AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Information Technology Services

Division or Department: N/A

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Approved by: Dr. Chris Maggio   **Date: July 30, 2018**

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

Information Technology Services (ITS) provides services, support, management, and oversight of university wide technology resources. It is our goal to ensure that IT is visible, proactive, and supportive of the campus mission and its constituents by ensuring access to technology is ubiquitous and plentiful and the associated services meet the needs and expectations of users.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

(1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected and returned to the CIO;

(2) The CIO will analyze and review the data with the ITS Leadership Team to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met:

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff;

(4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required;

(5) The CIO, in consultation with the ITS Leadership Team and other appropriate staff members, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, if necessary, changes to existing service offerings.

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Service Outcomes:

SO 1. Ensure that the technology-based labs and classroom technology resources are accessible, supported, and current to optimize the teaching and learning environment.

Measure 1.1.

Review the scheduling, availability and usage of campus computing labs. Public labs should see usage rates of at least 75%. Departmental and specialty labs should be scheduled or available for student use for at least 40 hours per week. Review to be completed by April 15, 2018.

Finding: Target Met

Analysis: This is a new measure resulting from the initial implementation of the LabStats usage software that was installed during the prior year assessment cycle. Based upon the analysis of this year's initial results, we now have a better-defined baseline for decision making in future years.

Lab usage, as measured through unique student logins and session durations, was used as a measure for this review. Public Access labs as well as most of the departmental labs saw high usage rates.

Computer Clusters (small labs with fewer than 12 stations) tend to see much lower usage rates than larger labs. The unique number of students that frequent these clusters is also low. Discussions should be had with the owners of these spaces to determine if the usage warrants continued investment in those spaces. Some of these are for specialized use while others are more generalized with some being tied to special projects that may or may not still be active. The larger open access labs see considerable amounts of daily use. These include rooms in the Library and Student Union. The third open access space, located in Health/PE, has seen reduced usage. It is expected that this is due to improved access in the residence halls and the reduction in hours that this room is available for use. The athletics lab located in the fieldhouse as well as the larger lab located in Shreveport also had large numbers of total logins.

Decision: Based on the analysis of 17/18 results labs with low usage statistics should be reviewed to determine if they are meeting the needs of students and if not, decide if they are they still necessary. This is particularly true of the smaller cluster spaces. As it appears students prefer larger, social spaces, the university should look at possibly consolidating some of the existing spaces and creating larger, more diverse rooms with extended hours of access for 18/19.

Measure 1.2.

Perform annual reviews of 100% of the technology-based classrooms to ensure that they are fully functional and the technology in use is appropriate for the space. Review to be completed by April 15, 2018.

Finding: This target was met.

Analysis: Based on the analysis of the results from 16/17 it was determined that we are currently servicing and upgrading our existing classroom spaces on a schedule that keeps them current and operational, meeting the needs of our faculty and students. As a result, for 17/18 we have continued to implement a 3 to 5-year refresh cycle while still being responsive to new and changing needs.

As part of a facility management change on the Alexandria Campus, all technology oversight at that facility has reverted to NSU. A complete review of the facility was done, and replacements or upgrades were scheduled for almost every component including the network wiring. There is a need for additional video classroom spaces on the Shreveport Campus. Multiple areas have been identified on the Natchitoches Campus for updates.

The spaces identified need normal refreshes or were identified for new projects due to academic needs. Based upon planned replacement cycles and the needs identified, labs in the following areas will be included in the upcoming cycle: Life Sciences, CAPA, SGA/SAB Offices, Shreveport, Library Labs on all campuses. Due to pricing it has been determined that small to medium size rooms that currently have projectors will be replaced by large screen LED panels as those space is scheduled for updates.

Decisions: Based on the analysis of 2017-2018 results the items described above will be included during the campus budget discussions and the technology fee budgeting process. Where applicable, proposals for funding may also be submitted as part of the budget enhancement request cycle. The timeline for reviewing needs will be extended in future years into the summer to ensure sufficient time exists to incorporate additional input from other areas of the campus.

Measure 1.3.

100% of all projects approved for Technology Fee funding will be completed during the year for which they are funded. Project status is documented in the annual report compiled and sent to the UL Board each fall. Target date for completion: October 15, 2017.

Finding: Target Met

Analysis: All of the approved projects for the academic year were completed. This is documented in the annual report which was signed by the University President and forwarded to the ULS Board of Supervisors on October 2, 2017.

Decision: Based on the analysis of 2017-2018 results we would like to complete the planning and approval processes earlier in the academic year. For 18/19 we hope to complete this process by September 30, 2018.

SO 2. Provide technology support to faculty, staff, and students to ensure their success in fulfilling their educational goals and job responsibilities.

Measure 2.1.

Review the results of satisfaction surveys sent to each user upon successful completion of a support ticket with an expectation that 90% of the users responding will report a favorable experience. Target date: May 1, 2018.

Finding: Target Met.

Analysis: Based on the analysis of the results in 16/17, ITS achieved an average score of 4.93 out of 5 on work request satisfaction surveys. During this assessment year, ITS achieved the same 4.93 score. Based upon the results from last year, ITS continued to emphasize timely response and customer support best practices.

We are extremely excited that the campus sees value in the work performed by ITS staff members. It is worth noting that most of the lower individual averages belong to administrative level employees who are the ones that must tell users "no" at times.

Decision: Based on the analysis of 2017-2018 results we recognize that while our scores are high and consistent, there is always room for improvement and we will continue to look for ways to improve both customer services skills as well as looking for new and better ways to complete requests faster in 2018-2019.

Measure 2.2.

The Student Help Desk will provide services to students, both in person and via telephone, for at least 70 hours per week while classes are in session and at least 40 hours per week during all other periods that the university is open. A Report of availability is compiled at the end of each academic term.

Finding: Target Met.

Analysis: Findings from 17/18 mirror those from 16/17. Based on the analysis of the result from last year, the hours of operation for the center were set as noted below:

Hours per week the student help desk was open during 17/18:

The SOS was available for a total of 3,293 hours (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018):
During a regular week for a total of 84 hours per week (30 weeks)

During finals week for a total of 93 hours per week (2 weeks)
During summer weeks for a total of 56 hours per week (8 weeks)
During intercession weeks a total of 40 hours per week (8 weeks)

During the past year, the student help desk hours have followed those of the library in which it is housed. During the hours of operations, the center is manned by a combination of students and full-time staff with individuals dedicated to telephone services as well as in-person, walk-up assistance.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the 17/18 results as well other factors including budget and the operating hours of the facility in which the helpdesk is housed, we expect the schedule to remain the same during the upcoming 18/19 academic year. Due to additional services being added to the library including academic advising, tutoring, and the Starbucks coffee shop, we anticipate the demand for services to continue to increase.

SO 3. Employ Innovative and out-of-the-box ideas to the development and delivery of technology-based services to enhance collaboration, communication, and the overall student experience at the university.

Measure 3.1.

The next generation of myNSU services will be completed and made available to users prior to the start of the Fall 2017 semester.

Finding: Target Met

Analysis: Based upon the analysis of the feedback and data collected in 16/17 prior to the start of the project, a core feature set was defined, and development plan implemented in 17/18. The next generation of myNSU service was released for general use between the Spring 2017 and Summer 2017 terms. We have continuously added to and improved upon the services since that time. The full functionality of Moodle (online course areas) was incorporated into the myNSU suite for the start of the Spring 2018 term.

Feedback continues to be positive. Since the initial release we have added enhancements to the advising components including the creation of additional intrusive alerts for students that include financial aid and registration related reminders. The mobile responsive design provides nicely formatted access to online courses from smart phones which was not possible in the past.

Decision: Based upon the results of the analysis and feedback received from users we believe that the project direction is on-track and serving the needs of our users. We will continue to add functionality during the 18/19 academic year with a focus on items expected to increase student retention and graduation rates. Development is currently underway to integrate services with the new Follett Bookstore systems which will allow students and faculty seamless access to course materials.

Measure 3.2.

Additional services will be added to NSU Mobile to allow for fee payment and degree audit access. These will be available by August 2017.

Finding: Not Met.

Analysis: These items were not completed by the anticipated date but are still in development and expected to be incorporated into the app by the end of Summer 2018. Limitations encountered with the single-sign on components and responsive formatting of the external services providing payment processing and degree audits have delayed implementation in the mobile app. Both features have been available on the web version for the past year.

The delays were a result of differing levels of functionality across these services and differing approaches to responsive formatting. Because these are mostly out of our control as these are third-party products, we will concentrate on work-arounds to make these available via the responsive web interface in myNSU as a plugin to the mobile app. The result will still ultimately be mobile access to the services for faculty and students.

Decision: Based upon analysis of the results, we remain committed to "Mobile-First" development being a key component of our development strategy. Time should be spent in the upcoming year to have formal discussions with faculty and students to verify our current direction and to ensure that the apps functionality, layout, and design is meeting the needs of those users.

Measure 3.3.

A marketing and training plan will be developed for IT services to promote increased utilization of key services across all constituent groups. Target for completion is November 15, 2017.

Finding: Not Met.

Analysis: This was a new measure for 17/18 based upon a recognized need to better educate the NSU community on the use of available technology resources. Due to the need to focus resources on other priorities we were unable to move forward with the development of a formalized marketing and training plan for IT Services. We believe this is still an area that needs focus but to support other campus wide needs and objectives the time was redirected toward essential projects related to student services and the enhancement of infrastructure to support the development of analytics and reporting processes related to recruiting, retention, and student success.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the results in 17/18 we continue to believe the ability to effectively communicate with our various campus constituencies, to advertise our services, and to provide training to those groups is a necessary priority for 18/19. This is

an area that needs improvement and expansion. As such, it will continue to be a part of our strategic plan in the upcoming year.

SO 4. Maintain and enhance the technology infrastructure used to deliver both current and future services to ensure ubiquitous access and high availability while meeting user expectations.

Measure 4.1.

Review the current network and server infrastructure to determine the need for upgrades in the upcoming year so that they can be included in both the standard and technology fee budgeting process. Target for completion of the review is September 30, 2017 to meet the budget submission deadline.

Finding: This target was met.

Analysis: Based upon the analysis of the 16/17 evaluations and inventories of existing infrastructure, key areas were identified as in need of upgrades as part of the 17/18 evaluation process. These included:
- The revitalization and replacement of our centralized Battery Backup power system.
- The replacement and expansion of our core server virtualization components.
- The replacement of key remote site servers and telephony support hardware.
- Improvements to the campus disk storage arrays.
- Replacement of the Apple Services Caching Server.
- Expansion of wireless services in Shreveport to support new testing and mobile device initiatives.
- Through the Budget Enhancement Process, $95,000 was allocated to the campus-wide replacement of faculty and staff computers.

Maintenance of the campus-wide technology infrastructure is essential to support the strategic needs of the entire campus. Through a combination of funding sources, including the recently initiated Strategic Budget Enhancement process, and the support of campus leadership, we have been able to maintain services at a very high level. This process is currently serving the needs of the campus and as such we will continue to employ these and new methods to ensure continued support at the same high levels.

Decision: Based on the analysis of our 17/18 results, we will continue to review the existing funding sources and the methods used to prioritize and determine expenditures related to the maintenance of our technology resources and infrastructure. Additional emphasis will be placed on identifying areas that qualify for the Budget Enhancement Request program in 18/19 that will impact the largest number of users throughout the campus.

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Measure 4.2.

Begin the process of replacing the campus telephone system. This will consist of a needs assessment, a review of possible solutions, product selection, and implementation. 100% of the needs assessment and solutions review will be completed by April 30, 2018.

Finding: Partially Met - percentage complete: 80%.

Analysis: This is a new measure for 17/18 based upon the review of campus technology needs performed during the 16/17 cycle. Based upon the analysis of the data collected and the results of a trial performed on the Natchitoches campus, we are currently reviewing vendor offerings for an IP based system to replace the 20+ year old traditional PBX currently in use. This will allow us to consolidate our telephone space with our existing data center, leverage the knowledge and skill of our existing staff to implement and maintain the system, and offer a more flexible line of service to our campus users.

Decision: Based on results of the completed needs assessment and initial review it is expected that the remainder of the evaluation and selection process will be completed fall 2018 so that the purchase of a new system can be included in the next budgeting cycle.

Measure 4.3.

Upgrade from Banner 8 to Banner 9. This upgrade will provide extensive improvements to the overall look, feel, and functionality of both the administrative and student components. This will be a phased upgrade running through December 2018. Targeted completion percentage by the end of the 17-18 assessment cycle: 75%.

Finding: Partially Met. The completion percentage of this items is estimated at 65%.

Analysis: This is a new measure for the 17/18 year added based upon the prioritization of critical projects during the 16/17 cycle related to SO 4. The installation of all Banner 9 components was completed in a TEST environment. It is currently being evaluated and tested by a group of selected "power-users" representing each functional unit of the university. The results of their testing and overall feedback have been positive. The installation into the production environment is in progress.

We are evaluating the campus specific modifications that reside in version 8 to determine if they should be carried forward, rebuilt, or eliminated. The remainder of the user base will be given access to the TEST system by the end of the summer. A migration of users to the version 9 production environment will begin in October.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the current progress on this project and due to a vendor supplied migration deadline of January 2019, this project will continue to be a priority for the next 6 months.

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Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvement based on analysis of results:

- Baseline usage data was established this year because of last year's implementation of the Labstats software package. This provides a means to make critical decisions regarding the continued funding of existing facilities and determining what types of new spaces should be considered in the future. The strategic allocation of finite resources is essential to optimize our technology-rich teaching and learning environments.

- Information Technology Services exceed its goal of 90% user satisfaction for the second year in a row falling just 7/100 of a point short of a perfect score on completed user evaluations of service requests. The Student Help desk has offered the maximum number of hours possible given our current location and staffing options. This resulted in 3,293 hours of availability during the 17/18 academic year.

- ITS continued to focus on our goal of Mobile-First development. myNSU and its associated course delivery components are now fully responsive on mobile devices. Faculty unanimously supported the move to the enhanced course delivery platform. Anytime-Anywhere access to focused advising information has provided enhanced opportunities for faculty and student interaction. While we were unable to meet self-imposed delivery deadlines on some of our services these continue to be developed and will be delivered soon.

- Key infrastructure projects were completed, and others are on-schedule for completion. Included in these is a $95,000 allocation from the recently created budget enhancement fund that will be dedicated to reconstituting the scheduled replacement cycle of faculty and staff desktop computers.

Information Technology Services continue to align its efforts with campus-wide initiatives focused on the recruiting of new students and the retention and success of our current students. A key aspect of everyday life for our students now revolves around an always connected lifestyle and the use of mobile technologies. We have concentrated on bringing key services into a single interface and focusing on ways to ensure that essential messages are seen and acted upon by the user. Efforts will continue to consolidate and streamline offerings following best practices defined by the services most widely used by students and employees daily. The investment made in infrastructure during previous years has provided the campus with a robust platform for the creation and distribution of online services

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

In much the same way we have attempted to leverage our infrastructure to create innovative and accessible services over the past year we must now focus on using the data provided by these applications to improve our ability to make informed decisions. Using real-time analytics, reporting, and visualization tools we will make data available in

ways that provide insight into processes and allow us to answer the question of "WHY". Online services such as Amazon, Facebook, and Netflix have set the bar regarding user expectations. Educational services and processes must adapt so that they are as easy to use and intuitive as those created by these online leaders. Information Technology Services must reevaluate our current staff and reallocate resources where necessary to achieve these goals. Focus must be placed on the use of real-time data to assist faculty and administrators with both day-to-day and long-term planning decisions. This will be a key area for research and development over the next year. While we were unable to move forward with our plans to create a more comprehensive marketing and training plan for Technology on campus, this is essential to our future success. It must be a priority in the upcoming year.