



**NORTHWESTERN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

# Strategic Plan 2016-2021



DEDICATED TO ONE GOAL. **YOURS.**<sup>™</sup>

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## *Letter from the President*



**NORTHWESTERN STATE**  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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January 11, 2017

I lend my strongest endorsement of this Strategic Plan for the next five years. Northwestern is poised to lead the region in all measurable areas of higher education. Although I am changing leadership positions and roles, let there be no doubt I will do everything in my power to ensure this institution is successful on its journey. The faculty, staff, administrators, students, and other stakeholders who gave their time and effort to assemble this plan have my sincere thanks.

I underwrite this plan subject to modifications and approval by Northwestern's incoming President.

Sincerely,

Dr. James B. Henderson, President  
University of Louisiana System  
1201 North Third St., Suite 7-300  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802



January 10, 2017

**This strategic plan reflects Northwestern State University's vision for institutional excellence and enhancement over the next five years.**

**While the document is a blueprint for innovative change and positive transformation, it also embraces and builds upon the history, traditions and core values of a university that has been the educational, cultural, economic and social bedrock of this region for 133 years.**

**Northwestern has moved closer to its goal over the past two years of becoming the premier regional university in the nation. That progress is reflected in new and more relevant academic programs, expanded student services and experiences, increased partnerships with business, industry and other educational entities and important contributions to the economy and workforce.**

**This strategic plan, which has been developed with the input and involvement of hundreds of faculty and staff members, students, alumni, community leaders and other stakeholders, forms the foundation for continued and more meaningful achievements for Northwestern, its students and others that the university serves.**

**The university's historic, current and future priorities are underscored in the five areas upon which the strategic plan will focus...The Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Athletic Prominence and Community Enrichment.**

**By directing continual emphasis and attention to those goals and objectives, the strategic plan will provide the motivation and momentum for Northwestern to reach new heights of achievement, quality and distinction over the next five years.**

**My commitment is to support and work in every way possible with faculty, staff, students, alumni and others who care about the university to make this strategic plan an effective and dynamic force in driving Northwestern toward its own goal of institutional excellence and its very purpose of helping students and others we serve in meeting their individual and mutual goals.**

Sincerely,

**Chris Maggio, Ed.D.  
Acting President and  
Vice President for the Student Experience**



## Strategic Plan 2016-2021

### Purpose

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. However, it should not be viewed in isolation. Nested within it are the Strategic Budget Process, the Quality Enhancement Plan, and Institutional Effectiveness Policy drafts.

This plan drives us in our quest for excellence in line with our vision. Our mantra, “Dedicated to One Goal – Yours,” is not a simple slogan. Rather, it represents a philosophy, which is that the Student is the heartbeat of this University. Our energy and focus are on making each one successful in whatever field they choose to pursue. As a reflection of our commitment, we will henceforth treat the word Student as a proper noun and capitalize it in our communications.

Our strategic plan captures the deliberate and sincere organizational self-assessment conducted over the past 18 months. We used data collected from numerous surveys, including faculty, Students, and alumni; diverse forums and focus groups; and new and historical qualitative and quantitative analysis. The methodology serves as the underpinning to establish the road map we use to navigate the uncertain fiscal environment of higher education.

### Background

During an interactive forum on March 5, 2015, the strategic vision and framework were presented to the faculty and staff. The framework was a synthesis of numerous conversations with internal and external stakeholders. Over the next several months, workgroups were established, and the framework was refined until it represented a collective commitment to our future. On August 17, 2015, the Strategic Framework was approved and adopted, laying the foundation for a new five-year Strategic Plan 2016- 2021. This plan builds on the thoughtful work captured in the 2011-2018 Strategic Plan, “Go for Greatness,” and uses it as the bedrock from which to move forward.

### 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.

## 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 everyone 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 leads 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.

## Strategic Plan Overview

Our strategic plan leverages the five Strategic Focus Areas developed and approved in the Strategic Framework. These focus areas drive what we do, how we do it, and, most importantly, why we do it. To achieve our desired goals, we must first understand where each focus area stands today. This document outlines the current and future states of each strategic focus area and delineates the process to navigate from one state to another. This environmental visualization is designed to facilitate our progression by leveraging the supporting objectives, associated strategies, metrics, and assigned oversight for each strategic focus area.

To ensure success, our strategies are actionable with clear benchmarks that measure our progress and gauge our success. We will follow three key principles of assessment. First, our metrics must be easy to use, accessible, and actionable. Second, they must be transparent, giving us the ability to measure ourselves both internally and against peers or other relevant external measures (board, state, or national standards). Third, we must make sure they are diverse in their qualitative and quantitative perspective, allowing us to draw a holistic picture of our progress.

Continuous assessment ensures we meet our objectives efficiently and effectively. Baseline data gathered in both quantitative and qualitative form set the basis from which we measure performance. Strategies yielding the greatest improvement, based on metrics designed to illustrate success across the spectrum of objectives, will be retained. Since the inception of the strategic framework, a renewed focus on these strategies has resulted in program expansion, increased participation and financial support from stakeholders, and cooperative endeavor agreements with both public and private entities. From here, we will mark success and measure improvement annually as we embark on our five-year plan.

We cannot afford to have this plan sit on a shelf and gather dust. Relevancy ensures longevity. This plan is flexible in that it allows us to review, edit, adjust, or modify objectives, strategies, and metrics as needed to facilitate continued progress toward our vision. Accountability is assigned to each focus area so that timely, methodical, and consistent data collection will take place.

Much has been accomplished since the approval of the strategic framework. We have made significant strides in our strategic focus areas: The Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Athletic Prominence, and Community Enrichment. To highlight a few, we have already established in Watson Library, the nucleus of our institution, an Academic Success Center which is making a positive difference in Students' lives. We have made numerous facility and grounds improvements, making an already beautiful campus truly spectacular and more user-friendly, including adding a coffee shop to the Library for the convenience of Students and faculty. We have increased our freshman class. We have new certification programs, all designed to address the business needs of our region's workforce. We have done yeoman's work on core competencies and on rightsizing our curriculum, so that our degree programs address the current and future needs of our Students, community, and region. We recently added a degree program leading to the Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Development to our postgraduate offerings and are developing a comprehensive academic Quality Enhancement Plan focused on improving Student learning.

# Section I.

## The Five Strategic Focus Areas

### 1. The Student Experience.

To achieve its envisioned future, Northwestern is committed to redefining and strengthening The Student Experience. Students succeed when we devote our energies to continuously 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 Students. From the first contact with a prospective Student through the commencement celebration, we will demonstrate our commitment to success by ensuring Students have an engaging, purposeful, and relevant Student experience. Coordination between all campus entities ensures 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' experience. For the first year, we will use quantitative and qualitative data already accessible on campus to establish a baseline of those data areas that objectively reflect 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 year's freshman fall class. We will draw the best and the brightest Students from our region with a goal of obtaining an average American College Test (ACT) score of 23.74. Our Students will be challenged academically by faculty and programs that capitalize on high-impact educational practices, thereby achieving an individualized transformational experiential learning experience.

At NSU, 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 growth. Each Student reflects 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 1) may be adjusted as necessary to secure the appropriate data. Baseline data will be captured in the first year review.



**Table 1**  
*Proposed Metrics to Assess The Student Experience*

<b>The Student Experience Metrics</b>
AY Enrollment Increase per freshman class
On-Campus/On-Line populations
Diversity represents regional demographics (1-10)
Percent of Students from within Region/Outside Region
Retention Rate between 1st to 2nd year and 1st to 4th year
On Campus/Off Campus Housing Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
On Campus Facilities Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
University Policies–Operation Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
Community Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
Academic Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
Student Support Services Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
Number of Programs with Capstone Internships or Similar Seminal Activities
Safety and Security Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
Elevate LA Financial Health Analysis Score with ULS
National On-Line Ranking–US News
National Ranking–US News
Percent of Graduates working within 6 months of graduation
Percent of Graduates working within their discipline
Number of Alumni actively supporting the University

*Note.* Baseline and target information, in addition to data provided in the strategic focus area update will be reported to the President and the Leadership Team in June 2017.

## 2. Academic Excellence.

To become the nation’s premier regional university, we must achieve academic excellence. This can best be attained through the dedicated support of our Students and faculty. We must work diligently to nurture and encourage our Students in ways that facilitate their success, as Students bring purpose to a university. Faculty, the backbone of a university, must be provided the necessary resources to succeed both in the classroom and in their research and must be valued by staff and Students for their expertise and commitment to success.

Since the inception of the strategic framework, new ways for attaining academic excellence have been initiated by Northwestern. For example, the creation and support of the Academic Success Center has played an important role in Student retention and success. Additionally, the completion of a competency-based degree program allows non-traditional Students to enter traditional degree programs more easily and achieves their goal of transitioning to college. Finally, the establishment

of a professional development workshop series for faculty has helped to improve classroom performance and our Lunch and Learn events are prompting faculty to become more engaged in their own research.

By 2021, we will have made significant gains in each of our objectives aimed at achieving academic excellence at Northwestern. We will have continued to support the mission of the Academic Success Center, that is, to provide faculty-led workshops and materials in the university core subjects and support to academically-at-risk Students. We will have created the Faculty Success Center to provide the necessary tools for faculty to continue their professional development with an emphasis on classroom and research excellence. These two entities are essential for the academic excellence sought by the University. We will have structured our curriculum to address the current and future needs of our community, state, and region. This will be reflected in the implementation of our Quality Enhancement Plan which will enhance or expand experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate Students.

Proposed metrics used to establish the baseline and measure progress for the Academic Excellence strategic focus area (Table 2) may be adjusted as necessary to secure the appropriate data. Baseline data will be captured in the first year review.

**Table 2**

*Proposed Metrics to Assess Academic Excellence*

Academic Excellence Metrics
Number of Students accessing web-tutorials, podcasts, and documents available through the Academic Success Center
Number of Students attending faculty-led workshops offered through the Academic Success Center
Survey of Student satisfaction with the Academic Success Center
Survey of Student satisfaction with academic advising
Survey of Student satisfaction with peer tutoring
Number of opportunities for all faculty to interact with on-line Students
Percent of graduates who gain admission to graduate/professional schools
Survey of alumni for most Meaningful Learning Experiences at NSU
Student Course Evaluation Survey
Number of faculty attending professional-development workshops
Number of faculty attending the Lunch and Learn workshops
Percentage of departments applying for University-sponsored research and travel funds
Number of departments acquiring new classroom/laboratory technologies
Number of new course offerings
Average class size in University Core Courses
Survey of faculty morale
Evaluation results of current salary/rank processes and outcomes
Number of documented faculty teaching evaluations
Availability of specific policies regarding: 1) funding for faculty development education, 2) faculty practice opportunities, and 3) equitable faculty compensation
Student/graduate performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.)

*Note.* Baseline and target information, in addition to data provided in the strategic focus area update will be reported to the President and the Leadership Team in June 2017.

### 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 respond 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 to draw from 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, as well as the establishment of a committee to conduct regular reviews 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 of 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. The establishment of such a protocol is a key strategy moving forward. Departments examined current protocol for the use of 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. Surveys of business and industry partners in the NSU service region as well as faculty and staff regarding national/state employment trends have 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. Other sources of information include a survey of department heads as well as GRAD ACT documentation incorporating workforce needs and NSU degree matching and future opportunities.

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.

The metrics we will use during our first year of assessment (Table 3) remain mainly qualitative until more relevant quantitative data can be reliably accessed and assessed. We continue our dialogue with alumni and our workforce partners to better identify key indicators required for market responsiveness. Baseline data will be captured in the first year review.

**Table 3**  
*Proposed Metrics to Assess Market Responsiveness*

Market Responsiveness Metrics
Percent of departments utilizing the newly created alumni survey to gather workforce demand data
Percent of departments utilizing the newly created employer survey to gather workforce demand data
Employer satisfaction survey with NSU graduates
Survey of alumni who feel they are/were well-prepared upon graduating (5-point Likert scale)
GRAD ACT documentation with workforce needs and NSU degree matching and future opportunities
Graduating Senior Survey-percent pursuing employment
Number of newly created degrees, concentrations, or certificates based on employer workforce demands

*Note.* Baseline and target information, in addition to data provided in the strategic focus area update will be reported to the President and the Leadership Team in June 2017.

#### 4. Athletic Prominence.

It is often said that an athletic program is the “front porch of the university,” because of the exposure that a successful program can provide to the institution. Achieving the identified goals associated with athletic prominence will result in outcomes for Student-athletes which emphasize academics, leadership, service learning, and competitiveness and 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. It will take a collaborative effort among the athletic department, campus, community, and alumni base to truly fulfill this Strategic Focus Area. Engagement and participation by staff members, coaches, Student-athletes, on-campus vendors, off-campus merchants, faculty, local and regional businesses, campus departments and organizations, alumni, and fans are necessary as these are the key stakeholders in the process of achieving athletic prominence. Ultimately, NSU Athletics will be a contributing factor towards NSU being the nation’s premier regional university.

In the past 18 months the NSU Athletic Department has seen success on several levels and, at the same time, an inordinate amount of personnel turnover. Through this period of transition, the NSU athletics program has maintained strength, adaptability, and a commitment to excellence both on

and off the field. As a testament to these attributes, the Athletic Department was able to implement components of the Athletic Prominence Strategic Framework despite a six-month period which saw nearly 30% (18) of the full-time coaches and staff depart. Successes during the 2015-16 year reflective of the department’s commitment to excellence include a record performance regarding grade point averages of Student-athletes for both semesters and for the number of community service hours served. Furthermore, record corporate sponsor and annual fund donations generated through the Demons Unlimited Foundation and an increase in both N-Club and Vic’s Kids Club memberships generated much-needed revenue. Facility improvements included Turpin Stadium upgrades (such as new chair back seating and ADA areas, refurbishing the visitors’ locker room, and constructing the Bryant Lewis Plaza at the north end of the playing field); graphic enhancements to the main lobby entrance at Prather Coliseum; upgrades to the cross country course made possible through funding from the Athletic Department, University, and City of Natchitoches; upgrades to the football practice field; adding graphic displays in the seating area and renovating the locker room at the softball complex; and updated baseball batting cages and dugouts.

We fully expect by 2021 Northwestern athletics will be positioned among the top two programs holistically within the Southland Conference. Already a leader in academics and community service, our goal is to garner competitive success which will result in all 14 NSU sports teams competing for conference championships, similar to what was accomplished over a two-year period from 2013-2015 when 10 of our 14 teams won 10 Southland Conference regular season or postseason championships. One important element of sustaining a high level of competitive success will be increasing retention levels for coaches/staff, although it is also understood that financial and career opportunities will always impact retention. Another important part of building on the momentum of recent years will be providing world-class facilities by working with an architect to add the following to the athletic complex: indoor training facility; tennis locker room at the tennis complex; baseball concession/restroom building; baseball locker room at Brown-Stroud Field; track locker room at the track complex, along with updated seating and press box; and a new larger video board in Turpin Stadium with high definition capability. We also expect that revenue and branding will

be increased and enhanced. Specifically, ticket sales (season, single event, and group), donations, and sponsorships must continue to grow in order to provide valuable resources for the program. The NSU brand must be marketed throughout the region in all mediums (television, print, radio, social media), all of which will promote and foster Demon Pride. Finally, the athletic program must be fully integrated into the University Experience and greater community, allowing for active participation and support by our generous alumni.

Since the Spring of 2015, the Athletic Prominence sub-committee has completed extensive research through open forums and on-line surveys to connect with Student-athletes, coaches, faculty/staff, donors, community leaders, alumni groups, Student groups, and the public.

The metrics we will use during our first year of assessment (Table 4) will be supplemented as we continue our dialogue with all stakeholders to best identify the key indicators of program improvement. We will seek a better balance between qualitative and quantitative benchmark data that can be reliably accessed and assessed. Baseline data will be captured in the first year review.

**Table 4**

*Proposed Metrics to Assess Athletic Prominence*

Athletic Prominence Metrics
Increase yearly event attendance and revenue by 10% for all sports
Increase new merchandise outlets by 10%
Increase media outlets (TV, print, radio, social media) and markets by 10%
Increase merchandise sales 15%
Establish baseline number of outlets, sales (items and dollar amount) LRC royalties
Retain or improve Student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0
Increase N-Club membership by 20%
Increase fan base in Leesville, Shreveport, Alexandria, and in Bossier City.
Increase Vic's Kids Club membership by 10%
Increase number of donors or dollars year over year
Increase number of touches related to budget mechanics
Establish transparent budget mechanics and share with Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors
Percent of Student-athlete participation in campus activities, (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM, etc.)
Student Athlete satisfaction survey on level and type of campus involvement
Increase number of Dean's and President's List honorees, increase spotlight on the academic success of Student-athletes.
Establish and measure Demon of the Day-a daily inside look at NSU Student-athlete's touches (marketing).
Increase number of NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) bonuses
Integrate former athletes' participation in advertising
Plan and execute facility improvement commensurate with funding availability

*Note.* Baseline and target information, in addition to data provided in the strategic focus area update will be reported to the President and the Leadership Team in June 2017.

## 5. 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 conducted a survey of 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 that are underway 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, the largest in history with 320 members, is featured at athletic events, parades, and 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 program that attracts alumni and other friends from the local community and far beyond. Communications with alumni have been expanded substantially. Websites and email initiatives such as Purple Pulse and Demonsunite.net provide information to alumni and 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 the expansion of the development staff. The most recent financial report showed an increase of 52% from the first to the third quarter of 2016. The number of individual donors to unrestricted funds has increased by more than 80% over the past 12 months. At the root of that growth is the promotion of an "every contribution counts" concept. We have entered partnerships with business, industry, government agencies, and especially cities where NSU campuses are located in an effort to increase collaboration and mutually beneficial relationships. Our footprint covers North-Central Louisiana with the main campus in Natchitoches, satellite campuses 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. Strategies are being developed not only to expand these town-gown relationships but also to permanently connect Students at satellite campuses as involved and productive alumni.

By 2021, we will have experienced growth and expansion in all areas of community enrichment. World-class performance arts programming will be evidenced through increased participation and widespread program awareness. Robust alumni engagement and mutually beneficial donor relationships will be revealed through increases in communication, participation, and financial support. An institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability, as well as thriving town-gown relationships, will be illustrated through the growth of internal and external partnerships and increased brand identity and awareness. By achieving success in community enrichment, the institution will move ever closer to becoming the nation's premier regional university.

The metrics we will use during our first year of assessment (Table 5) will be supplemented as we continue our dialogue with all stakeholders to best identify the key indicators of program

improvement. We will seek a better balance between qualitative and quantitative benchmark data that can be reliably accessed and assessed. Baseline data will be captured in the first year review.

**Table 5**  
*Proposed Metrics to Assess Community Enrichment*

<b>Community Enrichment</b>
Number of patrons attending recitals, concerts, art exhibits, theater/dance productions
Number of off-campus performances
Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame induction ceremonies
Expenditures dedicated to advertisement
Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets
Frequency of e-communications and number of participants
Number of Student Alumni Association members
Number of active alumni chapters nationwide
Number of Alumni Association members
Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets
Amount of annual private support
Number of individual contributors
Value of unrestricted endowment assets
Leadership Team minutes demonstrating university-community engagement and collaboration
Number of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies
Number of advisory volunteers
Brand identity survey
Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events and other programs at satellite campuses
Number of online and satellite campus graduates participating in university activities and events
Number of projects and internships involving Students in university and community activities and events
Number of cooperative endeavors with public and private entities

*Note.* Baseline and target information, in addition to data provided in the strategic focus area update will be reported to the President and the Leadership Team in June 2017.



## Section II.

# Performance Indicators and Assessment Process (Objective–Strategy–Metric–Responsibility)

Achieving our 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.

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 administrative services across all areas and campuses, particularly admissions processes, financial aid, registrar services, and academic advising.
- Align 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 1st-year experience and progressing through high-impact experiences and career preparation opportunities.

#### Metrics:

- Student Support Services Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- University Policies–Operation Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Retention Rate between 1st to 2nd year and 1st to 4th year
- Percent of Graduates working within 6 months of graduation
- Percent of Graduates working within their discipline

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Dean of Students

**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 that is 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.
- Expand co-curricular service learning and leadership opportunities.
- Develop our Students to be future leaders with a strong sense of civic responsibility, ethical reasoning, and social justice.

**Metrics:**

- University Policies – Operation Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Diversity represents regional demographics (1-10)
- Percent of Students from within Region – Outside Region
- Safety and Security Satisfaction Survey (1-10)

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Dean of Students

**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:**

- Incorporate Student learning outcomes, academic support, and retention in co-curricular programming initiatives.
- Transform campus spaces to adapt 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.

**Metrics:**

- University Policies–Operation Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Community Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Elevate LA Financial Health Analysis Score with ULS
- National On-Line Ranking–US News
- Number of Alumni actively supporting the University

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Dean of Students

**Objective 4. Provide a transformational learning and career preparation experience** (through advising, mentorships, experiential learning, and co-curricular involvement).

**Strategies:**

- Employ coordinated data-driven advising that uses intentional intervention milestones beginning the first year.

- Expand/develop specialized advising, services, and programs.
- Broaden the scope of career services.
- Develop a series of high-impact experiential learning activities designed to engage Students beginning their first year.

**Metrics:**

- University Policies–Operation Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Number of Programs with Capstone Internships or Similar Activities
- Academic Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Community Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Percent of Graduates working within 6 months of graduation
- Percent of Graduates working within their discipline

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Dean of Students

**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.
- Provide services and create opportunities that empower Students to make responsible life choices concerning their health and well-being.
- Engage the university community in the full array of programs, services, and experiences that cultivate a healthy, inclusive and safe campus environment.

**Metrics:**

- University Policies–Operation Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Community Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Safety and Security Satisfaction Survey (1-10)
- Elevate LA Financial Health Analysis Score with ULS
- Retention Rate between 1st to 2nd year and 1st to 4th year
- Diversity represents regional demographics (1-10)

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs/Vice President Academic Affairs, Dean of Students

## Strategic Focus Area 2—Academic Excellence.

Five objectives support academic excellence.

**Objective 1. Provide innovative instruction in the classroom and online** (by utilizing technologies/ techniques that have been demonstrated to be successful and by supporting faculty participation in conferences and workshops in discipline-specific areas).

### Strategies:

- Provide online and face-to-face instruction on technology/techniques that will improve the educational experience of our online 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 focus area for on-line Students so that the University's growing on-line Student population and Students at campuses other than the Natchitoches campus 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 faculty across the university are equitably compensated and a transparent process for equitable salary and rank is employed
- Provide travel funds for faculty members to travel to discipline-specific conferences
- Ensure that all classroom/laboratory technologies are functional and updated and that faculty are trained on their usage
- Provide grants for classroom/laboratory equipment maintenance and supplies
- Provide grants for faculty designing new or re-designing old courses
- Provide faculty evaluation rubrics
- Provide documented faculty reviews

### Metrics:

- Number of Students accessing web-tutorials, podcasts, and documents available through the Academic Success Center
- Number of Students attending faculty-led workshops offered through the Academic Success Center
- Survey of Student satisfaction with the Academic Success Center
- Survey of Student satisfaction with peer tutoring
- Number of faculty attending professional-development workshops
- Percentage of departments applying for University-sponsored research and travel funds
- Number of new course offerings

- Number of departments acquiring new classroom/laboratory technologies
- Survey of faculty morale
- Evaluation results of current salary/rank processes and outcomes
- Number of documented faculty teaching evaluations employing rubrics
- Availability of specific policies regarding: 1) funding for faculty development education, 2) faculty practice opportunities, and 3) equitable faculty compensation

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Academic Success Center Director, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty

**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
- Reduce the size of classes in the University Core Curriculum

**Metrics:**

- Survey of Student satisfaction with the Academic Success Center
- Average class size in University Core Courses

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Vice President of Technology Innovation and Economic Development, Academic Success Center Director, 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 at research or 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:**

- Student/Graduate performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.)
- Percent of graduates who gain admission to graduate/professional schools

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Academic Success Center Director, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty

**Objective 4. Foster quality Student-faculty interactions** (by forging a bond between faculty and Students that sets our University apart from so many 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 funds for transportation for faculty taking educational trips or performing 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 conversations
- Create opportunities for all faculty to interact with on-line Students

**Metrics:**

- Survey of Student satisfaction with academic advising
- Number of opportunities for all faculty to interact with on-line Students
- Number of faculty attending the Lunch and Learn workshops
- Survey of alumni for most Meaningful Learning Experiences at NSU
- Percentage of departments applying for University-sponsored research and travel funds

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Academic Advising Director, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty

**Objective 5. Monitor validated assessment of educational outcomes** (to continue to provide our Students with an unparalleled educational experience).

**Strategies:**

- Evaluate the assessments of the University Core Curriculum
- Develop a list of appropriate educational outcomes and measures that test for those outcomes

- Implement real, pedagogically-meaningful, documented course evaluations

**Metrics:**

- Average class size in University Core Courses
- Survey of Student satisfaction with academic advising

**Responsibility:** Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty

### Strategic Focus Area 3–Market Responsiveness.

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

**Objective 1. 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 and implement a university-wide process for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.
- Develop a university website viewable by all stakeholders (e.g., alumni survey results, current degree offerings, matching of degree offerings to projected workforce demands) and link to departmental webpages.
- Develop a standardized survey template for the collection of alumni and employer data for departmental use.

**Metrics:**

- 100% of departments will utilize the newly created alumni survey to gather workforce demand data
- 100% of departments will utilize the newly created employer survey to gather workforce demand data
- Availability of university website
- Availability of a recognized process for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs
- 100% satisfaction in employer surveys
- 100% alumni feel that they are well prepared (5-point Likert scale)

**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.
- Consolidate all departmental alumni surveys to create a single University-wide alumni survey to garner workforce demand data.
- Consolidate all employer surveys to create a single University-wide employer survey to garner workforce demand data.
- Monitor graduate success and preparedness using alumni and employer surveys.

### **Metrics:**

- Number of newly created or redesigned degrees, concentrations, or certifications based on employer workforce demands.
- Availability of consolidated alumni and employer survey
- 100% satisfaction in employer surveys
- 100% alumni feel that they are well prepared (5-point Likert Scale)

**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 via survey into curriculum and program development.
- Consolidate and disseminate all departments' Advisory Council documents to better identify workforce demand and trends.
- Use survey results to create or redesign programs aligned with workforce demands.

### **Metrics:**

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

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



#### **Objective 4. 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 specific university policies regarding: 1) Funding for faculty development, education, certifications, skill development 2) Faculty practice opportunities/pay incentives.

##### **Metrics:**

- Use of results from academic program review to guide the development or redesign of programs, concentrations, or certifications that meet the needs of the workforce.
- Availability of specific policies regarding: 1) Funding for faculty development, education, certifications, skill development 2) Faculty practice opportunities/pay incentives

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

#### **Strategic Focus Area 4–Athletic Prominence**

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

#### **Objective 1. Enhance Marketing Opportunities and Game Day Experience.**

##### **Strategies:**

- Athletics must be more externally assertive in terms of brand awareness and merchandise availability.
- Growing the brand of NSU Athletics 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 those alumni engaged and will 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 campus and Fort Polk to participate in events both on the main campus and on-site in Shreveport and Leesville if appropriate. These locations will add new segments to our fan base.

### **Metrics:**

- Increase yearly event attendance and revenue by 10% for all sports
- Increase new merchandise outlets by 10%
- Increase media outlets (TV, print, radio, social media) and markets by 10%
- Increase merchandise sales 15%
- Establish baseline, number of outlets, sales (items and dollar amount), LRC royalties
- Retain or Improve Student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0
- Increase N-Club membership by 20%
- Increase fan base in Leesville, Shreveport and in Bossier City.
- Increase Vic's Kids Club membership by 10%

**Responsibility:** Vice President External Affairs, Athletic Director

## **Objective 2. Promote 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:**

- Increase number of donors or dollars year over year
- Increase Vic's Kids Club membership
- Increase number of touches as it relates to budget mechanics
- Establish transparent budget mechanics and share with Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors.

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director for Development/Marketing, Athletic Business Manager.

### **Objective 3. Enhance University Collaboration and Support.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Develop a more cohesive bond between the Athletic Department and the 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.

#### **Metrics:**

- Percent of Student-athlete participation in campus activities, (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM, etc.)
- Student Athlete satisfaction survey on level and type of campus involvement

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development, Head Coaches

### **Objective 4. Enhance Recognizing and Promoting Success.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Revise the plan for publicizing the Student-athlete of the month as well as Dean's and President's List honors, the academic success of Student-athletes can be placed 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 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. The discussion will be initiated regarding a facility campaign which will need to be underwritten through private support.

#### **Metrics:**

- Increase number of Dean's and President's List honorees, increase spotlight on the academic success of Student-athletes
- Establish and measure Demon of the Day—a daily inside look at NSU Student-athletes' touches (marketing)

- Increase number of NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) bonuses
- Integrate former athlete's participation in advertising
- Plan and execute facility improvement commensurate with funding availability

**Responsibility:** Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director for Development/Marketing, Athletic Business Manager

## Strategic Focus Area 5–Community Enrichment

Five objectives support community enrichment

### Objective 1. Expand World Class Performing Arts Program

#### Strategies:

- Increase emphasis in Natchitoches and other communities on the excellence of Creative and Performing Arts at the university.
- Increase regional and national recognition of The Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band.
- 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:

- Number of patrons attending recitals, concerts, art exhibits, theater/dance productions
- Number of off-campus performances
- Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame induction ceremonies
- Expenditures dedicated to advertisement
- Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets

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

## **Objective 2. Increase Robust Alumni Engagement**

### **Strategies:**

- Expand communications through online initiatives such as the Purple Pulse e-newsletter and DemoNSUnite networking platform to provide opportunities and information to alumni and 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 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:**

- Frequency of e-communications and number of participants
- Number of Student Alumni Association members
- Number of active alumni chapters nationwide
- Number of Alumni Association members
- Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets

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

## **Objective 3. Promote Mutually Beneficial Donor Relationships**

### **Strategies:**

- Increase number of staff members with job duties directly related to the cultivation and stewardship aspects of fundraising.

- Promote an “every contribution counts” concept to engage supporters not currently giving back to the university.
- Rebrand the Columns Fund annual giving program to provide an income stream to support non-scholarship needs at the university and endow a portion of revenue and contributions to generate perpetual earnings.
- Increase focus on income-generating initiatives such as the acquisition of property contiguous with the campus that will create new revenues and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area.
- Increase on-campus and off-campus events for prospective and current donors with a focus on recognition and awareness of giving opportunities.
- Showcase positive impact of private funding through messages to alumni and public.

**Metrics:**

- Amount of annual private support
- Number of individual contributors
- Value of unrestricted endowment assets

**Responsibility:** Assistant Vice President External Affairs and University Advancement

**Objective 4: Expand Institutional Culture of Collaboration and Mutual Accountability.**

**Strategies:**

- Expand decision-making at the administrative level through an internal Leadership Team structure that includes more than 20 individuals from across the campus.
- Enter partnerships with business, industry, government agencies, and especially cities where NSU campuses are located in an effort to increase collaboration and mutually beneficial relationships with entities associated with the school.
- Encourage alumni, supporters, and other stakeholders to act in an advisory capacity for university activities.
- Develop an overarching communications strategy directed at all stakeholders designed to expand validation of the University’s brand, core goals, and mission.

**Metrics:**

- Leadership Team minutes indicating institutional collaboration and mutual accountability
- Number of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies
- Number of advisory volunteers
- Brand identity survey

**Responsibility:** Assistant Vice President External Affairs and University Advancement

## **Objective 5. Nurture Thriving Town-Gown Relationships**

### **Strategies:**

- Plan activities such as athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs to increase awareness of the university at sites away from the main campus.
- Identify and establish a database of graduates who earned degrees online or at sites other than the main campus to develop a network to expand town-gown relationships at all of the university's campuses.
- 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 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:**

- Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events and other programs at satellite campuses
- Number of online and satellite campus graduates participating in university activities and events
- Number of projects and internships involving Students in university and community activities and events
- Number of cooperative endeavors with public and private entities

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

## Implementation Plan.

Northwestern is a great institution because of its tremendous faculty, staff, Students, alumni, and community. Together, we have made unprecedented progress over the last eighteen months. To maintain this level of drive and commitment, we must continue to conduct constant organizational self-assessments, always looking for better, more efficient ways to do business to improve the quality of education and experience for our most precious resource, our Students.

To assist in this process, we will conduct a semiannual review of our progress through a December update to the President from SFA team leaders. In turn, the President and/or designated leadership team will provide an update to faculty, staff, and community partners at the beginning of the Spring Semester. An update will be presented by each SFA team leader to the President and the leadership team in June as a check on the status of progress in each area. During these forums, we will assess whether we need to adjust our objectives, strategies, and/or metrics.

## Next Step.

The university strategic plan provides the framework and context for our actions in 2016-2021. With our objectives and strategies defined, our next step is to implement. Each college, school, or administrative unit will build its own operational plan in support of the university's mission and core values. The Strategic Plan will provide a common framework and a shared narrative but leaves room for each unit to develop its own response to this plan in accordance with their specific needs.

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. We have a Strategic Plan that is bold, actionable and achievable. This Plan serves as a road map allowing us to be an exemplary model for higher education in the region. Through the commitment of our entire University community to this Strategic Plan, we are certain to realize our vision of becoming the nation's premier regional university through the innovative delivery of transformative Student learning experiences that prepare graduates for life and career success.

## Appendices:

Quality Enhancement Plan (draft)

Institutional Effectiveness Policy (draft)

Strategic Planning and Budgeting Process