

**Final Report**  
**Assessment Cycle 2024-2025**

**Student Support Services**

**Division or Department:** Student Affairs

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**Date:** 6 / 6 / 2 0 2 5

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**Date:** 6 / 1 7 / 2 0 2 5

**Northwestern Mission.** Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

**The Student Experience Mission Statement:**

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

**Student Affairs Mission:**

The Division of Student Affairs prepares students to be productive members of society and to improve the quality of life of students. Student Affairs provides support services in career development and placement, advocacy and accountability, academic support, mental and physical health, disability accommodations, student activities and organizations, student union life, and opportunities in leadership, community service, and programs for new students. Through hands on involvement in programs and services, Student Affairs promotes personal development in a student-centered environment, which delivers innovative practices in an environment of respect. Student Affairs encourages integrity, diversity, and collaboration with all members of the university community.

**TRIO Student Support Services Mission:**

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

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**Methodology:** The assessment process includes:

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

### Service Outcomes

**SO 1.** The TRIO Student Support Services Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) will promote student success by helping first year students become socially and academically integrated into the NSU community. Mentees will be recruited from the three sections of ACSI1010 taught by TRIO SSS Instructors. Junior/Senior TRIO SSS Project participants will serve as mentors.

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

**Finding.** Target was met.

### Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024 the target was met. Staff implemented bi-weekly course/subject specific study sessions for core classes such as Math 1020, 1060, Chemistry 1070, etcetera. They implemented bi-weekly homework nights to reinforce good study habits and teach study skills and strategies. This will also promote a sense of belonging and form better connections between mentors and mentees. They ensured that mentees were aware of how to request tutoring services. When tutoring services were utilized, tutors informed PMP Coordinator and the mentee's SSS Advisor of the results of the tutoring session(s) for further action, if needed. As the mentee progressed through the first academic year, an open line of communication was maintained between the mentor, mentee, tutor, and TRIO SSS advisor, forming a hub of support. This Academic Cycle twenty-three (23) mentees were recruited into the Peer Mentoring Program. The changes listed above were implemented, but were not lasting, except for the utilization of tutoring services. Bi-weekly study sessions were scheduled, along with homework nights. There was such low turnout for both

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activities that they were quickly discontinued. Mentors and Advisors continued to encourage mentees to seek tutoring services, of which many took advantage of the free service. SSS Advisors closely monitored the 5-week and mid-term grades and followed up with mentees that earned a letter grade of C or below. Those students were required to meet with an SSS advisor to determine what resources were needed to assist the student in bringing up their grade(s). With these interventions, 87% of the mentees made satisfactory academic progress (earned a 2.0 GPA or above) and 83% of the mentees will return for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, the staff implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. Bi-weekly course/subject specific study sessions were re-introduced. This time tutors were utilized to assist mentors facilitating the sessions. A new incentive was introduced to “spotlight” the mentor/mentee team that most improves academically each month. Analysis of core class test scores was used to determine improvement.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025 the target was met. The Mentor Program started the AC 2024-2025 with twenty-two (22) mentees, recruited from the three TRIO SSS taught sections of ACSI 1010. Another TRIO SSS participant became a mentor mid fall semester, with one more coming onboard at the beginning of the spring semester. This made a total of twenty-four (24) mentees. Three mentees were removed from the Mentor Program because they no longer met the criteria due to changing their major from a four-year degree to a two-year degree. Additionally, at the end of the fall semester, three (3) mentees expressed that they were no longer interested in being a part of the Mentor Program, bringing the total number of mentees to eighteen (18). The two new changes were discussed but never implemented. The Mentor Program Coordinator resigned due to relocating to another part of the state. A new Mentor Program Coordinator was not hired until September 2024. The SSS Staff hosted a retreat for the mentors prior to the start of the academic year. Mentors were very engaged with their mentees and most of the mentors accompanied their mentees to the Academic Success Center to either study together or receive tutoring. This, along with the oversight of our TRIO SSS Staff contributed to 83% of the mentees successfully completing their first year in college with a GPA of 2.0 or above, and 90% registered for the 2025-2026 academic year.

| Stated Objectives  | AC 2022-2023 | AC 2023-2024 | AC 2024-2025 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 82% or more mentees will persist from one AC to the next (Based upon registration for Fall)      | 87%          | 83%          | <b>90%</b>   |
| 80% of mentees will successfully complete their first year in college with a GPA of 2.0 or above | 87%          | 87%          | <b>83%</b>   |

**Decision:**

In AC 2024-2025 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. TRIO Student Support Services is a program funded by a 5- year grant from the U. S. Department of Education. The current grant cycle will end on August 31, 2025, ushering in a new 5-year cycle, 2025-2030. Under this new grant, the Peer Mentoring Program will no longer be supported. The new initiative to be utilized for this assessment is the TRIO Trailblazers Ambassador Program. The new service outcome will include two measures and will be re-written to state:

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“TRIO Trailblazers, the TRIO Student Support Services Ambassadors Program, will demonstrate growth in leadership skills through active participation in hands-on program training and event facilitation. Trailblazers will act as liaison for the department and will represent TRIO at events across the campus and in the community. Trailblazers will facilitate and execute activities and events independently and through collaboration.”

The new measure 1.1 will be:

“75% of Trailblazers will report having developed at least one workshop per semester to demonstrate their ability to lead, organize and execute. Staff evaluations of the Trailblazers will be used to measure their level of success. Success will be defined as meeting the level of “satisfactory” through an evaluation designed and conducted by the staff.”

The second measure 1.2 will be

“The Trailblazers will collaborate with at least two (2) departments across campus to plan and execute activities or events. This will demonstrate their level of collaboration and increase engagement. Activities and events will be evaluated through surveys and reports from the collaborating departments”.

These changes will improve the students’ growth in leadership, organizational, and collaboration skills, thus enabling their ability to act as liaison for the TRIO department, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

**Finding.** Target was met.

**Analysis:**

In 2023-2024 the target was not met. Mentees, along with Mentors, were required to attend the Mentoring Retreat the weekend before classes started in the fall. During the retreat, mentees would learn the purpose of the program, how mentoring can help them be more successful, and to begin to build rapport with their Mentor and the TRIO SSS staff. Mentors would be assigned mentees prior to the beginning of the academic year and would be present to assist their mentees’ move into the resident halls. Mentors will invite mentees on a personalized tour of the campus, preview their fall schedule of classes to show mentees where the classes are located, and answer any questions. Mentors will host at least two activities per month to address both non-cognitive and social issues. Activities will be presented in a relaxed, fun environment, rather than in a classroom setting. Non-cognitive attributes to be addressed in this measure on the *LASSI* scale are motivation and self-regulation. The following attributes fall under self-regulation: anxiety, attitude, concentration, self-testing, time management, and using academic resources. These changes will improve the students’ non-cognitive attributes thus, enabling the student to better cope with the challenges of college life and further enhance the student’s comfort in asking questions and expressing concerns to others, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement further. Due to staff changes, including the departure of the PMP Coordinator, mentees were not selected until the second and third week of the fall semester. Therefore, the fall retreat only included mentors, and mentors were

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not assigned mentees until the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) week of the semester. This delay caused a critical breakdown in the plan for mentor and mentees to start the bonding process prior to the start of the semester. Activities were planned, but it always seemed like something occurred to either postpone or cancel the activities. Even when activities took place, attendance was low. Fortunately, many of the mentors were able to build a strong relationship with their mentees which kept them engaged. Unfortunately, this was not enough to show an overall improvement in non-cognitive attributes for at least 90% of the mentees.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the TRIO SSS Staff implemented the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. During the fall retreat, mentees, along with mentors, developed and planned activities for the semester, thereby fostering ownership and accountability. An off-campus teambuilding activity or outing was planned for the beginning of the semester to promote rapport.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025 the target was met. Mentees were not identified until the third week of the fall semester due to the PMP Coordinator not being hired until September. Therefore, the fall retreat was attended by mentors only. It was successful in that it motivated the mentors, created a sense of cohesion, and allowed them to plan for the fall semester. During the retreat, mentors reviewed the TRIO SSS and Demon Days calendars and selected activities that they would invite their mentees to accompany them. A fall outing was planned to take place early in the semester. It was decided that the LASSI would not be utilized in this academic cycle, based upon previous feedback from students who indicated their reluctance in completing assessments because they received so many. The TRIO Staff decided to use formative data comprised of feedback from tutors, advisors, and mentors' interaction with the mentees. Based on the feedback obtained, it was determined that the majority of mentees were able to cope with the challenges of college life. They expressed questions and concerns about their academics (tutoring, grades, time management, etc.), financial aid, mental health, and housing. Three exceptions were noted and documented where mentees did not act upon recommendations to utilize the available free resources, but they did freely and frequently ask questions. Thus, 90% of mentees had an enhanced ability to cope with challenges of college life and were comfortable asking questions.

| Stated Objectives   | AC 2022-2023 | AC 2023-2024 | AC 2024-2025 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 90% of mentees will have an enhanced ability to cope with challenges of college life (non-cognitive attributes) and will be comfortable in expressing questions and concerns in a safe environment. | 90%          | 78%          | <b>90%</b>   |

**Decision:**

In AC 2024-2025 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. TRIO Student Support Services is a program funded by a 5- year grant from the U. S. Department of Education. The current grant cycle will end on August 31, 2025, ushering in a new 5-year cycle, 2025-2030. Under this new grant, the Peer



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Mentoring Program will no longer be supported. The new initiative to be utilized for this assessment is the TRIO Trailblazers Ambassador Program. The new service outcome will be re-written to state:

“TRIO Trailblazers, the TRIO Student Support Services Ambassadors Program, which will articulate personal growth, and professionalism and career readiness gained through program involvement.

The new measure 2.1 will read:

“100% of Trailblazers will complete a reflective portfolio, paper or presentation at the end of the academic year. The portfolio, paper or presentation will demonstrate and be the Trailblazer’s first-hand account of the personal and professional growth they have experienced.”

These changes will improve the students’ personal growth, professionalism and career readiness, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

**Finding.** Target was met.

**Analysis:**

In 2023-2024 the target was not met. The Presence platform was introduced during the mentor/mentee retreat and incorporated into the ACSK 1010 curriculum as a follow-up measure to the introduction during the retreat. The end of year exit questionnaire was revised and utilized both semesters to determine if mentees were participating in campus activities and joining RSO’s. The PMP Coordinator created an Engagement Report form used by mentors within the first four weeks of each semester. Mentors submitted the results to the PMP Coordinator, who in turn met with TRIO Staff to analyze results and determine what type of action should be taken. Due to staff changes, including the PMP Coordinator leaving the department, mentees were not selected until the second and third week of the fall semester. Therefore, mentees were not present at the fall retreat, thus the mentees were not introduced to Presence until the fourth meeting of the ACSK 1010 class. The exit questionnaire was revised and used both semesters which allowed Advisors to have a better view of which mentees were becoming involved with organizations and participating in campus activities. With this knowledge, Advisors and mentors spoke with mentees that were not involved and further encouraged them. The Engagement Report form was created but was not utilized until the fourth week due to the late identification and selection of mentees.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results the TRIO SSS staff implemented the following changes in 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. RSO representatives were invited to Mentor Mentee meetings or activities to pitch their organization and answer questions. Mentors took their mentees to the RSO Browse held each semester. This was done so mentees could meet officers and members of the respective RSOs to hear their reasons for joining said RSO.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025 the target was met. Mentors regularly invited and accompanied mentees to TRIO SSS and campus sponsored activities. Mentors encouraged mentees to join an RSO. The PMP Coordinator utilized the exit survey to receive feedback from mentees on their extracurricular involvement. SSS Staff also received feedback on involvement

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from mentees during individual meetings.

| Stated Objectives   | AC 2022-2023 | AC 2023-2024 | AC 2024-2025 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 90% of mentees will regularly participate in campus activities and/or join at least one student organization. | 91%          | 85%          | <b>94%</b>   |

**Decision:**

In AC 2024-2025 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. TRIO Student Support Services is a program funded by a 5- year grant from the U. S. Department of Education. The current grant cycle will end on August 31, 2025, ushering in a new 5-year cycle, 2025-2030. Under this new grant, the Peer Mentoring Program will no longer be supported. The new initiative to be utilized for this assessment is the TRIO Trailblazers Ambassador Program. The new service outcome will be re-written to state:

“TRIO Trailblazers, the TRIO Student Support Services Ambassadors Program, which will contribute to recruitment and retention efforts by positively influencing prospective and current student experiences, as evidenced by new recruit’s participation in campus activities and/or student organizations/”

The new measure 3.1 will read:

“Prospective student feedback, and Trailblazer contribution reports will be utilized to evaluate Trailblazers positive influence on prospective and current student experiences. Success will be defined as 75% of the Trailblazers recruiting at least two (2) new participants each semester.”

These changes will improve the students’ ability to contribute to recruitment and retention efforts, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements 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 AC 2024-2025 results analysis.

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

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

1.3: RSO representatives were invited to Mentor Mentee meetings or activities to pitch their organization and answer questions. Mentors took their mentees to the RSO Browse held each semester. This was done so mentees could meet officers and members of the respective RSOs to

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hear their reasons for joining said RSO.

**Plan of Action Moving Forward:**

**SLO 1:**

1.1: The new initiative to be utilized for this assessment is the TRIO Trailblazers Ambassador Program. The new service outcome will include two measures and will be re-written to state: "TRIO Trailblazers, the TRIO Student Support Services Ambassadors Program, which will demonstrate growth in leadership skills through active participation in hands-on program training and event facilitation. Trailblazers will act as liaison for the department and will represent TRIO at events across the campus and in the community. Trailblazers will facilitate and execute activities and events independently and through collaboration." The new measure 1.1 will be "75% of Trailblazers will report having developed at least one workshop per semester to demonstrate their ability to lead, organize and execute. Staff evaluations of the Trailblazers will be used to measure their level of success. Success will be defined as meeting the level of "satisfactory" through an evaluation designed and conducted by the staff." The second measure 1.2 will be "The Trailblazers will collaborate with at least 2 departments across campus to demonstrate their level of collaboration and increase engagement. Activities and events will be evaluated through surveys and reports from the collaborating departments".

1.2: The new initiative to be utilized for this assessment is the TRIO Trailblazers Ambassador Program. The new service outcome will be re-written to state "TRIO Trailblazers, the TRIO Student Support Services Ambassadors Program, which will articulate personal growth, and professionalism and career readiness gained through program involvement. The new measure 2.1 will read "100% of Trailblazers will complete a reflective portfolio, paper or presentation at the end of the academic year. The portfolio, paper or presentation will demonstrate and be the Trailblazer's first-hand account of the personal and professional growth they have experienced."

1.3 The new initiative to be utilized for this assessment is the TRIO Trailblazers Ambassador Program. The new service outcome will be re-written to state "TRIO Trailblazers, the TRIO Student Support Services Ambassadors Program, which will contribute to recruitment and retention efforts by positively influencing prospective and current student experiences, as evidenced by new recruit's participation in campus activities and/or student organizations." The new measure 3.1 will read "Prospective student feedback, and Trailblazer contribution reports will be utilized to evaluate Trailblazers positive influence on prospective and current student experiences. Success will be defined as 75% of the Trailblazers recruiting at least two (2) new participants each semester."