

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Recruiting Office

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

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

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

The mission of Recruiting is to increase the quantity and quality of all new student enrollment to Northwestern State University. New student enrollment includes all first-time freshmen, transfer students, and new graduate students. Increase in quality is determined by increased ACT/SAT composite scores, GPA and leadership skills. In support of this mission, the Recruiting staff provides prospective students with accurate information necessary to the admissions and enrollment processes, while presenting the public with a positive image of Northwestern State University. The

Recruiting staff are always focusing on an increase in diversity and access to higher education for all populations.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from weekly applicant and admission reports that compares applicants and admits from each parish and state to the application and admissions numbers from the previous year on the same date.
- (2) The Director, along with the Enrollment Manager, will analyze the data and determine whether the applicable outcomes are met.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be disseminated and discussed with the appropriate staff.
- (4) Weekly staff meetings will be held to discuss the progress.
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff and senior leadership, will determine and propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. Recruitment efforts will lead to an increase in student enrollment and be representative of the regional community.

Measure.1.1 Student enrollment will increase by 8% per freshmen class. 6% is acceptable.

Finding. Target was not met.

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. In Fall of 2023, there was an increase of 47 students, from 1020 to 1067 enrolled first-time freshmen. This was a 4.6% increase. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, in AC 2024-2025, Recruiting to utilize communication plans throughout the year with mail, email, social media, texting, and other platforms. The Marketing Office also assisted with this. In the previous assessment cycle, the Recruiting Office had a plan to partner with Common App, which would have allowed us to receive more applications as warmer leads in the funnel. Unfortunately, this was not possible due to cost. Other third-party companies were considered, such as College Vine, as a way to generate leads to meet students where they are located on social media platforms. Instead of purchasing and creating a College Vine account, we utilized the free version, which still allowed us to communicate with warm leads. The Director of Enrollment also visited specific parishes and schools within our 10-parish service area to increase applicant size.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025 the target was not met. In Fall 2024 there were 1051 enrolled entering freshmen. This is a decrease of 16 students, or a 1.5% decrease. Although some changes were made, they were not significant in impacting the Fall 2024 numbers due to assessment cycles. The changes that were made for AC 2024-2025 should be re-evaluated once Fall 2025 numbers are reported. Indications for Fall 2025 appear positive, and potential growth is expected.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Decision. In AC 2024- 2025, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the Recruiting Office will continue to make changes to the communications plan for AC 2025-2026 with mail, email, social media, texting, and other platforms. The data used to market NSU to prospective students will also be expanded to include eighth grade through juniors, as well as dual enrollment students. Recruiting has also partnered with CampusESP and other third parties, such as College Vine, as a way to generate warm leads to meet students where they are located on social media platforms. The Director of Recruiting has also created a new model of territory distribution focusing on Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southwest, Southeast, and East and North Texas as recruiting territories, which will allow greater focus on primary, secondary, and tertiary schools. These changes will improve the Recruiting Office's ability to recruit warm leads from across the state, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward. These changes will go into effect for AC 2025-2026, and results from these changes should be analyzed based on Fall 2026 numbers.

Measure 1.2. New Graduate student enrollment will increase by 3% per academic year.

Finding. Target was not met.

Analysis. In 2023-24 the target was not met. For the Fall of 2023, new graduate enrollment decreased from 1,031 students to 987 students, or 44 students. This decrease can still be attributed to similar reasons as the last assessment cycle, similar to last year with outdated admissions processes using virtually no electronic system and shifts to a more competitive marketing environment.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, in 2024-2025 the Recruiting Office had conversations with Academic Affairs and the Graduate School in order to drive the cycle of improvement. Though it was less of decrease than in years past, it's still a decrease. While this measure falls under the Recruiting assessment, University Recruiting only controls the recruitment of graduate students, not the admissions process or the latter section of the enrollment funnel, which the Graduate School has oversight. Large strides have been made using suggestions from last year assessment, and a new application for graduate school was created through Banner CRM in August. This process has been a combined effort with Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management. The new application allowed for customized communication through every academic area through texting and emails, as well as built-in strategies through every point in the graduate school funnel. Before these changes, these communication efforts did not exist for Graduate School admissions. Marketing was also involved with graduate school recruiting and launched unique digital advertising efforts on social media and SEO paid searches.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. For the Fall of 2024, new graduate enrollment decreased from 987 students to 928 students, or 59 students. This decrease can still be attributed to similar reasons as the last assessment cycle, with outdated admissions processes using virtually no electronic system and shifts to a more competitive marketing environment. Although some changes were made, they were not significant in impacting the Fall 2024 numbers due to assessment cycles. The changes that were made for AC 2024-2025 should be re-evaluated once Fall 2025 numbers are reported. Indications for Fall 2025 appear positive, and potential growth is expected.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, in 2025-2026 Recruiting will have conversations with Academic Affairs and the Graduate School to increase efficiencies. While this measure falls under the Recruiting assessment, University Recruiting only controls the recruitment of graduate students, not the admissions process or the latter section of the enrollment funnel, which the Graduate School has oversight. As reported last cycle, the new graduate school application has been created on Ellucian CRM Recruit, which will continue to drive the cycle of improvement for this measure. This process started eleven months ago and has been a combined effort with Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management. The new application now allows for customized communication through every academic area through texting and emails, as well as built-in strategy through every point in the graduate school funnel. The new application is already yielding results, as there are almost double the applications received last year to date. Training on the new application and processing system will need to be in place for graduate school staff and academic program administrators to help streamline enrollment decisions. We will continue to pursue new ways of gaining warm leads through name purchases and events, and continue innovating graduate student recruiting practices. These changes will improve the Recruiting Office's ability to recruit and enroll graduate students, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 1.3. The student body will be representative of university's regions in terms of diversity.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, we were able to enroll students from 56 of 64 parishes. Students from the following parishes were not enrolled in Fall 2023: Caldwell, East Feliciana, Franklin, Madison, Plaquemines, Saint Helena, Tensas, and West Baton Rouge. While we did not enroll students from all parishes, the number of parishes represented increased during AC 2023-2024. Based on race and ethnicity of our true entering freshman, in face to face classes that have disclosed race and ethnicity in Fall of 2023, those numbers were as follows: White – 548 (57%), Black/African American – 287 (30%), Hispanic or Latino – 47 (5%), Asian – 7 (.007%), 2 or more Races – 55 (6%), American Indian or Pacific Islander – 14 (1%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander – 2 (.002%), and Foreign or Resident Alien – 4 (.004%). This data mirrored the state of Louisiana demographic makeup.

Based on the analysis of AC 2023-2024, the Recruiting Office focused on all parishes through fairs, school visits, and warm leads for AC 2024-2025. As a result of these changes and continued efforts in AC 2024-2025, the target was met. In Fall of 2024 students were enrolled from 54 of the 64 parishes, decreasing by 2 parishes. Based on the data, students are not enrolled from the following parishes: Caldwell, Catahoula, East Carroll, Franklin, Iberville, Madison, Saint Helena, St. James, Tensas, and West Carroll. Students from Plaquemines, East Feliciana, and West Baton Rouge, all enrolled at NSU, which was different from AC 2023-2024. Students from Saint Helena, Madison, East and West Carroll, and Tensas have not enrolled at NSU in quite some time. In Fall of 2024, the demographic percentages were similar to AC 2023-2024. Those numbers are as follows: White – 580 (56%), Black/African American – 271 (26%), Hispanic or Latino – 62 (6%), Asian – 14 (.014%), 2 or more Races – 73 (7%), American Indian or

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Pacific Islander – 15 (.015%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander – 4 (.004%), and Foreign or Resident Alien – 12 (.012%). A few percentages have changed or swapped places from the previous year, however, Northwestern enrollment still mirrors the state of Louisiana demographic make-up. For the most accurate results from AC 2024-2025 changes and continued efforts, this data should be reevaluated once Fall 2025 data is reported. Indications for Fall 2025 seem similar to previous years.

Decision. In AC 2024 – 2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, in AC 2025-2026, this measure will continue to measure geographic region, race, and ethnicity to look at the full picture of diversity. The Recruiting Office will continue to recruit in all parishes through new recruiting initiatives, innovative postcard mailers, and utilizing new communication plans in our CRM system, now including geofenced social media advertising to drive the cycle of improvement. North Louisiana territory has also been divided into Northeast and Northwest, which means an increased presence in hard-to-reach parishes, especially in the Northeast region. We will always continue the mantra of recruiting at every school, every parish in Louisiana, and anyone who invites us to their property, to give every future student a chance at higher education regardless of background or circumstances. However, the new approach of recruiting the core 10 parishes in central Louisiana and auxiliary parishes touching those parishes will continue. Those parishes are where 62% of NSU's enrollment comes from, which demand a larger presence. For the most accurate results from AC 2025-2026 changes and continued efforts, this data should be reevaluated once Fall 2026 data is reported.

SO 2. Students who participate in NSide View Events, personalized campus tours on campus will learn the steps necessary in the admissions process.

Measure 2.1. Ninety percent (90%) of students who participate in Nside View and campus tours will respond that these events are very helpful in understanding the admissions process by responding, “strongly agree” or “agree” on their student survey. Students were able to select from 5 responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. In the campus tour surveys for the Fall of 2023 seniors overall stated that 96.1% strongly agreed the events were helpful and 98.7% agreed or strongly agreed the event was helpful, which was a 1% and 1% increase over the previous year.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, changes were made at N-Side View Day to include more personalized application assistance and a larger variety of sessions during AC 2024-2025. The location of application assistance was also moved to be included with tours, Financial Aid, and scholarship information.

As a result of changes made in AC 2024 – 2025, the target was met. In the campus tour surveys for the Fall of 2024, seniors overall stated that 97.3% strongly agreed the events were helpful and 99.1% agreed or strongly agreed the event was helpful, which was a 1% and 1% increase over the previous year. The changes allowed for the Recruiting Office to better fit the needs of current seniors and parents, which translated into improved survey results.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Decision. In AC 2024-2025 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the Recruiting Office will implement the following changes and continued efforts for AC 2025-2026. For tours, the Recruiting Office will continue to only use recruiters, when available, instead of ambassadors. When planning N-Side View Day events, the Director of Recruiting will continue to gauge the needs of students to ensure N-Side View Day and tours meet their needs and have a high overall satisfaction percentage. Also, for tours, the Recruiting Relations Specialist and Director of Recruiting will pair former high school students from the touring high school on tours when available. This will establish a connection with the students from the start. N-Side View Day has continued to be overhauled each session and provides a conference feel by allowing students and parents to choose what best fits their needs. While keeping the new changes from last year, and adding in new academic sessions for major exploration, students can understand what it may be like to attend NSU as a student. This will help students view what they want, participate when needed, and help with the overall flow of the event. Future preview day sessions will be added on new weekends, along with hybrid academic miniature days to cater to students who may not want a larger day. These changes will improve the organization's ability to cater to prospective students' needs, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement in satisfaction forward.

Measure 2.2. Ninety percent (90%) of students who participate in Nside View Events campus tours & recruiting receptions will respond these events are very helpful in understanding the Financial Aid process and associated requirements by responding "strongly agree" or "agree" on their student survey. Participants were given 5 choices on the measurement from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. For fall 2023, the same average of 99% was attained as the previous three years of students and parents indicated that the tour guide was knowledgeable. The best item to note is the qualitative feedback based on tour guides, which allows the Recruiting Office to praise recruiters who do well, and fix issues that arise.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, each tour was sent a survey after attending an event or visiting for a tour. Using the qualitative feedback from the tour responses allowed the Recruiting Office to make changes as needed based on tour responses and continue to drive the cycle of improvement.

As a result of changes and continued efforts, in the AC 2024-2025, the target was met. For Fall 2024, the same average of 99% was attained as the previous four years of students and parents indicated that the tour guide was knowledgeable and was able to provide knowledge regarding Financial Aid processes and requirements.

Decision.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, in 2025-2026, we will utilize more financial aid information in the discussion during tours and preview events, since parents find that to be most pertinent. Recruiters will also be trained on changes within the Financial Aid office, FAFSA, and LOSFA to better explain processes to prospective students and parents. A communication plan

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

with automated emails and texts to students who tour, will also keep students and parents updated with information. The recruiting office will also add banking information with our partner BOM to the tour, as well as the ability to share their experience via social media. The current data indicates that students who tour to NSU commit at a 72% rate, so these changes will allow the Recruiting Office to increase this attrition rate, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO 3. Enrollment of Transfer students will increase each year.

Measure 3.1. Transfer student enrollment will increase by 2% each year.

Finding. Target was not met.

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. University Recruiting addressed lead generation practices, ROI from transfer fairs, and innovative recruiting practices, boosting transfer student enrollment to 580 for Fall 2023, which was a 5.26% increase. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, the Recruiting Office continued with the same efforts during AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. As a result of these changes and continued efforts, the target was not met for AC 2024-2025. After multiple years of increased transfer enrollment, including the Fall of 2023 enrollment of 580, Fall of 2024 transfer enrollment decreased to 447 students, a decrease of 22.9%. As mentioned in the AC 2023-2024, the Recruiting Office has pushed for a transfer portal in order to compete with other colleges and universities. A lack of a transfer portal affects the Recruiting Office's ability to recruit quality transfer students who plan to enroll.

Decision. In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, in 2025-2026 we will increase our recruiting efforts by expanding our territory and increase the number of junior and community college agreements across our state and out of state. Three MOUs were recently added and have proven to be beneficial. Efforts will be shifted to focus on students with associate's degrees, especially those involved in organizations such as Phi Theta Kappa. Students within these parameters will be more likely to transfer and persist at Northwestern State University. Efforts are still being made to create a transfer portal, which would allow transfer students to know which courses transfer and how those credits fall into their degree program. This will be reliant on the IT infrastructure. It is a high priority in for the AC 2025-2026, and has been for multiple assessment cycles. These changes will improve the Recruiting Office's ability to assist students during the transfer process and help with a seamless transition, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SO 4. Entering freshmen will have scores and grade point averages that are above the state average and have cited leadership skills.

Measure 4.1. Freshmen ACT average for fall 2018 is 21.67. We will increase the average ACT for fall 2019 to 22.5. Acceptable targets are 22 ACT composite averages.

Finding. Target was not met.

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. In Fall of 2022, the ACT average was 20.72, and that average has now risen to 21.2 for Fall 2023. while in Fall of 2024 that average has risen to 21.39. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, the following

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

changes were implemented for AC 2024-2025. The Recruiting Office, along with the Financial Aid Office, analyzed and increased scholarship packages to target students with higher ACT scores and to be competitive with other universities. The Recruiting Office also utilized scholarships from the NSU Foundation Office to compete with other universities' scholarship offers. In AC 2024-2025, the Recruiting Office continued awarding based on ACT superscores, which has drawn multiple students to enroll at NSU. Louisiana Scholars College continues to be the natural landing spot for higher ACT scores. It was reported that during AC 2023-2024, the Scholars' College enrolled 68 students, while during AC 202-2025, they enrolled 80. This increased the ACT average, as many of those students are above the 30 ACT composite thresholds. We have also implemented new Dual Enrollment scholarships for participation to increase matriculation with Dual Enrollment students, who also tend to have robust ACT scores. Recruiting has also partnered with key organizations to offer scholarships, such as Louisiana Association of Student Councils and Distinguished Women of America, which attract high-caliber students to NSU. Both of those partnerships began Fall 2024. We also utilized College Vine, a third-party service with free access to high-caliber leads. This service has allowed the Recruiting Office to find students with high ACT scores that may not be interested in NSU at first glance.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. While the average ACT score increased, it did not hit the 22 ACT goal. For Fall 2024, the average ACT was 21.39. With the holistic admission policy by the Board of Regents now in place, it will make efforts to raise the average ACT harder due to only GPA needed for admission, however, NSU's average continues to rise.

Decision. In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, in AC 2025-2026 to meet our 22 ACT goal, the Recruiting Office will lean on creative scholarship packaging and matching with NSU Foundation monies to attract higher ACT scores. The Recruiting Office will also continue to award based on ACT superscores to draw student interest to NSU. Louisiana Scholars College will continue to be the natural landing spot for higher ACT scores, so increased recruiting efforts will occur within this department through fairs, school visits, and targeted marketing efforts. In AC 25-26, LOSFA will implement a new level of TOPS for students with 30+ ACT scores, which will allow students to receive even more tuition and fee coverage at NSU. This means that students with high ACT scores at NSU will be able to stretch their scholarship funds even farther, making NSU a more desirable choice than other universities and allowing use to drive the cycle of improvement. These changes will improve the Recruiting Office's ability to recruit high caliber students and increase the average ACT score at NSU, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement moving forward.

Measure 4.2. Ten percent (10%) of entering freshmen will have documented leadership skills as part of their application process for programs like the Presidential Leadership program, Louisiana Scholars' College, and the student ambassador program.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. In Fall of 2023, there were 72 PLP students, 51 ambassadors, and 68 scholars' students, rising in all categories with over 25% of the freshman class. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, the Recruiting Office worked to recruit students with leadership skills through events such as recruiting

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

receptions, N-Side View Day, and tours. Students were also recruited from third-party events on campus, such as FFA, HOSA, LASC, 4-H, and AHEC. As a result of these changes and continued efforts in AC 2024-2025, the target was met. In Fall 2024, there were 60 PLP students, 42 ambassadors, and 71 scholars' students, totalling 173, 17% of entering freshman class. These changes had a direct impact on the Recruiting Office's ability to continue recruiting strong prospective students with leadership skills that can be applied when they enroll at NSU.

Decision. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, in 2025-2026 moving forward, the Recruiting Office will strive to recruit more students to all the aforementioned programs in the measure through tactics previously discussed. As previously mentioned, Scholars' students should continue to rise through recruiting efforts to over 100, and the same should apply for ambassadors and presidential leadership students as early identification recruiting tactics were used through this assessment cycle. The Recruiting office will also shift focus to students during their sophomore, junior, and senior years to further solidify students with documented leadership skills, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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 analyzing the AC 2023-2024 results and lessons learned.

- Adjusted territory assignments to hone in on Northwest and Northeast Louisiana, as well as redefined out of state to focus on East Texas.
- We finally have achieved a great foundation in our Banner CRM system, and look to now take more innovative measure going forwarded with custom communication plans built around academic and extracurricular activities
- Continued to develop social media campaigns along with digital advertising and SEO paid searches to enhance strategy and campaigns from recruiting office to be geared towards goals.
- Created key partnerships with more community colleges, local entities, school districts, etc., and we look to expand even further in the future.
- Implementing new N-Side View Day in tandem with Lit Rally to capitalize on 2000+ students.
- Attempting to remove all barriers of entry to NSU through the admission process, like arbitrary fees, unneeded paperwork, and digitization efforts of materials through Banner Document Management.
- Greater focus on matriculation through Dual Enrollment program to hone in on NSU and school-based visits, along with key marketing concepts.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

- Recruiting events such as receptions and luncheons will be added/subtracted to increase ROI on larger pool regions.

Plan of action moving forward.

In addition to the action plans described above, the Recruiting Office will continue to focus on the inner office growth of recruiters and ambassadors through improved training methods. Recruiter salaries have also increased, which will aid in the overall retention efforts of the office staff and happiness. We've built many bridges with academic units this year, and will continue to do in the future, as empowering faculty to also recruit, will provide dividends in the future. We will also continue to provide personalization and customer service to all entering students, as it's the hallmark of NSU, and what attracts many students.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025