Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Program: (BS) Unified Public Safety Administration (256)

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

College of Arts and Sciences

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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.

College of Arts and Sciences Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, who work collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The college strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve 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, 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 Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs. The School of Social Sciences and Applied Sciences at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, history, public safety, law, and public service. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service the department produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and a driving force in the economic development and improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. The department delivers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and History and Bachelor of Science degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration with concentrations in Law Enforcement Administration, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, Public Facilities Management, Nuclear Surety and Geo-Measurement. Certificate programs in Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies and Public Policy and Administration are also available in addition to Pre-law and Paralegal Studies concentration and minor. The department also offers a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security and a Post master's certificate in Global Security and Intelligence.

Unified Public Safety Administration Mission Statement: Develop students in gaining an appreciation for the complexities of homeland security organizations, leadership, policies, ethics, and challenges, through the review of pertinent literature, critical and synthetic thinking, research, and reflective analysis and assessment. The bachelor's degree in Unified Public Safety Administration is unique in that it teaches students to develop plausible resolutions to the risks and threats currently challenging emergency response personnel through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences preparing graduates for life and career success in this expanding occupational field of emergency management in the public and private sectors. Courses are designed with the present and future administrator or leader in mind having direct application to the challenges of emergency management and public safety.

Purpose: The Unified Public Safety Administration program will prepare students for entry-level positions and enhancement of positions currently held to leadership positions of greater responsibility in government and the private sector with the ability to comprehend, influence, create and respond to public safety policies from national, state, and local levels. It will also prepare interested students for the pursuit of further/additional advanced degrees in Homeland Security, Emergency Management, Political Science or Strategic Leadership, at this or other institutions.

Methodology: The assessment process for the UPSA program is as follows:

1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected by the program coordinator.

2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine if students have met measurable outcomes.

3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty and Director.

4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core and supporting courses if required (show cause).

5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the UPSA Advisory Committee and Director, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. First, second, and third-semester students will be able to describe the historical evolution and context of early Unified Public Safety Administration, domestic homeland security practices and challenges, hazards, risks and the resources present in public safety preparedness and responses.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 2400: Introduction to Corporate and Municipal Emergency Management

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UPSA 2550: Hazards Risk Assessment Methods
UPSA 2700: Planning and Decision-Making in Public Organizations

Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge): On an annual basis, when offered, students enroll in UPSA 2400, 2550, and 2700, all required courses for UPSA majors, will complete course assignments designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, challenges, and applications of emergency management principles. Seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to describe a basic understanding of these by scoring 70% or higher on all assignments of the course. Weekly worksheets from the two courses offered during the evaluation period will be used to make this decision. Weekly exercises from UPSA 2550 and UPSA 2700 will be used to measure the application of emergency management principles using the same metric.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. This was in contrast to AC 2022-2023 in which the target was not met. UPSA 2400 was not offered during this reporting period, but UPSA 2700 and UPSA 2550 were offered during the Spring 2024 semester. UPSA 2700 was completed with two students. Both students easily exceeded standards in place for this measure. UPSA 2550 was offered in the Spring 2024 semester with eleven (11) students. Nine (9) students completed the course. The course was a success with all but two students presenting an above-average understanding of the concepts and principles of this class. Students were interactive, ready, and prepared to participate in class activities. There were 21 assignments for this class. The measure requires that 75% of students score 70% or better. Students were able to use correct terminology and present understanding of the underlying principles of course content. Weekly assignments showed their understanding of various readings done for the class. UPSA 2400 and UPSA 2700 did not have textbooks, instead relying upon professional journals, academic journals, and governmental and internet sources for course content.

Based on the AC 2023-2024 analysis results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025. For the two courses offered, grades and scores throughout the course were higher than normal. The faculty updated the course content to ensure the information available was accurate and the most modern information available.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Nine of eleven students (9/11= 81.8%) met the required performance level, thereby exceeding the 75% threshold for the standard. Students exceeding the threshold did so throughout the semester.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. In AC 2023-2024, the target changed from unmet to met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025-2026. Course content will be examined for the inclusion of content as appropriate, consistent with university standards, curricular elements of cultural representation, equity, disparity, and compassion within the subject matter, and to ensure content in this rapidly evolving subject matter is representative of the best current practices. The target for the objective

will remain unchanged, as only one in three courses was measured, and this is the second time the standard has been met in five years.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability): Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a course project/writing assignment in which they are required to research and submit academic research or service-learning projects in each course. This research project will be responsive to the research project requirements developed with the faculty responsible for the course and will evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of while working with a community partner as they meet the requirements set for the research project which contributes to the safety of the community.   Seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar
UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. One hundred percent (100%) of students (7 of 7) completed the capstone projects and courses properly, presenting critical-thinking expectations specified in the objective. Students were able to complete projects enhancing public safety by working with a community partner. Projects were diverse and unique and met an identified need to achieve the goals of the partner and the partner's purpose. In UPSA 4700 (a capstone companion course), one hundred percent (100%) of students (2 of 2) completed the capstone projects and showed critical thinking skills specified in the objectives of the courses. All students (100%) who completed the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management or private sector situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards. Senior seminar projects continue to be impressive individual feats and allow "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. New reflection exercises incorporated diverse elements into the curriculum.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025. During AC 2024-2025, the two courses tied to this objective were offered: UPSA 4700 in Fall 2024. UPSA 4480 was offered in both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters. Two students were enrolled in UPSA 4700, and a total of seven students in UPSA 4480 (5 Fall and 2 Spring). For both UPSA 4700 and UPSA 4480, all students were successful in achieving all measures for this course. Given that these courses constitute the capstone exercise for this degree, these results were not surprising. Senior seminar projects continue to be impressive individual feats and allow "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. New reflection exercises incorporated diverse elements into the curriculum. Dialectic discussions and interviews were added to UPSA 4480.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was met.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025-2026. The faculty will revise the curriculum delivery to include a restructuring of UPSA 4480 to provide more descriptive and guided assignments, specifically dialectic interviews pertaining to senior seminar projects.

SLO 2. Senior students will know the role and functions of the various agencies, laws, standards, risks, threats, tasks, and assignments in a comprehensive capstone exercise developed in conjunction with a community partner. The Senior Seminar course will include research, application, or analysis from all UPSA core courses.

Course Map: Tied to the course syllabus

below. UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar
UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Measure: 2.1. **(Direct – knowledge):** On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from the required courses listed above will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members through the University of Louisiana Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, using a standardized research paper rubric (attached) or a formal presentation to UPSA faculty. The papers and/or projects will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate basic knowledge of fundamental principles of emergency management, laws, practices, and procedures. The target is that at least 80% of students sampled will score 75% or higher on the evaluation.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Available appropriate audiences for student presentations were not available. This was due to calendar conflicts and budget restrictions. To ensure students met course standards, presentations were made to faculty through internet resources.

Based on the analysis and experiences of AC 2023-2024, the faculty implemented changes, in 2024-2025, to broaden audience opportunities for student presentations to include the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day and other professional conferences.

As a result of these changes, the target for AC 2024-2025 was met. All students (100%, 7 of 7) met the standard making a presentation to an appropriate audience as the changed definition for an acceptable presentation audience (NSU Faculty) allowed for presentation opportunities to be available for those unable to attend a professional or academic conference.

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Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of these results, no changes will be made. The objective will remain to permit a live presentation of findings to a formal academic audience or audiences of peers or faculty, or audiences for which a unit of instruction will continue. To build on this improvement, a unit of content will be added to the financial section of the presentation which adds direct and indirect financial benefit to the community partner resulting from the partner, along with tangible and intangible benefits realized by the community partner.

During the reporting period, students were tasked with identifying and completing a project with a community partner that contributed to the safety of the community. Broad latitude was provided to allow students to select a project in an area they identified, reflected their interests and passions, and satisfied an identified need of the community partner.

Given the wide variety of the subject matter of the projects of projects falling under the broad umbrella of "Service Learning", no specific uniform variable of success can be targeted, measured and identified for quantification. What is realized is the satisfaction for the community partner for an identified need for the community sponsor. Projects during this reporting period included the creation and delivery of a mandatory training module for a state agency, the creation of a fireworks safety protocol for a municipality, the creation of a multi-agency emergency response mock exercise, and a law enforcement policy and accompanying implementation training.

In all cases, the community partners (7 of 7) and students (7) were able to identify beyond the public safety enhancement, a direct or indirect financial benefit from the training for the organization. Students gained in all instances from dealing with aspects of the job, vocation or interests by gaining understanding of the matter beyond their current role. Additionally, all projects' results led to an interaction with other elements of the community beyond their community partner, and the role their project played led to the satisfaction of statutory and regulatory standards.

Measure: 2.2. (Indirect – Attitude): At the end of the term students will be administered a survey asking: "In my public safety administration courses, I provided a collegiate level of understanding of homeland security policy, strategy, threat assessment and trends, associated law and procedures, and how the various agencies interact across the spectrum of operations." The target is that at least 85% of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. All (4/4 = 100%) of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement. Conversations conducted as "exit interviews" with all graduating students found satisfaction with the program and, in many cases, testified to the strength of the curriculum and ability to work directly with faculty during the capstone project.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the faculty implemented the

following changes in AC 2024-2025. The faculty implemented a new rubric for use in the evaluation of projects that went beyond the presentation itself.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was met. All students (7/7 = 100%) in exit interviews expressed satisfaction with the structure and level of instruction and expressed that the experience met and fulfilled their needs and expectations. All stated varying levels of gratitude for learning opportunities presented by the personal nature of the senior seminar. The 100% satisfaction rate exceeded the target goal of 85%.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. As a financial benefit for the community partner has been realized by all community partners, the presence of this benefit will be further developed, and it will be determined whether the financial benefit to the community partner is direct, indirect or both.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement Based on Analysis of Results: The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2024-2025. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2023-2024 results. Providing current information is achieved through the absence of the adoption of formal textbooks for the courses. Other benefits are lower costs for students, the ability to bypass the bookstore and more expedient delivery of content as the availability and delivery of textbooks is not an issue.

- In Measure 1.1, two courses tied to the course map for this objective were offered (UPSA 2550 and UPSA 2700) during the academic year. Grades and scores throughout the course were higher than normal. The faculty updated the course content to ensure the information available was accurate and the most modern information available.

- In Measure 1.2, two courses tied to this objective were offered, UPSA 4700 in the Fall and UPSA 4480 in both the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters. Two students were enrolled in UPSA 4700, and a total of seven students in UPSA 4480 (2 Fall and 5 Spring). For UPSA 4700, all students were successful in achieving all course measures for this course. The same was true for both offerings of UPSA 4480. Given that these courses constitute the capstone exercise for this degree, these results were not surprising. Senior seminar projects continue to be impressive individual feats and allow "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. New and modified reflection exercises incorporated diverse elements into the curriculum.

- In Measure 2.1, not all students were able to return to formal (live) presentations as the majority of UPSA majors are internet-based and not available for live presentations such as the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, and other professional conferences. The expanded presentation options allowed this target to be met.

- In Measure 2.2, the faculty redesigned the rubric for use in the evaluation of projects that went beyond the presentation itself, adding elements of discussion and spontaneous response to the presentations.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- In Measure 1.1, the target for the objective will remain unchanged, as only one of three courses measured, and this is the second time that the standard has been met in five years. Course content will be examined for the inclusion of content consistent with evolving and university academic standards, curricular elements of cultural representation, equity, disparity, and compassion within the subject matter, and to ensure content in this rapidly evolving subject matter is representative of the best current practices and recent legal decisions.

- In Measure 1.2, the faculty will revise the curriculum delivery to include a restructuring of UPSA 4480 to refine restructured descriptive and guided assignments, expanding the breadth of the instrument in the financial element/budgeting module to include a modified financial module to include financial benefits to the community partner from the student's endeavor. While not a true educational goal of the class, information garnered form the expansion of the instrument will provide information substantiating the "town and gown" initiative of the university.

- In Measure 2.1, the objective will be expanded to permit a live presentation of findings to a formal academic audience or audiences of peers, faculty, or audiences for which a unit of instruction has been created. A broader definition of the "academic presentation" affording more students to make a presentation withing the definition of the standard for an "academic presentation".

- In Measure 2.2, a restructuring of the format and delivery of UPSA 4480 will be refined with an expanded standard for the mandatory presentation and financial module of the course of instruction for the continued to assure the continued improvement of the curriculum and courses of instruction.

- Curriculum materials, including textbooks, will be evaluated with consideration of effectiveness, cost, appropriateness and with emphasis on review of open-source materials. The curriculum will be reviewed with consideration of merging or discontinuing specific courses. Actions will be initiated to return prior learning experience credit opportunities with procedures meeting university and recognized academic practices.

- The possibility of curricula revisions incorporating appropriate external course offerings and continuing professional education hours as components of courses for academic credit. Other parts of the university have incorporated private sector training courses into courses to assure student competence when seeking employment in the private sector.

- The faculty will assure that all UPSA objectives, standards, and degree requirements are consistent with the university catalog, policies of the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Social Science and Applied Programs.

- Efforts will be undertaken to find additional student materials at no cost to the student. Textbooks meeting the need for most of the UPSA courses do not exist. In many cases selective journal and professional articles have been used. And recently more and more articles are well suited for the curriculum and course objectives are not available through the university library. NSU does not subscribe to a growing number of the major repositories of academic articles.