

Strategic Plan 2016-2021



Assessment Cycle 2016–2017 Report *Setting the Benchmark*

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PREFACE

NSU's *Strategic Plan 2016-2021* begins, "This is a working document. It is meant to be read, used, referenced, reread, and revised as necessary to guide Northwestern State University of Louisiana (NSU) in the decisions that we make. In fact, this strategic plan serves as the foundation for our decision-making process." This intent continues as a guiding principle into this first-year assessment, *Assessment Cycle 2016-2017, Setting the Benchmark*. This document reflects the strategic guidance of NSU President, Dr. Chis Maggio and Northwestern's senior leadership. Members of the leadership team have ownership of the Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs) and their associated objectives and strategies. The document is written in the reflection of diverse leadership and answers the call of our mantra, "Dedicated to One Goal—Yours."

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SFA The Student Experience: Vice President for the Student Experience, Mrs. Frances Conine

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2017, culminating six academic years of concerted effort by the entire campus community, Northwestern State University transitioned from *Strategic Plan 2011-2018, Go For Greatness* to a bold, comprehensive and ambitious new five-year plan, *Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Dedicated to One Goal—Yours*. This document serves as a roadmap to secure Northwestern’s vision of becoming the nation’s premier regional university. The plan leverages Five Strategic Focus Areas that drive what we do, how we do it, and, most importantly, why we do it. To achieve our desired strategic end state, we must understand continuously where we stand in each of these critical areas. This report, *Assessment Cycle 2016–2017 Setting the Benchmark*, documents just that by establishing our foundational benchmark metrics.

With clear benchmarks set, we can now quantifiably measure our progress and gauge our success. Informed assessment allows for enhanced environmental visualization, which drives our ability to make better decisions and navigate the future. This cyclic analytical decision-making process requires honest, and at times, difficult analysis of our current plan. Through this process, we found that we must be flexible in modifying (including adding or deleting) objectives, metrics, and methods. The results point to having better-informed objectives, associated strategies, and metrics, thereby allowing for holistic findings, comprehensive analyses, and informed strategic decisions. Our strategic plan is maturing as we go through this iterative process. This document represents the first of four annual assessments, all underpinning our Strategic Plan and overarching planning process. Our process is built on organizational self-actualization, continuous reassessment, adjustment, and refinement, all focused on meeting our 2021 objectives.

This process is already leading to better strategic decisions resulting in transformative change and the establishment of a community of greater trust and inclusion. Highlights of strategic decisions in 2016-2017 include:

- The University will continue to leverage marketing and recruiting operations to increase student enrollment as a means to offset funding shortfalls from the state and allow Northwestern to control its own destiny. For example, in 2016-2017 the University invested \$594,501 on Marketing and Branding, directly impacting enrollment. Freshmen enrollment increased from 2,987 in Fall 2015 to 3,439 in Fall 2016, a 15.13% increase. Spring Freshmen enrollment increased 7.87% from 2,566 in 2016 to 2,768 in 2017.
- Northwestern provided \$3.5M to make whole the Taylor Opportunity Scholarship (TOPS) for our students in academic year 2016-17. The state legislature reduced its funding to 41% of its full amount for spring semester 2017. The University decided to

keep this important promise to our students by making up the difference in funding, thereby reducing the monetary hardship of students and their families.

- Varnado Hall is undergoing renovations transforming it into a 21st-century living/learning residential college for students of the School of Creative and Performing Arts. The \$7M project is a result of collaboration between students, faculty, staff, and commercial partner Campus Living Villages. This investment reinforces the success of the Creative and Performing Arts Program (CAPA) a critical component to recruitment and community outreach.
- Northwestern’s Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Adult Learning and Development was approved by Louisiana Board of Regents in October 2016 and by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in June 2017. The Ed.D. is a practitioner degree program that will prepare individuals for leadership positions that focus on the adult learning and development, particularly in the community college setting.
- Northwestern, in partnership with Northwest Louisiana Technical College and Central Louisiana Technical Community College, developed a work-based learning program in the Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT). This program will support working students, allowing them to earn an associate degree from Northwestern State with additional courses through the NWLTC-Natchitoches and CLTCC.
- Through strategic engagement, the President persuaded a development firm to invest in refurbishing a private housing complex directly across the street from campus that will increase the number of bed spaces by approximately 60. The project, Cottage at Cane River, will enhance our entrance highway, University Parkway, and provide a convenient off-campus upscale housing option for our students. <https://cottagensu.com/>
- Within the College of Nursing, the School of Allied Health has developed two new Post-Baccalaureate certificates in Radiological Sciences. The post-baccalaureate certificate program in Invasive Cardiovascular Technology (ICT) will provide baccalaureate-prepared students with specialized cardiovascular technology education. Upon completion of the program, students will have the theoretical cardiovascular knowledge necessary to obtain advanced certification in invasive cardiovascular technology. <https://www.nsula.edu/academics/nursing-allied-health/allied-health-2/>
- University core general education requirements were aligned with the Louisiana State Board of Regents policy 2.16. <http://www.regents.la.gov/page/academic-affairs-policy-216>.
- Articulation agreements were signed with Louisiana Delta Community College in Forensic Science and Engineering Technology. The first agreement allows Certificate of Manufacturing (C4M) students who complete LDCC’s program to receive seven hours of credit toward NSU’s associate and/or bachelor’s degree in engineering technology. The second agreement allows LDCC Associate of Applied Science in Forensic Sciences to transfer credits toward NSU’s Bachelor of Science in Biology with a Forensic Science concentration.

- Northwestern established articulation agreements with Louisiana State University - Eunice and South Louisiana Community College. These agreements allow students to apply credits earned at LSU-E and SLCC to bachelor degree programs at NSU.
- Northwestern has traditionally had close associations with the military, particularly the Army and Air Force. Northwestern State University is a designated Governor's Military and Veteran Friendly Campus and is recognized as a Military Friendly School by *G.I. Jobs and Military Advanced Education & Transition* (MAE&T). In 2016, the University simplified the cost structure between Army and Air Force students by assessing equivalent discounted tuition rates for all branches of the military in order to recognize their service and better serve these individuals wishing to pursue educational opportunities at Northwestern State. The University further expanded the opportunity to a larger group of qualifying individuals to include active duty service members, retirees, reservists, and military dependents.
- The Board of Regents approved two Post-Baccalaureate Certificates (PBCs) offered through the Department of Engineering Technology in Project Management and Quality Control.
- The University hired a Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) and an interim Director of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The University is also in the process of hiring a University Assessment Coordinator (UAC), all of which underscore the commitment to ensuring our students and University community are receiving the very best service and education from Northwestern.
- A new Institutional Effectiveness policy established a structured and documented process to drive continuous, integrated, and institution-wide strategic planning and evaluation, incorporating an annual review and crosswalk of the mission, objectives, outcomes, and measures. The results are informative and lead to better decision making. The process fuels a cycle of continuous improvement in institutional quality, thereby reaffirming that Northwestern is effectively accomplishing its mission.
- On February 23, 2017, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System approved Northwestern State University's request to revalidate its Mission Statement and approved the University's Vision and Core Values Statements.
- To strengthen charitable relationships, the University is establishing a process to seek individual departmental needs and provide a menu of those needs to outside donors. Departments will be able to prioritize their needs, and donors will see the direct impact of their individual contributions.
- Northwestern State's Turpin Stadium will have a dramatically enhanced game-day experience for Demon football games beginning this fall with the installation of new chair back seats, bench seating, and ADA compliant seating areas which will greatly enhanced the fan experience at Turpin Stadium. In addition, there will be a new, much larger LED video display scoreboard, along with audio upgrades. Total cost of these projects is \$1.5M, most of which was provided through donor support.
- The NSU Alumni Association, in conjunction with the NSU Foundation, will continue to market the separate purposes of these funds. Timing of the annual appeals will be a

distinguishing factor with the “Columns Fund” campaign occurring in the fall and the Alumni Association membership drive occurring in the spring.

- The demoNSUnite.net platform will be promoted as one of the highest marketing priorities. As growth continues and volunteers are categorized by field, the Office of Career Counseling will be engaged to assist in matching students with mentors for internship and job opportunities.

Recently, online ranking services ranked nine Northwestern online academic programs in the top 10 in the nation. Bestcollegereviews.org ranked the online Bachelor of Science (BS) in Computer Information Systems as first and the BS in Psychology as seventh in the nation. The website affordablecolleges.com ranked Northwestern’s BS program in Accounting as third, the BS in Criminal Justice fourth, and the BS in Business Administration 10th. Onlineu.org ranked the Master of Arts in English as sixth. Lastly, online.org ranked Northwestern’s Prelaw and Paralegal Studies as fourth and the Master of Science in Homeland Security and the Certificate in Global Security and Intelligence sixth nationwide.

The University of Louisiana System Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) is used to assess the satisfaction of our students concerning campus services and is administered at all nine University of Louisiana System (ULS) schools. The results inform decisions on where to make improvements in the quality of student life and learning. Of the nine areas surveyed in spring 2017, Northwestern ranked first among ULS institutions in students’ satisfaction in five areas (Instructional Effectiveness, Registration Effectiveness, Student Centeredness, Campus Climate and Campus Services). Northwestern ranked second in Academic Advising Effectiveness and Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness, third in Safety and Security, and fifth in Campus Life. Most impressive is that Northwestern scored better than the national average for all four-year public institutions.

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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.

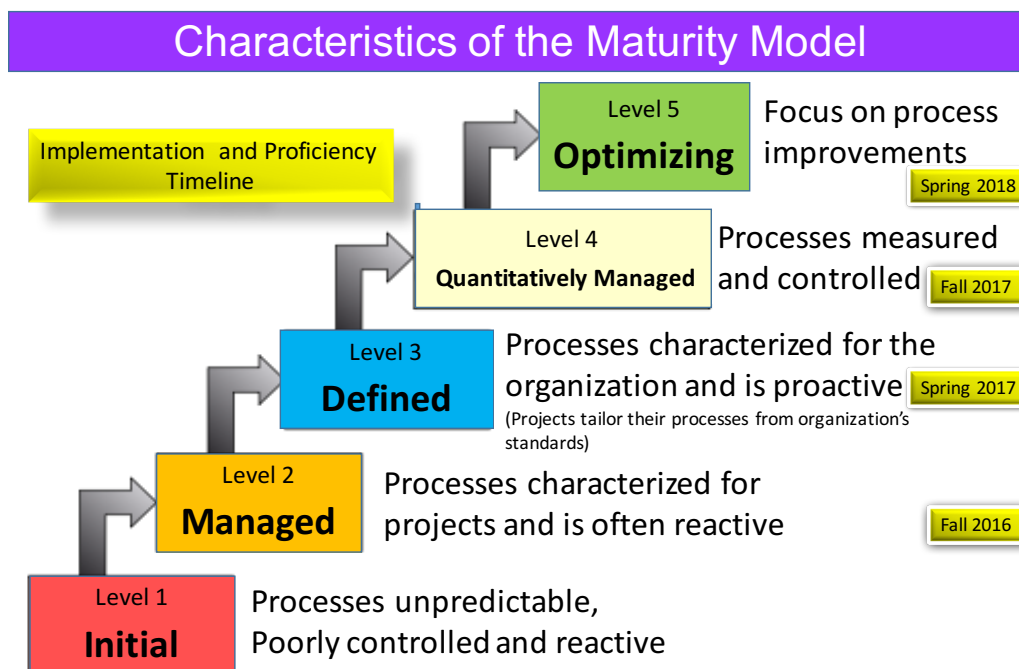
Our Core Values. Our core values capture the guiding principles for how we make decisions and work together. They are the foundation for the type of University community and regional partner we strive to become. Our guiding values are:

- **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 do not rest on our laurels, as we are in constant search of individual and organizational improvement. We seek opportunities to improve our students, community, and region.
- **Innovation is leading the forward edge of change.** We strive to be on the forefront in 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 2016–2017

Purpose. To document the results of Assessment Cycle Academic Year (AY) 2016–2017.

On June 15, 2017, the University completed its first academic year assessment of the strategic plan, *Assessment Cycle 2016–2017, Setting the Benchmark*. This report is the first in a series of five annual assessments incorporated into our Strategic Plan 2016–2021. It refines the University’s roadmap to securing its vision and provides the strategic azimuth to navigate the uncertain fiscal environment of higher education. We now have informed benchmarks and starting points for each Strategic Focus Area. These are not arbitrary or superficial, but rather the result of a comprehensive assessment of the metrics that support each Strategic Focus Area. Through this analysis, the University developed an assessment process based on a quantitative and qualitative understanding of these metrics. This approach allows for better-informed and more realistic 2021 objectives. The transition between maturity levels has occurred more rapidly than anticipated (Figure 1). We attribute this success to the overwhelming dedication of the entire campus community. We are currently between maturity level four and five. Our assessment model is quantitatively managed and our processes are measured and controlled allowing for incremental improvements.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/ec/Characteristics_of_Capability_Maturity_Model.svg/500px-Characteristics_of_Capability_Maturity_Model.svg.png

Figure 1. Levels of process development in the Capability Maturity Model.

Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation allows Northwestern to better identify the strategic decisions leading to institutional improvement. The assessment of 116 academic programs and administrative units underpin this report. These programs and administrative units have capitalized on their independent findings, analyses, and decisions/actions. We are integrating the results, and more importantly, the lessons learned, into next year's assessment plans (AY 2017-2018). This structured, cyclic review of our mission, goals, and outcomes will establish unstoppable momentum in the University's push towards its vision.

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

Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Model. The Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors of the University of Louisiana System hold institutions accountable for achieving positive outcome measures in academics as well as support services. Our ability to offer students federally-based financial aid depends on our accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Accreditation requires institutions of higher education to demonstrate an active assessment process that examines all programs and services and leads to improvement and mission accomplishment. According to SACSCOC, "The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results." SACSCOC adds, "Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against mission in all aspects of an institution." As such, Northwestern's model consists of the following components:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Principles of Accreditation: *Foundation for Quality Enhancement, 2012 are currently under review. Once published, the revised principles will replace this component of the IE Model.* The intent is to apportion each principle standard to the appropriate authority for ownership, evaluation, and integration into the daily operations of the University.

Northwestern State University Strategic Plan 2016-2021. The University strategic plan provides the framework and context for our actions for 2016-2021. This common framework and shared narrative nevertheless leaves room for adaptation and adjustment based on the higher education and socioeconomic environments.

Each June and December, the University Strategic Planning Team, in conjunction with the University Assessment Committee, will conduct a semiannual review of our progress through an update to the President from each Strategic Focus Area (SFA) team leader. In turn, the President or designated leadership team will provide an update to faculty, staff, and

community partners at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters as part of the Faculty and Staff Institute or similar activity. In mid-March, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, in coordination with each SFA, will initiate that year’s assessment report. This report will capture the strategic decisions made during the year and address any adjustments to the strategic plan moving forward. Each SFA team leader will present an update brief to the President and the leadership team in June as a status check of each area’s progress. During these forums, we will gain approval to any adjustments needed to the objectives, strategies, or metrics. We will publish the Assessment Cycle Report within 30 days of this meeting. The reports are:

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 2016-2021–Sustaining Success.*
5. *Assessment Cycle 2020–2021 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–The Way Forward.*

The Strategic Plan 2016-2021 objectives are:

The Student Experience:

- Objective 1. Provide responsive student services.
- Objective 2. Create a community that fosters diversity and inclusion.
- Objective 3. Develop a unique campus life experience.
- Objective 4. Provide a transformational learning and career preparation experience.
- Objective 5. Increase efforts to provide for the wellness of our students.

Academic Excellence:

- Objective 1. Provide quality and innovative instruction in the classroom and online.
- Objective 2. Establish 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.

University Assessment Process. All 66 academic programs, in coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, reviewed, amended, or revalidated their respective missions. They identified the degree-awarding programs (diplomas, certificates, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral) that will participate in the assessment process. Each has developed program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Learning for Life: Experience Your Future*, established uniform SLOs and performance targets for all seven QEP pilot programs. Each program then developed their associated assessment methodology.

Simultaneously, University Vice Presidents determined which of their administrative units must review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. The 50 units identified have developed their Service Outcome Measures (SOMs) and their assessment methodology.

Assessments are by Academic Year (AY; July 1 to June 30). By April 15 of each year, each academic program and administrative unit submits their draft assessment cycle plans for the coming year through their respective Academic or Administrative Review Committee Chair. The Dean or Vice President reviews and approves assessment plans before submitting them to the Office of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE). The DIE will account for each plan as part of the assessment process. The University will use the Institutional Effectiveness website as the primary repository of these assessment plans. These plans are finalized prior to the beginning of the fall semester, normally mid-August.

Administrative units finalize their assessment cycle plans within a few days of spring commencement and at the latest within the first two weeks of the fall semester for academic programs. Data collection takes place throughout the academic year with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each year, faculty and staff will collect data,

compare results of the previous year’s assessment, and develop plans for the upcoming year. All academic year assessments are due to the DIE no later than June 15.

Each Review Committee Chair develops an annual assessment report made up of the following components:

1. Results of the previous year’s assessment,
2. Proposed or actual changes based on these results, and
3. A new assessment plan to measure the impact of these changes (including an analytical assessment of the effects of the changes made).

The DIE consolidates each of these reports into a single presentation for review by the University President, normally in line with the June-July Strategic Plan update.

Quality Enhancement Plan. The development and implementation of the *Learning for Life: Experience Your Future* QEP is a seven-year process. This includes two years (2014-16) of data gathering and proposal development and five years (2016-2021) of implementation. The timeline includes 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.

Embedded in this timeline is an annual cycle of curricular redevelopment and alignment to the principles of the QEP. This cycle includes seven stages:

1. Each spring, faculty representing academic programs aligning their curriculum to the QEP will submit applications demonstrating program readiness. These applications will be due annually on May 31.
2. The Faculty Grants Team will review these applications to ensure that departmental support and faculty responsibility are adequate. The Faculty Grants Team will award funding (or course release) to successful applicants by June 30, with funding allocated for the following fall semester.
3. During the fall semester, grant recipients will develop a formal proposal for realigning program curricula. Recipients will submit these proposals to the Implementation Team by November 30.
4. The Implementation Team will review proposals to ensure program curricula meet the requirements of the QEP and its two student learning outcomes.
5. Once approved by the Implementation Team, program coordinators and department heads will submit proposed curricular changes to the University’s Curriculum Review Council (CRC). The deadline to submit proposals to be included on the agenda for the February meeting, the final meeting of the CRC each academic year, is January 31. The CRC reviews all proposed changes to course offerings, curricula, and catalog entries and makes recommendations to the University President for approval.

6. Following approval by the CRC, program faculty may begin aligning coursework and course materials to the student learning outcomes of the QEP.
7. The Assessment Team will complete direct assessment of QEP SLOs at the end of each semester and share findings with program faculty.

Strategic Budgeting Process. The *Planning, Programming, and Budget Execution (PPBE) Process* has four overlapping phases.

Planning. The Planning Phase is the definition and examination of environment; the analysis of changing conditions and trends; threat, technology, and economic assessments in conjunction with efforts to understand change and the long-term implications of current choices; and the guidance required to initiate the second phase. The University President owns this phase along with the VP Business Affairs and others as deemed necessary by the President. The President briefs University personnel and other appropriate audience members on the “State of the University,” enabling them to provide the desired guidance to allow for budget development. The President also presents the PPBE calendar during this session. The Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (SPBC) will develop the budget development calendar.

The SPBC members include the College Deans; VP Academic Affairs; VP Business Affairs; VP External Affairs; VP Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development; VP The Student Experience; VP University Affairs; Faculty Senate President; Representative from Accounting and Budgeting; Student Government President; legal subject matter expert (SME); and both faculty and staff representatives. *Note: The President or his designee will determine the committee chair and the number and duration of faculty and staff committee membership. Anticipated duration of service is one complete budget cycle.*

Programming. The Programming Phase begins immediately after the President disseminates budgetary guidance. This phase defines and analyzes requirements as envisioned to underpin our Strategic Plan and intents. In this phase, each organizational unit, operating with an independent budget, prepares and presents its requirements to its next higher authority. For example, Deans will determine within their college who must develop and present their budget requirements. Simultaneously, each unit prepares its NSU Budget Request Template as part of its submission. Once complete, the Dean will analyze each department’s requirements, capturing each requirement into a *List of Budgetary Priorities* (ordered 1-N). Colleges will then brief the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (SPBC) on their consolidated budget requirements. Administrative agencies/organizations will follow the same blueprint and brief their respective Vice President or equivalents of similar authority. University stakeholders own this phase. The tangible products produced in this phase are the budget brief and corresponding Budget Request Template for each organization.

Budgeting. The Budgeting Phase begins once all budgetary briefings are complete and each organization unit has submitted corresponding Budget Request Templates. This phase includes review, formulation, justification, preparation, and presentation of the proposed NSU

budget. The primary purpose is to have the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (SPBC) scrutinize and prioritize the requirements presented during the programming phase by University subcomponents. The product of this phase is a budget proposal submitted to the President and his Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC is composed of the Chief Financial Officer and anyone else designated by the President. This phase concludes with the production and presentation of a University budget in an open forum. The Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee owns this phase.

Execution. The Execution Phase is the real-world application and begins once the President approves and presents the budget for the academic year. This phase includes a periodic evaluation via a mid-year review to assess budget execution to date and any necessary adjustments. The VP Business Affairs owns this phase.

A sample timeline for this process includes advanced planning for expansion of the future year's budget (Table 1). Exact dates may be adjusted to meet changes in the state deadlines.

Table 1
Sample Strategic Budgeting Process Timeline

Budgetary Activity	No Later Than
Initial budget brief	October 31
Submit budget requests	November 18
Non-academic units submit request to appropriate VP	
Academic Affairs division submit requests to Dean	
Unit budget hearings	January 31
Non-academic units hold hearings by Division	
Academic Affairs Division holds hearings by College	
Presentations of consolidated budget requests to SPBC	February 10
Non-academic units presented by VPs	
Academic Affairs Division presented by Colleges	
SPBC reviews and prioritizes budget requests	February 20
SPBC submits budget proposal to President's Advisory Committee	February 28
SPBC presents budget justification to President's Advisory Committee	March 15
President's Advisory Committee reviews budget	March 30
President's Advisory Committee briefs the University on the budget	April 15
Final budget awaiting adjustment of Executive Budget	June 1
Budget due to ULS Board of Supervisors	June 25
Budget due to Louisiana Board of Regents	August 30
Continuation budget (future year new and expanded program request)	October 1

Northwestern also considers the Board of Regents', Board of Supervisors', and State and Federal mandates and regulatory guidelines/requirements as supporting components of its holistic Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Process.

Section II.

Performance Indicators and Assessment Results

(Objectives–Strategies–Metrics–Findings–Analysis–Decisions–Responsibility)

Achieving the vision to become the premier regional university requires an unbiased approach to both assessment and process. Through comprehensive analysis, we developed the objectives, strategy, metrics, and responsibility for each Strategic Focus Area (SFA). These are intended to yield the data needed to guide our strategic decision-making. None of the variables, the objectives, strategies, and metrics are expected to be sustained throughout the lifespan of this plan. We will adjust what is required as the environment in which we operate changes.

Strategic Focus Area 1–The Student Experience

To achieve its envisioned future, Northwestern State is committed to redefining and strengthening The Student Experience. Students succeed when we devote our energies to improve all aspects of student life: academic, physical, social, and mental well-being. We will make data-informed decisions in our ongoing effort to create new opportunities and enhance existing programs, services, and resources for our students. From the first contact with a prospective student through their commencement celebration, we will demonstrate our commitment to student success by ensuring they experience college life that is engaging, purposeful, and relevant. Coordination between all campus entities guarantees the delivery of services, programs, and experiences that meet the needs of all students on all campuses.

A number of metrics point to a healthy, supportive, rewarding, and transformational student experience. Over time, we will increase the sophistication and appropriateness with which we capture our students' experiences. For the first year, we will use quantitative and qualitative data already accessible on campus to establish a baseline that will be used to reflect objectively on our progress in meeting our 2021 benchmarks.

In 2021, we see ourselves making progress in all measurable areas of assessment for The Student Experience. We will establish and maintain a targeted level of growth with each fall's freshman class. We will draw the most academically qualified students from our region, striving to increase our entry test scores over the next five years. Faculty and programs that capitalize on high-impact educational practices will challenge our students and add value to The Student Experience.

At Northwestern, every student is treated with dignity and respect. Students enjoy and appreciate every aspect of the college experience and community life knowing they are in an optimal environment for personal and academic growth. Each student will reflect the pride of being part of the Demon family and will strive to become members of the Long Purple Line.

Proposed metrics used to establish the baseline and measure progress for The Student Experience strategic focus area (Table 2) may be adjusted as necessary to secure the appropriate data. Baseline data has been established through the academic year 2016-2017 assessment.

Table 2
Metrics for Assessing The Student Experience

AY 2016-2017 Benchmarks	The Student Experience Metrics	AY 2020-2021 Targets
1,459	Enrollment increase per freshman class, per year (EI)	1,700
9,819	Overall Northwestern State enrollment increase	11,000
10	Diversity represents regional demographics (1-10)	10
70%	Retention rate(full-time) 1st to 2nd year (RR)	75%
35%	Graduation rates (GR)	40%
7.9	Academic excellence and value (AEV; 1-10)	10
7.7	Responsive and helpful faculty and staff (RHFS; 1-10)	10
8.5	Satisfaction with support programs (SSP; 1-10)	10
8.5	Campus climate of advocacy and inclusion (1-10)	10
6	Programs with capstone internships or related activities	66
8.2	Satisfaction with University policies and processes (UPP; 1-10)	10
8.5	On-campus facilities satisfaction survey (1-10)	10
7.2	Campus housing and dining satisfaction (1-10)	10
7.6	Safety and security satisfaction survey (1-10)	10
7.5	Elevate LA financial health analysis score with ULS	8.5
40%	Percent of graduates working within 6 months of graduation	85%
65	Number of campus national rankings	85
1,530	Number of alumni actively supporting the University	1,884

Note. AY 2016-2017 baseline and AY 2021 targets are approved per the AY 2016-2017 Assessment Report briefed to the President, his Leadership Team, and University Assessment Committee on July 5, 2017. The next review will take place in December 2017.

*Some metrics were converted to a 10-point scale and include multiple survey averages.

Five objectives support the goal of redefining and strengthening The Student Experience.

Objective 1:

Provide responsive student services through streamlining processes and understanding the individual student's needs.

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.
- 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.

Metrics:

1. Academic Excellence and Value (AEV)-- Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (NLSSI) Academic Advising and Instructional Effectiveness scales and NSU Graduating Student Survey (GSS).
2. Satisfaction with Support Programs (SSP)--NLSSI Campus Services scale.
3. Satisfaction with University Policies and Processes (UPP)--NLSSI Processes and Procedures, Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness, Student Centeredness, and Campus Life scales.
4. Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff (RHFS)--NLSSI Student Centeredness and Campus Life scales.
5. Retention and Graduation Increases (RR and GR).
6. Enrollment Increases (EI)

Metric:**1. Academic Excellence and Value (AEV)**

Findings: Baseline established.

Academic Excellence and Value depends on a number of factors, including academic advising, instructional effectiveness, and instructional value.

Responses of 1,000 NSU students to the NLSSI Academic Advising Effectiveness scale averaged 5.83/7 ($SD = 1.45$), while those to the Instructional Effectiveness scale averaged 5.59/7 ($SD = 1.13$), both significantly above the national average ($p < .001$). In fact, the average response on each item in these two scales was significantly above the national average. Compared to other University of Louisiana System (ULS) institutions, Northwestern ranked third in Academic Advising Effectiveness and first in Instructional Effectiveness.

Responses on the NSU Graduating Student Survey of Instructional Value (communication, comprehension, critical thinking, analysis of data, scientific method, application of technology, independent learner, nature of diversity, visual arts

appreciation, personal values, US civic understanding, broader culture) averaged 3.62/4 ($SD = 0.60$, $N = 405$).

Analysis:

Academic Excellence and Value are evident in the academic effectiveness scales in NLSSI and the NSU Graduating Student Survey. Student opinions of both Academic Advising and Instructional Effectiveness on the NLSSI are not only significantly above the national average, they are also higher in a practical sense—in most cases by 0.5 to 1.0 points higher on a 7 point scale, with a very large sample size. This is indicative of a strong performance in these areas.

Academic advising occurs during Freshman Connection (the incoming student orientation program), within departments, and through NSU's Academic Advising Center. The NLSSI does not distinguish between these. The Academic Advising Center is assessed in metric 2.

The NSU Graduating Student Survey for fall 2016 and spring 2017 ($N = 442$) shows the vast majority of graduates were satisfied or very satisfied on every scale. This is a very comprehensive measure for learning milestones. They include:

- communication: 98.6%
- reading comprehension: 98.9%
- critical thinking: 98.4%
- analysis of data: 96.5%
- scientific method: 96.5%
- application of technology: 96.8%
- learning independently: 98.2%
- nature of diversity: 97.4%
- appreciation of the arts: 96.6%
- personal values: 98.4%
- US civic understanding: 89.1%
- understanding of broader culture: 92.6%

These measures are viewed as important capstone skills by NSU and reflect our mission and best practices in higher education.

Recommendations:

The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey should be utilized each year as the primary survey instrument for The Student Experience metrics. President's Cabinet

Metric:**2. Satisfaction with Support Programs (SSP)**

Findings: Baseline established.

Responses to the NLSSI Campus Services scale include library, computer labs, tutoring services, online access, career services, counseling services, and mentoring. The scale average ($M = 6.00/7$, $SD = 1.11$) was significantly above the national average ($p < .001$). Specific items on the Campus Services scale include:

- “Library resources and services are adequate”- $M = 6.21/7$ ($SD = 1.25$) compared to 5.60 nationally.
- “Computer labs are adequate and accessible”- $M = 6.17/7$ ($SD = 1.26$) compared to 5.70 nationally.
- “Tutoring services are readily available”- $M = 5.86/7$ ($SD = 1.54$) compared to 5.45 nationally.
- “This campus provides online access to services I need”- $M = 6.23/7$ ($SD = 1.23$) compared to 5.68 nationally.
- “Counseling services are available if I need them”- $M = 6.06/7$ ($SD = 1.38$) compared to 5.23 nationally.
- “There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career”- $M = 5.74/7$ ($SD = 1.64$) compared to 5.16 nationally.

Northwestern ranked first among ULS institutions in terms of the NLSSI Campus Services scale.

Analysis:

Student opinions of Support Programs on the NLSSI are not only significantly above the national average, they are also higher in a practical sense—ranging from 0.4 to 0.6 points higher on a 7 point scale, indicative of a strong performance in these areas. However, the 1,000 respondents to the NLSSI are a random sample of students and do not necessarily all use each service in the survey. These results represent the degree to which students feel they have access to the services they individually need.

NSU is providing programs and services to achieve academic excellence. In January of 2016, Northwestern State opened the **Academic Success and Tutoring Center** in Watson Library. The Center provides face-to-face and online tutoring and a variety of other support services.

Other academic services that promote student success at NSU include:

- Academic Advising Center

- Student Support Services, which provide tutoring
- Counseling Programs
- Career Services
- Student Accountability and Advocacy, including Student Conduct and Title IX
- Watson Library
- Writing Center
- Math Laboratories with 40 hours a week of tutoring
- Computer Labs
- Center for Inclusion and Diversity
- Student Activities and Organizations

Local surveys of service users support the findings from the NLSSI, indicating that NSU students who use these resources are also satisfied with support programs.

- NSU's academic advising program continues to improve. NSU conducted local advising surveys to assess the Academic Advising Center, however, the number of students responding was not large enough to be statistically significant.
- The Office of Disability Support surveyed students to determine effectiveness of their services. This survey found a 97% satisfaction rate from students.
- For Student Support Services, 100% of Trio students were Very Satisfied with services, events, and activities.
- The NSU Health Services student survey showed that 100% of surveyed students ($N = 84$) were satisfied with their level of care.
- Counseling Services found very high rates of client satisfaction (92%, $N = 84$).

Recommendations:

The academic deans should determine if local surveys for academic advising are warranted. This is information that should be determined with academic departmental input. If local surveys are conducted, methods must be employed to expand the number of students surveyed. In addition, anecdotal data collected at Freshman Connection indicates a review of summer orientation advising is warranted. Provost and Deans

Metric:**3. Satisfaction with University Policies and Processes (UPP)**

Findings: Baseline established.

Responses to the NLSSI Registration Effectiveness scale (Processes and procedures, Billing Policies, class registration, convenient times) averaged 5.85/7 ($SD = 1.15$), significantly above the national average ($p < .001$). Compared to other ULS institutions, Northwestern ranked first in Registration Effectiveness.

Responses to the NLSSI Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale indicate a satisfaction of 5.52/7 ($SD = 1.43$) on five items addressing admissions and financial aid, significantly above the national norm ($p < .001$). Compared to other ULS institutions, Northwestern ranked third in Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness.

The NLSSI Student Centeredness scale question, “I seldom get the run-around when seeking information on this campus,” averaged 5.40/7 ($SD = 1.84$), significantly above the national average ($p < .001$).

Responses to the statement, “Student disciplinary procedures are fair,” on the NLSSI Campus Life scale averaged 6.02/7 ($SD = 1.48$), significantly above the national average ($p < .001$).

Analysis:

In spring of 2016, the University formed a committee to review policies and procedures, streamline polices that block student success, and better integrate processes in admissions and readmission.

In the spring of 2017, Northwestern State formally dedicated the Long Student Services Center, a one-stop shop for enrollment services for new and continuing students. The building is conveniently located in the center of campus across from the Student Union. The Long Student Services Center houses:

- Admissions
- Recruiting
- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Registrar and Veterans Affairs
- One Card Office (food, housing, banking, etc.)
- First Year Experience
- Student Accounting

On the NLSSI, for both the Registration Effectiveness scale and the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale, the average response for each question was significantly above the mean compared to other US institutions ($p < .001$). Again, beyond the differences being statistically significant, the NSU results indicated a practical difference as well, ranging from 0.56 to 1.08 points on a 7-point scale for Registration Effectiveness and from 0.33 to 0.56 for Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness.

Additional data on Policies and Procedures, but not included in the metrics, is the NSU Student Satisfaction with Registrar Services ($M = 3.4/5$, $N = 247$), which indicated satisfaction with services of the Registrar's office. In addition, this survey asked students to rate the quality of information received from that office. The majority of responses (82.35%) indicated that staff directed them properly, while 17.65% said they were not given the proper information ($N = 204$). Accurate information is vital to student success and is addressed in the Decisions section below.

Overall, student satisfaction with NSU policy and procedures as indicated by the NLSSI and local surveys is positive.

Recommendations:

NSU will continue to assess the impact of policy and procedures on student satisfaction and retention. Leadership Team

All offices, particularly the Registrar's Office will train employees on provision of correct information to students. This strategy should also affect policies and procedures. It is suggested that training for all service areas include cross training in policies, processes, and information on correct campus information. Provost and Leadership Team

Metric:

4. Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff (RHFS).

Findings: Baseline established.

Responses to the NLSSI Student Centeredness scale averaged 5.80/7 ($SD = 1.27$), significantly above the national average of 5.25 ($p < .001$). Northwestern State ranked first among ULS institutions in terms of student satisfaction with Student Centeredness.

NSU respondents rated the NLSSI statement, "Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual," an average of 4.84/7 ($SD = 1.98$) compared to a national mean of 4.93.

In the NSU Counseling Services survey, 100% of student surveyed ($N = 84$) said their counselor was genuinely interested in them.

Analysis:

Northwestern State views provision of responsive and helpful faculty and staff as key into achieving growth and student retention. An overall scale of 7.7/10 for Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff is very good. Other local data gathered in The Student Experience indicates that students are very happy with the care and service from faculty and staff at NSU. Counseling, Health, Career Services, and Disability Services all have above 95% satisfaction rate with staff.

On one item in the NLSSI Campus Life scale, “Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual,” NSU scored 4.84/7 compared to a national mean of 4.93. This score is below the national norm and must be addressed with our campus housing partners.

Decisions/Recommendations:

The VP for The Student Experience will meet with the campus housing vendor to discuss steps for better assessment of their services and improved training and service delivery by resident assistants. VP for The Student Experience

All offices, particularly the Registrar’s Office will train employees on provision of correct information to students. This strategy should also affect policies and procedures. It is suggested that training for all service areas include cross training in policies, processes, and information on correct campus information. Provost and Leadership Team

Metric:

5. Retention and Graduation Increases (RR and GR).

Findings: Baseline established.

Fall-to-fall retention for 2016 was 70%, a 2% increase from the previous year.

Six Year Graduation Rate for spring 2016 was 35%.

Analysis:

We believe First Year Experience programs, including our University Studies 1000 class, affects our retention rate.

Northwestern State has one of the most robust and successful First Year Experience Programs in the country. For the summer orientation program, Freshman Connection, NSU is highly selective in choosing peer leaders. Leaders participate in comprehensive year-round training. They compete and perform in the top percentage in the Southern Region. Our Freshman Connection program is camp style, models best practices

for first-year experience programs, and receives excellent reviews by students and parents.

The program expands to Demon Days, which is a month-long series of activities after the start of each fall semester and aimed at student development, personal responsibility, service to community, affinity for NSU, and leadership.

Other freshman year, high-impact programs include:

- 3-day campaign of Career Exploration in UNIV 1000
- Freshman Seminar Series presentations, events, and activities
- Intrusive advising

Most academic programs follow an advising program similar to the one listed below. The NSU Psychology program conducts an aggressive and exemplary program:

For all undergraduates, all Psychology faculty post and maintain 10 office hours a week and graduate students are available for tutoring. Advisors meet with their advisees three times each semester: after 5-week grades, after midterm grades, and to schedule courses for the next term. Additional activities are provided for each class:

- Incoming freshmen:
 - o Psychology/addiction studies majors enroll in two designated courses each semester as part of the Psychology Freshman Interest Group (FIG).
 - o Psychology Club
- Sophomores:
 - o Twice a semester, faculty will meet with sophomores to share refreshments, studying tips and tricks, and schedules for next semester courses
 - o Psi Chi membership
 - o Undergraduate research team membership is available
- Juniors/Seniors:
 - o Undergraduate research team membership is available

At least twice a semester, faculty members will attend **Lunch and Learn** presentations on special topics, such as applying to graduate school, the science of psychology, and disability support technologies. During the spring semester, to honor all majors, the department hosts a “Party is Over Party,” an end of the year activity to say goodbye to graduating seniors and congratulate undergraduates for their success.

The Six-Year Graduation Rate for spring 2016 is 35%, which is a point for improvement. NSU is located in a region of Louisiana where people experience food, housing, and

financial insecurities; Additionally, many of our regional K-12 schools score low on academic standards. Most of our students receive some type of financial aid and many are academically underprepared. The burden of financing college is overwhelming to the majority of our students and contributes to our low graduation rates.

Programs to assist students in the transition after the end of the first year include:

- The sophomore breakfast.
- Mentoring opportunities via President’s Leadership Program for sophomores.
- Volunteer Programs for sophomores.
- Music students do a semester-end jury each semester. Qualified faculty in their respective areas evaluate programs and the comments are applied to the following semester to build and scaffold learning. During the fourth semester, the jury is a “qualifying jury.” Passing indicates that students are ready to go to the upper level of applied study. In the upper levels, they prepare for recitals and final, culminating experiences.
- Fine and Graphic Arts mimics the above with portfolio presentations each semester, culminating with a senior art show/exhibit.
- The NSU QEP is designed to provide experiential learning opportunities as they transition from year to year. In-depth information on the QEP is found in the academic section of the Strategic Plan.

The biggest challenge for NSU is retention after the first year. Strategies must include academic departments and involve decision-making around academic majors. In addition, financial planning must be a part of the retention program for students after the first year.

Recommendations:

Reorganize leadership in The Student Experience to hire an enrollment manager and coordinate retention through that area. President’s Cabinet, Provost, VP The Student Experience

NSU must plan and implement intentional sophomore-to-junior and junior-to-senior events in the Academic Affairs and The Student Experience. Provost and VP The Student Experience

Develop intentional-advising programs in academic areas with high major concentration (nursing) to move students to other appropriate majors. Deans, Provost, Academic Advising Center

Develop a plan for financial assistance and planning for students after the first year. Assemble a task force group to develop this program. Leadership Team

Metric:**6. Enrollment Increases (EI)**

Findings: Baseline established.

The entering freshman class in fall 2016 was 1,459, compared to 1,275 in 2015, an increase of 184 (14.4%). Total enrollment increased 7.0% in the same period, from 9,179 in 2015 to 9,819 in 2016.

Analysis:

Considering the market share and availability of students, NSU is doing well in enrollment increases. However, new markets must be developed.

The recent increase in enrollment is also attributed to better integration of processes.

Recommendations:

Investigate new markets for recruitment particularly the Louisiana prison population.
Provost and VP The Student Experience

Objective 2:

Create a community that fosters diversity and inclusion (through developing ethical and effective leadership, service, and civic engagement)

Strategies:

- Develop a diversity plan articulated in all University policies and procedures
- Continue to 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 with a strong sense of civic responsibility, ethical reasoning, and social justice

Metrics:

1. Diversity represents regional demographics (DD)
2. Campus climate of advocacy and inclusion (CCAI)
3. Safety and security satisfaction (SSS)

Metric:**1. Diversity represents regional demographics (DD)**

Findings: Baseline established.

Both ethnic classification and gender are self-reported by applicants for admission (Table 3). About 2.5% of applicants do not specify ethnicity. In addition, gender categories are limited to male or female.

Demographics for the State of LA by ethnicity and gender: American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.65%), Asian (1.5%), Black or African American (31%), Hispanic (4.1%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.04%), Two or More Races (1.5%), White (60%), and Other (1.5%); Female = 51%; Male = 49% (<https://suburbanstats.org/population/how-many-people-live-in-louisiana>).

Note: Percentages reported based on the raw number of individuals reported in the source, excluding duplications.

Table 3
Diversity Demographics

Gender	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Foreign	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Unknown	White	Total
F	120	70	2,442	88	407	9	281	215	4,922	8,554
	1.4%	0.8%	28.5%	1.0%	4.8%	0.1%	3.3%	2.5%	57.5%	70.3%
M	49	32	901	68	186	12	132	123	2,116	3,619
	1.4%	0.9%	24.9%	1.9%	5.1%	0.3%	3.6%	3.4%	58.5%	29.7%
Totals	169	102	3,343	156	593	21	413	338	7,038	12,173
	1.4%	0.8%	27.5%	1.3%	4.9%	0.2%	3.4%	2.8%	57.8%	100%

Analysis:

Other than the HBCUs in Louisiana, Northwestern State is one of the most diverse four-year colleges in the state. African American, two or more, other race students, Hispanic, and Asian students make up nearly 42% of our student population. In addition, due to Northwestern State's tradition of preparing teachers and nurses, generally female-dominated programs, 70% of our total population are female.

Northwestern State is clearly committed to diversity as articulated in the mission of the University, The Student Experience, and all the units that report under that area. A review of the demographic data for Northwest Louisiana compared to the demographics of the institution shows that Northwestern State is dedicated to access to education for the people of this region. NSU's student population reflects the population of the area NSU serves.

Decisions/Recommendations:

Review content of all Student Experience leadership programs to determine if diversity needs of students are met. VP The Student Experience, Director of FYE, Director of Greek Life, Director of Student Activities

Review the academic curriculum in each college to determine if courses and coursework related to diversity, leadership, and social justice may be added. Deans and Provost

Metric:

2. Campus climate of advocacy and inclusion (CCAI)

Findings: Baseline established.

The NLSSI Campus Climate scale assesses the degree to which the institution's communications with students are effective and how well campus experiences instill campus pride and a sense of belonging. NSU scored 5.85/7 ($SD = 1.19$) on this scale, significantly above the national average of 5.39 ($p < .001$). Specific questions on the Campus Climate scale include:

- "Administrators are available to hear students' concerns,"- $M = 5.80/7$ ($SD = 1.42$), significantly above 5.10 nationally ($p < .001$).
- "There is a strong commitment to diversity on this campus,"- $M = 5.98/7$ ($SD = 1.50$), significantly above 5.42 nationally ($p < .001$).
- "Students are free to express their ideas on this campus,"- $M = 5.93/7$ ($SD = 1.51$), significantly above 5.50 nationally ($p < .001$).

Analysis:

Compared to other ULS institutions, Northwestern ranked first on the NLSSI Campus Climate scale. In particular, the responses to the statements "There is a strong commitment to diversity on this campus" and "Students are free to express their ideas on the campus," indicate that NSU is doing well on this scale and students appear to be aware of the efforts made by NSU toward creating a diverse and inclusive campus climate.

A number of recent efforts have contributed to this result. In 2016-17, the President charged the Dean of Students with convening the University Diversity Committee, whose purpose is to monitor and enhance the overall progress of the University in carrying out its commitment to foster a diverse community of students and employees. The committee members share diversity best practices, engage in University diversity strategic planning, and make recommendations regarding essential diversity changes.

The University Diversity Committee developed and approved a plan designed to affect University policy and procedures related to diversity. The plan includes:

- University-wide assessment for diversity and inclusion climate.
- Training for administration, faculty, staff, and students.
- Identification of best practices.
- Creation of academic programs related to diversity, such as African American Studies.
- ADA assistance.
- Gender equity initiatives.
- Address health issues related to diversity, especially women’s health and mental health.
- Improve support for the Center for Inclusion and Diversity.

Specific new programs addressing issues of inclusion and diversity include:

- **Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID):** Opened spring 2016, academic year 2016-17 it gained a coordinator and two full-time graduate students. The center started out of student requests for diversity programming and safe spaces. The Center sponsored programs all year and supported Week of Listening events to hear student needs related to diversity, inclusion, and sensitivity.
- **Safe Haven:** Instituted the spring of 2017, the Safe Haven Program identifies and trains faculty and staff willing to function as safe people and spaces where students may go to find care and support. Training includes suicide prevention; gender sensitivity; Title IX related reporting obligations and victim-centered care; resources for students related to mental and physical health; financial, housing, and food insecurity; childcare services; spiritual communities; and other student issues. To date, 48 faculty and staff have been trained and display the Safe Haven logo on their office doors and email signatures.

In further support of inclusion, Northwestern State develops civic responsibility, ethical reasoning, and social justice in a variety of ways, including the following leadership programs:

- **Leadership NSU:** Greek Life, the First Year Experience, Student Life & Student Activities Board (SAB), and Student Government Association (SGA) collaboratively sponsor this leadership conference, open to all Northwestern State students. (Attendance is required by some organizations.) In 2016-17, over 400 students attended the two-day conference, featuring over 20 separate programs that focus on civic engagement, social responsibility, and diversity. The program ends with an afternoon of community service.
- **Student Government Association (SGA):** SGA develops civic leaders by modeling the democratic process and its members participate in state, regional, and national leadership conferences each year. SGA also sponsors leadership programs, programs on social justice (Sister Rose Mary), and diversity leadership (Odell Bizzell). In addition, SGA sponsored two Safe Spring Break tables centered on consent and safe sex. SGA sponsored Constitution Day, election night events, and trips to the Louisiana state capitol on ULS Day, all to promote civic engagement.
- **Greek Life:** Members of each Greek Council attend state, regional, and national leadership conferences. Individual councils also sponsor activities designed to promote social responsibility. For example, this year, IFC sponsored “Consent Is,” a safe spring break table during a bi-annual Week of Action hosted by Registered Student Organization Demons Support Demons.
- **The First Year Experience:** The motto for the First Year Experience is *Leadership, Loyalty, and Service*, which exemplifies the programs conducted in this area, all of which build on the strategies in this objective.
- **Demon Days:** Within Demon Days is Pitchforks for Pencils, a service project to collect school supplies for needy children in the Natchitoches community. All students, new and continuing, are encouraged to participate.
- **The President’s Leadership Program:** Over 75 students participate each year in this extremely successful scholarship program, which actively develops leaders, campus involvement, affinity to the institution, and promotes personal and social development. There is a focus on social responsibility, civic duty, and service. Students who participate in the program develop and host service projects. All students are involved in One of Seven, a program to promote a day of service each week to others.
- **Social Work at Northwestern State:** NSU’s Social Work Department offers a vigorous curriculum addressing social justice, ethics, and equity. Social Work 3140, Practice 3–Communities and Organizations, incorporates knowledge of social justice and ethical practice in field study. Several years ago, students in this class started a food pantry on the NSU campus that continues to operate. This is an excellent example of teaching and leadership in social responsibility and exemplifies the connection between academic and professional goals.

Decisions/Recommendations:

Continue and expand Leadership NSU to reach more students. VP The Student

Experience, Director of FYE, Director of Greek Life, Director of Student Activities

Deans and department heads review the academic curriculum in each college to determine if courses and coursework related to diversity, leadership, and social justice may be added. Deans and Provost

Review budgets for additional support for the Center for Inclusion and Diversity.
President's Cabinet

Consider development of degree programs or curriculum concentration in leadership.
Provost, Deans

Expand and fund Northwestern State's President Leadership Program. President's
Cabinet

Metric:

3. Safety and security satisfaction (SSS)

Findings: Baseline established.

In the NLSSI Safety and Security scale, Northwestern State scored 5.32/7 ($SD = 1.36$), compared to 5.06 in the US, significantly above average ($p < .001$). Compared to other ULS institutions, NSU ranked third on this scale. Specific items in the NLSSI Safety and Security scale include:

- "The campus is safe and secure for all students."- $M = 6.00/7$ ($SD = 1.28$), significantly above 5.82 nationally ($p < .001$).
- "Parking lots are well lighted and secure."- $M = 5.33/7$ ($SD = 1.69$), significantly above 5.16 nationally ($p < .01$).
- "Security staff respond quickly to calls for assistance."- $M = 5.87/7$ ($SD = 1.50$), significantly above 5.36 nationally ($p < .01$).

Analysis:

Student responses to items on the NLSSI indicate that NSU students feel safe on campus. While NSU is above average, we recognize the need to improve in this area.

Recommendations:

NSU Police should review all Safety and Security data on the NLSSI and make recommendations for improving the overall score. VP University Affairs, Police Chiefs

Objective 3:

Develop a unique campus life experience (through involvement, activities, services, and experiences to support student recruitment, engagement, retention, and loyalty to NSU).

Strategies:

- Transform campus spaces to create a unique and engaging campus environment, which adapts to the changing trends of a diverse student body
- Expand the number of living-learning programs and activities
- Engage in partnerships that build affinity with alumni
- Expand activities that build affinity with students

Metrics:

1. Campus National Ranking (CNR).
2. Number of Alumni actively supporting the University (NASU).
3. On Campus Facilities Satisfaction (CFS).
4. Campus Housing and Dining Satisfaction (HDS).

Metric:

1. Campus National Ranking (CNR).

Findings: Baseline established.

Northwestern State has 65 national rankings in academics for online and face-to-face programs, student leadership efforts, and athletics.

Analysis:

Northwestern State has over 65 national rankings when reviewing online programs, face-to-face programs, student leadership programs, and athletics. Many rankings are for online programs and for affordability. It is evident that NSU responded to the needs of students by proving quality and affordable online programs. Efforts to attain rankings in other areas should be included in the future.

Recommendation:

Review and set goals for on-campus academic programs for growth in National Rankings. Provost, Leadership Team

Metric:**2. Number of Alumni actively supporting the University (NASU).**

Findings: Baseline established.

The number of alumni contributors in 2016-2017 was 1,530.

Analysis:

Additional data supplied by Alumni and Development shows that the NSU Foundation raised \$3,903,181.22 in 2016-17. The total number of contributors including alumni, business entities, and non-alumni donors for 2016-17 is 2,323. Many contributors are not graduates and many of the 65,000 NSU graduates are not giving, leaving room for growth in giving among NSU alumni.

Northwestern State alumni appear to be supporting the institution in ways other than financial. In 2016-17 NSU alumni attended Alumni Association events all over the country. In hometowns and on campuses, 8,276 alumni attended events. This is a duplicated headcount. Clearly, NSU has a dedicated support base of alumni who want to remain involved with their alma mater.

Building an affinity to the institution develops students who are more easily retained and who become active alumni. The NSU University Studies 1000 class teaches University history and traditions, which helps begin to build affinity.

Demon Days provides activities and programs designed to engage students with University traditions and history. For example, at the first football pep rally, student leaders teach cheers and the NSU Fight Song. The Myths and Legends Tour teaches about famous Demons. Students also learn about Purple PrideDay (NSU wears purple on Friday). All new students are invited to participate in the Inferno where the incoming new class leads the football team onto the field at the first home game. During Halloween, NSU sponsors an event called Chasing Isabella, NSU's resident ghost.

SGA fostered University loyalty and school spirit by hanging banners with the Fight Song and Alma Mater in the Student Union. The SGA also created window murals for the SGA office with NSU events. Similar NSU branding was added in dining halls.

Alumni and Development made a concerted effort to engage current students to become alumni donors upon graduation by cosponsoring Grad Fest and encouraging participants to join the Alumni Association. Current students were also encouraged to consider giving towards specific scholarship goals.

Decisions/Recommendations:

Expand school spirit themes to University-wide student programming committee. VP The Student Experience/Dean of Students

Continue to grow alumni base and those supporting the University financially, specifically focusing on new alumni. Director of Alumni and Development Leadership Team

Metric:

3. On Campus Facilities Satisfaction (CFS).

Findings: Baseline established.

On the NLSSI Campus Climate Scale item, “On the whole, the campus is well maintained,” NSU ranked 5.88/7 ($SD = 1.52$), significantly above the national average of 5.72 ($p < .001$).

In a local survey of NSU Student Union bookings ($N = 32$), on a scale of 1-4, NSU ranked an average of 3.7 on all scales, which measured satisfaction of experience with booking, rules, staff, pricing, and follow-up.

Analysis:

Northwestern State’s commitment to creating a unique campus environment is evident in campus improvements in the Student Union:

- New bridge and handicap accessible walkway installed at the Union in 2016-17.
- New carpet installed in several of the main floor rooms and the lobby.
- New furniture placed in the main lobby of the Student Union and lobby painted.
- Installation of a ceramic tile mural created by the fine arts department students, faculty, and community members.
- Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID) chalk wall called “Chalk Talk” created where students may express themselves and share ideas.

In the past year, Watson Library underwent major renovations to accommodate student needs:

- A coffee shop, Café DeMon, was installed offering Starbucks products.
- A large area was reconstructed to house the Academic Success Center.
- A large area is currently under construction to house the Academic Advising Center.

Other campus improvements include:

- Outside seating spaces and landscaping.
- Improvements to parking lots.
- Conversion of an old lot adjacent to Iberville Dining Hall to a student-gathering place now known as Iberville Green.

Considering the reduction of state revenue for higher education and deferred maintenance on campus, Northwestern State managed to find creative solutions and make major improvements on campus.

Recommendation:

Expand the survey to include additional facilities. VP University Affairs

Metric:

4. Campus Housing and Dining Satisfaction (HDS).

Findings: Baseline established.

On the NLSSI Campus Life scale, NSU averaged 5.10/7 ($SD = 1.74$), significantly above the national average of 4.84 ($p < .001$). Individual items on this scale included:

- “Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable.” - $M = 5.00/7$ ($SD = 1.87$), compared to 4.92 nationally, which was not significantly different.
- “There is an adequate selection of food available on campus” - $M = 4.31/7$ ($SD = 2.27$), compared to 4.48 nationally, which was not significantly different.
- “Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual.” - $M = 4.84/7$ ($SD = 1.98$) compared to a national mean of 4.93, which was not significantly different.

Analysis:

Compared to other institutions in the ULS, NSU’s performance on the Campus Life scale was our lowest, ranking fifth. In particular, three items on the NLSSI related to food and housing deserve scrutiny. For all three (“There is an adequate selection of food available on campus,” “Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable,” and “Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual”), standard deviations were higher than with most other items on the NLSSI, indicating greater variation in the responses of students; while some students had acceptable or positive experiences, others had strongly negative ones. While NSU does not directly operate food or housing services on the Natchitoches campus, the operations of these vendors must be monitored and held to high standards.

NSU's housing vendor, Campus Living Villages (CLV), conducted surveys to determine student needs for programming and to determine success with move-in day activities. The survey for move-in day yielded high response rates and high satisfaction rates. This data is not included in the metrics.

Similarly, the NSU food vendor Sodexo attempted a survey, but the response rate was so low that data could not be considered. However, on a paper survey conducted by the NSU Director of Auxiliary Services, 76% of the student were satisfied with food overall. Again, it is imperative that all vendors conduct sound assessments and plan accordingly to assist Northwest State in recruitment, retention, and student satisfaction.

Northwestern State currently has 13 Living and Learning Communities (LLC):

- Louisiana Scholars' College
- Presidents Leadership Program
- The Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band
- Spirit Groups (Pom line and Cheerleaders)
- International students
- Athletic teams (Baseball, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball, Track, and Volleyball)

Beginning in 2016, NSU made plans to convert a historic residence hall into a self-contained LLC for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA). The NSU housing partner, CLV, committed nearly nine million dollars to this project. Construction began in spring 2017 and students will move-in in fall 2017. The focus on is on development of students in the creative and performing arts. This investment reinforces the success of a program critical to recruitment and community outreach.

The newly designed CAPA Residential College is conveniently located near the CAPA classroom and performance complex and features:

- 24-hour studios
- 24-hour computer labs
- Flexible performance and exhibition spaces

In addition to providing a supportive community of fellow artists, the dorm will be staffed by individuals who understand the needs of CAPA students. CAPA courses and extracurricular activities will be held in the hall, including opportunities to meet and study with visiting artists. When all stages of the new dorm are complete, NSU will be able to house over 180 students interested in the arts.

Research shows that successful programs are those focusing on academic areas where faculty have a high level of involvement in the LLCs. The CAPA LLC is a good example. Efforts in the future need to concentrate on LLCs with common academic interests

Decisions/Recommendations:

NSU has a privatized housing model. NSU will work with the director of housing to determine areas of improvement in living conditions and customer relations. Renovations and staff training regarding care for students will be the focus. VP The Student Experience

NSU also has privatized food service. Recent conversations with the director indicate that assessment is lacking. Recommendations include in-house satisfaction surveys to focus on expansion of food selection. VP The Student Experience

Expand Living and Learning Communities to other fast growing academic areas. Provost and Academic Deans, President's Cabinet

Objective 4:

Provide a transformational learning and career preparation experience (through advising, mentorships, experiential learning, and co-curricular involvement).

Strategies:

- Develop a series of high-impact experiential learning activities designed to engage students beginning their first year

Metrics:

1. Number of programs with capstone internships or related activities (QEP)
2. Percent of graduates working within 6 months of graduation (GW)

Metric:

1. **Number of programs with capstone internships or related activities (QEP)**

Findings: Baseline established.

An October 2016 survey at Northwestern State revealed that most (92%) degree programs require capstone experiences, including internships (40%) and undergraduate research (36%). Seven degree programs require high-impact experiential learning opportunities for their students:

- Early Childhood Education (internship)
- Elementary Education (internship)
- Health and Exercise Science (internship)
- Hospitality Management and Tourism (internship)
- Radiologic Science (internship)
- Music Performance (capstone experience or project)
- Louisiana Scholars' College (undergraduate research)

Analysis:

Several degree programs at Northwestern State have a rich history of requiring the three selected high-impact experiential learning opportunities for their students. However, there is no University-wide plan for defining, monitoring, and/or tracking these activities.

Throughout the strategic planning process, in The Student Experience, expanding and creating opportunities for students to have hands-on experience was clearly viewed by NSU leaders and students as a vital method of improving the Student Experience. At the same time, strategic planning was taking place, NSU leaders were charged with developing a quality enhancement plan (QEP). Again, the need for experiential learning to bridge the gap between classroom theory real-world experiences resonated with the QEP committee.

By adopting a rigorous plan, Northwestern State will better ensure all students, regardless of major, have opportunities for hands-on learning or research as they transfer classroom learning into practical application in the professional world. Changing dynamics in today's global economy and changing skills and knowledge expected of college graduates require universities to be nimble and ready to adapt curriculum to remain relevant. Experiential learning provides that needed bridge between academia and evolving trends and demands in varied career paths.

Recommendation:

Faculty in each NSU degree program will select at least one of four high-impact activities (Internships, Research Projects, Performance-Based Events, and/or Study Abroad) so that at least 8-degree programs are added in 2017-18. Presidents Cabinet, Provost, Deans, Dept. Chairs

Metric:**2. Percent of graduates working within 6 months of graduation (GW)**

Findings: Baseline established.

NSU Career Services Graduating Student Survey ($N = 150$) indicates that 40% of students secured jobs approximately 2 months prior to graduation. Of these students, 71% indicated they had jobs in their field of study

On the Graduating Student Survey of Instructional Value ($N = 405$), 82% of students indicated that they plan to work full-time after graduation.

Analysis:

The NSU Survey of graduating students shows that of the 1,554 students who graduated in fall 2016 and spring 2017, about 10% were surveyed at Grad Fest. About 40% of respondents said they had jobs at the time of the survey. Grad Fest is typically held two months prior to each commencement ceremony. These figures are positive given the fact that students are still in classes and may not be actively seeking employment. However, this survey does not provide information about specific majors or postgraduate study. While a 10% response rate is minimally acceptable, an improved survey and larger response would yield sounder results required by the University for planning. In planning for this survey, the timeliness of administration must be considered.

The graduating senior survey referenced in Objective 1 is conducted each semester by Institutional Effectiveness. This survey shows that 82% of students plan to work upon graduation, but not whether they have secured employment. Though not definitive, the information does give NSU an idea of what students plan to do professionally.

Decision:

NSU will develop and implement an improved graduating student survey by Institutional Effectiveness, Career Services, and Alumni Affairs adding information on specific fields of study, and acceptance to graduate and professional schools with the goal of increasing the number of responses to at least 30%. Provost, VP The Student Experience, Deans, Career Center, Alumni Director

Objective 5:

Increase efforts to provide for the wellness of our students (through physical, emotional, spiritual, and environmental health initiatives).

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

Metrics:

1. Satisfaction with Support Programs (SSP).
2. Elevate LA Financial Health Analysis Score with ULS (LAFH).

Metric:

1. Satisfaction with Support Programs (SSP)

Findings: Baseline established.

Responses to the NLSSI Campus Services scale include both academic and personal support. The scale average ($M = 6.00/7$, $SD = 1.11$) was significantly above the national average ($p < .001$). In particular, the Campus Services item “Counseling services are available if I need them” ($M = 6.06/7$, $SD = 1.38$) was significantly higher than the national average ($M = 5.23$, $p < .001$).

Analysis:

Student Satisfaction with NSU Support programs is strong. On the NLSSI, NSU ranked well above the US average with 6/7. Satisfaction data from local surveys not included also indicates high satisfaction. The NSU Health Services student survey showed that 100% of surveyed students were satisfied with their level of care. Counseling Services surveys also show a very high student satisfaction with services at 92%. Clearly, NSU is committed to student health and wellness.

The Department of Wellness and Recreation serves as an important and integral part of everyday life on the Northwestern campus providing programs and services to enhance and promote healthy lifestyles. Through recreation, sports competition, instruction, fitness, and wellness activities, the WRAC provides a safe environment while promoting sportsmanship, team building, leadership, and quality of life for NSU students, faculty/staff, alumni, and the Natchitoches community. All full-time students are members of the WRAC.

All students taking at least one hour on the Natchitoches campus pay a health services fee entitling them to mental and physical health services.

Northwestern State operates a nurse-driven campus clinic on the Natchitoches campus. NSU has contracts with three physicians to provide mental and physical health services. The clinic provides:

- free over-the-counter medications,
- procedures, including dressing changes and removal of stitches and staples,
- same-day physician appointments for a \$20.00 co-pay,
- University-wide health education and health promotion,
- public health programs,
- disease prevention,
- referrals to community resources,
- some diagnostic testing at reduced costs (pregnancy, STI's, etc.),
- federal and state health initiatives and mandates,
- private, confidential, personal counseling,
- psychiatrist appointments for \$20.00 co-pay.

Northwestern State provides confidential mental health services and outreach on the Natchitoches Campus. Three full-time, licensed counselors, counseling interns, and a part-time psychiatrist staff the center, which offers:

- assessment,
- referral and crisis hotline information,
- individual counseling,
- group and couples counseling,
- 24 hour crisis counseling,
- campus outreach programs,
- depression screening,
- access to Emotional Health 101,
- peer-mentor programs for alcohol and drugs,
- LA Highway Safety Grant,
- campus suicide prevention program–NSU Cares.

The Title IX program at NSU is committed to eliminating sexual assault at NSU and in the Natchitoches community. The program follows state law and best practices related

to prevention, reporting, and resolution of complaints and provides:

- confidential advising,
- advocacy,
- University-wide training,
- bystander intervention training,
- policy review and revisions,
- referral to Student Conduct and Accountability,
- referral to health services,
- referral to counseling,
- resolution, including No Contact orders,
- coordination with Registrar and Financial Aid offices,
- community-wide MOU,
- climate surveys,
- development of student awareness and activists groups.

In 2016-17, Northwestern State developed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the local Natchitoches community focusing on student health and safety, namely sexual assault elimination and care for victims, per Title IX law and Board of Regents policy. The purpose of the coalition is to provide education regarding sexual misconduct, share information, and advocate for victims. The focus is health and wellness of NSU students and the citizens of Natchitoches Parish. Members of the coalition include:

- Northwestern State University,
- University Police,
- City of Natchitoches Mayor’s Office,
- Natchitoches District Attorney’s Office,
- Natchitoches Parish Sheriff’s Department,
- Natchitoches City Police,
- Natchitoches Regional Medical Center,
- SANE Nurses,
- Coroner’s Office,
- Project Celebration.

NSU Health Services (NSUHS) also offers outreach services. NSUHS

- operates as a state reporting agency for LA Department of Health and Hospitals for STI (chlamydia, gonorrhea) testing.
- is part of the Center for Disease Control, Influenza-like Illness Network. NSU is considered a sentinel site, the only sentinel site in the NW LA Region.
- participates in the Nurse Family Partnership to ensure prenatal care and reduce infant mortality.
- participates in PAT Organization for Kindergarten Readiness.
- participates in 4th grade Health Fair focusing on Pulse Oximeter Project.
- collaborated with NSU Nursing Students for mini health fairs in the Student Union to screen for high blood pressure.

In addition, the NSUHS Director is a member of the Community Action Advisory Committee.

Northwestern State is 100% compliant with Louisiana law related to campus sexual misconduct. NSU follows best practices published by the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Louisiana State Act 172, Board of Regents Policy on Sexual Misconduct, and the Not Alone Campaign. Best practices and federal and state guidance are the guideline for training, programming, policy revision, investigation and adjudication of complaints. Northwestern State focuses prevention training around consent and bystander intervention. Administration believes student engagement in programming is crucial to success. The Title IX Coordinators and Dean of Students engaged students in the process via participation in a communication class with the goal of creating campus projects. Students in the class started a recognized student organization (RSO) called Demons Support Demons, and they helped form the MOU. Students have also been involved in rewriting policy.

NLSSI data shows that NSU students are satisfied with the campus climate. The NSU Campus Climate Survey for Sexual Misconduct ($N = 33$) found that 73.9% of responding students felt that NSU administration would take their report seriously.

Decisions/Recommendations:

NSU will develop an MOU with Outpatient Medical Center and Campus Health Services to provide additional health care for NSU students. VP The Student Experience, NSU Director of Health Services.

NSU will develop an MOU with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center for Collaboration for Mental Health Crises. VP The Student Experience, NSU Director of Counseling Services.

NSU will open small health clinic in the Shreveport campus. VP The Student Experience, Director of Health Services, Dean of CONAH.

NSU will review the need for health services on other off-campus sites. VP The Student Experience, Director of Health Services, NSU Director of Counseling Services Executive Director of Cenla and Ft. Polk.

Metric:

2. Elevate LA Financial Health Analysis Score with ULS (LAFH)

Findings: Baseline established.

NSU ranked 3.70/5 on the LAFH compared to a system average of 3.01/5. Fall 2016 total enrollment increased by 640. Fall 2016 freshman enrollment increased by 184. The Six Year Graduation Rate for spring 2016 is 35%

Analysis:

NSU leadership holds that a financially healthy institution is better able to meet the needs of students. Economic strength allows NSU to invest in facilitates, programs, and scholarships.

Such investments affect recruiting, and retention. As noted above, Northwestern grew in overall enrollment in 2016. However, the graduation rate continues to lag. Investment in infrastructure, programs, and particularly investment in scholarships, carries potential for increasing graduation rates.

LAFH Louisiana Financial Health computes three ratios from which four scores are generated for each campus. Expendable Net Assets, Plant Debt, Total Revenue, Total Operating Expenses, Total Non-Operating Expenses, & Change in Total Assets are used to produce composite scores. Composite scores range from 0 (poor financial health) to 5 (excellent financial health). Of the nine institutions in the University of Louisiana System, Northwestern State ranks third best overall in Financial Health. NSU has room for improvement; however, in the current Louisiana economic environment, we are doing well. Compared to other state institutions, NSU ranks significantly above average.

Recommendations:

Develop a plan for financial assistance and planning for students after the first year and create a formalized task force for this program. Leadership Team.

Comprehensive Summary of findings and changes/decisions.

Generally, Northwestern State University is performing well on all metrics in the Strategic Plan for the Student Experience. Enrollment rates are on the increase and retention from freshman to sophomore year increased. Graduation rates, however, continue to lag. NSU must concentrate on finding ways to help students and families make financial plans for their education. Whether through financial aid, recruiting and scholarships, NSU needs a concerted effort to help students continue to pay for college.

Through the QEP, NSU is developing programs within degree programs to engage students in their field of study. We expect this effort to drive graduation rates higher. Advising efforts focusing on students who change majors and summer orientation should also be considered.

Overall, students are satisfied with Northwestern’s campus climate, support programs, support from faculty and staff, and policies and procedures. It is noteworthy that on every single general scale, NSU ranked above the national average. Only three questions on the entire survey produced below average scores.

The greatest opportunity for improvement appears to be with our campus housing and dining partners. Both vendors need to conduct broader assessment. Specific areas for improvement are “care for individuals” in housing and “variety of food” in dining. Both are addressed above and with specific recommendations.

Another area for improvement related to policies and procedures involves provision of correct information to students in campus offices, namely the Registrar’s Office. All campus offices should be trained in customer and communication skills and cross-trained to understand policies of other vital campus offices.

The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory is a sound national survey with valid and reliable data. The survey is useful because of the satisfaction rankings and national comparisons and because students also rank the importance of each service and program. This feature provides campus leadership with valuable data. The NLSSI also offers a strategic planning overview.

Northwestern’s strengths as shown by the NLSSI for areas with high rankings and high importance include:

- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
- This campus provides online access to services I need.
- I received the help I need to apply my academic major to my career goals.
- The campus is safe and secure for all students.
- Faculty and staff are available to students outside of class (office hours, email).

- Computer labs are adequate and accessible.
- Students are made to feel welcome.
- Library resources and services area adequate.

NSU challenges as shown by the NLSSI for area with lower ranking (still above the national average) but high importance include:

- Faculty provide timely feedback about my academic progress.
- Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful.

Both of the above issues will be addressed by the Provost and VPSE.

Finally, the framework and data used for The Student Experience strategic plan should be reviewed. For consistency in reporting, we recommend the NLSSI be administered every year. Other metrics and strategies should be standardized. For example, regional diversity data and working after graduation require clear parameters yearly.

Resources for Best Practices:

Best practices for Graduating Student Survey of Instructional Effectiveness: <http://www.nea.org/home/33508.htm>

Best practices for Freshman Connection: <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/fostering-student-learning-and-success-through-first-year-programs>

Best practices Diversity and Inclusion: <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf>

Best practices for Title IX: <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/909811/download>

Strategic Focus Area 2–Academic Excellence

Northwestern State University strives to achieve academic excellence. We expect faculty to be exemplary models for their students by providing relevant content in an engaging way. Modeling includes the use of appropriate teaching techniques and technologies that enhance student learning. Faculty also serve as academic advisors, counseling students with their course schedule and tracking their academic progress each semester until graduation. Faculty maintain currency in their field by participating in research activities with their students, colleagues, and other professionals in higher education. Finally, faculty excel by demonstrating service to their students and academic department/college, and the University at-large, as well as service to their local and professional communities. The University provides the necessary resources for faculty to succeed both in the classroom and in their research and service endeavors.

Students seek academic excellence by being active learners, i.e., diligent in class preparation, attendance, and participation. Students, who form positive relationships with their peers and faculty, especially during peak testing times of the semester, will likely find greater success.

Resources are available to help students succeed in their academic learning. In fall 2016, the Academic Success Center was added to the Watson Memorial Library. Its goal is to help all students reach their full academic potential. Free tutoring both face-to-face and online was provided for many University courses, especially University Core courses. Many academically at-risk students who could have benefited from these services did not participate. Therefore, during the 2017-2018 year, the Academic Success Center will better promote their learning services, such as workshops and web-tutorials, and better monitor student participation and satisfaction. At least 300 students are projected to participate in academic support services for the 2021 target year.

Northwestern's Quality Enhancement Plan on Experiential Education further promotes student learning and preparation for a career or admission to a graduate or professional school. Seven programs were piloted spring 2017 and eight more will be added in 2018. By 2021, 100% of degree programs at Northwestern will require at least one experiential learning opportunity in the capstone year. The best practice experiences include internship, research projects, performance-based event, and/or study abroad.

Baseline data were established for most academic excellence metrics (Table 4). These metrics will be adjusted accordingly for the 2017-2018 year.

Five objectives support academic excellence.

Table 4
Metrics for Assessing Academic Excellence

AY 2016–2017 Benchmarks	Academic Excellence Metrics	AY 2020-2021 Target
66 Degree Programs	Number of assessed academic degree programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction	120 Degree and Certificate Programs
24	Number of students attending faculty-led and peer/student-led workshops offered through the Academic Success Center	300 (1150% increase)
Not Monitored	Number of students accessing web-tutorials, podcasts, and documents offered by or linked to the Academic Success Center	300
582	Number of students and/or faculty attending department or college-sponsored workshops focusing on innovative instruction in content or pedagogy	1,000 (72% increase)
730	Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops, including Lunch and Learn	1,200 (64% increase)
71 (sample)	Number of new or redesigned courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching	100 (sample)
125	Survey of faculty needs in technology to support innovative instruction	200 (60% increase)
27	Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies	35 (29%)
Advising: Strongly Satisfied Tutoring: Above Average	Survey of student satisfaction with the Academic Success Center	Advising: 90% Strongly Satisfied Tutoring: 90% Above Average
Not established	Survey of student satisfaction with academic advising in University Core courses	90% Strongly Satisfied
31	Average class size in University Core courses	30 (3% decrease)
4.15/5 "Good"	Student evaluation of instruction in University Core courses	4.50/5 "Good"
13 (93%)	Number of University Core classes with a designated course steward	12 (100%)
7	Number of faculty applying for internal research or travel grants that involve students	13 (85% increase)
77	Number of faculty-sponsored students engaging in research and presenting their research at professional conferences	110 (40% increase)
GRE Verbal: M = 148 (39%) GRE Quant: M = 145 (20%) LSAT: M = 148 (37%) MCAT: M = 490 (19%)	Student/graduate performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.)	Mean in the 50-90th percentile

AY 2016–2017 Benchmarks	Academic Excellence Metrics	AY 2020–2021 Target
8%	Percent of graduates who gain admission to graduate/professional schools	10% (25% increase)
NLSSI AAE 5.83/7	Survey of student satisfaction with academic advising	90% "Strongly Satisfied"
4.15/5--"Good"	Student course evaluation of instruction	4.50/5--"Good"
10 (sample)	Survey of alumni and current students for most Meaningful Learning Experiences at NSU	50 (sample)
93	Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together	102 (10% increase)
125	Number of faculty participating in needs survey to support teaching, research, and service	200 (60% increase)
45	Number of faculty participating and receiving internal grant opportunities	55 (22% increase)
4% (N = 37 PI/Co-PI)	Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants	5% (N = 45 PI/Co-PI)
Total 51	Number of faculty receiving endowed professorships per college	Total 70 (37% increase)
8	Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service	48 (500% increase)

Note. AY 2016-2017 baseline and AY 2021 targets are approved per the AY 2016-2017 Assessment Report briefed to the President, his Leadership Team, and University Assessment Committee on July 5, 2017. The next review will take place in December 2017.

Objective 1:

Provide quality and innovative instruction in the classroom and online (by utilizing technologies/techniques that have been demonstrated to be successful and by encouraging faculty to engage in and occasionally deliver workshops in discipline-specific areas to students and their colleagues).

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
- Create a program of faculty-led workshops for tutors in key areas (English, Sciences, Mathematics) to better equip these peer tutors to meet the needs and expectations of our students
- Develop a plan for online and off-campus students so these students have the same level of academic support and access to tutoring as our main campus students

- Ensure that faculty and staff are well-informed about the services offered by the Academic Success Center so that they may direct students who would benefit from these opportunities for academic support
- Ensure that all classroom/laboratory technologies are functional and updated and that faculty are trained on their usage
- Use student fee accounts for upgrading consumable classroom and laboratory equipment and supplies
- Provide stipends for faculty to design new or to re-design established courses that focus on integrating technology with content to improve student learning
- Promote the activities of The Center for Faculty Excellence in Research and Teaching

Metrics:

1. Number of assessed academic degree programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction
2. Number of students attending faculty-led and peer/student-led workshops offered through the Academic Success Center.
3. Number of students accessing web-tutorials, podcasts, and documents offered by or linked to the Academic Success Center.
4. Number of students and/or faculty attending department or college-sponsored workshops focusing on innovative instruction in content or pedagogy.
5. Number of full-time faculty and staff attending University, Department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops, including Lunch and Learn.
6. Number of new or redesigned courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.
7. Survey of faculty needs in technology to support innovative instruction.
8. Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies.

Metric:

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

Findings: Baseline established.

All 66 academic programs, in coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, developed their program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The 66 programs generated 293 SLOs. These SLOs generated 510 separate measures and of those 407 were successfully met reflecting a 79.8% success rate. One hundred three measures were not met.

Analysis:

Sixty-six degree awarding academic programs participated in the assessment process. Each developed program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and an associated assessment methodology from which findings were derived. The results were analyzed, leading to decisions and/or actions to promote continuous improvement in the quality and innovation of instruction.

Each SLO is specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and tied to a specific timeframe. Each outcome addresses knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions and specifies what students will know or be able to perform or demonstrate when they have completed or participated in the program, course, project, or activity.

Each measure also reflects the assessment methodology and the target for the outcome. There is a balance in direct and indirect measures being used with direct measures preferred. It is best to have a student demonstrate the skill or knowledge, although assessing a student's perception of their knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions is useful. The University encourages setting targets that are difficult to attain so that there is a constant pursuit of improvement, but doing so may adversely affect the success rate in meeting SLO measures.

The number of degree programs per college participating in the AY 2016-2017 assessment cycle are: College of Arts and Science-23, College of Education and Human Development-28, College of Nursing-8, and the College of Business and Technology-7.

Decision:

Assessment are now made available on the Institutional Effectiveness website <https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>. All are encouraged to review and explore the sixty-six (66) academic program assessments for AY 2016-2017 that are posted under the category heading "Assessment Cycle AY 2016-2017 Reports" in the sub-category "Educational Programs" (Assessment Cycle AY 2016-2017 Reports-Educational Programs). The University will continue to build on the assessment process through the development of new degree programs and the incorporation of all certificate programs. We expect the University to offer approximately 120 degree and certificate programs by 2021.

Responsibility: Academic Success Center Director, Assistant to the Provost for Academic Affairs/Director of Auxiliary Services, and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Metric:**2. Number of students attending faculty-led and peer/student-led workshops offered through the Academic Success Center (ASC).**

Findings: Baseline established.

Twenty-four students attended faculty-led and peer/student-led workshops that focused on contributing to the academic and personal success of students. <https://www.nsula.edu/academic-success-center/student-success-workshops/>

Analysis:

A survey was distributed to these students late in the spring 2017 semester to gain their perceptions of the value of the workshops. No students responded. Thus, the workshops were offered, but it is unknown as to how students benefited from the workshop content or materials shared.

Decision:

In future semesters, students will be surveyed at the end of each workshop. Responses will be noted and the director of the ASC will modify accordingly to better meet students' academic and personal needs.

Responsibility: Academic Success Center Director, Assistant to the Provost for Academic Affairs/Director of Auxiliary Services, and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Metric:**3. Number of students accessing web-tutorials, podcasts, and documents offered by or linked to the Academic Success Center (ASC).**

Findings: Baseline not established.

Analysis:

The ASC posts resources to promote student success on its website (<https://www.nsula.edu/academic-success-center/>); however, access of these documents was not monitored during the 2016-2017 year.

Decision:

The ASC Director will collaborate with program faculty and administrators who create instructional materials for their students to ensure that these tools are promoted and electronically linked to the ASC website.

Responsibility: Academic Success Center Director, Assistant to the Provost for Academic Affairs/Director of Auxiliary Services, and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Metric:

4. Number of students and/or faculty attending department or college-sponsored workshops focusing on innovative instruction in content or pedagogy

Findings: Baseline established.

A total of 582 students and/or faculty attended department or college-sponsored workshops focusing on innovative instruction in content or pedagogy. Workshops held included:

- School of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA): 375 participants (guest artist masterclasses, recitals, Journalism Day, visiting professional in New Media)
- College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH): 166 participants (Active Learning, Research Writing, Failure to Launch, Creating Classroom Success)
- Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Counseling (TLC): 41 participants (Online Resources, Differentiation of Instruction) (See workshop publicity materials.)

Analysis:

The sampled workshops represent programs with national accreditation, where on-going professional development for faculty and its constituents is expected. Other departments offered sessions pertaining to the use of new software or software updates (e.g., Art, Biology, CIS, EET/IET, New Media) and two departments extended to its faculty training on flipped classroom practices (Business, Education).

Decision:

Providing opportunities for all faculty to use innovative practices in teaching and learning will continue in the future. The 2021 target will increase to at least 1,000 as a result of better record keeping (e.g., sign-in sheets e-polling) of participation.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans/Department Heads/Directors, Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development

Metric:

5. Number of full-time faculty attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops, including Lunch and Learn.

Findings: Baseline established.

In addition to the department/college activities cited in #4 above, the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) provided professional development sessions for faculty, full-time and adjunct. Total attendance was 117 for 48 different training sessions (some sessions were held one-on-one); thus, 17% full-time and adjunct faculty participated in ECE professional development activities. (<https://www.nsula.edu/ece/professional-development/>)

Three hundred twenty-three faculty (48%), full-time and adjunct, completed Northwestern Online Boot Camp to develop skills in planning, managing, facilitating, and assessing learner performance in online courses. Boot Camp is self-directed and expected for all faculty who teach online.

Although sign-in is not required, all full-time faculty are expected to attend the Faculty Institute held on the first day that faculty return for each fall and spring semester. An estimated 225 faculty attended each semester and participated in professional development activities, 75% of 301 full-time instructional faculty.

Lunch and Learn sessions provide faculty/staff an opportunity to learn or update their knowledge/skills in research or practice. Four sessions were scheduled fall 2016, with a total of 45 faculty/staff participants (15%). Two sessions were held spring 2017, and a total number of 20 faculty participated (6%).

Analysis:

The grand total of faculty participating in University, Department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops was 730. Because the total number of full-time and adjunct instructional faculty was 677, approximately 108% faculty participated in professional development sessions for the 2016-2017 year.

Decision:

Professional development opportunities will continue to be a priority for Northwestern. In the future, the terms “workshops” versus “training sessions” will be differentiated. Further, professional development participation for full-time versus part-time/adjunct faculty and faculty versus staff will be separated for better clarity. The data presented for 2016-2017 represent a combination of full-time and adjunct faculty as well as staff participation in professional development activities that range from an hour session to a half-day or full-day/workshop session. By better defining this metric, the 2021 target will easily reach 1,200 participants.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans/Department Heads/Directors, Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development

Metric:**6. Number of new or redesigned courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching**

Findings: Baseline established.

A review of agendas and minutes from the University Curriculum Review Council revealed 71-course additions and revisions to program curriculum during 2016-2017.

Analysis:

The following sample highlights new or redesigned courses focusing on the use of current technologies or best practices in teaching:

- **Engineering/Industrial Technology:** Three new courses (Power Systems and Protection; Electric Motor Control; and Metrology and Instrumentation) were added to the curriculum as elective hours that can be taken by students in either major: Electronics Engineering Technology (EET) and Industrial Engineering Technology (IET).
- **Biological Science:** Four courses (Biostatistics Laboratory, Genetics, Immunology, and Molecular Biology I) were redesigned to use new software (R-Studio and R Markdown). These same courses also incorporated flipped classroom practices.
- **Computer Information Systems:** Seven courses were redesigned to provide currency in the field.
- **English:** Four courses were added to the curriculum: Screenwriting, Digital Storytelling, Reading Blackness, and Folklore of the Southern US.
- **Family and Consumer Science:** Seventeen courses were redesigned and the degree program approved for a name change to Child and Family Studies.
- **New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts:** One new course was approved (Sports Broadcast Production) and two-course titles, descriptions, and syllabi were updated.
- **Psychology and Addiction Studies:** A new concentration in Industrial Organizational Behavior (five courses) was added to both curricular programs.
- **Adult Learning and Development:** An Ed.D. degree was approved with two concentration areas: Adult Learning and Workforce Development and Community College Leadership; total 63 hours-23 courses.
- **Nursing:** A new concentration was added to the Master of Science in Nursing (Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner), comprised of 15 graduate hours or 5 courses.

Decision:

Program faculty will continue to improve their programs by imbedding current technologies and practices that best prepare students for their careers or for admission to graduate or professional schools. Adding new concentration areas to existing degree programs as well as seeking new degree programs to meet state and national workforce needs will continue to be explored.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans/Department Heads/Directors, Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development, and faculty.

Metric:**7. Survey of faculty needs in technology to support innovative instruction.**

Findings: Baseline established.

A faculty needs survey was distributed by the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) during February 2017. There were 125 faculty responses.

Analysis:

This survey revealed that while many faculty are comfortable utilizing technology in their courses, a demand exists for further training. A summary of findings included:

- Faculty always use Moodle (79%) and presentation software (44%); 52% never use social media when teaching classes, followed by 46% who never use mobile apps when providing instruction.
- Approximately 45% need basic instruction in audio/video integration, use of mobile apps (42%), and open educational resources (41%). In addition, 25% need advanced instruction in how best to engage students in online classes, Moodle (22%), and video recording (21%). The majority of respondents need no additional instruction in presentation software (61%), Moodle (60%), or instructional design (47%).
- Eighty-three percent of respondents believe that adequate professional development has been provided by Northwestern.
- Almost 60% prefer a one-hour professional development session, and 22% prefer a two-hour session.
- Face-to-face workshops are preferred (44%), followed by WebEx live (27%), and pre-recorded video (22%).
- Regarding future professional development, adjunct faculty and off-campus instructors would like to receive more sessions during evening hours and off-campus locations.

Decision:

The Office of ECE will continue to administer annually the faculty needs survey pertaining to online professional development for faculty. Sessions planned for the 2017-2018 year will be based on feedback from the February 2017 survey. Participation will be promoted, including faculty incentives, to obtain at least 200 survey respondents by 2021.

Responsibility: Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development, faculty, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans/Department Heads/Directors.

Metric:**8. Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies**

Findings: Baseline established.

Twenty-seven departments or sites established new technologies.

Analysis:

- Using student technology laboratory fees, five computer laboratory locations (Learning Center Rapides Parish, Ft. Polk Campus, Teacher Education Center, Watson Library, and Creative and Performing Arts) received new workstations ($N = 118$). Ft. Polk and Shreveport locations also received new printers.
- Twenty individual classrooms also received new workstations to include rooms in Bienvenu Hall, Creative and Performing Arts, Keyser Hall, Morrison Hall, Teacher Education Center, Student Services Center, James Noe Military Science, Nursing-Shreveport.
- A new compressed video system was installed at the Ft. Polk campus.
- Through a Board of Regents grant, Williamson Hall received a new coordinate measurement machine (CMM) and six new programmable logic controllers (PLC).

Decision:

Computer and classroom laboratories located on- and off-campus instructional sites will continue to receive upgrades, typically every three years, with funding provided by student fees. The Louisiana Board of Regents provides a cycle of funding for most disciplines; although the application is competitive, Northwestern faculty have been successful in receiving funds to support technology use in the classroom.

Responsibility: Office of Information Technology Systems, Office of Sponsored Programs, Department Heads/Directors/Deans, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Objective 2:

Establish a comprehensive commitment to core competencies (by creating a set of standards with which the core curriculum courses are developed and administered).

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. Survey of student satisfaction with the Academic Success Center.
2. Survey of student satisfaction with academic advising in University Core classes.
3. Average class size in University Core courses.
4. Student evaluation of instruction in University core courses.
5. Number of University Core courses with a designated course steward.

Metric:

1. Survey of student satisfaction with the Academic Success Center.

Findings: Baseline established.

Two surveys were distributed to clients of the Academic Success Center (ASC) from April 25-May 8, 2017 to determine the value of student advising and tutoring, two ASC services that support student learning in the humanities and STEM fields.

Analysis:

The response rate for both surveys was too small to provide a statistically valid assessment. (Both were distributed during the final exam period.) On the advising survey two of three respondents “strongly agreed” their advisor was knowledgeable and helpful. Only two students completed the tutoring survey, but both (one in Chemistry and one in Finite Math) rated their tutors as “above average.”

Decision:

For 2017-2018, the advising survey will follow the pre-registration periods (early November and early April) and the quality of tutoring will be evaluated on a regular basis, at least once monthly. Both surveys will be administered in a face-to-face setting immediately following the advising or tutoring session.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant to the Provost for Academic Affairs, Academic Success Center Director

Metric:**2. Survey of student satisfaction with academic advising in University Core classes.**

Findings: Baseline not established.

Students were not directly surveyed to determine their satisfaction with advising in University Core classes.

Analysis:

Indirectly, the ASC advising survey was administered to 199 students who were assigned to an advisor in the Academic Success Center. This advisor primarily assists students in scheduling their University Core classes and also coordinates tutoring services that support University Core classes. However, other students are advised by faculty within their departments, so this assessment did not fully address all advising in University Core classes.

Decision:

Effective fall 2018, all students will be surveyed to determine their satisfaction with academic advising. The survey will include questions pertaining to University Core classes as well as classes in students' major field of study. Northwestern has administered an advising survey in previous years, and the practice will resume in 2017-18 and beyond. The survey will be included as part of the pre-registration and registration periods.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Deans/Directors/Department Heads, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research

Metric:**3. Average class size in University Core courses.**

Findings: Baseline established.

For the fall 2016 semester, 51 University Core courses were reviewed. The average class size was 31.

Analysis:

Core courses with the largest enrollments were sciences, such as Biology 2250 ($N = 54$), Science 1010 ($N = 51$), and Chemistry 1040 ($N = 48$). Courses with the lowest enrollment were science and mathematics: Physics 2510 ($N = 3$), Math 1100 ($N = 3$), and Math 2100 ($N = 4$).

Courses with the highest enrollment are required for multiple majors across the University, whereas courses with the lowest enrollment are required for only mathematics majors.

Decision:

NSU is pleased to report its average class size across the University Core and will continue to monitor class size in the future. Larger classes are expected in the sciences and smaller classes in mathematics. This follows national and state trends.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Deans/Directors/Department Heads, Institutional Research

Metric:

4. Student evaluation of instruction in University Core courses.

Findings: Baseline established.

For the fall 2016 semester, 47 University Core courses were evaluated by students to determine course and teacher effectiveness. The mean response rate was 37.7%. The majority of student respondents were freshmen (49%), followed by sophomores (33%), juniors (14%), and seniors (4%).

The overall University Core course rating was 4.15/5 (83%) or the “Good” category, and the overall University Core teacher rating was 4.14/5 (83%), also the “Good” category.

Analysis:

Student evaluations in the larger classes, such as Biology 2250 and Science 1010, earned a mean student course rating of 4.00/5 (80%), whereas student evaluations in smaller classes, such as Math 1100 and Math 2100, earned a mean student course rating of 4.30/5 (86%).

Decision:

NSU will continue to encourage student evaluation of course and teacher instruction. A higher response rate will be promoted in the future. An overall “good” rating by mostly freshmen and sophomore students is acceptable, but a “superior” rating is desired. A “good” course and instructor rating for classes with approximately 50 students is also pleasing, especially when considering that the student respondents are approaching the content from different perspectives or majors. On the other hand, it is expected that students in the same field of study, e.g., mathematics, will likely view the content as relevant and provide a higher rating for the course.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Deans/Directors/Department Heads, Institutional Research

Metric:**5. Number of University Core courses with a designated course steward.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Fourteen courses designated to meet the General Education competencies of the University Core were identified. Thirteen of the 14 courses (93%) have a designated course steward. The one course without a designated steward (BIOL 1010) was monitored by the Director of the School in 2016-2017.

Analysis:

There was a misunderstanding for this metric in 2016-2017. Only multi-sectioned University Core courses designated to meet University general education competencies have a designated course steward, whose role is to provide oversight. The language for identifying metrics 4 and 5 is general; the data reported for metric 5 is specific to meeting the general education competencies, whereas the data reported for metric 4 is specific to student evaluations in all University Core courses. A distinction should be made for future evaluations.

Decision:

A distinction between University Core courses and University Core courses meeting General Education competencies is needed for future measures of objective two. It must be determined whether the focus is to assign a course steward to all University Core courses (approximately 50) or to steward only the courses contributing to general education competencies (12 courses in 2017-2018).

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, General Education Competency Committee, Deans/Directors/Department Heads/Faculty

Objective 3:

Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation (by providing students with the tools needed to become life-long learners and/or further their education with the necessary skills, confidence, and knowledge).

Strategies:

- Establish a workshop series aimed at preparing students for graduate/professional school admission exams.
- Support student and mentor travel to present research at professional conferences.
- Offer mini-courses/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 faculty applying for internal research travel grants that involve students.
2. Number of faculty-students engaging in research and presenting their research at professional conferences.
3. Student/graduate performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.).
4. Percent of graduates who gain admission to graduate/professional schools.

Metric:

- 1. Number of faculty applying for internal research travel grants that involve students.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Twenty-seven faculty were awarded research or travel grants by Northwestern. Three awards (11%) involved students and faculty as co-researchers, co-artists, or co-volunteers. In addition, the University funded travel for faculty mentors and student presenters at the University of Louisiana Academic Summit. A total of seven faculty members were supported for travel with students.

Analysis:

Faculty grant recipients included:

- Ms. Valerie Salter who accompanied seven Hospitality Management and Tourism students to Las Vegas for the Academy of Country Music Awards, March 27-April 3. The students were selected to serve as volunteers and were exposed to event management, production, and other aspects of event planning.
- Mr. Scott Burrell and one student participated in the International Workshop and Festival in New Haven, CT, June 23-30. This event linked the artistic vision of Michael Chekhov with the work of actors, teachers, and directors of today.
- Dr. Davina McClain accompanied two students to the Classical Association of the Middle West and South Conference. The students attended the meetings and served as volunteers.

The University of Louisiana System Academic Summit team included:

- Ms. Leslie Gruesbeck, accompanying four student artists.
- Dr. Margaret Cochran, accompanying eight student researchers.
- Mr. Steve Gruesbeck, accompanying one service-learning presenter.
- Dr. Jafar Al-Sharab, accompanying four service-learning presenters.

Decision:

Faculty will be encouraged to apply for internal grants that support student learning and growth in their profession. An increase of two faculty/student grants per year is expected, with the target for 2021 set for 13 or an 85% increase.

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

Metric:

2. Number of faculty-sponsored students engaging in research and presenting their research at professional conferences.

Findings: Baseline established.

Fifty-eight graduate students presented 21 papers and posters at seven conferences; 19 undergraduates made 14 presentations at two conferences.

Analysis:

A few graduate students made solo presentations; however, most participation came from large cohorts attending relatively few conferences. Both groups of undergraduates attended conferences with one or more faculty mentors.

Decisions:

For 2017-2018, the target will be 23 graduate presentations and 16 undergraduate presentations (63 and 22 presenters, respectively). For the target 2021 year, the graduate presentations will be 29 and undergraduate presentations 22 (80 and 30 presenters, respectively). To facilitate participation, Northwestern will partially fund graduate presenters (e.g., registration or travel) and fund undergraduate presenters (registration and travel).

Further, at the local level, Northwestern will annually collect a report of all student participation in NSU Research Day. The number of student presenters will represent all colleges and increase by 10% each year at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

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

Metric:

3. Student/graduate performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.).

Findings: Baseline established.

Test scores on graduate or professional school exams were verified for 102 undergraduates and graduating seniors for tests administered during the period July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. The largest number of students took the GRE (Verbal: 148.2 ± 1.3 , Quantitative: 145.4 ± 1.3 , $N = 83$).

Seven students who graduated in May 2016 and five who graduated during the evaluation period applied to law school and released their LSAT scores to the LSAC for the 2017 application cycle. The average score was 148 ± 2.9 , with a low of 139 and a high of 157.

In the evaluation period, 11 graduating seniors, 8 juniors, and 2 graduates from 2016 took the MCAT (Total: 490.5 ± 3.3 , CBPS: 122.5 ± 0.98 , CARS: 122.4 ± 1.0 , BBFL: 123.3 ± 1.0 , and PSBB: 122.3 ± 1.1 , $N = 21$).

Analysis:

On the GRE, 31 (37%) of those tested, scored above the national median on the verbal component, while seven (8%) scored above the median on the quantitative reasoning component. Northwestern's Graduate School requires a composite score (V + Q) of at least 280; 78 (94%) attained this benchmark. One of these students earned admission to the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine.

LSAT scores range from 120-180; the median is approximately 151. Three of 12 test

takers (25%) scored at the median or above, with four more graduates scoring 149 or 150. Admissions information is not available for the 2017 applicant cycle; however, two individuals who scored above the median have verified their acceptance (one to the LSU Law Center and one to the University of Maryland School of Law).

The majority of the MCAT scores and subscores were below the national median. The best performance was on the BBFL subscore where 6 scores (29%) were above the national median. Overall, only two (10%) scored above the median. Ten of 21 test takers chose not to apply for the 2017 application cycle, while an additional eight students who took the test earlier did. Thus, 19 Northwestern graduates applied to one or more of the 93 U.S. medical schools in the evaluation period; four of these (21%) have been accepted by one or more medical schools (two by LSUHSC Shreveport, two by LSUHSC New Orleans, and one by Morehouse). The graduate accepted by both LSUHSC New Orleans and Morehouse has chosen to attend Morehouse. Two of those rejected by all of their choices have already begun the 2018 application process.

Decision:

Those students taking the GRE earned acceptable scores for admission into graduate schools. In subsequent evaluation periods, the target for GRE scores will be for at least 90% of test takers to score at or above the level of $V + Q = 280$.

All but two of the LSAT scores were in the second or third quartile. 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 will be assessed next year to determine whether this target needs to be changed.

Unfortunately, only two of 14 applicants to LSU's medical school in New Orleans and two of 13 to LSU's medical school in Shreveport scored high enough to secure admission. Curricular changes have been made by the two units advising pre-medical students, but these changes will not be reflected in the performance of medical school applicants for another two years. The target for subsequent evaluation periods is to raise the number of students scoring above the national median on the total score ($Mdn = 500$) by one each year.

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

Metric:

4. Percent of graduates who gain admission to graduate/professional schools.

Findings: Baseline established.

It was verified that at least 121 students earned a passing score on a graduate/professional school admission exam and will continue on to graduate school.

There were 1,477 Northwestern graduates in 2016-2017; thus, at least 8% of graduates gained admission to graduate/professional schools.

Analysis:

It is unknown how this finding compares to Northwestern graduates from previous years or how the finding compares to graduates from other universities in Louisiana.

Decision:

Only nine departments were able to identify students who took an admission test for graduate or professional schools. With better planning, Northwestern will be in a better position to obtain admission test scores of future graduates and project that 10% of graduates will gain admission to graduate/professional schools by 2021.

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

Objective 4:

Foster quality student-faculty interactions (by forging a bond between faculty and students that sets our University apart from others).

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. Survey of student satisfaction with academic advising.

2. Student course evaluation of instruction.
3. Number of responses from alumni and current students for most Meaningful Learning Experiences at NSU.
4. Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together.

Metric:

1. Survey of student satisfaction with academic advising.

Findings: Baseline established.

For student advising offered by the Academic Success Center, two of the three respondents “strongly agreed” that their advisor was knowledgeable and helpful.

Responses of 1,000 NSU students to the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (NLSSI) Academic Advising Effectiveness scale averaged 5.83/7 ($SD = 1.45$), significantly above the national average ($M = 5.40, p < .001$). Specific items on the Academic Advising Effectiveness scale include:

- “My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward”- $M = 5.71/7$ ($SD = 1.78$), significantly above 5.31 nationally ($p < .001$).
- “My academic advisor is available when I need help”- $M = 5.90/7$ ($SD = 1.64$), significantly above 5.51 nationally ($p < .001$).
- “My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major”- $M = 6.19/7$ ($SD = 1.43$), significantly above 5.72 nationally ($p < .001$).
- “I receive ongoing feedback about progress toward my academic goals”- $M = 5.52/7$ ($SD = 1.74$), significantly above 5.04 nationally ($p < .001$).

Analysis:

Two surveys were distributed to students from April 25-May 8, 2017 to determine the value of student advising and tutoring, two services provided by the Academic Success Center and services that support student learning in the humanities and STEM fields. The response rate to the advising survey was too low ($N = 3$ out of 199 surveyed) to be statistically meaningful.

The NLSSI is given to a random sample of students, not just those using the Academic Success Center, and may give a better assessment of the various ways in which students receive advising. However, since the NLSSI is not given every year, a local measure assessing the quality of academic advising is needed.

Decision:

In order to capture the bond between faculty and students in advising, the advising survey will be distributed during the pre-registration periods (early November and early April) and preferably administered in a face-to-face setting immediately following the advising session. The survey will be distributed to all students enrolled in Northwestern, rather than only to the students advised by the Academic Success Center.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant to the Provost for Academic Affairs, Academic Success Center Director, Department Heads/Directors/Faculty, Institutional Research

Metric:**2. Student course evaluation of instruction.**

Findings: Baseline established using University Core course student evaluations.

For the fall 2016 semester, 47 University Core courses were evaluated by students to determine course and teacher effectiveness. The mean response rate was 37.7%. The majority of student respondents were freshmen (49%), followed by sophomores (33%), juniors (14%), and seniors (4%).

The overall University Core course rating was 4.15/5 (83%) or the “Good” category, and the overall University Core teacher rating was 4.14/5 (83%), also the “Good” category.

Analysis:

In University Core classes, student evaluations in the larger classes, such as Biology 2250 and Science 1010, earned a mean student course rating of 4.00/5 (80%), whereas student evaluations in smaller classes, such as Math 1100 and Math 2100, earned a mean student course rating of 4.30/5 (86%).

Decision:

To demonstrate the quality of faculty-student interactions, Northwestern will continue to promote student course evaluations. In the future, data will be provided for all courses, rather than only the University Core courses. A higher participation rate will also be sought.

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

Metric:**3. Number of responses from alumni and current students for most Meaningful Learning Experiences at NSU.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Ten current and former students responded to a social media posting “Why I Love NSU.”

Analysis:

A sampling of the responses include:

- “I wanted to continue my family’s legacy in attending Northwestern. I wanted to share the same purple pride that my mom, aunts, and cousins have.” (Luke Luky)
- “NSU has given me opportunities to come out of my shell and become the leader I never knew I could be, to grow as a person.” (Myranda Degraw)
- “...at this university, you are challenged and pushed not only academically but pushed to become a better leader, a better friend, a better worker, and an all-around better you.” (Mallory McConathy)
- “One of the best things about Northwestern is being a part of the Natchitoches community. When you come to school at Northwestern, you not only become a part of the demon family but the city of Natchitoches as well. In this town, no matter where you go, you will always find friends.” (Jared Fisette)
- “As a fourth generation demon, I bleed purple and white. Northwestern has a nurturing body of faculty and staff that care for each student and their academic needs. NSU instills in its student body a server’s heart. This University challenges you to serve the community and become unique on campus and eventually throughout the world.” (Faith Stanfield)

Decision:

In order to gain information from current and former students regarding their experiences at Northwestern, the use of surveys both formal and informal will continue. This feedback is valuable for demonstrating the quality of student-faculty interactions.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Assistant to the Provost of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Experience, News Bureau, NSU Alumni, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty, Students

Metric:**4. Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, which bring faculty, students, and families together.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Ninety-three events, social or academic, were held.

Analysis:

Northwestern is noted for hosting events that bring faculty, students, and families together. The following sample represents events that serve academic and social purposes. (Athletic events are not included in this count.)

- Freshman Connection. Students and their families have an opportunity to visit the main campus, meet faculty, become acquainted with the campus, which may include spending the night in the dorm room, and—more importantly—create a schedule for their fall classes. The Director of the First Year Experience and student leaders, called “Freshman Connectors” plan and supervise all events. Six events were held summer 2016; three of the six were one-day events only.
- School of Creative and Performance Arts (CAPA). An average of 15 artistic performances were scheduled each month from September to December 2016 ($N = 53$). The following list illustrates the variety of events hosted by CAPA:
 - o Music, Theatre, and Dance: “Faculty Showcase,” September 27
 - o Theatre: “Young Frankenstein,” October 13-16
 - o “All in the Timing,” November 2-6; November 9-12
 - o Art: “Spiritual Ya Ya and Faculty Exhibits,” August 22-September 23
 - o “Alumni Art Exhibit,” October 21
 - o Music: “All State Choir Day,” September 9
 - o “Chanticleer,” November 1
 - o Journalism Day: November 4
 - o Christmas Gala: November 30-December 2
- College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH). Thirteen social events were held (e.g., crawfish boil, back-to-school barbeque, Halloween party) and 14 academic events were held, such as CONSAH Family Night, Graduation Recognition Ceremonies, and Beta Chi Induction Ceremonies.
- College of Education and Human Development. Four formal events were held to include Education Reunion and Hall of Distinguished Educators Induction Ceremony (October 22), Phi Delta Kappa Induction Ceremony (November 29),

Differentiated Instruction In-Service (February 1-2), and Undergraduate and Graduate Awards Ceremony (April 18).

- College of Business and Technology. Three events were held to include the J. Walter Porter Forum (October 20), the annual induction ceremony for distinguished graduates of the School of Business (October 22), and the College of Business and Technology Showcase.
- Northwestern Donor Scholarship Banquet. Held to honor all scholarship donors and student scholarship recipients on March 6 at the Natchitoches Events Center.

Decision:

This measure is important and contributes to achieving objective four. Occasions that bring the Northwestern Demon family together help to shape who we are and who we want to be. Although most departments host many events each year, not all departments have a mechanism for counting attendance for each event. The recommendation is to improve in the methods for counting participation. Because the number of annual events is already high, the target for 2021 is only a 10% increase. The future sample of events will include at least 102.

Responsibility: President's Cabinet, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty

Objective 5:

Support faculty in teaching, research, and service (by providing resources in an inclusive and transparent process and by providing opportunities to honor their achievements).

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.

Metrics:

1. Number of faculty participating in needs survey.
2. Number of faculty participating in and receiving internal grant opportunities.
3. Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.
4. Number of faculty per College receiving endowed professorships.
5. Number of events or activities to recognize faculty/staff for their contributions in teaching, research, and service.

Metric:

1. **Number of faculty participating in needs survey to support teaching, research, and service.**

Findings: Baseline established.

A faculty needs survey was distributed by the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) in February 2017. There were 125 faculty responses.

Analysis:

The faculty needs survey pertained to the use of technologies for improving online instruction. Findings are presented in objective 1, metric 7 (pp. 18-19). The results are relevant to faculty needs in traditional classes as well. Further, the use of technology to support instruction is a popular topic for faculty research projects. Thus, knowing faculty strengths and areas for improvement in technology provides insight to the administration who can provide resources needed for faculty development.

Decisions:

A more comprehensive survey should be administered in 2017-2018 to obtain additional information from faculty regarding their specific needs in teaching, research, and service.

Additionally, the goals and objectives formulated by the Faculty Excellence Steering Committee will be posted on the NSU website (e.g., Provost/VPAA page or its own page) so that faculty can be aware of how this group advocates for faculty development in teaching, research, and service.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development, Deans/Directors/Department Heads, faculty

Metric:**2. Number of faculty participating in and receiving internal grant opportunities.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Thirty-eight faculty received University-sponsored research and travel grants during the fall 2016 or spring 2017 semesters. Seven faculty representing QEP pilot programs were awarded QEP grants, spring 2017.

Analysis:

Twenty-seven of the 38 grants were funded by the Office of Academic Affairs, specifically the Academic Enhancement account. A Faculty Grants Committee was formed with representatives from each college, one staff member, and one chairperson ($N = 7$). The committee established policies for the assignment, including an online application and a grading rubric. Committee members received and evaluated applications, and the chairperson notified each applicant of the decision made. Funding reimbursement was processed by staff in the Office of Academic Affairs.

The remaining 11 faculty and staff were awarded travel funds to attend annual professional meetings, such as the National Society for Experiential Education, SACSCOC, and the University of Louisiana Summit. These funds were also provided by the Office of Academic Affairs, Academic Enhancement account.

The total funding awarded to the 38 faculty/staff was \$42,691.

QEP pilot grant recipients ($N = 7$) were awarded \$3,000 each to collect and analyze student learning outcome data and to provide assurance that the eight principles of best practice for experiential education will be embedded in the degree program. The QEP grant applications were reviewed/evaluated by a QEP Faculty Grants team, which was comprised of seven faculty/staff members. Funding for the grants was provided by the QEP budget and totaled \$21,000.

The total dollars dedicated by Northwestern to support faculty in teaching, research, or service was \$63,691.

Decision:

Funds dedicated to support faculty and staff research and travel will remain a priority for Northwestern. The goal is for more faculty to be supported each year. The target number of faculty receiving funds for 2021 is 55, an overall increase of 22%.

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

Metric:**3. Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Thirty faculty served as principal or co-principal investigators, which represents 9.9% of Northwestern faculty. Also, seven staff members served as principal or co-principal investigators, which represents 1% of the University staff.

Analysis:

The Office of Sponsored Programs confirmed that faculty and staff obtained external funds to support their teaching, research, and service (Table 5). The recipients included:

Table 5
External Grants Submitted and Funded, AY 2016-2017

PI	Sponsor	Title	Funded
Biscoe, J.	Univ. of TX Austin	SubAward #UT 403-223, Amendment #5	25,000
Clawson	Rapides Foundation	Improving Healthcare Quality & Economic Development in Central LA by Increasing the Number of Registered Nurse Graduates in the Nine-Parish Sector of The Rapides Foundation (Yr 1 of 3)	202,267
Rasmussen	Cane River National Heritage Area	38th Annual Natchitoches - NSU Folk Festival	2,000
Williams, D.	LA BoR	eLearning Task Force	150,000
Al-Sharab	LA BoR	Image Processing of Energy Filtered Transmission Electron Microcopy Maps in Order to Extract Nanoscale Magnetic Properties of CoCr-Based Magnetic Thin Films	1,200
Cordell	National Park Service	Partnering for Preservation Technology 2016	490,636
Cawthon	LA Small Business Development Center	Louisiana Small Business Development Center at NSU	275,000
Longlois	LA Community & Tech. College Sys.	Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 Basic Grant Carryover Proposal	8,081
Biscoe, J.	Univ. of TX Austin	Subaward #UT 403-223, Amendment #6	35,000
Gregory	USDA National Forest Service	NSU Student Archaeology Training	864
Williams, D.	LA BoR	Louisiana BoR Open Education Resources (OER) Initiatives	30,700
Cawthon	LA Dept. of Economic Develop.	Louisiana SEBD Program	40,000
Perez-Mira	BPCC	First in the World	21,800

PI	Sponsor	Title	Funded
Conine	LA Highway Safety Commission	NSU Alcohol Education and Prevention	30,500
Al-Sharab	LA BoR	Nanostructured Scaffolds for Regenerative Medicine and Tissue Engineering	1,200
Alexander	LA Dept. of Ed.	Statewide Childcare Scholarship Program	200,000
Alexander	LA Dept. of Ed.	Comprehensive Child Care Resource and Referral for Region 7-Yr 1 of 2	25,860
Alexander	LA Dept. of Ed.	Comprehensive Child Care Resource and Referral for Region 7-Yr 2 of 2	25,860
Alexander	LA Dept. of Ed.	Comprehensive Child Care Resource and Referral for Region 8-Yr 1 of 2	504,780
Alexander	LA Dept. of Ed.	Comprehensive Child Care Resource and Referral for Region 8-Yr 2 of 2	504,780
Clawson	The Rapides Foundation	Psych-Mental Health Nurse Practitioners: Improving Behavioral Health Access in Central Louisiana - 1 of 6	83,335
McAlister	LA Dept. of Ed.	High Cost Needs Allocations	15,000
McAlister	LA Dept. of Ed.	Provider Support Needs Application-IDEA	50,000
McAlister	LA Dept. of Ed.	Provider Support Needs Application - 8g	15,000
Biscoe, J.	Univ. of TX Austin	Subaward UT, Amendment #7	15,000
Alexander	LA Dept. of Ed.	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program	1,781,849
Alexander	LA Dept. of Ed.	Statewide Child Care Career Development System	367,873
Hargrove	LA Highway Safety Commission	2017 Special Enforcement Waves	3,907
Total Amount Requested and Funded for FY 2016-17			4,907,491

Decision:

Northwestern will continue to promote external grant opportunities for faculty to pursue. The target for 2021 is 45 external grant awards or a 1% increase.

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

Metric:**4. Number of faculty per College receiving endowed professorships.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Endowed professorships are awarded on a competitive basis to faculty in specified academic units or to support specified activities. Income from the endowment

provides funding for expenses such as faculty travel, professional memberships, student research expenses, and salary enhancement.

Table 6
Endowed Professorships by College, Spring 2017.

College	Endowed Professorships
College of Arts and Sciences	10
College of Business and Technology	16
College of Education and Human Development	10
College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	12
University	3

Analysis:

The total number of faculty receiving endowed professorships for the 2016-2017 year was 51. Each College has additional professorships approved by the Board of Regents, which have not yet generated sufficient interest for an award. These include three to Arts and Sciences (two to CAPA, one to Mathematics); three to Business and Technology (two to Business, one to Engineering Technology); two to Education and Human Development (one to Teaching and Learning, one to Health and Human Performance); four to Nursing and Allied Health; and three to the University at-large.

Decision:

Northwestern will continue to seek donors to support faculty/staff in teaching, research, and service. The target for 2021 is a 37% increase or 70 faculty/staff receiving endowed professorships.

Responsibility: Office of External Affairs, President’s Cabinet, Deans/Directors/ Department Heads, Alumni

Metric:

5. Number of events or activities to recognize faculty/staff for their contributions in teaching, research, and service.

Findings: Baseline established.

Faculty were recognized a minimum of eight different ways.

Analysis:

Teachers of the Year are selected for each college during the summer. The University also names an Advisor of the Year. The formal presentations occur at the first

University-wide gathering of the new school year, Faculty Institute. The NSU News Bureau distributes a press release, which is printed by local newspapers and also shared by social media. The recipients are also recognized at halftime for one of the first home football games. For colleges hosting a reunion during Homecoming, such as Education, the distinguished faculty member is presented to a different audience. For the spring Faculty Institute, each Teacher of the Year shares a spotlight on the program by presenting to colleagues best practices in teaching.

Faculty and staff are also recognized annually for their years of service to the University. The landmark service years occur in increments of five—e.g., 25, 30, 35. The recognition ceremony takes place at the University-wide luncheon following the fall Faculty Institute.

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

Decision:

Northwestern will continue the tradition of recognizing faculty/staff for their excellent work in teaching, research, and service. Because of the comprehensive coverage by the NSU News Bureau, it will be possible to document many other ways in which faculty contribute to program innovation and expansion, and consequently recognize them for their work to the University. A 500% increase to the baseline number is projected for 2021.

Comprehensive Summary:

Objective 1: Provide innovative instruction in the classroom and online. Baseline data were collected and analyzed for seven of the eight measures for objective one. The majority of faculty/staff maintained or advanced their currency in innovative instruction by participating in professional development opportunities provided by the University. New or redesigned courses ($N = 71$) focused on implementing current technologies or pedagogies in specific content areas. Upgrades in classroom or laboratory technologies supported faculty and students in teaching and learning. Survey results on faculty needs in technology revealed that most faculty are comfortable using Moodle, but less effective in using social media and mobile applications for instructional purposes. In its first year of development, the Academic Success Center focused on addressing the learning needs of academically at-risk students. Staff and peer tutors provided varied resources, such as advising, tutoring, and workshops. To determine the quality of these experiences, student surveys were

administered late in the spring semester, contributing to a low response rate. This oversight will be corrected next year. Feedback from students will be obtained on a regular basis so that services can be added or modified to adequately address student learning needs.

Objective 2:

Establish a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.

Baseline data were collected and analyzed for four of the five measures for objective two. The mean student rating for University Core courses was “good.” Core courses contributing to meeting general education competencies were monitored by a designated course steward or, in one case, the director of the school. The metric not measured was the quality of academic advising in all University Core courses. In the future, this variable can be monitored by department heads supervising the core courses.

Objective 3:

Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.

Baseline data were collected and analyzed for all four measures for objective three. Fifteen percent of faculty obtained internal funding that involved students in research; 79 students presented their faculty-mentored research at professional meetings. At least 8% of graduates gained admission to graduate or professional schools.

Objective 4:

Foster quality student-faculty interactions.

Baseline data were collected and analyzed for all four measures for objective four. Students were satisfied with the effectiveness of academic advising, according to NLSSI findings, and the student rating for quality of instruction was “good” or 4/5. Ninety-three events brought faculty, students, and families together for social functions or academic ceremonies. A sample of current and former students provided a positive rating for NSU.

Objective 5:

Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.

Baseline data were collected and analyzed for all five measures for objective five. Forty-five faculty participated in internal grant opportunities and 4% of faculty/staff received external grant funding. Fifty-one faculty received endowed professorships and faculty were recognized for their accomplishments in teaching, research, and service.

Strategic Focus Area 3–Market Responsiveness

The region's citizens rely on us to produce the highly qualified labor force needed to meet the demands of a global economy. Meeting this challenge is dependent upon our ability to adapt to the changing environment by responding to the market through timely, effective, efficient, and visionary solutions. We must be able to anticipate the needs of the workforce 10 to 20 years from now and develop an associated curriculum that addresses those needs. This is primarily accomplished through an ongoing effort to gather, process, and analyze data to obtain meaningful information for making viable and appropriate strategic decisions.

Northwestern is a world-class institution that delivers premium educational experiences aligned to industry needs. Our ability to maintain this leadership role depends on our competitiveness and innovative methods for delivering an academic experience that meets each student's expectations and is aligned with industry standards. With a focus on specific workforce needs, the University produces graduates who possess work-ready credentials aligned with employer expectations. Remaining current in a rapidly changing environment requires the use of a process that ensures that academic programs continue to meet and deliver industry-recognized competencies. Active engagement with business and industry partners is critical to the continuous improvement process. These representatives provide invaluable insight into industry standards and requirements as well as direct input into the program through internships and graduate placement.

Northwestern has the benefit of its long, rich history and geographic location when assessing the University's current state of market responsiveness. The University has served a diverse student population throughout a predominantly rural area and has made it a practice to be cognizant of the needs of its constituents. Programming is driven by feedback from our partners in concert with a thorough review of market demands in advance of new program proposals to ensure viability in a rapidly changing market. We must continually assess internal and external factors that impact institutions in order to better understand how we can be market responsive.

Workforce needs are at the forefront of discussions about Northwestern's efforts to be a market responsive institution under changing economic conditions. A departmental protocol for systematic data retrieval and analysis has been discussed, and the establishment of such a protocol is a key strategy moving forward. Departments examined constituent feedback through advisory councils, programmatic committees, and data. Producing a product that is consistent with the needs of business and industry has never been more important. Under current processes, departments are in a constant state of evaluation to ensure that academic programming meets the requirements of their constituents. Feedback from business and industry partners in the NSU service region as well as faculty and staff regarding national/state employment trends has allowed us to determine and examine characteristics that might help our institution become the best possible partner in regional economic growth and development. The institution has also extracted information from the NSU Alumni survey concerning opportunities for alumni engagement and roles in promoting the University's

brand, reaching prospective students, supporting specific programs, and showing pride in our student experience.

Faced with a fast-changing job market, NSU is and must continue producing highly qualified graduates who are employable in both the current and future workforces. We are challenged to create and maintain academic programs aligned with tomorrow's workforce demands and produce highly educated workers who possess a diverse set of skills. The University relies most heavily on data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success. These data points guide the colleges and academic departments in their efforts to ensure alignment with employer needs and job market demands. Embedded within the academic curriculum and university experiences are opportunities to impart skills such as effective communication and writing, ability to work in teams, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning. These experiences create an alignment between the academic experience and job market demands to ensure that graduates are prepared for work upon graduation, but alumni are also diverse enough to adjust to fluctuating trends.

The business world can be a culture shock for new graduates. However, Northwestern incorporates a variety of academic and cultural experiences into the student's program to not only prepare students for employment but also to establish a love of lifelong learning. In addition, students are engaged in real-world experiences through part-time jobs, internships, volunteer work, and campus activities. These interactions are directly aligned with employer expectations to prepare students for the world of work.

The University recognizes the value of continuous reflection to improve. Reflection provides the opportunity to evaluate programs and processes to identify needed changes and make the adjustments necessary to meet the demands of an evolving work environment. Practicing reflection provides a clear path for the deployment of specific and focused methodologies used to improve the University's systems and processes. Thus, the continuous improvement process becomes a part of the University's operations and guides decision-making.

With clear benchmarks (Table 7), we can now continue to quantifiably measure our progress and gauge our success understanding where the starting point is. We understand this is an evolutionary process and that we will continue to develop new, more sophisticated methodologies as we refine our processes. We will continue our dialogue with alumni and our workforce partners in this process to identify key indicators required for market responsiveness. Our AY 2016-2017 Benchmarks and AY 2021 Targets are in Table 7.

Table 7
Metrics for Assessing Market Responsiveness

AY 2016–2017 Benchmarks	Market Responsiveness Metrics	AY 2020–2021 Target
77%-17/22	Number of departments that have active advisory councils	100%
99%	Percent of students/alumni who feel they are/were well-prepared upon graduating (increased knowledge in academic field)	100%
97%	Percent satisfaction of students/alumni who feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field	100%
77%-51/66	Number of NSU degrees or programs aligned with industry and workforce demands	100%
82%	Number of graduating seniors who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation	100%
34%	Number of graduating seniors who will pursue an advanced degree	50%
100	Increase academic articulation and industry partnership agreements	300

Note. AY 2016–2017 baseline and AY 2021 targets are approved per the AY 2016–2017 Assessment Report briefed to the President, his Leadership Team, and University Assessment Committee on July 5, 2017. The next review will take place in December 2017.

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

Objective 1:

Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.

Strategies:

- Analyze current and projected academic program needs.
- As required, increase the number of faculty members with industry recognized certifications and competencies.
- Develop University practices: a) Funding for faculty development, education, certifications, skill development; b) Faculty practice opportunities/pay incentives.

Metrics:

1. Departmental academic program review reflected through the availability of new or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications that meet the needs of the workforce.
2. Availability of specific practices: a) Funding for faculty development, education, certifications, and skill development; b) Faculty practice opportunities/pay incentives

Findings: Baseline established.

The University and its partners consult and revise programs and courses as necessary as we work to realize a shared vision for the region. University departments assess local industry and business needs and set forth strategies for the region's workforce development system that remain consistent with the state's strategic workforce system goals. The University is deeply committed to the economic vitality of the community and has confidence our ability to redesign programs and curricula to meet workforce needs and evolving talent demands in local and global economies.

Teaching and learning is changing, roles are changing, and the student population is changing in the 21st century. Traditional teaching methodologies are evolving and new forms of pedagogy are transforming the teaching-learning experience. As a result, the University has embraced technology advancements and was proactive in its efforts to develop infrastructure to support the changing environment.

The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) provides monthly professional development workshops for faculty that are offered face-to-face and online. An extended program engages faculty in the design or redesign of online courses and provides media and instructional support as they learn more about the latest teaching practices and quality standards in online education. Further, a new grant program was initiated, designated to support faculty for travel or professional development.

One faculty member from each program has been identified as the QEP Coordinator on the topic of experiential education. This ensures support for other faculty within each of the initial eight academic programs as they transform their curricula to include experiential opportunities designed to immerse students in their fields through pragmatic engagement. Over the next five years, all academic programs will include an experiential learning experience for students.

Additional opportunities are initiated at the college and departmental levels and through external funding agencies. However, sustaining faculty development initiatives can be an opportunity and a challenge in light of budget cuts. Further work will glean opportunities to identify practices that best support the faculty and departments in their efforts to remain at the forefront of leading pedagogical practices and workforce trends.

Analysis:

Departmental curriculum review is an ongoing process that employs the use of data and feedback from internal and external constituents to guide curriculum development and redesign. Professional development is generally initiated on the part of the faculty but may be provided at the institutional level or arranged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Faculty Handbook, p. 2). Professional development is

also viewed as a scholarly activity and emphasis is placed on these types of activities (Faculty Handbook, pp. 36-37).

Decision:

This is an ongoing process that will continue to provide relevant information for academic departments to use for decision making. 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 will remain focused on activities that lead to the production of relevant programs and courses that are taught by highly qualified faculty while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today's economic opportunities.

Responsibility: Vice President of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, 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.
- Develop or redesign programs to align with workforce demands.
- Monitor graduate success and preparedness using alumni and employer feedback.

Metrics:

1. 100% of NSU degrees or programs aligned with industry and workforce demands
2. 100% of alumni feel they were well-prepared
3. 100% alumni feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field
4. Increase in academic articulation and industry partnership agreements

Findings: Baseline established.

Departments review academic programs periodically for productivity and connection to workforce needs. Institutional Research provides enrollment data, by department and degree program, weekly. Further, national labor market statistics and state labor market statistics combined with departmental data guide the need for program redesign. While the degree to which this is necessary varies by program, individual

courses are updated or redesigned each semester to accommodate the needs of students and employers. A review of programs reflects 51 out of 66 to be in alignment with current industry and workforce demands, although further analysis reveals that some of the misalignment is due to the lag time created by the speed and dynamic nature of the occupation. This may create opportunities for the institution regarding program redesign. Further, in some fields, complete alignment may not be possible due to a constantly changing environment.

Additionally, the University has 100 established articulation agreements and partnerships to provide clear pathways for the articulation of credit allowing students to pursue industry-specific credentials or advanced degrees. As an example, the University, in partnership with Northwest Louisiana Technical College, Central Louisiana Community Technical College, the Natchitoches Community Alliance, Alliance Compressors, Boise Cascade, Stella-Jones, Pilgrim's, and RoyOMartin, collaborated on the development of an Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program. This program is an excellent example of a multi-institutional/employer relationship in which a program was developed that combines cutting-edge curriculum with paid work experience and integrates highly sought-after business principles and best practices of world-class manufacturers.

Finally, 98.7% of graduates were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way their experiences at NSU increased their knowledge in their chosen academic field and 96.6% were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way their experiences helped them complete job or career requirements ($N = 238$; Fall 2016 Graduating Student Survey).

Analysis:

The use of workforce and departmental data provides the evidence needed to update, add, or decommission courses and programs. Combining data from sources helps the departments assess their current contributions to the workforce and identify opportunities to improve curricula by focusing on the knowledge and skills employers want. Further, an online database is available through the Louisiana Workforce Commission that provides a deeper look into the relationship between academic programs, degree programs, and career exploration. This tool has since replaced the manual mapping of programs via Excel spreadsheet.

Decision:

A review of current degree programs will continue and programs and courses will be redesigned as required to meet workforce requirements. The departmental feedback methods being used are closely aligned to the needs of the individual departments, which can be structured to target employers and graduates from specific academic programs. Monitoring data will be ongoing to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends through the use of employer feedback in order to engage in academic program design and redesign.

Responsibility: Vice President of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, Provost/ Vice President Academic Affairs, Department Heads, Deans

Objective 3:

Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies

Strategies:

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

Metric:

1. Number of newly created or redesigned degrees, concentrations, or certifications based on employer workforce demands that reflect occupational forecasts.

Findings: Baseline established.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, data was collected by the institution and academic departments to facilitate the program review process. During 2016-2017, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved 11 new programs and certificates for Northwestern State (Table 8). The process involves a review of market demand data and input from stakeholders by departments to determine changes that are needed to existing curriculum and future academic needs. For example, the University received approval to offer the Doctor of Education degree for students who intend to pursue or advance their careers at the highest level of professional practice in the program concentration areas of community college leadership and adult learning and workforce development. The Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Leadership in Northwestern State is the only advanced degree program in Louisiana focusing on the need of developing community college leaders and preparing practitioners to work with adult learners and in workforce development. The development of this program was a direct result of the Louisiana Community and Technical College's expressed need for additional faculty and administrative resources to address the additional students at the community and technical colleges as indicated in the forecasts.

Table 8
New Programs Submitted on Behalf of Northwestern State University and Approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents for 2016-2017

CIP Code	Degree	Subject/ Discipline	Approved
510901	PBC	Invasive Cardiovascular Technology	2017/05
510920	PBC	Magnetic Resonance Imaging	2017/05
190701	BS	Child & Family Studies	2017/03
131201	EDD	Adult Learning & Development	2016/12
231303	GC	Writing For Busns, Industry+Technol	2016/1
260502	BS	Applied Microbiology	2016/08
131202	PBC	Elem Ed & Sped Mm Gr 1-5	2016/04
131203	PBC	Middle School Ed & Sped Mm Gr 4-8	2016/04
131205	PBC	Secondary Ed & Sped Mm Gr 6-12	2016/04
520211	PBC	Project Management	2016/01
150702	PBC	Quality Control	2016/01

Another example reflects conversations with industry about the need for employees to be able to problem solve and think analytically. In response, the College of Business and Technology developed a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC) in Business Analytics to help increase the knowledge of completers in the area of problem-solving and analysis. The PBC in Business Analytics is designed to provide training on basic business analytics to help bridge the gap between the skills of the current workforce and the needs of industry.

Another PBC was developed in Project Management, which focuses on effective decision-making in technical, manufacturing, and service-providing industries. The program allows students to gain pertinent knowledge to apply project management techniques and principles to products, processes, or services in industrial environment thereby enabling them to work as project managers or supervisors. This 18-hour program fulfills workforce needs that have grown as Louisiana has attracted many technical, manufacturing, and service providing industries over the past five years. Further, by engaging a multi-faceted approach at various organizational levels to align the skills, competencies, and credentials offered with those most in demand, the University can better ensure that graduates are prepared to enter the workforce.

Analysis:

The development and proposal of new programs and certificates requires 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 will remain 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. The monitoring of new program development based on workforce trends, alumni satisfaction, and employer feedback will be ongoing.

Responsibility: Vice President of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, 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. Availability of a recognized process for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.
2. 100% of departments have active advisory councils with employer representation.
3. 100% of alumni who feel they are/were well-prepared upon graduating.
4. Increase in academic articulation and industry partnership agreements.

Findings: Baseline established.

During 2016-2017, data gathering included the collection of data by individual departments and data from state and national workforce authorities, including a review of departmental advisory councils, alumni surveys, graduating senior survey results, a compilation of newly created degrees and certificates, and a review of existing academic and industry partnerships.

Analysis:

Based on the fall 2016 graduating senior student survey ($N = 238$), 81.9% of

respondents indicated that their principle activity upon graduation will be full-time employment, and 8.0% part-time employment. While duplicated, 34.0% of respondents indicated a desire to pursue graduate or professional school studies. Further, 98.7% of alumni indicated that their knowledge increased in the chosen academic field, and 96.6% indicated that they had completed job or career requirements.

The University has established 17 advisory councils, all of which include employer representation. To provide a better understanding of the process in which advisory councils are utilized, information was solicited from departments. Based on a review of departmental advisory councils, 77% of the departments have established advisory councils to assist the departments in providing input into programmatic alignment with workforce needs. The advisory councils are involved in curriculum development with varying degrees of intensity. At the low end of the continuum, the advisory boards offer general advice on workforce issues and local labor market needs. Further along the continuum, members of the advisory councils may partner with departments to design training for immediate workforce needs and/or contribute to industry-led efforts to prepare students for jobs. Members may also donate equipment required to meet certain curricular needs and provide help in developing curriculum for student job shadows and internship experiences, as well as serve as a source and recruiter for adjunct faculty in their industry area.

Northwestern currently has over 100 active 2+2 articulation agreements. In addition, Northwestern continues to actively pursue additional agreements with various community colleges, universities, and industry partners.

Decision:

Although the data collected provides appropriate and relevant information for academic departments, the process by which the data is collected and made available can be improved upon. Annually, data will be solicited from departments to create awareness and present opportunities for collaborative endeavors across disciplines. Further discussion regarding advisory boards should be conducted to determine how best to assist in the development of advisory boards for the remaining departments.

Responsibility: Vice President of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, Provost/ Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Comprehensive Summary:

There are many examples of successful Northwestern State University Alumni who fulfilled degree requirements and entered the workforce prepared to embrace what would prove to be long-lasting, successful careers. Northwestern's Alumni have pursued 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. The efforts of the institution are notable in its long history of being a responsive university.

Maintaining and enhancing the institution's responsiveness to students and employers has become an increasingly important task. The activities targeted for development are based 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 in order to meet the needs of constituents.

The institution must also 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/>

GRAD Act. 2016. <http://oir.nsula.edu/assets/GRADAct/NwSUGRADActReport201516.pdf>

Louisiana Board of Regents CRIN: Inventory of Degree and Certificate Programs <https://apps.regents.state.la.us/Reports/Report.aspx?reportPath=/CRIN/CRINDLOAD>

Louisiana Workforce Commission Career Exploration Database. <http://www.laworks.net/Stars/default.aspx>

Northwestern State University Articulation and Partnership Agreements. University Registrar. <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/articulation-partnership-agreements/>

Northwestern State University Departmental Advisory Councils. <https://oir.nsula.edu/advisory-panels/>

Northwestern State University Graduating Senior Student Survey. Question 4.

Northwestern State University Graduating Senior Student Survey. Question 7.

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 campuses are located. We surveyed more than 6,700 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.

Today, the Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band (SON), the largest in history with 320 members, is featured at athletic events, parades, cultural programs, and special events on the main campus and throughout Louisiana and surrounding states. Creative and Performing Arts programs are also highlighted at the President’s Command Performance, a high-profile event that attracts alumni and other friends from the local community and beyond. These programs, and others in the arts, provide cultural enrichment that would otherwise be inaccessible to many in our largely rural service area.

Communications with alumni have been expanded substantially. Websites and email initiatives such as Purple Pulse and Demonsunite.net are opportunities to inform alumni and to increase membership and participation in alumni activities. The Natchitoches Chapter of the Alumni Association is participating in a pilot program to expand the role and involvement of community chapters across the state and nation. A renewed focus on increasing contributions from alumni and supporters was initiated through additions to the development office staff. Steady growth in fundraising has resulted largely from this increase in development staffing. Since July 2016, donations have increased 67.2% and the number of individual donors to unrestricted funds has increased by more than 80%. At the root of that growth is the promotion of an “every contribution counts” concept. We have entered numerous partnerships with businesses, industry, government agencies, and especially cities where NSU campuses are located to increase collaboration and mutually beneficial relationships. Our footprint covers North-Central Louisiana with our main campus in Natchitoches, off campus instructional sites in Alexandria and Leesville-Fort Polk, and one of the nation’s largest and most respected nursing and allied health programs in Shreveport, along with academic programs at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City. We are developing strategies to not only to expand these town-gown relationships but also to permanently connect students at off campus instructional sites as involved and productive alumni.

By 2021, we will have experienced tremendous growth and expansion in all areas of community enrichment. World-class performing 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.

With clear benchmarks (Table 9), we can now continue to quantifiably measure our progress and gauge our success understanding where the starting point is. We understand this is an evolutionary process and that we will continue to develop new, more sophisticated methodologies as we refine our processes. We will continue our dialogue with alumni and our community partners in this process to identify key indicators required for Community Enrichment. Our AY 2016–2017 Benchmarks and AY 2021 Targets can be found in Table 9.

Table 9
Metrics for Assessing Community Enrichment

AY 2016–2017 Benchmarks	Community Enrichment	AY 2020–2021 Target
29,949	Number of patrons attending recitals, concerts, art exhibits, theater/dance productions	35,000
20	Number of off-campus performances	30
1	Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame induction ceremonies	1
\$25,568.39	Expenditures dedicated to advertisement	\$51,136.78
7,869	Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets	10,000
13,000	Frequency of e-communications and number of participants	20,000
25	Number of Student Alumni Association members	200
21	Number of active alumni chapters nationwide	35
690	Number of Alumni Association members	1,500
6,507	Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets	10,000
\$4,652,202.88	Amount of annual private support	\$6,000,000
2,323	Number of individual contributors	5,000
\$30,000,000/ \$100,000	Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets	\$50,000,000/ \$1,000,000
12	Leadership Team minutes demonstrating University-community engagement and collaboration	12
16	Number of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies	40
1,300	Number of advisory volunteers	3,000
1	Brand identity survey	1
65	Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events and other programs at off campus instructional sites	100
30	Number of projects and internships involving students in University and community activities and events	50

Note. AY 2016-2017 baseline and AY 2021 targets are approved per the AY 2016-2017 Assessment Report briefed to the President, his Leadership Team, and University Assessment Committee on July 5, 2017. The next review will take place in December 2017.

Five objectives support community enrichment

Objective 1:

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.”
- 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.
- Induct distinguished alumni into the Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame each year, which focuses widespread positive attention on the University and its music, dance, theater, and visual arts programs.
- 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.
- 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 recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions.
2. Number of off-campus performances.
3. Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame induction ceremonies.
4. Expenditures dedicated to advertisement.
5. Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets.

Metric:**1. Number of patrons attending recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Number of patrons attending on-campus events:

- Classic on the Cane Marching Contest: 9,000
- GALA: 14,000
- Theatre/Dance Mainstage: 4,710
- Symphony Concerts: 1,450
- Art Exhibits: 789

Analysis:

Numbers for Classic on the Cane, GALA, and Symphony concerts will remain consistent with slight increases (Classic on the Cane invitations to bands are capped at 35, GALA performances are sold out/capacity of Fredericks, and Symphony concerts in Magale are also at capacity).

Decisions:

The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to host events that are currently at capacity. To increase annual participation, additional performances would require increases in faculty/staff resources.

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

Findings: Baseline established.

Twenty off-campus events were held in the last year:

- Musical theatre @ Kiwanis and Rotary: 3 performances
- Design Center students with outside contracts: 6 contracts
- Voice Faculty @ Hodges Garden: 1
- Regional Symphony performances: 8
- Modern in Motion dance concert: 2

Analysis:

The number of off-campus performances is healthy, as are social media outlets and e-communications with patrons. Targets for baseline data are strong and in line with expectations.

Decisions:

The number of off-campus performances has a healthy window for growth from established baseline data, and the School of Creative and Performing Arts will seek more opportunities in this area as well as a stronger way to track these performances.

Metric:**3. Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame induction ceremonies.**

Findings: Baseline established.

The Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony is held annually.

Analysis:

The Hall of Fame induction has proven successful in honoring alumni who have excelled in this field. Many honorees have given back financially and are now involved in an advisory capacity.

Decisions:

Although the CAPA Hall of Fame has been instrumental in recognizing and engaging successful alumni, the number of induction ceremonies is not a good measure as there will never be more than one presentation per year. Instead, success of this event should be measured by post-induction involvement by the awardees.

Metric:**4. Expenditures dedicated to advertisement.**

Findings: Baseline established.

In the past academic year, \$25,568.39 was dedicated to advertisement of CAPA performances.

Analysis:

Expenditures dedicated to advertising represent a significant portion of the overall

marketing budget. Increases in participation have been realized through exposure and enhancement of brand identity.

Decisions:

Expenditures for advertising have been consistent with growth in recognition of the program in terms of participation and enrollment. Additional dollars should be invested until market saturation is achieved.

Metric:

5. Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets.

Findings: Baseline established.

CAPA social media outlets have a significant number of active followers:

- CAPA Facebook: 2,486
- SON Facebook: 1,580
- Theatre/Dance Facebook: 1,604
- NSU Choirs: 176
- CAPA Twitter: 1,194
- SON: 829

Analysis:

The number of users on CAPA social media outlets is commensurate with that of other outlets such as the NSU Alumni Association. As with the NSU Alumni Association, the number of participants continues to grow in line with prudent management and quality of the content posted.

Decisions:

A minimum financial investment will help social media outlets grow and will allow another avenue to promote events which will, in turn, assist the entire objective in growth of data.

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

Objective 2:

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.
- Establish a Student Alumni Association to focus on membership, spirit and traditions, alumni connections, student philanthropy, and other aspects of student participation in alumni-related 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 social media activities such as Twitter Chats, Alumni Spotlights, “Why I Love NSU” campaigns, and other programs.
- Inform soon-to-be graduates of opportunities for participation in alumni events and endeavors through expansion of the Gradfest program, free first-year Alumni Association membership, and the new Fork ‘em Farewell program.
- Establish programs to better connect graduates with careers and jobs through social media and websites, new databases, links to Fast Start, partnerships with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, electronic and magazine advertising and the establishment of a career-based Speakers Bureau and Directory.
- Establish 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 Student Alumni Association members.
3. Number of active alumni chapters nationwide.
4. Number of Alumni Association members.
5. Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets.

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

Findings: Baseline established.

The Purple Pulse e-newsletter is sent monthly to 13,000 alumni (number of alumni with active email addresses on file).

Analysis:

Monthly e-communications to alumni and supporters assist in fundraising and event awareness activities. Although this is an effective form of communication, reach is limited to the number of alumni with email addresses on file.

Decisions:

To increase exposure through e-communications, the NSU Alumni Association will develop strategies for a data campaign specifically focused on capturing email addresses. Other strategies will include contracting with a third party to collect email addresses from the public domain for existing constituents.

Metric:**2. Number of Student Alumni Association members**

Findings: Baseline established.

The NSU Student Alumni Association has 25 charter members.

Analysis:

The NSU Student Alumni Association was re-established in 2016 and soon after became a recognized student organization. Since then, a membership drive was held and officers elected. Online students are now being welcomed with a package of branded materials, including screen savers and desktop materials such as keyboard covers.

Decisions:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue the process of reestablishing the NSU Student Alumni Association and monitor increases in participation once a baseline is established. It is recommended that in addition to welcome packages including branded materials for online students, additional strategies be explored to increase brand identity and affinity.

Metric:**3. Number of active alumni chapters nationwide**

Findings: Baseline established.

There are currently 21 active alumni chapters nationwide (Table 10).

Table 10.

Northwestern State University Alumni Association Local Chapters.

City	State	Name
Alexandria	LA	Central LA Chapter
Baton Rouge	LA	Baton Rouge Chapter
Lafayette	LA	Lafayette Chapter
Lake Charles	LA	Southwest LA Chapter
Mandeville	LA	Northshore Chapter
Monroe	LA	Northeast LA Chapter
Natchitoches	LA	Natchitoches Chapter
New Orleans	LA	New Orleans Chapter
Shreveport	LA	Northwest LA Chapter
Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles Chapter
Washington	DC	Washington DC Chapter
Orlando	FL	Orlando Chapter
Pensacola	FL	Emerald Coast Chapter
Atlanta	GA	Atlanta, GA Chapter
Bloomington	IL	Bloomington, IL Chapter
New York	NY	New York Chapter
Austin	TX	Austin Chapter
Dallas	TX	DFW Chapter
Houston	TX	Houston Chapter
San Antonio	TX	San Antonio Chapter
Tyler	TX	East Texas Chapter

Analysis:

NSU Alumni Chapters are located primarily in Louisiana (9) and neighboring Texas (5). The remaining chapters are located in areas where there are large concentrations of alumni, including major cities across the country.

Decisions:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to add chapters in areas where concentrations of alumni exist. Once chapters have been established, the next step is to ensure the chapter is self-sustaining both financially and from a human resource perspective.

Metric:**4. Number of Alumni Association members.**

Findings: Baseline established.

The NSU Alumni Association has 690 members.

Analysis:

Clearer distinctions have been established between the NSU Alumni Association membership program and the annual giving campaign, the newly formed “Columns Fund.” Although an increase in membership of 2% in the first year of inception is minimal, branding and awareness of the separate uses of the two programs will ultimately increase growth. With a database of over 40,000 alumni records, the potential for increases in participation, in terms of both membership and giving, could be exponential.

Decisions:

The NSU Alumni Association, in conjunction with the NSU Foundation, will continue to market the separate purposes of these programs. Timing of the annual appeals will be a distinguishing factor, with the “Columns Fund” campaign occurring in the fall and the Alumni Association membership drive occurring in the spring.

Metric:**5. Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets.**

Findings: Baseline established.

For the fiscal year ending 2017, the NSU Alumni Association Facebook page received 4,487 “likes,” while the Twitter page had 1,740 followers. For the same period, the Instagram page has 280 followers, and 1,361 likes. This is a total of 6,507 active users among the three outlets.

Analysis:

NSU Alumni Association Facebook likes increased 12.8% from 3,977 in the previous

year. The number of followers for the Twitter page increased 15.4% from 1,508; in addition, Twitter impressions, which gauge multiple levels of overall exposure, reached 224,100, an increase of 4.7% from 214,000 impressions the previous year. The Instagram page was established in July of 2016 and thus has no comparative data, but represents new social media engagement. Increased social media activity has resulted in increased affinity and financial investments in the institution.

Decisions:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue the use of social media platforms with a focus on increasing exposure. Additional analytical measures such as Twitter impressions will be utilized to gain insight. It is recommended that opportunities for paid advertisement or sponsored posts on these platforms be utilized to increase engagement.

Responsibility: Assistant Vice President External Affairs, President Student Government Association

Objective 3:

Mutually Beneficial Donor Relationships

Strategies:

- Increase the 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 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: Baseline established.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, the NSU Foundation secured \$4,652,203 in private funding for the institution.

Analysis:

This is an increase of 67.2% from \$3,196,959 the previous year. Increases in contributions are attributed to a renewed focus on maintaining current relationships with donors while simultaneously developing new ones. Previously, allocating time and resources to both approaches was difficult, however increasing the development staff from 1 full-time employee to 3 full-time employees in the last year has allowed for an increase in the number of donor visits and opportunities for solicitation. It should also be noted that there was a successful drive to obtain matching funds for endowed professorships and scholarships before state allocations were changed effective July 1, 2017. This exceptional effort contributed significantly to the current increase.

Decisions:

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. It is recommended that additional development staff be added over time as increases in yield are realized.

Metric:**2. Number of individual contributors.**

Findings: Baseline established.

The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, was 2,323.

Analysis:

Of the 2,323 contributors, 1,530 are alumni, 88 are business entities, and 705 are non-alumni donors.

Decisions:

Increases in the number of individual contributors will be achieved through promoting the range of giving levels and demonstrating the impact of smaller contributions secured in large volumes.

Metric:**3. Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets.**

Findings: Baseline established.

As of June 30, 2017, restricted endowment assets totaled approximately \$30,000,000 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled approximately \$100,000.

Analysis:

Historically, fundraising efforts have been focused primarily on donor specific intent. While this practice is important in ensuring donor satisfaction, there has been minimal growth in unrestricted assets. The “Columns Fund” was established to secure unrestricted contributions; related marketing materials provide information relative to the use and distribution of the funds.

Decisions:

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, 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.

Responsibility: Assistant Vice President External Affairs and University Advancement, Director of Development

Objective 4:**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 directed at all stakeholders that are designed to expand validation of the University’s brand, core goals, and mission.

Metrics:

1. Leadership Team minutes indicating institutional collaboration and mutual accountability.
2. Number of advisory volunteers.
3. Brand identity survey.

Metric:

1. Leadership Team minutes indicating institutional collaboration and mutual accountability.

Findings: Baseline established.

The leadership team meets monthly (12 times per year).

Analysis:

The leadership team is comprised of Vice Presidents, Deans, the Director of Athletics, the Faculty Senate President, the Student Government President, and other key administrative personnel. Monthly leadership team minutes show cross-campus collaboration among these representatives and frequent sharing of information and ideas has enhanced overall communication.

Decisions:

Although monthly meetings of the leadership team show cross-campus collaboration, this item should be removed as a metric as the number of meetings will remain the same.

Metric:

2. Number of advisory volunteers.

Findings: Baseline established.

The demoNSUnite.net platform currently has over 1,200 users. The NSU Foundation, Alumni Association, and Demons Unlimited Foundation maintain 30-35 members serving in an ongoing advisory capacity.

Analysis:

The demoNSUnite.net platform was launched in April 2016 and has since grown to over 1,200 users. Although an annual comparison cannot yet be drawn, participation has increased by over 10% quarterly since the initial joining of over 800 members in the first quarter following the launch. Of these users, 66% indicated they are willing to help by serving in a mentor or ambassador capacity (Figure 2). The response rate of 66% demonstrates the willingness of participants to provide a service. Considering the intent of the platform is to not only involve these constituents but encourage others to join because of their need for support, trends show that the community will continue to grow.



Figure 2. Participation in demoNSUnite.net, 2016-2017.

Decisions:

The demoNSUnite.net platform will be promoted as one of the highest marketing priorities. As growth continues and volunteers are categorized by field, the Office of Career Counseling will be engaged to assist in matching students with mentors for internship and job opportunities.

Metric:**3. Brand identity survey.**

Findings: Baseline not established.

A brand identity survey has not been conducted since 2010.

Analysis:

The NSU Marketing and Branding Division was established in 2010. During the first year, a brand identity survey was conducted to gauge recognition and affinity. Initial reports revealed this area is one in which immediate improvement could be realized. Since then, incremental increases in the marketing budget have contributed to growth in enrollment and record achievements in fundraising.

Decisions:

A brand identity survey will be conducted as a measure to gauge overall recognition and garner constituent feedback concerning reputation. Results will be analyzed to determine returns on investment and used as consideration for increases in budgetary allocations.

Responsibility: Assistant Vice President External Affairs and University Advancement

Objective 5:**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 and 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 of the University's instructional 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 online and off campus graduates participating in University activities and events.
3. Number of projects and internships involving students in University and community activities and events.
4. Number of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies.

Metric:

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

Findings: Baseline established.

Sixty-five events are being held annually at the off campus instructional sites.

Analysis:

Many of the events that were previously exclusive to the main campus such as Gradfest, Freshman Connection, Welcome Week, and Student Activity Board events are now being held at off campus instructional sites. Other activities include events such as the “Victory Tour” promoting athletic events, “Transfer Day” highlighting students transferring in from the 2-year institutions, and “Military Appreciation Day” at instructional sites located on military installations. These events have proven successful in increasing awareness and, in turn, enrollment and retention.

Decisions:

The University will continue to develop strategic initiatives and activities and host events at off campus instructional sites. There is room for growth in this area and

increases will continue with proper planning and adequate funding.

Metric:

2. Number of online and off-campus graduates participating in University activities and events.

Findings: Baseline established.

Currently, data on the number of online and off-campus graduates participating in University activities and events is not captured uniformly.

Analysis:

There is currently no medium for capturing this data and several issues must be overcome before accurate counts can be taken. Examples include the self-identification of a student as an online student as many students take classes both online and in the classroom and the lack of identification post-graduation of alumni who attended off campus instructional sites rather than the Natchitoches campus.

Decisions:

The University will explore ways to define these classifications and capture data at events.

Metric:

3. Number of projects and internships involving students in University and community activities and events.

Findings: Baseline established.

The Office of Leadership and First Year Experience currently has 85 students actively engaged in community service projects. Each student completes 1 hour per week as part of the “One of Seven” initiative comprised of 32 weeks totaling 2,720 hours per year.

Analysis:

These projects include campus clean-up initiatives, military appreciation events, nursing home visits, and volunteer assistants with local charities and support organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club.

Decisions:

In addition to the successful participation from students working through the Office

of Leadership and First Year Experience, other opportunities will be identified through the demoNSUnite.net platform to increase community service opportunities in the local community.

Metric:

4. Number of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies.

Findings: Baseline established.

NSU is currently engaged in 16 cooperative endeavors with business, industry and government agencies.

Analysis:

These endeavors include relationships such as those with the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance to promote manufacturing in the region, the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development, and the Bossier Parish Chamber of Commerce to promote military events. There is great potential for growth in this area as the benefits the University can provide to partners are vast and readily available.

Decisions:

The University will continue to identify opportunities for partnerships with business, industry, regional support groups, and peer institutions to enhance opportunities for mutual growth.

Responsibility: Vice President of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, Assistant Vice President External Affairs and University Advancement

Comprehensive Summary:

The area of Community Enrichment is essential in increasing the major growth areas of enrollment and funding. Every aspect set forth hereinabove plays a unique role in achieving success in these areas. Whether it be national recognition through world-class performing arts or local prestige through regional outreach and community service activities, 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 premier regional university.

Strategic Focus Area 5–Athletic Prominence

Based on the exposure that success can provide, it is often said that an athletic program is the “front porch of a university.” 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 2016-17 year, while not overly successful in terms of wins and losses, still provided results that advanced the athletic program and University. Specifically, the athletic department’s three core values all yielded levels of success:

Academic Achievement

- All teams exceeded the 930 NCAA APR benchmark
- Record department grade point average (3.12)
- Women’s Basketball Senior Beatrice Attura was first-team Academic All-American.

Personal Responsibility

- Over 2,600 hours of community service contributed by NSU student-athletes to the local community
- Men’s Basketball senior Sabri Thompson was one of five Division I players nationwide named to the Allstate “Good Works Team.”

Competitive Success

- Women’s soccer had best season since 2005
- Senior Zeek Woodley broke the school’s career basketball scoring mark
- Women’s track team scored a school record 133 points to finish third at the conference outdoor meet as junior DeShalyn Jones was named the outstanding track performer.

The Athletic Department continued to expand the program’s external scope and brand, increasing social media statistics and generating revenue. Furthermore, we initiated plans for a major facility fund raising campaign.

With clear benchmarks (Table 10), we can now quantifiably measure our progress and gauge our success understanding where the starting point is. We understand this is an evolutionary process and that we will continue to develop new, more sophisticated methodologies as we refine our processes. We will continue our dialogue with alumni and our community partners in this process to identify key indicators required for market responsiveness. Our AY 2016-2017

Benchmarks and AY 2021 Targets can be found in Table 10.

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

Table 10
Metrics for Assessing Athletic Prominence

AY 2016-2017 Benchmarks	Athletic Prominence Metrics	AY 2020-2021 Target
124,746	Increase yearly event attendance 10% for all sports	187,119
\$1,586,843	Increase yearly revenue by 10% (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships)	2,380,264
8	Increase new merchandise outlets by minimum of two per year	18
16,972	Increase NSU Demons Facebook followers by 10%	25,458
7,674	Increase @nsudemons Twitter followers by 10%	11,511
\$47,164	Increase licensing royalties by 15%	\$70,746
3.06	Retain or improve student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0	3.11
121	Increase N-Club membership by 20%	182
270	Increase non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Alexandria, and Bossier City) by 10%	405
108	Increase Vic's Kids Club membership by 10%	162
\$340,633	Increase Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted dollars (i.e. special events, annual fund, sponsorships, and N-Club) by 10%	\$510,949
40	Establish transparent budget exposures (i.e. Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.	60
11	Identify and sustain/grow annually student-athlete participation in campus activities, (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM, etc.)	20
2,611	Complete a minimum of 4,000 community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes) annually.	4,000
219	Average at least 200 Dean's/President's List honorees per year.	250
104	Average at least 100 Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees per semester.	114
930+	Increase single year and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores (always above 930 threshold).	940
5	Plan and execute facility improvement projects commensurate with funding availability.	10
4	Establish as a goal that all teams will register a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference play (note—eight teams have win-loss records to measure; for track and field/cross country, the metric will be to finish in the upper third of the 13-team conference standings).	14

Note. AY 2016-2017 baseline and AY 2021 targets are approved per the AY 2016-2017 Assessment Report briefed to the President, his Leadership Team, and University Assessment Committee on July 5, 2017. The next review will take place in December 2017.

Objective 1. Enhance Marketing Opportunities, Game Day Experience and Resource Acquisition

Strategies:

- NSU Athletics must be more externally assertive in terms of brand awareness and merchandise availability through increased advertising and affinity.
- Improving product variety and availability of merchandise through regional merchants, as well as informing fans of media coverage and outlets with which to engage dynamic content, will serve to enhance school pride.
- Increasing 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 will help to keep alumni engaged and cultivate supporters.
- Improving the game day experience with continuous attention to concessions and merchandise offerings, revamped tailgating amenities/options and strategic in-game activities and giveaways will foster an environment that expands fan satisfaction, leading to heightened attendance and loyalty.
- Focus on the Northwest Louisiana market, inviting members of the Shreveport nursing instructional site and Fort Polk to participate in events both on the main campus and on-site in Shreveport and Central Louisiana if appropriate. These locations will add new segments to our fan base.

Metrics:

1. Increase yearly event attendance and revenue by 10% for all sports.
2. Increase new merchandise outlets by 10% and merchandise sales by 15%.
3. Increase social media exposure (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) by 10%.
4. Retain or improve student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0.
5. Increase N-Club membership by 20% and non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, and Bossier City) by 10%.

Metric:

1. Increase yearly event attendance and revenue by 10% for all sports.

Findings: Baseline established.

Total attendance at NSU home games across all sports decreased by 3.5% year over year (Table 11). This includes attendance figures for football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, softball, and baseball.

Revenue from the athletic program's three main sources—ticket sales, annual gifts, and sponsorships—increased by 6.7% from \$1,480,269 to \$1,586,843. Season tickets totaled \$314,480, annual gifts totaled \$340,633, and sponsorships (cash/in-kind) totaled \$931,730.

Table 11
Change in Game Attendance by Sport, 2015-16 to 2016-17.

Sport	2015-16			2016-17			% Total Increase / Decrease
	Games	Total Attendance	Average Attendance	Games	Total Attendance	Average Attendance	
Football	5	42,003	8,400.60	5	39,714	7,942.8	-5%
Soccer	8	3,608	451	7	2,196	313.7	-39%
Volleyball	9	2,933	325.9	9	2,489	276.6	-15%
M-Basketball	13	22,219	1,709.20	13	18,909	1,454.5	-15%
W-Basketball	15	15,764	1,050.90	16	14,943	933.9	-5%
Softball	22	7,550	343.2	27	11,286	418.0	49%
Baseball	25	13,079	523.2	27	13,845	512.7	6%
Total	97	107,156	1,104.70	104	103,382	994.1	-4%

Analysis:

While success in terms of wins and losses was not as good as hoped, the fact that several metrics (i.e. attendance, social media statistics, licensing revenue) increased reflected continued efforts to assertively expand the “NSU” brand and better position NSU teams for future success. Special promotions (i.e. “White Out” for football home opener, robust marketing plan for baseball and softball home openers) helped enhance the attendance numbers. For example, to have only a 5% difference in football attendance for a 1-10 football season reflects promotional efforts. Much effort for the baseball opening series against the University of Cincinnati accounted for 2,538 fans, or 18% of total season attendance for a team that won 13 games as compared to 33 wins in 2016. Promoting the men’s basketball program was difficult as the team struggled with the loss of its point guard (arguably the best player in school history) for the entire season and a player who broke the school’s career scoring record for 14/18 conference games.

Metric:

2. Increase new merchandise outlets by 10% and merchandise sales by 15%.

Findings: Baseline established.

While it is not possible to know exactly how many outlets carry NSU merchandise and apparel, it is important to note that Wal-Mart significantly upgraded its NSU merchandise this past year and Walgreen’s began carrying NSU merchandise. Other outlets that had already carried NSU gear included Lids, Neebo, Barnes & Noble, Posey’s and Hibbett. Vendors who requested, through Licensing Resource Group (LRG; NSU’s licensing partner), approval to sell the NSU brand increased.

Licensing revenues through LRG, based on the last three quarters of calendar year

2016 and the first quarter of 2017, increased by almost 38% over the previous four quarters.

Analysis:

The increase in vendor requests and outlets were related directly to the increase in licensing revenue. The efforts of NSU’s external staff to increase social media presence, both for the department accounts as well as for sport/individual accounts, has paid dividends with the increased numbers. NSU changed licensing partners four years ago and that, in addition to efforts by the staff to place and sell merchandise, have resulted in licensing revenue increases for the past several quarters (Table 12).

Table 12
Quarterly Revenue from Licensing Resource Group, 2013-2017

	4th Qtr (prior year)	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	Total
2013-14	8307.49	7809.99	5596.91	5298.57	\$27,012.96
2014-15	7146.06	6585.08	7103.51	5249.65	\$26,084.30
2015-16	8495.75	8312.63	7977.94	9757.6	\$34,543.92
2016-17	12508.86	18009.3	10580.81	6047.17	\$47,146.14

Metric:

3. Increase social media exposure (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) by 10%.

Findings: Baseline established.

NSU Demons Facebook followers increased from 14,193 in 2016 to 16,971 in 2017 (13.3% increase; Figure 3).



Figure 3. Growth in Facebook followers and likes for NSU Demons, 2016-2017. NSU

Athletics has an umbrella Twitter account (@nsudemons) with 7,674 followers (+26% since 2016), as well as individual accounts for each sport (Figure 4).

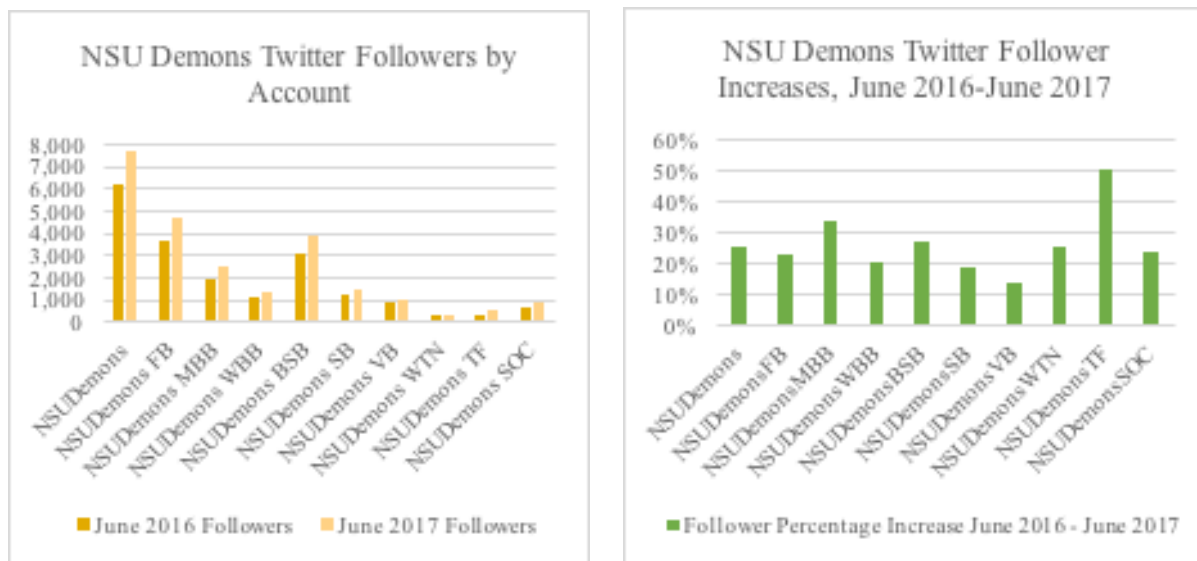


Figure 4. Changes in @NSUDemons Twitter followers by sport, June 2016-June 2017.

Analysis:

Both Facebook and Twitter usage demonstrate increased interest in NSU Athletics.

Metric:

4. Retain or improve student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0.

Findings: Baseline established.

For academic year 2016-17, NSU student-athletes compiled a cumulative grade point average of 3.12 for fall semester and 3.00 for the spring for an average yearly GPA of 3.07. This bested the 2015-16 year, during which the fall semester GPA was 3.06 and spring semester was 3.04 for an average GPA of 3.055.

Analysis:

Continued focus on academic success was illustrated by the best year ever in terms of department cumulative grade point. The NCAA Accelerating Academic Support Program grant (AASP) has undoubtedly contributed to continuing rise in department GPA and most importantly, the GPA is to the point that it consistently exceeds the 3.00 benchmark.

Metric:**5. Increase N-Club membership by 20% and non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, and Bossier City) by 10%.**

Findings: Baseline established.

N-Club Membership grew year over year from 83 to 121 members (nearly 40%) and dollars generated from those memberships grew from \$9,515 to \$10,820 (close to a 12% increase).

Season ticket holders (all sports) from outside of Natchitoches accounted for 42% of all sales.

Analysis:

The Athletic Department/Demons Unlimited Foundation assumed coordination for N-Club membership and activities/cultivation for the first time in 2015-16 and saw a nice influx of dollars, which was exceeded by renewals and new members during the 2016-17 year.

The fact that 42% of season ticket holders across all sports (football, men's/women's basketball, baseball, softball) were from outside of Natchitoches is a positive because (a) the athletic program can only count on Natchitoches so much based on its size and economic profile (b) the best opportunity to keep increasing ticket sales lies outside of the Natchitoches market.

Decision:

The external slant/focus of the Athletic Department must continue to grow. Assertive efforts must continue to be made on several levels to continue increasing external support that will generate dollars to complement NSU's athletic department budget. Aggressive marketing plans must be implemented to create exposure for the teams and to generate renewals and new ticket sales. The annual fund, which underwrites major expenses which are not covered by the department budget (i.e. book scholarships, coach/staff salary supplements and incentive bonuses, marketing), must continue to identify and attract donors at the \$1,000 and above level. Finally, we must continue to identify, cultivate and solicit more members of the business/corporate community. Complementary initiatives—social media, publicity, good academic reports—must also continue to be a focus to create an enhanced atmosphere for support.

Responsibility: Vice President External Affairs, Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Relations, Director of Marketing and Digital Media, Assistant Athletic Director for Ticketing and Special Events, Director of Development and Donor Engagement, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, Assistant Sports

Information Director, Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development, Director of the Enhanced Academic Program, Assistant Academic Coordinator

Objective 2:

Promote Campus/Community Service, Appreciation, and Engagement

Strategies:

- Establish community service-based approach. This area will be achieved through heightened interaction between coaches/student-athletes and the NSU campus as well as the Natchitoches community.
- NSU Athletics will collaborate with youth organizations to offer special products and opportunities while looking for ways to provide low-income families scholarship-like offers to summer camps on a limited basis.
- To take the department's community service efforts to a new level, opportunities for campus and community organizations to partner with athletic teams for service projects will be explored and encouraged. Appreciation efforts will include the continued addition of strategic touches, giving student-athletes the chance to thank supporters, boosters, faculty, and students.
- On campus, a partnership with the Cradle to College Pipeline program can have a tremendous impact on the lives of many young people in the community.
- Increase the transparency of budgets and spending will show increased appreciation and spur engagement.

Metrics:

1. Increase Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted dollars (i.e. special events, annual fund, sponsorships, N-Club) by 10%.
2. Increase Vic's Kids Club membership by 10%.
3. Increase transparent budget exposures (i.e. Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.

Metric:

1. **Increase Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted dollars (i.e. special events, annual fund, sponsorships, N-Club) by 10%.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Annual fund (unrestricted) dollars for the 2016-17 year total \$340,633, which is just under \$20,000 better than the 2015-16 total of \$320,918, a 6.1% increase.

Analysis:

While falling short of increasing annual unrestricted gifts by the goal of 10%, a \$20,000 increase is significant considering that a \$10,000 donor from the previous year decreased their \$10,000 annual gift by 50% (business considerations) and another donor decreased their year-end from 2015-16 by \$10,000.

Metric:**2. Increase Vic’s Kids Club membership by 10%.**

Findings: Baseline established.

Dues collected for Vic’s Kids Club memberships increased from \$300 in 2015-16 to \$2,005.

Analysis:

The Office of the Assistant Athletic Director for Ticketing and Special Events assumed oversight for Vic’s Kids Club this past year and the efforts of the graduate assistant in that office set a new standard that created a good bond with youth in the community. While it will never be a significant fundraiser, a refreshed emphasis on Vic’s Kids membership paid off financially but more importantly, increased awareness and branding among area youth.

Metric:**3. Increase transparent budget exposures (i.e. Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.**

Findings: Baseline established.

For the 2016-17 year, a fresh emphasis was placed on increasing transparency and awareness of Athletic Department and Demons Unlimited Foundation budget numbers and mechanics. The Athletic Director met with: the Faculty Senate President (twice), all head coaches and executive staff members, the Student-Athlete Advisory Council, the Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors, and approximately 30 higher level donors and former athletes. In addition, the Athletic Director and Athletic Business Manager discussed budget mechanics with the NSU Athletic Council at its once per semester meeting. The Athletic Director also provided details via social media and media (i.e. newspaper, radio) interviews (approximately five).

Analysis:

Meetings explaining pertinent budget information (i.e. start-up budget funding

for NSU compared to most other programs, use of Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted dollars, continuing spike in scholarship cost) have created a better understanding of NSU's financial position and the need to keep enhancing it.

Decision:

Continued engagement will be an expectation of the department and, in particular, on the part of the external staff and Director of Athletics. Current and new initiatives to engage former athletes, fans, and alumni will broaden exposure for the athletic program and the University. Expanded efforts on the part of the Director of Athletics to explain and articulate budget mechanics, including how private funds are designated/spent, must be pursued to continue gaining trust and clarity for current and potentially new donors.

Responsibility: Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Relations, Director of Ticketing and Special Events, Director for Development and Donor Engagement

Objective 3:

Enhance University and Community Collaboration and Support.

Strategies:

- Develop a more cohesive bond between the Athletic Department and campus.
- Improve Athletics participation in University initiatives and activities.
- Collaborate with University entities to conduct research for Athletics' projects and partnerships through academic programming to educate about Athletics' traditions.
- Create a presence on-campus and in the community by student-athletes, coaches, and staff.

Metrics:

1. Identify and sustain/grow annually student-athlete participation in campus activities, (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM, etc.).
2. Complete a minimum of 4,000 hours of community service (coaches, staff, and student-athletes) annually.

Metric:

1. **Identify and sustain/grow annually student-athlete participation in campus activities, (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM, etc.).**

Findings: Baseline established.

Student-athletes, coaches, and staff participated in the following campus organizations, activities and initiatives during the 2016-17 academic year: Creative and Performing Arts, Student Government Association, Purple Jackets, Baptist Christian Ministry, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Dancing with the Sigmas, Greek Life, Varnado Hall renovation ribbon cutting, NSU Presidential interview process, ROTC, Student Support Services TRIO program, Presidential Leadership Program, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and Student Programming Committee.

Analysis:

Some members of the coaching and support staff are highly involved in campus and community endeavors while others have limited to no involvement. Student-athlete service took a dip this year, in part due to a change in the Academic Staff, which has oversight for this area.

Metric:

2. Complete a minimum of 4,000 hours of community service (coaches, staff, and student-athletes) annually.

Findings: Baseline established.

Student-athletes completed a recorded 2,611 hours of community service during the 2016-17 academic year (Table 13) and it is estimated (records will be better kept for 2017-18) that coaches and staff contributed approximately 300 hours of campus/community service.

Table 13
Community Service Hours Contributed by NSU Athletics, 2016-2017

Team	Hours
Baseball	92.0
Men's Basketball	443.5
Women's Basketball	549.0
Football	297.5
Soccer	63.5
Softball	592.0
Tennis	312.0
Men's Track	35.5
Women's Track	15.0
Volleyball	211.5
Staff	253.0
Total	2864.5

Analysis:

Some members of the coaching and support staff are highly involved in campus and community endeavors while others have limited to no involvement. Student-athlete service fell this year, in part due to a change in the Academic Staff, which has oversight for this area. Service by coaches and staff must be better and the Director of Athletics will articulate this message to the department. We have discussed having a “coach/staff” volunteer of the year contest. To increase student-athlete service, (a) the Director of Athletics will visit with coaches whose teams did not meet a good service standard this past year and (b) a minimum number of community services hours per athlete will be established and tracked.

Decision:

We will renew our focus level to ensure that coaches and student-athletes are better engaged with others on-campus and in the community. Each sport will prepare a yearlong community service plan. The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee members representing each sport will be charged with the task of ensuring that their respective team/teammates are carrying out components of their plan. The plan will include volunteer efforts on- and off-campus as well as involvement in campus organizations and activities. The Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development and staff will regularly monitor this effort.

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 and Promote Success****Strategies:**

- Revise the plan for publicizing the Student-Athlete of the Month as well as Dean’s and President’s List honors, place the academic success of student-athletes more in the spotlight.
- 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 continue to be 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.
- Enhance and upgrade its facilities and prepare staff to keep up with the demands of operating and managing a Division I athletic program.
- Athletics will place an increased emphasis on maintaining and upgrading existing

facilities in any way possible. We will initiate the discussion of a facility campaign that will need to be underwritten through private support.

Metrics:

1. Increase number of Dean's/President's List and Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees; increase spotlight on the academic success of student-athletes.
2. Increase single year and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores (always above 930 threshold).
3. The eight teams that register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, and women's tennis) will compile a winning percentage of .600 or better in Southland Conference play annually. The cross-country and indoor/outdoor track teams will finish in the top one-third of the standings at the conference championship meet.
4. Plan and execute facility improvement commensurate with funding availability.

Metric:

1. **Increase number of Dean's/President's List and Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees; increase spotlight on the academic success of student-athletes.** Several vehicles are utilized to promote academic success of NSU student-athletes, including press releases on the athletic web site which are carried by the local paper, posted on social media accounts (twitter, Facebook), and included on the Daily NSU Campus Messenger. In addition, regular emails to Demons Unlimited Foundation donors include information about the athletic program's academic success.

Findings: Baseline established.

NSU student-athletes were honored for extraordinary academic success during the 2016-17 year:

President's List—49 (fall) and 38 (spring)

Dean's List—67 (fall) and 65 (spring)

Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll—101 (fall) and 107 (spring)

Analysis:

NSU student-athletes are achieving at a higher level academically than ever before. Again, the NCAA AASP grant has definitely contributed to the resurgence.

Metric:

2. **Increase single year and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team**

scores (always above 930 threshold).

Findings: Baseline established.

For the most recent NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR), all NSU teams' APR (Table 14) exceeded the 930 benchmark on both a single and multi-year level. Single year APR scores, which measure retention and eligibility, are part of a four-year rolling average which determines if an athletic program is or is not in compliance with NCAA standards.

Table 14

NCAA Academic Progress Report for all NSU teams, 2015-16.

Sport	2015-16 Single Year Scores	2015-16 Multi-Year Rate
Baseball	972	964
Men's Basketball	1000	972
Women's Basketball	981	973
Men's Cross Country	1000	978
Women's Cross Country	1000	991
Football	975	957
Soccer	964	983
Softball	978	987
Tennis	1000	992
Men's Track & Field	956	949
Women's Track & Field	1000	960
Volleyball	1000	989
average	985.5	974.6

Analysis:

While it will strain an already limited and stretched budget, it will be imperative to sustain initiatives funded by the NCAA AASP grant to ensure that the high level of academic success is sustained.

Metric:

- The eight teams that register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, and women's tennis) will compile a winning percentage of .600 or better in Southland Conference play annually. The cross-country and indoor/outdoor track teams will finish in the top one-third of the standings at the conference championship meet.**

Findings: Baseline established.

The women's soccer team was the only one of eight teams with win-loss records to register a .600 or better winning percentage. The women's track team finished third at the indoor championship meet. At the outdoor meet, the women finished third and the men finished fourth.

Analysis:

Many factors influence win-loss records each year. For example, the football team—while not winning any of its nine conference games—either had the lead or was within one score of having the lead in eight of those contests. The men's basketball team lost its best player for the season and the school's career scoring leader for 14/18 conference games. The baseball team lost five players from last year's team who were selected in the Major League draft and the softball team's pitching staff was ravaged with injuries and unexpected departure of players. These factors and others are taken into consideration each year when evaluating a program.

Metric:

4. Plan and execute facility improvement commensurate with funding availability.

Findings: Baseline established.

The following facility improvement/enhancement initiatives were completed, undertaken, or instituted through a planning process during the 2016-17 year:

- We invested \$5,000 to 10,000 into improving the condition of the football practice fields.
- We installed updated and colorful graphics in the Prather Coliseum lobby and backlit letters above the front entrance.
- Three meetings were held with the TBA Architecture Firm from Monroe to discuss a facility campaign which would include the following:
 - o Tennis Center at the Jack Fisher Complex that would include a team locker room, storage, and coaches' office, plus the possibility of installing new lights.
 - o A locker room, larger restroom facility, and concession stand at Brown-Stroud Baseball Field.
 - o New seating and press box, plus a team locker room, at the Walter Ledet Track and Field Complex.
 - o An annex to the Athletic Fieldhouse that would include a new weight room with offices for strength coaches, a "Hall of Tradition" on the first floor, a club level seating area for football games on the second level. This wing would include an elevator which coupled with a sky bridge would provide access to the second floor of the Fieldhouse.

- o Convert the current weight room into a rehab center, thus relieving space stress in the main athletic training room in the Fieldhouse.

Analysis:

The layout of the NSU athletic complex is a positive factor, but the condition and appearance of most facilities need updating and in some cases, complete overhauling. A sense of urgency must be maintained to put in place as soon as possible a facility campaign that will give NSU investors and alumni an opportunity to meet actions of other Division I schools by changing the face/look of athletic facilities to positively impact recruiting and ensure competitive success.

Decision:

The Athletic Department academic support staff (academic coordinators, compliance coordinators and Faculty Athletic Representative) will meet monthly to assess academic performance with the intention of monitoring success/problems and sustaining the high level of academic performance in place. We will form a steering committee consisting of Athletic Department members (coaches/staff) and external individuals to collaborate with the TBA Architecture firm with the intention of announcing a facility campaign in late 2017 or early 2018.

Responsibility: Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director for Development/Marketing, Athletic Business Manager, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations and staff.

Comprehensive Summary of Findings and Decisions.

While winning at the very competitive Division I level and in the Southland Conference is not a given and not always the end result, the focus of the athletic program has been and will continue to be best positioning NSU's 14 teams for a high level of success. It is imperative that external initiatives—from enhancing revenue production to expanding the brand of the athletic program to keeping a strong academic profile—be sustained and enhanced. Also important will be the need for NSU student-athletes, staff, and coaches to have a high level of visibility and involvement on campus and in the community, which will serve two purposes—emphasizing the importance of altruism and strengthening the bond between outside entities and the athletic program. Finally, facility projects, both enhancing those in place and developing new ones, must be a focal point to positively influence the recruiting process and provide quality venues on a daily basis for current student-athletes.

Next Step

The University strategic plan is the framework and context for our actions in 2016-2021. With our objectives, strategies, and targets now defined, our next step is to continue to implement our model keeping institutional improvement at the forefront of our actions. We must capture the lessons learned and fully implement our decisions based on our AY 2016-2017 findings. We will update AY 2017-2018 Assessment Plans as necessary and continue to assess the recommendations made in order to build consensus and secure decisions when appropriate. Initiate and or continue AY 2017-2018 assessments and data collection. Below are the near term and short term activities.

Near Term:

- August 14th–Update to Faculty and Staff
- October–President’s guidance initiates the Strategic Budgeting Cycle
- December–Azimuth check on assessment process (SFA / Program / Unit)

Short Term:

- March-April–2018-2019 draft assessment plans (due 13 April)
- May 11th–Commencement ends assessment cycle
- June 15th–2017-2018 Assessments complete and submitted to DIE
 - o SFA updated assessments complete and submitted to DIE
- Draft-Assessment Cycle AY 2017–2018 Report–Validating Our Approach
- Brief to President-June 29, 2018.

People are what make an institution great. It is the caliber and character of our faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community that will ensure Northwestern fulfills its mission. It is through the commitment of our entire University community that we will realize our vision of becoming the nation’s premier regional university.

We should all feel emboldened with this new direction. The campus is alive with renewed energy. In every division, in every corner of the campus and throughout the State, we have dedicated people working selflessly to achieve the ambitious objectives of our Strategic Plan. Undeterred by the economic recession and severe budget cuts, the work has gone forward with unprecedented resolve and creativity. The time and energy applied toward the common goal of becoming the nation’s premier regional university is off to a great start, but we also know, the work has just begun.

