137) students registered to compete in seven competitions; students also attended sessions delivered by the School of Education Faculty and took campus tours.
- The Rapides Foundation Future of Health C.A.R.E. Program Grant aimed at Louisiana workforce development in Healthcare Careers, including Behavioral Health such as Social Work, Psychology, and Addiction Studies. Multidisciplinary partnership involving GCEHD and College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. Through this grant, GCEHD served 395 high-school students from 6 different parishes including Catahoula, Rapides, Allen, Grant, Winn, and Natchitoches.
- The EdD Adult Learning and Development program is recognized as the number 1 by Great Value Colleges. NSU was selected not only for the program's affordability but also for its institution's outstanding reputation, its faculty's excellence, and the unwavering commitment to providing non-traditional students a high-quality education and, in doing so, giving them the tools needed to achieve their future career goals.
- The Bachelor of Science in Addiction Studies at NSU ranked # 2 on the 20 Best Bachelor's Programs in Addiction and Substance Abuse by Collegerank.net.
- The Ed Rising Sponsor and Officer in the School of Education are selected as judges for the National Ed Rising Conference.
- The EdD Adult Learning and Development program graduated 13 students and currently has 71 students enrolled for fall. Our EdD graduates serve in leadership positions such as Chancellor, Dean, Executive Director, Principal, CFO, VP, Executive Assistant, and in areas of governance for the ULS system.
- Dr. Patrice Moulton sponsored students for an international trip to Nepal, which allowed them to visit the American Embassy and the Fulbright Commission and establish an NGO charity.

- The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development honored 40 students at the GCEHD Spring Convocation. Awards were given in each department, determined by criteria established and voted on by the respective faculties.

#### *New Initiatives:*

- With ROTC Recruiting refinements in 2023-2024, the program is set to double again, with nearly 40 incoming students committing to NSU and NSU ROTC for fall 2024.
- The Department of Health and Human Performance secured approval to begin offering a Bachelor of Science degree in Sport and Recreation Management in fall 2023.
- The Department of Health and Human Performance added an Exercise Physiology concentration in their graduate program and new minor in Coaching Athletics.
- Dr. Erick Kigen and Dr. Sunggun Jeon from the Department of Health and Human Performance developed the Exercise Physiological Lab and Applied Neuromuscular Physiological Lab. The NSU Foundation contributed \$10,000, and Steeg Endowed Professorship awarded \$5,000 to the labs.
- The Department of Health and Human Performance secured two new endowments: the Cindy Poole Davis Health & Exercise Science Scholarship, and the Bill E. Stewart Health & Human Performance Scholarship.
- The Social Work Department completed a year of self-study and site-visit to be reaccredited by the Council on Social Work Education for eight years.
- The UL Board of Regents approved the Master of Social Work in April 2024.
- The Social Work Department sponsored the Opioid Symposium: Opioid Use Disorder and Maternal Health with four hours of no-cost continuing education credits to 149 professionals in the field.
- The Center for Excellence in Teaching is in its pilot stages and will have the ribbon cutting ceremony on Fall 24.
- Sabine Parish established a community partnership with NSU for their Universal Preschool Program and to recruit for our program.
- The Master's in Counseling Program in the School of Education received CACREP accreditation.
- The School of Education Quality Rating score from the state was tied for the second highest in Louisiana; the quality score is better than Universities such as LSU, LA Tech, ULL, and ULM.
- The Department of Psychology's name changed to Psychology and Addiction Studies.
- The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies curriculum requirements for the Minor in Psychology (392) changed. The change in the minor will allow students to explore their interests in psychology and tailor coursework to their professional goals.
- The Addiction Studies program applied for Accreditation through the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC).
- The Addiction Studies faculty hosted an Exam Prep Seminar for National Licensing and Certification Exam candidates.
- Legislation is in place to allow Master Level Clinical Psychology students to apply for Licensure in the State of Louisiana.
- Dr. Neeru Deep renegotiated royalty with the McGraw Hill publisher for custom learning material in two low-cost custom textbooks for the Department of Psychology & Addiction Studies. This agreement brought a total of \$8,000 royalty to the Department in 2023-2024 and

will continue for the next three years. The Department will use this money for students' scholarships and program enhancement.

- GCEHD Faculty presented around 100 sessions at state, regional, national, and international conferences. Many faculty members serve in leadership positions in a variety of professional organizations.
- The GCEHD started the NSU GCEHD Literacy Initiative. Dr. Deep, Dr. Jordan, and Dr. Brunson received two grants: The Weyerhaeuser awarded \$1,596, and the International Paper awarded \$5,000. With this initiative, Dr. Deep successfully developed and delivered *Well-being Literacy Workshops for Future Educators* to 100 students in the School of Education. Dr. Brunson was able to donate more literacy bags to elementary schools, and Dr. Jordan was able to make space for the Teacher Excellence Program.
- The GCEHD initiated a new award for the staff's dedication; Ms. Kristen Walker and Ms. Stephanie Anothony-Smith received the Distinguished Staff Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- The GCEHD Appreciation Day and GCEHD Service Day received a positive response from students, faculty, and staff.

#### *Faculty and Staff Awards/Recognition:*

- Major Kegan Davis, US Army Assistant Professor of Military Science, was promoted from Captain on 1 May 2024.
- Assigned to the Department of Military Science, Department of the Army Civilians, Mr. Raymond McDowell, Mr. Edward Kelly, and Mr. Dennis Montgomery attended US Army Cadet Command's General Schedule Logistics Technician, Human Resources Assistant and Recruiting Workshops, respectively, held in Savannah, GA on December 4-15, 2023.
- The Department of Military Science nominated Dr. Marcus Jones, NSU President, to attend the US Army Center of Influence Parachute Team Tandem Orientation Program. Upon completion, he participated in a tandem parachute jump with the Army Golden Knights on 5 September 2023.
- Dr. Christy Hornsby and Dr. Debria Jo Hailey received the GCEHD Faculty Scholar Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- Dr. Michelle Fazio-Brunson and Dr. Patrice Moulton received the GCEHD Faculty Service Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- Mr. Byron McKinney, Dr. Jackie Calhoun, and Dr. Cynthia Lindsey received the GCEHD Faculty Teaching Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- Ms. Kristen Walker and Ms. Stephanie Anothony-Smith received the Distinguished Staff Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- Two faculty from the Department of Health and Human Performance received the 2024 National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education awards; Dr. Haley Blount received (the NAKHE) Presidential Award, and Dr. Jackie Calhoun received the Haley Beth Poindexter Young Scholar Award.
- Dr. Haley Taitano and Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith from the Department of Health and Human Performance received the NAKHE Hellison Grant of \$5,000 to research the Impact of Toxic Leadership on Intercollegiate Athletics Departments.
- Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith from the Department of Health and Human Performance, mentor of Dr. Amanda Aguilar, University of Alabama Huntsville, received the NAKHE Leader Mentor Grant of \$2,000 for Impact of Elite Youth Sport Participation on Families.

- Dr. Jackie Calhoun from the Department of Health and Human Performance received the NAKHE Engaged Scholar Grant of \$2,000 to Investigate the College Recruiting Experiences of Youth Softball.
- Ms. Faith Stanfield, Director of Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center received a Let-Be-Healthy Grant of \$2491.77. Also, the NSU CDC Center received a 6.35/7 (Excellent) rating from the Louisiana Department of Education.
- Ms. Caron Coleman, Principal of NSU Elementary Lab School, was recognized; the Elementary Lab School received the National Blue-Ribbon Award from the US Department of Education.
- Ms. Natalie Ducote- Principal of NSU Middle Lab School, highlighted that the NSU Middle Lab School Orchestra traveled to Tioga to compete in a Louisiana Music Education Association competition. Both groups (6th and 7th/8th) scored the highest superior rating in both their performance and sight-reading divisions!
- Ms. Annabel Jones, an Art and Digital Media teacher at NSU Middle Lab School, was named Teacher of the Year, and Miss Valentina Forkner was named Student of the Year.
- Dr. Keicia Hawkins received Freeport McMoran Endowed Professorship in Pluralistic Education of \$10,435.
- Dr. Neeru Deep received Arthur Watson Endowed Professorship for Excellence in Academic Accommodation of \$8,616.
- Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson received Melba L Steeg Endowed Professorship in Primary Education of \$9,638.
- Dr. Amy Criag received Dan, Lily Chase and Daughters Marty Causey, and Lisa Chase Endowed Professorship in the College of Education of \$7,224.
- Dr. April Giddens received a Thomas E Stewart Endowed Professorship in Education of \$6,745.
- Dr. Charles King received Dr. Francisco A. Silva Endowed Professorship in Psychology (Addictive Studies) of \$6,078.
- LTC Joshua Drake received a Demon Regiment Endowed Professorship in Military Science of \$6,474.
- Dr. Debra Hailey received Family and Consumer Science Endowed Professorship of \$6,545.
- Dr. Katrina Jordan received Carolyn Bellue Holly Endowed Professorship in Teaching and Learning of \$10,825.
- Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith received Dr Violet Davion Shaver’s Endowed Professorship in HHP for \$5,376.
- Dr. Charles King received the SWAATC \$25,000 grant to enhance the field of Addiction Studies.
- Dr. Neeru Deep, Dr. Katrina Jordan, and Dr. Michelle Brunson received two grants for the new NSU GCEHD Literacy Initiative: Weyerhaeuser awarded \$1,596 and International Paper awarded \$5,000.
- Dr. Andrew Fultz, Director, NSU Title IV-E/Louisiana Title IV-E Program Manager, brought NSU a three-year grant renewal from the Department of Children and Family Services and Southeastern Louisiana University for \$ 9.9 million (3.3 million per year) disbursed among seven public universities. Northwestern State administers the Louisiana Child Welfare Scholars program, which provides funding to students in child welfare professionals from eight public universities in Louisiana. Under the current grant structure, students receive approximately \$900,000 per year in direct funding through the NSU contract.
- Mr. Steven Gruesbeck, Coordinator, NSU Healthcare ACE, received the Rapides Foundation Future of Health C.A.R.E. Program Grant: \$1,166,525 aimed at Louisiana workforce development in Healthcare Careers, including Behavioral Health such as Social Work, Psychology, and Addiction

Studies. Multidisciplinary partnership involving GCEHD and College of Nursing and School of Allied Health.

- Ms. Nancy Alexandria, Director of Child and Family Network received multiple grants totaling \$9,898,628 for 2023-2024. Through these grants, NSU Child and Family Network offers a variety of services to assist early learning programs and families in Northwest and Central Louisiana. CFN assists owners and providers of early education programs as well as families who want information or resources. Primary services are professional development, provider resources, and family referrals.

*Closing thoughts:* The GCEHD is a beautiful college with deep roots in positively impacting and building flourishing communities through education, scholarly work, and service activities. As the Interim Dean, I am very proud of the work we achieved this year as a team.

I am so very thankful to my GCEHD Team!

*Dr. Neeru Deep*

## College of Nursing & School of Allied Health

Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH) is comprised of a diverse group of staff and health professionals dedicated to providing the highest quality nursing and allied health education in our state and region. To accomplish this goal, CONSAH strives to be an innovator and pacesetter in the educational preparation of individuals in nursing and allied health. CONSAH is guided by its mission statement:

*Northwestern State University College of Nursing and School of Allied Health serves an increasingly diverse student population while advancing the mission of the University by offering excellent and innovative undergraduate, graduate, certificate, and continuing education programs that are designed to assist individuals in achieving their goals to become responsible and contributing members of an interprofessional global community that improves the health of our region, state, and nation.*

To support the mission, CONSAH has dedicated resources, faculty, staff, to increasing the number of graduates from the traditional ASN and BSN programs by increasing partnerships with healthcare agencies. CON has also increased support of the various nursing bridge programs, including the military medic/paramedic-RN, LPN-RN and LPN-BSN, and RN-BSN nursing routes. Additionally, the number of post-master's nursing students has increased, which provides more multi-skilled nurse practitioners in our state. Finally, the BSN-DNP nurse anesthesia program has reached its full capacity with three simultaneously enrolled cohorts, with the first cohort having graduated in December 2023.

Within the allied health programs, similar initiatives have occurred to increase the diversity of student backgrounds. Both the Bachelor of Science in Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAH) and the RT-BSRS programs provide an upward mobility track for allied health practitioners. In addition to the post-bachelors' certificates were converted to undergraduate certificate programs to provide more opportunities for the associate-prepared students in Louisiana, the ultrasound program accepted a second cohort of students, further establishing the first sonography program in North Louisiana.

A part of the CONSAH's mission is to assist individuals to *"become responsible and contributing members of an interprofessional global community that improves the health of our region, state, and nation."* As part of their clinical rotations, each student provides over 1000 hours of direct patient care in area hospitals, clinics, and community health agencies. Additionally, students participate in community service throughout their programs. These services include vaccine clinics, health fairs, translation services, and addressing the health needs of vulnerable populations in north and central Louisiana.

During the upcoming 2024-2025 Academic year, the CONSAH will continue to produce graduates who recognize the holistic needs of those in their care. Faculty will continue to model for all students the CONSAH values of excellence in all things, respect for others, open communication and teamwork, empathy and caring, integrity and ethical behaviors, and being passionate members of an interprofessional healthcare team.

### Degree Programs

The CONSAH offers 8 degree-programs spanning from the associate degree to the practice doctorate, 3 post masters certificates in nursing, 3 undergraduate certificates in radiologic sciences, and 1 post-baccalaureate certificate in ultrasound. The CONSAH currently enrolls over 2400 undergraduate and graduate students in these degree programs. Many of these programs are located on off-campus learning sites in Alexandria, Leesville, Natchitoches, and Shreveport.

CONSAH has 86 full-time faculty members, and 78 adjunct faculty members who teach courses throughout CONSAH. Degrees offered through the College of Nursing include:

1. Associate of Science Degree in Nursing (ASN)
  - a) Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to ASN
  - b) Paramedic/Military Medic to ASN
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
  - a) LPN to BSN
  - b) RN (ASN) to BSN
  - c) BS to BSN
3. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
  - a) Nurse Educator
  - b) Nurse Administrator
  - c) Nurse Practitioner
    1. Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
    2. Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
    3. Family Nurse Practitioner
    4. Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
    5. Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
    6. Women's Health Nurse Practitioner
4. Post-master's Certificate Programs
  - a) PMC Family Nurse Practitioner
  - b) PMC Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
  - c) PMC Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
5. Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
  - a) BSN to DNP: Nurse Anesthesia
  - b) MSN to DNP: Organizational Systems Leadership

Degrees offered through the School of Allied Health (SAH) include:

1. Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Science (BSRS)
  - a) RT to BSRS
2. Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences w/Ultrasound Concentration (BSRS-US)
3. Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAH)

4. Undergraduate Certificate Programs
  - a) UG Cardiac Radiology Intervention
  - b) UG Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Therapy
  - c) UG Computed Tomography (CT)
5. Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
  - a) PBC Ultrasound
6. Master of Science in Radiologic Science (MSRS)

The Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) has approved all four nursing degree programs and all concentrations of each degree program. The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) nationally accredits the ASN program through 2030. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) nationally accredits the BSN, MSN, PMC, and DNP degree programs. All programs are accredited by the CCNE through 2030. The BSN to DNP-NA degree program received full accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) for the maximum time of five years (2026). The CON is an accredited provider of Continuing Education in nursing by the American Nurses' Credentialing Center on Accreditation (ANCC). The CON underwent an ANCC accreditation visit in Spring of 2023 and was reaccredited for four years (2027).

The BSRS degree program is nationally accredited through the Joint Review Commission on Education in Radiologic Technology (JCERT) through 2025 and during the upcoming academic year will engage in the reaccreditation process through self-study submission and a site visit. Additionally, during the 2024-2025 academic year, the ultrasound program (BSRS-US) will seek initial accreditation from the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRCDMS) as the first cohort of students graduate in Spring 2025.

In the Academic Year 2019-2020 the CONSAH awarded 587 degrees (CON-504; SAH 83). In AC 2020-2021, the CONSAH awarded 641 degrees (CON-554; SAH 87). In AC 2021-2022, the CONSAH awarded 657 degrees (CON-527; SAH 130). In AC 2022-2023, the CONSAH awarded 579 degrees (CON-481; SAH-98). In AC 2023-2024, the CONSAH awarded 608 degrees (CON-501; SAH-107).

### Program Growth

The need for nurses and allied health professionals continues to remain at an all-time high. To drive enrollment, CONSAH pursued grant opportunities to expand nursing and allied health pathways and remains focused on prioritizing external partnerships and funding sources. Grants awarded to CONSAH include a \$740,400 grant through the Louisiana Board of Regents which established an LPN to RN Cohort in collaboration with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center (NRMC). CONSAH received a \$231,769 grant for Nurse Anesthesia Traineeships (NAT) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that will allow for nurse anesthesia students to participate in clinical experiences in rural and medically underserved areas in Louisiana. The Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program (BHWET), also funded through HRSA, is in its final year of funding with the intent to reapply when the notice of opportunity becomes available. In addition to newly awarded grants, the continuation of many grants and partnerships was seen. Of those continuations includes the renewal of a \$337,223 grant through the NRMC Foundation which supports 1 full-time nursing faculty member on the Natchitoches campus. Pending grant proposals include the HRSA Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention–Workforce Expansion Program which if awarded, will fund the development and implementation of a new concentration in the Associate of Science in Nursing Program entitled, Allied Health to ASN (AH to ASN).

## Alumni, Faculty, and Student Success

### Alumni:

CONSAH alumni are successful professionals who bring regional and national prominence to NSU through their achievements. CONSAH alumni are involved in professional organizations, inpatient and outpatient healthcare management, and are engaged with current NSU students as mentors. Examples of recent alumni successes include:

- *Drs. James Blankenship, Sharonda Johnson and Arielle St. Romaine*, have published multiple peer reviewed articles since program completion in 2023.
- *Dr. Anna Morris* reelected as 'Director at Large' for Louisiana Council of Administrators in Nursing Education (LaCANE).
- *Dr. Katrina O'Con* honored as 'Outstanding Alumna Distinguished Service Award' winner in 2023.

### Faculty:

CONSAH faculty members are interprofessional collaborators committed to the development of graduates who demonstrate the characteristics of resilient critical thinkers, compassionate and empathetic caregivers, and healthcare professionals who demonstrated this year, that their capability and flexibility of handling healthcare challenges. CONSAH's commitment to excellence continues to be exemplified through faculty members who constantly strive to promote students' success in their pursuit of academic and professional career goals. To maintain the mandated faculty to student ratios within the CONSAH, each year external funding for faculty positions must be obtained. Currently the CONSAH has 27 externally funded faculty/staff positions, which represents 30% of the CONSAH faculty/staff positions.

Examples of CONSAH individual and aggregate Faculty achievements for 2023-2024 include:

- *Dr. Laura Aaron*, recognition for service to Association of Educators in Imaging and Radiologic Sciences (AEIRS) and had Annual Meeting presentation designated each year as the "Dr. Laura Aaron Honorary Research Presentation", 2024.
- *Dr. Aimee Badeaux*, selected as the '2024 Program Director of the Year' award by the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists.
- *Tamara Baxter*, recognized as 2023-2024 CONSAH 'Educator of the Year' award recipient.
- *Dr. Tammy Curtis*, recognized as 'Technologist of the Year' by the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists.
- *Jennifer Evans*, recognized with 2023-2024 CONSAH 'Educator of the Year' award recipient.
- *Chelsea McCullin* obtained a Master of Science in Radiological Sciences degree.
- *Dr. Katrina O'Con* was named as a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists.
- *Dr. Katrina O'Con* obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy in Nursing degree.
- *Dr. Susan Steele-Moses* was featured as the Keynote Speaker during the Work Nursing 2024 conference in Rome, Italy.
- *Dr. Susan Steele-Moses*, recognized as the 'Nursing Educator of the Year' during LSNA's Annual Nightingale Awards and Gala in October 2023.
- *Dr. Aaron Stigers*, recognized as the 2023-2024 CONSAH 'Nurse of the Year' award recipient.
- *Dr. Aaron Stigers*, recognized as the 'MLK Humanitarian' award recipient.
- *Dr. Aaron Stigers* obtained a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.
- *Dr. Shaun Wheat* obtained a Doctor of Education degree.
- 1 Faculty serving as President of Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 1 Faculty is CCNE on-site reviewer.



- 1 Faculty is ACEN accreditation evaluator.
- 1 Faculty is COA on-site reviewer.
- 1 Faculty is JRCERT on-site reviewer.
- 1 Faculty serving on a national committee for the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists.
- 2 Faculty serve on national committees for the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists
- 3 Faculty received tenure.
- 6 Faculty received academic rank promotion.
- 3 Faculty serve on the board of Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.
- 10 Faculty awarded grants.
- 12 Faculty published peer-reviewed articles.
- 18 Faculty awarded Endowed Professorships.
- 20 Faculty podium presentations.

### Students:

CONSAH Student achievements for 2023-2024 include:

- Participated in multiple vaccination clinics throughout Northwest and Central Louisiana.
- 1 DNP Nurse Anesthesia student awarded *Maria Roach, CRNA Scholarship* through the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists Foundation.
- 5 BSRS students won the annual Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists Quiz Bowl Competition during the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists' 66th Annual Meeting.
- Produced over 27 scholarly project practice change projects (DNP capstone projects)
- 50 nursing students inducted in Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

### Program Success

Measures of program success include passage rates on licensure and certification examinations, national program rankings, progression from admission to graduation data and employment data. Additionally, alumni and employer ratings of program and graduates are used to evaluate program success. The following are indicators of program success:

#### Licensure/Certification Examination Passage Rates AC 2023-2024:

Licensure as a registered nurse occurs when students successfully complete their national council licensure examinations. Licensure as a radiologic technologist occurs when students successfully complete their registry examinations. Certification as an advanced practice registered nurses occurs when master's degree students successfully complete certification exams specific to a patient population. Accreditation for all programs is based on the first-time pass rates in each respective examination. All CONSAH programs exceed accreditation standard minimums and enjoy a first-time pass rate higher than both state and national averages:

Program	Clinical Certifying Exams	Job Placement	Clinical Completion
ASN	97.97% state: 90.07% national: 87.76%	100%	62%
BSN	98.84% state 94.84% national 90.19%	100%	73%
MSN	84.21% national: TBD	100%	86%
DNP-NA	88.23% national: 82.9%	100%	85%
BSRS	94% national: 84.4%	100%	71%

### CONSAH Employer & Alumni Satisfaction:

- CONSAH alumni satisfaction rates above 90% for the past five years
- CONSAH employer satisfaction rates above 90% for the past six years

### National Program Rankings and Recognition:

- #1 ranked online allied health program in US (intelligent.com).
- #1 Most Affordable RN-BSN program in Louisiana (RNtoMSN.org)
- #1 ranked online RT-BSRS program in US (intelligent.com).
- #11 best Radiologic Science program in U.S. (bestvalueschools.org)
- #12 ranked online RN-BSN program in US (intelligent.com)
- #1 Producer of licensed registered nurses in Louisiana (2023 LSBN report)
- #1 Single Producer of Nurse Practitioners in Louisiana (2023 LSBN Report)

### The Future

Like other programs and universities across the state, CONSAH has seen a decline in overall enrollment since 2021. To address these challenges, CONSAH has increased its recruiting and retention efforts. Looking ahead, CONSAH will continue to actively recruit high school students, as well as nontraditional students looking to return to the classroom in one of the many bridge programs. Regarding retention, CONSAH has and will continue to implement “bootcamps” to promote successful transition from one clinical level to the next. Additionally, CONSAH will continue to leverage relationships to grow bridge and nontraditional programs, such as the military medic/paramedic-RN, LPN-RN, and accelerated nursing programs.

Last year, CONSAH’s strategic plan included the following short-term goals: 1) Successfully transition to new CON undergraduate nursing director; 2) successfully transition to new CONSAH Director of Assessment and Planning 3) transition nursing to competency-based education; 4) increase Interprofessional Education (IPE) in nursing and allied health curricula; increase practice partnerships; 5) seek additional external funding sources through partners and grants; 6) develop research opportunities for college and faculty; 7) create dedicated evening/weekend cohorts for students; 8) continue fundraising for renovation of Warrington building in Shreveport; 9) seek funding for high fidelity lab equipment in Alost Hall.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, CONSAH experienced several leadership transitions and organization changes related to personnel and roles. In addition to the planned CON undergraduate nursing director and the Director of Assessment and Planning, an Interim Dean of CONSAH and a new Director of Grants and Planning were appointed. Within the CON degree programs, the program faculty will implement competency-based education across all programs, after having spent this academic year planning. The CONSAH continues to seek out new clinical partnerships while fostering and expanding existing clinical partnerships. Through such partnerships, the CONSAH now has a cohort of paramedic/military medic students enrolled in the Baton Rouge area that primarily engage and weekend clinical experiences. The CONSAH footprint and impact continue to expand across the state and will further do so in the upcoming year through various capital outlay projects. In addition, the CONSAH relocating faculty, staff and students from the Rapides Annex to a second building on the England Airpark campus, renovation of the Warrington Building in Shreveport will commence in fall 2024 because of fiscal appropriations. Finally, Alost Hall nearing completion in Natchitoches, will ensure CONSAH has state of the art facilities for years to come.

**Short/Long term Goals:** 1) Successfully transition from an Interim to permanent Dean of CONSAH; 2) implement newly approved degree programs within the School of Allied Health; 3) transition nursing to competency-based education; 4) increase Interprofessional Education (IPE) in nursing and allied health curricula; increase practice partnerships; 5) seek additional external funding sources through partners and grants; 6) develop research opportunities for college and faculty; 8) continue fundraising for renovation of Warrington building in Shreveport; 9) seek funding for high fidelity lab equipment in Alost Hall

### Innovation

The use of 'Examsoft' software has enabled faculty to load test questions into a test bank based on program goals and outcomes. The benefit of this software and question implementation is that faculty can more accurately perform test analyses based on course objectives and program goals/outcomes.

The centralized application system used by the DNP program for the past four years is now being used by the MSN program. This system provides a way for students to use a single online application, streamlining the process of admittance.

CONSAH piloted a centralized IRB application system during the fall 2022 semester. Based on the success of the pilot program, the University adopted the same system for the 2023-2024 academic year.

## College of Business and Technology

The College of Business and Technology (CoBT) employs 28 full-time faculty members, 2 part-time faculty member, 2 twelve-month coordinators/administrators with teaching release time, 1 nine-month coordinator, 2 administrative support staff members and one twelve-month dean. The CoBT serves 828 (14-day count Fall 2023) undergraduates and graduate students enrolled in the following degrees:

### The School of Business:

- BS in Accounting (ACCT)
- BS in Business Administration (BUAD) with concentrations in business analytics, e-sports management, entrepreneurship, finance, human resources, international business, management, and marketing
- BS in Computer Information Systems (CIS) with concentrations in application development, cybersecurity, information systems management, and networking and system management
- BS in Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT) with concentrations in culinary arts, hospitality services, and travel & tourism

- Minors in accounting, business administration, computer information systems, hospitality management and tourism, and culinary arts.
- MS in Computer Information Systems

The CoBT faculty are providing an engaging, applied learning environment for our students.

### **Academic Success**

At the College, academic success means our students are meeting University, college, and school expectations. One measure of student academic success is being in good standing [GPA of 2.0 overall and in major]. In both fall 2023 and spring 2024, 87% of students achieved a GPA of 2.0 and above.

Another measure of student academic success is academic progress, moving towards earning a degree. In AC 2023-2024, 43.47% of the CoBT fall 2017 cohort had earned degrees. Academic progress is also determined by the number of credit hours earned by our students per semester. In fall 2023, the average number of credit hours earned for CoBT students was 10.59 with 10.55 earned credit hours in spring 2024 with a median number of hours earned of 12 for both semesters. An impressive 79.54% of students in the fall 2023 semester and 81.46% in the spring 2024 semester successfully earned hours within a 3-hour margin of their attempted hours.

To assist with ensuring academic success, we provide our students with access to the following:

1. Proper prerequisites for course success.
2. Supplemental instruction. Instructors provide supplemental instruction, video captured lectures, and students can also access tutors.
3. Relevant connections between what our students are learning in college and their current or future life by providing reality-based learning experiences such as guest speakers, business cases, problem-based or project-based learning, role plays, and simulations.
4. Experiential learning opportunities such as internships and service-learning programs. (i.e., Fastenal Company, Hancock Whitney Bank, NSU Career Counseling Center, Louisiana Bankers Association).
5. Relevant course lectures and assignments enhance our students' knowledge and skills.
6. Connecting students with key academic support and student development through involvement with the Student Advisory and Outreach Board activities and guest speakers.
7. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Please see SACSCOC document for more information.

The College of Business and Technology has taken a proactive approach by appointing a faculty member as an enrollment and advising strategist. During the 2023-2024 academic year, a meticulous review of degree programs resulted in plans to facilitate a smoother transition for students as they progress through different stages of their education. To enhance efficiency, traditional classroom courses were thoughtfully paired, aligning with the sequential order within each specific degree program. This strategic pairing optimizes attendance and ensures that students follow a logical progression. Despite these efforts, challenges persist. For incoming or transfer students who do not precisely align with the prescribed degree plans, individualized solutions are implemented. These personalized approaches address any deviations from the established sequence, ensuring that every student receives the support needed to succeed.

Accreditation is also a reflection of academic success. In Spring 2021, the School of Business was reaccredited by AACSB. The School of Business is currently in the process of preparing for the reaccreditation process in Spring 2025.

## Student Success

The College also defines student success as:

1. student retention (persistence). In AC 2023-2024 the School of Business persistence rate for all students was 70.41% and the persistence rate for our full-time entering freshman (1st to 2nd year) was 49.25%; both measures increased as compared to AC 2022-2023.
2. number of graduating students. In AC 2023-2024, the annual CoBT graduation rate was 43.47%. This rate represents 165 CoBT students that earned degrees.

The College and faculty participate in the following events and activities that also contribute to student success: (1) first-year convocation ceremonies; (2) enhanced advisor/instructor/student relationships (Registration Round-up Event); (3) student recognition (Phi Beta Lambda, Beta Alpha Psi, Student Advisory and Outreach Board, Honor Societies, competitive events, and leadership award ceremonies); and (4) student engagement with and participation in Walter Porter Experience, and the College of Business and Technology Advisory Board meeting. HMT hosts several social events such as the Columns Cafe dinner events and lunch events, athletic tailgating, and special luncheon demonstrations each semester.

## Research and Innovation

The College continues to improve classroom delivery of instruction. During this year a state-of-the-art interactive whiteboard was installed in a high technology classroom. The College provided a development session for not only faculty in the College but for many other areas across campus foreseeing the installation of several devices in other classrooms. Continual enhancement of innovative teaching is a focus of the College to increase student success and satisfaction.

In AC 2023-2024 ACCT faculty continued to expose students to the workforce by networking with professionals and preparing for success. Through Beta Alpha Psi, a national honor financial professionals' organization, students connected to representatives from Fastenal, LA Bankers Association, FDIC, Laveer Wealth Management, Heard McElroy and Vestal, Deloitte, KET Solutions, Harbor Group International, National Australia Bank, and Macias Gini & O'Connell. At the Spring 2024 Virtual DEI Event, students interacted with representatives from Becker Professional Education discussing "Workplace Culture with Inclusive Language".

The student learning environment in the Accounting Principles course was further enhanced by involvement with GDIT (resume writing), participation in NSU Career Fairs (as volunteers and jobseekers), and other classroom engagements. ACCT Classroom guest speakers include the following: Postlethwaite & Netterville, EisnerAmper and Bank of Montgomery inspiring students to be persistent in their academic studies.

Collaborative group projects that bridge the classroom and industry offer invaluable experiences for students in the ACCT, BUAD, and CIS degree programs. Industry collaborations through group projects in the International Business Course empowered students to work with companies such as,

- Teledyne Technologies
- Arkansas Lime Company
- Flying Tiger Brewery
- Smokin' Joes Cigars.
- Youthforia
- Cleary Bikes
- Temecula Olive Oil Company
- Jameco Electronics
- Supermix Studio
- Bouncin' Bears

The Business Administration area continued to engage in experiential learning projects, community service projects, and entrepreneurial projects. Senior level students worked with the Chamber of Commerce and with NSU on a Bike Sharing Plan. Students pitch new ideas during the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Inferno Pitch. Our students continued to succeed in the classroom as well. Our Word and Excel certification classes produced several top 10 students in the state with an option to compete at nationals. Finally, the Business Administration area continued to engage industry stakeholders through guest speaking events with employers and organizations like the Louisiana Bankers' Association and Fastenal.

The CIS faculty continues to engage in technology-related projects within the University and community. The College received a grant from LED in conjunction with a match from Real Vision Software, Inc. Several projects were created with the help of this grant. (1) Students were able to develop a mobile app to be used for scheduling for traveling nurses. (2) In response to continuous phishing scams affecting all levels of the institution and the community, the following opportunities arose:

- Cybersecurity preparedness handouts and tutorials were developed and disseminated to students, faculty, and staff.
- Learning opportunities were provided for cybersecurity students with the implementation of Microsoft Azure Labs.
- Community Workshops in the cybersecurity area have been initialized and are planned to be conducted in future semesters.
- A dashboard for faculty management that would decrease the amount of oversight and continuous communication is being developed to minimize the threat vectors that arise with email communication.
- A research project that studied the level of cybersecurity awareness by the institution's students, faculty, and staff was conducted and results were presented at the 2024 NSU Annual Research Day.

To continuously evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the teaching in our online offerings, several of the online courses have been identified, evaluated, and reviewed using the Quality Matters essential standards. Results from these evaluations will be used to identify those aspects of the courses that need to be monitored, improved, and of course, celebrated. Resources are being developed for faculty to use to enhance individual courses.

Currently, HMT has students completing their industry field experience requirements during the summer semester in regional, national, and international locations: Inkulu Adventures in Thambazimbi, South Africa; Hollywood Casino in Toledo, Ohio; Hotel Castell d'Emporda, Girona, Spain; and Boise Cascade, Florien, LA.

In the spring semester, HMT faculty and students traveled to Orlando, Florida to complete in the inaugural Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AHOAA) Collegiate Championship: Hotel Turnaround Competition Program. Eleven elite teams of hospitality students from seven universities competed in a hotel ownership simulation challenge that enabled them to make decisions mirroring real-life challenges- from capital investments and service offerings to operational efficiencies, marketing strategies, and staffing/training maneuvers.

The College remains at the forefront of outreach to the community. Emergenetics workshops have been conducted to help several key industrial, commerce, and tourism members of the community. Emergenetics provides communication techniques, team and individual work behavior strategies, and

management techniques to improve the work environment. Workshops have been conducted for IgNITE (NSU leaders), Natchitoches Chamber Leadership, Alliance, and 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court (Many, LA) among others.

Additionally, the College plays a key role in the development of the Louisiana School for Math, Science & the Arts and NSU Innovation Center. The Center will serve as an entrepreneurship hub and business incubator, offering resources for student business ideas, training, and counseling for start-ups and small businesses.

### **Outlook-Action Plan**

To continuously evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the teaching in our online offerings, several online courses have been identified, evaluated, and reviewed using the Quality Matters essential standards. Results of these evaluations will be used to identify aspects of the courses that need to be monitored, improved, and of course, celebrated. Resources are being developed for faculty to use to enhance individual courses.

The School of Business is gearing up for its AACSB reaccreditation. Faculty and administration are working on the continuous improvement review report and supporting documentation. A peer review team was established and initial communications with the team have been launched in preparation for the visit in 2024-2025. Prior to the visit, the Dean will be part of an external AACSB review team in September 2024 where firsthand knowledge will be experienced and shared in preparation for the visit to the University.

Following the continuous spirit of innovation and community support, our CIS capstone classes will help our own institution in the 2024-2025 school year. First steps for the design of Graduate School Document Repository have been taken, and we expect to have a functioning prototype by the end of the Spring 2025 semester with a possible full implementation in Fall 2025.

The CIS area continues to work with Louisiana Economic Development (LED) agency and General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) via a 10-year collaborative endeavor agreement. The CIS area met the targets established for the 2023-2024 academic year and has employed creative strategies to fill faculty vacancies. Finally, the CoBT is in discussions with LED and GDIT about prospects of extending the collaborative endeavor agreement as 2024-2025 is the tenth year of the agreement.

For the first time in the history of the program, Hospitality Management and Tourism hosted the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) for their accreditation site visit in April 2024. Results of this successful visit and the initial accreditation status will be decided during the July 24, 2024, commission meeting. If granted accreditation, HMT will be the only 4-year program in the state accredited by ACPHA.

At this time the CoBT has faculty and staff positions frozen, unfunded, or not provided due to current enrollment conditions. This can and has put additional pressure on existing faculty members who must handle increased workloads. A primary concern is that faculty members may have less time to dedicate to individual students, potentially affecting student retention rates. While addressing these challenges, the CoBT is employing several strategies: (1) prioritizing workload distribution; (2) providing support, resources, tools, and professional development; and (3) encouraging collaboration and exploring alternative teaching methods. The strategies will evolve as necessitated by internal and external factors. The CoBT will advocate for financial and human resources to assist faculty and staff in performing duties that lead to the success of the student, school, college, and University.

## Moving Forward

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024 completes the University's seventh iteration of holistic assessment of Strategic Plan 2023-2028-*Providing Education of Enduring Value*. Organizationally, we have learned much about ourselves over the past year as we prepare for Assessment Cycle 2023-2024. The University can move forward into AC 2024-2025 with confidence knowing its commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in the progress made toward our vision.

Student learning assessments maximize the principles of honest evaluation and assure the highest quality of coursework, whether through in-person classes, online delivery, or hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources are continuously updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

The annual assessment process is incomplete until the recommendations and proposed decisions are mediated and agreed upon, the final report is written, and the briefing is presented. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process, we still have work to do in convincing faculty and students of the power of assessment.

Based on our analysis of assessment activities, we have identified six strategic goals/challenges for the next five years:

- Increase and or improve **student services that aid regional, national, and international recruitment, retention, and student success.**
- Provide **effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online** ensuring the **alignment of curricula to tomorrow's workforce demands** while **developing public-private partnerships.**
- **Improving analysis of assessment results to improve critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and writing skills across** all degree and certificate programs regardless of discipline.
- **Expansion of External Stakeholders' participation and knowledge** of SLO assessment so they better understand the process and can offer more relevant and timely feedback. The initiative would require a mix of surveys and evaluation rubrics.
- **Assessment of High-Impact Practices–Lessons Learned** requires a collaborative effort between academic and student affairs focused on service/experiential learning. The QEP assessment results are critical in evaluating these co-curricular student experiences.
- **Increasing all aspects of cultural competence by** understanding, accepting, and valuing differences between people while removing all barriers, discrimination, and intolerance so that everyone feels included and supported.

As a road map to the future, we have also identified immediate (3 x months), near-term (6 x months), and short-term (12 x months) activities to guide our efforts.

Immediate:

- Capture the 2023-2024 lessons learned and implement decisions.
- Update AC 2024-2025 Assessment Plans as necessary.
- Finalize AC 2023-2024 assessments–data collection at the degree and unit level.
- Continue to assess recommendations–build consensus and establish predictability.



#### Near Term:

- October—Receive President's guidance on Strategic Plan 2024-2025
- December—Annual SACSCOC Conference
- Azimuth check on AC 2024-2025 assessment process (SFA/Program/Unit)
- Maintain continuity in data collection.

#### Short Term:

- October and beyond—thinking about the way forward—relooking assessment plans.
- May 14-15, 2025—Commencement ends the assessment cycle.
- June 20, 2025—AC 2024-2025 Degree, Unit, Core Assessments complete and submitted to DIE.
- August—Assessment Cycle AC 2024–2025 Report—*Making a Difference* published.
- September—Brief to President

It is with heavy hearts and immense pride that we bid farewell to Dr. Jones as President of Northwestern State University. In June 2024, the University of Louisiana System (ULS) President, Dr. Rick Gallot, requested Dr. Jones rejoin the University of Louisiana system (ULS) as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, a position he previously held. In this role, he will also serve as a senior advisor to President Gallot in strategic planning and enrollment management. His expertise will be leveraged on a broader scale to benefit all nine institutions within the UL System by revising the ULS Strategic Plan. This process will involve collaboration and input from various stakeholders, including statewide community members, faculty, staff, students, and NSU alumni. Dr. Jones served Northwestern with distinction for the past 25 years.

It is with immense pride that we now welcome Dr. James Genovese as the University's 21st President. Dr. James Genovese is a Northwestern graduate who previously served as Associate Justice on the Louisiana Supreme Court. On July 18, 2024, the Board of Supervisors of the ULS unanimously selected Dr. Genovese to serve as President of Northwestern.

The University remains steadfast in its mission, core values, and strategic direction. Through the commitment of our entire University community, we will realize our vision of becoming the nation's premier regional university.