

Strategic Plan 2023-2028



Assessment Cycle 2024-2025
Making a Difference

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PREFACE

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 region's educational, cultural, economic, and social bedrock for 141 years. *Assessment Cycle 2024-2025, Making a Difference*, is the tangible evidence that 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. On July 18, 2024, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) of the University of Louisiana System (ULS) unanimously selected James T. Genovese to serve as the 21st President of Northwestern.

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. On 30 October 2024, Dr. Belle Wheelan, the president of SACSCOC, notified the University that it had been approved to participate in the Differentiated Review Process for the reaffirmation Class of 2027 based in part on its high-quality fifth-year report. This commitment to excellence by the entire university community will continue to drive Northwestern toward securing its vision of becoming the nation's premier regional university. Northwestern is unmatched in preparing its graduates for life and career success. This document reflects the strategic guidance of President James T. Genovese and Northwestern's senior leadership. President Genovese immediately identified the following priorities for AC 2024-2025:

- Provide responsive student services to recruit, retain, and promote student success.
- Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.
- Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands—foster public and private partnerships.

With the following objectives in direct support:

- Enhance marketing opportunities, game day experience, and resource acquisition.
- Expand world-class performing arts program and promote mutually beneficial donor relationships.
- Develop a more inclusive (*thriving*) campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.

Members of the leadership team have ownership of the Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs) and their associated objectives and strategies:

President, James T. Genovese

Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff: Dr. Drake Owens

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

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

Research within Its Mission: Chair, Research Council, Dr. Margaret Cochran
Quality Enhancement Program: QEP Assessment Coordinator, Dr. Greg Handel
SFA Market Responsiveness: Executive Director, Economic Development and University
Advancement, Ms. Laurie Morrow
SFA Community Enrichment: Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff, Dr. Drake Owens
Community/Public Service: Service-Learning Coordinator, Mr. Steven Gruesbeck
University Capital Outlook: Executive Director for University Affairs, Ms. Jennifer Kelly
University Architecture Update: Chief Information Officer, Mr. Ron Williams
SFA Athletic Prominence: Director of Athletics, Mr. Kevin Bostian
SFA Cultural Competence: Ms. Brittany Blackwell Broussard
Dean, Graduate School: Dr. Mary Edith Stacy
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences: Dr. Frances Lemoine
Dean, Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development: Dr. Neeru Deep
Dean, College of Business and Technology: Dr. Greg Handel
Dean, College of Nursing and Allied Health: Dr. Aimee Badeaux
Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources, Ms. Roni Biscoe
Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Mr. Frank Hall



Executive Summary

James T. Genovese, President

September 18, 2025

The 2024–2025 academic year has been a season of reflection and renewal, one in which we met challenges with resolve and converted them into momentum for growth.

Northwestern State University stands at the intersection of tradition and transformation. Founded 141 years ago to train teachers in rural Louisiana, NSU has evolved into a multi-campus, multi-disciplinary university serving more than 8,500 students across the state and beyond. We honor our legacy while charting a forward-looking course rooted in innovation, workforce development, and economic impact. Our faculty, staff, alumni, and students embody grit, service, and academic excellence. Whether preparing nurses, training teachers, developing artists and performers, or guiding first-generation students to graduation, our mission remains constant: to become the nation’s premier regional university.

Progress this year is evident across enrollment and student experience. In Fall 2024 we welcomed more than 1,100 new students and reached 100% housing occupancy, and Spring 2025 continued the trend with increases in first-time freshmen and transfer students. We strengthened recruitment through high-impact events such as N-Side View Day, STEM Day, and Fall Scholars Day, and expanded high school outreach across the region. With support from an external enrollment consultant, we produced a university-wide Strategic Enrollment Plan now in the hands of every academic and support unit, and implementation is underway.

The Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory confirms our trajectory, with NSU outpacing both University of Louisiana System and national benchmarks: 70% of students reported satisfaction compared to 52% nationally, and 74% indicated they will re-enroll compared to 60% nationally. We also expanded student support through Swipe Out Hunger, launched Leadership NSU, and reinvigorated traditions such as Family Day and the Senior Ring Ceremony.

Building on this momentum, we will deepen student well-being and success with prevention and wellness programs, enhanced financial education, an early-warning system to identify at-risk students, expanded Living Learning Communities, a more comprehensive Parent Portal, and increased face-to-face course availability for freshmen and sophomores. Academic excellence remains a core strength, with student evaluations showing high and improving perceptions of classroom experiences and accreditation processes remaining on track.

Academic innovation is visible across colleges. The College of Nursing and School of Allied Health expanded clinical partnerships, targeted recruitment, and bridge pathways such as Military Medic and Paramedic to RN, LPN to BSN, and RN to BSN to broaden access for working professionals. Enrollment grew in Family Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs, directly addressing statewide needs in primary and behavioral health. The DNP program continues to graduate clinical leaders, and the Nurse Anesthesia concentration now runs three concurrent cohorts to meet demand for CRNAs.

In the School of Allied Health, the BAS in Allied Health and RT to BSRS pathways expanded, new imaging certificates launched, Diagnostic Medical Sonography graduated its first cohort and earned initial accreditation, and a new Master of Science in Allied Health will launch in 2025–2026. These advances are supported by

nearly two million dollars from HRSA for PMHNP workforce expansion and by \$490,000 from the Workforce Training Rapid Response Fund. Recognition followed, as our DNP program was named Nursing School of the Year for Graduate Programs at the Nightingale Gala and faculty leaders Dr. Shaun Wheat and Dr. Aimee Badeaux received statewide honors. The college expanded simulation experiences and clinical partnerships, and an agreement with UT-Tyler established a Pharmacy Early Assurance Program that streamlines advising and improves placements for biology and health science majors.

The College of Arts and Sciences advanced collaboration and workforce readiness by launching CREATE, the Center for Research, Education, and Artistic Teamwork Exploration, as a faculty collaboration incubator. Engineering Technology relaunched its Advanced Manufacturing concentration, Fine and Graphic Arts signed an articulation agreement with the Digital Media Institute in Shreveport, the Louisiana Scholars' College awarded its first Undergraduate Certificates in Medical Humanities, and Mathematics introduced new concentrations in Applied Mathematics, Computer Science, and Sport Analytics. Physical Sciences signed an agreement with the North Louisiana Crime Lab, partnered with ARQ for laboratory analyses, established a thermal analysis lab in Fournet Hall, added a Physics minor, and acquired DSC instrumentation to strengthen chemistry and forensic science. Theatre and Dance expanded career pipelines through a new connection with Royal Caribbean and strengthened recruiting with Calcasieu Theatrical Arts.

The School of STEM engaged more than 450 high school students through STEM Day and the Engineering Technology Symposium, advanced the ARGO Lab for drone-based remote sensing and 3D mapping, and aligned classroom learning with paid industry experience through an Advanced Manufacturing program. NSU launched its first IBM course in RPG IV; infused AI across programming, data structures, 3D design, and analytics; and began developing an M.S. in STEM with a concentration in AI and Machine Learning. An active AI Club and a robust slate of lectures supported by IBM, the Fédération Française du Bâtiment, and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training are elevating NSU's role in applied AI.

The School of Creative and Performing Arts sustained a powerful recruiting engine through standout performances with the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Society, seasonal productions such as Twelve Angry Jurors, the Fall Choir Concert, Wind Symphony events, and the Christmas Gala, while New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts hosted the 51st annual JaM Day to connect students with industry professionals.

Innovation also defined the College of Business and Technology. The School of Business earned AACSB reaccreditation, and Hospitality Management and Tourism secured ACPHA accreditation as the only four-year program in Louisiana with that credential, with independent department status beginning in July 2025. Experiential learning expanded through consulting projects, international internships, and partnerships with GDIT, Louisiana Economic Development, SHRM, and regional businesses. AI was integrated into coursework, coding outreach reached local youth, and CIS capstone students built a Graduate School Document Repository prototype. Entrepreneurship and analytics were showcased in the Inferno Pitch competition, won by AI-driven startup Mendi Health, and in the Leadership in the Age of AI Forum. Curriculum updates in programming, marketing analytics, and finance, supported by IBM partnerships, are positioning graduates for high-demand roles in banking, healthcare, and emerging tech.

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development, with approximately 1,600 students and the university's largest number of graduates, opened the Center for Excellence in Teaching with support from Weyerhaeuser and the International Paper Foundation to provide coaching, mentoring, and well-being resources for pre-service teachers. The Social Work Department secured approvals for

the Master of Social Work degree, admitted the first cohort for Fall 2025, and completed CSWE Benchmark 1. Addiction Studies achieved NASAC accreditation, and Psychology and Addiction Studies received a \$400K Board of Regents grant to launch a Collegiate Recovery Program, while collegewide engagement was strengthened through Appreciation and Service Day events.

Research activity aligned with our mission continues to thrive. Undergraduates delivered 14 professional presentations at venues that included the Industrial Engineering and Operations Management World Congress and the Louisiana Academy of Sciences, and 19 more at the ULS Academic Summit. NSU Research Day featured 59 undergraduate presenters with 30 combined presentations and posters, alongside 25 graduate presenters and 24 faculty presenters. Graduate students gave 35 presentations at conferences that included LERA, MSERA, Sigma Tau Delta, Sigma Theta Tau, and the Southwest Psychological Association. Scholarly output included 21 dissertations, six theses, four creative projects, two performance documents, two field studies, 19 scholarly projects, and 172 papers in lieu of thesis, while undergraduates completed eight theses.

Our next Quality *Enhancement Plan, Beyond the First Year Experience: Perspective, Perseverance, and Persistence*, addresses the critical transition beyond year one by targeting barriers such as gateway courses, expanded work and activity commitments, and reduced post-first-year support. An external evaluator has audited the Freshman Connection process and is now examining the first-to-second-year transition, with findings informing a strategic framework for improved retention, achievement, and well-being.

Facilities and infrastructure improvements are moving forward. Alost Hall, a \$44M academic facility, remains on track for Fall 2025 and will add modern classrooms and collaboration spaces. Iberville Dining Hall underwent a full renovation through a partnership with Sodexo. Additional projects included new rigging in Fredericks Auditorium, two elevators in Watson Library, and upgraded lighting at Turpin Stadium. Deferred maintenance funding from Act 751 is investing \$29M campuswide, with \$2.1M already directed to academic and residential enhancements.

Athletic facilities also advanced through new scoreboards and artificial turf at Brown-Stroud Field and the softball complex. The \$12M David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center broke ground with a \$1.9M private gift, and \$1.7M in lighting and full resurfacing at the Walter Ledet Track Complex is underway.

Accessibility remains a priority as we continue the ADA components of the Five-Year Plan, including repaired sidewalks and in-process roof projects at Fournet Hall, Shreveport, and Leesville. Planning is also accelerating, as Warrington Hall and Innovation Park are advancing with matching funds secured and architects assigned, and our Campus Master Plan with AQ Studios aligns facilities with long-term academic priorities.

Modernization extends to information technology. We decommissioned the legacy phone system, upgraded Banner servers, implemented Ellucian Ethos, enhanced network and Wi-Fi in Varnado Hall and Alost Hall, rolled out a new copier fleet, and deployed an F5 load balancer. Projects now in progress include Banner self-service modules, policy updates, and network upgrades across main campus, Shreveport, and Athletics. Priorities ahead include a 100 Gb internet connection, staff PC replacements, a rebuilt Shreveport disaster recovery center, and integrated technology for Innovation Park and the Field House.

Support from donors and partners continues to accelerate our mission. The NSU Foundation reported \$7.3M in FY25 revenue and provided more than \$5M in institutional support, including \$3M in scholarships. Transformative gifts included \$200K for endowed professorships, \$400K for endowed scholarships, and \$600K establishing the Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies, with one million dollars pending from a Board of Regents match. The Morgan Extra Mile Scholarship surpassed one million dollars in endowment value. Federal support totaled \$4.1M for projects such as Elevate U, a

comprehensive advising and pathways initiative, with \$4.5M in pending requests and \$5.7M in development for TRIO, health workforce, nursing, STEM, and Innovation Park.

Outreach efforts also grew through the 140th Anniversary Campaign and Northwestern Now, while Proud to be Purple, Demons on the Road, and CrawFest reconnected alumni across Louisiana and beyond, and weekly alumni e-communications amplified our story. And our impact in the community remains substantial. Students, faculty, and staff contributed 268,502.5 hours of community and public service, representing at least \$1.9M in economic value at the federal minimum wage.

Athletics adds to this momentum with a dynamic rebuilding phase marked by fresh leadership and measurable progress. Nearly 400 student-athletes earned a cumulative 3.0 GPA, Spring 2025 set a department record at 3.27, and the annual GPA reached 3.23, which exceeded our 3.11 target. The NCAA-reported graduation rate stands at 80%, and 224 student-athletes made the Southland Conference Honor Roll, a 10.5% increase.

Under Head Coach Blaine McCorkle, football posted significant gains in strength metrics. Seven of 14 sports finished in the conference's top third despite a budget ranked tenth of twelve, and signature moments included the Lady Demons' WNIT berth, women's outdoor track and field repeating as Southland champions with multiple individual honors, and baseball's 33–19 season capped by a 13–3 win at No. 7 LSU.

The Fork 'Em Collective expanded NIL opportunities, revenue rose by nearly two million dollars with the largest cash gift in program history, ten facility projects were completed, both the Demons Unlimited Foundation and Louisiana State and NCAA audits reported zero findings for a second consecutive year, and social media reach surged on TikTok and Instagram.

Our culture of inclusion continues to strengthen. NSU exceeded its target for cultural competence programming, marketing increased attendance and visibility, and the RNL-SSI placed NSU above ULS and national norms in student satisfaction.

Assessment results confirm university wide progress. The 2024–2025 assessment cycle, *Making a Difference*, reported that of 1,391 outcomes, measures, objectives, and metrics assessed, 1,132 were positive, representing an 81% success rate and affirming our commitment to accountability, continuous improvement, and student success.

As we look to the future, our course is guided by three priorities.

We will provide responsive student services that recruit, retain, and promote success by expanding outreach to high schools and two-year institutions, growing dual enrollment, creating stackable credentials, and strengthening wellness, financial education, early intervention, and parent engagement.

We will deliver effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online by investing in faculty excellence and mentorship, expanding programs in AI, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, redesigning foundational courses, launching new programs, and leveraging partnerships with leaders such as IBM.

We will align curricula with tomorrow's workforce by building strong public and private partnerships that include Innovation Park, collaboration with the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, and broad industry engagement.

Together, these commitments will drive economic development, workforce readiness, and student success across Northwest Louisiana and beyond.



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 2024–2025

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 2024-2025—*Making a Difference* is the second full quantitative assessment of Strategic Plan 2023-2028. On February 28, 2020, the BOS for the ULS approved Northwestern's updated Mission, Vision, and Values statement. In concert with the Institutional Effectiveness Model and its push for continuous improvement, Northwestern requested and received the BOS for the ULS revalidation of Northwestern's *Mission, Vision, and Values* statement on 27 February 2025.

On June 20, 2025, the University completed the eighth cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and core competencies as part of the *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2024-2025*. Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation enable Northwestern to make informed strategic decisions, ultimately leading to institutional improvement. The assessment encompasses all six strategic focus areas (SFAs): Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, Athletic Prominence, and Cultural Competence. The University is moving forward with 26 objectives, 100 metrics, 166 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 region's socioeconomic conditions.

Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Model. The Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors for 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 the accomplishment of their mission (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, ensuring participation, standardization, flexibility, and accountability.

Figure 1
The Institutional Effectiveness Process

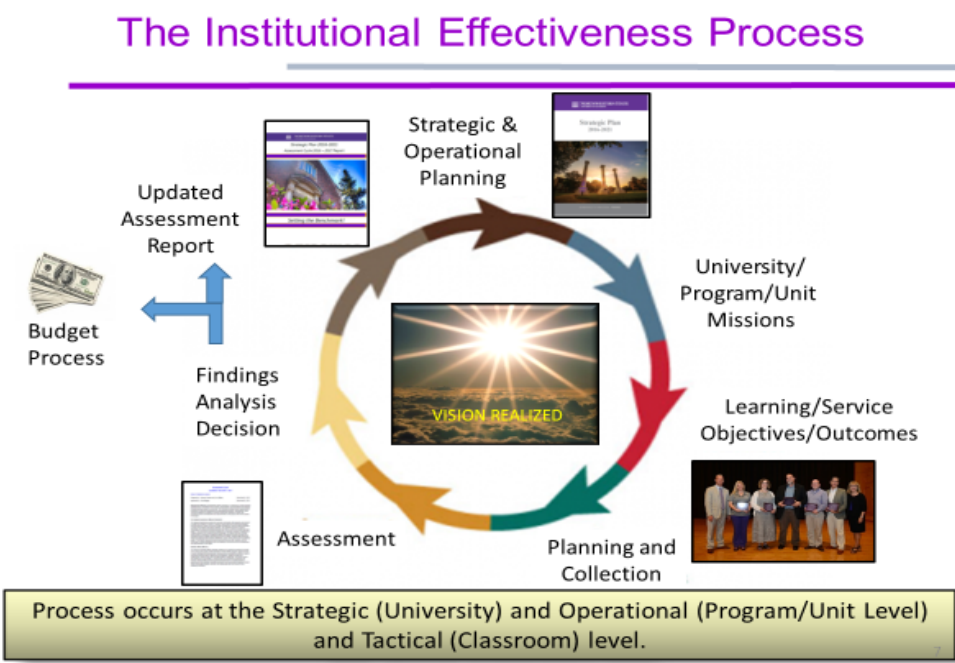
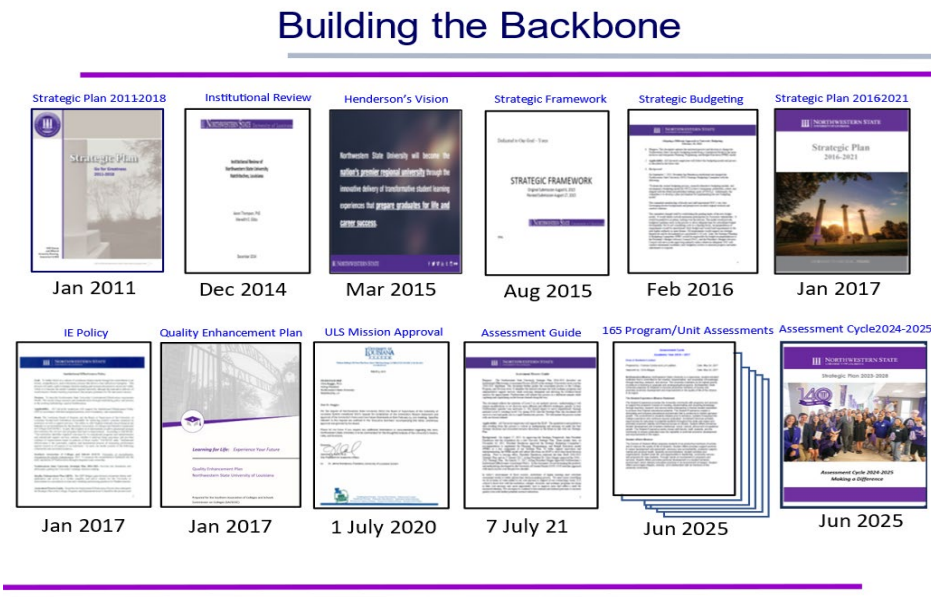


Figure 2
Literary Backbone



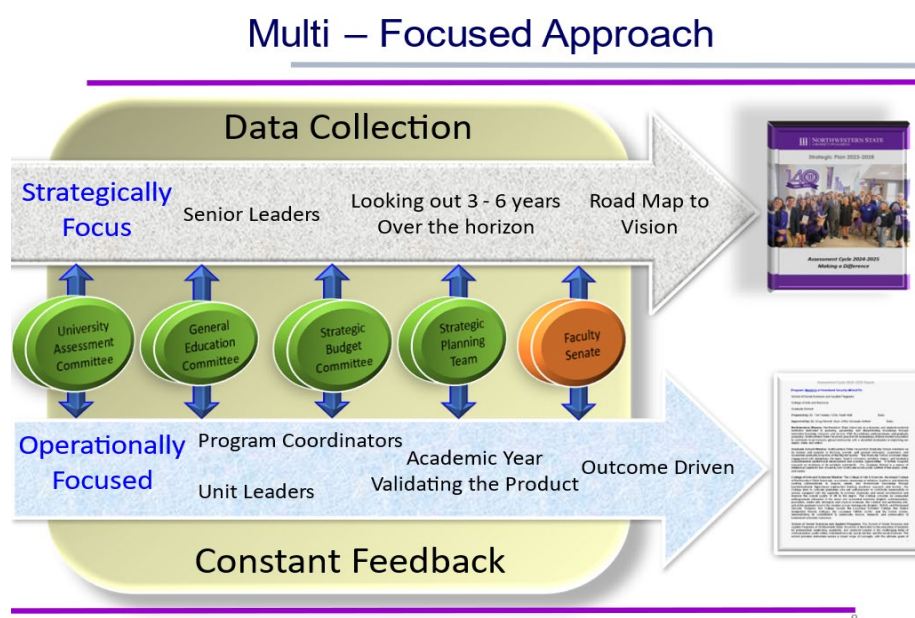
The supporting organizational structure (Figure 3) is provided through the President's Leadership Team, which provides the strategic vision and serves as the forcing function to drive the process, ensuring various model components stay aligned and mutually supportive. The University Strategic Planning 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 instruments in maintaining the integrity of the process. The University General Education Committee ensures Northwestern has a 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 assigned each applicable standard to the appropriate authority for ownership, evaluation, and integration into the University's daily operations.

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 the plan, Assessment Cycle 2024–2025 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Driving Change, allows for adaptation, innovation, and adjustment based on the findings and the evolving 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

Figure 3
Organizational structure



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 did not conduct an assessment in AC 2021-2022 to allow for a period of reflection and to enable senior leadership to focus on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) fifth-year interim review, ensuring the University is following all Federal Laws 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. Utilize strategic and sustainable practices 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 cultural competence among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.

Objective 2. Integrate cultural competence throughout the academic curriculum and support programs.

Objective 3. 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 assessing 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, 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), in 2023-2024 one hundred and four (104), and in 2024-2025 one hundred and three (103) 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 2024-2025 academic year, with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each program identified its findings, completed its analysis, and collectively determined the 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 (2025-2026). Once the Dean approves, program coordinators submit completed assessments to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) on June 20, 2025. Please view the 2024-2025 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, typically presented in August or September.

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.

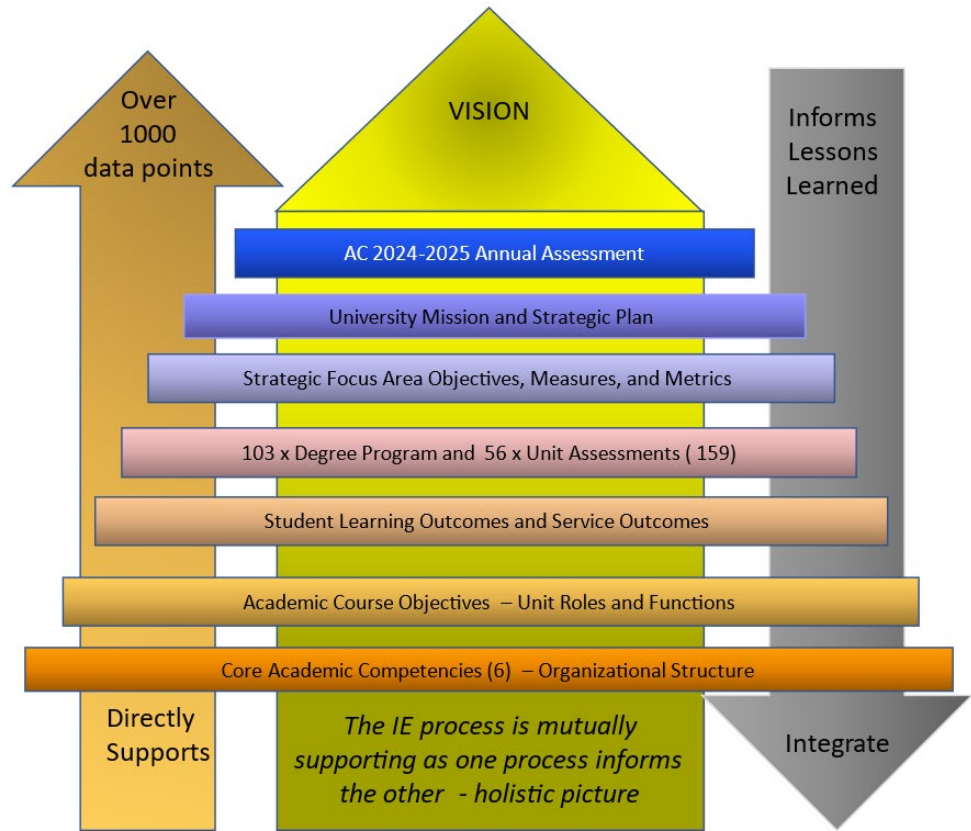
Institution-level Assessment Activities. As Northwestern closes in on completing its eighth iteration of the institution-wide assessment process (for all strategic focus areas, academic programs, administrative support services, and academic and student support services), assessments enable the analytical comparison of results between the current year and the last measurement, as well as against established targets. (Some metrics are assessed annually, with the remainder evaluated on a two-year cycle.) The study of these results forms the foundation for developing executable action plans focused on improving 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. 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 2025 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 provide 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, specifically in 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 2024-2025 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, alumni, 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.

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

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.

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 focus on providing a student experience in which every student is supported, connected, and prepared for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

In pursuit of its strategic vision, Northwestern State University has demonstrated unwavering dedication to enhancing all aspects of the student experience. During the 2024–2025 academic year, this commitment was reflected through a series of impactful initiatives led by the Division of Student Experience. Key advancements included the development and implementation of the Strategic Enrollment Plan and enhanced communication and educational tools such as Campus ESP, Vector Solutions, and SUNY SCI system resources, alongside the expansion and optimization of student spaces to better meet the evolving needs of the campus community.

The Student Experience encompasses five areas of activities:

- Achieving and maintaining optimal enrollments.
- Supporting enrollment and student success.
- Fostering student engagement through co-curricular activities.
- Enhancing students' second-year experience.
- Enhancing holistic health and safety of students.

Except for enrollment data, most metrics (Table 2) were assessed using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNLSSI), administered spring every other year (2021, 2023, 2025) 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 their *satisfaction* with items. (Higher scores represent higher importance or higher satisfaction.) Data collection occurred in spring 2025; Northwestern State University achieved a 13% response rate to the RNLSSI, the second highest of the UL System institutions.

Numerical values are not comparable from item to item or year to year. However, results from the local Spring 2025 administration of the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) show measurable improvement in student satisfaction across all items from AC 2022-2023 to AC 2024-2025. In addition, the institutional scores for Spring 2025 were higher than the UL System averages and the national norms for similar institutions; all but three averages for the ULS and three for the national norm (out of 45 items) were significantly higher at the $p < .001$ level. Students reported feeling welcomed on campus and confident in their ability to access the resources necessary for academic and personal success.

Table 2
Metrics for The Student Experience

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	The Student Experience Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
61%	70%	71%	<i>Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 2nd year</i>	73%*
48%	48%	56%	<i>Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 3rd year</i>	61%*
43%	46%	45%	<i>Graduation rates (SACSCOC-aligned)</i>	53%*
1,020	1,067	1,059	<i>Enrollment per freshman class, per year</i>	1,300
3,063	2,905	3,112	<i>Enrollment on Natchitoches campus</i>	3,700
9,389	8,847	8,523	<i>Overall Northwestern State University enrollment</i>	11,000*
5.99		6.17	<i>Satisfaction with support services and resources)</i>	6.3
5.67		5.86	<i>Responsive and helpful staff (Student Centeredness)</i>	6.3
5.72		6.06	<i>Understanding of University policies and procedures</i>	6.3
80%	87.8%	83.7%	<i>Percentage of graduates working within 6 months of graduation</i>	80%*
5.60		5.80	<i>On-campus facilities satisfaction survey</i>	6.3
4,909	6,423	7,079	<i>Number of students involved in co-curricular activities</i>	7,000
24,933	22,060	25,484.5	<i>Hours students engage in volunteer community service</i>	25,000**
20,194	23,376	39,445	<i>Number of students & stakeholders using career services platform</i>	11,000
	105	68	<i>Number of 1st year students participating in living-learning communities</i>	TBD
	17	26	<i>Number of eligible 2nd year students participating in leadership programming</i>	TBD
	27/49=55%	28/47=60%	<i>Percentage of students completing a leadership program who assume a peer leadership role within one academic year</i>	TBD
	42/49=86%	43/47=91%	<i>Satisfaction with 1st year leadership programs</i>	TBD
156	196	297	<i>Number of health-related programs and services</i>	125
6.00		6.19	<i>Satisfaction with health-safety related support programs</i>	6.3
5.36		5.56	<i>Safety and security satisfaction survey</i>	6.3

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2022-2023 are reflected on the far left with AC 2023-2024 to the right and AC 2024-2025 to the far right. *Blue italicized text was assessed in 2024-2025.* 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.

*Serves as Student Achievement Criterion.

** Total for volunteer and professional service hours

Five objectives support The Student Experience:

Objective 1:

Utilize strategic and sustainable practices to achieve and maintain optimal 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 continued to improve despite significant growth from fall 2022-2023 (61%) to fall 2023-2024 (70%). The fall 2023 to fall 2024 persistence rate increased to 71%, which did not meet the target of 73%.

Analysis:

Although in recent years NSU has faced retention challenges, AC 2024-2025 maintained retention rates for first-year to second-year students. The NSU retention rate for full-time first to second year students in fall 2023 was 9.27 percentage points higher than fall 2022, and with the fall 2024 cohort, slightly rising by 0.45 percentage points. The Faculty Led Assistance in My Education (FLAME) program was developed last cycle as a cross-curricular initiative to assist with tutoring services and was enhanced in fall 2024 with additional academic areas, increasing its reach across academic programs.

Decision:

The Director of Enrollment Management will develop and implement strategies, as outlined in the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan, to address two key challenges affecting retention: financial constraints and scheduling inefficiencies. These strategies are expected to:

- Improve education surrounding financial aid, bill payment, and options to assist students with larger balances owed to the University.
- Develop an early warning detection system based on student achievement accessible to faculty and staff to alert advisors, department heads, and administration of lower grades, financial issues, absences, and other retention related issues.
- Explore adding new Living Learning Communities to foster better social support within student groupings.
- Build a more expansive Parent Portal through Campus ESP to assist parents with decisions to help their students in real time.
- Create more options for face-to-face modality of classes offered to first-and second-year students to foster better support.

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

The persistence of students from first to third year increased significantly ($p < .001$) from 48.37% for the fall 2021 cohort ($n = 1,135$) to 56.20% for the fall 2022 cohort ($n = 879$) but did not meet the target of 61%.

Analysis:

This metric is like the full-time first to second year retention increase, and the percentages are starting to compound with growth over time. In response to modified admission requirements throughout Louisiana, the University has implemented initiatives such as FLAME (Faculty Led Assistance in My Education) and Beyond Graduation to create support systems for students. Through FLAME, students receive academic help from professors in their area of expertise. Beyond Graduation serves a nine-parish area to help students from recruitment to graduation. The Beyond Graduation cohort is now 759 students strong, an increase from 192 in AC 2023-2024. Financial Aid staff consistently meet with all new students attending Freshman Connection (orientation) concerning financial obligations, responsible borrowing, and financial aid options. Through the efforts of initiatives like these, persistence of students from first to third year is expected to grow over the next few years.

Decision:

The Director of Enrollment Management will develop and implement strategies within the SEM Plan to deploy enrollment coaches in six academic areas of campus to assist with registration, holds, reenrollment, and student service-based issues. These strategies are expected to:

- Explore the creation of a sophomore experience, the students most susceptible to retention loss, to help foster community, support, and engagement past the first year.
- Refine early intervention plans for academically at-risk students, as mentioned in the first metric.
- Prioritize creating mentor programs, living learning communities, and successful academic mapping to aid students on their path to graduation through the Title III Grant: Elevate-U Program.

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%, while the Fall 2017 cohort's graduation rate fell to 44.63% (<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 2017 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 Student Experience increased the target to 53%. The target was not met in AC 2024-2025. A renewed focus on the implementation of the SEM Plan will ultimately help increase the graduation rate, and that will compound with time, much like first to third year retention.

Decision:

The Director of Enrollment Management will:

- Work with Department Heads on low graduation yielding programs to determine strategies to assist those students.
- Work with UL System and the company Graduation Alliance to identify and help “stop out” students resume at the University.
- Create initiatives focused on career readiness for juniors and seniors to promote engagement.

Metric:

4. Enrollment per freshman class per year

Findings:

The number of entering freshmen decreased from 1,067 in fall 2023 to 1,059 in fall 2024. This number included new students who first enrolled in the summer term and continued in the fall.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the class increased by 47 students, for a total of 1,067, and in AC 2024-2025, the class decreased by 8 students to 1,059. While this is only a slight decrease, the result falls short of the overall enrollment goal. Based on the analysis and utilizing the recommendations from an independent enrollment consultant contracted by the University, a SEM plan has been developed. The recommendation of the consultant is to shift the overall incoming class goal to 1,200 instead of 1,300 for a healthier baseline.

Decision:

- Create new recruiting territories for two recruiters instead of one in Northwest and Northeast Louisiana to place a more individualized focus in our key service regions.
- Target high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors with marketing campaigns to increase awareness to a younger demographic for earlier decisions.
- Create new scholarship packages for the new TOPS standard of 31 on the ACT.
- Enhance the engagement of Dual Enrollment initiatives through special visitation in high schools and campus visits.
- Explore implementing Common App at NSU to increase the application pool.
- Create a plan to move applicants through the enrollment funnel with a focus on the highest yielding group through strategic academic-based communication, specialized visitation days, and personalized communication.

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 2024 trended up by 207 students to 3,112, compared to fall 2023 with 2,905 students.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the goal was adjusted to 3,700 to reflect the current state of enrollment. 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 was

3,910 for fall 2023 and 3,751 for fall 2024. The reclassified number is a decrease from last year, however, the increase with those taking at least one Natchitoches based class was higher. Both numbers will continue to grow as new initiatives are implemented to increase the Natchitoches base of students.

Decision:

- Focus enrollment efforts on traditional face-to-face majors on the Natchitoches campus.
- Implement required academic advising through sophomore and junior years with a focus on face-to-face classes.
- Address auxiliary student concerns—such as the cost of housing, meal plans, and class-related materials—to help reduce the overall cost of attendance for students.
- The VPSE/DSA will collaborate with Athletics to develop new strategies for increasing student enrollment in face-to-face courses on the Natchitoches campus.
- Enhance Club Sports offerings to align with the interests and expectations of prospective students.

Metric:

6. Overall Northwestern State University enrollment

Findings:

Enrollment over all instructional sites and online was 8,523 in the fall of 2024. This was a decrease of 324 students from the fall of 2023 (8,847).

Analysis:

Overall Northwestern enrollment decreased by 324 students. Decreases may be attributed to the focus on Dual Enrollment in high school creating fewer years to retain, 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. In order to create positive trendlines, the SEM plan will need to be worked thoroughly over the next three years to achieve the needed results.

Decision:

- Increase scholarships in areas not covered by the Gallaspy Foundation.
- Focus on recruiting Northwest LA, Northeast LA, Central LA, and East Texas students to achieve the best return on investment.
- Work with Dual Enrollment matriculation programs and initiatives to cultivate students earlier in their high school years.
- Create more recruiting focused summer camp opportunities to aid in overall recruiting.
- Utilize Enrollment Coaches to add another layer of support in academic units.
- Leverage marketing and branding to develop customized, personalized communication plans for every stage of the enrollment funnel.

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.
- Local recruiting to meet local economic development strategies.
- Educate campus community about available services, such as accessibility and disability support, career counseling, job location, food pantry, faculty-led academic mentoring, and prior learning assessments.

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 2024-2025 RNLSSI Campus Services scale include library, computer labs, tutoring services, online access, career services, counseling services, and mentoring. The scale average ($M = 6.17/7$, $SD = 0.98$) was significantly above the average from AC 2022-2023 ($M = 5.99/7$, $SD = 1.09$, $p < .001$).

Analysis:

Northwestern improved significantly in overall student satisfaction for Campus Services compared to AC 2022-2023. Of the items reviewed, NSU improved in all eight; of these, six of the eight were statistically higher in AC 2024-2025. The average for each item was significantly higher than those for both the UL System and the RNL National Norm ($p < .001$).

Despite improving significantly overall ($p < .001$), the item, *Computers and/or Wi-Fi are adequate and accessible*, did not change significantly for students living on-campus. In AC 2022-2023, students living in the residence halls had the lowest satisfaction on this item ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 1.517$, $N = 232$), significantly below the other three groups; the average for the residence halls increased in AC 2024-2025, but did not change significantly ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.283$, $N = 235$, $p = .072$) and remained significantly lower than the other groups.

The item, *Counseling services are available if I need them* increased from 6.00/7 ($SD = 1.50$) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.19/7 ($SD = 1.39$, $p < .01$) in AC 2024-2025. Further analysis of this item, divided into five groups based on instructional delivery (*Completely in-person*; *Mostly in person*; *Half in-person*, *Half online*; *Mostly online*; and *Completely online*), found a significant difference between group means (one-way ANOVA, $p = .004$). A follow-up test with Tukey's HSD indicated that satisfaction among students enrolled completely online ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 3.116$, $N = 135$) was significantly lower than those enrolled half in-person and half online ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 2.059$, $N = 107$). Similarly, based on students' perception of the importance of this item, completely online students rated the availability of counseling services significantly less important ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 2.844$, $N = 136$) than those enrolled half in-person and half online ($M = 6.19$, $SD = 1.763$, $N = 104$). Although the importance scores indicate that online students may have lower expectations about the availability of counseling services they can utilize, their satisfaction scores indicate we may need to further address the needs of this group.

Decision:

- Counseling and Career Services will be separated to meet the unique needs of both the departments and the students utilizing the resources.

- Counseling Services will identify options for improving access to personal counseling.
- Career Services will develop a summer outreach program to develop the pipeline to NSU.
- Explore opportunities to have intentional conversations with students regarding majors and careers with community and industry stakeholders.

Metric:

2. Responsive and helpful staff

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Student Centeredness scale averaged 5.98/7 ($SD = 1.11$, $N =$) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.83/7 ($SD = 1.22$, $p < .01$).

The RNLSSI item within Campus Life scale, *Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual*, increased from 2022-2023 ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.81$), averaging 5.49/7 ($SD = 1.60$, $p < .001$).

Combining the five items results in a significant increase from a score of 5.66/7 ($SD = 1.25$, $N = 466$) in AC 2022-2023 to a mean score of 5.86/7 ($SD = 1.10$, $N = 353$, $p = .008$) for AC 2024-2025.

Analysis:

Each of the five individual items from the RNLSSI in this metric increased in student satisfaction between AC 2022-2023 and AC 2024-2025. The only increase that was not statistically significant was for the item, *Students are made to feel welcome here*, which was, nevertheless, a campus strength.

Previous analyses of the item, *Residence Hall staff are concerned about me as an individual*, did not distinguish between students who lived in a residence hall and those who did not. It is difficult to interpret the responses of students who reported that they did not live in the dorms. For instance, students who reported owning their home had the highest average score in AC 2022-2023 ($M = 5.61$, $SD = 1.706$, $N = 76$) and in AC 2024-2025 ($M = 6.06$, $SD = 1.467$, $N = 52$), despite the fact this category of student did not interact with Residence Hall staff. For this reason, the nonresident responses were excluded from the analysis.

Although individuals who lived in the Residence Hall were the group least satisfied with the Residence Hall staff in both AC 2022-2023 ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.83$, $N = 217$) and AC 2024-2025 ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.77$, $N = 236$), this represented a significant increase (independent samples t -test, $p = .005$), indicating that the performance of Residence Hall staff had improved.

Decision:

- Facilitate Customer Service Training initiatives across campus.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and revise content presented at the residential community meetings.
- Implement a comprehensive professional development program for staff and student employees.
- Coordinate student focus groups to gain a better understanding of student needs.

Metric:

3. Understanding of University policies and procedures

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, University Policies and Procedures were evaluated using two scales on the RNLSSI, plus one item each from Campus Climate and Campus Life scales. Student satisfaction increased significantly on every item.

- Responses to the Registration Effectiveness scale (processes and procedures, billing policies, class registration, and convenient times) averaged 5.98/7 ($SD = 1.03$) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.81/7 ($SD = 1.16$) in AC 2022-2023.
- Responses to the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale (five items addressing admissions and financial aid) indicate a mean satisfaction of 5.89/7 ($SD = 1.23$) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.65/7 ($SD = 1.38$) in AC 2022-2023.
- Responses to the statement, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, on the Campus Life scale averaged 6.13 ($SD = 1.29$) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.95/7 ($SD = 1.46$) in AC 2022-2023.
- The item, *I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus* from the Campus Climate scale averaged 5.66 ($SD = 1.62$) in AC 2024-2025 compared to 5.47/7 ($SD = 1.75$) in AC 2022-2023.

Analysis:

Clear and student-friendly policies and procedures play a vital role in student satisfaction, success, and retention. Streamlining policy has been a key objective within the Student Experience since the inception of the strategic plan. While progress has been made, additional efforts are needed to fully achieve this goal. We are, however, making significant strides in this area.

Comparing AC 2024-2025 to AC 2022-2023, the Registration Effectiveness scale increased significantly ($p < .001$). All four items, *Registration processes and procedures are convenient*, *Billing policies are reasonable*, *I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts*, and *I am able to take care of college-related business at times that are convenient for me*, all increased slightly. The recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale increased significantly. This scale rose by .34 points, 5.65/7 ($SD = 1.38$) in AC 2022-2023 to 5.89/7 ($SD = 1.23$, $p < .001$) in AC 2024-2025.

The average for *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, increased by 0.18 points, 5.95/7 ($SD = 1.46$) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.13/7 ($SD = 1.29$, $p < .01$) in AC 2024-2025. A comprehensive revision of the Student Code of Conduct in AC 2024-2025, along with the creation of an accompanying flow chart, as well as facilitated student focus groups, may have impacted student satisfaction in this service area.

These results indicate systematic improvement in students' understanding of University policies across a wide variety of activities affecting the ways students interact with administrative staff in handling recruitment, financial aid, and registration. Combining these 11 items results in a score of 6.06/7 ($SD = 0.952$, $N = 333$) for 2024-2025, a significant increase compared to 5.85/7 ($SD = 1.12$, $N = 496$, $p = .002$) for AC 2022-2023.

Decision:

- Fully implement a policy management process to review existing policies and procedures that impact students.
- Enhance financial aid counseling opportunities throughout the undergraduate experience since this appears to have improved students' awareness of this service.
- The strategic enrollment plan will incorporate internal and external communication plans regarding tuition and fees.
- Develop programs and awareness campaigns to educate students on the Student Code of Conduct and policies.
- Leverage learning platforms (e.g., SUNYSCI, Vector) to enhance students' understanding of University expectations, policies, and procedures.

Metric:

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

Findings:

Each semester, all graduating students receive the First Destination Survey in Handshake. To be consistent with NACE reporting standards, this metric uses the responses submitted by recipients awarded associate and bachelor's degrees in the period from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. By the end of June 2025, 573 of 1479 undergraduate degree recipients (38.7%) had completed the survey. Of those, 461 (80.5%) indicated they were working (i.e., employed, continuing their education, or serving in the military). An additional 150 participants saved but did not submit their survey; of these, 145 indicated they were working.

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 simply save their document without formally submitting. Thus, both submitted and in progress surveys are included in our analysis.

The Spring survey closes each Assessment Cycle on October 5, six months post-graduation. 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 of submitted and in progress surveys for AC 2024-2025 ($723/1479 = 48.9\%$) was statistically higher than that for AC 2023-2024 ($371/1401 = 26.5\%$). This is considered a *high* response rate. The proportion of respondents in the *working* category decreased (but not significantly) from AC 2023-2024 ($258/294 = 87.8\%$) to AC 2024-2025 ($605/723 = 83.7\%$, two proportion z test, $p = .100$).

Decision:

- Incorporate the First Destination Survey into Capstone courses each semester prior to graduation.

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 2024-2025, the RNLSSI item, *overall, the campus is well-maintained*, was used to measure satisfaction with campus facilities from item #44 from the Campus Climate scale. The mean score increased from 5.60/7 ($SD = 1.61$) in AC 2022-2023 to 5.80/7 ($SD = 1.49$; $p < .01$) in AC 2024-2025. Satisfaction is above both the University of Louisiana System norm (5.54/7; $SD = 1.64$; $p < .001$) and the national norm 5.63/7 ($SD = 1.55$; $p < .05$).

An additional local survey from the Event Management System (EMS) assessing facilities in the Student Union is conducted annually. Of 23 entities answering the survey, 16 represented Recognized Student Organizations. The EMS survey for AC 2024-2025 (Table 3) shows total satisfaction for reserving facilities in the Student Union. Data for Student Union utilization indicates high traffic in the building throughout the year. 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:

Overall, the campus is well-maintained, changed from AC 2022-2023 (5.6/7; $SD = 1.61$) to AC 2024-2025 ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.49$), a satisfaction increase of 0.20 points.

During AC 2024-2025, in the Student Union: the Title IX Office moved into a newly renovated suite, the Parenting Room was completed, three meeting rooms on the 3rd floor received new carpeting, room 312 was converted from a storage room back to a meeting room, room 320 was upgraded with a new A/V system, new carpeting was installed throughout the Counseling Center, a teleconferencing unit was installed in Room 314, and paint was refreshed in high traffic areas throughout the building.

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	8.7% 2	86.96% 20	4.35% 1	23	3.91
The contract, rules, and booking details were clear and easy to understand	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	95.65% 22	4.35% 1	23	4.0
Pricing for the venue was reasonable.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	43.48% 10	56.52% 13	23	4.0
Confirmation for my event was received in a reasonable time.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	21.74% 5	73.91% 17	4.35% 1	23	3.77
My experience with the booking staff was satisfactory.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0% 0	95.65% 22	4.35% 1	23	4.0

Students, faculty, and staff appear satisfied with campus maintenance based on improvements in both facility maintenance ratings and increased facility usage patterns. However, comments within the RNLSSI indicate that despite these overall improvements, several campus-wide areas still require attention.

Specifically, in written comments respondents identified concerns regarding campus roads, parking facilities, lighting systems, public restrooms, elevator functionality, classroom technology, and sidewalk hazards. These identified deficiencies suggest that while general maintenance satisfaction has increased, targeted improvements in these areas would further enhance the campus environment and address remaining user concerns. Addressing these issues could help maintain a positive trajectory in facility satisfaction while ensuring comprehensive campus maintenance standards across all areas of operation.

Decision:

- The Cabinet and facilities manager will utilize RNLSSI findings concerning student satisfaction with facilities to drive improvement.
- 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.

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 2024-2025, 7,079 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 2024-2025, RSOs reserved on-campus facilities 2,117 times through the Event Management System (Table 4). Student bookings increased by 193 from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025. The number of meetings, events, and activities across campus continues to increase.

In AC 2024-2025, 100 Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) and Club Sports opportunities were available to students. RSOs hosted 563 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

Table 4

Event Management System Reservations for Recognized Student Organizations

EMS Data	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total Bookings (all EMS facilities)	1,863	1,924	2,117
Estimated Attendance at Booking	65,655	65,667	77,211

attendance at campus events was 17,272 students utilizing Presence swipes and event rosters (e.g., Esports 319, Food Pantry 405, Athletics 1,260, SGA 802, UPC 1,102, CID 214, and FYE 1,814), based on 2,489 unique participants. Greek organizations grew slightly in new members from 230 in AC 2023-2024 to 234 in AC 2024-2025. Organization rosters included 1,247 students (823 were unique). However, this does not consider the number of students involved in athletic programs (375), performance groups, RSOs that do not use the Presence system, or activities and events where attendance is not taken.

Analysis:

While campus bookings increased in AC 2024-2025, 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 activity fees are put to good use as indicated on the RNLSI (item #45 Campus Life Scale) AC 2024-2025 is also reassuring.

Decision:

- Broaden the definition of co-curricular involvement to include all forms of student engagement across campus.
- Enhance data collection efforts by encouraging campus departments and RSOs to consistently use the new online portal platform (Suitable) for tracking student experience events and programs.
- Deliver high-quality co-curricular programs and events that address a diverse range of topics, enriching the overall student experience.
- Conduct a talent inventory of staff and alumni to support student organization programming and foster member development.
- Develop leadership initiatives for RSOs that build community, promote collaboration and communication, and cultivate critical thinking and responsible decision-making, ultimately recognizing and advancing meaningful, individualized student engagement.

Metric:**3. *Hours students involved in volunteer community service*****Findings:**

Community and public service hours involve both volunteer service and required professional service. The Student Experience coordinates volunteer service activities. Northwestern State University students, including those in RSO's, Greeks, freshmen, and First Year Experience, and student-athletes volunteered for 25,484.5 community service hours in AC 2024-2025 compared to 22,060 community service hours in 2023-2024.

The Student Experience offers two campus-wide community service days, the [1 of 7] Service Kickoff (544) in the fall and the V. L. Roy Day of Service (185 hours) in the spring for a combined total of 729 hours. In AC 2024-2025, over 52 student volunteers worked 931 hours in the campus food pantry, serving 405 students who experienced food insecurity.

Analysis:

Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) can improve their reporting, as information is missing from many organizations. In addition, students participate in service initiatives independently, which is not often reported. Even with data missing, Northwestern students clearly engage in community service at a high rate.

Decision:

- Develop a system to accurately track and record service hours for both student organizations and individual students.
- Create and launch a student engagement toolkit to help students identify impactful learning experiences that support leadership growth and civic involvement.
- Expand opportunities for students to engage with the broader community through public and community service initiatives.
- Establish a recognition program for students who complete 100 hours of community service.

Metric:

4. Number of students and employers using Handshake

Findings:

As of June 2025, 39,445 NSU students, alumni and employers are using the Handshake platform:

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Employers	9,783	11,685	14,719
Undergraduate Students	7,949	9,098	17,625
Graduate Students	600	687	3,171
Alumni	1,862	1,906	3,930
TOTAL:	20,194	23,376	39,445

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. When they register for classes, the University loads undergraduate and graduate students into the system. However, students must activate their accounts to use the features.

For AC 2024-2025, our career center approved 3,396 new employers within the Handshake platform.

Activity for 2023-2024 showed 23,376 students, alumni, and employees using Handshake. For 2024-2025 the number of Handshake users increased by 16,069, totaling 39,445.

Students value the connection between classroom learning, as measured by the *Campus Services* scale. This area showed improvement, with satisfaction rising from 6.07/7 in the previous assessment cycle to 6.26/7. Further focus on strengthening this classroom-to-career connection will be essential for enhancing both student satisfaction and retention rates.

Decision:

- Assess facility capacity and infrastructure requirements to accommodate expanded Graduate and Career Fairs due to anticipated growth in participation and employer attendance.

- Career Services will collaborate with Academic Affairs to integrate career development services directly into classroom instruction and curriculum.
- Career Services will partner with local employers to expand employment and internship opportunities for students within the surrounding community.
- Create a campaign to grow the Handshake program as students progress.
- Career Services will collaborate with Alumni & Development to leverage alumni networks for mentorship, job placement, and career advancement opportunities.

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 1st 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)/Ambassadors, Scholars' College at University Place, and the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) for CAPA majors living in Varnado Hall. In AC 2023-2024, 105 first-year students participated in a living-learning community (LLC), establishing the baseline.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, The Student Experience recommended expanding the LLCs to meet the interests of the diverse student body. One component of this decision was to integrate Activity #2 of the Title III grant to expand those offerings, focusing on low-income and first-generation students, though the Title III LLCs are not limited to those populations. Due to the delay in receiving and initiating the grant and staffing issues at the beginning of the award period, groundwork is incomplete. Therefore, in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met.

Nevertheless, Title III-directed LLCs have been established and are open for Fall 2025 in conjunction with Housing. The Student Engagement Coordinator has leveraged several student events over the

course of the spring and early summer (such as Freshman Connection) to recruit participants. The Title III grant website provides information about the LLCs (<https://www.nsula.edu/elevate-u/living-learning-communities/>). The Coordinator will work with Housing over the summer to prepare communal spaces for the Title III LLCs in anticipation of Fall 2025.

Decision:

- A cohesive marketing plan is needed for all LLCs so that students are aware of the options available to them. A marketing plan would allow Title III to better align with Student Experience in its development and promotion of LLCs to address the interests and experiences of NSU's diverse student body.
- The Title III team will participate in appropriate student events to promote its LLCs as well as utilize its website (<https://www.nsula.edu/elevate-u/>), social media channels, and the Family Connection Newsletter to promote awareness of its LLCs.

Metric:

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

Findings:

The initial PLP cohort of 49 students from the 2023-2024 academic year served as the baseline group; these students are now in their second year during the 2024-2025 academic year. Leadership programming is defined as Leadership NSU and as a mentor within the PLP mentoring program. Of those 49, 14 students attended Leadership NSU as second-year students; 12 were mentors within the PLP mentoring program.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the recommendation was made to integrate Activity #2 of the Title III grant to expand the first- and second-year experience. This makes sense, given the student engagement focus of the grant and that of Student Experience. However, due to the delay in receiving and initiating the grant and staffing issues that have persisted in the first year of the grant, communication and misalignment have plagued the grant. Consequently, neither the comprehensive review of student leadership development opportunities nor a clear definition of "eligible second-year students" has been achieved, the latter of which remains elusive to define in the context of both traditional and transfer students as well as credits/hours versus chronological time. Therefore, the full, formal development of a leadership track has not been achieved. Accordingly, in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met.

This does not mean work has not been done to develop a leadership track. The Title III Student Engagement Coordinator met with the Vice President for the Student Experience in the spring and initiated a review of models for programming. The Coordinator also initiated a leadership-focused program within Title III known as The Elevate-U Rise to Leadership Program. The first level of the program is Resident Mentors (<https://www.nsula.edu/elevate-u/resident-mentors/>). The Resident Mentors are meant to be facilitators attached to the Title III LLCs. Therefore, despite the target not being met, groundwork has been laid. As of June 2025, the Title III Student Engagement Coordinator has announced her resignation, and the Title III team will be reduced to the Program Director and the newly-appointed Principal Investigator/Project Director.

Decision:

- A realignment of the efforts between the grant team and the Office of the Student Experience will occur.

- Review current leadership opportunities with an eye towards defining “leadership programming.” This will also facilitate the effort to define “eligible second-year students.”
- Integrate The Elevate-U Rise to Leadership Program into the Office of the Student Experience for wider promotion and recruitment, with a focus on the second-year student experience.

Metric:

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

Findings:

The 2024-2025 PLP cohort of 49 students served as the study population. A comprehensive year-end survey was administered to students who completed both SAHE 1020 and SAHE 1030, with 47 participants responding. Among these respondents, 28 reported taking on leadership roles during the academic year. This annual survey collects detailed descriptions of peer leadership positions and responsibilities that students have undertaken throughout the year.

Analysis:

The 28 students who assumed a peer leadership role is 60% of the AC 2024-2025 PLP cohort which increased from 55% for the AC 2023-2024 PLP cohort. As of June 2025, 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.

While not an explicit part of this metric, the Title III grant team initiated a leadership-focused program during AC 2024-2025 known as The Elevate-U Rise to Leadership Program. The first level of the program is Resident Mentors (<https://www.nsula.edu/elevate-u/resident-mentors/>). The Resident Mentors are meant to be facilitators attached to the Title III LLCs. This program is in its first year, so little data exists. However, currently three (3) Resident Mentors are in the program.

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

Decision:

- ElevateU staff will survey sophomores in the beginning of the fall 2025 semester.
- 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.
- While it is in its infancy and has not yet yielded usable data, The Elevate-U Rise to Leadership Program should be considered for the population studied by this metric.

Metric:

4. *Satisfaction with first year leadership programs*

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025 PLP cohort of 49 was used as the population. At the year's end, a comprehensive survey was administered to those who 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. In AC 2024-2025, 91% of respondents indicated 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.

Decision:

- Explore NSSE as a potential data source and framework.
- Update and implement expanded survey to broaden the first-year population.
- Identify appropriate survey delivery methods and timing.

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 2024-2025 Northwestern sponsored 297 health-related programs compared to 196 in AC 2023-2024. This metric quantifies events, programs, resources, and services; most are provided by departments and Recognized Student Organizations in The Student Experience division.

Analysis:

Northwestern understands the strong link between health and student success and has consistently expanded its health-related programming each year. The university offers a wide range of presentations, awareness events, and activities addressing topics such as hazing prevention, mental health and well-being, good sleep habits, concussion safety, fitness, suicide prevention, self-care, international travel safety, campus and residential safety, sexual assault advocacy and awareness, alcohol and substance abuse, self-defense, financial wellness, sexual health, stress management, internet safety, food insecurity, trauma support, conflict resolution, sun safety and healthy hydration, and healthy eating.

A standout initiative is the annual NSU Wellness Fest, held each November. This event brings together over 40 campus and community partners to offer free health screenings, resources, and services to students, faculty, and staff. More than 350 students participated in the most recent Wellness Fest.

Decision:

- Expand and enhance the annual NSU Wellness Fest by incorporating additional services, resources, and interactive components to further support the well-being of students, faculty, and staff.
- Collaborate with Sodexo Campus Dining and the regional Sodexo dietician to offer more nutritious meal options in dining facilities and to actively promote healthy eating habits across campus through education and outreach.
- Strengthen partnerships with community organizations such as Mind Over Matter and Collegiate Recovery to expand available resources, explore collaborative initiatives, and pursue grant opportunities that support health and wellness programming for the NSU community.
- Assess and reimagine current university committees with a focus on developing new and innovative health-related initiatives that align with evolving student needs and campus priorities, such as Swipe Out Hunger and the Board of Regents Hunger Free Campus Designation Task Force.
- Launch a targeted marketing campaign to increase visibility and engagement with *The NSU Pantry* initiative, highlighting its role in supporting food security and student wellness.
- Fully integrate Vector Solutions modules across campus to educate students on hazing prevention, sexual assault prevention, alcohol and drug misuse prevention, wellness and safety, career readiness and personal development, equipping students with comprehensive knowledge and skills for personal and academic success.

Metric:

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

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, satisfaction with the counseling component of support programs was measured by the RNLSSI item, *Counseling services are available if I need them*, from the Campus Services scale. The mean score increased from 6.00/7 ($SD = 1.50$) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.19/7 ($SD = 1.39$) in AC 2024-2025, a significant increase ($p < .01$). NSU's average on this measure remained higher than the national average for Four-Year Public institutions ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.54$, $p < .001$) and the ULS average ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.51$, $p < .001$).

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. Monitoring satisfaction in this area will help us maintain high quality service for our students. A collaborative partnership with the Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development contributed to counseling services, with licensed, professional counselors assisting with the caseload throughout AC 2024-2025.

Decision:

- Counseling staff and leadership will explore strategies to increase student access to counseling services, particularly during high-demand and stressful periods.
- Review and revise the mental health component within University Studies 1000 to better prepare and inform first-year students.
- Redesign the Counseling Center layout to maximize space efficiency and foster a more inviting, accessible environment for students.

Metric:

3. Safety and security satisfaction

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Safety and Security scale averaged 5.56/7 ($SD = 1.27$) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.36/7 ($SD = 1.36$; $p < .001$) for AC 2022-2023.

Analysis:

All items in this metric increased slightly. In terms of importance, the RNLSSI item, *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, from the Safety and Security Scale, ranked 1st of 45 items as the most important to students, with a mean of 6.70/7. Satisfaction increased from 5.75/7 ($SD = 1.39$) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.01/7 ($SD = 1.22$) in AC 2024-2025; the importance to students is high and satisfaction is low and does not meet student expectations, as indicated by the gap of 0.69. While data indicates that safety and security is a challenge, the item, *Security staff respond quickly to calls for assistance* from the same scale, also increased in satisfaction from 5.89/7 ($SD = 1.47$) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.15/7 ($SD = 1.28$) in AC 2024-2025. Increased satisfaction might be attributed to the implementation of the Campus Shield App, which provides students with a timely reporting mechanism to University Police. The item, *the amount of student parking space on campus is adequate*, also increased slightly from 4.72/7 ($SD = 2.00$) in AC 2022-2023 to 4.81/7 ($SD = 1.96$) in AC 2024-2025; however, students who live in the residence halls are significantly less satisfied with the amount of parking than those who live off-campus ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.914$, $N = 235$). The item, *Parking lots are well-lighted and secure*, also increased from 5.19/7 ($SD = 1.72$) in AC 2022-2023 to 5.38/7 ($SD = 1.65$; $p < .01$). Parking issues are unexplained.

Decision:

- Campus Safety leadership, University Cabinet, and senior administration will receive RNLSSI findings to develop strategies for addressing identified safety and security concerns across campus.
- The University Safety Committee will assess campus lighting and provide recommendations for improvements.
- The University Parking and Traffic Committee will evaluate the availability and allocation of parking spaces on campus and vehicle registration.
- University Affairs, The Student Experience, and the Student Government Association will collaborate to address safety and security concerns, utilizing focus groups, surveys, and the University Safety Committee.

Comprehensive Summary

Our highest priority in the Division of The Student Experience is supporting students and ensuring they have the best possible experience during their time at NSU. Our dedicated staff are committed to removing barriers to success and enriching campus life by offering a wide range of activities, leadership opportunities, services, resources, and upgraded facilities that complement and support the academic environment. Whether it provides tools for classroom success, access to resources, promoting holistic health and safety, or fostering meaningful connections and engagement outside the classroom, our mission is to actively serve, support, and empower every student throughout their journey at NSU.

In AC 2024-2025, the division focused on processes that improve the student experience through three key operational areas: enhancing communication by providing clear, consistent, and proactive messaging across all student touchpoints to reduce confusion and stress while improving access to

support services; optimizing facilities by creating welcoming physical spaces and environments that support student well-being and foster a sense of belonging on campus; and streamlining departments by restructuring operations and service delivery models to eliminate barriers and better align with student needs. The development of prevention strategies and programs promoting emotional well-being remains a top priority for student affairs practitioners.

Northwestern State University has undertaken a focused effort to improve student retention, graduation rates, and overall enrollment through the implementation of a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan. While the institution has experienced progress in critical areas, continued challenges underscore the need for sustained, targeted initiatives. NSU plans to enhance financial education and billing resources, develop an early warning system to identify students at risk, expand Living Learning Communities, strengthen parent engagement through a more comprehensive Parent Portal, and increase the availability of face-to-face courses for freshmen and sophomores.

The path to achieving long-term enrollment and graduation targets will require consistent implementation of the SEM Plan, collaborative engagement across campus, and an unwavering commitment to supporting students from recruitment through graduation. The institution will realign recruiter territories for more focused outreach, expand marketing efforts to younger high school students, develop new scholarship opportunities for high-achieving applicants, increase dual enrollment engagement through campus visits, and implement communication strategies designed to drive applicants through the enrollment funnel.

Northwestern State University's path to realizing its strategic vision requires an unwavering dedication to enhancing every dimension of the student experience. Students flourish through our collective commitment to continuous improvement across academic excellence, emotional well-being, physical health, social connection, and comprehensive support services. By fostering seamless collaboration among all departments and entities that serve students, we will deliver integrated programs, services, and experience

Student Government Association

The Student Government Association (SGA) focused on several initiatives during AC 2024-2025, which included 1) student technology, 2) campus engagement, 3) transparency, and 4) campus safety. The Student Government Association worked collaboratively with the STAT Committee to ensure that student dollars were being spent on technology projects that would directly benefit them. The SGA implemented an Event Planning Checklist Template to allow the RSOs on campus to have an optimized way to plan events. We increased transparency by furthering the advertisement for our open SGA meetings as well as hosting a forum that allowed students the opportunity to address their concerns with the university. SGA also aided in passing a student fee increase by informing students on the benefits of the increase and providing detailed information on the groups that it would benefit.

The safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors was a high priority for 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 still a top priority of the Student Government Association to be more of an advocate and voice for students. In the 2025-2026 assessment cycle, innovation, advocacy, and execution will be top priorities for SGA. Initiatives such as introducing new programming, creating collaborative opportunities with the student body, outreaching to diverse groups on campus to solve problems, and implementing measures to allow students to hold SGA accountable to the promises that they make are all sure to continue to propel Student Government Association at Northwestern State University to greater heights!

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).

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, which evaluates 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.

Student Achievement Criteria and Outcomes as reflected on the University website:

<https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>

Northwestern disaggregates each criterion by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age. The disaggregation categories align with the University's mission, the University of Louisiana's Strategic

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 2028
Fall Enrollment	11,000	8,000	9,389	8847	* 8523				
1 st Fall to 2 nd Fall Retention	73%	60%	61%	71%	71%				
1 st Fall to 3 rd Fall Retention	61%	48%	48%	48%	56%				
Baccalaureate Completers	1,345	1,045	1,445	1,308	1,267				
Graduate Completers	315	225	309	298	304				
** KSCI ** SACSCOC Graduation Rate	53%	40%	43%	47%	45%				
Licensure Pass Rate	75-100%	50-98%	83-100%	82-100%	** 47-100%				
Job Placement Rates***	80%	70%	78%	80%	85%				

Source: nsula.edu/oir/studentachievement/

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

Notes:* AC 2024-2025 Threshold of Acceptability adjusted based on twenty years of historical enrollment data. Before adjustment, the Threshold of Acceptability was 9,000. Source: NSU Factbook.

** Northwestern's overall first-time pass rate is 92% (472/512). Nursing (DNP-NA) 79% (11/14), three-year average 84%. Nursing (MSN-NP) 89% (70/79), three-year average 86%. Vet Tech 47% (8/17), three-year average 67%.

*** Based on previous graduation cohort.

Framework, and the Board of Regents' Master Plan, all of which strive to increase educational access for all citizens of Louisiana. A standardized approach describes each criterion. Each is defined with the source noted, the specific application to Northwestern provided, the goal for Fall 2028, and the target and outcome identified.

Fall Enrollment. The number of students enrolled in the fall at postsecondary institutions. Students reported are those enrolled in courses creditable toward a degree or other recognized postsecondary credential; students enrolled in classes that are part of a vocational or occupational program, including those enrolled in off-campus or extension centers; and high school students taking regular college courses for credit. **IPEDS Glossary Definition**

Goal. 11,000 Fall 2028.

Outcome. 8,523 Students for Fall 2024.

Table 6

First-Time Pass Rates on Professional Licensure Exams 2024-2025

Discipline	Exam Required prior to Employment	Entity Granting Licensure	Year	Goal	Threshold of acceptability	# Students taking Exam	# Students Meeting Goal	% Meeting Goal
Nursing (MSN & PMC APRN concentrations)	Certification exam administered by: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board, American Nurses Credentialing Center, National Certification Corporation, Pediatric Nursing Certification Board, or American Association of Critical-Care Nurses	LA State Board of Nursing	2024	80%	80%	69	57	82.6%
Nursing (DNP-NA)	National Certification Exam (NCE) by NBSCRNA	LA State Board of Nursing	2024	80%	80%	14	11	79% (3Y 84%)
Nursing (ASN, BSN; Pre-RN licensure concentrations)	NCLEX-RN	LA State Board of Nursing	2024 ASN BSN	90% 90%	80% 80%	105 183	103 177	98.09% 96.72%
Radiologic Sciences	American Registry of Radiologic Technologists Exam in Radiography	LA Radiologic Technology Board of Examiners	2024	100%	75%	48	40	83.33%
Veterinary Technology	Veterinary Technician National Examination	LA Board of Veterinary Medicine	2024	75%	50%	17	8	47% (3Y 67%)
Education	<i>Praxis</i> ® Subject Assessments—Principles of Learning & Teaching: exam that measures candidates' pedagogical knowledge.	LA Department of Education	2024	100%	98.00%	76	76	100%
						512	472	92%

Source: Louisiana Board of Nursing, Radiologic Technology Board of Examiners, the Board of Veterinary Medicine, and the Department of Education. Northwestern's overall first-time pass rate is 92% (472/512). Nursing (DNP-NA) 79% (11/14), three-year average 84%. Nursing (MSN-NP) 89% (70/79), three-year average 86%. Vet Tech 47% (8/17), three-year average 67%. Detailed Licensure Data is provided for AC 2024-2025 on the Institutional Effectiveness Website.

1st Fall to 2nd Fall Retention Rate. A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational [program](#) at an institution expressed as a percentage. For [four-year institutions](#), this is the percentage of first-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking [undergraduates](#) from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall. **IPEDS Glossary Definition**

Goal. 73.0%-Retained from Fall 2027 to Fall 2028.

Outcome. 71.0%-Retained from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024.

1st Fall to 3rd Fall Retention Rate. A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduate students' retention to the 3rd Fall from the cohort established for the 1st Fall-to-2nd Fall Retention rate metric. **IPEDS Glossary**

Goal. 61.0%-Retained from Fall 2027 to Fall 2028.

Outcome. 56.0%-Retained from Fall 2022 to Fall 2024.

Baccalaureate Completer/Grad Completer. A student who receives a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award. To be considered a completer, the degree/award must be conferred. **IPEDS Glossary**

Goal-Baccalaureate Completers. 1,345 in Academic Year 2027-2028.

Outcome-Baccalaureate Completers. 1,267 in Academic Year 2023-2024.

Goal-Graduate Completers. 315 in Academic Year 2027-2028.

Outcome-Graduate Completers. 304 in Academic Year 2023-2024.

Graduation Rate. (Note. The SACSCOC Graduation rate serves as Northwestern's **Key Student Completion Indicator** (KSCI). The SACSCOC Graduation rate is calculated based on the Annual Profile information (cohort size and number receiving a degree) that institutions provide to the Commission (as of spring 2018). **SACSCOC Definition**

Goal. 53% in Academic Year 2027-2028 (Fall 2020 cohort).

Outcome. 45% Academic Year 2023-2024 (Fall 2017 cohort).

Licensure. To receive, to apply to take or to take the examination required to receive, a local, State, or Federal license, or a nongovernmental certification required as a precondition for employment, or to perform certain functions in the States in which the educational program is offered, or to meet additional conditions that the institution knows or reasonably should know are generally needed to secure employment in a recognized occupation for which the program is represented to prepare students (Table 6). **Federal Regulation 34 CFR 668.50 Effective May 26, 2019**

Placement Rate. Placement rate is defined using the standards for career outcome rates approved by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in their *Standards and Protocols for the Collection and Dissemination of Graduating Students' Initial Career Outcomes Information for Undergraduates*. As such, the placement rate for this report will include the following graduate outcomes: employed, continuing their education, in the military, and volunteering within six months of graduation. (Each year's graduating class includes those students who complete degrees between the periods of July 1 to June 30 each year, a time consistent with degree completion reporting requirements established by the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) program. **NACE Definition**

This criterion, unlike the previous seven, lags behind because spring graduates have until October 30 to submit their First Destination surveys. In addition, closer analysis has indicated that a large number of graduates enter data into their profiles, but do not *submit* them. For instance, 61 Spring 2024 graduates have surveys *In Progress* which contain sufficient responses to raise the Working category from 53.8% to 83.8%. To maintain data reporting consistency, these results are not included in our analysis but are considered in decision making.

Source: US Bureau of Labor and First Destination Surveys

The 2023-2024 FDS yielded the following results:

- 84.6% Working, Continuing Education, Military or Volunteering (+4.6% from 2022-2023)
- 15.4% Still looking for employment
- 0% Not seeking employment

The breakdown by graduation cohort is in the chart below:

Job Placement Survey Results					
Graduation Cohort	Working	Still Looking	Not Seeking	Response Rate	# Student Responses
August 2023	52 (92.9%)	4 (7.1)	0 (0%)	19.4%	56/289
December 2023	71 (84.5%)	13 (15.5%)	0 (0%)	17.2%	84/489
May 2024	64 (53.8%)	17 (21.0%)	0 (0%)	14.4%	81/561
Overall	187 (84.6%)	34 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	16.5%	221/1339

Source: NSU First Destination Survey 2023-2024 results

Goal. Placement rate of 80% by 2027-2028.

Outcome. 84.6% in fall 2024.

The student achievement criteria outlined above guide the institution and ensure it is meeting 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 benchmarks are not consistently met, improvement plans are devised, implemented, and re-analyzed to support continuous improvement.

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). In AC 2024-2025, the Threshold of Acceptability was adjusted based on 20 years of historical enrollment data. Before adjustment, the Threshold of Acceptability was 9,000 based on pre-COVID enrollment. 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 secure employment upon graduation (licensure/job placement metrics) and thereby make a positive impact in the region, state, and nation.

Northwestern has taken several steps over the last 6-18 months to maximize its strategic planning and assessment activities:

Reviewed, updated, and assessed the strategic plan: The University has reviewed, updated, and reassessed its strategic plan to ensure it is aligned with its current goals and objectives. This involved a SWOT analysis, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and identifying new opportunities and challenges. The University completed the eighth cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and core competencies as part of *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2024-2025*. Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation allow 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 involves holding meetings, focus groups, and other forums for feedback and input.

Enhanced data collection and analysis: The University reviewed and refined its data collection and analysis methods to ensure that it gathers 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 constant 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, ensuring it provides high-quality programs and services to its students and stakeholders.

The Excellence in Assessment (EIA) Designation awarded to Northwestern State University of Louisiana demonstrates the university's strong commitment to assessment and its implementation of effective assessment practices to enhance student learning and program outcomes. The 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.

Strategic Focus Area 2–Academic Excellence

The Academic Excellence (AE) strategic focus area made substantive progress towards meeting AC 2024-2025 targets in all 10 metrics measured in this cycle. One or more results in seven of the 10 metrics exceed their targets. It is most encouraging to see the assessment of student learning outcomes in academic degree programs and certificates expand to include all 103 areas. Of the 320 metrics used to assess student learning outcomes, 277 (87%) were positive. Also, of the 537 measures used in this assessment, 428 (80%) were met.

As we enter AC 2025-2026 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 7).

Table 7
Metrics for Academic Excellence

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
86/103 (100% of eligible programs)		103/103 (100%)	<i>Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes to help drive effective and innovative instruction</i>	100% Degree and Certificate Programs
	<i>N > 102</i>		Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching	35-50
4.30/5 (C) 4.39/5 (I) (36% response rate)		4.37/5 (C) 4.46/5 (I) (26% response rate)	<i>Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness)</i>	4.5/5.0 (90%) (35.2% response rate)
	27.63		Average class size in University core courses	28
4.23/5 (C) 4.30/5 (I) (36% response rate)		4.28/5 (C) 4.37/5 (I) (24% response rate)	<i>Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses</i>	4.5/5.0 (90%) (42% response rate)
16/17		14/14	<i>Number of University core classes with a designated course steward</i>	99% of multi-section courses
270 44 Prof. Conf. Presenters		226 99 Prof. Conf. Presenters	<i>Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty</i>	300 80 Prof. Conf. Presenters
115 (44 G; 71 UG) Prof. Conf. Presenters 50 NSU Research Day		131 (98 G, 33 UG) Prof. Conf. Presenters 84 NSU Research Day	<i>Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting</i>	154 (20% increase)

Table 7 (cont.)
Metrics for Academic Excellence

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
	GRE Verbal: M = 150 (42%) GRE Quan. M = 147 (8%) LSAT: M = 148 (32%) MCAT: M = 492 (25%)	GRE Verbal: M = 150 (25%) GRE Quan. M = 147 (13%) LSAT: M = 149 (46%) MCAT: M = 495 (32%)	<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		4.61/5 4.61/5 4.70/5	<i>Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction representing quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., encouraged interactions between faculty and students; gave prompt feedback; and displayed an appropriate demeanor)</i>	Improve scores in courses below 4.5/5.0
	27 Faculty grants 69 Eps/Chairs 33 ULS attendees		Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.	45 Faculty Grants 70 EPs/Chairs
8% (N = 26)		12% (N = 37)	<i>Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants</i>	10% faculty (32 PIs)
	74		Number of rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies	42
132 press releases		32 press releases 91 faculty honorees	<i>Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service</i>	20 impactful events 50 press releases

Note: Outcomes for AC 2022-2023 are reflected on the far left with AC 2023-2024 to the right and AC 2024-2025 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2024-2025. 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.

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 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 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 the 2024-2025 Assessment Cycle, 100% (103/103) of 73 academic degrees and 30 certificate programs completed the annual assessment or reviewed their assessment plans, including two newer programs that had reached an appropriate size or age to be assessed.

Analysis:

Northwestern defines student learning outcomes for all degree and certificate programs. It measures how well these outcomes are achieved and provides evidence of seeking improvements based on analyzing the results moving forward. This validation of mission success reflects the hard work of the entire University community and demonstrates a genuine commitment to excellence.

On June 21, 2025, the University completed the eighth cycle of assessing its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and core competencies as part of Assessment Cycle (AC) 2024-2025, Making a Difference. Consistent, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation enable Northwestern to make informed strategic decisions, ultimately leading to institutional improvement. The assessment covers all six strategic focus areas: Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, Athletic Prominence, and the newly integrated Cultural Competence.

The 103 academic degree programs assessed in 2024-2025 generated 320 SLOs and 537 measures, averaging almost two (1.68) measures per SLO. Of the 320 SLOs, 277 (87%) were met. Of the 537 measures, 428 (80%) were met. The change rate was 7%, 4% positive, and 3% negative. Six programs failed to meet the majority of their SLOs.

Decision:

Program faculty will compare current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the upcoming year (2025-2026). 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 aimed at enhancing 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 8). This list is not exhaustive; however 102 courses are documented.

Table 8

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 print-based 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 kinetic-based 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 cloud-based computer aided design and manufacturing software.
IET 4910 Modeling 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. Analysis of sound emissions 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.
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 students 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.

Table 8 (cont.)

Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices, by College

College of Business and Technology	
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.
College of Education and Human Development	
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 in a 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.
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.

Table 8 (cont.)
Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices, by College

College of Education and Human Development (continued)	
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 allows 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 8). 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 8 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 2024 and Spring 2025 summative results for courses and instructors from the Student Evaluation of Instruction are given in Table 9. The pooled average over both semesters for overall course quality was $M = 4.37$ ($SD = 0.829$, $n = 15,617$) and the pooled average for instructor's effectiveness was $M = 4.46$ ($SD = 0.820$, $n = 15,583$).

Analysis:

The average rating of student surveys distributed at the end of fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters are significantly higher for both course quality (two-variable t -test, $t = 7.86$, $p < .001$) and instructor effectiveness ($t = 8.08$, $p < .001$) compared to AC 2022-2023.

Although neither metric reached the target of 4.5, these evaluations indicate that at the end of the semester students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard, with over 87.5% of respondents rating both course and instructor either *Good* or *Superior*.

Decision:

Although the Student Evaluation of Instruction does not directly measure course and instructor quality, it does reflect student *perceptions* of the classroom experience. Until a more granular approach is identified 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, we will monitor and respond to student attitudes about instruction.

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

Table 9

a. Fall 2024 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	87	1.49%
Poor	(2)	146	2.50%
Fair	(3)	502	8.58%
Good	(4)	1884	32.22%
Superior	(5)	3229	55.22%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
5382/30925 (17.40%)	4.37	0.86	5
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	85	1.46%
Poor	(2)	133	2.28%
Fair	(3)	437	7.49%
Good	(4)	1505	25.79%
Superior	(5)	3675	62.98%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
5368/30925 (17.36%)	4.47	0.84	5

Table 9 (cont.)

b. Spring 2025 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	102	1.04%
Poor	(2)	214	2.19%
Fair	(3)	842	8.62%
Good	(4)	3499	35.82%
Superior	(5)	5112	52.33%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
9769/28433 (34.36%)	4.36	0.81	5
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	105	1.07%
Poor	(2)	201	2.06%
Fair	(3)	718	7.35%
Good	(4)	2789	28.55%
Superior	(5)	5935	60.75%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
9748/28433 (34.28%)	4.46	0.81	5

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 for AC 2023-2024. 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 10).

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 10

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

Course	Fall 2020			Spring 2021		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
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

Course	Fall 2020			Spring 2021		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
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 meets general education requirements. The current target will remain a mean of 28 in University core courses, because 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:

On the Student Evaluation of Instruction the pooled average over both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters for overall core course quality was $M = 4.28$ ($SD = 0.864$, $n = 3,062$) and the pooled average for core instructor's effectiveness was $M = 4.37$ ($SD = 0.870$, $n = 3,092$; Table 11).

Analysis:

The average rating of student surveys distributed in core courses at the end of fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters are significantly higher for both course quality (two-variable t -test, $t = 2.68$, $p = .004$) and instructor effectiveness ($t = 4.23$, $p < .001$) compared to AC 2022-2023.

Table 11

a. Fall 2024 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)	20	1.52%
Poor	(2)	47	3.57%
Fair	(3)	128	9.71%
Good	(4)	469	35.58%
Superior	(5)	654	49.62%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
1,316/7,419 (17.74%)	4.28	0.89	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	
Extremely Poor	(1)	19	1.44%
Poor	(2)	39	2.96%
Fair	(3)	123	9.33%
Good	(4)	396	30.05%
Superior	(5)	735	55.77%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
1,312/7,419 (17.68%)	4.36	0.88	5

Table 11 (cont.)

b. Spring 2025 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)	20	1.13%
Poor	(2)	48	2.71%
Fair	(3)	191	10.77%
Good	(4)	682	38.44%
Superior	(5)	833	46.96%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
1,774/5,581 (31.79%)	4.27	0.84	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	19	1.07%
Poor	(2)	45	2.53%
Fair	(3)	161	9.04%
Good	(4)	570	32.02%
Superior	(5)	985	55.34%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
1,780/5,581 (31.89%)	4.38	0.83	5

Analysis:

The average rating of student surveys distributed in core courses at the end of fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters are significantly higher for both course quality (two-variable t -test, $t = 2.68$, $p = .004$) and instructor effectiveness ($t = 4.23$, $p < .001$) compared to AC 2022-2023.

Typically, average course and instructor ratings are lower in core course than in the remainder of the curriculum, and this year was no exception. Nevertheless, averages were strong. Although neither metric reached the target of 4.5, these evaluations indicate that at the end of the semester students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard, with over 85% of respondents rating both course and instructor either *Good* or *Superior*.

In addition to difficulties with the launch of the new Student Evaluation of Instruction in the fall, our response rate in the spring may have been reduced due to a delay in ULS distribution of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, which has a lengthy demographic section, 118 additional multiple choice items, and a free answer section. The Student Evaluation of Instruction has 20 multiple choice items plus a free answer comments section; thus, students with a course load of 5 classes would have the equivalent of an additional 100 item survey to answer, all in the last month of the semester.

Decision:

We will maintain our target in course/instructor effectiveness moving forward and encourage students to participate in course/instructor evaluations to raise the overall response rate to 45% by 2026. Likewise, Academic Affairs will work collaboratively with the Student Experience to more proactively engage with students on their expectations for instruction and instructors.

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:**

Fourteen University core courses had a designated course steward in AC 2024-2025 (Table 12).

Table 12

Course Stewards for AC 2024-2025

Course #/Title	
BIOL 2250 Anatomy and Physiology and Allied Health Majors	Cynthia Doffitt
COMM 1010 Oral Communication	Ms. Zering
Comm-2500-Interpersonal Communication	Dorian Eaton
MATH 1035 Contemporary Mathematics	Dr. Mary Reeves
MATH 1060 Finite Mathematics	Dr. Leigh Ann Myers
MATH 1020	Ms. Carrie Maggio
ENGL 1010/1011–Composition & Rhetoric I/Enrichment	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 1010–Composition & Rhetoric I	
ENGL 1020–Composition & Rhetoric II	
ENGL 2110–Introduction to Literature	Dr. Lilly Berberyan
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

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 were identified, including Biology 2250; Chemistry 1070; Communication 1010; English 1010, 1020, 2110; Geography 1010; Psychology 1010, 2050; Fine Arts 1040; and Science 1010. Since then, the courses receiving stewards have been adjusted to reflect enrollment patterns and changes in the core curriculum.

Course stewards ensure course goals/objectives/key assessments are the same across all course sections offered and ensure that instructors are engaging with students and responsive in meeting their learning needs. 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 from 2024-2025 and recommend any changes or upgrades to the course steward process. The consensus has been that this 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:

Ninety-nine graduate students presented 35 papers and posters at six professional conferences. In addition, 25 graduate students were accepted to deliver 19 presentations at NSU Research Day.

The 226 graduate research products required for graduation (summer 2024-spring 2025), included: dissertations ($N = 21$), graduate theses ($N = 6$), field studies ($N = 2$), performance documents ($N = 2$), scholarly projects ($N = 19$), creative research projects ($N = 4$), and Papers-in Lieu of Thesis ($N = 172$).

Approximately 20.6% of Northwestern's full-time faculty were engaged in directing or assessing the capstone research of graduate students. This is slightly below the previous assessment cycle.

Analysis:

The Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice Research Poster Carousel was held this spring, providing an additional venue for Nursing graduate students to present their work. This virtual conference is convenient for our online graduate students, since they do not need to travel to the event. Seven Master's and doctoral students in Education also travelled to the Mid-South Educational Research Association Conference. A smaller group of undergraduates and graduate students presented at the Sigma Tau Delta (International English Honor Society) Regional and National meetings.

Decision:

The target for 2026 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.

The target for graduate research products will be reduced from 400 to 300 to more closely match the number of Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral students graduating each year.

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:

One hundred thirty-one students (33 undergraduates, 98 graduates) were accepted to present papers and posters at professional meetings this year. NSU Research Day included 19 presentations by 33 graduate students and 30 presentations by 59 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 2022-2023, due in part to the ULS Academic Summit being held at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA, rather than at a nearby institution in northern Louisiana. Northwestern undergraduates also presented at six other conferences. All undergraduates attended conferences 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. Typically, Research Day and the ULS Academic Summit are both held near the end of the Spring semester. Lower participation at the Academic Summit in AC 2024-2025 may have helped increase undergraduate participation in Research Day from students who do not have time to make two presentations at the end of the semester.

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 41 undergraduates, graduating seniors, and recent graduates. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) were assessed for students graduating May 2024 or later taking tests administered during the period June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025. 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 2023 or later. In previous years, the largest number of students took the GRE (Verbal: 149.9 ± 4.633 , Quantitative: 147.4 ± 6.052 , $N = 8$). This year, more students took the MCAT.

From June 1, 2024-May 31, 2025, 11 current students and graduates completing their degree in May 2024 or later took the LSAT at least once. The average score was 148.9 ($SD = 10.04$), while the average percentile rating was 39.6% ($SD = 30.0\%$). The percentile ranking of the average score is 34.7%. LSAT scores ranged from 132 to 162.

Between June 1, 2023 and May 31, 2025, 22 continuing students, graduating seniors, and graduates from 2023 or later took the MCAT (95% confidence interval--Total: 495.1 ± 4.62 , CFBPS: 123.0 ± 1.00 , CARS: 124.4 ± 1.34 , BBFLS: 123.6 ± 1.41 , and PSBFB: 124.3 ± 1.43 , $N = 22$). Test-takers and medical school applicants must list all institutions from which they have earned undergraduate credits; the cohort for this metric excludes individuals with only dual enrollment credits from NSU and those earning an associate degree while still in high school (such as many students from LSMSA).

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, two (25%) of those completing the GRE scored above the national median on the verbal component, while one (12.5%) scored above the median on the quantitative reasoning component, 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; all eight scored above this benchmark. The number of students taking the GRE has declined, due to a general trend of fewer graduate programs requiring this test for admission. At NSU, some degree programs have stopped requiring the GRE for admission, especially those designed for individuals mid-career. Other programs only require the GRE for students below a particular undergraduate GPA.

LSAT scores range from 120-180; the national median is 152. Five of this year's test-takers (45.5%) scored at the median or above. Although numerically higher, the average score did not increase significantly ($p = .330$). Two more students (5) scored above the median compared to last year, so the target was met. Admissions outcomes for NSU students applying to law school continue to improve. In the 2023 application year, 14 students recently completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to law school. All (100%) were accepted by one or more schools; 12 (86%) matriculated to a law school in fall 2024, six fewer than in 2022.

Except for the CARS subscale, the majority of the individual MCAT scores and sub-scores were below the national medians. Although numerically the average scores were above those for AC 2023-2024, none were significantly higher. The number of MCAT test-takers dropped by 40% compared to AC 2023-2024. Although the percent of students exceeding the national median was larger overall and for each subscale, the *number* of students scoring above the median dropped in each case, so the target was not met. The

best performance for NSU students was on the CARS sub-score where 13 of 22 (59%) scored above the national median. For overall scores, seven (32%) scored above median, a percentage comparable to AC 2023-2024; four students (18%) scored above the highest score from AC 2023-2024, with a maximum of the 87th percentile. Nine students in the current cohort (41%) applied to medical school; three (33%) were accepted for early admission, two by LSUHSC-Shreveport and the third by LSUHSC New Orleans. This is not significantly different from the national average acceptance rate (41% of applicants are accepted by one or more medical schools). Many aspiring physicians apply to more than one school, reapply if they are not initially accepted, or choose to withdraw before a decision has been made; as a result, the acceptance rate *per application* is much lower for the two institutions where most of our students apply: LSU School of Medicine Shreveport (4.15%) and LSU School of Medicine New Orleans (5.84%). An additional four students have already started the application process for 2026.

Curricular and advising changes were made six years ago by the two academic units advising pre-medical students; even with some students delaying their applications until the year after graduation, these changes should be fully reflected in the performance of medical school applicants this year.

Decision:

Due to the decline in the number of students taking the GRE, this metric will be dropped. Small sample sizes make it statistically impossible to produce meaningful results or to detect patterns in student performance.

On the LSAT, the number scoring above the national median rose from three to five, despite a drop in the number of students taking the exam. 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.

Approximately 40 students who have received academic credits from NSU apply to medical school each year. Of these, fewer than 25% graduated from NSU. Because of dual enrollment, including students from LSMSA, we teach a large number of well-qualified students whom we lose to other institutions, such as LSU A&M and Louisiana Tech, where they pursue their bachelor's degree. Of the 18 applicants who received credits from NSU and were accepted by medical schools in the 2025 application year, 16 (89%) fall into this category. Individualized recruitment from this population could benefit the success of our pre-medical programs. 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* = 501) 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).*

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:

Due to difficulties in launching a new platform, the Student Evaluation of Instruction was not collected for the fall A term and the evaluation period at the end of the semester was compressed; as a result, the response rate for fall 2024 (Table 13) was 19%. Just over a third of student enrollments rated their instructors in spring 2025 (Table 14). The pooled average over both semesters for *faculty/student interactions* was $M = 4.61$ ($s = 0.898$, $n = 14,917$), for *prompt feedback* was $M = 4.61$ ($SD = 0.887$, $n = 15,285$), and for *appropriate demeanor* was $M = 4.70$ ($SD = 0.794$, $n = 14,658$).

Analysis:

Student evaluations for fall 2024 and spring 2025 indicate superior student-faculty interactions. Frequency of responses appear relatively stable and exceed the target values. Overall, 75.20% of students indicated Northwestern teachers *always* encourage interaction between faculty and students; 9.77% stated their teachers *usually* encourage interaction. The mean rating was significantly higher than that in AC 2022-2023 ($t = 3.12$, $df = 32,614$, $p < .001$).

For the criterion, *my teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments*, 76.71% responded *always* and 10.89% answered *usually*. The mean rating was significantly higher than that in AC 2022-2023 ($t = 4.41$, $df = 32,133$, $p < .001$).

Table 13

Fall 2024 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	150	2.55%
Occasionally	(2)	169	2.88%
Sometimes	(3)	306	5.21%
Usually	(4)	538	9.16%
Always	(5)	4426	75.36%
Not Applicable	(0)	284	4.84%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
5,873/30,925 (18.99%)	4.60	0.92	5.00

Table 13 (cont.)
Fall 2024 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	137	2.33%
Occasionally	(2)	190	3.24%
Sometimes	(3)	269	4.58%
Usually	(4)	610	10.39%
Always	(5)	4528	77.11%
Not Applicable	(0)	138	2.35%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
5,872/30,925 (18.99%)	4.60	0.90	5.00
My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	114	1.96%
Occasionally	(2)	123	2.11%
Sometimes	(3)	211	3.62%
Usually	(4)	410	7.03%
Always	(5)	4638	79.55%
Not Applicable	(0)	334	5.73%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
5,830/30,925 (18.85%)	4.70	0.82	5.00

Table 14
Spring 2025 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	216	2.20%
Occasionally	(2)	242	2.46%
Sometimes	(3)	498	5.07%
Usually	(4)	996	10.14%
Always	(5)	7376	75.10%
Not Applicable	(0)	493	5.02%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
9,821/28,433(34.54%)	4.62	0.99	5.00
My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	204	2.08%
Occasionally	(2)	284	2.89%
Sometimes	(3)	460	4.69%
Usually	(4)	1098	11.19%
Always	(5)	7505	76.46%
Not Applicable	(0)	264	2.69%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
9,815/28,433(34.52%)	4.61	0.88	5.00
My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	155	1.59%
Occasionally	(2)	184	1.89%
Sometimes	(3)	338	3.47%
Usually	(4)	880	9.04%
Always	(5)	7605	78.11%
Not Applicable	(0)	574	5.90%
Response Rate	Mean	SD	Median
9,736/28,433(34.24%)	4.70	0.78	5.00

Seventy-nine percent of students believed their teachers *always* displayed an appropriate demeanor both inside and outside the learning environment; 10.89% stated their teachers *usually* displayed an appropriate demeanor. The mean rating was significantly higher than that in AC 2022-2023 ($t = 4.62$, $df = 32,909$, $p < .001$).

Decision:

Although the Student Evaluation of Instruction does not directly measure course and instructor quality, it remains a reliable indicator of student *perceptions* of the classroom experience. Results from fall 2024 and spring 2025 demonstrate clear progress, with significant increases in ratings for faculty-student interactions, prompt feedback, and professional demeanor. Building on this momentum, the institution will continue to monitor student attitudes while also capitalizing on opportunities to advance innovative approaches for engagement. These include developing more personalized feedback systems, expanding high-impact faculty-student interaction practices, and integrating emerging instructional technologies that foster dialogue and connection both inside and outside the classroom. By acknowledging the gains already achieved and committing to ongoing innovation, the institution ensures a dynamic learning environment that actively supports student success and strengthens the faculty-student partnership. Until a more granular approach is identified 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, we will monitor and respond to student attitudes student/faculty interactions.

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

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 rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies.
4. *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 during AC 2023-2024, 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 For Our Future conferences ensures the University will be well-represented at these multidisciplinary meetings. 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 2024-2025, 41 new grants from 26 PIs were funded for a total of **\$6,536,511.67** (Table 15). The largest grants went to the Child and Family Network, NCPTT, and the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. An additional **\$6,927,862.81** was brought to the University by continuations of multiyear grants first awarded in previous years to eleven additional PIs not represented in the new awards (Table 16). Thus, total grant income in AC 2024-2025 was **\$13,464,374.48**, a 16% decline over AC 2022-2023.

Table 15

Newly funded grants in 2024-2025

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Cox, JD	Biological and Microbiology	Amendment to NSU Drone Remote Sensing and Soil Health Education Program	\$49,368.00
King, Charles	Psychology and Addiction Studies	SSW AATC Grant	\$25,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$2,000.00
Warren, Simeon	NCPTT	Designing and Implementing Pilot Resiliency Projects at South-eastern Coastal Fortifications at Ft Pulaski and Ft Massachusetts	\$416,220.86
Warren, Simeon	NCPTT	Fort Jefferson Materials Monitoring Tool	\$487,871.34
		(5) Federal Sponsored Awards Total:	\$980,460.20
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Child Care Resource and Referral-Amendment 3	\$944,344.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Young Children with Disabilities	\$61,600.00
Badeaux, Aimee	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Rapid Response Fund, Expansion of Healthcare Workforce	\$490,000.00
Brunson, Jerry			
Cox, JD	Biology and Microbiology	Enrichment of Student Education through Development of a WBLE+ Program	\$12,000.00
Cano-Lopez, Edgar	CAPA/Fine and Graphic Arts	LA Litho	\$2,730.00
Cowan, Jennifer	Child and Family Network	Louisiana Pathways Career Development System	\$367,873.20
Cowan, Jennifer	Child and Family Network	Louisiana Pathways Scholarship	\$2,023,858.80
Cox, Reatha	Student Experience	Louisiana Board of Regents Hunger-Free Campus	\$10,000.00
Dugas, Anna	School of STEM/Physical Sciences	DemonSats-6: Continued Student Payload Program at Northwestern State University and LSMSA	\$12,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Birth to Three	\$443,897.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Lead Agency for Bossier Parish	\$90,300.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start Network for Bossier Parish	\$100,000.00
Gruesbeck, Leslie	Fine and Graphic Arts	Work-Based Learning Experience Plus (WBLE+)	\$12,000.00
Gruesbeck, Steven	College of Education and Human Development	Keep Northwestern State Beautiful: Reducing Single Use Plastic Waste at NSU's Cenla Campus	\$5,000.00
Handel, Greg	Academic Affairs	Building a Competitive Workforce OER/CTE Course Redesign	\$108,000.00
Handel, Greg	Academic Affairs	Meauxmentum Scholars Project	\$10,000.00
Longlois, Julie	EDIO/Carl D. Perkins	Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century (Perkins V)	\$48,118.08

Table 15 (continued)
Newly funded grants in 2024-2025

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Longlois, Julie	Electronic and Global Engagement/Carl D. Perkins	Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)-Postsecondary Basic Carryover Grant	\$4,173.39
Morrow, Laurie DePriest, Jennifer	Economic Development, Innovation, and Outreach	Regional LASTEM Center	\$275,000.00
Penrod, Curtis	School of Business	Central Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Enhancement Program	\$40,000.00
Pursell, Elizabeth	Academic Success/Advising Services	Catapulting Student Success through Motivation, Transparency, and Support	\$100,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2025 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$5,110.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2025 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$8,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	44th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$2,585.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$2,285.00
Reynolds, Thomas	English, Languages, and Cultural Studies	NSU Mindset Meauxtivators	\$4,231.00
Rivera-Vazques, Daniel	STEM/Physical Science	Acquisition of Ductless Chemical Fume Hoods for Chemistry Undergraduate Laboratories and Outreach Activities at NSU	\$55,148.00
Salter, Valerie	Business/Hospitality, Management & Tourism	Enhancement of the Undergraduate Hospitality Management & Tourism (HMT) 10/24/2024 Culinary Arts Program	\$135,107.00
Taylor, Dominique	New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts	Louisiana Community Journalism Initiative-MacArthur Foundation Year 1 of 2	\$19,130.00
<i>(29) State Sponsored Awards Total:</i>			\$5,392,490.47
Brunson, Michelle	College of Education and Human Development	Remapping the Cradle to Prison Pipeline to Cradle to College Pipeline in Natchitoches through Early Literacy Intervention	\$1,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	44th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$2,500.00
Fletcher, Ventric	Athletics	NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP)	\$100,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	The 45th Annual Natchitoches- NSU Folk Festival	\$4,800.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start for Bossier Parish Local Match for Tuition	\$42,000.00
Taylor, Dominique	New Media, Journalism, and Communication	Louisiana Community Journalism Initiative-LUCE Foundation-Year 1 of 2	\$10,761.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$2,500.00
<i>(7) Private Sponsored Awards Total:</i>			\$163,561.00
<i>New awards: 2024-2025</i>			\$6,536,511.67

Table 16
Continuation of multiyear grants 2024-2025

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Ammons, Kevin	NCPTT	Partnering for Preservation 2024-Modification 3	\$399,148.14
Badeaux, Aimee	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship at NSU-Year 2 of 4	\$54,079.00
Handel, Greg	Academic Affairs	Elevate-U Initiative-Year 2 of 5	\$434,110.00
Simmons, Pamela	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	PHMHNP: Bridging the Behavioral Healthcare Gap-Year 4 of 4	\$266,666.00
Welch, Frances	Student Support Services	Office of Postsecondary Education: Student Support Services Program-Year 5 of 5	\$500,379.00
<i>(5) Federal Sponsored Awards Total:</i>			\$1,654,382.14
Fultz, Andrew	Social Work	Title IV-E Child Welfare Scholars Program-Year 2 of 3	\$3,307,502.00
Wilhite, Lisa	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Establishing an LPN to RN Cohort in Collaboration with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center-Year 2 of 3	\$246,800.00
<i>(2) State Sponsored Awards Total:</i>			\$3,554,302.00

Table 16 (cont.)
Continuation of multiyear grants 2024-2025

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Brunson, Michelle	College of Education and Human Development	Remapping the Cradle to Prison Pipeline to Cradle to College Pipeline in Natchitoches through Early Literacy Intervention	\$1,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	44th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$2,500.00
Fletcher, Ventric	Athletics	NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP)	\$100,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	The 45th Annual Natchitoches- NSU Folk Festival	\$4,800.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start for Bossier Parish Local Match for Tuition	\$42,000.00
Taylor, Dominique	New Media, Journalism, and Communication	Louisiana Community Journalism Initiative-LUCE Foundation-Year 1 of 2	\$10,761.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	\$2,500.00
		(7) Private Sponsored Awards Total:	\$1,719,178.67.
Continuations: 2024-2025			\$6,927,862.81

Analysis:

Compared to AC 2022-2023, the number of NSU employees initially receiving grants from external agencies increased from 18 to 26 and the number of new grants funded increased from 22 to 41. The average amount per grant (\$445,895 in AC 2020-2021 versus \$296,155 in AC 2022-2023 and \$159,127 in AC 2024-2025) continued to decline, as participation by individual faculty members applying for smaller grant amounts increased. The Child and Family Network remains an impactful program that garners tremendous grant support, receiving about 30% of Northwestern's extramural funding; however, several other units accounted for significant amounts of grant support.

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 Merchant McIntyre, based in Washington, D.C., 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 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 as evidenced by 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 succeeded 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.

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

Metric:**3. 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 17).

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.

Table 17

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
College of Arts and Sciences	
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	*Thermocycler (PCR) and Safe Imager 2.0 Blue-Light Trans Illuminator

Table 17 (cont.)

New Technologies Acquired in AC 2023-2024

College of Business and Technology	
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
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
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

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

Northwestern State University recognizes the contributions of its faculty in research, teaching, and service through both major events and announcements of special recognition. This recognition is documented through press releases by the NSU News Bureau.

In AC 2024-2025 small groups of faculty were recognized through public events, such as the presentation of three major research awards at the Fall Faculty Institute—the outstanding Research Award, named to honor Dr. Mildred Hart Bailey; the Lifetime Achievement Award, named for Dr. Jean D’Amato Thomas, and the Louisiana Studies Award, which honors Dr. Marietta LeBreton. Also recognized at this time were the recipients of the Excellence in Teaching Awards for each college and the Outstanding Advisor awards for the University. Faculty and staff reaching milestones in their years of service to the University were recognized at the Faculty Luncheon.

Faculty newly elected to office in professional societies or receiving other professional recognition are typically announced to the University or community through a press release. This category also includes book launches from faculty authors and profiles and publicity for art exhibits or recitals. Faculty awarded grants are announced periodically.

Outstanding teaching is also recognized with stories about unusual classroom activities or faculty providing extracurricular academic experiences for their students.

In AC 2024-2025, NSU filed 32 press releases honoring 91 faculty and staff members. The University also established a Faculty Recognition Council to identify additional systematic ways to recognize faculty contributions.

Analysis:

The strong ratings from the Student Evaluation of Instruction in AC 2024-2025 highlight meaningful progress in faculty-student engagement. Over 75% of students consistently reported that their instructors always encouraged interaction, provided prompt feedback, and displayed professionalism, with statistically significant gains compared to AC 2022-2023. These outcomes are reinforced by the University’s commitment to recognizing and celebrating faculty achievements in teaching, research, and service. Through faculty awards, press releases, and recognition events, NSU not only honors individual accomplishments but also fosters a culture of excellence that directly contributes to high-quality student experiences. Taken together, these data suggest that intentional recognition of faculty contributions, combined with expanded innovative practices such as personalized feedback systems and high-impact engagement strategies, can sustain and further elevate student-faculty interactions

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 20 impactful and global events or activities in 2025-2026 and 50 press releases.

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

Comprehensive Summary

In AC 2024-2025 academic 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.

Northwestern State University achieved substantive progress in advancing Academic Excellence during AC 2024-2025, exceeding targets in seven of 10 key metrics. Student learning outcomes were assessed across all 103 academic degree and certificate programs, with 87% of outcomes and 80% of measures met—demonstrating a university-wide commitment to continuous improvement. Student Evaluations of Instruction confirmed notable gains in course quality, instructor effectiveness, and faculty-student engagement, with over 75% of students affirming that instructors consistently encouraged interaction, provided prompt feedback, and maintained professional demeanor. These outcomes represent significant improvement compared to previous cycles and reinforce confidence in instructional quality. Complementing these outcomes, the University strengthened recognition of faculty contributions through awards, press releases, and events, highlighting excellence in teaching, research, and service. This dual emphasis—on student learning and faculty excellence—creates a reinforcing cycle of academic quality and innovation. Looking forward, NSU will build on this momentum by adopting more granular and adaptive evaluation methods, integrating emerging technologies into pedagogy, and expanding innovative faculty-student engagement practices. By acknowledging measurable gains and committing to innovation, the University ensures a dynamic and supportive learning environment that elevates student achievement, faculty development, and institutional distinction.

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).

Northwestern State University is a member of the Council on Undergraduate Research.

AC 2024-2025 Key Findings (in comparison to AC 2023-2024):

Northwestern students presented at

- 1 international conference: *Université et Usages de L'AI*, Troyes, France
- 2 national conferences: Industrial Engineering in Operations Management World Congress, Sigma Tau Delta National Conference.
- 8 regional conferences: Louisiana Academy of Sciences, Louisiana Education Research Association, Louisiana Studies Conference, Mid-South Educational Research Association, Louisiana Studies Conference (NSU), Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Conference (English), Southeast Psychological Association, and Southwest Psychology Association.
- 2 multi-university student conferences: University of Louisiana Lafayette Undergraduate Research Conference, University of Louisiana System Academic Summit.
- 3 NSU conferences: Research Day, Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing Research Poster Carousel, Tri Beta Annual Research Symposium.
- 36 presentations by 100 graduate students at 7 scholarly conferences.
- 25 presentations by 44 undergraduates at 8 conferences, including the ULS Academic Summit.
- 86 Master's students made 22 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 Nicholls State University in Thibodaux. Nineteen Northwestern undergraduate authors shared their work in six research presentations and four multi-author service-learning projects. Five students created art pieces selected for the visual arts show and four musicians represented the University in the Performing Arts Showcase.
- Research Day was held on April 3, 2025 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 10 posters, 58 oral presentations (15 minutes), and an additional 9 brief oral presentations (5 minutes). Three oral presentations were made virtually. Total presentations were the same as AC 2023-2024.
 - 19 presentations were presented by 25 graduate students (down by 1 each).
 - 31 presentations were presented by 60 undergraduate students (up by 1).
 - 27 faculty members presented their work (up by 1).
 - 9 additional faculty were coauthors or copresenters on one or more student papers (up 50%).
- Delta Theta Chapter of Beta Beta Beta held a Scientific Research Symposium featuring 11 oral and poster presentations of the work of 44 NSU undergraduate students.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- Develop a new system using Teams to document faculty and student presentations and publications.
- The Research Council will recognize Undergraduate Research Fellows and Undergraduate Research Mentors in AC 2025-2026 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 underwent a comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes. The one exception was 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, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 were complete (fall/spring) iterations of assessing the University's core competencies.

The AC 2024-2025 core competency assessments are located on the University Institutional Effectiveness website under Assessment Cycle Reports, AY 2023-2024, General Education Core Competencies.

The AC 2024-2025 Core Competency assessment results: *13,517 student assessments were completed, representing a 14% decrease from the 15,615 assessments in AC 2023-2024.* (Note: Some courses have more than one assessment, and some students may have been assessed in more than one course.) As was the case in AC 2023-2024, eight of 12 Student Learning Outcomes (67%) were met. Twenty-two of the 31 measures (71%) were met, while the remaining nine were not. These results show no marked change between 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025.

English. To demonstrate writing as a purpose-driven process of communication within specific contexts. **984 students** were assessed (**516 were Dual Enrollment**), a 1.8% increase over AC 2023-2024.

SLO 1. Students will write a variety of types of texts for diverse audiences, purposes, and contexts. *Results include 516 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. 895 of 984, 90.9% of students met the target, scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, a 1% increase from AC 2023-2024.

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. 884 of the 984, 89.8% of students met the target, scoring 2 or higher on the evaluation, a 3.8 increase from AC 2023-2024.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Training in the

teaching of rhetorical analysis and genre awareness will be refined to address any continued challenges in those areas. Training on the streamlined portfolio assignment will be refined to increase student participation and pedagogical effectiveness. Outreach to dual enrollment instructors working in the K-12 setting will focus on supporting those instructors who are not currently submitting reports.

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 2025-2026. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the following changes will be implemented to drive improvement in AC 2025-2026. 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. These changes will enhance students' ability to rhetorically analyze various media, write effectively in specific genres, and understand the pedagogical purpose of the portfolio assignment, thereby continuing to advance the cycle of improvement.

SLO 2. Students will perform writing as a process of planning, researching, prewriting, drafting, evaluating, and revising to develop and strengthen their compositions. *Results include 406 dual enrollment students.*

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. 743 of 820, 90.6% of students met the target, scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, showing a slight 2% increase AC 2023-2024.

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. 742 of 820, 90.5% of students met the target, scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, showing a 2.5% increase over AC 2024-2025.

Based on the analysis of the AY 2024-2025 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Training in the teaching of source integration and attribution, a central learning outcome of ENGL 1020, will be refined to address any continued challenges in this area. Training on the streamlined portfolio assignment will be refined to increase student participation and the pedagogical effectiveness of the assignment. Outreach to dual enrollment instructors working in the K-12 setting will focus on supporting those instructors who are not currently submitting reports.

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 2025-2026. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the following changes will be implemented to drive improvement in AC 2025-2026. 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. These changes will enhance students' abilities to integrate and attribute sources in their writing, thereby improving their understanding of the portfolio assignment's pedagogical purpose and continuing to advance the cycle of improvement.

Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning. To apply mathematical and analytical reasoning skills. Overall, **1199 students** were assessed (of which **131 were Dual Enrollment**), a 1% increase over 2023-2024. 1169 met the target score or better. 97.6% of students reached the assessment goal.

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. Overall, 1198 students were assessed (of which 131 were Dual Enrollment); 1169 met the target score or better. 97.6% of students reached the assessment goal. The overall target of 90% success was met. Only one class (Math 2100) did not achieve the individual course goals of 80% success. If one additional student in Math 2100 had attained an acceptable score, the target would have been met. We saw meaningful improvement in Math 1820 and 1830, which were two 3-credit-hour courses created from the 6-credit-hour course, Math 1810. It should be noted that only one student was assessed in 1820. Four courses achieved 100% success, including Math 1090, a first for the class. Math 1035 dropped due to a course restructuring (new book, new material).

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. Overall, 1199 students were assessed (of which 131 were Dual Enrollment); 1175 met the target score or better. 98.0% of students reached the assessment goal. The overall target of 80% success was met. We again saw meaningful improvement in Math 1820 and 1830, which were two 3-credit-hour courses created from the 6-credit-hour course, Math 1810. It should be noted that only one student was assessed in 1820. Four courses achieved 100% success, including Math 1090, a first for the class. Math 1035 dropped significantly due to a course restructuring (new book, new material). If two additional students in Math 2100 had attained an acceptable score, the target would have been met.

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. Overall, 1199 students were assessed (of which 131 were Dual Enrollment); 1175 met the target score or better and 98.0% of students reached the assessment goal. The overall target of 95% success was met. Only one class (Math 2110) did not achieve the individual course goals of 80% success. If one additional student in Math 2110 had attained an acceptable score, the target would have been met.

Additionally, this course only had four students assessed. We saw meaningful improvement in Math 1820 and 1830, which were two 3-credit-hour courses created from the 6-credit-hour course, Math 1810. It should be noted that only one student was assessed in 1820. Math 1035 dropped due to a course restructuring (new book, new material).

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. Overall, 1199 students were assessed (of which 131 were Dual Enrollment); 1157 (96.5%) met the target score or better. The overall target of 90% success was met. Solving a word problem has been a particular challenge and an intense area of focus over the last several years. The efforts we have undertaken and strategies we have implemented have been successful in this area. In AC 2020-2021, our overall success in this measure was 68.7%. In AC 2024-2025, we achieved the highest success rate yet at 96.5%. Only two classes, Math 1035 and Math 2100, did not reach the individual course goals of 80% success. If one additional student in Math 2100 and three additional students in Math 1035 had attained an acceptable score, the target would have been met. We saw meaningful improvement in Math 1820 and 1830, which were two 3-credit-hour courses created from the 6-credit-hour course, Math 1810. It should be noted that only one student was assessed in 1820. Math 1035 dropped due to a course restructuring (new book, new material).

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:

The Course Coordinator for MATH 1035 will conduct a review of the quiz to ensure alignment with the stated academic standards. Additionally, the Course Coordinator will convene a meeting with all MATH 1035 instructors during the designated on-call week to discuss the course curriculum and outline.

Faculty will select 3-5 student responses from the Assessment Quiz and conduct a microanalysis—a step-by-step breakdown of where students succeeded or struggled. These findings will be shared during department meetings, along with suggestions for instructional changes based on the analysis' findings.

Instructors will collaborate to develop and implement a standardized problem-solving strategy. This strategy emphasizes restating the problem in one's own words, identifying both known and unknown variables, and determining the appropriate next steps within the context of the problem.

Natural Sciences. To understand the universe through the study of life and physical sciences. Overall, **948 Students assessed:** 648 in Fall 2024 and 299 in Spring 2025; **49 dual enrollment students assessed:** 9 in Fall 2024 and 40 in Spring 2025. Represents a 1.1% increase in students compared to AC 2023-2024.

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 2024-2025, the target was not met with 77.61% (735/947) of students scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-2.39%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz, but higher (+25.84%) than the AC 2023-2024 (51.77%; 380/734).

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 2024-2025, the target was not met with 54.85% (520/948) of students scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-25.15%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz; this is higher (+16.89%) than the AC 2023-2024 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 2024-2025, the target was not met with 46.20% (438/948) of students scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-33.80%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz but is higher (+8.87%) than the AC 2023-2024 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 2024-2025, the target was not met; 40.19% (381/948) scored 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below (-39.81%) our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz, and is lower (-3.13%) than in AC 2023-2024.

Based on the analysis of the results from AC 2024-2025, in AC 2025-2026, the following will be implemented to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. The Director of STEM and Department Head of Biology and Microbiology will: meet with all BIOL 1010, 2250, and

SCI 1020 course stewards to ensure they understand the assessment process; ensure the practice scientific method exam and discussion/review occur before the assessment; and Increase instructional time on the various types of experimental variables, which can be a challenging concept for many students.

Humanities. To understand the diversity of human knowledge and experience across cultures as examined through the humanities. A total of **2443 students** were assessed; **439 were dual enrollment**, representing a 15.8% decrease from AC 2023-2024.

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. Assessed: 1942 students (304 dual enrollment).

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 three (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. Target met. A total of 777 students were assessed; 166 were dual-enrolled. Students in ENGL 2110 achieved an 87.5% rate of scores at three or above on the standardized rubric. Students in ENGL 2070 achieved an 86% rate of scores at three 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 an 81% rate of scores at three or more, while non-dual enrollment sections attained a rate of 94%. ENGL 2070 dual enrollment students achieved a 72% rate of scores at three 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. The writing will be evaluated to determine if students demonstrate a basic knowledge of social, literary, and historical contexts. At least 70% of students sampled will score a three (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. Target met. A total of 718 students were assessed; 123 were dual-enrolled. Students in ENGL 2110 were evaluated for this assessment. Assessment analysis indicates that 85% of students achieved a score of three or higher on the standardized rubric for this measure. ENGL 2110 dual enrollment students achieved an 80% rate of scores at three or above, while non-dual enrollment students achieved a rate of 90%. Both online and face-to-face sections performed well.

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. The writing will be assessed 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 three (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. Target met. A total of 777 students were assessed; 166 were dual-enrolled. In 2024-2025, the target was met. Assessment analysis shows that 80.5% of ENGL 2110 students and 81% of ENGL 2070 scored a three or above on the standardized rubric used to evaluate this measure. In ENGL 2070, 88% of non-dual-enrollment students and 74% of our dual-enrollment students scored a three or higher on the assessment assignment. In ENGL 2110, 87% of non-dual-enrollment students and 74% of dual-enrollment students scored three 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. A total of 718 students were assessed; 123 were dual-enrolled. In 2024-2025, the target was met. Assessment analysis reveals that 86% of students scored three or higher on the standardized rubric used to evaluate this measure. Students in ENGL 2110 were evaluated. In ENGL 2110, 91% of non-dual enrollment students and 81% of dual enrollment 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. A total of 921 students were assessed; 304 were dual enrollment. In 2024-25, the target was met. Students scored an average of 91.3% on the persuasive speech assessment. Students presented strong work overall, but faculty is navigating student use of platforms like ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence when crafting speech presentations. We want our students to be adept at using cutting-edge technology upon entering the workforce, but not as a replacement for their hands-on learning experiences. This is relatively new territory for higher education, so we will update our course to include guidance on ethical and effective AI usage. Certain faculty members still struggle to use McGraw-Hill software to report their speech scores, but this is a minority percentage of overall instructors and sections.

Measure 1.6. Target 70%. Students will recognize and analyze how verbal and nonverbal communication styles vary across cultures and how these differences 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. A total of 143 students were assessed for this measure; 15 were dual enrollment. In 2024-25, the target was met. Students scored an average of 79.96% on the project. The assignment was scored as one assignment this year, combining cultural research elements with oral presentation of discovered information. Students demonstrated enthusiasm and curiosity in improving their communication skills in interpersonal relationships. Faculty incorporated personal interviews into the research gathering phase of this project, which resulted in students reporting an increased level of empathy and understanding for others. However, students still struggled with conducting and applying scholarly research as well as orally citing sources referenced in the presentation aspect of the assignment.

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. Target met. A total of 101 students were assessed; 0 (zero) were dual enrollments. In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. The number of students enrolled in 5 sections was 113. Two face-to-face sections and three online sections were assessed, totaling 101 students. Twelve students were removed because they did not attempt the assessment. Eighty-nine percent of the 101 students completed at least one part of the assessment. Nine students (approximately 9%) completed only the written part of the assessment and did not complete the presentation part. Five students of the 101 completed both parts but failed to make the 70% average for the assessment. Eighty-three percent of the 101 students passed with an average score of 70% or better, indicating that the goal was met. This number indicates a 7% decrease in the number of students passing the assessment with a score of 70% or better. Most of the drop can be attributed to the nine students who did not complete both parts of the assessment. When taking into consideration only students who completed both parts of the assessment, the pass rate would have been 95%. Five of the 101 students assessed completed both the written and oral parts and scored less than 70%.

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. Target met for HIST 1010, 1020, 2010, and 2020. A total of 467 students were assessed; 135 were dual enrollment. In AC 2024-2025, the target was met in all assessed courses. In HIST 1010, the 194 assessed students earned a 93% achievement of target. In HIST 1020, 89% of 73 assessed students met the target. In HIST 2010, the 122 assessed students earned a 94% achievement of target. In HIST 2020, the 78 assessed students earned an 88% achievement of target. Assessment demonstrated HIST 1010/1020 and HIST 2010/2020 achieved the targets established in this process. Compliance with assessments for dual enrollment courses continues to improve. Faculty focused on improving course development, design, and delivery. To drive improvement in World History courses, the history faculty participated in a Board of Regents eLearning grant that focused on developing Open Educational Resources (OER) for World History courses. One additional faculty member has adopted the new OER materials. Two faculty members have fully implemented the new OER materials in all their sections of HIST 1010. The OER textbook experiment continues to expand and to drive improvement in HIST 1010, resulting in reduced DFW rates in this core class. HIST 1010, 1020, and 2010 achieved their targets at higher rates than in 2023-24; HIST 2020 matched its 2023-24 rate.

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. A total of 34 students were assessed; 0 were dual enrollment. In 2024-2025, the target was not met. Of the 34 students assessed, only 22 met the target, resulting in a 65% target achievement rate. Dr. Keele's sections did increase from 64% to 75% target achievement rate, but Dr. Dromm reported that half of his class cheated on the assessment assignment, failing. ChatGPT is forcing faculty to rethink their approach to assessment, as many students have attempted to submit work that they created using ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence platforms.

Social/Behavioral Sciences. To demonstrate an understanding of human behavior and the relationship between individuals and their societies. In AC 2024-2025 6,701 assessments were given, a 23% decrease from the 8,668 students assessed in AC 2023-2024. There were 478 dual enrollment students, a 1% increase over the 424 in AC 2023-2024. While results varied widely depending upon the course (from 61% to 100%), in terms of the results of all student assessments combined, 78% met the Competency Target Score of 70% or higher. It should be noted that these results encompass all assessments administered, including pretests and posttests, which are designed to measure how students understood the material before and after exposure to the content, as assessed by the tools used. This result is slightly lower than the one from AY 2023-2024, which was 81%, but the difference can be viewed as relatively insignificant, given that the number represents only a slight downward shift. If this trend continues, a significant reappraisal of the assessment program for this competency will be needed; however, at this point, such a reappraisal does not seem necessary.

SLO 1. Number of assessments: 4,749. 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: 2,370. 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, 78% of students (1,866 of 2,370) scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 75% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	76%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	62%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	97%	Fall/Spring
Social Science	ANTH 1510	Question Bank	78%	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	100%	Spring
	PSCI 2010	Question Bank	82%	Fall/Spring

Measure 1.2. Target 75%. Number of Assessments: 2,379. 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 75% on the assessment rubric.

Finding: Target Met. Overall, 78% of students, or 1,867 out of 2,379, scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 75% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	81%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	63%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	97%	Fall/Spring
Social Science	ANTH 1510	Question Bank	65%	Fall
	ANTH 2020	Question Bank	100%	Spring
	ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	61%	Fall/Spring
	GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	95%	Fall
	GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	98%	Spring
	PSCI 2010	Question Bank	81%	Fall/Spring

SLO 2. Number assessed: 1,952. 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: 976. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and their impact on group and individual interactions through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum of 75% on the assessment rubric.

Finding: Target Met. Overall, 75% of students, or 728 out of 976, scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 75% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	88%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	75%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	52%	Fall/Spring

Measure 2.2. Target 75%. Number assessed: 976. Students 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 of 75% on the assessment rubric.

Finding: Target Met. Overall, 81% of students, or 789 out of 976, scored 75% or higher.

Category	Course Name	Methodology	% scoring 75% or higher	Term
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Question Bank	84%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Question Bank	81%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Question Bank	97%	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. 1,329 students were assessed (367 of them were dual enrollment), representing an 11% decrease from AC 2023-2024.

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. In AY 2024-2025, all three targets were met. Results for dual enrollment, online, distance learning, and on-campus students were comparable, as 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. Enrollment in FA 1040 was lower than last year, with 1329 students enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040, and 367 of them (28%) were dual-enrolled. Out of these 1329 students, all but three sections participated in the pre-test and post-test. From the remaining sections, involving 1,253 students, 1,210 (or 97%) took the pre-test, and 1,021 students (or 81%) participated in the post-test. The pre-test average was 25.68/50, and the post-test average was 42.93/50, leading to a growth rate of 67%. The participation rates, the averages, and the growth rate are all increases from last year.

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, important examples, and people in the artistic community.

Finding: In AY 2024-2025, all three targets were met. There was no disparity between dual enrollment, online, distance learning, or on-campus students 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. Individual scores are collected, and growth is determined using the following formula: Enrollment in FA 1040 was lower than last year, with 1329 students enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040, and 367 of them (28%) were dual-enrollment students. Of these 1329 students, all but three sections participated in the pre-test and post-test. Of the remaining sections, involving 1,253 students, 1,210 (or 97%) took the pre-test, and 1,021 students (or 81%) participated in the post-test. The pre-test average was 25.68/50, and the post-test average was 42.93/50, leading to a growth rate of 67%. The participation rates, the averages, and the growth rate are all increases from last year.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement:

- sent emails to encourage student participation in assignments and tests,
- created more pre-test and post-test score opportunities,

- utilized different procedures for tests and assignments,
- annotated lecture notes, updated tests, web resources, welcome videos, assignments, forums, lecture slides, quizzes, and guidelines to reflect student needs.

As a result of these changes, the 2024-2025 targets were met. The 67% growth rate, the highest rate in this class to date, meets the ideal target for the year. The Pre-Test participation rate was 97%, also the highest ever, and the Post-Test participation rate was 81%, which met the adjusted target of 70%.

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; The target was met. 973/1329 (73%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

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. In 2024-2025, the target was met. 946/1329 (71%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

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 fall and spring semester, students will have completed the visual art performance critique, a reflection paper based on attending an art gallery.

Finding. In 2024-2025, the target was met. 946/1329 (71%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

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 fall and spring semester, the student will have completed the dance performance critique, 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. In 2024-2025, the target was met. 930/1329 (70%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 Measures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- Made the assignment worth more points
- Added online options for completion,
- Updated the wording of the assignment,
- Focused on instructor involvement early on.

As a result of these changes, the 2024-2025 targets were met.

Plan of Action Moving Forward. Each core competency will implement strategies for improvement, ensuring standardization in the application of the measures to a variety of applicable courses. Each competency will deliberately integrate dual-enrollment students into the assessment process. More details can be found in the AC 2024-2025 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. It aims to foster a student's perspective, perseverance, and persistence to enhance their long-term personal, financial, and academic well-being. 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 same support systems that helped them succeed in their first year. This QEP will examine all aspects of student retention and persistence from a holistic perspective.

During the summer of 2025, an external evaluator was hired to conduct an audit of the freshman connection process. The evaluator provided an overview of the process, offered suggestions to make the transition to college easier, and will next assess the transition from the first year to the second year. The evaluator will help develop a strategic framework that will guide the QEP structure.

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 based on 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 18) provide quantifiable measures to assess our progress and gauge our success. Progress towards meeting these targets in 2024-2025 include:

- In the last five years, the Curriculum Review Council approved substantial changes to 57 out of 73 Associate, Bachelor, or Graduate degree programs.
- An additional 333 public and private partnerships were identified and developed, increasing our total partnerships to 486.
- The Louisiana Board of Regents approved three new undergraduate certificate programs and two new master degree programs.

The University's role is vital in developing a productive and dynamic labor force to meet the demands of the global economy. The programs being established will 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 18

Metrics for Market Responsiveness

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	Market Responsiveness Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Target
73%		78.1%	<i>New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certificates approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce</i>	75%
	10		Number of professional development opportunities ECE support staff participated in to advance knowledge	12
	32		Number of distinct professional development courses provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of on-line course delivery.	36
153		486	<i>Number of bona-fide industry partners</i>	250 (total)
	85.4%		Percent of online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation	85%
	20.2%		Percent of recent graduates pursuing an advanced degree	25%
3		5	<i>Number of new degrees, or certificates approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts</i>	3
	1278		Number of distinct non-credit courses offered annually through Continuing Education.	1350
	38		Number of engagements between administration and business industry partners	48
	268		Number of classrooms and labs managed by Student Technology Funds to provide students state-of-the art technology	300
	12		Number of specialized programs designed to develop leadership skills (outside the classroom)	15
	197		Number of interactions offered to engage students with business and industry partners	250

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2022-2023 are reflected on the far left with AC 2023-2024 to the right and AC 2024-2025 to the far right. *Blue italicized text were assessed in 2024-2025.* 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 certificates 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 certificates approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.

Findings:

Of the 73-degree programs currently offered at NSU, 57 (78.1%) were updated in the last five years (AC 2020-2021 to AC 2024-2025) in the form of new degree programs, additional concentrations, and curriculum edits to established degrees or concentrations. Because the BA in Liberal Arts (220 and 820) includes two types of concentrations (five specialized interdisciplinary programs and seven individualized honors curricula) supervised by two different academic units, it is counted as two separate programs despite sharing a single Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code.

Northwestern offers 37 Certificate programs at the Undergraduate, Post-Baccalaureate, Graduate, and Post-Master's level. Two were approved in AC 2024-2025, six more approved since AC 2020-2021, and one established program was updated. Thus, 24.3% of these compact programs have content established or renewed in the last five years.

In AC 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved two new master's degree programs and three new undergraduate certificates developed and submitted by NSU:

- Master in Social Work (MSW)
- Master of Science in Allied Health
- Undergraduate Certificate in Honors Critical and Analytical Thinking
- Undergraduate Certificate in Honors Professional Ethics
- Undergraduate Certificate in Medical Humanities

Analysis:

Departmental curriculum review employs data and feedback from internal and external constituents to guide curriculum development and redesign. The pace at which disciplines change varies, driven by emerging technologies, scholarly research, and societal needs. Some fields, such as healthcare and information technology, formally incorporate new concepts and skills into their courses and degree requirements each semester. Other areas adapt to change by offering their students a more fluid collection of new courses from which to choose to meet their requirements. Finally, in fields leading to licensure, regulatory boards may revise their standards, resulting in a need for changes or even new degree programs. In all fields, faculty, alumni, and employers reflect on student and graduate success and formulate new approaches to improve their degree programs. 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.

NSU offers four degrees at the Associate's level; half of these were modified in the last five years. At the Bachelor's level, 39 of 40 degrees (97.5%) were modified in the last five years; three of these degrees were newly approved in the assessment period. Graduate programs were less likely to be

updated, with 16 of 29 (55.2%) revised in the last five years, including two new degrees. Collectively, 57 of 73 degree programs (78.1%) are based on up-to-date concepts, practices, and standards.

The 37 certificate programs are, for the most part, additional specialized training in Nursing or Education, designed to supply a credential that fills workforce needs. In addition to technical skills in specialized fields, the undergraduate certificates include several topics intended to cultivate soft skills applicable to many careers, such as Strategic Communication, Leadership Studies, Medical Humanities, Critical and Analytical Thinking, and Professional Ethics.

Decision:

The institution and academic departments will continue to seek actionable insights that inform strategic decisions. Feedback from internal and external stakeholders will remain integral to maintaining alignment with emerging trends and industry demands. Programs and courses will be sustained and enhanced to ensure relevance, be led by highly qualified faculty, and produce graduates fully prepared to excel in today's economy. Based on AC 2024-2025 outcomes—where the 75% goal was exceeded—targeted curriculum enhancements will be institutionalized to strengthen recruitment and retention efforts further.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, 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 content produced by the ECE Staff.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, 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 19). 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 19

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 for Economic Development and University Advancement, 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 333 industry partnerships were added in AC 2024-2025 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, present to students as guest lecturers, or provide internships or training programs. As of Spring 2025 the University has 486 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 and serve as corporate partners for faculty projects. In the broadest sense, these relationships create public good while satisfying the mission and objectives of each partner.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

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 for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

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 for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

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 or certificates 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 or certificates approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.*

Findings:

During AC 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved two new master degree programs for Northwestern State University: Master of Social Work and Master of Science in Allied Health (Table 20). In addition three undergraduate certificates were approved: Medical Humanities, Honors Critical and Analytical Thinking, and Honors Professional Ethics.

Table 20

New Programs Submitted on Behalf of Northwestern State University and Approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents in AC 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025.

CIP Code	Degree	Subject/ Discipline	Approved
513204	UC	Medical Humanities	08/2023
440701	MSW	Social Work	04/2024
380101	UC	Honors Critical & Analytical Thinking	12/2024
380104	UC	Honors Professional Ethic	12/2024
510000	MS	Allied Health	12/2024

Analysis:

The approval 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. Both the Master of Social Work and Master of Science in Allied Health are professional degrees intended to provide credentials for employment in advanced healthcare-related fields. The three undergraduate certificates represent credentials for skills desired for employment and applicable across multiple disciplines.

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program is designed to prepare students for advanced social work practice in various settings, focusing on both individual and community well-being. The program equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values required to engage effectively with diverse populations and address complex social issues. The MSW program is available through a hybrid format, including both online and on-campus classes, and is structured to accommodate students from various geographic locations, allowing flexibility for working professionals. NSU's MSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), ensuring it meets national standards for social work education and prepares graduates for licensure.

The Master of Science in Allied Health (MSAH) program is designed for healthcare professionals who wish to advance their careers, deepen their expertise, and pursue leadership or specialized roles in healthcare. It typically targets individuals in allied health professions, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, radiologic technology, respiratory therapy, and clinical laboratory sciences. The MSAH program aims to provide healthcare professionals with advanced knowledge and skills to enhance their

clinical, managerial, and research capabilities. Students are trained to take on leadership roles, improve patient outcomes, contribute to evidence-based practices, and influence the overall healthcare delivery system.

The undergraduate certificate in Medical Humanities offers perspectives on medicine and health drawn from art, philosophy, history, religion, literature, and other fields in the humanities and social sciences. It signals to employers and professional schools that students have a broad understanding of medicine, including its social, ethical, cultural, and historical dimensions and provides insight into treating clients as whole individuals.

The undergraduate certificate in Honors Critical and Analytical Thinking provides students with high-demand skills that will allow them to be leading decision-makers and problem-solvers in their chosen fields. Its inter- and multidisciplinary curriculum provides instruction in the skills of critical and analytical thinking and allows students to practice applying those skills in their desired fields through discipline-specific courses. Critical and analytical thinkers can make effective and accurate decisions by understanding the details and complexities of situations, including all of the reasonable alternatives; they can reason through these complexities to decisions that are well-informed, based on evidence and observation, untainted by cognitive biases, and reflect appreciation of both their short- and long-term effects.

The undergraduate certificate in Honors Professional Ethics enhances students' career prospects and opportunities for advancement by demonstrating their ability to understand, make, and implement decisions about ethical issues that arise in their professions. A person with training in professional ethics can protect their organization against corporate malfeasance, sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination, inequitable treatment of clients and partners, and waste, as well as ensure its compliance with all other relevant ethical norms and laws. The certificate is a particularly valuable credential for those seeking to serve on institutional ethics committees and compliance boards, and those pursuing leadership positions in business, their community, or government. It is also good preparation for graduate work in law, philosophy, business, theology, medicine, and public administration.

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 and University Advancement, 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, we remain 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 and University Advancement, 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 and University Advancement, 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 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 and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

2. Number of specialized programs or organizations designed to develop leadership skills outside 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 and University Advancement, 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 and University Advancement, 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 21st 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 2024-2025 includes:

- The number of off campus performances has increased through the addition of numerous music and voice faculty performances regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Number of users on CAPA social media outlets continues to grow 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, 2025, the NSU Foundation secured \$7,527,524 in private funding for the institution.
- The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, was 2,011. This is up 3.9% from 1,936 recorded during the 2023-2024 cycle.
- As of June 30, 2025, restricted endowment assets totaled \$78,211,104 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled \$1,252,889. Totals are up from approximately \$71,102,958 and \$881,520 reported during AC 2023-2024.
- As of June 30, 2025, 34,328 users were registered on the “DemoNSUnite” alumni networking and mentoring platform.
- For AC 2024-2025, 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.

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 21).

Table 21
Metrics for Community Enrichment

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	Community Enrichment Metrics	AC 2023–2028 Targets
	31,713	28,225	<i>Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions</i>	35,350
	196	215	<i>Number of off-campus performances</i>	350
	36,996	38,784	<i>Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets</i>	50,000
30,274	31,426	26,107	<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
	1,321	809	<i>Number of Alumni Association members</i>	2,000
9,813	10,027	10,123	<i>Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets</i>	11,000
\$6,606,624	\$9,319,869	\$7,527,524	<i>Amount of annual private support</i>	\$7,000,000
1,861	1,936	2,011	<i>Number of individual contributors</i>	2,200
	\$71,102,958	\$78,211,104	<i>Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets</i>	\$70,000,000/ \$1,000,000
	\$881,520	\$1,252,889		
In progress	Complete	Complete	<i>Reestablish platform for alumni networking and mentoring</i>	Complete
	34,123	34,328	<i>Number of registered users on “DemoNSUnite”</i>	35,000
In progress	Contracted & designed	In progress	<i>Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines</i>	Complete
	103	104	<i>Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off campus instructional sites</i>	100
294,307	250,732	243,018	<i>Number of hours students spend providing professional services (internships)</i>	350,000
	58	62	<i>Number of institutional partners with articulation agreements</i>	100
In progress	Complete	Complete	<i>Establish content experts in respective fields to serve as editors</i>	Complete
In progress	In progress	In progress	<i>Launch an enhanced website designed to meet the needs of 21st century learners</i>	Complete

Note: Outcomes for AC 2022-2023 are reflected on the far left with AC 2023-2024 to the right and AC 2024-2025 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2024-2025. 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.

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 down from 2023-2024. (Table 22)

Table 22

Attendance at Campus Events

Event	Attendance					% change 2019-2020 to 2023-2024
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	2024-2025	
Classic on the Cane Marching Contest	9,500	9,500	9,500	10,000	8,000	-20%
GALA	15,000	15,000	10,000	12,000	12,500	4.16%
GALA at the Strand			1,100	-		0
Theatre/Dance Mainstage	6,700	6,700	3,700	3,743	1,225	-67.2%
Journalism Day	130	130	(cancelled)	200	350	75%
Symphony Concerts	2,200	3,000	1,500	1,500	1,650	10%
Art Exhibits	2,500	2,500	1,250	4,270	4,500	5.4%
Total	36,030	36,830	27,050	31,713	28,225	-10.9%

Analysis:

The number of patrons attending on campus events has declined due to cancellation of events related to renovations to A. A. Fredericks Auditorium in spring 2025.

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. Renovations to A. A. Fredericks Auditorium will be completed by fall 2025.

Metric:**2. Number of off-campus performances****Findings:**

Number of off-campus performances are up from 196 in AC 2023-2024 to 215 in AC 2024-2025 (Table 23).

Analysis:

The number of off-campus performances in AC 2024-2025 has increased 9.7% from the total recorded in AC 2023-24. The increase is driven by music and voice faculty performances regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Decision:

The number of off campus performances still 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 23

Number of off-campus performances

Event	Performances					% change
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	2024-2025	
Musical Theatre @ Civic Organizations	5	10	10	0	6	0
Design Center Students with outside contracts	6	6	8	8	8	0
Voice Faculty @ Community Events	1	4	4	33	30	-9%
Music Faculty Regional/National Symphony Performances	8	8	4	122	130	7%
Modern in Motion Dance Concert	2	2	2	4	5	25%
Mardi Gras Balls Performance	2	2	2	2	3	50%
The Natchitoches Christmas Parade	1	1	1	1	1	0%
CAPA on the Cane		1	(cancelled)	1	1	0%
Voice Faculty @ Regional/National Performances				9	19	111%
Music Faculty @International Performances				16	12	-25%
Total	25	34	31	196	215	9.7%

Metric:**3. Number of users on CAPA social media outlets****Findings:**

Number of users on CAPA social media outlets are up from AC 2023-2024 (Table 24).

Analysis:

The number of users on CAPA social media outlets continues to rise.

Table 24

Users on CAPA Social Media Outlets

Organization/Platform	Users					% change
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	2024-2025	
CAPA Facebook	2,866	3,448	3,718	5,700	5,870	2.98%
SON Facebook	4,492	5,061	5,801	9,829	9,900	0.72%
Theatre/Dance Facebook	1,698	1,773	1,863	8,300	8,470	2.05%
NSU Choirs Facebook	176	1,011	1,121	1,900	2,000	5.26%
CAPA Twitter	1,194	1,414	1,425	1,461	1,570	7.46%
SON Twitter	829	951	1,003	1,056	1,070	1.33%
NSU Theatre Alumni Facebook	350	1,750	320	500	530	6.00%
NSU Choirs Facebook			182	340	1,400	311.76%
NSU Choir Instagram				1,700	1,174	-30.94%
NSU Flute Studio				4,410	4,700	6.58%
NSU Horn Studio				1,800	2,100	16.67%
Total	11,605	15,408	15,433	36,996	38,784	4.83%

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, 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 26,107 alumni (number of alumni with active email addresses on file). This is down 10.9% from 31,426 reported during AC 2023-2024. The president's weekly update is sent each week to 26,107 alumni.

Analysis:

Decline in number of participants is attributed to purging the list for invalid addresses. Open and click rates are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The weekly update has increased the frequency of e-communications.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will 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 (Table 25). No new chapters were established during AC 2024-2025.

Analysis:

Staff resources were dedicated to sustaining the 24 chapters currently in place and increasing database capabilities for future engagement efforts.

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 with staff members actively traveling to chapter events. Self-sustaining activity will be a focus at chapter events to ensure a strong base of consistent support is established.

Table 25

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, 2025, 809 alumni have renewed their membership, down 38.6% from 1,321 reported in 2024.

Analysis:

Membership counts previously included lapsed memberships up to 12 months after the renewal period.

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 2025 were 6,890. The NSU Alumni Association *X* page (formerly *Twitter*) has 1,978 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2025. The *Instagram* page has 1,255 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2025. Total active users among the three outlets number 10,123, an increase of 1% from 10,027 reported for the fiscal year ending 2024.

Analysis:

Growth of social media outlets is attributed to increased participation of volunteers and additional funds dedicated to advertising, however growth was minimal. 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 and Development

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, 2025, the NSU Foundation secured \$7,527,524 in private funding for the institution. This is down 19.2 % from \$9,319,869.04 recorded during AC 2023-2024.

Analysis:

Two major gifts were realized in 2023-2024, increasing the hurdle to exceed last year’s contributions in 2024-2025. Nevertheless, our private support target was met. Controlling for the major gift outliers shows an increase of 2.8%. 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, 2025, was 2,011. This is up 3.9% from 1,936 recorded during the 2023-2024 cycle.

Analysis:

The number of individual donors has increased. The increase is primarily due to re-engaging previous donors. 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 and reengagement 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, 2025, restricted endowment assets totaled \$78,211,104 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled \$1,252,889. Totals are up from approximately \$71,102,958 and \$881,520 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 continue to be reported in AC 2025-2026.

Responsibility: Director of Alumni and 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. Reestablish platform for alumni networking and mentoring.

Findings:

The "DemoNSUnite" platform for alumni networking and mentoring was reestablished in 2023.

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:

2. Number of registered users on "DemoNSUnite"

Findings:

As of June 30, 2025, 34,328 users were registered on the "DemoNSUnite" alumni networking and mentoring platform.

Analysis:

The site went live in October, 2023. It now has 34,328 registered users, up from 34,123 in 2023-2024.

Decision:

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

Responsibility: Director of Alumni Affairs; University Advancement Database Manager

Metric:**3. *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 2025, targeting 39,500 participants. The survey will close in November 2025.
- Set baselines and targets for brand perception based on the results of the survey.
- Identify actions based on analysis of the results.

Responsibility: Chief Marketing Officer; 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 21st century learners.*

Metric:

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

Findings:

104 events were held in AC 2024-2025 at off-campus instructional sites, up from 103 in AC 2023-2024.

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 2024-2025, students’ professional community/public service effort involved at least 243,018 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 involve students performing and polishing their professional skills. Students in this category collaborated with 194 Campus and Community Partners.

For AC 2024-2025, NSU’s professional skills service hours have an estimated economic impact of at least \$1,977,742; even though this is skilled labor, its value has been calculated at federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025 we documented approximately 3.1% fewer professional hours than AC 2024-2024’s total of 250,732. This decline is slightly less than the decrease in enrollment for the same period (5.77%). The total number of campus and community partners has increased, providing additional community/public service opportunities in 2025-2026.

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.

Responsibility: Executive Director of Economic Development and Advancement, Director of Service-Learning, Deans and Department Heads.

Metric:

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

Findings:

NSU is engaged in 92 cooperative endeavor agreements with 62 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 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 and Advancement

Metric:

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

Findings:

Content experts were identified in 2023-2024 to help with messaging and communication of value propositions to prospective students and their families. For 2024-2025 content experts were reengaged.

Analysis:

Northwestern State University reengaged 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: Chief Marketing Officer

Metric:

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

Findings:

Northwestern State University selected Push10 as the 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. Once the website is launched, modify the metric to assess website traffic and set baselines.

Responsibility: Chief Marketing Officer

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
- Combating 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 2024-2025 Key Findings (with comparisons to AC 2023-2024)

- For AC 2024-2025, students' total community/public service hours were at least 268,502.5, approximately 1.5% fewer hours than AC 2023-2024's grand total of 272,792.
- As a result, the estimated economic impact of NSU's service hours declined from AC 2023-2024's grand total of \$1,977,742 to \$1,946,643.13 for AC 2024-2025, both calculated at federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.
- For AC 2024-2025, students collaborated with approximately 194 Campus and Community Partners, the same as during AC 2023-2024.
- For AC 2024-2025, NSU's Community/Public Service projects addressed all 11 focus areas, unchanged from AC 2022-2023.
- For AC 2024-2025, 14 NSU students participated in four service-learning oral presentations at the 2025 University of Louisiana System Academic Summit on Experiential Learning. By comparison, 13 NSU students made four service-learning oral presentations and 1 poster presentation During AC 2023-2024.

Plan of action moving forward.

1. The University will provide opportunities for students to participate in community/ public service activities through avenues found in academic units, 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 will coordinate a "What to Expect When You're Presenting" workshop for students and faculty mentors to highlight local and regional presentation-making opportunities, expectations, and support services available to students at no cost.
5. Director of Service-Learning will collaborate with key personnel from academic units, 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.

In June 2024, the Louisiana Legislature enacted Louisiana Act 751, which authorizes the issuance of bonds to finance deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects at public postsecondary educational institutions within the state. As part of this statewide initiative, Northwestern State University was allocated \$2 million to support funding for infrastructure and facility improvements on its main campus and off-campus instructional sites. Projects that are funded through ACT 751 include roof replacements at the Shreveport and Leesville instructional sites. These two roof projects are

currently in the design phase and awaiting state review. A comprehensive Energy Management Upgrade across multiple campus facilities is also in the preliminary planning and design stage.

Completed projects in 2024-2025 include repairs to the three elevators in Watson Library, artificial turf installation on both softball and baseball fields, as well as a new and improved scoreboard for the baseball stadium. Projects nearing completion include the Turpin Stadium lighting upgrade, scheduled for completion in June 2025. The replacement of the rigging system in the A.A. Frederick's Theatre is funded through the traditional Capital Outlay process but was supplemented by ACT 751 money and is scheduled for completion in July of 2025. Our new and innovative academic building, Alost Hall, is also set for completion in July of 2025. The David & Sherry Morgan Health and Human Performance Center is progressing with an expected Phase 1 completion date in early 2026.

Projects that have recently begun include restroom improvements in the James A. Noe Military Science Building and stairwell painting in the fine arts building. The following projects are in the early design and review stages with start dates pending. A Notice to Proceed is scheduled to be sent to the contractor in June 2025 for the Fournet Hall roof replacement and vent hood replacement in science classrooms, with an expected duration of 180 days. 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 Bienvenue Hall, the Teacher Education Center, and Varnado Parking Lot.

Technology at Northwestern State University 2025

Northwestern has undertaken a range of technology-focused initiatives aimed at enhancing campus systems and services for the university community. These efforts are organized into three categories: completed, in progress, and planned projects, each contributing to the ongoing improvement of the university's technological infrastructure.

Completed

Teams Telephone system

The Teams telephone solution has been fully deployed following the completion of a 3-year project by ITS. Each milestone our network team reached involved overcoming service, equipment, and vendor-related issues. As part of the upgrade of the phone system, fax and service lines must be migrated off the old analog lines. Service lines provide connections to fire panels, security systems and elevator call boxes. ITS took this opportunity to work with departments and reduce the number of fax lines. All campuses have been fully transitioned

Upgrade Internet connections for CENLA and Leesville sites from 100Mb to 500Mb

Cenla's expansion necessitated an upgrade last year. This bandwidth increase has significantly enhanced network speed and capacity to provide for continued program growth at both campuses.

Physical Plant Ticketing System–Cloud Migration

ITS worked with the physical plant to transition the legacy work order system to a new cloud solution.

Upgrade Windows 10 to Windows 11

Microsoft is scheduled to end support for Windows 10 in October 2025. Unsupported operating systems are a security risk for our network and users. Less than 20 Windows workstations remain on campus

that have not been upgraded due to specific legacy applications. ITS will continue to work with departments to migrate these final systems.

Varnado Hall Network and Wi-Fi Upgrade

Varnado Hall remains a dynamic component of our university housing here in Natchitoches. The network upgrades will provide dependable connectivity to its residents, ensuring they have access to resources essential for their academic success and overall campus experience.

Upgrade Banner Servers

We are updating our servers to Oracle Linux 8.X to ensure our applications run on fully supported and modern operating systems. This upgrade enhances our security posture, improves vendor support options, and positions us for future scalability and growth.

Ellucian ETHOS

Ellucian ETHOS is a platform designed to unify processes and connect our local Banner servers to cloud-based applications. We were able to connect our cloud instance of Ellucian ETHOS to the local Student and Integration API's and populate their published resources to ETHOS. This opened the door to configuring and utilizing several Ellucian cloud applications.

In Progress

Banner Document Management System

Training and installation have commenced to implement the Banner Document Management System. This system will streamline document management processes across the university.

Banner 9 Self Service modules for Students, Faculty, and Financial Aid

Several new Banner 9 Self-Service modules have been successfully installed and are currently undergoing testing and configuration to ensure seamless functionality.

Review and Revise ITS Policies

With feedback from the Strategic Planning Team and the Louisiana legislative auditors, ITS determined that our departmental policies should be reviewed and revised. Our ITS leadership team has been conducting a review of all policies. We are focusing on cybersecurity, data protection and modern technologies.

Shreveport Campus Network Upgrade

The Shreveport campus houses one of our principal degree programs and the university's disaster recovery center. This critical infrastructure upgrade will provide reliable network access to our secondary data center and provide for growth of our nursing and allied health program. Equipment has been configured, and we are working to schedule installation in late July 2025.

Alost Hall Technology and Network

With the construction of Northwestern new instructional building, we aim to ensure that its state-of-the-art technology infrastructure will support learning, administration, and meeting spaces effectively. ITS has worked with departments to ensure the classrooms meet each area's expectations. Network connectivity has been established with the building. Classroom technology equipment is planned when access is available.

Core Main Campus Network Upgrade

The end of hardware support on our current equipment and the internet upgrade are some important reasons for upgrading the universities core network. This equipment provides connectivity

to our satellite campuses, main campus buildings, and data center services; ensuring network reliability that is critical to university operations. Equipment is installed, configured and our team is transitioning networks to the new switch.

DegreeWorks upgrade with integration into Experience portal

Experience portal offers a tailored interface that powers day-to-day activities in one unified place for students and staff. Degree Works feeds directly into Experience portal to facilitate a connected experience for all campus users.

Ellucian Experience Portal

Experience portal offers a tailored interface that powers day-to-day activities in one unified place for students and staff. Degree Works feeds directly into Experience portal to facilitate a connected experience for all campus users.

Planned

Campus network hardware replacement (100Gb Internet Connection)

The university aims to upgrade its core network equipment to accommodate an update of the LONI (Louisiana Optical Network Initiative) circuit from the current 10 Gbps to a faster 100 Gbps connection. We are following a plan for upgrading network and security appliances toward this goal.

Field House Technology and Network

The expansion of the athletics facility will incorporate the necessary technology to support enhanced training, performance analysis, and administrative functions, ensuring that the facility meets the evolving needs of both athletes and staff.

Disaster Recovery Center rebuild in Shreveport

Another important matter is rebuilding the Disaster Recovery Center in Shreveport, as some critical equipment is approaching 20 years old. The purpose of these servers is to house backups of critical data. This project will modernize the center's IT infrastructure and improve the university's disaster recovery capabilities.

Datacenter Replacement Main Campus

Cloud computing has been utilized for many critical university functions. Some university applications are still housed on premises. This upgrade will provide capacity for growth and the reliability and up-time our students and faculty depend upon. Funding has been secured for phase 1 of this project and we are acquiring quotes.

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. The steps for assessing our progress are given in Table 26.

Several individual and team highlights during 2024-2025 generated positive publicity and a high level of alumni/community pride. Furthermore, the academic and citizenship emphasis continued to produce positive results. Specifically, the athletic department’s three core values all yielded levels of success:

Academic Achievement

- The department set a record with its spring GPA of 3.27 for all student-athletes.
- NSU improved 10.5% in total student-athletes on the Southland Conference Commissioner’s Spring Honor Roll, with 126 earning at least a 3.0 GPA during their semester of competition. Across both semesters, 224 NSU student-athletes were named to the commissioner’s honor roll.
- NSU continues to excel in graduating their student-athletes with a mark of 87% in the most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rate report. This was the sixth consecutive year NSU scored 80% or better.
- Thirteen of the 14 teams exceeded the 930 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmark.
- Three programs—tennis, men’s cross country, and women’s cross country—posted perfect Academic Performance Rate single year scores of 1,000.
- Four programs—tennis, volleyball, soccer, and men’s cross country—kept their multi-year rates at or above 975, with tennis remaining perfect and volleyball sitting at 984.

Personal Responsibility

- NSU student-athletes registered 4,273 hours of community/campus service and engagement for the 2024-2025 year. This was a 13.5% increase over AC 2023-2024.
- Some of the events included were:
 - Chunk the Change for the NSU Food Pantry
 - NSU Library—painting the interior
 - 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

- The women’s track and field program swept the Southland Conference Indoor and Outdoor Championships for the second straight year. NSU’s women’s team has won five of the past six conference meets in the past three seasons.
- Women’s Tennis were Southland Conference co-regular season champions. The Conference named Coach Morelli their Coach of the Year.

Table 26

Metrics for Athletic Prominence

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	Athletic Prominence Metrics	2023-2028 Target
70,292	69,868	72,148	<i>Yearly event attendance for all sports</i>	75,000
\$2,939,068	\$3,101,784	\$5,022,018	<i>Yearly revenue (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships, game guarantees)</i>	\$2,380,264
21,250	23,472	35,943	<i>Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes</i>	25,458
11,541	11,786	11,830	<i>Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers</i>	11,511
\$39,065	\$43,811	\$31,969	<i>Licensing royalties (LRG)</i>	\$50,000
186 (holders) 792 (tix)	192 (holders) 812 (tix)	201 (holders) 836 (tix)	<i>Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e., Leesville, Shreveport, Alexandria, Bossier City)</i>	300
11*	15	28	<i>Camps and clinics for area youth</i>	20
50*	84	91	<i>Transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and DUF BoD, current/potential donors)</i>	60
36	37	42	<i>Student-athlete participation in campus activities. (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM)</i>	20
3,624	3,764	4,273	<i>Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).</i>	4,000
2.952	3.064	3.23	<i>Student-athlete GPA</i>	3.11
147	161	204	<i>Number of Dean's/President's List honorees per year</i>	250
187	197	224	<i>Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees per year.</i>	200
959/970	961/972	963/965	<i>Multi and single-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores.</i>	940
11	6	10	<i>Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.</i>	8
7/14	4/14	7/14	<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 2022-2023 are reflected on the far left with AC 2023-2024 to the right and AC 2024-2025 to the far right. *Blue italicized text was assessed in 2024-2025. 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.*

* data collection incomplete in AC 2022-2023

- Five of NSU's eight programs that compete in standings-related sports—baseball, men's basketball, football, women's basketball, softball, tennis, volleyball, and soccer—finished in the top four of the league. Adding in men's and women's track and field's performance at the conference level, seven of the 14 were top-four programs in the league.
- Northwestern State produced two track and field All-Americans—women's sprinter Maygan Shaw and freshman jumper Roy Morris. Eight total NSU student-athletes reached the NCAA Regionals. Individual conference accolades included: Indoor and Outdoor Coach of the Year (Mike Heimerman), Women's Outdoor Athlete of the Year (Samari Finney), Women's Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year (Shaw), and Women's Outdoor Field Athlete of the Year (Raven-Symone Jarrett). Pole vaulter Madison Brown was named the SLC Indoor Track and Field Student-Athlete of the Year, combining her academic and athletic performance. Shaw was named the SLC Female Indoor Track Athlete of the Year while Dynia Lewis was the SLC Indoor Co-Newcomer of the Year. Assistant coach Adam Pennington was named the USTFCCA Indoor Region Assistant Coach of the Year.

- Women's basketball returned to the national postseason for the first time since 2016, playing in the WNIT after a season in which the Lady Demons produced the Southland Newcomer of the Year (Mya Blake) and Freshman of the Year (Vernell Atamah). Blake was a first-team All-Southland selection and led the conference in scoring. Atamah was NSU's first SLC Freshman of the Year since 2013.
- Soccer produced three all-conference players (two first-teamers) and two first-team All-Louisiana selections while winning five games from the previous season.
- Softball defeated No. 20 Mississippi State in Starkville for its first win over a ranked team since 2004.
- Men's basketball nearly doubled its win total from AC 2023-2024 (from 9 to 16) and reached the Southland Conference Tournament semifinals for the third time in the past five seasons.
- Northwestern State baseball became the first team to hand LSU a run-rule loss in a non-conference game, defeating the eventual national champion Tigers 13-3 on April 22. This season the Demons won 13 more games than a season ago and won their most SLC games since 2016. The 35 wins were the most since 2018 when NSU won the SLC Tournament title.
- Demon football linebacker Blake Gotcher led the NCAA (all divisions) in tackles enroute to earning All-American honors from two sources. Gotcher also finished as a finalist for the Buck Buchanan Award, honoring the best defensive player in the Football Championship Series. Teammate Chancellor Owens also earned Freshman All-American honors from two publications.

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, for the third straight year, noticeable facility updates were completed.

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 and Fort Polk instructional sites to participate in events both on the main campus and 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 2023-2024, overall total attendance was up slightly (3.26%) in 2024-2025. The slight increase in overall attendance is due to football having a full home schedule of five games. However, soccer was the only other sport to have increased total attendance and average attendance in 2024-25 (Table 27).

Analysis:

Total attendance for AC 2024-2025 increased slightly from AC 2023-2024. The increase in total attendance was due to football playing five home football games as well renewed optimism in the program with new head football coach Blaine McCorkle. The total football attendance doubled the attendance from 2022-23. The 2024-25 average attendance for football was second in the Southland Conference. However, other than football and soccer, all other sports decreased in attendance. Men's and Women's Basketball has decreased for the second straight year despite both teams finishing tied for fourth in the Southland Conference. In addition, baseball was down significantly from the previous year despite finishing fourth in the Southland Conference. Looking to AC 2025-26, our external administrative staff must focus on increasing attendance, thus increasing ticket revenue. Our sport programs, especially in Men's and Women's Basketball and Baseball, were too good in AC 2023-24 to have decreased in attendance. These three sports are revenue producing and we need to do a better job of marketing the programs and generating interest which will result in increased attendance and revenue.

Table 27

Game Attendance by Sport, 2021-2022 to 2024-2025.

Sport	AC 2021-2022			AC 2022-23			AC 2023-24			AC 2024-25		
	Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance	
		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average
Football	5	32,828	6565.6	5	18,843	3768.6	3	14,742	4,914	5	35,224	7,045
Soccer	7	1,564	223.4	8	1,149	143.6	7	882	126	9	1,250	139
Volleyball	9	1,167	129.7	10	1,333	133.3	13	3,588	276	9	1,162	129
M-Basketball	12	10,115	842.9	13	17,205	1323.5	13	13,455	1,035	15	8,633	576
W-Basketball	12	5,399	449.9	14	9,220	658.6	11	5,434	494	14	5,725	409
Softball	15	3,769	251.3	18	4,172	213.8	16	6,576	411	22	4,729	215
Baseball	28	14,722	525.8	26	18,370	706.5	27	25,191	933	25	15,425	617
Total		69,564			70,292			69,868			72,148	

Metric:

2. *Yearly revenue for all sports*

Findings:

Revenues for AC 2024-2025 were \$5,022,018, including \$240,641 for ticket sales (season and single game), \$3,369,877 for Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted gifts, restricted gifts (cash), and sponsorships and game guarantees of \$1,411,500.

Analysis:

Ticket revenue in AC 2024-2025 was \$240,641, representing a \$65,938 increase (37.74%) from the previous year's total of \$174,703. The increase in ticket sales is due to having a full home football schedule plus the renewed optimism surrounding the new head football coach, Blaine McCorkle. Demons Unlimited Foundation cash revenue increased by 78.76%. The increase is due to two large donations, \$1,992,000 (the largest cash gift in Athletics history) for baseball and softball facility upgrades and \$340,000 for the baseball scoreboard. Game guarantees increased 18.9% in AC 2024-25. We have asked our coaches in revenue generating sports to increase game guarantees to help with our overall budget. Our focus for AC 2025-26 is to continue to drive revenue. To be competitive, we must increase revenue, and we are going to have to think creatively to do so.

Metric:

3. *Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes*

Findings:

The number of likes on our Facebook account increased from 23,472 in AC 2023-2024 to 35,943 in AC 2024-2025, a 53.1% growth rate based on content shared on the platform throughout the academic year.

Analysis:

Our marketing department focused on 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. In addition to Facebook's significant growth, Tik Tok and Instagram both showed significant growth in AC 2024-25. Our department believes our biggest future growth will come from these two social media platforms. 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 2024-2025, a small 0.37% gain from the previous year was recorded on the main Twitter account (@NSUDemons), averaging more than 16,400 impressions per month for the second straight year. Followers on the main account increased to 11,830. The athletics department has also seen significant growth on two other social media platforms, Tik Tok and Instagram.

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. Although Twitter's growth was small, Tik Tok and Instagram both showed significant growth in AC 2024-25. Our department believes our biggest future growth will come from these two social media platforms.

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 2024 and the first quarter of 2025. Total revenue of \$31,969.21 was 24.7% below the long-term average and a 27.0% decrease from AC 2023-24 (Table 28). In Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2024, quarterly revenues were below the 8-year average; only Winter 2025 was above average.

Analysis:

Licensing revenues decreased significantly. The continuation of negative factors such as the decrease in student enrollment and football's continued losing season record may have contributed. Another potential factor could be the lack of apparel and novelty items in retail stores. The University needs to consider ways to increase NSU licensed products in retail stores from Shreveport to Alexandria.

Table 28

Licensing Resource Group Revenue/CLC by Assessment Cycle

AC	April-June (previous)	July- September	October- December	January- March	Total
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
2024-2025	\$ 6,549.29	8,302.20	5,284.61	11,833.11	31,969.21
M	\$ 9,782.05	11,840.13	8,938.84	9,291.63	39,852.67
Difference from M	(\$ 3,232.76)	(3,537.93)	(3,654.23)	2,571.48	(7,883.46)

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 Parish increased from 192 in AC 2023-2024 to 201 AC 2024-2025. The 201 season ticket holders collectively purchased 836 season tickets.

Analysis:

The small increase in season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parish 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 may 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 2025–26:

- For each sport program, develop marketing campaigns that identify niche audiences with customized communication strategies for each striation 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 strengthening 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, which 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, and 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: 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:

Twenty-eight total camps (eight by football, four by soccer and softball, and three each by volleyball, men's basketball, women's basketball, and baseball) were held in AC 2024-2025.

Analysis:

The increase in the number of camps can be attributed mainly to football and softball. New head coaches in both sport programs wanted to increase their visibility across the state and east Texas. 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:

As with previous years, 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 2024-2025 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 three 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 (Demon Brothers Booster Club) and supporters (Beacon Society) in the spring to give an in depth look into the football program including additional resources provided by the university and athletic department and assessed ways in which the football program can be more successful. The goals of the meetings were for alums/supporters to get to know the inner workings of the football program and how Coach McCorkle has instilled the culture and core values 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 2024-2025, the athletics department continued to prioritize meetings with donors to cultivate and solicit financial support for the athletics department. Despite staff turnover we have made progress in getting more alumni and donors involved. However, we MUST continue to recognize how important alumni and donor support is for our athletic department and the need to continue reaching out, cultivating, and soliciting new donors. The number of donor cultivation meetings did increase during AC 2024-2025. 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:

Our primary focus MUST be to engage, on all levels, 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 2024-2025, 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 2024-2025 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 4,273 hours of community service during the 2024-2025 year (Table 29).

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. Athletics partnered

Table 29
Community Service Hours Contributed by NSU Athletics by Team, 2021-2022 to 2024-2025

	NSU ATHLETICS COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS			
TEAM	AC 2021-2022	AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-25
Soccer	122	122	146	166
Men's Basketball	125	742	725	823
Women's Basketball	45	562	602	684
Football	425	525	430	488
Baseball	84	301	385	437
Softball	75	203	260	295
Tennis	60	68	73	83
Men's Indoor and Outdoor Track	64	152	141	160
Men's Cross Country	0	26	51	58
Women's Indoor and Outdoor Track	45	152	141	160
Women's XCcountry	0	26	51	58
Volleyball	147	298	365	414
ALL TEAMS	352	447	394	447
Total Hours	1,544	3,624	3,764	4,273

with the app Helper Helper to help track our student-athletes community service hours. In addition, Associate AD Sports Medicine/Senior Women's Administrator Brittany Pajuluoma did an excellent job in providing and following up with student-athletes and coaches on community service opportunities. 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/Promote 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 2024 was 3.19 and Spring 2027 was 3.27; overall, the 2024-2025 academic year average GPA was 3.23.

Analysis:

Our student-athletes exceeded the goal of a cumulative department GPA of 3.11 or better for AC 2024-2025 with a cumulative GPA of 3.23. Our cumulative department Fall GPA of 3.19 was the highest semester GPA since Spring 2014, then the Spring GPA beat this mark with a cumulative semester GPA of 3.27 which set a department record. Our student-athletes continue to do well in the classroom. 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 and Dean's List was the highest since Spring 2020 and Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll was the highest in over 10 years (Table 30).

Table 30

Student-Athletes Receiving Academic Honors AC 2016-2017 to AC 2024-2025

Term	President's List	Dean's List	Total	Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll
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
Fall 2024	42	54	96	98
Spring 2025	49	59	108	126

Analysis:

Overall, numbers rose substantially for the President's List, Dean's List, and the Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll. Our department has continued to make academics a priority and the staff and coaches have done an excellent job in providing the resources necessary for our student-athletes to be successful. The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong on an individual basis as well as collectively.

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. (Since many athletes are on both the indoor and outdoor track teams, these rosters are combined to avoid duplicate reporting, leaving a total of 12 teams for this metric.) In the report for 2023-2024, 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 2023-2024 multi-year APR was 965. This is down from the previous couple of years due to the dramatic drop-in football's APR. Football was not sponsored for AC 2023-24 due to the tragic circumstances involving the death of a student-athlete. Because of this, football was measured on a 3-year average and not the normal 4-year average. This led to a multi-year rate of 928 which is below the minimum required multi-year average of 930. However, the institution qualified for a waiver and was able to avoid a post-season and countable athletically-related activity penalties for AC 2025-26. On a positive note, three NSU teams—women's cross country, men's cross country, and women's tennis—received a perfect 1,000 APR score (Table 31).

Unfortunately, NSU did not receive the NCAA Academic Performance Unit for the 2023-2024 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 just missed qualifying for one (GSR) of the units (qualifying for more than one unit does not result in additional funding).

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. However, the NCAA

Table 31

Three Year NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) by Sport, AC 2021-2022 to AC 2023-2024

Teams	Year	APR	
		Multi-Year	Single-Year
Baseball	2021-22	979	970
	2022-23	969	951
	2023-24	962	973
Men's Basketball	2021-22	975	961
	2022-23	979	956
	2023-24	947	913
Women's Basketball	2021-22	967	960
	2022-23	962	938
	2023-24	945	957
Football	2021-22	950	936
	2022-23	936	898
	2023-24	928	N/A
Soccer	2021-22	981	1,000
	2022-23	985	989
	2023-24	977	948
Softball	2021-22	979	942
	2022-23	980	988
	2023-24	971	963
Tennis	2021-22	983	1,000
	2022-23	1,000	1,000
	2023-24	1,000	1,000
Men's Cross Country	2021-22	985	1,000
	2022-23	981	1,000
	2023-24	975	1,000
Women's Cross Country	2021-22	957	882
	2022-23	967	1,000
	2023-24	953	1,000
Men's Indoor and Outdoor Track	2021-22	931	913
	2022-23	930	976
	2023-24	932	935
Women's Indoor and Outdoor Track	2021-22	970	944
	2022-23	960	971
	2023-24	955	990
Volleyball	2021-22	989	1,000
	2022-23	989	1,000
	2023-24	984	936
Institutional	2021-22	959	970
	2022-23	961	972
	2023-24	963	965

Academic Performance Unit ups the ante for making academic achievement a priority for Division I athletic programs. NSU is one of many in the Southland Conference who failed to qualify for these funds this past year and has partnered with Forward Progress, an APR tracking company; they will review our programs to see if they can find any APR points. Forward Progress' track record shows a 4% increase in APR points which would put us over the minimum needed to receive the academic unit funding. The academic unit revenue is critical for NSU, and the staff and coaches are going to work extremely hard to ensure we accomplish this metric.

Metric:

4. *Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with funding availability*

Finding:

The NSU athletic program continues to make strides in upgrading all our athletic facilities. The department started, completed, or approached completion on 10 projects in AC 2024-25. Despite

weather and suitable ground delays the David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center is coming together with an official completion date of January 2026. 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.

Thanks to a lead gift of \$1,992,000 from David and Jennifer Thornton the department was able to put in state-of-the-art turf at both baseball and softball as well as outfield wall at baseball and lights at softball. The turf is the first of its kind in the United States as it is a no-fill turf meaning there is no tire rubber. The European Union banned tire rubber fill because of its link to cancer. Geo Surfaces, based in Baton Rouge, brought their no-fill turf to the US and NSU was the first school to install it.

The Athletic Department has identified several facility projects that need to be completed including new video boards for the softball, soccer, and track & field complexes (\$750,000 total); new mondo track surface and lights (\$1.8M); and a new locker room and coaches' offices for women's soccer (\$2M) and 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 2024-2025 include:

- Baseball Turf and Outfield Wall (\$1.4M)
- Softball Turf and Lights (\$592,000)
- Softball Hitting/Pitching Cage—adding two pitching lanes and enclosing it with HVAC (\$200,000-split between cash and GIK)
- New LED Digital Video Boards (Prather Coliseum and Baseball) (\$600,000)

Facility projects on the radar:

- New LED Digital Video Boards (Softball, Soccer, and Track & Field (\$750,000)
- Track Mondo Surface and Lights (\$1.8M)
- 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:

The AC 2024-25 athletic season was a very fruitful one for Northwestern State. Eight varsity teams register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, women's tennis). Five of the eight programs (soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball,

and women's tennis) met our performance goal. In track and field/cross country, which does not generate a win/loss percentage, the women's team claimed their third straight Southland Conference Indoor Championship and claimed their second straight outdoor Southland Conference Championship.

Analysis:

The AC 2024-2025 athletic department was highly successful athletically. Seven of our 14 sports finished in the upper third (Top 4) of the conference standings. The expectation for AC 2025-26 is to continue this upward trajectory with our sport programs. Softball and Men's Indoor and Outdoor Track are poised for big years. Football is going to be better as they continue to build the program. 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. As long as the university and department can continue to provide the resources necessary to compete, the future is really 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 continued challenges with revenue shortfalls, AC 2024-25 was a resounding success. NSU graduated over 100 student-athletes, had an overall GPA of 3.23, won three Southland Conference Championships, and dedicated 4,273 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 with the best experience possible. NSU is on an upward trajectory and is set up to have an even better 2025-2026 academic year in the classroom, on the field/court, and in the community.

Strategic Focus Area 6–Cultural Competence

According to our mission statement, “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 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 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 community at Northwestern. In addition, Dr. Jasmine Wise assists the department’s growth as the Coordinator of the Gail Metoyer Jones Center.

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 across campus and in all activities to close the gap in recruitment, retention, and completion. To quantitatively measure its progress, Northwestern established benchmarks for its Cultural Competence Metrics (Table 32) in AC 2022-2023, AC 2023-2024, and AC 2024-2025 with corresponding AC 2027-2028 targets.

Table 32:

Metrics for Cultural Competence

AC 2022-2023	AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	Cultural Competence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
39%	39%	39%	<i>Percentage of Students of Color</i>	50%
24%	23%	23%	<i>Percentage of Faculty of Color</i>	30%
16%	18%	20%	<i>Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color</i>	30%
29%	27%	28%	<i>Percentage of Administrators of Color</i>	30%
53%	65%	65%	<i>Retention rate of Students of Color 1st–2nd year</i>	80%
39%	40%	50%	<i>Retention rate of Students of Color 1st–3rd year</i>	65%
3,897	3,474	3,326	<i>Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment</i>	5,000
43%	39%	41%	<i>Graduation rates of Students of Color</i>	50%
11*	9	6	<i>Number of students in Ethnic Studies minors</i>	75
11	6	12	<i>Number of courses offered in the Ethnic Studies minors</i>	12
8	12	13	<i>Number of Inclusive Coaching Workshops</i>	15
43%	44%	38%	<i>Percentage of Students of Color in student organizations</i>	50%
			<i>Percent of Positive Responses on NSU Campus Climate Survey</i>	80%
10	60	85	<i>Frequency of CC programs and initiatives sponsored by CID or any Dept/Org per academic year</i>	75
	65%	70%	<i>Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant</i>	100%
25%	85%	75%	<i>Percent of Students of Color graduates working within 6 months of graduation</i>	75%

Note: Outcomes for AC 2022-2023 are reflected on the far left with AC 2023-2024 to the right and AC 2024-2025 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2024-2025. 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.

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 1st–2nd year*
6. *Retention rate of Students of Color 1st–3rd 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 2024-2025 the student body was composed of 39.02% Students of Color. The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

Analysis:

The University continues to have one of the most diverse student body populations in the region. *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, or Foreign. The category Foreign may include individuals who identify as *White*; however, they do increase the campus's cultural diversity. In Fall 2024, NSU enrolled 3,326 Students of Color. The total number of students attending NSU is 8,523. The percentage of Students of Color did not change from AC 2023-2024 to AC 2024-2025. Although the overall student enrollment has dropped slightly, as is the current trend in higher education, it is encouraging that the percentage of students of color has not decreased.

Decision:

Work with recruiting and retention to increase the overall number of students along with percentage of Students of Color. Specifically, we will support recruiting, retention, and academic programs to increase the number of students at NSU, especially those that tap into underserved populations.

Metric:

2. *Percentage of Faculty of Color*

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025 the percentage of Faculty of Color was 22.9%.

Analysis:

The target percentage is 30% by the year 2028. Of the 546 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. There was no significant change from AC 2023-2024, as the University increased the number of faculty by three members this year. A positive outcome from this data is that there seems to be no attrition of faculty of color this academic year as opposed to last year in which the attrition rate was 29%.

Decision:

Work with human resources, the Office of the Provost, and the Faculty Senate, in particular the Culture and Climate committee, to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color. Through the Culture and Climate committee composed of faculty members, various initiatives will be researched and instituted to foster a sense of belonging and increase morale of faculty to increase their retention.

Metric:

3. *Percentage of Tenured Faculty of Color*

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025 the percentage of tenured Faculty of Color was 19.7%.

Analysis:

The target percentage is 30% by the year Fall 2028.

Of the 147 tenured faculty members, 29 faculty members are People of Color. The percentage of tenured faculty who are Faculty of Color increased by one percentage point from AC 2023-2024 to AC 2024-2025, however, this may be due to the total number of tenured faculty decreasing. 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. New faculty are encouraged to attend New Faculty Orientation and “Demonology” sessions to become more familiar with the process and requirements. Moreover, having a faculty mentor to gain more guidance and wisdom could be beneficial and help junior faculty navigate the process.

Decision:

Work with the Office of the Provost and the faculty senate to increase the percentage of Faculty of Color that achieve tenure and promotion. Establish faculty mentorship program to assist junior faculty navigating the process.

Metric:

4. *Percentage of Administrators of Color*

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025 the percentage of Administrators of Color is 28.0%.

Analysis:

The target percentage is 30% by the year Fall 2028. This was a slight increase from AC 2023-2024 (1%). Of the 239 administrators, 67 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 efforts to attract and retain Administrators of Color.

Decision:

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 1st–2nd year

Findings:

For retention rates, students whose race/ethnicity is listed as *unknown* were excluded. In AC 2024-2025 the retention rate of Students of Color 1st-2nd year was 65.4%.

Analysis:

The target percentage is 80% by the year Fall 2028. Of the 420 first year Students of Color from the Fall 2023 cohort, 275 (65.4%) were retained to the second year. In comparison, students who identified as White had a significantly higher retention rate of 75.0% with 388 of the 517 students returning for the second year ($p < .001$). There was no significant change from AC 2023-2024 to AC 2024-2025 as we continue to see the retention rate of students of color in the first year lags behind the rate of their white peers.

Decision:

The Office of Culture and Climate 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. Also, the Director of Culture and Climate will work with appropriate departments on retention plans to identify and remove barriers to student success.

Metric:

6. Retention rate of Students of Color 1st–3rd year

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025 the retention rate of Students of Color from 1st-3rd year was 49.9%.

Analysis:

The target percentage is 65% by the year 2028. Of the 389 first year Students of Color from the Fall 2022 cohort, 194 (49.9%) were retained to the third year. In comparison, of the students that identified as White, 299 out of 484 (61.8%) were retained from first to third year. It is encouraging to see a 10% increase this year in retention rates of students of color versus last year. This significant improvement may be due to the intentional efforts by enrollment management/first year experience and other departments.

Decision:

The Office of Culture and Climate will 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. Also, the Director of Culture and Climate will work with appropriate departments on retention plans to identify and remove barriers to student success.

Metric:

7. Overall Northwestern State Student of Color enrollment

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, the Fall 2024 enrollment of Northwestern State University included 3,326 Students of Color. The target is 5,000 students by the year 2028.

Analysis:

In comparison to AC 2023-2024, 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 has remained constant each year it has been assessed. Because numbers have declined we must re-evaluate recruitment and retention plans at the enrollment management and academic department level. As the population becomes more diverse, we must continue to focus on attracting and retaining all types of students. Innovative methods that focus on removing barriers to education need to be attempted to increase our enrollment figures.

Decision:

Work with recruiting office/enrollment management, Office of the Provost, and student affairs to recruit and retain Students of Color.

Metric:

8. Graduation rates of Students of Color

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025 the graduation rate of Students of Color was 40.9%.

Analysis:

The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

In the Fall 2018 cohort, 289 Students of Color out of 707 (40.9%) completed an associate or bachelor's degree within 4 to 6 years of entering the cohort. Students of Color graduation rate increased by 2 percentage points from AC 2023-2024 to AC 2024-2025. Also, in comparison, a slightly higher proportion of students in that cohort that identify as White (or unknown) graduated (332 out of 773 total; 42.9%). It is encouraging that the gap is closing in comparison to the difference in rates from last year, as well as increasing. However, the university lags beyond some of our sister universities which boast higher overall graduation rates and graduation rates of students of color. Outreach with resources that address the specific needs of Students of Color must occur. The mentoring program that enrollment management instituted was helping to improve retention and completion rates, however, it was discontinued this past year. This may hinder the progress made so we need to revisit the program. Also, we need to continue to connect more students with TRIO services, if they qualify, which will provide critical support for students.

Decision:

Work with recruiting office/enrollment management, TRIO support services and Academic Success Center to ensure all students 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 2024-2025, six 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 because four students graduated in AC 2023-2024 while the net number of continuing declared majors only increased by one. 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. The Office of Culture and Climate continued the collaboration with the Ethnic Studies advisory board to host a lecture series that attracted all NSU constituents and highlighted the minor. However, the minors seem to be experiencing challenges in marketing for each specifically. Full support from the university will be needed to make the programs more visible and attract more students.

Decision:

Collaborate with the Ethnic Studies Advisory Board, Coordinators of the minors, the Office of the Provost, and associated special interest student groups 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. More promotion of the minors during recruitment days are also needed to make potential students aware of the program. Coordinators will be encouraged to meet with Provost and Marketing team to implement effective marketing strategies.

Metric:

2. *Number of courses offered in the Ethnic Studies Minor*

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, 12 courses were offered in the Ethnic Studies minors.

Analysis:

The number of courses offered in the Ethnic Studies minors increased this year in comparison to last academic year which had only 6 different ethnic studies minor courses thanks to collaborations with different academic departments and professors willing to teach unique courses.

Decision:

Cross collaborate and cooperate with different academic departments to offer students a wide and diverse range of courses from different perspectives. Also, to maintain and increase these unique course offerings, more faculty of diverse educational backgrounds are needed to teach them. 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.

Metric:

3. *Number of Inclusive Coaching Workshops*

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, 13 workshops were presented to Faculty, Staff, and Students.

Analysis:

We increased the number of workshops offered by 1. These workshops covered a myriad of topics that led to insightful information and thought-provoking dialogue between attendees. Also being peer-led by faculty and students volunteers, this increased leadership and inspired further educational pursuits among presenters. Through this initiative, the nine faculty/staff workshops had 83 total participants while 25 students participated in the four student workshops.

Decision:

Collaborate with faculty and staff to provide cultural competence training in a diverse range of topics. Work with the Provost to encourage more participation among faculty and staff. Continue to train students in the Cultural Bridge Builders group to present to students. Meet with Student Experience staff to develop new ways to collaborate with more student groups to increase attendance to the workshops.

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 2024-2025 the percentage of Students of Color making up total participation in student organizations is 37.9%. The target percentage is 50% by the year 2028.

Analysis:

Findings show that of the 1,107 total members, 420 (37.9%) members in a Recognized Student Organization (RSO) identify as a Student of Color, a decrease of about 6% between AC 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025. Moreover, this equates to 13% of the Students of Color population at NSU being involved in at least one RSO which is a decrease of 2%. Interestingly, this is still 1% higher in comparison to the White student population with 12% participation (same figure as last year). This figure also does not consider other forms of involvement on campus such as athletics, some of the spirit groups, or theater (except for the Student Theater Organization). The data must be viewed with caution as the system for reporting student involvement is dependent on the student organization leaders inputting and updating organization rosters accurately and timely. Also, many students did not report race or ethnicity data which is also self-reported. Of concern is the significant decrease in participation of students of color in comparison to last year. Involvement leads to finding connection and a sense of belonging on campus which leads to higher retention. Efforts to foster these connections will need to be improved as this can also lead to more involved alumni. Also, we hope collaboration and the exchange of cultural competence occurs within these organizations among their members.

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 2024-2025 no NSU Campus Climate Survey on Cultural Competence was selected. The target percentage is 50%+ by the year 2028.

Analysis:

Due to budget restrictions and political climate, we chose not to assess campus cultural climate via a separate survey. However, data was analyzed from the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey that is administered bi-yearly. This year the response rate was 13%. The averages on all 45 items were significantly higher than the national norms for similar institutions; all but two items were significantly higher than the averages for the University of Louisiana System.

One of the reported challenges NSU is facing is on the item that states, *Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students*, ($M = 5.84$, $SD = 1.49$). The survey also revealed a strength of NSU via the item that states, *Students are made to feel welcome here* ($M = 6.13$, $SD = 1.29$). In comparison to the last time the survey was administered in Spring of 2023, NSU maintained high ratings. Satisfaction increased significantly on the item, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair* ($M = 6.13$, $SD = 1.29$), compared to AC 2022-2023 ($M = 5.95$, $SD = 1.46$, $p < .01$). Satisfaction also increased significantly on the local item, *The college provides opportunities to learn about diverse groups in the classroom* ($M = 6.03$, $SD = 1.31$), compared to AC 2022-2023 ($M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.44$, $p < .01$). Lastly, for the local item, *Because of my strong connection to NSU I tell people that it is a great place to go*, the rating for AC 2024-2025 increased significantly ($M = 6.02$, $SD = 1.43$) compared to AC 2022-2023 ($M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.90$, $p < .001$). The score on the local item, *College students show respect for different perspectives*, decreased slightly, with a score of 5.88 in 2025 versus 5.89 in 2023.

In comparison to our fellow universities in the University of Louisiana System and the National Norms, NSU students reported significantly higher satisfaction ratings at the $p < .001$ level on 42 of 45 items. This shows that overall, NSU is a leader in overall Campus Climate.

Drilling down into the data, we analyzed the items on specific demographic markers to assess whether groups of students differed. In analyzing the differences between Students of Color and White/Caucasian students, we found no significant difference except for the item, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*. On this item it seems as though White students were in less agreement that the disciplinary procedures are fair as the score was a 4.58 in comparison to Students of Color with a score of 4.99 ($p = .039$).

Gender differences were also analyzed. Comparing male, female, and other gender identities (transgender, gender queer, and other gender), no significant differences were detected. Surprisingly, the analysis did reveal slightly higher satisfaction scores among those that identified as one of the other gender identities, although the sample size of this group was small ($n = 11$).

Lastly, disability status differences were compared. Those that identified as having both a physical and a learning disability had lower mean ratings on the following items: *Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students*, *Students are made to feel welcome here*, and *Students are free to express their ideas on this campus*. We must keep in mind the sample size for the groups vary widely. The smallest group was those that have both a physical and a learning disability, in comparison to those that reported just a physical disability, just a learning disability, and no disability (the largest group).

Decision:

Being that the survey garnered overall positive results on items reflecting a sense of belonging and cultural competence among the NSU community, the Office of Culture and Climate will deliver comparable programming that will foster cultural exchange, cultural competence, and belonging among NSU students, faculty, and staff. The Director of Culture and Climate will share detailed findings with appropriate personnel (Director of Student Conduct, Director of Accessibility and Disability Support, VP of Student Experience, and the Provost) to assess possible causes and solutions improve scores among the difference demographic groups.

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 2024-2025, 85 Cultural Competence programs and initiatives were sponsored by the CID and/or campus departments, and/or recognized student organizations. The target is 75 per year by 2028.

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, about 85 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 63 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. Despite the changing political climate, we, along with the departments and the student body, were able to continue the mission of creating an atmosphere of belonging within the NSU community.

Decision:

Considering the changing political landscape, we will be strategic with our programming and initiatives not to violate any laws, executive orders, or other regulations, but will still maintain our overall mission to create an atmosphere of belonging for NSU community. We will continue to attend departmental browses hosted by the Department of Student Experience so NSU constituents can be aware of our programs. 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 accurately report on the efforts of the entire University community.

Metric:

4. *Percentage of facilities that are ADA compliant.*

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, the percentage of buildings in 100% ADA compliance is 70%.

Analysis:

According to the Executive Director of University Affairs, approximately 70% of the buildings on campus are in 100% ADA compliance (not including dormitories, which are operated by a third party). Improvements have been made such as automatic doors on the restroom or the entrance to the buildings. Also, concrete sidewalks have been inspected with some being 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 2024-2025 the percentage of Students of Color that graduated and were working or continuing education within six months of graduation is 75%. The target percentage is 75% by the year 2028.

Analysis:

The data was collected using the First Destination Survey accessed by students on the platform Handshake run by the Career Services department. The survey had a total of 369 Associate and Bachelor level graduate respondents out of the 1600 graduates from AC 2024-2025, a 23.1% response rate. Of the 247 Students of Color who completed the survey, 206 (75.2%) reported working, continuing education, or in the military. In comparison, 306 out of 369 (82.9%) 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 Spring graduates. However, experience shows this should be a small number of students and would be unlikely to change the overall percentage. Although the target was met, Student of Color graduates working post-graduation declined by 10%. The overall percentage for all students also declined.

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.

Executive Summary

In general, the metrics demonstrate consistent patterns of progress.

- *Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Rates:* All student cohorts are moving towards our targets, with the gaps between Students of Color and White students narrowing.
- *Faculty and Administrator Recruitment, Retention, and Tenure:* Due to the smaller number of Faculty and Administrators, representation of People of Color in these positions are relatively stable. We nevertheless need to employ strategies for these groups to become more closely aligned with the student population.
- *Ethnic Studies Minor, Course Offerings, and Workshops:* As a new program, Ethnic Studies has small numbers and is sensitive to fluctuations in participation. Nevertheless, offerings and interest is generally increasing.
- *Campus Climate for Students:* The Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey indicates high satisfaction of students relative to ULS System institutions and national norms. In particular, satisfaction scores of Students of Color are equivalent to those of White students, indicating no problematic areas. Similarly, campus climate scores were equivalent across gender groups. However, students with both a learning disability and a physical disability expressed a significantly lower opinion of their level of inclusion. Although this sample is small, we will need to closely monitor our actions to accommodate such students.

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 unequalled 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 (28) Degree programs with sixty-three (63) 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):

Academic Year	Number of Degrees Awarded
2016-2017	585
2017-2018	606
2018-2019	612
2019-2020	682
2020-2021	631
2021-2022	750
2022-2023	738
2023-2024	632
2024-2025	682

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

- **Landry Allen** (2023, BM-voice) won the *Audience Favorite* award for the Arkansas District of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.
- **Allyce Hill Bailey** (2011, BA in English) was named a Richland County Magistrate Judge in South Carolina effective July 1, 2024. She is a member of the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies' Advisory Council.
- **Meghan Buckley** (2010, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Scientific Inquiry) was promoted to Staff Product Marketing Manager at Illumina, a biotechnology research company.
- **Ella Castro** (2023, MM Music Education-voice), currently pursuing a DMA in orchestral conducting, has been named a Conducting Fellow at the University of North Texas.
- **Brett Chiquet** (2002, Liberal Arts with a concentration in Scientific Inquiry) was named professor and chair of the Department of Pediatric and Community Dentistry at the University of Buffalo's School of Dental Medicine.
- **Brian Coatney** (2001, BME-Instrumental), past president of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA), has led the Plano Senior High School to its second 6A Honor Orchestra award. He is one of only three directors in the history of TMEA to win honor orchestra twice.
- **Emma Cockrum** (2025, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities & Social Thought and M.A. in English with a concentration in Writing and Linguistics) accepted a job as a grant reviewer for the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement.
- **Brianna Corley** (2022, BA in Communications) was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for AY 2024-2025.
- **Catelyn Errington** (2023, MA in English and BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities and Social Thought) will attend the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's PhD program in Creative Writing.
- **Hayes Fawcett** (2023, BA in Communications) was named one of the "50 Most Influential Figures in Sports" by *Sports Illustrated*.

- **Sarah Ferstel** (2004, BA in Anthropology) was promoted to Director of Undergraduate Research at Louisiana State University.
- **Gary Fields** (1982 BA and 1984 MA in Communication) and **James Mustian** (2008, BA in Communications), each previous Pulitzer winners, were nominated, along with other staff members of the Associated Press, as the finalist for the 2025 Pulitzer Prize in the Breaking News Reporting category.
- **Nicole Fitzgerald** (1998, AD in Veterinary Technology and 2016 BS in Biology), a Registered Veterinary Technician Specialist in Anesthesia and Analgesia, has been named the Program Director of the newly developed Veterinary Technician program at LSU School of Veterinary Medicine.
- **Dr. Melissa Frank** (BS in Anthropology) became President of West Georgia State University.
- **Luis Gallo** (2019, BM-oboe) was recently appointed Assistant Professor of Oboe at Ithaca College.
- **Jolie Gonzalez** (2018, MM in Music Education–violin), currently pursuing a DMA in conducting at Northern Colorado, was selected as a conducting participant at a workshop in Chile with Marin Alsop, music director of the Baltimore Symphony.
- **Zackary Grant** (2004, BME-Instrumental) was appointed music director of the Caddo Magnet High School Orchestra.
- **Colby Grayson** (2024, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities and Social Thought) was accepted into the LSU School of Law with a full scholarship.
- **Paxson Guest** (2015, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics), an attorney at Phelps Dunbar, LLP, was selected as a member of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry’s Emerging Leaders Council.
- **Blake Inabnet** and **Santana Lin-Lewis** (both 2024, BS in Biology) are employed at the Ellen Trout Zoo in Lufkin, TX.
- **Kyle May** (2012, BA Liberal Arts with a concentration in Foreign Languages) was promoted to Senior Director of Corporate Partnerships at the Walton Arts Center and Walmart AMP.
- **Mark Minton** (1995, BME and 2020, MM Music Education) was inducted into Northwestern State’s CAPA Hall of Fame.
- **Chandler Monk** (2018, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Scientific Inquiry) earned a Ph.D. in Bioinnovation from Tulane University in 2025. She also founded a biotech startup in New Orleans called Cleaved Diagnostics which focuses on novel molecular diagnostics for infectious agents in newborns and transplant patients.
- **Leanny Muñoz** (2016, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Fine and Performing Arts) was appointed Director of Operations for the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera.
- **Tre Nelson** (2018, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics) started a position as Deputy Director of Health Policy for The Picard Group, Washington, D.C.
- **Dr. Felipe Ledesma Nunez** (2013, MM Performance-piano) earned his PhD from Harvard University in 2025. Felipe is the first Ecuadorean to receive a doctorate at Harvard.
- **Taylor Orgeron** (2013, Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities & Social Thought), an Associate Professor of English in the Department of Language and Literature at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, was recognized as a 2025 Da Vinci Creativity Fellow by the DaVinci Institute.
- **Danielle Prontka** (2000, BM-Performance) led the orchestra at Memorial High School in Houston to win TMEA’s Texas 6A Honor Orchestra award.
- **Brandon Scott Pruett** (2006, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Scientific Inquiry), currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology at the

University of Alabama-Birmingham, co-authored a chapter on “Antipsychotics” for the *Handbook of Practical Psychopharmacology* (American Psychiatric Association Publishing, 2025). He also co-authored an article on “Mapping the cellular etiology of schizophrenia and complex brain phenotypes” for the journal *Nature Neuroscience* (Vol. 28, pp. 248-258, 2025).

- **Nick Reves** (2002, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities & Social Thought) became a Senior Advisor at the US Air Force’s Office of Commercial and Economic Analysis.
- **Ronald Rodriguez** (2018, BM) was recently appointed Assistant Professor of Jazz Piano at Samford University.
- **Isaiah Roy** (2020, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Scientific Inquiry) earned his M.S. in Physician Assistant from South University.
- **Blake Schouest** (2016, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Scientific Inquiry) became Senior Specialist of Regulatory Strategy at Neurocrine Biosciences.
- **Elisha Scott** (2022, BS in Physical Sciences) was hired as a Research Associate at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport.
- **Toria Smith** (2017, BA in English) started as a Communications Specialist with the Newcomb Institute.
- **Dr. David Chase Stephens** (2017, BA in History), was the winner of the Alabama Historical Association’s 2025 Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins Award for the best dissertation in Alabama History. His dissertation entitled “To Obstruct and Resist: *Paradise v. Allen*, Integration Efforts, and the Alabama State Troopers” examined the “storm and stress” of integrating the Alabama State Troopers by hiring and promoting Black and women officers.
- **Meghan Taylor** (2018, MM in Music Education) published article: Kensley Behel and Meghan S. Taylor. “Playing-Related Pain of Clarinetists: A Novel Approach.” *The Clarinet* Vol. 52 No. 3 (June 2025), p. 45-49.
- **Dr. David Toledo** (1999, BM) has authored a book:
Toledo, D. M. (2025). *Music and leadership: The Nature and Role of Aesthetics in Orchestrating Successful Organizations*. Routledge.
- **Kaci Waguespack** (2023, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities & Social Thought), currently J.D. candidate at the George Washington University Law School, has been named Projects Editor for the *Public Contract Law Journal*.
- **Emily Adams Whitney** (2021, BM-voice) won the *Encouragement* award at the Georgia District of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and a scholarship to participate in the Sarasota Aria Bootcamp Emerging Artist Program.
- **Shari Wilson** (2021, BA in English and BFA in Theatre) was named as a producer on the Black Maternal Health 2025 Filmmaking Team for New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC), which cultivates Louisiana's racially and economically diverse communities to become involved in television production and community-based storytelling.
- **Meilyn Woods** (2022, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Humanities and Social Thought) graduated from McNeese State University in Spring 2025 with an MFA in Creative Writing and a MA in English. She received the Outstanding Graduate Award from McNeese State University for Spring 2025.
- **David Neal Wyatt** (1991, BA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Scientific Inquiry) was promoted to Medical Director of Hospice Services for Arkansas Hospice, the largest not-for-profit provider of hospice care in the state of Arkansas.
- Four (4) 2025 graduates of the Louisiana Scholars’ College have been accepted into their professional school of choice:

- **Brody Heard**—LSUHS School of Medicine (Medical Doctorate)
- **Elayna Gardiner**—LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans (M.H.S. in Counseling)
- **Madison Holland**—University of Central Arkansas (Doctor of Physical Therapy)
- **Laurel Dickinson**—Loyola University New Orleans College of Law (Juris Doctorate)
- Eleven (11) 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.
 - **Leighton Anderson**—LSU School of Veterinary Medicine
 - **Ar’Nijah Bradley**—Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
 - **Jenna Caswell**—University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (Graduate School)
 - **Bryce Fonseca**—LSU Health-New Orleans School of Medicine
 - **Madison Little**—LSU Health Shreveport (Physical Therapy)
 - **Hailey McGovern**—University of Texas of Rio Grande Valley (Graduate School)
 - **Presley Pleasant**—University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Pharmacy
 - **Maggie Stanford**—University of Texas-Austin (Graduate School)
 - **Madison Szekely**—University of St. Augustine, Texas (Physical Therapy)
 - **Tanner Terrell**—University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Pharmacy
 - **Leah Thompson**—University of Louisiana at Monroe (Physical Therapy)
- Eleven (11) recent graduates of the Department of Theatre and Dance have been accepted into their professional school of choice or working/performing in their field of choice:
 - **Austin Anderson** (2024, BFA in Musical Theatre) has performed as
 - “Judas”—*Jesus Christ Superstar*—Mac-Hadyn Theatre NYC 2025
 - “Butch”—*A Chorus Line*—Tulane Summer Lyric 2025
 - “Dr. Pomatter”—*Waitress*—Dutch Apple Broadway Palm 2025
 - “Tommy DeVito” (Cover)—*Jersey Boys*—Prather/Barbara Apex 2025
 - “Fred”—*A Christmas Carol*—Palace Theatre 2024
 - “Norm Waxman”—*Jersey Boys*—Palace Theatre 2024
 - “Nick Massi” (understudy)—*Jersey Boys*—Dutch Apple 2024
 - “Baker” (understudy)—*Into the Woods*—Northern Lake Arts 2024
 - “Toby”—*Sweeney Todd*—Tulane Summer Lyric 2024
 - **Roshane Brown** (2022, BFA in Production and Design) is working as the house electrician for The Huntington Theatre in Boston, MA.
 - **Chloe Castello** (2021, BS in Theatre) will be an Assistant Stage Manager at the Peach State Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.
 - **Myjoycia Cezar** (2022, BFA in Production and Design) is the Production Management Assistant at Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT.
 - **Liam Gardner** (2022, BFA in Production and Design) was hired at University of Louisiana at Lafayette as Scene Shop Manager.
 - **Julia Kuchler** (2024, BFA in Musical Theatre) has been
 - “Cast member”—Walt Disney World 2024-Present
 - “Tour Actor/Director”—Missoula Children’s Theatre 2024
 - **Maxwell Martello** (2022, BFA in Production and Design) is the Technical Director at Rivertown Theatre for the Performing Arts in New Orleans, LA.

- **Je'Breanne Morgan** (2021, BS in Theatre) is an Audio and Video Engineer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.
- **Amber Slater** (2022, BFA in Production and Design) recently graduated with an MFA in Stage Properties from the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.
- **Kaylon Willoughby** (2022, BS in Theatre) has been accepted into UNO's MFA program in Creative Writing.
- **Eden Wyandon** (2023, BFA in Production and Design) is working in the Sound shop at Yale University.

Current Students

- Multiple students from the Department of Biology and Microbiology presented their research at the Louisiana Academy of Sciences Meeting in Alexandria, LA on March 15, 2025.
 - **Hailey McGovern** (BS in Biology)-won the Best Undergraduate Oral Presentation in the Zoology category
 - **Hollon Gower** (BS in Biology)
- Three students **Lauryn Vernon**, **Tristan Millsaps**, and **Braedon Theodos** from the Department of Biology and Microbiology were awarded scholarships through the Bayou North Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Rural Scholars' Program. With this program, Bayou North Area AHEC partners with LSU Health Shreveport to attract more medical professionals to rural areas in Louisiana by providing opportunities and support to students from these areas who want to pursue careers in medicine.
- Eight (8) students from the Department of Biology and Microbiology are engaged in discipline-specific internships during Summer 2025:
 - **Hayden Baldwin**—LSUHSC-H Pathogen Host Interactions & Immunology Research and Education (PHIIRE summer research program)
 - **Hollon Gower**—Gator Country
 - **Hunter Hicks**—Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
 - **Mitchell Mayfield**—National Fish Hatchery
 - **Hailey McGovern**—San Diego Zoo's Reproductive Research on Killer whales
 - **Alexis Ortega**—LSUHSC-S CURIOUS Summer Research Program
 - **Hannah Shaver**—Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
 - **Sophia Whitman**—Disney's Animal Kingdom
- **Hailey McGovern** (BS in Biology) was accepted into a Conservation Science Summer Fellowship Program at the San Diego Zoo where she will be working with the Reproductive Sciences team on a research project.
- **Tristan Millsap** (BS in Biology) was awarded a \$1500 MCAT Test Preparation Scholarship from Proton Guru.
- **Aliyah Soileau** and **Meghan Bercegeay** presented their research on yeast Mediator at the Louisiana Academy of Sciences Meeting in Alexandria, LA on March 15, 2025.
- **Gabriel Craig**, **Riley Birdwell** and **Nolan Ezernack** (all Electronic Engineering Technology majors) worked on a project entitled "PanicGuard+: Safeguarding Vulnerable Populations with a Redesigned Panic Button System." This project was presented by Craig at Industrial Engineering and Operations Management World Congress, Detroit, MI, October 9-11, 2024. The presentation won 2nd place in the Senior Design Project Competition, sponsored by Tooling Tech Group.
- **Christopher Doney** (MA in English) spent the 2024-2025 academic year in the Republic of Uzbekistan as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar. He was the first Northwestern State student to earn a Fulbright Award.
- On October 5-6, 2025, 14 Northwestern State students participated in a two-day StorySLAM Workshop led by instructors from The Moth, a nationally recognized podcast that promotes the art and craft of storytelling to honor and celebrate the diversity and commonality of human experience. **Oona**

Zbitkovskis, Instructor of English, coordinated the workshop, and **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, and **Shea Montgomery**, Instructor of English, assisted in its facilitation.

- **Colton Bailey** (BFA in Fine and Graphic Arts)
- **Chloe Boulas** (BA in English)
- **Stephani Bradley** (BFA in Fine and Graphic Arts)
- **Kiara Davis** (BA in English)
- **Penny “Val” Davis** (BA in Communication)
- **Peter Gorham** (BFA in Fine and Graphic Arts)
- **Kamryn Harris** (BA in English)
- **Anja Moore** (BA in English)
- **Gabriel Parker** (BA in English)
- **Katherine Rion** (BA in English)
- **Emily “Lennon” Shumate** (BA in English)
- **Brianne Stewart “Marko Bones”** (BA in English)
- **Emily Thomisee** (BS in Psychology)
- **Kerrigan “Kiwi” Zachry** (BA in English)
- Four (4) Northwestern State students presented original research at the virtual Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Conference on October 26, 2024, under the mentorship of **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**, Associate Professor of English. Sigma Tau Delta is the international English honors society.
 - **Vy Bui** (BFA in Fine and Graphic Arts) presented “In Aubrey's Mind: An Animated Un-Essay on Woodson's *Red at the Bone*”
 - **Jim Case** (MA in English) presented “Languages of Resistance: A Re-description of a Second-Class Citizen”
 - **Christopher Doney** (MA in English) presented “Linguistic Colonialism or Passport to Global Opportunity: Perceptions of the English Language in Dushanbe, Tajikistan”
 - **Angela Saldivar** (BA in English) presented “Decentering Anthropocentrism: An Exploration of Animal and Disability Studies in Sewell's *Black Beauty*”
- Five (5) Northwestern State students participated in the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honors Society 2025 Annual Convention held in Pittsburgh, PA, from March 19-22, 2025. **Jim Case**, **Kiara Davis** (BA in English), **Angela Saldivar**, **Rebecca Smith** (BA in Communication), and **Kaitlyn Williams** made the trip along with Sigma Tau Delta co-advisor **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**, Associate Professor of English. Three of those students presented their work at the meeting:
 - **Jim Case** (MA in English) presented “Adah’s Language of Resistance in Body and Story: A Re-description of a Second-Class Citizen”
 - **Angela Saldivar** (BA in English) presented “Decentering Anthropocentrism: An Exploration of Animal and Disability Studies in Sewell's *Black Beauty*”
 - **Kaitlyn Williams** (BS in Secondary Education and Teaching-English [Louisiana Scholars’ College]) presented “Integrating Young Adult Literature in Middle and High School Classrooms”
- Two (2) English, Languages, and Cultural Studies students presented research at Northwestern State’s 38th Annual Research Day on April 3, 2025.
 - **Jim Case** (MA in English) presented “How Nature Shapes Who We are: The Nomadic Self in ‘Harmony’ and *Braiding Sweetgrass*” under the mentorship of **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland**, Professor of English.
 - **Anja Moore** (BA in English) presented “Rue de Fleurus: The Life, Work, and Legacy of Gertrude Stein” under the mentorship of **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Association Professor of English.

- The student members of the Gamma Mu Chapter of Kappa Pi Art Honors Society, a recognized student organization, hosted the Annual Makers' Faire December 2024.
- **Brody Heard** (Louisiana Scholars' College major) presented at the ULS Academic Summit at Nicholls State University in April 2025.
- **Nhan Ngo** and **Ty Gary** (Louisiana Scholars' College majors) participated in the Asian-American Hotel Owners Association convention's (AAHOACON) Turn Around Hotel Revenue Management Competition in New Orleans in 2025.
- **Masen Starks, Shannon Boone, and Natalie Sutton** (all Math majors) competed in both the Integration Bee and the Student Team Competition at the Louisiana/Mississippi Section of the Mathematical Association of America meeting in Jackson, MS February 20-22, 2025. Masen placed 2nd in the Integration Bee.
- **Masen Starks, Shannon Boone, and Natalie Sutton** (all Math majors) represented Northwestern State in the International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC)/ Mid-Atlantic USA Regional Competition on November 16, 2024. Their team, the "Demon Coders," placed 1st in Division II, ranked 12th overall in the region (which includes Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma), and became the first Louisiana team to solve two problems in the contest.
- Current string students **Emilio Castro, Carlos Diaz del Valle, Oscar Caraballo Torres, Abigail Morales, Perla Hipp, Ronald Zaldana, Norman Martinez, Emma Felton, Jesus Calderon, Santiago Rovira, and William Shupak** play in orchestras in the area including professional symphonies in Shreveport, Rapides Parish, El Dorado (Arkansas), Marshall (Texas), Longview (Texas), Texarkana (Arkansas), and Monroe.
- **The NSU Saxophone Choir**, under the direction of Dr. Paul Forsyth, was selected to perform two pieces at the 2025 Region VI North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) Conference in Lake Charles in April.
- **Brooke Jones** (BM in Performance-voice major) and the NSU String Quartet "Armonia" which is comprised of **Oscar Carballo** (BM in Performance-violin major), **Carlos Diaz del Valle** (BM in Performance-violin major), **Ronal Zaldana** (BM in Performance-viola major), and **Jesus Calderon** (BM Performance-cello major) were chosen to represent the Department of Music at the 2025 University of Louisiana System's Academic Summit April 10-11, 2025.
- **Jesus Calderon** (BM in Music Performance major) is performing with the Colombian Youth Orchestra during Summer 2025.
- **Lennon Cooke** (BM in Performance-flute major) was accepted into the National Flute Association Intercollegiate Flute Choir which will take place August 7-10, 2025 in Atlanta, Georgia.
- **Mario Gomez** (2025, BM in Music Business-piano) received several honors this year:
 - won 1st place at the state competition of the Music Teachers National Association
 - was awarded a teaching assistantship to pursue MM degree at Ohio University
- **Mario Gomez** (2025, BM in Music Business-piano) and **Steven Mendoza** (MM Performance-piano) both won awards (1st for Mario and 2nd for Steven) at the state competition of the National Association of Negro Musicians National Competition.
- **Dillon Humphries** (2025, BME) will be the Assistant Director of Bands at Jennings High School.
- **Molly Laird** (2025, BME-Instrumental-oboe) was awarded the Excellence in Music Education award from Northwestern State's School of Education.
- **Rikki Landry** (2025, BM in Performance-clarinet) performed in a master class and attended the clarinet studio at the Louisiana Clarinet Symposium in January 2025.
- **Nohelia Ramos** (BM in Music Business major) and **Rikki Landry** (2025, BM in Performance-clarinet) attended the International Low Clarinet Festival in Arizona in January 2025. Nohelia performed with the Conference Clarinet Choir.

- **Francisco Riego** (BME and BM in Performance–bass trombone majors) was invited to perform several concerts with the Marshall Symphony (Texas) during the year. He also competed in the Music Teachers National Association Young Artist Brass Solo Competition in Fall 2024.
- **Daniel Scott** (2025, MM in Performance-saxophone) helped organize and performed at the inaugural Gladewater Jazz Fest in Gladewater, TX.
- **Konnor Thibodeaux** (2025, BME) was invited to attend the University of Oregon’s Orchestral Conducting Workshop June 2-5, 2025. He will be Director of Bands at Carencro Middle School and Assistant Director of Bands at Lafayette High School.
- **Kathryn Wilkinson** (MM in Music Performance–voice major) was a semi-finalist for the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) National Student Auditions-Advanced Commercial Music Category. She will compete for a spot in the finals on June 26, 2025, in Philadelphia, PA.
- **Lia Portillo** (Spring 2025 BS in Communication graduate) earned multiple awards/honors this year:
 - Society of Professional Journalists-Louisiana Pro Chapter–2024 Outstanding Journalism Awards–2nd Place Student Print News Reporting
 - Society of Professional Journalists-Louisiana Pro Chapter–Student Representative for 2024-2025
 - Recipient of the 2024 Emma Bowen Foundation Scholarship
 - 2024 "Best of the South" Southeast Journalism Conference–3rd Place Best News Writer
 - 2025 College Media Association Apple Awards–1st Place Division II for Best Social Media Coverage of a Single Event
 - 2024 Mark of Excellence Awards by the Society of Professional Journalists Region 12–Winner in General News Reporting in the Small Enrollment Division
 - Member of Report for America Corps at The Marshall News Messenger as Hispanic Communities reporter in East Texas (2025) <https://www.reportforamerica.org/members/lia-portillo/>
- Twenty-four (24) undergraduate students are conducting research with faculty members within the Department of Physical Sciences:
 - **Benjamin Castro**–Cu-graphene interactions
 - **Zaiba Daud** and **Brett Brady**–LaACES DemonSats-6 project
 - **Milayah Ealy**–EPFRs
 - **Isabella DiMaggio**–Photocatalysts for PFAS degradation
 - **Landen Jett**–ACE inhibitor synthesis
 - **Reese Kennedy, Amber Long, and Peyton Fuller**–ADB-BUTINIACA analysis
 - **Alex Laurent**–Heavy metals in Sibley Lake
 - **Morgan McCrory** and **Lexie Arceneaux**–d9-THC/iso-THC study
 - **Kallie Madrigal**–Cu²⁺ reduction kinetics
 - **Faith Richard** and **Leo Wang**–SeaPerch drone
 - **Cedric Scott** and **Graham Christ**–Gaba-C₆₀ adsorption
 - **Zarie Shelvin**–Choline Sensor
 - **Vyen Trang**–Robotis Mini advanced operation
 - **Violet Villarreal**–Robot Dog integration
 - **Shae Wetzel** and **Brody Heard**–AI sensor building improvement
 - **Shae Wetzel** and **Morgan McCrory**–RockOn 2025
- **Jacob Mullican** (BA in History major) was named 2025-26 recipient of the Louisiana Police Jury Association scholarship.
- **Raven-Symone Jarrett** (a student-athlete and MS in Homeland Security major) had an outstanding 2025 track season. Competing in jumps, sprints, and primarily multi-event disciplines, she showcased her versatility and skill. Jarrett claimed the gold medal in the heptathlon at the Southland

Conference Championships, setting a school record with an impressive 5,414 points. She also secured first place in the long jump with a personal best of 20'9.25".

- Thirty (30) students majoring in programs in the Department of Theatre and Dance are working in their respective fields during Summer 2025:
 - **Jaeda Barrett** (BFA in Dance major) will be a performer at the Cedar Point Amusement Parks in Sandusky, OH.
 - **Caleb Barton** (BS in Theatre major) will be performing as Black in *The Wild Party* and as featured ensemble in *Something Rotten* and *A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder* with Thingamajig Theatre Company in Pagosa Springs, CO.
 - **Jared Cole Becton** (BS in Theatre major) has been cast in the chorus of *Texas! The Outdoor Musical* at Palo Canyon State Park in Canyon, TX.
 - **Katelyn Elizabeth Bonnette** (BFA in Production and Design and BS Theatre majors) will be a stitcher, dresser, and wardrobe crew member at the Peach State Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.
 - **Charlysse Casma** (BS in Theatre major) will perform as Miss Allison and Doc Chocolate at Hershey's Chocolate World in Hershey, PA. In Fall 2025, Charlysse will be performing and touring Missouri and South Carolina with the National Theatre Children's Company.
 - **Carissa Hope Chauffe** (BFA in Production and Design major) will be the Carpenter at Peach State Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.
 - **Elizabeth Cook** (BFA in Musical Theatre and BFA Dance majors) will be working as a choreographer with Interlochen Center for the Arts in Interlochen, MI.
 - **Piper Dearing** (BFA in Production and Design major) has been accepted into The Florida State University School of Theatre in the Technical Production Program and will also be the Technical Director at the Peach State Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.
 - **Averie Duran** (BFA in Dance and BS Theatre majors) will be working as a Costume Assistant with Thingamajig Theatre Company in Pagosa Springs, CO.
 - **Cortelina Encalada** (BFA in Production and Design major) has been accepted into The Florida State University School of Theatre in the Technical Production Program and will also be the Production Manager at the Peach State Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.
 - **Dylan Freeman** (BS in Theatre and BFA Dance majors) will perform as Neleus/Ensemble in *Mary Poppins* and work as a summer camp teacher at the Grandstreet Theatre in Helena, MT.
 - **Milton Garcia** (BFA in Production and Design major) will be the Assistant Technical Director at Peach State Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.
 - **Madeline Grant** (BS in Theatre major) will be working as a character escort and backup performer at Cedar Point Amusement Parks in Sandusky, OH.
 - **Ashley Harkey** (BFA in Production and Design major) works as an Audio Two at Texas Shakespeare Festival.
 - **Morgan Heinzen** (BS in Theatre major) will be working as a touring performer, camp counselor, and teacher at the Missoula Children's Theatre Company in Missoula, MT.
 - **Valerie Henderson** (BS in Theatre major) will be working as a friend of the Peanuts for the 75th Peanuts Anniversary and Boardwalk Nights' Basketball show at Cedar Point Amusement Parks in Sandusky, OH.
 - **Leslie Israel** (BFA in Musical Theatre major) will be working as the director of the first summer stock show, *Madagascar, Jr.* at the Christian Youth Theatre (CYT) in Lake Charles, LA.
 - **William Kielwasser** (BFA in Musical Theatre major) will be a featured soloist in *Pride Recital* and performing as singer/dancer in *Lust Lil's Western Roadshow* and dancer/host in *Derby Dogs* during *Boardwalk Nights* at Cedar Point Amusement Parks in Sandusky, OH.

- **Raleigh Lusignan** (BFA in Production and Design and BA Liberal Arts majors) will be Prop Master Peanuts 75th Anniversary and Boardwalk Nights at Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky, OH.
- **Aydin Mathews** (BS in Theatre major) will be performing as best friends with Snoopy for the 75th Peanuts Anniversary and Boardwalk Nights' Basketball show at Cedar Point Amusement Parks in Sandusky, OH.
- **Savannah Mathews** (BS in Theatre major) will participate in the Disney College Program at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL.
- **Damari Padilla** (BS in Theatre major) was cast as a singer in Blossom Beats Show at Kentucky Kingdom Theme & Waterpark in Louisville, KY.
- **Kwincy Pierre** (BFA in Musical Theatre major) will be performing as Gilbert in *Hairspray* and a swing in *9 to 5* at the Cumberland County Playhouse in Crossville, TN.
- **Preston Rasco** (BS in Theatre major) is working as a touring performer and camp counselor and teacher with the Missoula Children's Theatre Company in Missoula, MT.
- **Mia Rodriguez** (BFA in Musical Theatre major) was cast as Brooke Windham in *Legally Blonde* at Fort Totten Little Theatre in Devils Lake, ND.
- **Ava Schorr** (BFA in Musical Theatre major) will be a director and featured performer at Missoula Children's Theatre in Missoula, MT.
- **Khuyen Tran** (BFA in Musical Theatre major) was cast as Connie Wong in *A Chorus Line* at the Summer Lyric Theatre at Tulane University in New Orleans, LA.
- **Jamie Trosclair** (BFA in Production and Design and BS Theatre majors) will be Prop Artisan at Peach State Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.
- **Collin Walker** (BFA in Production and Design major) interned at Live Design International. Following that internship, Collin became an Audio Technician at Double Trouble Entertainment in Marquette, MI.
- **Phoenix Woods** (BFA in Musical Theatre major) will be performing as Tracy Turnblad in *Hairspray* and in the Ensemble for *9 to 5* at the Cumberland County Playhouse in Crossville, TN.
- **Caroline Lee** (BS in Veterinary Technology major) was the recipient of a national Zoetis Foundation Scholarship through the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF).

Academic Engagement

The COAS participates in several current and future activities and initiatives 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 College of Arts and Sciences received a generous donation from Dr. Kass Byrd which was used to create the COAS Enhancement Fund (CASEF). These funds have been used to support several initiatives in the Spring 2025:
 - **Dr. Damien Tristant**, Assistant Professor of Physics, and two students (Brody Heard and Shae Wetzel) traveled to France (Paris and Troy) for over a week as part of an on-going collaboration with UTT in Troy. They conducted and presented research as well as expanded our

research associations with the collaborators on the Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning environmental sensor project.

- Eight faculty members were awarded \$2,500 grants to support research and/or scholarly activity conducted this calendar year. Recipients include:
 - **Dr. Moftah Ali**—Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology
 - **Dr. Khirsten Doolan**—Assistant Professor of English
 - **Dr. Christopher Gilson**—Associate Professor of History
 - **Nhan Ho**—Assistant Professor of Dance
 - **Dr. Nicole Lobdell**—Assistant Professor of English in the LSC
 - **Edgar Lopez Cano**—Assistant Professor of Art
 - **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**—Associate Professor of English
 - **Dr. Alexei Muravitsky**—Professor of Mathematics in the LSC
- Funds will also be used to support the creation of strategic planning documents for all academic units with the COAS.
- 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 2024-2025 academic year, the program was expanded to a university-wide initiative, and CREATE sponsored five 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!
 - **Design and Creation of a Sousaphone Harness.** This project involved the design and development of a harness that could be used by a sousaphone player while marching to reduce stress and strain on the shoulder and back. It involved collaboration with an occupational therapist as well as engineers and musicians.
 - **Expansion of the Preparatory Exercises Offered by the School of STEM's Pre-Professional School Advisory Committee.** This project involved collaborating with faculty/experts in English and creative writing as well as communications and social work. Students interested in applying to professional schools following their undergraduate experience at Northwestern State attended a series of workshops designed to assist them with personal statement/resume writing as well as interview preparation.
 - **ArtSafe.** This project was a collaboration between art, communications, and STEM faculty to create a series of student-oriented safety videos focusing on specific safety requirements within the Department of Fine + Graphic Arts.
 - **Establishment of a University Credential Focused on Professional Skills Development.** This is a cross-university project that will be on-going. Faculty/staff are working to establish common skills needed by all academic areas and disciplines. The utilization of a new student engagement platform (Suitable) will allow students to create extra-curricular transcripts to monitor and document the achievement of professional skills offered through a series of courses and activities throughout the university.
- The university-wide initiative Faculty Development Communities (FDCs) engage faculty in a wide range of interests/expertise with the goal of establishing greater faculty community and interest. Multiple

faculty from the COAS took part one of three different FDCs sponsored by Northwestern State during the 2024-2025 academic year:

- **Dr. Kathy Autry**—Associate Professor of Mathematics
- **Dr. Sean Bartley**—Assistant Professor of Theatre History
- **Dr. Cynthia Doffitt**—Associate Professor of Biology
- **Christine Ferrell**—Instructor of Languages
- **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**—Associate Professor of English
- **Dr. Allison Rittmayer**—Associate Professor of English
- **Josie Rodriguez**—Adjunct Professor of Fine Arts
- **Dr. Duminda Samarakoon**—Assistant Professor of Chemistry
- **Dr. Nabin Sapkota**—Associate Professor of Engineering Technology
- **Juanita Self**—Instructor of Mathematics
- **Dr. Joseph Straub**—Assistant Professor of Biology
- **Dr. Damien Tristant**—Assistant Professor of Physics
- The Department of Biology and Microbiology created the Demons become Career Coach position. This individual will be responsible for 1) sharing information with students, 2) coaching and mentoring Northwestern State students who are interested in professional or graduate programs, 3) creating and updating academic maps to facilitate faculty advising, and 4) acting as a liaison between Northwestern State students and professional or graduate programs.
- The Department of Biology and Microbiology established memoranda of understanding between Lake Charles Memorial Hospital and Northwestern State's BS in Biology's Clinical Laboratory Science concentration.
- The Department of Biology and Microbiology has established an early assurances agreement with University of Texas—Tyler's School of Pharmacy.
- **Dr. Li Ma** (Associate Professor of Biology) established "Career Fair on the Wall", a centralized place for majors within the Department of Biology and Microbiology to find information regarding internships and professional or graduate programs.
- Students in DAN4400 (Senior Seminar) course (under the direction of **Nhan Ho**, Assistant Professor of Dance) developed professional websites, audition reels, and resumes. These materials are being used in applications to dance companies, intensives, and graduate programs. The course also included public speaking and interview preparation to support their transition into the professional field.
- Following LA Board of Regent's training in January of 2024, co-requisite English faculty—**Dr. Khirsten Doolan**, Assistant Professor of English, **Sadeem El Nahhas**, Instructor of English, **Dr. Jennifer Enoch**, Associate Professor of English, and **Mariann Wilson**, Instructor of English—implemented student motivational strategies from the GPS Mindset framework in ENGL 1010/1011 course pairings during the 2024-2025 academic year. **Dr. Thomas Reynolds**, Professor of English, introduced the GPS Mindset framework to the department through his work as a LA Board of Regent's Mindset Meauxtivor during the 2024-2025 academic year.
- The Advance English Scholarship was established in the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies in the Fall 2024. The first fully-endowed scholarship in the department, a committee will grant awards based on need and merit to students majoring in English.
- The NSU Student Film Society, sponsored by **Dr. Allison Rittmayer**, Associate Professor of English, was reinvigorated by a \$1,000 donation in January 2025 and held regular film discussions for much of the spring 2025 semester around films as varied as Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), the anime *Paprika* (2006), Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* (1961), and Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948).

- Part of a new program to invite alumni to connect with English, Languages, and Cultural Studies students, **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, hosted alumna and former editor-in-chief of *Argus* **Angelin Adams** (BA in English, 2000 & M.A. in English, 2002) as a guest speaker in her ENGL 4080: Writing as a Profession course on April 14. Adams is the Editorial Director of Design, Culture, and Gift at Clarkson Potter, Penguin Random House's premiere illustrated imprint and a member of the department's Advisory Council. Her virtual visit focused on becoming an editor, finding internships, and exploring how opportunities at Northwestern State led her to her dream job in New York City.
- Department of Engineering Technology has revised and restarted an Advanced Manufacturing program concentration under Associate of Science in Engineering Technology program. 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.
- **Dr. James J. Mischler**, Associate Professor of English, is participating as a Google NASH Faculty Champion for Northwestern State and is preparing to offer his students in TESOL Google training in AI Essentials in Fall 2025.
- The Department of Fine + Graphic Arts developed an articulation agreement with Digital Media Institute (DMI) in Shreveport, LA.
- The Director and all academic staff who serve as instructors within the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies advisors completed a two-month Appreciative Advising course facilitated by Florida Atlantic University. Using this framework, partnering with Title III Director, these instructors are creating Northwestern State's first Advisor Certification and Training (ACT) program, a 9-10 weeklong online course for faculty and staff advisors. This certification program, with both virtual and face-to-face components, is intended to benefit new and continuing advisors.
- The Louisiana Scholars' College awarded its first Undergraduate Certificates in Medical Humanities to two students: **Kayden Larkins** and **Elayna Gardiner**.
- The Louisiana Scholars' College established the Means-Stave Grants program, funded by alumnus Will Broussard. This program will make at least \$1000 available each year to students to fund projects and provide supplies associated with their senior theses.
 - In Spring 2025, Adrienne Nance (Louisiana Scholars' College major) was awarded \$700 for a Texas State University Forensic Anthropology Center workshop course (Forensic Anthropology Methods) which will teach her methods she intends to utilize in her thesis.
- The Louisiana Scholars' College began the series of public talks called *Scholar Talks*. The program began with two talks in the Fall 2024-one by **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** and the other by **Dr. Robert Page**.
- The Louisiana Scholars' College began offering two new undergraduate certificates *Honors Professional Ethics* and *Honors Critical and Analytical Thinking*.
- New concentrations for the BS in Mathematics in Applied Mathematics, Computer Science, and Sport Analytics were developed, approved, and launched. These included the creation of nine new Computer Science (CSC) courses and three new Mathematics courses.
 - Students in the Sport Analytics concentration will gain hands-on experience through a collaborative partnership with Northwestern State Athletics.
 - The Division of Mathematics has committed to a \$100,000 investment to develop a state-of-the-art programming laboratory to support these initiatives.

- Northwestern State’s Inaugural All-State Clinic, hosted by the Department of Music on August 31, 2024, brought nearly 400 students to campus. The event, spearheaded by **Drs. Alexis Sczepanik** and **Stephen Clark** will be returning August 30, 2025, and be expanding to include new clinic for All-State Middle School students in September 2025.
- The Department of Music’s faculty ad-hoc committees were tasked with the creation and revision of both a Music Faculty Handbook and a Music Student Handbook that are being designed to ensure that all policies and academic procedures are updated and clearly described in an electronic format. The handbooks enhance transparency, foster community standards, and support both faculty governance and student success.
- **Dr. Stephen Clark**, Assistant Professor of Music–Flute, designed and implemented a comprehensive course outline for MUS1500 (Recitals and Concerts). The goal of the initiative was to instill a broader understanding of professionalism among students across all music degree programs. While maintaining core components such as weekly recitals and lab ensemble, the course introduced practical, career-oriented assignments that addressed essential skills for the music paths. Key topics included, writing a professional bio, preparing for and selecting appropriate headshots, stage performance etiquette, and understanding and navigating professional adjudication.
- **David Steele**, Instructor of Music and Woodwinds, created a new initiative in the Survey of Music Business Course. As part of a semester long endeavor, students presented their business plans and pitches as a final class project. Mason Windham, BM Music Business in Percussion won with his project “High Quality Visual Presence at Astronomically Low Rates” for his “company” Parallax Drill.
- **Sofiko Tchetchelashvili**, Instructor of Viola, developed the NSU String Quartet “Armonia”.
- The Department of Physical Sciences signed a memorandum of understanding with the North Louisiana Crime Lab in Shreveport, LA. This agreement will ensure that the BS in Physical Science Forensic Science concentration program maintains its capacity to train graduates for the workforce as well as providing students with field experience opportunities.
- The Department of Physical Sciences developed a partnership with ARQ (an activated carbon company) to analyze samples using existing laboratory equipment and processes.
- The Department of Physical Sciences established a thermal analysis laboratory in Fournet Hall to enhance course offerings to Northwestern State students.
- The Department of Physical Sciences created a minor in Physics.
- The Department of Physical Sciences acquired a DSC (Differential Scanning Calorimetry) 9 which will enhance laboratory offerings in Chemistry and Forensic Science
- The School of STEM developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) club called “Faculty AI Club: Empowering Transformative Scholarship (FACETS)” for staff, faculty, and students to share information on the latest advances in this ever-changing field.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance initiated a new connection with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (RCCL) to explore potential audition opportunities for majors. This year, graduating seniors submitted their professional materials to RCCL’s casting director, and Northwestern State hopes to host an in-person audition on campus next year.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance has worked to strengthen and expand its relationship with Calcasieu Theatrical Arts in Lake Charles, LA—the department’s largest recruitment hub.

Community Engagement/Recognitions

- The Department of Engineering Technology held workshops for VEX IQ training for the Natchitoches Parish School Board STEM teachers on February 14 and March 14, 2025.
- The 44th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival, organized by **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, was held on July 20, 2024, in Prather Coliseum, and attracted more than 1,600 attendees. The Louisiana State Fiddle Championship and The Annual Gumbo Cook-off were held as part of the festival, as well. Several Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies faculty and staff worked as volunteers for this annual event.
- Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies hosted A Reading by Louisiana Poet Laureate Alison Pelegrin, on September 18, 2024, sponsored by a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. The event was organized by **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, and **Shea Montgomery**, Instructor of English.
- Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society, under the guidance of faculty co-sponsor **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**, Associate Professor of English, partnered with the Hispanic Student Journalist Association on a political awareness event on September 25, 2024: Demons for Voting.
- The Moth StorySLAM Live Performance on October 6, 2024, featured ten NSU students performing their narrative pieces written during a workshop with the New York-based podcast. The event, organized by **Oona Zbitkovskis**, Instructor of English, and facilitated by **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, and **Shea Montgomery**, Instructor of English, was recorded and archived as part of the nationally recognized show.
- The 16th annual Louisiana Studies Conference, organized by **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, and co-chaired by **Dr. Daniel Gordy**, Assistant Professor of English and Criminal Justice, and others was held on October 19, 2024, on the Northwestern State campus and included researchers from the university, state, region, and beyond.
- The award ceremony for the 16th NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest, a contest open to all Louisiana students in grades 9-12 regardless of the type of school institution, was held as part of the Louisiana Studies Conference. The contest was organized by **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, and judges included **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, and **Shea Montgomery**, Instructor of English.
- The Cane River Reading Series, organized by **Dr. J. Andy Briseño**, Associate Professor of English, hosted folklorist Dr. Keegan LeJeune on October 22, 2024, in the Northwestern State Student Union. LeJeune read from his creative nonfiction book *Finding Myself Lost in Louisiana*.
- Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies partnered with the Department of Theatre and Dance to present "Beat as One": Poetry and Dance on October 23, 2024. The event featured dance performances from dance students set to poetry read by English students and faculty in the Lobby of the Student Union. The event was organized by **Oona Zbitkovskis**, Instructor of English, and **Brett Garfinkel**, Professor of Dance and Department Head of Theatre and Dance.
- A Day of the Dead Celebration, organized by language faculty under the leadership of **Christine Ferrell**, Instructor of Languages, and **Dr. Benjamin Forkner**, Associate Professor of Languages, was held on October 30, 2024, in Orville J. Hanchey Gallery, featuring an altar built by students enrolled in Spanish courses, professional dancing lessons, and Latin-inspired food and music.
- #CurrentlyReading, organized by **Sadeem El Nahhas**, Instructor of English, and **Heather Salter Dromm**, Instructor of English, was held on November 6, 2024, in Morrison Hall. Several faculty and English majors presented short talks on what they were currently reading to inspire readers to explore new books and authors.

- Partnering with the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs, *The Current Sauce*, the Native American Student Association, and the Center for Inclusion and Diversity, Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies hosted Native American Film Series 6: *Bad Press* in the Lucille Hendrick's Room of the Student Union on November 13, 2024.
- *Apocryphal Girl* Reading featured **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, reading from her new poetry chapbook *Apocryphal Girl* (Spring 2024) on November 12, 2024, in the Cammie G. Research Center in Watson Library.
- Demon Writers' Guild, under the guidance of faculty sponsor **Shea Montgomery**, Instructor of English, held "Obsessions" on November 14, 2024, in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center in Watson Library. The event featured public readings of poetry, prose, and fiction from student writers.
- The 16th annual Multicultural Christmas Concert, organized by **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, was held on December 3, 2024, at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum. The event raised funds for Cane River Children's Services.
- *Argus* staff, under the guidance of faculty sponsor **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, and members of the Demon Writers' Guild under the guidance of faculty sponsor **Shea Montgomery**, Instructor of English, presented a Zine Workshop on February 12, 2025, in the Language Resource Center.
- #CurrentlyReading, organized by **Sadeem El Nahhas**, Instructor of English, and **Heather Salter Dromm**, Instructor of English, was held on February 19, 2025, in Morrison Hall. Faculty and English majors presented short talks on what they were currently reading to inspire readers to explore new books and authors.
- The Cane River Reading Series, organized by **Dr. J. Andy Briseño**, Associate Professor of English, hosted former Louisiana Poet Laureate and Professor Emerita Julie Kane on February 25, 2025, in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center of Watson Library to celebrate the release of Kane's newest collection: *Naked Ladies*.
- "What's Your Word?" was a joint program, organized in part by **Christine Ferrell**, Instructor of Languages, with Northwestern State's Counseling and Career Services and the Center for Inclusion and Diversity, which encouraged attendees to discover a word that might inspire and guide their intentions for the year. Originally planned as a workshop that was cancelled due to weather, the event was held on February 27, 2025, as part of Krewe of NSU in Prather Coliseum.
- International Women's Day, on March 6, 2025, featured three events supported by Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies students and faculty:
 - Language faculty and students from the department's Language Resource Center, the Spanish Club, Demon Writer's Guild, and *Argus* hosted activities during the Celebrating Women's Day event, organized by **Dr. Benjamin Forkner**, Associate Professor of Languages, held in the Student Union Lobby from 11 AM–2 PM.
 - Students from the Native American Student Association under the guidance of **Heather Salter Dromm**, Instructor of English, held a book sale to raise money for their future event programming.
 - The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies hosted International Women's Day Movie Night, featuring Oscar-award winner *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once* through the work of **Dr. Benjamin Forkner**, Associate Professor of Languages, and **Dr. Allison Rittmayer**, Associate Professor of English, in Varnado Hall from 5 PM–7PM.
- Celebrate "La Francophonie," a celebration of French language and Francophone cultures organized by **Christine Ferrell**, Instructor of Languages, was held on March 14, 2025, at Collins Pavillion. The

event featured Cajun band Amis du Teche, who sang Cajun French music and taught attendees the Cajun two step.

- *Argus*, under the guidance of **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, and ELCS hosted a Reading from NSU Creative Writing Award Winners as part of the launch of the 2025 *Phobias* edition of NSU's art and literary magazine on April 9, 2025, in Lucille Hendricks Ballroom of the Student Union.
- Latin Dance Night, organized by **Dr. Benjamin Forkner**, Associate Professor of Languages, was held on April 22, 2025, as a celebration of the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures. The event featured live Latin music performed by Northwestern State students from Central and South America and professional salsa dance lessons.
- Choctaw-Apache Voices, a joint event with Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs, Native American Student Association, and the Center for Inclusion and Diversity was held on April 23, 2025, featuring NSU alums **Thomas Parrie** (M.A. English, 2010 & BA in English, 2005) and **Dr. Robert Caldwell** (M.A. in Heritage Resource Management, 2011) discussing their work on the Choctaw-Apache book series in the Lucille Hendrick Room on the first floor of Northwestern States's Student Union.
- **Sean Callander**, Assistant Professor of Art, organized pottery sales at 56th Annual Louisiana Pecan Festival, Colfax, LA; Blooming on the Bricks, Natchitoches, LA; and the Melrose Arts and Crafts Fair, Melrose, LA.
- **Leslie Gruesbeck**, Associate Professor of Art and **Corbin Covher**, Associate Professor of Art, hosted K-12 Art Teacher Summer Workshop during the Summer 2024 to 41 attendants.
- The Department of Fine + Graphic Arts, sponsored by the Northwestern State Foundation contracted with Yumali Torres from the La Ceiba Grafica in Veracruz, Mexico. She taught students lithography techniques using both the ancient marble stone method and the more recent aluminum plate method. The event, held in August 2024, was curated by **Edgar Cano Lopez**, Assistant Professor of Art.
- **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck**, Associate Professor of Art, served as a juror for ArtBreak, Shreveport Regional Arts Council, Shreveport, LA May 2-4, 2025.
- **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck**, Associate Professor of Art, **Matthew DeFord**, Professor of Art, **Marisol Balderrama Villela**, Assistant Professor of Art History, and **Mirla Gonzalez** Enriques, Professor of Art, along with graduate students **Brendan Ritter** and **Jude McCully** and undergraduate students **Anna Claire Kent**, **Vy Bui**, **Peter Gorham**, **Colton Bailey**, and **Mia Speed** presented ArtBreak 2025 Master Class workshops for 7th-12th graders—Shreveport Regional Arts Council and Caddo Parish Schools, May 2-4, 2025.
- **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** (Assistant Professor of English, Louisiana Scholars' College) was interviewed on *Thinking Allowed* for BBC Radio 4 in an episode titled "Medical Icons" (aired Sept 12, 2024).
- **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** (Assistant Professor of English, Louisiana Scholars' College) did an interview on New Book Network podcast about her book *X-ray* (Bloomsbury 2024; available Feb 18, 2025)
- **Dr. Judith Covington** (Professor of Mathematics) was elected Chair of the Council on Sections by the Congress of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA)-a national leadership role within the MAA.
- **Judith Covington** and **Dr. LeighAnn Myers** (both Professors of Mathematics) launched Math4Fun, a series of professional development workshops for K-12 math teachers. The workshops, open to the public, focus on using mathematics in fun and practical ways, such as to solve the Rubik's cube.
- Three clarinet students provided music for the funeral services of Department of Music's alumnus, Michael Williford (1972, BME).

- Six BM in voice majors in the Department of Music performed for the State of Louisiana Clerk's winter meeting on Monday, November 18, 2024, hosted by David Stamey, Natchitoches Clerk of Court.
- The **NSU Jazz Combo** completed their 1st year of monthly jam sessions at Onyx Lounge in Natchitoches. This is an excellent event for our jazz students and a great partnership that the Department of Music hopes to grow in future years.
- Under the direction of **David Antilley** and **James Stanfield**, our ESPN+ and NSU-TV staff had great engagement:
 - ESPN+:
 - 94 ESPN+ Broadcast with over 222 Hours of Programming on ESPN+
 - 8 high school visits to recruit students for ESPN+ and the Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts
 - Hosted 30+ high school students for ESPN+ Trailer Visit providing hands on training
 - NSU-TV
 - Provided "TV Studio" workshops for all Kid Konnection session at each Freshman Connection
 - Visited with and provided studio tours for 5 different Junior High/High Schools
 - Recorded and streamed Board of Regents Meeting
 - Recorded and streamed University of Louisiana System Meeting
 - Recorded and streamed NSU Presidential Investiture
 - Recorded and generated YouTube videos for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts Departmental Graduation ceremonies
 - Recorded and streamed all Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 Northwestern State University's Graduation ceremonies
 - In addition to the production of broadcasts, David and James have both been interviewed as guests multiple (6+) ESPN+ broadcasts during basketball and soccer games to promote the Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts as well as made appearances on the Patrick Netherton Radio/YouTube show to promote New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts
- The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts welcomed high schools such as Red River, BPSTIL, and Pineville for Seminar Days from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025.
- **Anna Dugas**, Assistant Professor of Physics, led a group of undergraduate research students to a 3rd Place finish in the Mission Course–Seaperch as well as 3rd Place finish for Presentation & Technical for Seaperch Water Drone Project–Seaperch at the Louisiana 4-H State Competition at the Robicheaux Recreation Center in Lafayette, LA on March 1, 2025.
- The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs increased faculty involvement in regional events such as the Gayerre History Club Conference in Shreveport.
- The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs increased its outreach to local employers in law enforcement, fire safety, and corrections, as well as with stakeholders in history and preservation.
- The Creole Heritage Center (CHC) was involved in several events/engagements:
 - They welcomed more than 50 visitors to their exhibit/office space, including contingents of two Creole family reunions.
 - In March 2025, the Creole Heritage Center brought together leaders from four Louisiana Creole organizations to meet with representatives of the French government's Cité Internationale de la Langue Française to support their efforts to include creole languages and cultures.

- In October 2024, they partnered with NSU's Hospitality Management & Tourism Program to host NSU alumna Chef Sheri Raleigh for student workshops and a public presentation featuring Louisiana Creole cuisine.
- They hosted the award-winning New Orleans-based group OperaCréole for a remount of their acclaimed program, originally performed in France, exploring the connections between French and Louisiana Creole classical and folk music.
- In partnership with Cane River Creole National Historical Park and Cane River National Heritage Area, they welcomed 10 Louisiana middle-schools teachers in June 2025 for a Creole Teacher Institute that gave the teachers the knowledge and resources necessary to accurately incorporate Louisiana Creoles' history and culture into their classrooms, as well as connected them to cultural heritage sites around Natchitoches to promote in person or virtual classroom visits
- **Dr. Hiram Pete Gregory**, Professor of Anthropology and Curator of the Williamson Museum continued his outreach and work with tribal communities by participating in multiple meetings/engagements with the following groups:
 - the Adais-tribal Council
 - the Chair and Vice-chair of the Natchitoches Tribe
 - the Manuel DeSoto Family Association Paris France
 - the Cultural Committee of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe (to discuss a summer session drone presentation at a tribal youth camp)
 He also conducted several important meetings with local cultural groups:
 - two cultural sessions for the Natchitoches NSU Folk Festival
 - the St. Augustine Historical Society to discuss the Badin Roque House Restoration
 - along with Brady Jett (a Public History trainee), hosted a morning meeting of the Northwestern Louisiana Basketry Club at Williamson Museum
- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Professor of History, was invited to give a Cavanaugh Lecture at Louisiana State University-Alexandria. The presentation, entitled "'...will very likely be tax deductible': The Association of Citizens' Councils of Louisiana Scholarship Fund, 1956-1959," was given on March 20, 2025.
- Four members of the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs (**Drs. Tommy Hailey, James MacDonald, Bill Manger, and Mark Melder**) traveled to Belize in May 2025 to meet with personnel of the University of Belize, staff of archaeological sites, personnel of the National Library of Belize, and operators of cultural immersion sites throughout Belize to expand the exchange and cultural immersion opportunities for university students and faculty.
- **Dorothy Washington**, Assistant Professor of Economics, participated in Natchitoches' Boyz to Men Camp June 2-6, 2025. She taught a Money Management seminar for young men ages 8-18 as part of a large group of teachers and speakers on topics from welding, auto mechanics, farrier, gardening, and bible study.
- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Professor of History, who serves as the editor of *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South*, attended the annual meeting of the Louisiana Historical Association (LHA) as well as the Association's board meeting in Baton Rouge. Dr. Pellegrin served as president of the LHA from 2022-2023.
- **Dr. Kent Peacock**, Assistant Professor of History, participated in the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities' day-long workshop on teaching the Reconstruction Era of United States history, a period he covers in multiple courses he teaches.
- **Dr. Kent Peacock**, Assistant Professor of History, and **Dr. Greg Granger**, Professor of History, participated as judges for the regional National History Day competition held at the Louisiana

Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum. They evaluated research papers and poster presentations by outstanding middle and high school students who demonstrated great curiosity about the past and engagement in the critical skills of identifying and analyzing reputable primary sources to learn about human experiences in the past.

- **Dr. Kent Peacock**, Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Creole Heritage Center, along with representatives of the Creole Heritage Center actively promoted Northwestern State and highlighted the enduring cultural significance of Louisiana Creoles through their participation in Louisiana C.R.E.O.L.E., Inc.'s Zydeco Music and Creole Heritage Awards Ceremony in Lafayette, the Bar-B-Que Contest at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and the Jeanerette Creole Fest.
- **Dr. James MacDonald**, Professor of History, **Dr. Christopher Gilson**, Associate Professor of History, and **Dr. Kent Peacock**, Assistant Professor of History, represented Northwestern State at the Gayarre History Club Conference at the R.W. Norton Art Gallery in Shreveport, LA on April 1, 2025.
- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Professor of History, **Dr. James MacDonald**, Professor of History, and **Dr. Christopher Gilson**, Associate Professor of History, attended the spring meeting of the North Louisiana Historical Association in Mansfield, LA on April 12, 2025. The organization gathered and toured the Mansfield Female College Museum, which opened in 1855 and was the first institution of its kind west of the Mississippi River.
- The School of STEM engaged with approximately 10,000+ K-12 students during the 2024-2025 academic year. These students spanned multiple parishes in our region (and beyond). The events included the following:
 - **Fall STEM Day**
 - **Spring STEM Day**
 - **Recipe for Rural STEM Day**
 - **Northwestern LA Literary Rally STEM Showcase**
 - **LA State FFA Regional Contest**
 - **Robotics Competition and Smart Structures Show**
 - **ET Symposium**
 - **Career and Opportunity Day**
 - **Demon Math Classic**
 - **Starbase STEM Zone**
 - **Summer Robotics Camps**
 - **Destination Science Camp**
- Our Student Media team won multiple awards this year for The Current Sauce:
 - **2024 Society of Professional Journalists Region 12 Mark of Excellence Awards**
 - Winner—General News Reporting Small Enrollment Division—Lia Portillo
<https://purplemedianetwork.com/17533/news/nsu-presidential-semifinalists-will-visit-campus-next-week-a-breakdown-of-the-candidates/>
 - Finalist—Corbin Gwaltney Award for Best All-Around Student Newspaper Small Enrollment Division—The Current Sauce Staff
 - **2024 Society of Professional Journalists Louisiana Outstanding Journalism Awards**
 - 1st Place—Student Print Feature Reporting—Madelyn Murphy
 - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/16846/arts-living/madeline-romeros-little-bird-senior-exhibition-invites-viewers-to-find-their-inner-little-bird/>
 - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/17069/arts-living/from-long-distance-couple-to-husband-and-wife/>

- <https://purplemedianetwork.com/17133/arts-living/nsu-art-facultys-work-on-display-shows-their-burning-passion-for-more-than-just-teaching/>
- 1st Place—Student Multimedia Reporting—Lia Portillo Cantarero and Isabel Juarez Rubio
 - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/17073/arts-living/nsu-alumna-returns-to-star-in-her-own-taylor-swift-tribute-show/>
- 2nd Place—Student Print News Reporting—Lia Portillo Cantarero
 - <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/17223/news/natchitoches-mayor-announces-scholarship-raffle-did-he-violate-the-law/>
- 2nd Place—Student Multimedia Reporting—Kallie Bourgeois and Kevin Thomas
 - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/16673/sports/nsu-athletic-director-kevin-bostian-addresses-the-decision-to-cancel-the-season-and-the-future-of-football/>
- **2024 “Best of the South” Southeast Journalism Conference (SEJC)**
 - 1st Place—Best Newspaper Designer—Juliana Nobles Pacheco and Hayley Keeler
 - 3rd Place—Best News Writer—Lia Portillo
- **2024 Liberty Awards presented by SPJ, flytedesk, CMA, and ACP**
 - 3rd Place—Best Election Print Edition for schools under 10,000 enrollment
<https://www.spj.org/liberty-awards.asp>
- **2024 Apple Awards, College Media Association (CMA)**
 - 2nd Place Division II and III—Best Crisis Coverage—Lia Portillo Cantarero, Kevin Thomas and Kallie Bourgeois
 - <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/>
 - 2nd Place Division II—Best Multimedia Package—Lia Portillo Cantarero and Isabel Juarez Rubio
 - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/17073/arts-living/nsu-alumna-returns-to-star-in-her-own-taylor-swift-tribute-show/>
 - 2nd Place Division II—Best Opinion Column—Destin Lopez
 - <https://purplemedianetwork.com/16732/showcase/low-income-housing-coming-to-natchitoches-its-impact-and-the-response/>
- **2025 Apple Awards, College Media Association (CMA)**
 - 1st Place Division II—Best Social Media Coverage of a Single Event—Lia Portillo Cantarero

- 2nd Place Division II–Best Opinion Column–Kallie Bourgeois
<https://purplemedianetwork.com/18715/showcase/navigating-going-home-for-the-holdiays-after-the-2024-presidential-election/>

- The Department of Theatre and Dance public performances included:
 - *Now. Here. This*–September 2024
 - *Christmas GALA 2024*– December 2024
 - *Cabaret*–April 2025
- The students of the Musical Theatre program performed *Now. Here. This.* for the Natchitoches PEO in November 2024.
- **Dr. Sloane Artis**, Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre, participated in multiple outreach/recruiting events:
 - Conducted a masterclass with Guest Music Director Mary Grace Ellerbee–August 2024
 - Judged the NSU’s Got Talent competition–November 2024
 - Presented workshops with **Nhan Ho**, Assistant Professor of Dance, at Ovey Comeaux High School and Southside High School–December 2024
 - Was a Northwestern State representative and presenter at the Louisiana Thespian Festival–January 2025
 - Presented workshops with **Nhan Ho**, Assistant Professor of Dance, at Pineville High School–March 2025
- **Nhan Ho**, Assistant Professor of Dance taught community-facing dance classes through Northwestern State’s WRAC, including an open-level Hip Hop class and an Adult Hip Hop Cardio Jam. These classes have helped strengthen connections between the university and the local community while promoting dance as a lifelong practice.
- NSU Dance Company performed its yearly production of *Modern in Motion*.

Program Successes

- 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 2024-2025, our courses realized over a 75% success rate for students in our MATH co-requisite courses and a 60% success rate for students in our ENGL co-requisite courses.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural studies retained 100% of its incoming first-year students from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025.
- **Christine Ferrell**, Instructor of Languages, and **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, were nominated by the Gail Metoyer Jones Center at Northwestern State University as inspiring faculty during Women’s History Month (March 2025) in recognition of their invaluable contributions.
- The Louisiana Scholars’ College’s admission rates have increased 40% over last year to a projected 103+ incoming freshman for 2025-2026.
- The Louisiana Scholars’ College accepted five (5) students into accelerated master’s programs–three (3) in the MA in English and (2) in MS in Clinical Psychology.
- Northwestern State’s co-requisite mathematics program achieved an 84% success rate, significantly above national benchmarks.
- The Division of Mathematics’ new recruitment and retention efforts are showing strong early results with a 500% increase in incoming freshmen and 300% increase in overall majors anticipated for 2025-2026.
- Thirty students earned either BM, MM, or BME degrees during the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 commencement ceremonies. Over 90% of those students have obtained jobs or were accepted into doctoral and master’s programs at the school of their choice.

- All (100%) of Spring 2025 graduates in Music Education have secured teaching positions for the 2025-2026 academic year.
- Two retired faculty of the Department of Music (**Dr. Burt Allen** and **Dr. Dennette McDermott**) were named Professor Emeritus.
- The NSU Choir room was named the Burt Allen Choral Rehearsal Room in honor of **Dr. Burt Allen**, Professor Emeritus of Music.
- Under the direction of **Dr. Dominique Taylor**, students in the Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts won multiple awards this year:
 - **Victoria Rodrigue** (BS in Communications, 2025) won two Silver Telly awards (General Student and General No for Profit Professional categories) for the promotional video “Phi Mu, More Than Just a Sorority” she produced for her COMM 3480 Promotional Video Production course.
 - The creators of the Hispanic Student Journalists Association (HSJA, a Northwestern State recognized student organization) won the Spring 2025 Society of Professional Journalists Region 12’s Mark of Excellence Awards for Best Podcast–Conversational Category
 - NSU-TV was awarded two Apple Media Awards
 - “Latino Living”, co-producer/co-host **Lia Portillo** and **Isabel Juarez Rubio** and HSJA Production Crew, won 2nd place–Best Podcast
 - “Second Annual Battle of the Bands”, producer/writer/ editor **Lia Portillo** and co-producer/camera **Isabel Juarez Rubio**, won 3rd place–Multimedia Package
- The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs placed history majors in internships at Forts Randolph/Buhlow State Historic Site and the NSU Williamson museum.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance has made continued revisions and improvements to the processes of their collaborative Season Selection Committee, which is charged with selecting theatrical performances for the coming year.
- The Department of Theatre and Dance has established new policies and procedures designed to strengthen collaboration between the department and the STO (Student Theatre Organization), a recognized student organization comprised of department majors.
- The Veterinary Technology program is the only such program in Louisiana fully accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association without a probationary status due to deficiencies.

Research/Scholarly Activity/Grant Successes

- The Department of Biology and the Department of Fine + Graphic Arts were both awarded a Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE)+ grant (from BoR) to provide paid internships to their students.
 - For the Department of Biology (**Dr. Jerry Brunson** and **JD Cox**), the grant will support four students in the Wildlife Biology and Conservation concentration (\$2500/student) to work 16 hours/week with a partner (Natchitoches Fish Hatchery) and will also fund departmental workshops focusing on professionalism, cover letter/resume writing, and safety in the workplace. Students will be required to attend all of these workshops prior to applying for the internships. This application process will allow us to properly vet the students participating in the program and help us maintain strong relationships with our industry partners.
 - For the Department of Fine + Graphic Arts (**Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck** and **Mirla Gonzalez**), the grant will be used to upgrade technology in the Design Center which provides internal internship opportunities for students working on projects for local/community individuals and businesses.
- **Dr. Khirsten Doolan**, Assistant Professor of English, and **Dr. Allison Rittmayer**, Associate Professor of English, recently presented at the Society for the Study of Southern Literature conference in Gulfport, MS, June 23-26, 2024. They co-chaired the panel "Reconstructing Queer Souths." Doolan presented a paper titled, "Gay 'til the Cows Come Home: Queer Southern Expression on

TikTok," and Rittmayer presented, "Toward a Southern Transcestry: Tracing Visibility and Activism in the 21st Century." Doolan also participated in a roundtable session titled, "Get It While It's Hot: Gas Station, Roadside, and Convenience Cuisine in the U.S. South."

- Several faculty members attended the South Central Modern Language Association's 81st Annual Conference in New Orleans in September 2024. **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland**, Professor of English, delivered her paper "Artificial and Other Intelligences in Ray Naylor's *The Mountain in the Sea*," **Sadeem El Nahhas**, Instructor of English, presented "'It's Complicated': Echoes of Colonial Rhetoric in American Media Coverage of Palestine," and **Dr. Thomas Reynolds**, Professor of English, shared "Implementing a Successful Co-Requisite English Program in Rural Louisiana." El Nahhas, Reynolds, and **Dr. James J. Mischler**, Associate Professor of English, also chaired sessions at the three-day conference.
- **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, was awarded a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities to sponsor A Reading by Louisiana Poet Laureate Alison Pelegrin, on September 18, 2024.
- Several faculty members presented research at the Louisiana Studies Conference in Natchitoches, LA, in October 2024. **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, presented "Becoming from Here: A Poet Comes Home—Learning to Live in Louisiana," **Heather Salter Dromm**, Instructor of English, presented "The Dangers (and Opportunities) of Nostalgia in Louisiana Country Music," and **Sadeem El Nahhas**, Instructor of English, presented "Wading Through the Water: An Exploration of Louisiana in Post-Katrina Poetry."
- **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**, Associate Professor of English, published his article "Olivia's Kingdoms: Corresponding with Carby's Imperial Intimacies in *The Woman of Colour*" in the online journal *Romanticism on the Net*. His essay is part of the October 2024 special issue on Black Studies and Romanticism.
- **Max Shelton**, Instructor of English, presented "Learning to Write, Writing to Learn" at the Louisiana Association for Public, Community, & Adult Education (LAPCAE) Conference in Baton Rouge, LA, in October 2024.
- **Dr. Daniel Gordy**, Assistant Professor of English and Criminal Justice, completed his Ed.D. in Adult Learning and Development at NSU in December 2024. His dissertation, "Rehabilitating Correctional Education with Technology, Mentorship, and Responsive Pedagogy," brought together his work in English and criminal justice through the field of education.
- Four ELCS faculty members presented research at NSU's 38th Annual Research Day on April 3, 2025:
 - **Dr. Khirsten Doolan**, Assistant Professor of English, presented "Bread and Circuses: Revisiting Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* Series."
 - **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**, Associate Professor of English, presented "Sanskrit Verses and White Contradiction in Gilroy's *Inkle and Yarico*."
 - **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland**, Professor of English, presented "Artificial and Other Intelligences in Ray Naylor's *The Mountain in the Sea*."
 - **Heather Salter Dromm**, Instructor of English, presented "Time Travel on the Spectrum in Holly Smale's *Cassandra in Reverse*."
 - **Dr. Lilly Berberyan**, Assistant Professor of English, organized and led a session, "How Not to Be a Misogynist," at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference, in Boston, MA, on March 20, 2025.
- **Dr. Julie Kane**, Professor Emerita of English, was named the 2025 recipient of the Louisiana Writer Award, given by the Louisiana Center for the Book in the State Library of Louisiana to recognize outstanding contributions to Louisiana's literary and intellectual life by a contemporary Louisiana's body of work.
- **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, was named "Literary Winner" at Shreveport Arts Council's 2025 Critical Mass 13 on April 10, 2025.

- **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland**, Professor of English, published “Metamorphosing with Selkies: Shape-Shifting Instabilities in the Self-Conscious Anthropocene” in *Matrix: A Journal for Matricultural Studies* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 2024-2025), special theme: “Women and Water.”
- **Dr. James J. Mischler**, Associate Professor of English, presented a research poster, “The Non-human Subjects Research (NHSR) Application Review Process: Purpose and Benefits” at the Responsibility in Medicine & Research (PRIM&R) International Conference in Seattle, WA, in November 2024. In January 2025, Mischler joined the grant “Evaluation of Large Language Model (LLM) Generated Text,” at the State University of New York–Downtown, “as a data analyst, and he was invited to serve as a member of the Louisiana Department of Education’s ESL Focus Group. In February 2025, Mischler organized and moderated “AI in Applied Linguistics: Using ChatGPT in the Language Classroom” for the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL). Mischler also presented “Enhancing the Research Knowledge and Skills of Students via the Institutional Review Board” at the University of Louisiana System For Our Future Conference in Baton Rouge, LA, in March 2025.
- **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, moderated a roundtable discussion and music performance of Louisiana tradition bearers as a pre-festival event for the 44th Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival “Fiddlin’ with the Finest! A Celebration of Louisiana Folk Fiddling” in June 2024 at the Beauregard Museum in DeRidder, LA, and served as a Folklife on behalf of the Louisiana Folklife Commission for “Honoring Ron Yule” in Natchitoches, LA, in October 2024. Rasmussen also served as a grants review panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts in Fall 2024.
- **Dr. Thomas Reynolds**, Professor of English and Department Head, presented research posters on NSU’s co-requisite English program at two international conferences: Modern Language Association’s 140th Annual Convention in New Orleans, LA (January 2025) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Baltimore, MD (April 2025).
- **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Professor of English, secured grant funding for the 45th annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival, to be held in July 2025, in the amount of \$17,910 from several funding agencies.
 - Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. “2025 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival.” Non-competitive Strategic Partnership Grant. Funded amount: \$8,000
 - New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. Community and Partnership Grants. “The 45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival.” Funded amount: \$4,800
 - Shreveport Regional Arts Council, Louisiana Division of the Arts. “2025 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival.” Funded amount: \$5,110

The Louisiana Folklife Center solicited and received \$7,800 in charitable donations and \$27,385 in external grant money in support of the 2024 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival held in July 2024 and are on track to surpass those amounts for the 2025 event.
- **Dr. Nabin Sapkota** (Associate Professor of Engineering Technology) completed his certification on “Generative AI for Natural language Processing Program” from MIT.
- **Dr. Xinjia Chen** (Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology) co-authored a full-length journal article published on *IEEE Transactions*:
 - S. Y. Chang, H. -C. Wu, K. Yan, **X. Chen**, S. C. -H. Huang and Y. Wu, "Personalized Multimedia Recommendation Systems Using Higher-Order Tensor Singular-Value-Decomposition," in *IEEE Transactions on Broadcasting*, vol. 70, no. 1, pp. 148-160, March 2024, doi: 10.1109/TBC.2023.3278111.
- **Dr. Moftah Ali** (Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology) along with **Dr. Xinjia Chen** (Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology) and **Dr. Jafar Al Sharab** (Professor of Engineering Technology) co-authored a conference paper:

- Jafar F. Al Sharab; Adeal S Matuk; Moftah Ali; Xinjia Chen. "Exploring Mathematical Proficiency in AI-Driven Engineering Environments: A Survey-Based Study of Current Workforce," *54th IEEE ASEE Frontiers in Education (FIE) International Conference*, Washington, DC, October 13-16, 2024.
- **Dr. Moftah Ali** (Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology) and **Dr. Jafar Al Sharab** (Professor of Engineering Technology) co-authored a conference paper:
 - Moftah Ali; Jafar F. Al Sharab, "Strategies for Improving the Communication Skills in Engineering Technology Programs," *54th IEEE ASEE Frontiers in Education (FIE) International Conference*, Washington, DC, October 13-16, 2024.
- **Edgar Cano Lopez**, Assistant Professor of Art, has received multiple grants/honors this year:
 - The Gottlieb Foundation Individual Support Grant-\$25,000
 - The Louisiana Endowment for the Arts FY25 Louisiana Project Grant for *LA Litho* lithography project-\$2,730
 - South Arts 2025 Louisiana Fellow for the Visual Arts
- Multiple faculty within the Department of Fine + Graphic Arts had their work exhibited:
 - **Edgar Cano Lopez**, Assistant Professor of Art, alongside Liz Lessner, Brandon Sertain, and John Isiah Watson-*Rokoko* exhibition Baton Rouge Gallery, May 6-29, 2025
 - **Edgar Cano Lopez**, Assistant Professor of Art-*The Future Holds Something For Us*, group exhibition, Elements Gallery, Queens, New York, April 12-July 12, 2025.
 - **Edgar Cano Lopez**, Assistant Professor of Art-Best of Show, "Chrome Dance" 61st Juried Competition, Kerry Inman, juror. Masur Museum of Art <https://www.masurmuseum.org/product/61st-juried-competition/>
 - **Edgar Cano Lopez**, Assistant Professor of Art-Best of Show, 16th Annual Surreal Salon, Baton Rouge Gallery, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Beth Carvner, Juror.
 - **Matthew DeFord**, Professor of Art-"5x5x5," River Oaks Arts Center, Alexandria, Louisiana Solo Exhibition
 - **Matthew DeFord**, Professor of Art, with **Corbin Covher**, Associate Professor of Art-"Collaborative Art the Game, the Show," Orville Hanchey Gallery, Natchitoches, Louisiana
- **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck**, Associate Professor of Art, presented *The Impact of ADDIE Designed Lessons in Scissor and Knife Use on the Self-Efficacy of Collegiate Art Students* at the Mid-South Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Chattanooga, Tennessee, November 6-8, 2024.
- **Corbin Covher**, Associate Professor of Art, participated at the ULS Day at the Capitol 2025 (May 5, 2025) with a virtual reality demonstration.
- **Edgar Cano Lopez**, Assistant Professor of Art, with Jorge Navarro presented *Pintura Y Testimonia*-lecture moderated by Carlos Torralba Galleria AP, Facultad de Artes Plasticas, Veracruz, Mexico, June 12, 2025.
- **Matthew DeFord**, Professor of Art, participated in the "Tom Peyton Memorial Arts Festival," First United Methodist Church, Alexandria, Louisiana National Competition.
- **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck**, Associate Professor of Art, has been selected to present "The Impact of Addie Designed Lessons in Scissor and Knife Use on the Self-efficacy of Collegiate Art Students" at the Twenty-First International Conference on The Arts in Society, at School of Philosophy, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, June 10 -12, 2026.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Pursell**, Instructor in the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, served as the Northwestern State team leader for the Board of Regents' initiative Meauxmentum. In June 2025, the team, which also includes COAS faculty/administrators **Dr. Jerry Brunson**, **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck**, **Dr. Francene Lemoine**, and **Dr. Thomas Reynolds**, was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the LA Board of Regents to implement the Meauxmentum Framework into university programming.

- **Dr. Rondo Keele** (Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) published the article "Relations in *Summa Logicae*," in *Ockham's Summa Logicae: A Critical Guide*, edited by C. Panaccio and J. Pelletier. Cambridge University Press: 2025, pp. 105-127.
- **Dr. Davina McClain** (Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) received a Caristia grant from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South to help fund the Floralia celebration in the College.
- **Dr. Keith Dromm** (Professor in the Louisiana Scholars' College) and co-author Heather Salter Dromm (Instructor of English in the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies) had a chapter accepted for publication in *Country Music and Philosophy* (McFarland, forthcoming): "What's Wrong with the Good Old Days?"
- **Dr. Keith Dromm** (Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) presented a paper, "Water Conservation and Confucian Ethics," at the *Water, Philosophy, & Politics Workshop*, University of Nevada-Reno, May 20-21, 2024.
- **Dr. Keith Dromm** (Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) was a participant in the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded summer program on "Creative Spaces/Contested Spaces: Reinterpreting Italian American Public Art in New York City" at the Fashion Institute of Technology, June 17-21, 2024. It was part of the NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture summer programs. Selection is competitive and participants are awarded a stipend.
- **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** (Assistant Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) published *X-Ray*, a book in Bloomsbury's Object Lesson Series (July 25, 2024); the book has been reviewed favorably in *Journal of Medical Humanities*; *Hektoen International: A Journal of Medical Humanities*; and on MedHum.org
- **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** (Assistant Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) organized and moderated a roundtable titled "The Short Book: Brevity in Scholarship" at MLA 2025 Annual Conference (Jan 12, 2025).
- **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** (Assistant Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) published an invited essay "Victorians and the Discovery of X-rays" on *The Victorian Web* <https://www.victorianweb.org/technology/xrays.html> (Jan 17, 2025)
- **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** (Assistant Professor, Louisiana Scholars' College) received a Summer Stipend from the National Endowment of Humanities in support of research to be performed in summer 2025.
- **Mr. Paul Christopher**, Associate Professor of Cello, recorded and released a CD featuring the world premier recordings of the complete unaccompanied cello works of Christian Wolff.
- **Dr. Malena McLaren**, Professor of Music–Clarinet, served as a representative on the International Clarinet Association. In this role, she participated in planning of as well as served as a presenter/performer/adjudicator for the annual Clareidoscope Virtual Conference on March 16, 2024.
- **Dr. Malena McLaren**, Professor of Music–Clarinet, was interviewed for 2025 ICA Research Presentation regarding her role as a Library Liaison for the International Clarinet Association.
- **Dr. Malena McLaren**, Professor of Music–Clarinet, received the Magale Endowed Professorship to present research and perform recitals–University of Alabama (with Dr. Chialing Hsieh) in October 2024, and the International Low Clarinet Fest in Arizona in January 2025.
- *Three Reeds Duo* **Dr. Paul Forsyth** (Professor of Music-Saxophone) and **Leah Forsyth** (Assistant Professor of Music-Oboe) was featured on Constellation Series Recital at the University of Alabama, November 8, 2024.
- The Natchitoches Northwestern Symphony Orchestra was invited to play at the Louisiana Music Educators Association conference January 16-19, 2-25.
- **Sofiko Tchetchelashvili**, Instructor of Viola, and **Dr. Andrej Kurti**, Professor of Violin, were invited to teach and perform at the International Music Festival "Suoni d'Abruzzo" in Ortona, Italy during Summer 2025.
- **Dr. Malena McLaren**, Professor of Music–Clarinet, is co-planning the 2026 LA Clarinet Symposium which will be held at LA Tech University in January 2026.

- **Dr. Paul Forsyth** was awarded the Prince Music Endowed Professorship which will be used to allow the Three Reeds Duo to attend and perform at the International Duo Symposium in Costa Rica in May 2026.
- **Dr. Dominique Taylor**, Associate Professor of Communications in the Department of New Media, Journalism, Communication Arts, received an award from the Louisiana State University through the Henry Luce Foundation for “Louisiana Community Journalism Initiative.”-\$10,761
 - The grant supports and builds relationships with community-run newspapers across Louisiana. The grant works with universities across Louisiana to fund interns working at a local newspaper in an effort to support the paper, build networking opportunities for the student, and produce news stories covering local Louisiana communities. The program’s first Intern, Dakota Thomas (Communications minor), started his internship with the *Natchitoches Times* in May 2025.
- **Dr. Daniel Rivera-Vasquez**, Associate Professor of Chemistry, was awarded a grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents. The grant entitled “Acquisition of Ductless Chemical Fume Hoods for Chemistry Undergraduate Laboratories and Outreach Activities at NSU” was funded for \$55,148.
- **Dr. Damien Tristant**, Assistant Professor Physics, was awarded a grant from LaSPACE RockOn 2025 to build and launch a rocket, with two undergraduate Physical Science students.
- **Dr. Duminda Samarakoon**, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, has published two articles:
 Zuhair Hawsawi, Ahmed Alzharani, **Duminda Samarakoon**, Amal Abdulrahman, TaVeion Taylor, Md. Hanif Uddin, William Gladney, Xiao-Qian Wang, and Ishrat Khan. *Highly Conductive Boron Containing Electrolytes by Integration Modeling and Experiments. ACS Omega* **2025**, 10(1), 127-133 DOI: 10.1021/acsomega.4c01051
 M. K. Indika Senevirathna, **Duminda K. Samarakoon**, Rosi Gunasinghe, Xiao-Qian Wang, Michael D. Williams; Bandgap opening of ferric chloride intercalated graphene by applying small electric field. *AIP Advances* 1 December 2024; 14 (12): 125107. <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0221841>
- **Dr. William Manger**, Assistant Professor of Geography, presented “The Photo Postcards of Albert W. Lohn” at the Pimeria Alta Historical Society and Museum in Nogales, AZ.
- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Professor of History, presented his on-going research on conspiracy theories on water fluoridation in Louisiana in the 1950s and 1960s to the Association of Citizens' Councils of Louisiana.
- **Dr. Christopher Gilson**, Associate Professor of History, published the book review:
 Gilson, C.R. (2025) ‘The price of collapse: The Little Ice Age and the Fall of Ming China, written by Timothy Brook’, *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 32(2), pp. 219–221. doi:10.1163/18765610-32020005.
- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Professor of History , published a review:
 Pelligrin, C. (2025). ‘Review of Oil Cities: The Making of North Louisiana’s Boomtowns, 1901-1930, by Henry A. Wiencek’, *Gulf South Historical Review*, 22 (1): 134-36.
- **Dr. Dean Sinclair**, Professor of Geography, published a book review:
 Sinclair, Dean. *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 122, no. 3 (2021): 162–65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45492637>.
- **Dr. Christopher Gilson**, Associate Professor of History, is participating in the LOUIS/Board of Regents Open Education Resources Grant program, "Building a Competitive Workforce".
- **Dr. Hiram Pete Gregory**, Professor of Anthropology and Curator of the Williamson Museum, was awarded a US Forest Service Grant in consultation with the six Native American nations/tribes to plant river can and longleaf pin along Cane River.
- **Dr. Hiram Pete Gregory**, Professor of Anthropology and Curator of the Williamson Museum, received a continuation of a US Forest Service grant for an archaeological curation training program.

- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Professor of History, attended the Gulf South History and Humanities Conference in Pensacola, FL on October 10, 2024. At the conference, Dr. Pellegrin chaired the session “International Relations and Warfare in Southern U.S. History.”
- **Drs. Greg Granger, Charles Pellegrin, James MacDonald** (all Professors of History), and **Dr. Christopher Gilson**, Associate Professor of History, all attended the 2025 Louisiana Political Science Association Meeting in Lake Charles on February 7, 2025.
 - Dr. Granger chaired a session entitled “Bridging Gaps and Building Futures: Foster Care Training in the Delta Regional Authority States.”
 - Drs. Pellegrin, MacDonald, and Gilson presented research papers in a panel entitled “Floods, Fluoride and Factories: Contesting Authority in Louisiana’s Political Landscape.” Their contributions covered a wide range of topics including the 1849 Red River flood, the fluoridation debate in Louisiana during the 1950s and 1960s, and the role of Indian Agent John Sibley in early Louisiana.
- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin** and **Dr. James MacDonald**, both Professors of History, were active participants at the prestigious Society for Military History Meeting in Mobile, Alabama March 27-30, 2025.
 - Dr. Pellegrin chaired the session “Politics, Diplomacy, and Military Strategy in the Twentieth Century.”
 - Dr. MacDonald participated in the session entitled “Indigenous Societies and War” where he presented research on Native American alliances in his paper “Caught Between Two Fires: The Catawba Choose Sides in the American Revolution.”
- **Dr. Christopher Gilson**, Associate Professor of History, participated in the Popular Culture Association 2025 National Meeting in New Orleans, LA April 16-19, 2025. Dr. Gilson presented a paper titled “Tempest and Terror: Monsters in the History and Literature of Meteorology.”
- **Dr. Sean Bartley**, Assistant Professor of Theatre History, won the Association for Theatre in Higher Education’s Edited Works award for *Experiential Theatres*.
- **Dr. Sean Bartley**, Assistant Professor of Theatre History, published new chapter “Introduction, Invitation, and Integration in Immersive Performance” in *Enveloping Worlds: Toward a Discourse of Immersive Performance* (Edited by E.B. Hunter & Scott Magelssen)
- **Dr. Sloane Artis**, Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre, served as a host and scenes concert coordinator at the Louisiana National Association for Teachers of Singing (NATS) Conference. Nine (9) students majoring in Musical Theatre placed in competitions at the conference.
- **Nhan Ho**, Assistant Professor of Dance, was a co-presenter for the panel *Building Community Through Cohorts* at the National Dance Education Organization’s National Conference September 29–October 1, 2024.
- **Nhan Ho**, Assistant Professor of Dance, has been accepted as a presenter for the 2025 NDEO Conference (October 4-6, 2025) with the session *Limón Technique: Foundations to Athletic Movement*.
- **Nhan Ho**, Assistant Professor of Dance, and graduating senior Gabrielle Marino (BFA Dance major) presented work at the American College Dance Association hosted at Texas State University in San Marcos, TX March 12-15, 2025.
- **Andrew Killion**, Assistant Professor of Lighting and Sound Design, went to London’s West End for a two-day training in mixing musicals. He will be integrating what he learned into the sound classes at Northwestern State.

In addition, departments and schools host several events annually that strengthen our recruiting and retention efforts. To highlight a few:

The *Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies’ Student Success and Persistence Committee* **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis** (chair), Associate Professor of English, **Dr. Khirsten Doolan**, Assistant Professor of English, **Christine Ferrell**, Instructor of Languages, and **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, in the department of English, Languages, and

Cultural Studies, developed and has continued retention events that have positively affected enrollment, engagement, and persistence for English majors, English minors, Creative writing minors, French minors, Gender & Sexuality Studies minors, and Spanish minors:

- At the beginning of each fall semester, Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies hosted a Taco Social to welcome new and returning students back to campus and create opportunities for them to get to know one another and their faculty and staff.
- Around midterms of each fall and spring semester, Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies hosted a *Tea & Empathy* event for majors and minors to drop in and de-stress through food, fun, and fellowship.
- Near the end of each semester, Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies hosted a *Final Stretch* event for majors and minors to drop in and de-stress through food, fun, and fellowship.

NSU Art Camp: The Department of Fine + Graphic Arts offers several sessions of summer arts camps for over 120 young artists (ages 5-11) as well as advanced artists (ages 12-18) to explore their own creative twists on a variety of classic and modern art.

NSU Music Academy: The Department of Music continues to enroll children and adolescents in the Natchitoches Community for lessons in piano, guitar, percussion, strings, and voice.

Double Reed Day: The 10th NSU Double Reed Day 2025 was held on March 8, 2025. Students and community members from across Louisiana came to campus for a day of Oboe and Bassoon classes and performances. This event was run by **Leah Forsyth**, Associate Professor of Oboe, and **Douglas Bakenhus**, Professor of Bassoon.

NSU Music Kids Camp: The Department of Music re-established this camp in Summer 2025 to introduce students (K-5) to instruments, songs, and composition.

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 400 high school students to participate in various 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 300 high school students to participate in various journalism, communication, and new media contests.

Scholars' Day: The Louisiana Scholars' College hosts this event 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.

Regional Social Studies Fair: The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs host the regional social studies fair on the Natchitoches campus each Spring semester.

3D Digital Summer Field School: The ARGO Lab (School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs) in collaboration with the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training holds a summer field school camp each year during which they engage high school-age students from the local community in documenting Natchitoches' history, primarily in the African American neighborhoods of Jackson Square and the Hill. The experience teaches the students about the importance of historic preservation while providing them with valuable technology transfer skills.

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 STEM 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 40 children from the community attended.

Demon Math Classic: The Department of Mathematics hosts this annual event each March, attracting over 200 high school students to participate in various 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 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, the NSU Elementary Laboratory School, the NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network, to assist children and their parents related to learning and development.

During AC 2024-2025, the GCEHD is proud to reflect on the numerous revisions to fieldwork, increased opportunities for internships, improvements in curricula, an increase in scholarships, research, and service opportunities, enhanced admission procedures, increased collaboration, and the 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 2023-2024 to AC 2024-2025, GCEHD students and faculty are persistent in pursuing educational attainment, scholarly work, and service activities.

GCEHD Degree Programs

In the Academic year of 2024-2025, the GCEHD enrolled 1897 undergraduate and graduate students in 50 degree and certificate programs. Four hundred eighty-seven students (ages 3-14) enrolled in the NSU Elementary and Middle Laboratory schools and Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center (CDC). Forty-eight military cadets were enrolled as full-time students in fall 2024.

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 2024-2025, the GCEHD awarded 401 undergraduate and graduate degrees. Two cadets were commissioned as 2nd lieutenants in the U.S. Army during 2024-2025. In 2023-2024, the number of degrees earned totaled 447.

For AC 2024-2025, retention rates for departments within GCEHD ranged from 82.83% to 86.86%. GCEHD had a Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 retention rate of 62.21% 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:

- The Northwestern Demon Regiment (NDR) is the alumni organization of NSU's ROTC program. **LTC Calvin Hoover**, US Army Retired, returned to Natchitoches upon his retirement from the Army in 2024. He volunteered to serve on the NDR Executive Council and was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff.
- The following alumni returned to their alma mater in the Fall of 2024 as honorary captains for the Demon football. NSU recognized the military service of:
 - LTC Arthur Smalley**, US Army Retired, on 7 September 2024
 - 1LT Meya Morse** on 21 September 2024
 - CPT Dominitra Charles** on 26 October 2024
 - LTC John Hatley** on 16 November 2024
- **MAJ Richard Hooter**, US Army Retired, was recognized in September 2024 in the Natchitoches Parish Journal for his service to NSU and the Department of Military Science.
- NSU's new academic building was named for **Dr. Robert Alost** in October 2024. Dr. Alost was commissioned through NSU's ROTC program as an artillery officer in 1957. He went on to serve NSU as a faculty member, department head, and dean before being named the 16th President of NSU. He was also a co-founder and Director of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts. The Robert Alost Memorial Scholarship was established in his honor in the spring of 2025.
- **LTC Henry Burns**, US Army Retired, is a 1970 alumnus of NSU ROTC, a two-term member of the Louisiana House of Representatives from District 9 in Bossier Parish, and a successful entrepreneur. In October, he was inducted into NSU's Long Purple Line, NSU's Alumni Hall of Distinction.

- During the annual Military Ball co-hosted by the Department of Military Science and the NDR on April 12th, the Demon Regiment celebrated the 75th anniversary of NSU's ROTC program by presenting their coin to alumni in attendance. Honored were:
 - MAJ Roland Beasley**, US Army Retired,
 - CPT Michael Beauford**
 - MAJ Jody Bernard, Jr.**
 - MAJ Raymond Bijolle**, US Army Retired
 - COL James Bowie**, US Army Retired
 - CPT Donald Davis**, US Army Retired
 - Mr. Fernando Del Rio**
 - MAJ Ted Duggan II**, US Army Retired
 - Mr. William Gaines, Jr.**
 - COL William Gates**, US Army Retired
 - LTC John Hatley**
 - MAJ Richard Hooter**, US Army Retired
 - LTC Calvin Hoover**, US Army Retired
 - MAJ Kenneth Hoover Sr.**, US Army Retired
 - LTC Reginald Horton**, US Army Retired
 - LTC Gene Johnson**, US Army Retired
 - Mr. Jeremy Miller**
 - LTC Edwin Reliford Jr.**, US Army Retired
 - LTC Arthur Smalley**, US Army Retired
 - Ms. Mabel Tuiel**
 - COL Walter Weaver**, US Army Retired
 - LTC Christian Young III**, US Army Retired
- During the Military Ball, **LTC (R) Reginald Horton** was inducted into the NDR Hall of Fame. He graduated and was commissioned from NSU in 1985. An infantry officer, he served with distinction for over 34 years before assuming a position with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He continues to serve the nation as the Minority Veterans Program Coordinator and the Congressional Medal of Honor Coordinator for the VA Healthcare System, Alexandria, Louisiana.
- **1LT Kayla Graham** graduated and was commissioned from NSU with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in 2022. **1LT Graham** is battling a rare form of cancer but pushed herself to complete a Master of Science in Psychology in May 2024 with her cohort while undergoing treatment.
- **Dr. Charles King** (Graduated in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology degree from the Department of Psychology) has accepted position as the Department Head of Psychology and Addiction Studies at Northwestern State University.
- **Dr. Matthew Magee** (Graduated in 2025 with a Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Development from the School of Education) has accepted position as the Dean of Agriculture, Business, and Technology at Highland Community College.
- **Dr. Craig Leager** (Graduated in 2024 with a Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Development from the School of Education) has accepted position as the Executive Dean of Instruction at Indian Hills Community College.
- **Wendy Kyei** (Graduated in 2024 from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies) is accepted into the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Kentucky.
- **Greere Koehler** (Graduated in 2025 from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies) is hired as the Title IV-E Statewide Program Manager.

- **Shiley Cartinez** (Graduated from the Department of Health and Human Performance) is accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at LSUHSC Shreveport.
- **Tyra Jones** (Graduated from the Department of Health and Human Performance) is accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at LSUHSC New Orleans.
- **Katelyn Furlow** (Graduated from the Department of Health and Human Performance) is accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the University of Louisiana Monroe.
- **Madison Simms** (Graduated from the Department of Health and Human Performance) is accepted into the Doctor of Occupation Therapy program at the Texas Christian University Doctor of Therapy Program.
- **Reina Becnel Lim** (Graduated in 2025) was accepted into the Tulane University Master of Social Work Advanced Standing Dual Degree MSW/MS-DRL and a Roll Wave Scholar.
- The inaugural class of the NSU Master of Social Work accepted the following BSW graduates: **Anniya' Platt, Christian Lawson, Ragini Brooke Delasalle, Coree Nash, Kristina Wozniak, Hannah Hubner, and Megan Goff.**

Current Students:

- **Cadet Jacob Mullican** 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.
- **2LT Arianna Astorga**, named the 2024 Legacy Cadet, graduated, and was commissioned from NSU in August 2024 with a Bachelor of Science in Health and Exercise Science with a Concentration in Pre-occupational Therapy and a Minor in Military Leadership. She is a logistician serving in the US Army Reserve.
- **Cadet Jacob Mullican** was named the recipient of the 2025-2026 Police Jury Association of Louisiana Scholarship.
- The 83rd anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor that brought the US into World War II was commemorated with the 18.6-mile Norwegian Foot March at Barksdale Air Force Base on 14 December. There were over 200 marchers from LA, TX, AR, and MS. Joining the march from NSU were:
 - Cadet Kyra Cole**
 - Cadet Colton Wood**
 - Cadet Jacob Mullican**
 - Cadet Eric Cao**
 - Cadet Caiden Matthews**
 - Cadet Grace Kerney**
 - Cadet Mia Cole**
 - Cadet Layla Theriot.**
- The Superior Cadet Award recognizes those Cadets who show academic and military leadership and demonstrate strong officer potential. Award recipients are:
 - Top MS I—**Cadet Joao Vitor Dos Santos**
 - Top MS II—**Cadet Jacob Mullican**
 - Top MS III—**Cadet Layla Theriot**
 - Top MS IV—**Cadet Caiden Matthews**
- **CDT Caiden Matthews** is the recipient of the department's highest honor—the Major General Urban W. Wise Touchstone Award. The term “Touchstone” was taken from the Cadet Creed, and we use it to mark the character of the recipient. The award reads, “Touchstone: the standard against which others are measured.” The award was presented during our annual military ball on April 12th.

- **2LT Caiden Matthews**, named the 2025 Legacy Cadet, was the Commander of the Demon Battalion for the Academic Year 2024-2025. On 14 May 2025, he graduated and was commissioned with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Minor in Military Leadership. He received his top choice for branch assignment, Quartermaster, and is serving the Army on active duty. NSU ROTC alumnus **MAJ Justin Thompson** administered the Oath of Office.
- **Hilliary Barnett** from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies has been appointed to the Mind Over Matter Board in Natchitoches, LA. The Mind Over Matter organization is a resource network for Natchitoches Mental Health Services.
- **Dr. Kristen Walker Authement** with students attended the Future Educators Honor Roll ceremony, hosted by the State of Louisiana at the historic Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge on Tuesday, May 6th. This prestigious event recognized aspiring educators who are already making a meaningful impact in the field of education. Northwestern State University was proud to have three honorees: one graduating senior in elementary education, one in secondary education, and a high school student who will be attending NSU to pursue a degree in early childhood education.
- **Lona Aucoin** and **Austin Head** from the School of Education are recognized as Louisiana Board of Regents Distinguished Residents.
- Two students at the School of Education attended the Teacher Leader Summit.
- Three students from the Social Work Department presented at NSU Research Day in the spring of 2025 and one student presented at the State Social Work Conference, NASW-La.
- Twelve students were admitted to the Phi Alpha National Honor Society for Social Work.
- One hundred percent of the graduate students in Clinical Psychology presented their research at NSU Research Day.
- The Psychology Department provided multiple scholarships to students, including Thornton Family, Flourishing Junior, and Senior Success Scholarships, which totaled \$29,000.
- The Social Work Department awarded over \$24,300 in scholarships to students and the Title IV-E grant sponsored \$37,500 for Child Welfare Program stipends. The total scholarship amount was \$61,800.
- The GCEHD awarded \$35,000 in need-based Tuition Scholarships to NSU- Elementary Lab and Middle- Lab Students.
- Fifty-one students received awards at the 2024-2025 Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Honors Convocation.

Academic Engagement

- The Department of Military Science hosted 96 JROTC Cadets from 10 high schools on March 7th for the annual Demon Challenge competition. Held at Noe Armory, 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 70 students participating in 2024, Cadets and Cadre incorporated recruiting trips to regional JROTC Programs to increase outreach and participation.
- Advanced Camp is the capstone leader development opportunity for all Cadets between their MS III and MS IV years of ROTC. Those who completed Camp at Fort Knox, KY, were:
 - Cadet Christian Holmes**
 - Cadet Jaylon James**
 - Cadet Caiden Matthews.**
- **Cadet Ethan Jones** served on the opposing forces to facilitate Advanced Camp field training exercises.
- Cadet Troop Leader Training provides the opportunity to shadow Army officers and learn first-hand how active-duty units operate and conduct training: **Cadet Christian Holmes** served with

the 239th Forward Support Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, 17th Field Artillery Brigade, Joint Base Lewis–McChord, WA.

- **Cadet Caiden Matthews** served with B Company, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Cavalry Brigade, Fort Cavazos, TX.
- 6th Brigade “Titan” held its Ranger Challenge military skills competition. Earning the coveted Ranger Challenge Tab were:

Cadet Miguel Flores, Co-captain

Cadet Jacob Mullican, Co-captain

Cadet Brendan Campbell

Cadet Mia Cole

Cadet Joao Dos Santos

Cadet Megan Franchino

Cadet Todd Gladish

Cadet Camryn Huff

Cadet Tin Huynh

Cadet Ethan Jones

Cadet Colton Wood

- The Department of Military Science had outstanding recruiting activities: they visited 89 high schools, 1 LA Youth Camp, 2 NSU N-Side View events, all NSU Freshman Connection Sessions, 3 counselor luncheons, 6 recruiting receptions, Caddo Parish JROTC Inservice, LA State JROTC Drill Meet, LHSAA Softball tournament recruiting, Leesville High School and Natchitoches Central High School JROTC Drill Meets, and they hosted Demon Challenge on NSU’s campus as mentioned above.
- The School of Education proudly hosted the 2025 Regional Educators Rising Conference on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, centered around the inspiring theme, *For the Love of Education*. The event welcomed approximately 200 attendees, including middle and high school students, club sponsors, community presenters, and volunteer judges. A total of 103 students competed across seven dynamic events, showcasing their passion and potential for future careers in education.
- A large group of students and faculty from Northwestern State University’s Department of Social Work got a close look at the workings of state government and the importance of advocacy during a two-day visit to Baton Rouge on April 23-24. The group participated in an open session at the State Capitol, were recognized on the Senate floor, and spent a meaningful time at the Department of Children and Family Services to learn more about that department’s programs.
- *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 497 high-school students. We have earned a strong, positive reputation at the eight Central Louisiana Parish (Veron, Allen, Rapides, Avoyelles, Winn, LaSalle, Catahoula, and Natchitoches) School Board Offices that help us to identify and transport their high school students to engage with our team of faculty members and learn about healthcare careers and the academic pathways that lead to workforce entry.
- The Bachelor of Science in Addition Studies at NSU ranked #6 on the Best Online Bachelor's Programs in Counseling in Nation by Counseling Psychology.org.
- The EdD Adult Learning and Development program faculty encourages their students to present at the state and regional levels. Within the 2024-2025 calendar year, the Ed.D. faculty and students have presented at conferences 22 times.

- The EdD Adult Learning and Development program faculty created a week to celebrate our Ed.D. students and other graduate students with an initiative called Grad Students Rock. Grad Students Rock offers resources and guidance in scholarly writing as well as a chance to visit faculty.
- The Ed Rising Sponsor and Officer in the School of Education were 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.
- The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development honored 51 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:

- The Social Work Department received MSW Curriculum approval from the NSU Graduate Council and Curriculum Review Committee.
- The Social Work Department accepted new applicants for Master of Social Work Cohort 1. The first cohort will start in the fall of 2025.
- The Social Work Department completed Benchmark 1 for their new MSW program and got approval from the Council on Social Work Education.
- The Social Work Department sponsored nine no-cost Lunch and Learn events virtually and in person for faculty, students, alumni, and the local professional community.
- Three faculty participated in two virtual Lunch and Learns sponsored by the Department of Nursing.
- The Addiction Studies program received Accreditation through the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC).
- The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies received a three-year grant of \$400,000 from the Board of Regents for starting the Collegiate Recovery Program.
- The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies awarded Dr. Susan Thorson-Barnett Grit Scholarship to a student in the Master's in Clinical Psychology program.
- The students from the Master of Clinical Psychology program can apply for Licensure in the State of Louisiana. **Dr. Cynthia Lindsey** from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies advocated for our Master of Clinical Psychology program.
- The School of Education signed two MOUs for Education Leadership with DeSoto Parish Schools and Opel.
- The School of Education started a partnership with Charter Schools USA (currently 9 charter schools in Louisiana).
- The GCEHD Faculty presented around 100 sessions at state, regional, national, and international conferences. Many faculty members have been in leadership positions in professional organizations.
- **Dr. Neeru Deep** successfully delivered *Well-being Workshops for Future Educators* to 100 students in the School of Education and the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies. She also provided a well-being workshop for the Child and Family Network staff.
- GCEHD Appreciation Day and GCEHD Service Day received positive responses from students, faculty, and staff.

Faculty and Staff Awards/Recognition:

- **Major Kegan Davis**, Assistant Professor of Military Science, endured "The Ten Toughest Days in the Army" by completing the US Army Sabalauski Air Assault School, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and earning his Air Assault wings.

- **Ms. Sid Hall**, ROTC Program Manager and Military Affairs Coordinator, received the Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Distinguished Staff Member Award in April 2024.
- **Ms. Margaret Bell**, Facilitator of Military Science and Office Manager, and **Ms. Stephanie Anthony**, Assistant to the Dean of the GCEHD, attended the Louisiana Institute for Administrative Assistants (LIAA) Conference, on May 7-9, 2025, in Baton Rouge. The conference is geared toward individual professional development and networking opportunities for office personnel.
- **Ms. Shannon Wall-Hale** represented NSU at the Board of Regents Meauxmentum Scholar Conference in Baton Rouge and the Board of Regents' Meauxmentum Higher Education Summit in Lafayette.
- **Ms. Shannon Wall-Hale's** Positive Psychology class was featured in the Alumni Columns Magazine with **President Genovese** and **Judith Castillo Gargallo** (Professional Pickleball Player and former Lady Demon Tennis Player).
- **Dr. Patrice Moulton** was appointed to the Executive Board of Fullbright.
- **Dr. Solice** and **Dr. O'Halloran** were selected to serve as Resident Mentors for the NSU Elevate U.
- **Dr. Kristen Walker Authement** has been selected to serve as a judge at the National Educators Rising Conference, taking place June 26–30 in Orlando, Florida. She will judge the *Educators Rising Moment* competition, where students share the personal stories and inspirations that led them to pursue a career in education.
- **Dr. Kristen Walker Authement** completed her doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction in March 2025 from Capella University. While completing her doctorate, Dr. Authement was also recognized at the NSU volleyball game for educators where a student had nominated her as making a positive impact on them. Dr. Authement was also selected for the School of Education Award for Excellence in School Culture.
- **Dr. O'Halloran** presented at the National Field Conference Convention.
- **Dr. Michelle Frazo-Brunson**, **Dr. Debra Jo Hailey**, and **Dr. April Giddens** published a chapter in *Voice of Early Educators Conversations About Change in the U.S. South*.
- **Dr. MaryAnne Candley** and **Mrs. Jessical Fultz** from the Social Work Department will be attending the 2025 CSWE Faculty Institutes this summer.
- **Dr. Sunggun Jeon** and **Dr. Laura Beth Norman** received the GCEHD Distinguished Scholar Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- **Dr. Haley Blount**, **Dr. Debra Jo Hailey**, and **Dr. Jennifer Shaw** received the GCEHD Distinguished Service Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- **Dr. Michelle Fazio-Brunson** and **Dr. Lauren Mitchell** received the GCEHD Distinguished Teaching Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- **Mrs. Jennifer L. Cowan**, **Mrs. Sid Hall**, and **Mrs. Helen Tousek** received the Distinguished Staff Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- **Ms. Faith Stanfield**, Director of the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, highlighted that the CDC received a five-year renewal from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- **Ms. Caron Coleman**, Principal of NSU Elementary Lab School, highlighted that the NSU Elementary Lab School was named a Top Gains school with a grade of A from the Louisiana Department of Education.
- **Ms. Natalie Ducote**-Principal of NSU Middle Lab School, highlighted that the NSU Middle Lab School Orchestra selected for the Louisiana All-State Orchestra and NSU Middle Lab School Softball Team is the Middle School State Champions.
- **Dr. Christy Hornsby** from the School of Education received a Freeport McMoran Endowed Professorship in Pluralistic Education for \$11,137.
- **Dr. Neeru Deep** received an Arthur Watson Endowed Professorship for Excellence in Academic Accommodation for \$9,173.

- **Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson** from the School of Education received Melba L Steeg Endowed Professorship in Primary Education for \$10,247.
- **Dr. Dylan Solice** from the School of Education received Dan, Lily Chase and Daughters Marty Causey, and Lisa Chase Endowed Professorship in the College of Education for \$7,825.
- **Dr. April Giddens** from the School of Education received a Thomas E Stewart Endowed Professorship in Education for \$7,174.
- **Dr. Charles King** from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies received Dr. Francisco A. Silva Endowed Professorship in Psychology (Addictive Studies) for \$6,462.
- **LTC Joshua Drake** from the Department of Military Sciences and Leadership received a Demon Regiment Endowed Professorship in Military Science of \$6,888.
- **Dr. Debra Hailey** from the School of Education received a Family and Consumer Science Endowed Professorship for \$6,972.
- **Dr. Katrina Jordan** from the School of Education received a Carolyn Bellue Holly Endowed Professorship in Teaching and Learning of \$11,518.
- **Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith** from the Department of Health and Human Performance received Dr. Violet Davion Shaver's Endowed Professorship in HHP for \$5,811.
- **Dr. MaryAnn Candley** from the Social Work Department received Louise Mathilde's Bradford Endowed Professorship in Social Work for \$5,644.
- **Dr. Charles King** received the SWAATC \$125,000 grant renewal (three years) to enhance the field of Addiction Studies.
- The GCEHD and the Social Work Department awarded multiple scholarships to faculty and staff to attend State and National Conferences.
- Four faculty members from the Social Work Department presented at the National Conferences: The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors and Federation of Business Disciplines.
- **Dr. Hornsby** and **Dr. Normand** were inducted into the Phi Beta Delta, Honor Society for International Scholars.
- **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**, Director, 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 Alexander**, Director of the NSU Child and Family Network (CFN), received multiple grants totaling \$5,087,683 for 2024-2025. 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, including coaching, a statewide scholarship, and a career development program for early childhood providers, 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 Dean, I am very proud of the work we achieved this year as a team and thankful to the NSU Leadership team for always supporting us.

I am grateful to my GCEHD Team and the NSU Leadership 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's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health advances the mission of the University through innovative teaching, experiential service learning, and scholarship. The College of Nursing and School of Allied Health offers quality healthcare education to a diverse student population to achieve their goal of becoming responsible healthcare providers who improve the health of our region, state, and nation.

In alignment with its mission to deliver quality healthcare education and strengthen the regional workforce, CONSAH has expanded pathways, increased program capacity, and prioritized workforce-responsive growth.

Within the College of Nursing, significant progress has been made in the traditional Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs through expanded clinical partnerships and targeted recruitment efforts, resulting in increased graduate output. Bridge programs, including Military Medic/Paramedic-to-Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)-to-RN, LPN-to-BSN, and RN-to-BSN, continue to serve as critical access points for working professionals and non-traditional students across Louisiana.

Enrollment in post-master's nursing programs has continued to rise, particularly in the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) tracks. These programs play a vital role in expanding access to primary and behavioral healthcare across Louisiana, especially in rural and underserved areas. The increased number of graduates from these tracks directly supports the state's goal of strengthening the advanced practice workforce and addressing shortages in both physical and mental health services.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program has maintained a steady output of graduates, preparing clinical leaders and advanced practice nurses across multiple specialties. The Nurse Anesthesia (NA) concentration has expanded its capacity with three concurrently enrolled cohorts and increased cohort sizes to better address the statewide shortage of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs).

Within the School of Allied Health, the promotion of upward mobility and equitable access remains a strategic priority. The Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAH) and the Radiologic Technologist to Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences (RT-to-BSRS) programs are designed to facilitate academic and professional advancement for credentialed allied health practitioners from diverse backgrounds. To further support associate-prepared professionals, former post-baccalaureate certificate programs have been restructured as undergraduate certificate options, thereby broadening educational access.

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS) program recently graduated its inaugural cohort, obtained initial programmatic accreditation, and admitted its third cohort—further solidifying its role as the first and only sonography program in North Louisiana. Additionally, the Master of Science in Allied Health (MSAH) program was formally approved, expanding graduate-level opportunities for allied health professionals seeking leadership and administrative roles in healthcare. The MSAH program is scheduled to admit its first cohort during the 2025–2026 academic year.

An integral part of CONSAH's mission is to assist individuals in becoming *responsible healthcare providers who improve the health of our region, state, and nation*. In alignment with this mission, students engage in extensive clinical experiences, with each student completing over 600 hours (program specific) of direct patient care in hospitals, clinics, and community health agencies across North and Central Louisiana.

In addition to clinical training, students actively participate in community service initiatives that enhance public health and promote civic responsibility. These include organizing and staffing vaccine clinics, participating in health fairs, offering translation services, and addressing the unique healthcare needs of vulnerable and underserved populations throughout the region.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the CONSAH will continue its commitment to producing graduates who recognize and respond to the holistic needs of those in their care. Faculty members will actively model and instill the core values that define CONSAH's culture and mission: excellence in all endeavors, respect for others, open communication and teamwork, empathy and compassion, integrity and ethical behavior, and a passionate commitment to interprofessional collaboration. These values remain central to shaping students into healthcare professionals who lead with competence, compassion, and accountability.

Degree Programs

The CONSAH offers 8 degree-programs spanning from the associate degree to the practice doctorate, 3 post master's certificates in nursing, 3 undergraduate certificates in radiologic sciences, and 1 post-baccalaureate certificate in diagnostic medical sonography. 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 79 full-time and 74 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 (PMC)
 - 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: Educational Leadership
 - c) MSN to DNP: Executive Leadership

Degrees offered through the School of Allied Health (SAH) include:

1. Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Science (BSRS)
 - a) Radiography
 - b) Radiologic Technologist (RT to BSRS)
 - c) Diagnostic Medical Sonography
2. Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAH)
3. Undergraduate Certificate Programs
 - a) UG Invasive Cardiovascular Technology
 - b) UG Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
 - c) UG Computed Tomography (CT)
4. Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
 - a) PBC Diagnostic Medical Sonography
5. Master of Science in Allied Health (MSAH)
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, through 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 Radiography program is nationally accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) through 2025. The program has completed its required site visit and is currently in the final stages of the reaccreditation process. Additionally, the DMS program successfully completed its site visit and has received initial accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) upon the recommendation of the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS) in the following concentrations: Abdominal- Extended, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Vascular. These accreditations affirm the program's compliance with national educational standards and its leadership in the profession.

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). In AC 2024-2025, the CONSAH awarded 579 degrees (CON-470; SAH-109).

Program Growth

The need for nurses and allied health professionals continues to remain at an all-time high, and CONSAH continues to respond with strategic efforts to grow and sustain its programs. To drive enrollment, CONSAH pursued grant opportunities to expand nursing and allied health pathways. While several HRSA grant opportunities were canceled in the past year, CONSAH remains committed to securing external funding while prioritizing partnerships. The HRSA competing continuation proposal entitled "PMHNPs: Bridging the Behavioral Healthcare Gap" was approved. The total award for this grant funding will reach nearly \$2M over the 4-year performance period and will be essential in growing the workforce of Psychiatric Mental Health NPs. CONSAH was also awarded \$490,000 through the Workforce Training Rapid Response Fund for healthcare completers. In addition to pursuing new and continuation grants, CONSAH maintained key funding relationships, and many key partnerships were continued. Those continuations include the renewal of a \$137,000 grant through Christus Highland Hospital, which supports 1 full-time nursing faculty member and 1 full-time allied health faculty member.

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. Recent alumni successes include:

- **Dr. Aaron Stigers**, added to the Martin Luther King Health Center and Pharmacy Board in 2024.
- **Dr. Denise Jones**, Willis Knighton Chief Nursing Officer, elected Treasurer for Louisiana State Nurses Association 2025.
- **Dr. Michael Brown**, elected president-elect for Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners (LANP) 2025.
- **Deanna Kamphuis**, elected Treasurer for LANP 2025.

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 CONSAH has 36 externally funded faculty/staff positions, which represents 37.5% of the CONSAH faculty/staff positions.

Examples of CONSAH individual and aggregate Faculty achievements for 2024-2025 include:

- **Dr. Larry Arant** obtained a Doctor of Education degree.
- **Dr. Aimee Badeaux**, recognized as the 'Nursing School Administrator of the Year' during Louisiana Nurses Foundations Annual Nightingale Awards and Gala in August 2024.
- **Dr. Tammy Curtis**, recognized as Technologist of the Year during Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists annual conference, July 2024.

- **Jessica Despino**, recognized with 2024-2025 CONSAH 'Educator of the Year' award recipient.
- **Robin Haydel Laborde**, recognized as 2024-2025 CONSAH 'Educator of the Year' award recipient.
- **Dr. Melissa Rennie**, recognized as the 2024-2025 CONSAH 'Nurse of the Year' award recipient.
- **Dr. Aaron Stigers** obtained a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.
- **Dr. Aaron Stigers**, recognized with MLK Health Center and Pharmacy Humanitarian award.
- **Dr. Shaun Wheat**, recognized as the 'Nursing Educator of the Year' during Louisiana Nurses Foundations Annual Nightingale Awards and Gala in August 2024.
- 1 Faculty serving as Executive Secretary of Membership of Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 1 Faculty serving as Executive Secretary of Finance of Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 1 Faculty serving as Meeting Planner of Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 1 Faculty serving as Chair Louisiana Educators in Radiologic Sciences of Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 1 Faculty serving as Chair of Social Media Task Force of Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 2 Faculty are CCNE on-site reviewers.
- 1 Faculty is ACEN accreditation evaluator.
- 1 Faculty is COA on-site reviewer.
- 2 Faculty is JRCERT on-site reviewer.
- 2 Faculty serving on a national committee for the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists.
- 1 Faculty serves on national committees for the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists
- 3 Faculty members received tenure.
- 4 Faculty received academic rank promotion.
- 10 Faculty serve on 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.
- 25 Faculty podium presentations.

Students:

CONSAH Student achievements for 2024-2025 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.
- 2 BSRS students won first and second place in the Student Bee competition at the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists mid-winter seminar.
- Produced over 27 scholarly project practice change projects (DNP capstone projects)
- 33 nursing students inducted into the 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 2024-2025:

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 nurse occurs when master's degree students successfully complete certification exams specific to a patient population. Accreditation for all programs is based on 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	95.45% state: 91.17% national: 89.71%	100%	49.6%
BSN	92.17% state 91.17% national 89.71%	100%	67.9%
MSN	87% national: TBD	100%	83%
DNP-NA	78.57% national: 89.3%	100%	87.5%
BSRS	88% * national: 85%	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:

- #2 ranked best allied health professions Bachelor's Degree Schools in Louisiana (collegefactual.com)
- #1 ranked Online MSN Program in Louisiana 2025 (registerednursing.org)
- #1 ranked online nurse practitioner program in Louisiana (registerednursing.org)
- #1 Most Affordable RN-BSN program in Louisiana (RNtoMSN.org)
- #2 ranked online RT-BSRS program in US (intelligent.com).
- #5 ranked Most Affordable Radiologic Science Degree in the US (bachelorsdegreecenter.org)
- #4 ranked Best Master of Science in Radiography Programs in the US (universityhq.org)
- #12 ranked online RN-BSN program in US (intelligent.com)
- #1 Producer of licensed registered nurses in Louisiana (2023 LSBN report)

The Future

Like many programs and institutions across the state, the CONSAH has experienced ongoing challenges with enrollment due to shifting demographics, increased competition, and evolving student needs. In

response, CONSAH has expanded its recruitment and retention strategies to ensure continued access to high-quality healthcare education. Moving into the 2025–2026 academic year, CONSAH will continue to target both traditional high school students and nontraditional learners through outreach efforts and enrollment pathways, particularly its robust suite of bridge programs. These include the Military Medic/Paramedic-to-RN, LPN-to-RN, and Accelerated BSN programs.

To support retention, CONSAH has implemented clinical “bootcamps” to strengthen academic preparedness and ease the transition between clinical levels. These efforts will continue, along with strategic partnerships designed to expand access and increase enrollment in high-demand areas.

Last year, CONSAH’s strategic plan included the following short-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; 5) increase practice partnerships; 6) seek additional external funding sources through partners and grants; 7) 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.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the CONSAH advanced several key strategic priorities aimed at strengthening academic programs, infrastructure, and institutional capacity. The transition from interim to permanent leadership was successfully completed with the appointment of a new Dean, providing continuity and direction for ongoing strategic planning. Within the School of Allied Health, implementation began for newly approved degree programs, including the MSAH, which is set to enroll its first cohort in the 2025–2026 academic year. The DMS program achieved initial accreditation and enrolled its third cohort, solidifying its position as the only bachelor’s prepared sonography program in Louisiana. In the College of Nursing, faculty began implementation of competency-based education (CBE) across all nursing programs following the prior year’s planning efforts. Efforts to secure additional external funding continued, supporting faculty positions, research, and program innovation. Significant capital projects also moved forward: the renovation of the Warrington Building in Shreveport began in Fall 2024 following legislative appropriations; faculty, staff, and students were relocated to a second instructional facility on the England Airpark campus in Alexandria; and renovations to Alost Hall in Natchitoches neared completion, setting the stage for state-of-the-art learning and simulation environments. These accomplishments reflect CONSAH’s continued commitment to academic excellence, statewide impact, and the advancement of Louisiana’s healthcare workforce.

Short/Long term Goals: 1) Improve internal operations and workflow efficiency across academic and clinical programs; 2) increase enrollment through targeted recruitment and pathway expansion; 3) improve student retention and academic success through enhanced advising and student support services; 4) strengthen faculty onboarding, mentoring and instructional development; 5) use program-level data to inform decisions related to resource allocation, student outcomes, curriculum development and strategic planning; and 6) increase external funding through grants, partnerships and philanthropic support.

Innovation

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the CONSAH advanced its commitment to academic and operational innovation through targeted integration of technology to enhance assessment, compliance, and institutional effectiveness.

The use of ExamSoft was expanded to further support program-level assessment and curricular alignment. Faculty utilized the platform to map test items to course objectives and program

outcomes, enabling more precise test analysis and data-driven instructional improvement. Based on its effectiveness in the undergraduate programs, the MSN program is scheduled to adopt ExamSoft for assessment and evaluation beginning in the 2025–2026 academic year.

To strengthen compliance reporting and clinical placement readiness, CONSAH implemented SentryMD and PreCheck across applicable programs. These systems facilitate centralized tracking of student health records, background checks, and immunization documentation, ensuring timely and accurate fulfillment of clinical site requirements.

In support of continuous improvement and accreditation readiness, CONSAH began the review and evaluation of assessment management platforms and will pilot a new assessment software system during the upcoming year. This initiative is intended to enhance program outcome tracking, streamline curriculum mapping processes, and support consistent reporting across all academic units.

College of Business and Technology

The College of Business and Technology (CoBT) employs 22 full-time faculty members, 1 part-time faculty member, 5 nine-month faculty members with coordinating duties, 2 administrative support staff members, 1 twelve-month coordinator, 1 twelve-month director, and 1 twelve-month dean. The CoBT serves 777 (14-day count Fall 2024) 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, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Human Resources Management, International Business, Management, Marketing, and Pre-Law as well as pre-licensing courses for a Property & Casualty insurance license (Finance 3130); Life, Health, and Accident insurance license (Finance 3320); Real Estate license (Finance 3150 and Finance 3160).
- BS in Computer Information Systems (CIS) with concentrations in application development, information systems management, and networking and cybersecurity
- 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, tourism, and culinary arts.
- MS in Computer Information Systems

The College of Business and Technology faculty offers an engaging and applied learning environment for our students.

Academic Success

At the College, academic success means that our students are meeting the expectations of the university, college, and school. One measure of student academic success is being in good standing [GPA of 2.0 overall and in major]. In Fall 2024, 88% were in good standing, while in Spring 2025, 91% were in good standing.

Another measure of student academic success is academic progress, moving towards earning a degree. In AC 2024-2025, the percentage of the CoBT Fall 2018 cohort that had earned degrees was 47.27%.

Academic progress is also determined by the number of credit hours our students earn per semester. In Fall 2024, the average number of credit hours earned by CoBT students was 11.47, with 11.34 earned credit hours in Spring 2025, and a median number of hours earned of 12 for both semesters. An impressive 85.53% of students in the Fall 2024 semester and 84.86% in the Spring 2025 semester successfully earned hours within a three-hour margin of their attempted hours.

To assist with enhancing 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, Northwestern State University Career Counseling Center, Louisiana Bankers Association, Northwestern Mutual Insurance).
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 refer to the SACSCOC document for more information.

One of the most significant changes to the curriculum that has happened during this cycle is the inclusion of a second Communications class for all majors. Industry partners and AOL results strongly supported this change. Other examples are:

1. Content review in sequence classes—Instructors in select sequential courses implemented a content review during the first part of the lesson to “reactivate” the content learned previously.
2. Do you want to know more? Do you want more practice?—Various courses now feature specific areas in their online presence that provide scaffolding techniques to help students recall content they may have forgotten or expand their knowledge with additional information on specific subjects.
3. Content evaluation—Faculty review the scores of the School of Business Knowledge Exam to identify areas that require extra support and provide resources and assistance.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, a meticulous review of degree programs led to plans to facilitate a smoother transition for students as they progress through various stages of their education. To enhance efficiency, faculty paired traditional classroom courses to align with the sequential order within each specific degree program. This strategic pairing optimizes attendance and ensures that students follow a logical progression of learning. Despite these efforts, challenges persist. Faculty and staff in the CoBT develop and implement individualized solutions for incoming or transfer students who do not precisely align with the prescribed degree plans. These personalized approaches address any deviations from the established sequence to confirm that every student receives the support needed to succeed.

Accreditation is also a reflection of academic success. In Spring 2025, the School of Business was reaccredited by the AACSB, and the HMT department received initial accreditation from the ACPHA!

Student Success

The College also defines student success as:

1. Student retention (persistence). In AC 2024-2025, the School of Business persistence rate for all students was 69.57% compared to a Northwestern State University persistence rate of 74.76%. The persistence rate for full-time entering first-year students (1st to 2nd year) was 49.25%, a decrease compared to academic year 2023-2024.
2. Number of graduating students. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the annual CoBT graduation rate was 43.47%. This rate represents 162 CoBT students who 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).
4. Student engagement with and participation in the Walter Porter Experience and the College of Business and Technology Advisory Board meeting.

HMT hosts social events, including the Columns Cafe dinner and lunch events, athletic tailgating, and special luncheon demonstrations, each semester. These events feature international president elects, chairs, and committee members at the International Honor Society level. At the annual International Conferences, our faculty presented topics that range from board development and international engagement to health, positivity, and project management. Additionally, faculty members actively represent the school and community's goals and directives in the Northwestern State University Faculty Senate.

Research and Innovation

The curriculum at the SBUS is a living, evolving organism that adapts to the changing needs of students, the community, and the global market. For example, since the last visit, the SBUS has revised the curriculum to meet the evolving needs of industry. Recognizing the increasing need for industry-level certifications, the SBUS added certifications to the CIS curriculum, including Amazon Web Services, Mendix, Agile Certification, CompTIA Cloud+, and CompTIA Project+, among others. In the BUAD curriculum, the SBUS added Human Resources and Project Management certifications to the existing Real Estate and Insurance Certifications. These certifications confirm the relevance of our curriculum and provide the additional credentials our students need. Additionally, faculty members participate in cross-functional teams to deliver presentations and publications, both nationally and internationally, on the impacts of AI. For example, the faculty, staff, and stakeholders participated in the following initiatives:

- **Dr. Ron Martin**, one of our advisory council members, shared a short paper that he put together, *Generative AI Intelligence is an Education Challenge*
- **Ms. Sherri Voebel**, Northwestern State University librarian, shared a presentation from the World Intellectual Property Organization titled *Presentation from World Intellectual Property Organization—Generative AI*
- The ULS system office launched *Empowering AI Literacy*, a micro-credential pilot program. One of our faculty members contributed to the development of this program. This micro-credential focuses on quick mastery of specific AI skills, making it a practical and efficient way

to learn. Developed collectively by all nine universities in the ULS with our students in mind, this program aims to equip faculty with essential AI literacy for success.

The faculty is engaged in developing the skills and technology related to the theory and practice of computer science. Recognizing the importance of reaching out to the community and engaging the next generation of professionals in the computer age, the CIS faculty collaborated with the community to provide several learning programs and multiple computer coding activities for young children and students in the central Louisiana region. To better prepare our SBUS students to understand and apply human resource management skills, Central Louisiana Society for Human Resource Management (CLSHRM) professionals networked with SBUS faculty during CLSHRM meetings to collaborate on best practice recommendations and promote two new course offerings at Northwestern State University. The target audience was external stakeholders in the Human Resources profession. The SBUS added a Human Resource concentration and offered the SHRM Certificate programs twice a year. A faculty member incorporated one of the SHRM certificates into an academic class in Spring 2024, and this course has been successful in the 2024-2025 academic year. One student who completed the Human Resource Management course applied for and received the SHRM student grant, which allowed the student to sit for the SHRM-CP exam, which the student passed. This effort benefits both the students and the broader community.

Student involvement and business school activities are crucial to developing stakeholder relationships within our community, while creating viable business solutions and promoting economic development to address the current restoration project needs for the abandoned high school and its surrounding area. Students received internship and summer employment offers throughout the academic year and upon graduation. Careers fairs, corporate presentations, and recruitment events are available throughout the year, introducing potential new hires to a variety of opportunities in their area of interest and degree aspirations. Additionally, faculty members submitted an interactive, innovative classroom grant to the Board of Regents to fund the creation of a state-of-the-art classroom that will enable our students to proactively prepare for the evolving needs of the workforce. The idea for the school was to have software/hardware to create, record, and stream presentations; equipment for product prototype development (3D printing), and agile team meeting spaces. While the Board of Regents initially did not fund the initial grant request, faculty members resubmitted the request with revisions but failed to receive the grant funds. Other efforts to increase technology in the classroom include the installation of additional Promethean boards in 2024-2025 and the planned creation of a recording lab for students.

The SBUS strives for excellence in providing our students with theoretical business acumen and positive business experiences, fostering achievement in entrepreneurial success. Students in Business Administration continued to assist companies in Natchitoches and the surrounding areas with Experiential Learning Projects before graduation. Last year's local companies included Bank of Montgomery, Chili's, Maggio's, Sweet D's Bakery, and a food truck in Many, Louisiana. Other companies outside the area included Providence House Trucking Company, Tiny Tots Day Care, The York Chop, Yum Yum Desert Bar, and a strategic analysis for the Theta Chi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Students use what they have learned to complete a cumulative analysis of each business to make recommendations based on expertise gained in their tenure in Business Administration. It is an excellent opportunity for students to view a company as a business consultant, make informed and relevant recommendations, and have the confidence to know that they will be able to apply this knowledge in the real world.

The CIS faculty continues to engage in technology-related projects within the University and the community. The College received a grant from LED, in conjunction with a matching grant from Natchitoches Regional Medical Center (NRMC). This grant was instrumental in creating valuable student opportunities:

1. Students received internship offers at the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center.
2. Students presented their cybersecurity research at Natchitoches City Hall and Northwestern State University's Research Day.
3. Students completed work and industry-recognized certifications.

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
- Boise Cascade, Florien, Louisiana

For the first time in the program's history, Hospitality Management and Tourism hosted the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) and became formally accredited in March 2025. The Northwestern State University Hospitality Management and Tourism program is the only 4-year program in the state accredited by ACPHA. Due to this success, Hospitality Management and Tourism will become an independent department within the COBT effective July 1, 2025.

The College remains at the forefront of community outreach. The faculty conducted Emergenetics workshops to help several key members of the industrial, commercial, and tourism sectors in the community. Emergenetics provides communication techniques, team and individual work behavior strategies, and management techniques to improve the work environment. The Emergenetics workshop participants include IgNITE (leaders from Northwestern State University), the Natchitoches Chamber Leadership, the Alliance, and the 11th 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 the Northwestern State University Innovation Center. The Innovation 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

All three disciplines updated their curricula in the 2023-2024 academic year, with the changes effective in the 2024-2025 academic year. Amongst the various changes was a change to a general education component that affected all three disciplines and was also related to the assurance of learning process. To increase the communication skills of our graduates, all three disciplines added a requirement for students to take either COMM1010 (Oral Communication) or COMM2500 (Interpersonal Communication). While students previously only had to take BUAD2200, this addition to the core curriculum (although technically listed under the general education area) helps enhance a key skill set that our graduates need. Building on the spirit of innovation and community support, our CIS capstone class will continue to contribute to our institution's growth in the 2025-2026 school year. Prototypes of the Northwestern State University Graduate School Document Repository were developed by capstone students in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. The results will be evaluated and implemented in the 2025-2026 academic year. The faculty has merged the browser-based labs with virtual reality technology, so that the experience our students have in the classroom better represents what they will encounter on the job.

The School of Business (SoB) introduced new Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and measures for Academic Year (AY) 2024-2025. Therefore, for most measurements, AC 2024-2025 serves as the base year for data analysis and for driving the cycle of continuous improvement in future years. While the School of Business implemented new Student Learning Outcomes, many of the changes made based on the 2023-2024 results would still impact the 2024-2025 student learning outcomes, even if the student learning outcomes and measurements are slightly different. The following reflects all changes implemented to drive the continuous improvement process in AC 2024-2025. These changes are based on the knowledge gained from analyzing the AC 2022-2023 and AC 2023-2024 results.

The School of Business has identified several common themes and opportunities for targeted intervention. While most performance benchmarks were met or nearly met, key areas such as depth of financial analysis, oral communication, and mastery of core business disciplines highlight the need for strategic action. To address these findings and foster a cycle of continuous improvement, the following strategies can be considered to guide the school's actions in AC 2025–2026:

1. Enhance instructional support and learning resources. Faculty members can implement additional resources, such as study guides, practice exams, recorded tutorials, and instructional workshops. These tools will support students in complex topics, such as financial ratio analysis, oral communication, and the application of business concepts in core courses.
2. Standardize assessment tools and expectations across courses. The school can develop and adopt consistent rubrics for key written reports, presentations, and project components to ensure uniformity and quality. Clear evaluation criteria will help faculty identify patterns in student strengths and weaknesses, promote consistency, and enhance the quality of feedback.
3. Implement targeted interventions in underperforming areas. For courses and survey areas that fell below the benchmark, the faculty members can collaborate to revise instructional content and incorporate more interactive, application-driven exercises, including case studies and problem-solving workshops.
4. Expand faculty collaboration and pedagogical best practices. Faculty can be encouraged to share effective teaching methods and assessment techniques across disciplines at SoB Faculty Luncheons, Lunch & Learn, or school meetings.
5. Strengthen engagement with industry and experiential learning. Building on the success of its experiential projects, the school will continue to engage external stakeholders and industry partners. Structured communication protocols, clear deliverables, and early feedback loops will enhance students' readiness for professional interactions and increase the likelihood of project success.

The Accounting area has identified several common themes and opportunities for targeted intervention. While most performance benchmarks were met or nearly met, key areas such as ethical decision making and mastery of core accounting principles highlight the need for strategic action.

Specific strategies include the following:

1. The instructors of the International Business course will continue to meet regularly to review and address scoring and grading issues. They will provide an additional comprehensive overview of the executive summary and business communication requirements in both face-to-face and online courses for the academic year 2025-2026. They will also provide an additional comprehensive overview of the presentation requirements

in both face-to-face and online courses in AC 2025-2026, including a rubric detailing their expectations. To further strengthen the course topics and assessments, instructors will collaborate to ensure consistency across the course.

2. The SLO committees will collaborate with the instructors of the Strategic Management course to record a video outlining expectations regarding student collaboration and the importance of interactions with team members on the service-learning project.
3. The instructors of the ACCT4020 class will utilize a variety of pedagogical methods to assist students with their project. Best practices include professors embedding model examples of various business mergers into the course shell and developing voice-narrated videos. These videos will provide step-by-step instructions for completing projects and assignments for students.
4. Accounting faculty members are re-evaluating the practice case to determine if it is accomplishing the objective of the measurement. The instructor of ACCT 3190 suggested that a case study involving ethical scenarios based on the AICPA Code of Conduct would be more effective in gauging students' awareness and understanding of ethical principles and dilemmas within the discipline. Students will be provided with resources to explore the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct, including webinars on compliance, creating a culture of ethical behavior, and real-life applications of the Code. Instructors will track student performance to gauge the impact of these improvements.
5. The Accounting faculty will analyze and identify difficult topic areas within the course and provide additional instructional support, practice exams, or study guides in these areas. Faculty members will also add Sharpen to the Intermediate Accounting I course in the Fall 2025 semester.

To address these findings and foster a cycle of continuous improvement, the following general strategies will guide the accounting area's actions in AC 2025–2026:

1. Enhance instructional support and learning resources. The accounting faculty will continue to add resources for students needing reinforcement of accounting principles and concepts in each of their accounting classes, including practice exams, recorded tutorials, webinars, and targeted study apps. These tools will support students with oral communication, complex accounting topics, and the application of business concepts in core courses. Excel or Data Analytics case assignments have already been added to existing classes to improve students' technological and critical thinking skills.
2. Standardize assessment tools and expectations across courses. The Accounting area can develop and adopt consistent rubrics for key written reports, presentations, and project components. Clear evaluation criteria will help faculty identify patterns in student strengths and weaknesses, promote consistency, and enhance the quality of feedback.
3. Implement targeted interventions in underperforming areas. For courses and survey areas that fell below the benchmark, the faculty members can collaborate to revise instructional content and incorporate more interactive, application-driven exercises, including case studies and problem-solving workshops.
4. Expand faculty collaboration and pedagogical best practices. Faculty can be encouraged to share effective teaching methods and assessment techniques across disciplines at SoB Faculty Luncheons, Lunch & Learn, or school meetings.
5. Strengthen engagement with industry and experiential learning. Building on the success of its experiential projects, the accounting area will continue to engage with external stakeholders

and industry partners. Structured communication protocols, clear deliverables, and early feedback loops will enhance students' readiness for professional interactions and increase the likelihood of project success.

The CIS area continues to collaborate with the Louisiana Economic Development (LED) agency and General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) through a 10-year agreement. The CIS area met the targets established for the 2023-2024 academic year and employed creative strategies to fill faculty vacancies. The CoBT is in discussions with LED and GDIT about the prospects of extending the collaborative endeavor agreement, as 2024-2025 is the tenth year of the contract. The CoBT partners with various companies to provide internships and employment opportunities. Examples of participating companies include Fastenal, FDIC, the Louisiana Bankers' Association, and GDIT. In an ongoing effort to support relationships with external stakeholders and foster the creation of student scholarships, our range of engagements includes an increasing number of guest speakers on campus, internship opportunities, entrepreneurial business development competitions, career fairs, experiential learning opportunities, and community service-centered projects. Faculty and staff continue to host guest speakers and events to promote student exposure to business and industry in the classroom, as well as to foster relationships with community partners. For example, the management capstone course continues to engage students in experiential learning via community service opportunities.

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) and the challenges of using AI are key technology issues that the SBUS seeks to address as it moves forward. Several classes are now helping students understand Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it can be an excellent tool for the job if used properly. For example, the instructor of our Database class (CIS 2980) asked students to create database queries using AI and analyze both the results of the query and the query itself to identify any significant differences and/or issues with the use of AI. Faculty and staff within the College have been working. They will continue to work with internal and external partners to maintain awareness of the potential uses and impacts of AI in the classroom.

Currently, the state has a hiring freeze, which has impacted the CoBT, as existing faculty members must manage increased workloads. A primary concern is that faculty members have less time to dedicate to individual students, which can negatively impact student retention rates. While addressing these challenges, the CoBT employs the following strategies, which will continue to evolve in response to internal and external factors:

1. Prioritizing workload distribution.
2. Providing support, resources, tools, and professional development.
3. Encouraging collaboration and exploring alternative teaching methods.

In conclusion, the School of Business and its faculty are committed to enhancing all aspects of student learning. New initiatives are constantly being introduced and evaluated based on their effectiveness. Measures of student learning outcomes are assessed each semester and will be compared to AC 2024-2025 results to determine progress. The School of Business fosters a collegial environment, with faculty members frequently collaborating to ensure that effective strategies are shared among themselves. By driving the cycle of continuous improvement, the School of Business remains committed to preparing graduates to thrive in a dynamic global marketplace. The CoBT continuously advocates for financial and human resources to support faculty and staff in performing duties that contribute to the success of students, the school, college, and University.

Moving Forward

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 completes the University's eighth iteration of the 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 2025-2026. The University can confidently move forward into AC 2025-2026, knowing its commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in the progress toward our vision.

Student learning assessments maximize the principles of honest evaluation and ensure 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 need to convince 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 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.**
- Improve analysis of assessment results to **increase critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and writing skills across** all degree and certificate programs regardless of discipline.
- **Expand 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.
- **Collaborate between academic and student affairs** focusing on service/experiential learning to **Assess High-Impact Practices–Lessons Learned.** The QEP assessment results are critical in evaluating these co-curricular student experiences.
- **Increase 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 2024-2025 lessons learned and implement decisions.
- Update AC 2025-2026 Assessment Plans as necessary.
- Finalize AC 2024-2025 assessments–data collection at the degree and unit level.
- Continue to assess recommendations–build consensus and establish predictability.

Near Term:

- September/October—Receive the President's guidance on Strategic Plan 2025-2026
- December—Annual SACSCOC Conference
- Azimuth check on AC 2025-2026 assessment process (SFA/Program/Unit)
- Maintain continuity in data collection.

Short Term:

- October and beyond—thinking about the way forward—reevaluating and adjusting assessment plans.
- May 2025—Commencement ends the assessment cycle.
- June 20, 2025—AC 2024-2025 Degree, Unit, Core Assessments complete and submitted to DIE.
- August/September Assessment Cycle AC 2024–2025 Report—*Making a Difference* published.
- September—Brief to President

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.