

Strategic Plan 2016-2023



Assessment Cycle 2020-2021 ***The Way Forward***

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PREFACE

During Assessment Cycle 2020-2021, the COVID-19 virus forced Northwestern State University to reevaluate how to execute its mission. Through deliberate planning, Northwestern substantially modified academic programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning and the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Assignments and student learning assessments were modified to maximize the principles of equitable evaluation and assure the highest quality in-person classes, online delivery of courses, and hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources were updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

Student learning outcomes guide the design and delivery of instruction to ensure student learning. While the assessment process continues, it would be naïve to assume academic program assessments have not been affected—the degree of which is based on individual programs. Because of the tireless efforts of Northwestern’s highly accomplished and respected leadership, faculty, and staff, the trust of current and future students in the University’s commitment to extraordinary academic and experiential student learning opportunities is evident through increased enrollment, even during these trying times.

NSU President, Dr. Chris Maggio

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

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

Diversity and Inclusion: Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Michael Snowden

Research within Its Mission: Chair, Research Council, Dr. Margaret Cochran

Quality Enhancement Program: QEP Assessment Coordinator, Mr. Bob Jordan

SFA Market Responsiveness: Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development, Dr. Darlene Williams

SFA Community Enrichment: Vice President for External Affairs, Mr. Jerry Pierce and Assistant Vice President of External Affairs for University Advancement, Mr. Drake Owens

Community/Public Service: Service-Learning Coordinator, Mr. Steven Gruesbeck

University Capital Outlook and University Architecture Update: Dr. Darlene Williams

SFA Athletic Prominence: Director of Athletics, Mr. Greg Burke

Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences: Dr. Frances Lemoine

Dean, Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development: Dr. Kim McAlister

Dean, College of Business and Technology: Dr. Margaret Kilcoyne

Dean, College of Nursing and Allied Health: Dr. Dana Clawson

Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources, Mrs. Roni Biscoe

Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Mr. Frank Hall



Executive Summary

September 17, 2021

Northwestern State University of Louisiana's (NSU) *Strategic Plan 2016-2023* provides the framework and context for our actions in 2020-2021. The plan is flexible and responsive to the challenges of the landscape of higher education and remains a steadfast guide for innovative change and positive transformation. It embraces and builds upon the history, traditions, and core values of a University that has been the educational, cultural, economic, and social bedrock of this region for 135 years. *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2020-2021, The Way Forward* is the tangible evidence Northwestern is a learning institution committed to holistic organizational improvement. Northwestern is on a path of growth, adaptation, and innovation in providing the highest caliber educational experience in the region through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences. The ability to rapidly innovate allowed Northwestern to quickly respond to the COVID-19 Coronavirus as it took hold in America. The caliber and character of the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community facilitated the seamless transition from face-to-face learning to online learning. This commitment to excellence by the entire University community continues to drive Northwestern towards securing its vision of becoming the nation's premier regional university.

AC 2020-2021 is the fifth iteration of exercising the University's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Model as part of the *Strategic Plan 2016-2023 Dedicated to One Goal—Yours*. The focus during the past year has been sustaining success and refining procedures and processes to further ingrain a culture of continuous improvement. The Institutional Effectiveness Model encompasses strategic and operational planning, the allocation of budget and resources, and the evaluation of programs and services, including administrative and experiential learning activities. It includes the identification and measurement of outcomes across all objectives, such as strategic focus areas, student learning, service, and core competency outcomes, and the analysis of data and assessment results to inform decision making. These coordinated activities support and enhance the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of Northwestern State University by improving programs and services.

Completing the fifth iteration of its institution-wide assessment process for all strategic focus areas, academic programs, administrative support services, and academic and student support services allows analytical comparisons of the results between the previous year and the established target. These comparisons provide the University with meaningful evidence to drive institutional improvement in student learning and program growth and design. The study of these results is the bedrock for the development of executable action plans focused on driving the cycle of continuous improvement. The process provides the University the opportunity to analyze program results across all colleges and schools to inform its strategic planning effort and to implement improvements based on this analysis.

With clear objectives and mature comparison data, Northwestern can quantifiably measure progress and gauge success. An informed assessment allows for enhanced environmental visualization, which drives the ability to make better decisions and navigate the future. This cyclic analytical decision-making process continues to require honest, and at times, sophisticated analysis of our current courses of action. Through this process, we find we must be flexible in modifying (including adding or deleting) objectives,

metrics, and methods. The results point to better-informed objectives, metrics, and associated strategies, thereby allowing holistic findings, comprehensive analyses, and informed strategic decisions. This document represents the fourth of six annual assessments, all underpinning our Strategic Plan and overarching planning process. The foundation of the process is organizational self-actualization and continuous reassessment, adjustment, and refinement, all focused on meeting our 2023 objectives.

Strategic Decision Making, 2020-2021. This process continues to allow for better strategic decisions resulting in transformative change and the establishment of a community of trust and inclusion. The actions below resulting from the analysis of assessment outcomes serve as evidence Northwestern is engaged in the process of continuous improvement. Highlights from 2020-2021 include:

What a Year!

What a year it has been! We have dealt with the **global pandemic, five named hurricanes** breaking the state record for the most strikes in a single season, and a historic **snow and ice storm**. Through it all Northwestern has **seamlessly adapted** without degradation in **executing its mission with tenacity and compassion**. The University anticipates welcoming students back to campus in the fall of 2021 and is modeling class schedules and other activities after our (pre-pandemic) Fall 2019 academic and campus event programming.

On 16 April 2021, Dr. Chris Maggio notified University of Louisiana System President Dr. Jim Henderson of his intent to retire from Northwestern State University on June 30, 2021. This decision was made during prayerful deliberation with his family and was based entirely on considerations of his family's future and aspirations. Dr. Maggio has served as president since 2017 and was a former member of the faculty, staff, and administration for 33 years. Chris worked in almost every capacity as he served in athletics, recruitment and enrollment management, alumni and development, student affairs and as a vice-president and president. We wish the Maggios the very best in their new journey and are thankful for having the opportunity to serve alongside a caring, compassionate, dedicated leader that gave 110% every day to the people and mission of this great University.

Financial Decisions

NSU was awarded an additional **\$2.8 million through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA)** to continue to support students who have exceptional needs related to COVID-19. Like the CARES Act, the CRRSAA Act provides grants to students, but an important difference this year was that students enrolled in distance education courses exclusively will be allowed to receive an award under the CRRSAA law. Because of this, significantly more students at NSU will receive an award under CRRSAA.

To increase graduation and retention rates for NSU students, leadership worked with the **Northwestern State University Foundation to develop a new scholarship specifically for students who need extra funding to remain in school** and for those who need funding to graduate. Deans and Department Chairs identify students who need this money to stay in school or graduate. In 2019-20, **nearly 25 students received more than \$61,000**.

Northwestern received a five-year Title IV grant of \$2.3 million from the U.S. Department of Education to support our Student Support Services, federal TRIO program. Our SSS program works to support first-generation, low-income students or students with disabilities. I would like to thank and congratulate NSU Program Director Frances Welch and our Student

Support Services team for their effective work in the grant application process and the continued success of the program.

Northwestern offers a **flat-rate tuition for students** who attend NSU exclusively online. Undergraduates pay \$375 per credit hour up to 12 hours and \$100 per credit after that, while Graduate students pay \$475 per credit hour up to nine hours and \$100 per credit hour thereafter. Internet-only students do not pay any out-of-state fees. As one of the **Nation's Top Military Friendly Universities** we offer the military financial options that includes a competitive tuition rate of \$192 per credit hour for active duty, reservist, retirees, and their dependents. NSU's College of Nursing offers a flat rate of tuition and fees for **Registered Nurses who would like to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing** degree. Students pay a flat rate of \$6,750, which includes tuition and fees for 30 credit hours of nursing courses in NSU's RN to BSN program. The flat-rate tuition of \$225 per credit hour also applies to the general education courses that some students may need. Northwestern State's School of Education charges a flat rate for **students in the PREP program**, an accelerated alternate certification program for professionals who would like to become certified to teach at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Students are charged a flat rate of \$5,040 (\$280 per credit hour) in tuition and fees for 18 graduate hours of education courses in three alternate certification programs. Upon completion, students are eligible to transfer 12 hours into the Master of Education program in Curriculum and Instruction.

The Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts was excited to witness the **completion of the renovations to A.A. Fredricks Auditorium**. During the renovation project, the Christmas Gala was moved to the Natchitoches Events Center, marking the **first time in Gala history** that the production was not on the Northwestern State University campus. The success of the event demonstrated the adaptability and collaboration that continues to drive this School toward enhanced prominence.

Academic Programs

In response to the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Northwestern State University **suspended all in-person classes on Friday, March 13, 2020**. Although the University offers 40 of its 95-degree programs online for individual programs, certificates, and specialized credentials, moving the remaining degree programs to an online format involved transitioning over 2,000 sections of face-to-face courses to online delivery in less than a week. The seamless process in which this occurred required a herculean effort from faculty and staff and is a testament to their teamwork and steadfast dedication to the education of students.

The **Louisiana Board of Regents approved** the College of Business and Technology's request to offer a **Master of Science degree in Computer Information Systems** and the College of Nursing's request to offer a **Post Master's Certificate in Adult-Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner** and **conditionally approved the online undergraduate certificate program in Business Analytics** and the **undergraduate certificate in Leadership Studies**. The proposed program will utilize a combination of classroom instruction and experiential learning. The program is designed to build soft skills such as problem-solving and the ability to work on a team while also developing students' confidence and ability to work autonomously.

The Chair of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International Board of Directors notified Northwestern that the Peer Review Team's recommendation for extension of accreditation of **the business degree programs** offered by Northwestern State University has been

concurred by the Continuous Improvement Review Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors. This AACSB business accreditation is a significant milestone which sends the message worldwide that **Northwestern has met the most rigorous standards of excellence in business education** and demonstrates that we have committed to upholding and advancing the quality of the program.

The **Louisiana Board of Regents** approved the **Undergraduate Certificate in Remote Systems Science and Technology (RSST)**. The Remote Systems Science and Technology Initiative addresses the predicted exponential increase in demand for certified remote pilots (drone pilots) with an interdisciplinary, interdepartmental Undergraduate Certificate that will provide students with a foundation in remote systems applications, operation, and regulations.

Northwestern's **nurse anesthesia program received full accreditation** by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs. The program is approved for five years, the maximum accreditation period for a new program, and was also approved to offer distance education didactic courses. NSU's nurse anesthesia program joins 124 accredited nurse anesthesia educational programs in the country and was one of seven in capability review during the 2020-21 year. The College expects to begin admitting the first cohort of 20 students (10 in Alexandria and 10 in Shreveport) in the B-term of the Spring 2021 semester. Northwestern is **the only ULS school to offer the BSN-DNP-NA program.**

The **College of Nursing and School of Allied Health nursing programs** (BSN, RN to BSN, MSN, Post Masters Certificate, and DNP) **completed a successful self-study report** in June 2020 and will host its national accreditation agency, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in September 2020 for reaffirmation of their accreditation.

The University signed a **historic agreement** in September 2019 with one of our partner institutions, Centenary College. The Memorandum of Understanding allows **preferred admission to Centenary College students into our BS to BSN Accelerated Curriculum.** This agreement will accommodate students seeking the BSN degree upon completion of a BS degree in Biology, Chemistry, or related science curricula from Centenary College. This agreement strengthens our role in enhancing health care in our region.

Northwestern received great news with the release of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) most recent Graduate Success Rate (GSR) for member schools. The report shows that NSU student-athletes had the highest graduation rate (89%) in school history. NSU shared the top spot in our 13-school Southland Athletic Conference, and only Tulane University had a higher mark among Louisiana's 12 Division I institutions. **Northwestern and LSU each had marks of 89% and shared the number 2 ranking in the state.**

Northwestern was notified that the **Commission on Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Theatre voted to accept** the response and grant renewal of membership for our BS degree in Theatre. Furthermore, the Commission wrote that they commend Northwestern for prioritizing support as and when funds became available over several years to renovate the A.A. Fredericks Performing Arts Building during a challenging period of financial contraction. They elaborated that continuous support of this kind is important for the theatre unit, enabling it to continue to meet artistic and curricular purposes and goals that serve the institution and its community.

Finally, **four online programs at Northwestern are ranked as the best in the nation** by Intelligent.com and another program has been ranked second. The top ranked programs were the **paralegal certificate program**, the **bachelor's program in allied health**, and **graduate programs in homeland security** and the **nurse practitioner concentration within the MSN program**. The unified public safety administration program's concentration in fire science was ranked second.

The comprehensive research guide is based on an assessment of 1,280 accredited colleges and universities. Each program is evaluated based on curriculum quality, graduation rate, reputation, and post-graduate employment. The 2021 rankings are calculated through a unique scoring system which includes student engagement, potential return on investment, and leading third-party evaluations. The methodology algorithm then collects and analyzes multiple rankings into one score to easily compare each university.

Northwestern's online Bachelor of Science in Accounting has been ranked third in the nation by Study.com. The School of Business, which includes the Bachelor of Science in Accounting, is accredited by American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business. This accreditation places the School of Business among the top five percent of business programs worldwide. NSU is one of the few undergraduate programs to have earned AACSB accreditation, a marker of excellence.

Diversity and Initiatives

The **University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors approved the naming of three campus facilities** in honor of individuals who played significant roles in our university's development and history.

The newly renovated meeting space on **the first floor of the Friedman Student Union will recognize the late Dean of Women Lucille Mertz Hendrick**. Dean Hendrick served as a college administrator at NSU from 1959 until 1974, with the last 11 years as Dean of Women.

The **stage on the Iberville Green will be named the Seven Oaks Stage in honor of the first seven Black students to attend Northwestern**: Steve Jackson, June Cofield, Doris Ann Roque-Robinson, Hyams J. Baptiste, James Johnson, Johnnye Britton-Paige, and Pearl Jones-Burton. The naming recognizes these individuals for their role as pioneers in the expansion of civil rights and for planting the seed of equality and inclusion that has allowed NSU to grow and become the diverse institution that it is today.

The Academic Success Center in Watson Library will be named for former State Sen. Gerald Long and his wife, the late Rose Long. Both Northwestern alumni, former Senator and Mrs. Long contributed personal financial gifts to Northwestern for the library facility, and their donations were expanded with corporate matching funds. Mr. Long also contributed extensive funds which remained in his political campaign account to Northwestern when he left office.

International

Northwestern and the **Universidad Veracruzana, a public university in Veracruz, Mexico**, formalized a dual degree program that will allow students to transfer from one university to the other and meet graduation requirements for bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees from the host university. The initial degree available will be in business administration, but the hope is to

expand the degree options to include nursing, engineering technology, hospitality management and tourism, and creative and performing arts. Northwestern State has developed agreements with several international universities in recent years and is host to a growing number of international students. The International Student Resource Center at NSU was created to help international students in the transition from their home countries to NSU and promote opportunities for NSU students to participate in long- and short-term study-abroad programs.

Community Support and External Affairs

In **Fall 2020 Northwestern's enrollment of 11,447 students set a record**. Highlights include increases in the number of graduate students and freshmen retention. Graduate School registration this fall is 1,150, a 7.8 percent increase over last year. The retention rate for full-time first-year students increased from 70 percent to 74 percent. For the fourth consecutive year, entering freshmen enrollment has been over 1,500 students.

Northwestern **earned the 2021-22 Military Friendly School designation**. This is Northwestern State's 11th time to receive the honor. Institutions earning the Military Friendly School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. Over 1,200 schools participated in the 2021-2022 survey with 747 earning the designation.

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development hosted the **Educators Rising State Conference**. Approximately 350 high school students interested in teaching careers attended the event and participated in educational sessions throughout the day.

The **Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center has earned accreditation** from the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**, the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children. To earn NAEYC Accreditation, the CDC went through an extensive self-study and quality-improvement process, followed by an on-site visit by NAEYC Assessors to verify and ensure that the program met each of the 10 program standards, and hundreds of corresponding individual criteria. NAEYC-accredited programs are always prepared for unannounced quality-assurance visits during their accreditation term, which lasts for five years. More than 7,000 programs are currently accredited by NAEYC—fewer than 10% of all childcare centers, preschools, and kindergartens nationally achieve this recognition.

Northwestern has been **selected to host the Louisiana Board of Regents' LaSTEM Network Center for Region 6**. The Center will be housed on the Northwestern's Central Louisiana Campus in Alexandria and will be one of nine regional STEM Centers strategically positioned across Louisiana. The STEM Center **will provide regional opportunities for PK-16 faculty and students and STEM partners to engage in activities that promote STEM culture and literacy, experiential learning** and prepare a STEM workforce for the future.

Another **important initiative is the Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership (CLIP)**, a paid teacher residency program that develops middle school math and science teachers for high-needs schools in Central Louisiana. Eight individuals from Central Louisiana have recently completed an intense, 15-month teacher residency program and are now beginning their careers as middle school math and science teachers. This program is funded by a \$4.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Quality Partnership Program plus \$8 million of in-

kind matched funding from project partners. The partnership includes The Orchard Foundation, nine Central Louisiana school districts, NSU's Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development and College of Business and Technology-Computer Information Systems, Urban Learning & Leadership Center, EvalWorks, and the Rapides Foundation. By the end of the five-year grant, 44 new individuals will be teaching in Central Louisiana schools in critical shortage areas. Recruitment is underway for the 2021 cohort, which begins work in June.

School of Business partnered with the Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program (EAP), a division of Building our Region's Future (BRF) Foundation, **to host our annual *Inferno Pitch* competition.** This entrepreneurial and business competition provides NSU students with experiences in developing a commercial product from inception and a platform to pitch the product to investors. Students participated in an online workshop with EAP team members, faculty, and other advisors who provided the competitors with expertise, mentorship, and key connections to fuel their success. Student teams submitted ideas for new businesses, and the top five teams made their pitch online to a panel of judges comprised of EAP staff and regional business executives. This semester's modified *Inferno Pitch* competition was one of many examples of the successful delivery of traditional programs through unique, nontraditional methods.

Northwestern **made progress of a few campus improvement projects** that are nearing completion or beginning over the next several months. In the fall of 2019, in partnership with the NSU Foundation, we opened the Campus Marketplace Building on University Parkway and relocated our NSU Bookstore to this new facility. This move gave us the opportunity to re-imagine the vacated space in the Friedman Student Union. Reviewing room usage information and facility use requests, data indicated the need for another large meeting room in the building. Also, through focus group meetings with students and monitoring the growing popularity of competitive sport competitions using video games, staff members developed plans to create a state-of-the-art Esports venue. Renovation is now complete on both projects. When we can do so without pandemic restrictions, we will have grand opening ceremonies for our new Esports venue, <http://nsula.edu/esports>, and 3,500 square foot mini-ballroom meeting space.

We also **demolished Dodd Hall** in the heart of campus. Demolition was completed during the spring semester, creating a green space with the opportunity for future development. We will soon begin **two street overlay projects**. First, Caspari Street from University Parkway to the four-way intersection at the Student Union will be repaved, and later this summer we will overlay Sam Sibley Drive from the Student Union intersection eastward to the Wellness, Recreation and Activity Center.

Our **continued focus on government relations has resulted in priority funding** for the planning phase of a **new academic building to replace Kyser Hall**.

Assessment

In August 2020 Northwestern State University received the Excellence in Assessment designation. We are one of just 12 universities nationally to achieve this prestigious designation, <https://www.nsula.edu/nsu-one-of-12-schools-to-earn-excellence-in-assessment-designation/>. The award recognizes institutions that successfully integrate assessment practices across the institution, provide evidence of student learning, and use assessment results to guide institutional decision-making and improve student performances.



Introduction

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

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

Vision. Northwestern State University will become the nation's premier regional university through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences that prepare graduates for life and career success.

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

- **Our students are our priority.** We provide each student with transformational and experiential learning experiences to assist in the development of an ever-growing individual, scholar, and professional.
- **Diversity helps define who we are.** We welcome and respect all traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.
- **We are future focused.** We are in constant search of individual and organizational improvement by seeking new, inclusive, and innovative opportunities to develop our students and improve our University.
- **Innovation is leading the forward edge of change.** We strive to be at the forefront of all we do.
- **We honor and respect the ideals of freedom.** We protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views.
- **We are careful stewards.** We responsibly and sustainably manage the economic and natural resources entrusted to us.
- **Integrity is our cornerstone.** We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards as educators, scholars, students, and professionals.
- **We are a team.** We are a collaborative community that focuses on ensuring the success of every member.

Section I.

Assessment Cycle 2020–2021

Purpose. To document the results of the Assessment Cycle (AC) 2020–2021.

On 31 July 2020 Northwestern State University was named an *Excellence in Assessment* designee by the National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment (NILOA) for the commitment to the comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes to drive internal improvement and advance student success at the institution-level. The Excellence in Assessment (EIA) designation is the first national designation of its kind, spotlighting institutions that successfully integrate assessment practices across an institution, providing evidence of student learning, and using assessment results to guide institutional decision-making and improve student performance.

The Excellence in Assessment Designation is the first national, jointly sponsored designation to recognize institutions moving assessment of student learning from a compliance exercise to one of meaningful engagement. It highlights the use of evidence of student learning across the entirety of the university setting, involving a variety of stakeholders including students, employers, and student affairs.

On June 18, 2021, the University completed its fifth assessment of its strategic plan, *Assessment Cycle 2020-2021, The Way Forward*. The report is the fifth in a series of annual evaluations incorporated into our Strategic Plan 2016–2023. It refines the University’s roadmap to securing its vision and provides the strategic azimuth to navigate the uncertain fiscal environment of higher education. The University will use AC 2021-2022 as a year of planning and reflection to update its strategic plan to facilitate the continued pursuit of the University’s vision. The expectation is the assessment of the new *Strategic Plan 2023-2028 - A New Day* will be initiated in AC 2022-2023.

Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation continue to allow Northwestern to maximize its strategic decisions leading to institutional improvement. The assessment of five strategic focus areas with 23 objectives and 83 metrics, 159 academic programs, administrative units, and core competencies assessments underpin this report. These strategic focus areas, programs, administrative units, and competencies have continued to capitalize on their independent findings, analyses, and decisions/actions. This structured, cyclic review of our mission, goals, and outcomes will continue to enable the University’s drive towards its vision.

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

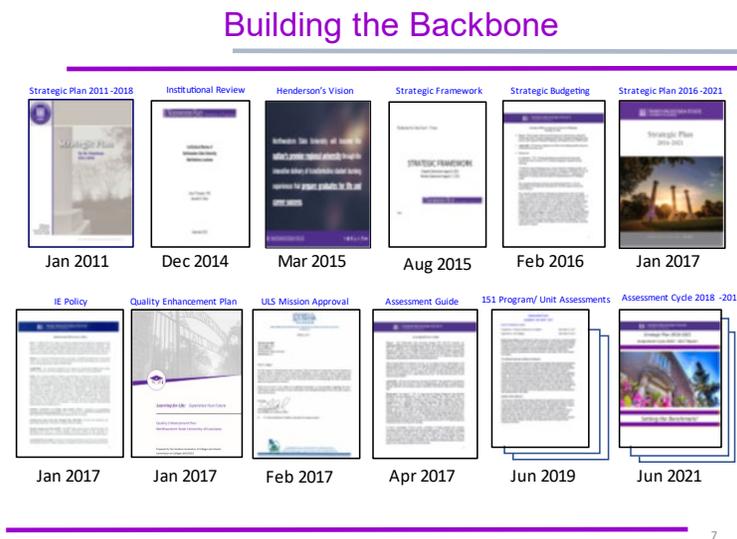
Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Model. The Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors of the University of Louisiana System hold institutions accountable for achieving positive outcome measures in academics as well as support services. Our ability to offer students federally-based financial aid depends on our accreditation by SACSCOC. Accreditation requires institutions of higher education to demonstrate an active assessment process that examines all programs and services and leads to improvement and mission accomplishment (Figure 1). SACSCOC adds, “Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against the mission in all aspects of an institution.”

Figure 1
The Institutional Effectiveness Process



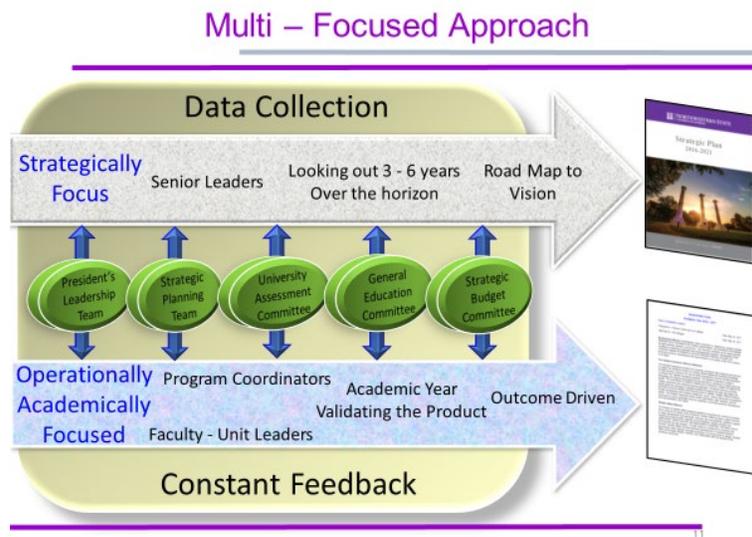
To fully leverage its strategic planning and institutional effectiveness model, a literary backbone of policy and procedures (Figure 2) was established and structured to ensure participation, standardization, predictability, flexibility, and accountability.

Figure 2
 Literary Backbone



The supporting organizational structure (figure 3) is provided through the President’s Leadership Team, which provides the strategic vision and serves as the forcing function to drive the process ensuring various components of the model stay aligned and mutually supportive. The University Strategic Planning Team looks over the horizon and steers the process around hazards and toward the vision. The University Assessment Committee provides for the standardization, predictability, and quality in the process. The program and unit coordinators, faculty, staff, and students are the instruments in maintaining the integrity of the process. The University General Education Committee ensures Northwestern has a broadly based core curriculum that is central to the University’s mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents’ requirements for general education survey courses

Figure 3
Organizational structure



applicable to all students regardless of their major. Lastly, the Strategic Budgeting Committee helps align resources to university priorities, improve transparency, reward entrepreneurial efforts, reconcile program costs and revenue and promote improved fiscal stewardship and accountability.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement, 2018. The University has apportioned each applicable standard to the appropriate authority for ownership, evaluation, and integration into the daily operations of the University.

Northwestern Assessment of its Strategic Plan 2016-2023. The University strategic plan provides the framework and context for our actions for 2016-2023 while allowing for adaptation and adjustment based on the higher education and socioeconomic environments.

Each September and March, the Strategic Planning Team, University Assessment Committee, General Education Core Competency Coordinators, faculty, staff, students, and guests participate in a semiannual review of progress through an update to the President from each Strategic Focus Area (SFA) team leader and special topic area. In turn, as appropriate, the President or designated senior leader will provide an update to all faculty, staff, and community partners at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters as part of the Faculty and Staff Institute, strategic communications, or similar activity. In mid-March, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, in coordination with each SFA, will initiate that year's assessment report. This report captures strategic decisions made during the year and addresses adjustments to the strategic plan moving forward. Each SFA team leader presents an update to the President and the leadership team in September as a status check of each area's progress. During these forums, the President reviews all proposed adjustments to the objectives, strategies, or metrics. The University publishes the Assessment Cycle Report within 30 days of this meeting. The report in purple below is ongoing.

Beginning with Assessment Cycle (AC) 2019-2020, each SFA determines which objectives/metrics it will assess that year based on their data collection plan. Those objectives and metrics not assessed during AC 2019-2020 were assessed in 2020-2021, thereby completing a complete assessment every two years. The University will not conduct an assessment in AC 2021-2022 to allow the senior leadership to solely focus on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges fifth year interim review to ensure the University is following all Federal Law and Department of Education policies.

1. *Assessment Cycle 2016–2017 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Setting the Benchmark.*
2. *Assessment Cycle 2017–2018 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Validating Our Approach.*
3. *Assessment Cycle 2018–2019 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Building Momentum.*
4. *Assessment Cycle 2019–2020 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Sustaining Success.*
5. ***Assessment Cycle 2020–2021 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–The Way Forward.***
6. *Assessment Cycle 2021–2022 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Reflection Year–No Report*
7. *Assessment Cycle 2022–2023 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–A New Day.*

Strategic Plan 2016-2023 objectives: Our objectives by strategic focus area are:

The Student Experience:

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

Academic Excellence:

- Objective 1. Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.
- Objective 2. Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.
- Objective 3. Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.
- Objective 4. Foster quality student-faculty interactions.
- Objective 5. Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.

Market Responsiveness:

- Objective 1. Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead.
- Objective 2. Align curricula with tomorrow’s workforce demands.
- Objective 3. Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies.
- Objective 4. Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.

Community Enrichment:

- Objective 1. Expand world-class performing arts program.
- Objective 2. Increase robust alumni engagement.
- Objective 3. Promote mutually beneficial donor relationships.
- Objective 4: Expand institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.
- Objective 5. Nurture thriving town-gown relationships.

Athletic Prominence:

- Objective 1. Enhance marketing opportunities, game day experience, and resource acquisition.
- Objective 2. Promote community service, appreciation, and engagement.
- Objective 3. Enhance University and community collaboration and support.
- Objective 4. Enhance recognizing and promoting success.

University Program and Unit Assessment Process. All academic programs, in coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. They identify the degree-awarding programs (diplomas, certificates, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral)

that will participate in the assessment process. Each develops program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Simultaneously, University Vice Presidents determine which of their administrative units must review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. Administrative and Student Support Units developed their Service Outcome Measures (SOMs) and their assessment methodology.

Assessments take place during the Assessment Cycle (AC: June to May). Each academic program and administrative unit submits their assessment cycle plans for the coming year to their respective Academic or Administrative Review Committee Chair. The Dean or Vice President reviews and approves assessment plans. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) will account for each plan as part of the assessment process. Data is collected throughout the academic year with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each year, faculty and staff collect data, compare results of the previous year's assessment, the target, and the effectiveness of their action plans to the current year's results providing evidence of improvement or needed improvement based on the analysis of the results.

All assessments are due to the DIE no later than mid-June, exact date determine by the DIE in concert with senior leaders. The University uses the Institutional Effectiveness website as the primary repository for all assessments. The DIE develops the Assessment Year presentation in line with the July Strategic Plan update.

Quality Enhancement Plan. The development and implementation of the *Learning for Life: Experience Your Future* QEP is a seven-year process. Included are two years of data gathering and proposal development (2014-2016) and five years (2016-2021) of implementation. The timeline consists of information relative to all stages of QEP development and implementation: committee and personnel assignments, faculty and student forums, community engagement and marketing, QEP editing and submission, curricular redesign and approval, and academic program assessment. In spring 2020 the QEP will be fully implemented.

Strategic Budgeting Process. The *Planning, Programming, and Budget Execution* (PPBE) model best fits the University's Budget Development. This model provides the appropriate incentives; it is inclusive, emphasizes a high level of transparency in concert with the principles of our strategic intent while providing the information necessary for sound decision-making, support innovation, and entrepreneurship, and helps the University maximize support from campus stakeholders and private donors.

Student Learning Outcomes Statements. The University takes a deliberate approach to the structure of its assessment process, particularly regarding the identification of outcome measures. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides faculty and staff with a guide to assist in standardizing the development of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Service Outcomes (SOs). The University Common Core SLOs support individual degree program SLOs, which underpin the Academic Excellence Strategic Focus area of the strategic plan.

According to the University's *Guide to Outcome–Measure Development*, SLOs should be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and tied to a specific timeframe. Each outcome addresses knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The policy requires that outcome statements specify what students will know or be able to perform or demonstrate when they have completed or participated in the program, course, project, or activity.

As described in the University's *Guide to Outcome–Measure Development*, measures combine the assessment methodology and the target for the outcome. A direct measure, which is preferred, requires a student to demonstrate the skill or knowledge. An indirect assessment measure addresses the

perception of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The University encourages setting targets that are difficult to attain so that there is a constant pursuit of improvement. As such, Northwestern does not rely solely on course grades as an acceptable measure for the assessment of an outcome.

Per the *University Assessment Process Guide*, and in coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, each academic entity reviews, amends, or revalidates their respective missions. The foundation of this assessment process emanates from the hierarchy of University, College, Department, Program and/or Unit mission. Each measure is mapped to a specific course from which data is collected. In most cases, multiple courses contribute to the data collection and analysis of a single measure. In 2017-2018, sixty-six (66) and in 2018-2019 ninety-three (93) degree awarding academic programs participated in the assessment process. Each developed program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and an associated assessment methodology from which they derived their findings. Each then analyzed their results, leading to decisions or actions to promote continuous improvement. In 2019-2020, ninety-five (95) and in 2020-2021 ninety-nine (99) degree/certificate awarding academic programs are participating in the assessment process.

Evidence of Institution-level Student Learning. Assessment data collection occurred throughout the 2020-2021 academic year with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each program identified its findings, completed its analysis, and collectively determined decisions/actions necessary to drive the improvement cycle. Program faculty compared current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the coming year (2020-2021). Program coordinators then submitted completed assessments, once approved by the respective Dean, to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) on 18 June 2021. Please view the 2020-2021 Assessment Cycle Reports at <https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>. An Academic Review Committee, composed of program assessment coordinators, oversees the assessment process within each of the University's four Colleges. Following the completion of all program assessments, each of the four Academic Review Committee Chairs provides input to the annual assessment report. The report captures the most significant findings and decisions of the past academic year, including proposed and actual changes, an analytical assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the status of new assessment plans. This information is integrated into the findings for the Strategic Focus Area Academic Excellence where recommendations for pedagogy, curriculum development, review or adoption are made. The DIE consolidates these reports into one executive presentation for the University President's review/decision in the June-July timeframe.

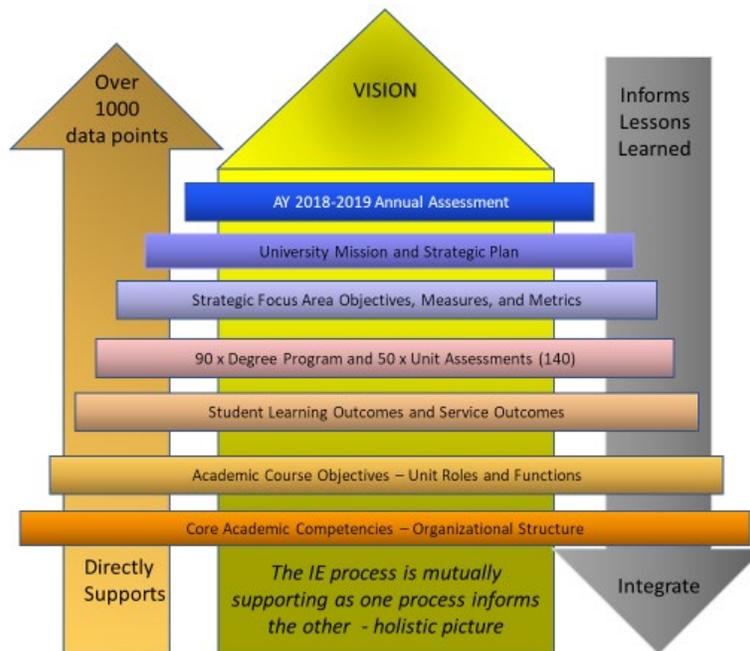
Institution-level Assessment Resources. Assessment resources are centralized on the IE website under the tab *Assessment Process and Resources*. In addition to the items listed, the DIE pushes best practices to program and unit coordinators as part of the monthly UAC meetings. The DIE also holds needs-based workshops and professional development sessions for organizations requiring or requesting assistance or those in coordinator transition. On average, the DIE conducts 15-20 assessment related visits per semester.

Institution-level Assessment Activities. As Northwestern closes in on completing its third iteration of the institution-wide assessment process (for all strategic focus areas, academic programs, administrative support services, and academic and student support services), assessments allow for the analytical comparison of the results between the previous year to this year and to the established target. The study of these results is the bedrock for developing executable action plans focused on improvement in student learning, as well as institutional and program growth. The process provides the University the opportunity to analyze program results across all colleges and schools to inform its strategic planning effort and make improvements based on the analysis of these results. As such, the University can provide its stakeholders with the required evidence of growth based on the review of findings.

Use of Institutional-level Student Learning. An informed assessment allows for enhanced environmental visualization, which drives our ability to make better decisions and navigate the future. This cyclic analytical decision-making process will continue to require honest, and at times, sophisticated analysis of our current plan. Through this process, we continue to find we must be flexible in modifying (including adding or deleting) objectives, metrics, and methods. The results point to better-informed objectives, metrics, and associated strategies, thereby allowing for holistic findings, comprehensive analyses, and informed strategic decisions. The foundation of the process is organizational self-actualization and continuous assessment, adjustment, and refinement, all focused on meeting our 2023 objectives.

At the tactical level, common core outcomes and classroom course objectives provide the data to inform the measure supporting the operational level degree program assessment measures supporting student learning outcomes, which in turn provides data to inform the metrics and objectives at the strategic level assessment of the strategic plan (Figure 4). This nesting of assessment data allows for a better appreciation of student learning while providing a more holistic view of progress in student learning on our strategic focus areas, specifically the Academic Excellence and Student Experience strategic focus areas. This process and the analysis of the associated results and lessons learned drive decisions at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. The use and evidence of institution-level learning are evident in the AC 2020-2021 Assessment Cycle *Executive Summary*, which reflects the strategic decisions made across the university impacting a myriad of efforts from financial health, Board of Regents initiatives; academic programs; student, alumni, and community relations; and external affairs.

Figure 4
Assessment Process



Reflection, Growth, and Improvement Plan. Our model calls for a continuous cycle of annual assessments across multiple echelons with overlapping and mutually supporting outcomes and associated data. The annual assessment process is not complete until the recommendations and proposed decisions reflected in the strategic assessment are mediated and agreed upon by the strategic planning

committee, a final after-action review is conducted, the final report is written, and the brief presented. During the 2019-2020 Assessment Cycle, the decision matrix review reflected over 50 separate decisions. Each decision was discussed and closed with a consensus on the appropriate disposition. The results of the after-action review, incorporating input from across the university, is integrated into the final presentation to the president. Once delivered, recommended improvement to the process is made and all artifacts are uploaded on the Institutional Effectiveness website.

The after-action report requires everyone in the assessment process to take an introspective review of their actions, roles, functions, and responsibilities. It also requires them to identify what is working as designed and what can be done to improve the process. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process in which the entire University is involved, we do not have 100% faculty and student buy-in. We still have work to do in convincing faculty and students of the power of assessment. We have several administrators who fear innovative change and are more comfortable nibbling at the edges.

We are addressing these challenges in a multifaceted approach. We now routinely hold professional development sessions with targeted groups where the comfort level for participants is such that the exchange of ideas is much improved. We are consistent in our battle rhythm of meetings and activities maintaining assessment activities on the radar of our participants and interested parties. We have added more precise language to our University Catalog regarding the purpose of assessment, student learning outcomes, and specifically, students' required responsibilities in participation. The University now requires specific SLO language in each academic degree course syllabus, whereby it is stated how the course either directly or indirectly supports the degree program assessment. We have developed tools for faculty, such as the anatomy of assessment, assessment of a measure by the numbers, fundamentals of assessment, and the transition checklist, designed to facilitate learning. Instituting a culture of assessment and continuous improvement is a work in progress, and the approach must be balanced to ensure support, compliance, ownership, and promotion. We are not there yet, but we are making significant progress.

Section II.

Performance Indicators and Assessment Results

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

Strategic Focus Area 1–The Student Experience

The Student Experience at Northwestern State University of Louisiana (NSU) is committed to improving student lives through the following objectives:

- Provide responsive student services.
- Create a community that fosters diversity and inclusion.
- Enhance co-curricular experiences to aid engagement and retention.
- Provide transformational learning and career experiences.
- Provide student health and wellness services.

Accomplishments related to The Student Experience:

1. Northwestern State University experienced the highest enrollment in its history with 11, 447 students in fall 2020. This surpassed the 2022-2023 goal of 11,360.
2. For the third year, Northwestern State University exceeded goals for students using the Career Services platform, Handshake.
3. Northwestern State University Student Evan Chapman of Mesquite, TX was awarded the 2021 Louisiana Army National Guard’s Best Warrior Award which with 12 graded events and 33 hours of competition. Chapman plays sax in the NSU Jazz Orchestra and is the only Army Bandsman in history to win the State Best Warrior Award.
4. Northwestern State University increased the number of students assessed on the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNLSSI) in spring 2021 to 25% of the student body compared to the spring 2019 assessment of 19%.
5. On the RNLSSI, in spring 2021 compared to spring 2019, Northwestern improved on 7 of 9 major scales. For 2021, Northwestern scored above the national average on every question assessed on the RNLSSI.
6. To reduce anxiety of college students during the COVID-19 pandemic, Northwestern State University Counseling Services quickly converted to teletherapy and continues to assist more students with online counseling.
7. Student Conduct and Accountability with the Title IX Office revised Student Conduct and Sexual Misconduct Policy and developed new trainings for the Northwestern community.
8. Enrollment Management with the Northwestern Foundation expanded the Gallaspy Graduation Retention Award program providing funding to help students remain enrolled.
9. The Northwestern State University Programming Council (UPC) won 4 first place awards at the National Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities National Awards.
10. Northwestern State TV News Services won a Silver and Bronze Telly at an international competition for General Local TV category for the December 2021, Newscast. They competed in a professional, non-student category against professional media journalists such as Disney, Netflix, and others.
11. Student Support Services (SSS) participant Tyrenisha James was selected from students in the Ark-La-Tex to receive the Walter O. Mason Scholarship. The Foundation provides support to TRIO participants who demonstrate a strong desire for academic success.

12. TRIO SSS Assistant Director/Instructor, Jamie Flanagan was elected President of the Louisiana Association of Student Assistance Programs (LASAP).
13. The Mayor of Natchitoches issued a proclamation naming February 27 National TRIO Day in the City of Natchitoches.
14. The NSU Chapter Alpha Lambda Delta First Year Honor Society received the Maintaining the Flame Award (2020-2021).
15. Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society TROW Scholarships were awarded to Ashley Eubanks and Grace Gosserand for 2021-22.
16. Northwestern student Katie Kennedy was elected as the student board member to the Order of Omega Honor Society national board.
17. Reatha Cox serves as the Vice President for the Order of Omega Greek Honor Society.
18. Northwestern student, Madeleine Hensley, won Miss Congeniality at the 2021 Miss Louisiana Pageant.

Table 1
Metrics for The Student Experience

AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	AY 2020-2021	The Student Experience Metrics	AY 2022-2023 Targets
5.81		5.88	Academic excellence and value	6.3
6.02		6.04	Satisfaction with support programs	6.3
5.69		5.73	Satisfaction with University policies and processes	6.3
5.64		5.67	Responsive and helpful faculty and staff	6.3
70.7%	70%	76%	Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 2nd year	76%
N/A	61%	60%	Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 3rd year	63%
36%	42%	44%	Graduation rates	43%
1,560	1,515	1,518	Enrollment per freshman class, per year	1,700
4,573	4,446	3,993	Enrollment on Natchitoches campus	4,500
11,081	10,900	11,447	Overall Northwestern State enrollment	11,360*
10	10	10	Diversity represents regional demographics	10
5.82		5.83	Campus climate of advocacy and inclusion	6.3
5.31		5.52	Safety and security satisfaction survey	6.3
5.85		5.92	On-campus facilities satisfaction survey	6.3
4.88		5.05	Campus housing and dining satisfaction	6.3
7,354		9,464	Students involved in Cocurricular Activities	8,000
351,809	306,304	325,917	Student community service hours	400,000
15	28	36	Programs with capstone experiential learning activities	36
7,674	11,273	14,735	Number of students and employers using Handshake	11,000
75	75%	75%	Percent graduates working w/in 6 months of graduation	80%
36	77	154	Number of health-related programs and services	45

Note: Outcomes for AC 2018-2019 are reflected on the far left with AC 2019-2020 to the immediate right and AC 2020-2021 to the next right. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured. *Adjusted upward from 11,000 in 2019. Yellow text indicates a change in target since 2017. Blue italicized text indicates metrics evaluated in 2020-2021.

Except for enrollment data, most metrics were assessed using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNLSSI), administered every other year (2019, 2021) by the University of Louisiana System. The RNLSSI collects data on a 7-point Likert scale. RNLSSI also allows participating universities to add unique questions, discussed in this report. RNLSSI allows students to rate the *importance* of questions in addition to rating items. The result is a scale called the Performance Gap which allows institutions to better measure student satisfaction. The next data collection for these items will be in spring of 2023. The RNLSSS for 2021 had the highest student response rate ever. Twenty five percent (2042) of Northwestern's students completed the survey.

Objective 1:

Provide responsive student services that aid in recruitment, retention, and student success.

Strategies:

- Provide programs and services for achieving academic excellence.
- Better-integrate admissions processes, financial aid, registrar services, and academic advising throughout the campus.
- Streamline policies and procedures to enhance responsiveness to students' needs.
- Establish and implement programs that assist students in transition from one academic level to the next, beginning with a comprehensive first-year experience and progressing through high-impact experiences and career preparation opportunities.
- Campaign to increase male enrollment in traditionally female areas.
- Manage Natchitoches Campus class availability.
- Increase Dual Enrollment and DE conversions to regular enrollment.
- Increase certificate programs.
- Increase overall number of recruiting contacts.

Metrics:

1. *Academic Excellence and Value*
2. *Satisfaction with Support Programs*
3. *Satisfaction with University Policies and Processes*
4. *Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff*
5. *Retention Rates from First to Second Year*
6. *Graduation Rates*
7. *Enrollment per Freshman Class*
8. *Enrollment on the Natchitoches Campus*
9. *Overall Enrollment*

Metric:

1. *Academic Excellence and Value (AEV)*

Findings:

In AC 2020-2021, responses of 2042 NSU students to the RNLSSI Academic Advising Effectiveness scale averaged 5.84/7 ($SD = 1.42$), while those to the Instructional Effectiveness scale averaged 5.92/7 ($SD = 1.05$), both higher than, but statistically like the results from 2018-2019 ($p = .056$ and $.078$, respectively). Both measures were significantly higher than the national averages for Four-Year Public institutions ($p < .001$).

Analysis:

All four items on the Academic Advising Effectiveness scale improved from 2018-2019, although only one changed significantly: *My academic advisor is available when I need help* increased from 5.74/7 to 5.90/7 ($p < .001$). Students rate these items as highly important, resulting in a positive performance gap for this question.

Two items on the Instructional Effectiveness scale were significantly higher than in 2016-2017. The average score for *Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students*, increased from 5.64/7 ($SD = 1.65$) in 2018-2019 to 5.84/7 ($SD = 1.49$) in AC 2020-2021. In terms of importance, this item was ranked 14th out of 45 items. This was an area of concern in AC 2018-2019. The average score for *There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term* improved significantly from 5.91/7 ($SD = 1.43$) to 6.02/7 ($SD = 1.34$; $p = .021$).

Faculty provide timely feedback about my academic progress is an individual item showing a decline from AC 2018-2019 to AC 20120-2021. While not statistically significant, in a time of online learning this is an important area for improvement.

Decision:

- Deans and Department Chairs will be apprised of RNLSSI findings.
- Deans and Provost will analyze data on timely feedback and discuss with faculty.
- Deans and Provost will discuss ways to improve response time.

Metric:

2. Satisfaction with Support Programs (SSP)

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Campus Services scale include library, computer labs, tutoring services, online access, career services, counseling services, and mentoring. The scale average ($M = 6.04/7$, $SD = 1.04$) was slightly above, but statistically like the average from AC 2018-2019 ($M = 6.02/7$, $SD = 1.12$).

Analysis:

Northwestern improved slightly in overall student satisfaction compared to AC 2018-2019. Of the eight items reviewed, NSU improved on six, although only one was significant. The item, *There are adequate services to help me decide on a career*, increased from 5.76/7 ($SD = 1.60$) in AC 2018-2019 to 5.88/7 ($SD = 1.44$, $p = .023$).

Two items had a slight decline compared to 2018-2019:

- *This campus provides online access to services I need.*
- *I receive the help I need to apply my academic major to my career goals.*

Decision:

- Review online access by hosting focus groups.
- Career Services will meet with Deans regarding careers and majors.

Metric:

3. Satisfaction with University Policies and Processes (UPP)

Findings:

In 2020-2021, University Policies and Procedures were evaluated using two scales on the RNLSSI, plus one item each from two additional scales.

- Responses to the Registration Effectiveness scale (processes and procedures, billing policies, class registration, and convenient times) averaged 5.84/7 ($SD = 1.13$) in 2020-2021, compared to 5.83/7 ($SD = 1.14$) in 2018-2019.
- Responses to the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale (five items addressing admissions and financial aid) indicate a satisfaction of 5.61/7 ($SD = 1.40$) in 2020-2021, compared to 5.59/7 ($SD = 1.44$) in 2018-2019.
- Responses to the statement, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, on the Campus Life scale averaged 6.15/7 ($SD = 1.29$) in 2020-2021, compared to 5.92/7 ($SD = 1.58$) in 2018-2019.
- The item, *I seldom get the run-around when seeking information on this campus*, averaged 5.50/7 ($SD = 1.74$) compared to 5.45/7 ($SD = 1.81$) in 2018-2019.

Averaging the 11 items in this metric results in a score of 5.73/7 for 2020-2021, compared 5.69/7 for 2018-2019.

Analysis:

Policies and Procedures that are easy to understand and student friendly are obviously important in student satisfaction, success, and retention. Streamlining policy has been a goal in the Student Experience since the inception of the strategic plan.

Comparing 2019 to 2021, the items included in the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale were volatile; the item, *Registration processes and procedures are convenient*, increased significantly ($p = .005$) while the item, *Billing policies are reasonable*, dropped significantly by the same amount ($p < .001$). This item also declined in AC 2018-2019. In the Registration Effectiveness scale, no items changed significantly; only the item, *Financial aid counseling is available if I need it*, dropped compared to 2019. The item, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, rose substantially by 0.23 points ($p < .001$), which is important, considering this metric dropped in 2019. Considering all 11 items collectively, NSU experienced a slight overall increase.

In 2020-2021 Northwestern developed a new online “Questions and Concerns” page which is continuously monitored and allows students to ask questions of and register concerns with the appropriate campus contact. Staff in the Student Experience and Information Technology worked diligently to develop a platform that appropriately connects students to the correct staff. The program also takes students directly to their assigned academic advisor.

Items with declines were:

1. *Billing policies are reasonable.*
2. *I can take care of college-related business at times that are convenient to me.*
3. *Financial aid counseling is available if I need it.*

Items with the largest increases include:

- *Student disciplinary procedures are fair.*
- *Registration processes and procedures are convenient.*

Decision:

- VPSE and the CFO will review billing processes and develop better student communication.
- Focus groups on ideal times for offices to provide services.

Metric:

4. Responsive and Helpful Faculty and Staff

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Student Centeredness scale averaged 5.81/7 (*SD* = 1.20) in 2020-2021, compared to 5.77/7 (*SD* = 1.28) for 2018-2019.

The RNLSSI item, *Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual*, was unchanged between 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, averaging 5.10/7 (*SD* = 1.83)

Averaging the 5 items results in a score of 5.67/7 for 2020-2021, compared to 5.64/7 for 2018-2019.

Analysis:

The five individual items from the RNLSSI in this metric remained stable or improved slightly between 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, but none of the changes were significant. It is commendable that the largest increase was on the item, *Students are made to feel welcome here*, which changed from 6.05/7 (*SD* = 1.43) in AC 2018-2019 to 6.11/7 (*SD* = 1.34) in AC 2020-2021.

Decision:

- Identify a customer Service Training for employees
- Consider adding objectives related to employee satisfaction.

Metric:

5. Retention Rate of Full-time First to Second Year

Findings:

The first year to second year persistence rate for first-time, full-time, baccalaureate-seeking entering freshmen increased from 70.7% (fall 2019) to 76.0% (fall 2020)

Analysis:

The retention rate for full-time first to second year students in fall 2020 was 6% higher than fall 19.

Decision:

- The Director of Enrollment Management continues to develop new retention plans to address first time students.
- Continue to look for scholarship dollars for full-time first-time students.

Metric:

6. Retention Rate of Full-time First to Third Year

Findings:

The persistence rate of students from first to third year dropped from 61% to 60% and did not meet the target of 63%.

Analysis:

While this metric dropped by only 1 percentage point, retention to the third year of college is an excellent indicator for graduation. This drop is likely affected by the pandemic and financial barriers. More focus is needed on this metric if Northwestern expects to increase enrollment and graduation rates.

Decision:

- Faculty/staff think tank.
- Review of academic programs with loss of 1st to 3rd year students.
- Review available scholarships.

Metric:

7. Graduation Rates

Findings:

In 2019-2020, Northwestern adjusted the graduation rate parameters to parallel those established by SACSCOC. Therefore, the 6-year graduation target for full time degree-seeking students for 2019-2020 was edited in the metric table from 45% to 42%. The graduation for 2020-2021 was 44%, resulting in a small increase based on the new assessment standards.

Analysis:

Six-year graduation rate rose slightly in 2020-2021 due to the adjustment of the assessment standard. The rate is low and needs to improve to meet the mission of the institution.

Decision:

- Faculty focus groups.
- Request IR reports to determine areas with decline.
- Work with Deans and Department Chairs to determine reasons for stop outs.
- Consider childcare grant opportunities to assist students.
- Look for scholarship dollars for students not graduating.

Metric:

8. Enrollment Per Freshman Class Per Year

Findings:

The number of entering freshmen increased from 1,515 in fall 2019 to 1,518 in fall 2020. This number included new students who first enrolled in the summer term and continued in the fall.

Analysis:

The enrollment for the freshman class increased by 3 students for fall 2020; however, to reach the target and grow, freshman enrollment should increase.

Decision:

- Focus on Central LA and NW LA students
- Focus on targeted minority students.
- Maintain low cost of enrollment.
- Explore scholarships for underserved.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.

Metric:

9. Enrollment on Natchitoches Campus

Findings:

The enrollment of students taking at least one face-to-face class on the Natchitoches campus for fall 2020 was 3,993, down by 453 students from fall 2019.

Analysis:

The target for this metric is 4,500 which was exceeded in fall of 2018; however, the target was not met in fall 2019 or fall 2020. Rising costs of on campus living, greater emphasis on online education, and the COVID-19 pandemic likely impacted Natchitoches campus enrollments.

Decision:

- VPSE/DOS will appoint a Task Force to study Natchitoches enrollment.
- Work with Foundation for scholarship dollars.
- Work with IR to determine areas with significant face-to-face declines.
- Continue to review offerings and closely monitor student requests for face-to-face classes.
- Explore on-campus housing issues related to cost.
- Increase clinical offering and retention of clinical students for College of Nursing and Allied Health (CONAH) in Natchitoches.

Metric:

10. Overall Northwestern State University Enrollment

Findings:

Enrollment over all instructional sites and online was 11,447 in the fall of 2020. This was an increase of 547 students from the fall of 2019.

Analysis:

Overall Northwestern enrollment increased by 547. Increases may be attributed to changes in admissions standards due to the pandemic. In addition, Northwestern saw increases in online enrollment, a well-established venue for the University and likely the most feasible option for students during COVID-19 restrictions.

Decision:

- Reconsider goals.
- Increase online transfers.
- Improve leveraging of scholarship and exemption dollars.
- Improve leveraging of discounting in competitive markets.
- Increase number of certificates programs.
- Increase scholarships in areas not covered by Gallaspy Foundation.
- Focus on Central LA and NW LA students.
- Focus on targeted minority students.
- Maintain low costs of enrollment.
- Explore scholarships for underserved.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.

Objective 2:

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

Strategies:

- Develop a diversity plan articulated in all university policies and procedures.
- Continue to broaden programs and services for students, faculty, and staff geared to making the campus climate equally welcoming for all members of the community.
- Develop our students to be future leaders with a strong sense of civic responsibility, ethical reasoning, and social justice.
- Educate campus community on Disability Services.
- Highlight programs to focus on male and international students.

Metrics:

1. Diversity represents regional demographics.
2. Campus climate of advocacy and inclusion
3. Safety and security satisfaction

Metric:

1. Diversity Represents Regional Demographics

Findings:

Northwestern State University student demographics mirror those of the region the University serves (Tables 2 and 3). Omitting international students, the proportion of majority students (57.9%) and minority students (42.1%) are the same as those in Louisiana ($\chi^2(1) = 1.093, p = .296$), based on current population estimates. However, women are much more highly represented in the student body than in the state (72.1% compared to 51.0%), comparable to national trends.

Analysis:

NSU's student body remains very diverse. Within the minority population, Native Americans, Hispanics, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islanders, and two or more races are slightly more highly represented than

Table 2

NSU Fall and Spring Enrollment by Gender and Ethnicity AC 2020-2021

Gender	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Foreign	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Unknown	White, nonhispanic	Total
F	112	104	2,615	94	527	6	399	119	5,251	9,227
% of F	1.2%	1.1%	28.3%	1.0%	5.7%	0.1%	4.3%	1.3%	56.9%	71.9%
M	49	46	857	74	258	7	172	66	2,076	3,605
% of M	1.4%	1.3%	23.8%	2.1%	7.2%	0.2%	4.8%	1.8%	57.6%	28.1%
NSU	161	150	3,472	168	785	13	571	185	7,327	12,832
	1.3%	1.2%	27.1	1.3%	6.1%	0.1%	4.4%	1.4%	57.31	

Derived from Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Census files, unduplicated.

Table 3
 State of Louisiana Demographics for AC 2019-2020*

Gender	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Foreign*	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or Pacific	Two or more races	Unknown (Some Other Race)	White, nonhispanic	Total
F	15,330	35,408	761,756		86,166	917	36,971	28,480	1,349,052	2,314,080
% of F	0.7%	1.5%	32.9%		3.7%	0.04%	1.6%	1.2%	58.3%	51.0%
M	15,249	34,724	690,640		106,394	1,046	35,912	40,747	1,294,580	2,219,292
% of M	0.7%	1.6%	31.1%		4.8%	0.05%	1.6%	1.8%	58.3%	49.0%
LA	30,579	70,132	1,452,396		192,560	1,963	72,883	69,227	2,643,632	4,533,372
	0.7%	1.5%	32.0%		4.2%	0.04%	1.6%	1.5%	58.3%	

Derived from <https://suburbanstats.org/population/how-many-people-live-in-louisiana>.

expected for Louisiana. In part this may be due to the small numbers of students in these groups, or to the fact that individuals are more likely to identify with two or more races. Also, the comparison data covers the entire state of Louisiana rather than being weighted according to our students’ parishes of origin. Population estimates for Louisiana in 2018-2019 were calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau, based on 2010 census data, since results of the 2020 census by race have not yet been released. The disparity between NSU’s distribution of students by gender mirrors the nationwide trend for more women to attend college than men, as well as the popularity of traditionally female dominated majors, such as nursing and education, at the Northwestern State University.

Decision:

- Continue to support new initiatives to increase the enrollment of males in traditionally female-dominated majors.
- Work with local Native American Tribes.
- Develop strategies to increase Asian population at Northwestern.

Metric:

2. Campus Climate of Advocacy and Inclusion

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Campus Climate scale averaged 5.83/7 (*SD* = 1.28) in 2020-2021, compared to 5.82/7 (*SD* = 1.23) in 2018-2019.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-2021, two items remained stable, two declined, and four improved, although none of the changes were statistically significant. Of particular concern were the metrics exhibiting consecutive declines between AC 2016-2017 and AC 2020-2021. The item, *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, dropped from 6.00/7 (*SD* = 1.28) in AC 2016-2017 to 5.88/7 (*SD* = 1.43), a significant decline (*p* = .010), even though the national scores were increasing for the same period (*p* = .011). Similarly, the item, *Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment*, dropped from 5.73/7 (*SD* = 1.61) in AC 2016-2017 to 5.58/7 (*SD* = 1.64), also a significant decline (*p* = .009). National scores increased on this metric for the same 4-year period (*p* < .001). On the RNLSSI, students rate the student conduct process as fair. Satisfaction with the Office of Accountability and Conduct has risen with every administration of the RNLSSI. In addition, this office has an advocacy component.

Decision:

- Add student safety issues to the new Strategic Diversity Plan.
- Fully implement the newly developed Strategic Diversity Plan.
- Move appropriate metrics to Strategic Diversity Plan
- Address safety at cabinet and leadership team.

Metric:

3. *Safety and Security Satisfaction*

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Safety and Security scale averaged 5.52/7 ($SD = 1.35$) in 2020-2021, compared to 5.31/7 ($SD = 1.41$) for 2018-2019.

Analysis:

The four items in this metric include one of the items of concern in Metric 2, *The campus is safe and secure for all students*. However, overall this subscale improved significantly from AC 2018-2019 ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 1.41$) to AC 2020-2021 ($M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.35$; $p < .001$), due to large improvements in the two items regarding parking. The item, *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate*, improved from 4.25/7 ($SD = 2.16$) in AC 2018=2019 to 4.96/7 ($SD = 1.96$; $p < .001$) in AC 2020-2021, and the item, *Parking lots are well-lighted and secure*, improved from 5.25/7 ($SD = 1.73$) in AC 2018=2019 to 5.36/7 ($SD = 1.69$; $p = .047$) in AC 2020-2021. Parking issues are likely related to availability of space during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Decision:

- University Safety Committee will review campus lighting and make suggestions.
- Safety of all students will be addressed with the VP for Inclusion and Diversity for consideration in the Strategic Objectives in that area.
- Address safety at cabinet and leadership team.

Objective 3:

Enhance the co-curricular experiences to aid in retention, engagement, persistence, and completion of all NSU students.

Strategies:

- Transform campus spaces to create a unique and engaging campus environment, which adapts to the changing trends of a diverse student body.
- Expand the number of living-learning programs and activities.
- Rebrand programming as Campus Alma Mater programs to build allegiance to NSU.
- Develop award program for civic engagement.
- Develop women's living and learning community.

Metrics:

1. *On Campus Facilities Satisfaction*
2. *Campus Housing and Dining Satisfaction*
3. *Students Engaged in Co-Curricular Activities*
4. *Hours Students Engage in Community Service*

Metric:

1. On-Campus Facilities Satisfaction

Findings:

The RNLSSI item, *On the whole, the campus is well maintained*, was used to measure satisfaction with campus facilities. The mean score increased from 5.85/7 (*SD* = 1.49) in AC 2018-2019 to 5.92/7 (*SD* = 1.42) in AC 2020-2021. An additional local survey from the Event Management System (EMS) assessing facilities in the Student Union is conducted annually. Of 55 entities answering the survey, 22 represented Recognized Student Organizations. The EMS survey for 2020-21 (Table 4) indicates almost total satisfaction for the process of reserving facilities in the Student Union. Pre-pandemic data for Student Union utilization indicates high traffic in most of the building throughout the years. This is especially true for the Ballroom, a large multi-purpose room used by NSU and members of the Natchitoches community. High traffic in this area led to NSU remodeling the old NSU Bookstore space to provide a “mini ballroom” recently dedicated to former Dean of Women, Lucille Hendrick. This action clearly demonstrates that the Student Experience is responsive to student needs.

Table 4

Friedman Student Union survey

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
It was convenient to book the facility through the Event Management System.	1.82% 1	0.00% 0	14.55% 8	80.00% 44	3.64% 2	55	3.79
The contract, rules, and booking details were clear and easy to understand	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 11	74.55% 41	5.45% 3	55	3.79
Pricing for the venue was reasonable.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.36% 9	56.36% 31	27.27% 15	55	3.77
Confirmation for my event was received in a reasonable time.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.37% 11	74.07% 40	5.56% 3	54	3.78
My experience with the booking staff was satisfactory.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.73% 7	83.64% 46	3.64% 2	55	3.87

#	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE
1	The venue pricing is some of the cheapest in the city. Or even in the state!	4/29/2021 11:11 AM
2	Great staff as always!	4/21/2021 10:15 AM

Analysis:

The increase in the RNLSSI item regarding facility maintenance is not statistically significant, however, it does indicate a moderate improvement of 0.07 points. The local survey also shows high satisfaction with facilities. Generally, the campus community and the local community are satisfied with facilities.

Decision:

- Student Experience Staff will continue to identify improvements in the Student Union.
- Funding for overall improvements to the Union, especially the Alley, will be investigated.
- Student Experience staff will identify new spaces for development and improvement for students.

Metric:**2. On-Campus Housing and Dining Satisfaction****Findings:**

The RNLSSI Campus Life scale contains three items that directly address housing and dining experiences: *Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable*, *There is an adequate selection of food available on campus*, and *Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual*. The average of these items was used to measure satisfaction with campus facilities. The mean score increased from 4.88/7 in 2018-2019 to 5.05/7 in AC 2020-2021.

Analysis:

The three items from the RNLSSI included one which increased significantly over the first administration of this measure and a second which improved, but not significantly. Student responses to the item, *There is an adequate selection of food available on campus*, increased from 4.61/7 ($SD = 2.10$) in 2018-2019 to 5.01/7 ($SD = 1.97$; $p < .001$); this was the second consecutive significant increase in this measure. Student ratings of the living conditions in the residence halls improved from 4.94/7 ($SD = 1.89$) in AC 2018-2019 to 5.05/7 ($SD = 1.82$) but were not significantly different. Their ratings of resident hall staff remained stable.

In response to the question *Residence Hall staff care about me as an individual*, the satisfaction rate stayed the same and the importance rate also dropped by 1%. This satisfaction percentage dropped in 2019 compared to the 2017 results. While there was no change in the satisfaction rate regarding residence hall staff, housing administration should continue to push this rate higher as it impacts to student retention.

Decision:

- Roundtables with students regarding Housing staff.
- Improve housing staff training.
- Discuss rates with Housing.
- Discuss additional LLCs with Housing.
- Roundtables with students and staff regarding campus dining.
- Explore additional housing and dining scholarships.

Metric:**3. Students Involved in Co-Curricular Activities****Findings:**

Data for this metric was obtained from the NSU Presence platform (formerly NSU OrgSync), an online computer program related to activity for Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs). The number of students involved in Co-Curricular Activities, as determined by Presence, is the overall measure for this metric. Students and faculty/staff use Presence to record activity, membership, leadership opportunities, schedules, by-laws, regulations, and other information required of student organizations on campus. Additional data comes from the Event Management System (EMS) managed by the Director of the Student Union.

In AC 2020-2021, 9,464 currently enrolled students were registered in Presence, which allows students in organizations to see events, check in for events, and communicate with others in their organizations.

In AC 2020-2021, RSOs reserved on-campus facilities 1,467 times through the Event Management System (Table 5). Student bookings dropped by 304 from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 and by 262 in 2020-2021 compared to 2019-2020. Considering shutdowns during the pandemic, declines were anticipated.

Table 5

Event Management System Reservations for Recognized Student Organizations

EMS Data	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Total Bookings (all EMS facilities)	2,033	1,729	1,467
Estimated Attendance at Booking	95,630	75,953	50,538

Presence recorded attendance (face to face and online) at student events in 2020-2021. Students hosted 506 events (fundraisers, leadership trainings, organizational meetings, networking, recreational activities, service events, sisterhood/brotherhood events, socials, virtual events, welcomes, and Esports activities). Events were attended by 5,014 students. The unduplicated headcount was 1,279. As this is a new computer program, comparative data from previous years is not exact.

A question on the RNLSSI, *Student activity fees are put to good use*, relates to student involvement in co-curricular activities. The importance of this item dropped in 2021 while the satisfaction rate increased.

Analysis:

Northwestern increased in student participation and surpassed the target. An analysis of campus bookings over the past years shows a significant decline. 2020-2021 declines are undoubtedly due to closures and restrictions during the pandemic and decreases in on campus enrollment. The new data in Presence shows events and student activity which included online programming as well. While comparative data is not exact, the number of students involved in co-curricular activities and events is encouraging particularly considering COVID-19 restrictions. The fact that students feel their fees are put to good use at NSU is also encouraging. The drop in importance of this item is an area of concern.

Decision:

- Determine exact data sources and targets with Student Experience staff.
- Look for best practices for student.
- Expand leadership development for all RSOs.
- Online programming and other engagement possibilities need to be further explored.

Metric:

4. Hours Students Involved in Community Service

Findings:

Northwestern State University students, including students in recognized student organizations, Greeks, athletes, freshmen, First Year Experience, and students participating in academic projects, volunteered for a total of 325,917 community service hours in 2020-2021 (Table 6). The total services hours in 2019-20 was of 306,304 The number of community service hours in in 2018-19 was 351,809.

Table 6

Student Volunteer Service Hours

Unit	Hours
Academic Affairs	309,426.5
Student Experience	14,946
Athletics	1,544
Total	325,916.5

Included in the total are hours Northwestern students volunteered at the Natchitoches Campus Food Pantry. Over 65 volunteers worked a total of 1,461 hours in the campus food pantry serving 242 students with food insecurity. Northwestern students continue to volunteer for clean-up and repair following natural disasters (hurricanes and tornadoes) in communities outside Natchitoches, and they do a large amount of clean up on campus and around town.

Analysis:

Reporting for this metric is less than precise. However, Northwestern students clearly engage in service at a very high rate.

Although Northwestern has not reached the target of 400,000 community service hours, data shows an increase in services hours in 2020-2021 from the previous reporting period of about 20,000 hours. An increase while pandemic protocols were in place is positive. Northwestern remains dedicated to student engagement and development through volunteerism. The Student Experience mission embraces the belief that engaged students are successful in the classroom and become contributing citizens.

Decision:

- Identify ways to better track and count service.
- Continue to emphasize volunteerism in Student Experience and in Academic Affairs
- Consider ways for students to volunteer online.

Objective 4:

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

Strategies:

- Develop a series of high-impact experiential learning activities designed to engage students beginning their first year.
- Incorporate a required capstone experiential learning activity, such as internships, research, or performance-based events, in each baccalaureate degree program.

Metrics:

1. *Number of baccalaureate degree programs with capstone experiential learning activities*
2. *Number of students and employers using Handshake*
3. *Percent of graduates working within 6 months of graduation*

Metric:

1. Baccalaureate Degree Programs with Capstone Experiential Learning Activities

Findings:

Note: Findings and targets for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-21 are adjusted and are further explained in analysis.

In AC 2020-2021, Northwestern added 8 additional baccalaureate programs to the list of degrees with capstone experiences:

Accounting	Dance	Liberal Arts
Communication	General Studies	Social Work
Criminal Justice	History	

Analysis:

This metric reports progress with the Northwestern State University Quality Enhancement Program (QEP). The QEP is managed in Academic Affairs and was established to provide real life experiences to Northwestern students to better prepare them for careers and citizenship. In 2018, Academic Affairs adjusted the targets for the QEP. Adjustments are reflected in the 2020-2021 report only. Prior strategic reports for the Student Experience show the original annual targets and the final target of 66.

In 2019-2020, Northwestern added 13 programs, meeting the goal of having 28 programs with capstone experiences for reporting period. In 2020-2021 Northwestern added 8 additional programs and met the overall goal of 36 undergraduate baccalaureate degrees with capstone experiences.

Decision:

- Goal met; new QEP in discussion.

Metric:

2. Number of Students and Employers Using Handshake

Findings:

As of June 2021, 14,735 Northwestern students, alumni and employers are using the Handshake platform:

Employers	6,789
Undergraduate Students	5,766
Graduate Students	347
Alumni	<u>1,833</u>
Total	14,735

RNLSSI item #24, *I receive the help I need to apply my academic major to my career goals*, decreased in satisfaction by 3% but the importance rate also decreased by 1 %.

Analysis:

Handshake is a relatively new platform for NSU designed to assist students in career decision making and in matching employers with students. Undergraduate and graduate students are loaded into the system when they register at the University, however, students must activate their accounts to use the features.

Activity for 2019-20 showed 11,273 students, alumni, and employees using Handshake. For 2020-2021 there was an increase of 3,462 Handshake users totaling 14,735.

The connection between the classroom and career goals is clearly important to students. Decreases in satisfaction are minimal but should be addressed to improve satisfaction and retention.

Decision:

- Career Services meeting with Deans
- Career Services presentation at Faculty Institute
- Career Services will work with Academic Affairs to provide services via the classroom.

Metric:

3. Percent of Graduates Working Within 6 Months of Graduation

Findings:

At the end of May 2021, 75% of our students who reported, said they were working. This number is fluid and changes daily. The survey closes each year on October 5.

Analysis:

Handshake is the NSU platform for recording and disseminating career and employment information to NSU students and alumni. Data reported is preliminary since the survey will not close for this cohort until October 2021. Email reminders are sent periodically to remind graduates to respond. For students answering *Working* as their primary occupation, follow-up questions ask for details of the specific job, including start date, to distinguish between the intention to seek employment and employment itself.

Efforts to increase responses effected an increase from 22.9 % in 2018-19 to 30% in 2019-20. Therefore, this effort should be revised.

Decision:

- Efforts to increase response rates like 2018-2019 to be revisited.
- Career Services meeting with Deans
- Career Services presentation at Faculty Institute
- Career Services will work with Academic Affairs to provide info on Handshake in the classroom

Objective 5:

Provide for student health and wellness (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.
- Add health services at other off-campus instructional sites.

Metrics:

1. *Number of Health-Related Programs and Services*
2. *Satisfaction with Support Programs (item 2)*

Metric:

1. ***Number of Health-Related Programs and Services and Community Partnerships***

Findings:

In 2020-2021 Northwestern sponsored 77 health related programs compared to 154 during 2019-2020 for an increase of 77 programs, resources, and services.

Events, programs, resources, and services are used for this metric. Health-related activities on the NSU campus for 2020-2021 include:

Events	59
Educational Programs	64
Services	15
Resources	16
Total Programs	154

Analysis:

In 2018-2019 Northwestern set a target of 45 events which has been surpassed every year of the report. Since the establishment of this metric, Northwestern has grown health related programming every year.

Even in the pandemic, Northwestern improved on the number of services and programs provided to the campus community. Northwestern recognizes the connection between health and student success.

Other achievements for Northwestern Health and Wellness include two grant awards from the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center for: Center for Positivity, Well-being, and Hope for \$6,000 and The NSU Wellness Fest for \$7,250

Decision:

- Continue to expand the campus-wide health fair to include more services.
- Work with food service for healthy options.
- Work with Natchitoches community to develop additional partnerships and grant options.
- Consider ways to use existing committees and data to develop additional programs.
- Update University Studies Health and Wellness lessons with new focus on mental health

Metric:

2. *Satisfaction with Support Programs (Counseling)*

Findings:

The RNLSSI item, *Counseling services are available if I need them*, from the Campus Services scale was used to measure satisfaction with the counseling component of support programs in AC 2018-2019 and AC 2020-2021. The mean score increased from 6.04 ($SD = 1.49$, $N = 993$) in AC 2018-2019 to 6.05 ($SD = 1.44$, $N = 2042$) in AC 2020-2021, which was not significant. NSU's average on this measure remained significantly higher than the national average for Four-Year Public institutions ($M = 5.82$, $SD = 1.46$, $p < .001$).

Analysis:

On the RNLSSI this item is a campus strength, with both high importance and high satisfaction. Despite disruptions and stresses connected with the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes in the campus environment, student satisfaction with counseling services remains high. Although on average students ranked the availability of counseling services 23rd out of 55 local and national items, the availability of such services for students in need can be essential to their well-being, success, and retention. We should continue to monitor satisfaction with this area to help us maintain high quality service to our students.

Decision:

- Counseling Center staff need support to add additional counselors and to bring salaries to competitive level with the community.
- Counseling staff and leadership need to continue to find ways to make counseling services more available to students during peak times.

Comprehensive Summary of findings and changes/decisions

In 2020-2021, all metrics for the Student Experience were assessed as compared to AC 2019-2020. Northwestern is making positive improvement in almost every metric.

1. **Responsive Student Services**

Northwestern State University students continue to rate *services, polices, support programs and support personnel* above the national average. While declines were not statistically significant, areas that can be improved include:

- a. *Feelings of safety for minority students*
 - Make minority student safety a specific metric in the new Strategic Plan for Inclusion and Diversity
 - Ensure minority representation on Campus Safety Committee
 - Center for Inclusion and Diversity should conduct a roundtable to address.
 - University Safety Committee will review campus lighting and make suggestions.
 - Address safety at cabinet and leadership team.
- b. *Climate of Advocacy and Inclusion*
 - Add student safety issues to the new Strategic Diversity Plan.
 - Fully implement the newly developed Strategic Diversity Plan.
- c. *Faculty responsiveness*
 - Ensure Deans and Dept Heads review the RNLSSI responses.
 - Deans and Provost analyze data on timely feedback and discuss with faculty
- d. *Housing and Dining Services/More caring housing staff.*
 - Roundtables with students regarding Housing staff
 - Improve housing staff training.
 - Discuss rates with Housing.
 - Discuss additional LLCs with Housing.
 - Continue to work on better application and lease assignment process.
 - Roundtables with students and staff regarding campus dining
 - Explore additional housing and dining scholarships.
- e. *Improvement of other services*
 - Review online access of services by hosting focus groups.
 - Identify a customer Service Training for employees
 - Consider adding objectives related to employee satisfaction.
 - Counseling center staff need support to add additional counselors and to bring salaries to competitive level with the community.
 - Counseling staff and leadership need to continue to find ways to make counseling services more available to students during peak times.
- f. *Policies and Procedures*
 - A major step for Northwestern related to processes was the purchase of CRM Recruit which will drastically streamline enrollment management procedures.
 - VPSE and the CFO will review billing processes and develop better student communication.
 - Focus groups on ideal times to provide services, particularly for Financial Aid.

2. **Community that Fosters Diversity and Inclusion/Enrollment Demographics**

These issues are addressed above under student support programs and other metrics. However, the Northwestern student population continues to reflect the demographics of the state of Louisiana. Northwestern remains the most diverse campus other than HBCU campuses in the state.

- Continue to support new initiatives to increase the enrollment of males in traditionally female-dominated majors.

- Work with local Native American Tribes
- Develop strategies to increase Asian population at Northwestern.

3. Enhanced Co-Curricular Experiences

The Student Experience continues to develop new spaces on the NSU campus that are inviting and build a shared affinity for the institution. When students left campus in the spring for COVID-19, the Northwestern State University Student Union interior was repainted. In addition, Northwestern opened a new E-Sports area in spring of 2021. Adjacent to this space is a new multi-purpose room for 250 students or guests which was opened in the spring of 2021.

- Determine exact data sources and targets for Co-Curricular and Service Hours.
- Look for best practices for student involvement in literature.
- Expand leadership development in all for all RSOs.
- Continue to emphasize volunteerism in Student Experience/Academic Affairs.
- Consider ways for students to volunteer online.
- Look for ways to leverage student scholarships into service activity.

4. Transformational Learning and Career Experiences

Satisfaction with Support Services at Northwestern continues to be above the national average and has improved with each administration of the RNLSSI. Career Services at Northwestern continues to have high ratings from students and are included in the Responsive Student Services objective above.

Northwestern surpassed the goal for students and employers using Handshake last year. The number of students with employment 6 months after graduation needs is a fluid figure. Efforts to increase student participation in the Final Destination Survey need to be increases. Students asked for stronger links between classroom and careers.

- Career Services will work with Academic Affairs to provide services via the classroom.
- Career Services meeting with Deans regarding Handshake and the Final Destination Graduation Survey.
- Career Services presentations at Faculty Institute

5. Health and Wellness

Research shows that students who focus on their physical and mental health are more likely to be retained and graduate. The Student Experience made strides toward development of a healthier student population for the past two years. Despite the pandemic, Northwestern was able to provide increased health programming to students. During the pandemic, teletherapy was provided. Decisions related to this metric for 2021-2022 include:

- Continue to expand the campus-wide health fair to include more services.
- Work with food service for healthy options.
- Work with Natchitoches community to develop additional partnerships and grant options.
- Consider ways to use existing committees and data to develop additional programs.
- Update University Studies Health and Wellness lessons with new focus on mental health.
- 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.
- Add health services at other off-campus instructional sites.

6. Enrollment Data

Enrollment is not a stated objective for the Student Experience but is the most important by-product of the goals and activities of the Student Experience strategic plan. Enrollment data is included in the metrics for the Student Experience and is included below because of the importance of recruitment and retention.

a. *Retention rates for fulltime students first to second year*

This rate increased and our target was met. Enrollment management efforts (freshman support, advocacy for appeals, scholarships focused on returners, and re-enrollment efforts) will continue.

- The Director of Enrollment Management continues to develop new retention plans to address first time students.

b. *Retention rates for first to third year students*

This metric dropped by 1%. Efforts to increase this rate will include:

- Faculty/staff think tank.
- Review of Programs with loss of 1st to 3rd year students.
- Review of scholarships available

c. *Graduation rates*

Rates have improved slightly but are not meeting the target. Furthermore, increases are likely due to changes in the measures. Efforts to foster graduation rates for 2021-2022 will include:

- Faculty/Student Affairs focus groups to determine reasons for stop outs.
- Request IR reports to determine areas with declines.
- Consider childcare grant opportunities to assist students.
- Look for additional scholarship dollars for students not graduating.

d. *Overall enrollment at Northwestern*

Enrollment for fall 2021 reached an all-time high at 11,447 students.

e. *Enrollment for the freshman class*

Experienced a slight increase. To address freshman and overall enrollment:

- Focus on Central LA and NW LA students
- Focus on targeted minority students.
- Maintain low costs of enrollment.
- Explore scholarships for underserved.
- Convert more Dual Enrollment students to campus.
- Reconsider goals
- Increase online transfers.
- Continue to Improve leveraging of scholarship and exemption dollars.
- Improve leveraging of discounting in competitive markets.
- Increase number of certificates programs.
- Increase scholarships in areas not covered by Gallaspy Foundation.

f. *Enrollment on the Natchitoches Campus*

These declines must be addressed. A strong Natchitoches campus enrollment is vital to athletics, student life, CAPA, and Northwest Louisiana.

- The Vice President of the Student Experience will appoint a task force to increase Natchitoches enrollment.
- Work with Foundation for scholarship dollars.
- Work with IR to determine areas with significant student declines.
- Continue to review FTF offerings and closely monitor student requests for face-to-face v. online classes.

- Explore new on-campus housing.
- Increase clinical offering and retention of clinical students for College of Nursing and Allied Health (CONAH) in Natchitoches
- Work with IT to determine face-to-face declines.

The Student Experience staff will continue to find ways to engage students, improve services, and increase enrollment thereby meeting targets. With new leadership in the Student Experience and reorganization of the division, the Student Experience will redevelop metrics, strategies, and targets.

Strategic Focus Area 2–Academic Excellence

The Academic Excellence (AE) focus area made substantive progress or maintained performance levels in meeting objectives for AC 2020-20201 in 5 of the 9 metrics measured in this cycle. Two metrics were not measured due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Declines were largely attributable to the cancellation of conferences and financial constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring semester. Overall, results supporting academic excellence at Northwestern were positive. If recommendations for improvement are implemented during AC 2020-2021, the achievement of targets set for 2021-2022 will likely be obtained.

Table 7

Metrics for Assessing Academic Excellence—those in blue were assessed in 2020-2021. Those in black were assessed in 2019-2020.

AC 2018-2019	AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2022-2023 Targets
84/93	84/95		Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes to help drive effective and innovative instruction	100% Degree and Certificate Programs
50		N > 96	<i>Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching</i>	35-50
4.3/5 (C) 4.4/5 (I) (43% response rate)	4.33/5 (C) 4.41/5 (I) (36% response rate)		Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness)	4.5/5.0 (90%) (45% response rate)
31.48		28.26	<i>Average class size in University core courses</i>	28
4.25/5(C) 4.3/5 (I) (41% response rate)	4.65/5 (C) 4.56/5 (I) (30% response rate)		Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses	4.5/5.0 (90%) (42% response rate)
10/11 (New criterion)		17	<i>Number of University core classes with a designated course steward</i>	100% of multi-section courses
342 93 Prof. Conf. Presentations	278 42 Prof. Conf. Presentations		Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty	400 80 Prof. Conf. Presenters
90 13-G; 77 UG Prof. Conf. Presentations 170 NSU Research Day	70 42 G; 24 UG Prof. Conf. Presentations 68 NSU Research Day		Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting	154 (20% increase)
GRE Verbal: M = 148 (42%) GRE Quan: M = 145 (24%); LSAT: M = 142 (18%); MCAT: M = 494 (28%)		GRE Verbal: M = 146 (28%) GRE Quan. M = 142 (11%) LSAT: M = 144 (22%) MCAT: M = 495 (33%)	<i>Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT)</i>	90% to score 280 GRE; Increase the # of students scoring above nat'l median for LSAT & MCAT by one/year

AC 2018-2019	AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2022-2023 Targets
4.6/5 4.6/5 4.7/5	4.60/5 4.57/5 4.67/5		Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., encouraged interactions between faculty and students; gave prompt feedback; and displayed an appropriate demeanor)	Improve scores in courses below 4.5/5.0
159		N > 185	<i>Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together</i>	180
23 Faculty Grants 67 (EPs/Chairs) 14 (QEP Grants) 86 (ULS Conf) 13 SP&B Grants	25 Faculty Grants 74 (EPs/Chairs) 18 (QEP Grants) 42 (ULS PD Conf)		Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.	45 Faculty Grants 70 EPs/Chairs
8% (N=30)		6% (N=20)	<i>Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants</i>	10% (45 PI/Co-PI)
893		*not measured due to COVID	<i>Number of faculty attending department or college-sponsored workshops focusing on innovative instruction in content or pedagogy</i>	900
990		1,304	<i>Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including lunch and learn</i>	1,600
38	27		Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies	42
199		*not measured due to COVID	<i>Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service</i>	200

Note: Benchmarks for AC 2018-2019 are reflected on the far left with AC 2019-2020 results to the immediate right. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured. Blue italicized text indicates metrics evaluated in 2020-2021.

Five objectives support Academic Excellence.

Objective 1:

Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.

Strategies:

- Foster the assessment of expected outcomes for the improvement of instruction
- Provide online and face-to-face instruction on technology/techniques that will improve the educational experience of our students and professional development of our faculty
- Create a program of faculty-led workshops for tutors in key areas (English, Mathematics, Sciences) to better equip peer tutors to meet the needs and expectations of our students
- Develop a plan for online and off-campus students so these students have the same level of academic support and access to tutoring as our main campus students
- Ensure that faculty and staff are well-informed about the services offered by the Academic Success Center so they may direct students who would benefit from these opportunities for academic support

- Use student fee accounts for upgrading consumable classroom and laboratory equipment and supplies
- Provide stipends for faculty to design new or to re-design established courses that focus on integrating technology with content to improve student learning

Metrics:

1. Number of assessed academic degree programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction.
2. *Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.*
3. Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).

Metric:

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

Findings:

During Assessment Cycle 2019-2020, 100% (84/84) of academic degree and certificate programs completed the annual assessment. The remaining 11 programs created or updated their assessment plan due to low student enrollment or the program was recently approved by the Board of Regents. AC 2019-2020 assessment results reflect a maturing of the assessment process seeking to improve student learning.

Analysis:

Northwestern identifies student learning outcomes for all degree and certificate educational programs. It assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and it provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results moving forward. This validation of mission accomplishment is a testament to the tremendous work of the entire University community and reflects a sincere commitment to excellence.

AC 2019-2020 is the fourth iteration of exercising the University's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Model as part of the *Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Dedicated to One Goal—Yours*. The focus during the past year has been on validating the approach, refining procedures, and processes, and sustaining success to further ingrain a culture of continuous improvement.

The 84 academic degree programs assessed in 2019-2020 generated 321 SLOs, and 492 measures, averaging almost two (1.53) measures per SLO. Of the 336 SLO's, 86% were met. Of the 492 measures, 73% were met. The change rate was 13%, 06% positive and 7% negative. Four programs failed to meet the majority of their SLOs, 3 programs met.

Decision:

Program faculty will compare current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the upcoming year (2020-2021). The most significant findings and decisions, including evidence of improvement (actual changes), assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the initiation of new assessment plans will be integrated into pedagogy, experiential learning experiences, curriculum development, and course review or adoption—all designed to improve our programs and student learning.

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

Metric

2. Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.

Findings:

Each college reported multiple courses using technologies or best practices (Table 8).

Table 8

Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices, by College

College of Arts and Sciences	
ART 2160, 3560, 3960, 4560, & 4960	Adobe Creative Suite, Manual and software application of design principles in project-based curriculum aimed at print-based media.
ART 3410, 3810, 4610-New Media I, II, III, & IV	Adobe Creative Suite, Manual and software application of design principles in project-based curriculum aimed at kinetic-based media.
ART 4980-Prof. Practice	Assembling resume, artist statement, personal identity system, exhibition proposal in preparation for senior exhibition and professional practice
CHEM 3011, 3021- Org. Chemistry Lab 1 & 2	Organic chemistry laboratories incorporating new techniques for chemical analysis
COMM 2530-Visual Communication	Uses Adobe software to help students develop applicable industry-relevant skills
COMM3260 Social Media Management	Uses Adobe software and social media platforms to create industry-relevant web pages and other social media output
COMM 2440, 3480, 4420-Basic and advanced Video Prod. & Digital Video Prod.	Uses video equipment, Adobe software to help students develop applicable, industry-relevant skills
COMM 2610-Photojournalism	Uses DSLR camera equipment to help students develop applicable industry-relevant skills
COMM3430 News producing	Uses rundown software to create public affairs programming
COMM2400 Audio Production	Uses Adobe software and state of the art recording equipment to produce podcasts and other audio programming.
COMM 4230 Digital Content Production	Uses video equipment, Adobe software, online magazine formats that incorporates all digital skills
NMJCA	Renovated TV Studio with state-of-the-art control room, virtual set, cameras, lighting, etc.
NMJCA	New podcast studio with state-of-the-art audio equipment allowing students to produce/create podcasts, etc.
CJ, History, & Social Sciences	New laboratory equipment provides hands-on experiences in forensic science courses; new courses in history and social sciences, such as American Indians & the Law and Adv. Legal Research & Writing, provides relevant knowledge to students; and updated rubrics for writing assignments to give students the tools they need to succeed.
ENGL 1010, 1020, & 3230-Comp & Rhetoric I & II; Technical Comp.	New technologies installed in two classrooms for student and faculty use. Laptops and iPads are stored on mobile recharging carts, allowing use in other English classrooms.
ENGL 3500, 3510, 3520, 3530, 3540, 3610, 3620, 4710, 4870, 4970, 4980, 5340 & 5870 ENGL Film Studies	New technologies added to the Content Creation Lab including a digital audio recorder, a mini-beam projector, and other technology upgrades to support student learning in the Film Study program.
MATH 1020, 1021; 1035, 1036-College Algebra & Contemp. Math	Co-requisite program for students with math ACT score of 16-18. Students enrolled in 3-hrs lecture, 2-hrs lab with the same instructor and had Inclusive Ed access to software and text materials on the first day of class. High student success (pass) rate as a result.
MATH 2030, 2040, 4050- Elem/Middle Math; Informal Geometry/Mmt; & Math Cont & Conc.	Best practices to pre-service teachers: using various manipulatives to explore, develop, and dissect mathematical concepts and skills for place value numbers, fractions and percentages, and the four basic operations; expanding concepts learned in Math 2030 to measurement and geometry in 2040, building substantial starting questions and using available tools to obtain appropriate theoretical and practical answers; using different algorithms in Math 4050 where students investigate and invent numerical topics presented in class and prepare to meet the needs and aptitudes of their future students.

College of Arts and Sciences (continued)	
MUS 4150/5150-Pedagogy	Projects implementing best practice principles in applied teaching to small groups or individual instruments.
MUS 4110 & 4130- Elem Music Meth; Music Ed for Stud. w/Special Needs	Music education techniques and technologies focusing on elementary aged students; group discussions and projects focusing on assisting students with special needs.
MUS 5870, 5880, 5890-McClosky Technique Intro, I&II	Seminars and projects focusing on using the McClosky Vocal Technique.
MUS 4400- Sound Recording	Students are introduced to the basic physics of sound including hands-on experiments with transverse wave/longitudinal wave, amplitude, frequency, overtone, reflection/diffraction using software such as sound analyzers and sound frequency generator with recording hardware. Other projects include demonstrations using analysis of sound emission for different instruments/human voice in various spaces and with various frequencies to be able to select appropriate microphone to match the appropriate sound quality for the space. Additionally, students are assigned to record recital/concerts in Magale or other formal concert spaces. Lastly, students learn setup and running of PA systems for live events and often assist recording and setup for NSU Jazz Orchestra concerts. Software: Avid Pro Tools HD, iZotope RX, Frequency Sound Generator 1.80, Fast Fourier Transform Sound Analyzer on N-Track Tuner Pro, NewTek Tricaster Internet Streaming System. Hardware: MacBook Pro, Mbox Pro Audio Interface, Rokit 6 monitor speakers, Selected microphones, Bose F1PA system, and Shure UHF Wireless Mic System.
SBIO 1831 & 1851–Honors Biology Lab 1 & 2	Adoption of McGraw-Hill Connect Virtual Labs to provide for a safer laboratory experience during COVID.
SMAT 1820, 1830, 2000, & 2010 and SSTA 3810 - Honors Math: Pre-Calculus, Pure Math, Applied Calculus 1 & 2, & Statistics	Adoption of Cengage WebAssign as a homework tool to provide individualized assignments and instruction for remediation and enrichment, direct access to instructors, and secure testing.
SBUS 482T, SFPA 482T, SHUM 482T, & SSCI 482T– Undergraduate Thesis	Requirement of student presentations of undergraduate theses incorporating presentation software and delivery through WebEx or Teams in addition to or in lieu of face-to-face delivery.
SBIO 3890 & SERV 3850–Honors Directed Study in Biology and Service Learning	Training, preparation, and 10-day medical mission trip serving underserved populations in the U.S. and abroad.
SECL 1910-1911 & 1920-1921– Honors Ecology 1 & 2	Required and optional field work and service on and off campus, including work in Dogwood Valley and Briarwood Nature Preserve.
THEA 3390, 4270- Sound Reinforcement & Recording; Special Prob. In Design, DAN 4660, Dance & Technology	Projects in sound design, reinforcement, and recording using dance theatre technologies. This class was taught online and was the first time it was implemented. Final Cut Pro was purchased to help teach the students the proper way to create a dance film.
THEA 3340, 3360, 4420, 4430, 4310, 4450	Costuming construction; make-up for stage; advanced costumes; costume, lighting, and scene designs for stage; and visual techniques. Use of Auto-Cad Smart-Room Software. The Costume shop received new equipment with grant money that would assist in learning new building techniques for dance costumes. With the closing of a Casino in Shreveport we were able to purchase a bunch a new lighting instruments to update our inventory as well as have up to date technology that is current in the industry.
School of Biological and Physical Sciences	1) Received a Board of Regents Electronic Learning Grant that provided funds to create online learning videos for biology and chemistry classes. This was very important during the pandemic as we had to move skill-based learning online. This impacted multiple classes in both BIOL and CHEM 2) Received a Board of Regents Enhancement Grant that allowed the school to purchase a new gas chromatography mass spectrometry instrument for skill-based learning.
College of Business and Technology	
ACCT 4080-Auditing	Practice cases focusing on developing students' critical thinking skills and core technological competencies in order to tackle a real-world audit scenario.

College of Business and Technology (continued)	
BUAD 3250-Business Law I	In online classes, Internet videos are used. Instructor has video- taped all lectures and placed class notes online for student use.
BUAD 3270-International Bus.	Use of McGraw-Hill Connect, Teams, WebEx, Microsoft Sway, Google Forms, VIC, and Google Maps. Instructor also created a Facebook page to provide supplementary and up-to-date materials for class discussion and assignments.
BUAD 4900-Senior Seminar	Presentation software allowing high-resolution photographs, diagrams, video, and sound files to augment text and verbal lecture content; use of course management and lecture-capture tools.
CIS Courses	All Computer Information Systems courses are based on the idea of utilizing current technologies to improve the operations of an organization.
CULA & HMT courses	Service learning incorporated with Columns Café and local opportunities; use of guest speakers and field trips; volunteer experiences at Academy of Country Music Annual Awards and local/statewide events and festivals.
FIN 3090–Business Finance	Uses Excel, Connect, and Moodle. Through assignments and projects, students apply knowledge and skills gained through classroom lectures to demonstrate an understanding of the material. Instructor uses the scaffolding method of instruction.
MGT 3220- Organization and Mgt; MGT 3580–Operations Mgt; MGT 4300–Strategic Mgt. And Policy; MGT 4320–Advanced Mgt.; MGT 4270–Human Resources Mgt.	Uses casework and other class activities to teach professional behavior and principles of management; ties to other management courses to show how to manage products through a business. Technology use includes McGraw-Hill Connect, Teams, WebEx, Microsoft Sway, Google Forms, and VIC. MGT 3580 Instructor also created a Facebook page to provide supplementary and up-to-date materials for class discussion and assignments.
MKTG 3230–Principles of Marketing	Uses online videos from outside sources and instructor videos. Students present a marketing plan for a new product (active learning–learning through engagement) and the instructor makes heavy use of Moodle for online quizzes, testing, and turning in assignments.
College of Education and Human Development	
PSYC 3010-Physiological Psychology	Neuroscience videos are included to enhance the understanding of students; use of NSUs library online database to research four required assignments; use of Stanford University Medical School’s website for better understanding of stress and how stress influences the body.
PSYC 4420, 4490- Senior Research Seminar	New courses developed to support the QEP. The courses were designed to support academic scholarship of UG students who will initiate a research project and publicly present their findings.
PSYC 4500-Psy. of Business & Industry	Assignments are designed to mimic many activities that Industrial/Organizational Psychologists encounter at work, including Career/Interest Assessments, using Public Relations for Crisis Management, Critical Analysis of Products and Training Programs. Students also complete a personal reflection assignment on ‘models of change’ within the context of personal and professional change theories.
PSYC 5300-Intellectual Assessment	APA ethical guidelines for psychology assessment; professional conduct competency expectations for working with adults and children in the assessment process; industry standards and best practices in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of standardized intelligence measures. The learning experience includes intensive instruction regarding standardized intelligence measures with skills demonstration, student skill building, peer reviews, mock professional settings for student hands on assessment administration with volunteer examinees to simulate the experience of professional psychological assessment in the world of work. Practice assessment activities include skills development with clinical interviews, mental status examinations, and professional report creation. Additional learning experiences provide connection to current industry sources for assessment materials, professional development training, and continuing education.
Synchronous-online Psychology courses	In this format, students and teachers logged onto a virtual meeting platform and class was conducted every class period for all 16 weeks. This style of virtual class offered a benefit over Hyflex classes because everyone had their own computer terminal, speaker, and audio input at all times, making clear communication easy for all parties. This class style also offered a benefit over traditional online classes because all of us were able to interact in real-time.

College of Education and Human Development (continued)	
SOWK 2000-Exploring Soc. Work	Use of pod casts, power points, online articles, interviews, and You Tube videos
SOWK 3030-Human Behavior & the Social Environment	Using Team-Based learning and Problem-Based learning. Developed multimodal videos on all materials utilizing power points with voice overlay that included YouTube videos, podcast, TEDx Talks, and Sage text resources.
SOWK 3070-Social Work Values and Ethics	Uses a program called Geopro for students to create genograms—a generational mapping of family patterns used in social work.
SOWK 4030-Statistics in Social Work Research	Utilized NSU Virtual Machines and Laerd Digital Services for students to learn and use SPSS in the classroom. Utilized Team-Based learning and Problem-Based learning. Developed multimodal instructional videos through Microsoft stream on all materials utilizing PowerPoints with voice overlay that included YouTube videos, TEDx Talks, and Kahn Academy.
ASN and BSN didactic courses	Utilized one-on-one tutoring or small group remediation sessions via face-to-face, phone calls, WebEx, or distance learning classrooms; Utilized ATI online resources such as case studies, demonstration videos, learning templates, custom quizzes, and proctored exams; Utilized textbook online resources such as case studies, virtual simulation, and computer adaptive testing.
College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	
ASN & BSN clinical courses	Participated in real-time simulation at Willis Knighton Innovation Center, CHRITUS Cabrini, Virtual Simulations, Case Studies, & NSU Skills Lab, including preparatory assignments, pre- and post-brief conferences; students utilized age-appropriate & culturally appropriate health teaching for their patients.
ASN & BSN Clinical courses, All Levels	Utilized iPads and Exam Soft (a secure testing platform) for proctored exams.
NURB 3050-Pathophysiology	Utilized Anatomage virtual reality for visualization of anatomical structures.
NURB 3160-Research in Nursing	Interprofessional course with School of Allied Health faculty and students.
NURB 3220-Child Health	Assessed real-time knowledge of students using Socrates or Kahoot, a mobile response system.
NURB 3223-Health Assessment for RNs	Utilized Shadow Health Virtual Simulation for RN to BSN nursing physical assessments.
MSN & DNP didactic courses	Utilized WebEx, FlipGrid, Quizlet, YouTube, and PlayPosit (platform for making interactive presentations) to increase student engagement; Utilized current research through NSUs Library's online databases.
NURG 5700-Methods of Clinical Nursing Assessment	Utilized Shadow Health Virtual Simulation for advanced practice nursing physical assessments
NURG 7010-7012; 7015	Use of Typhon for Digital Portfolio and Clinical Hour Tracking
NURG 7012	Use of ProQuest for electronic repository of scholarly work; dissemination of scholarship
DNP Courses	Use of ExamSoft for secured testing (Exams and Quizzes); ExamSoft for performance assessment via rubric feature for all assignments
RADS 5210 -Development & Teaching Methods in Radiologic Sciences	Module describing best practice principles to include teaching theories and models and applying those in the course; assignment requiring students to provide examples of effective technology use in the classroom.
RADS 5220-Assesment in Radiologic Sciences	Assignment requiring students to apply best practices in student assessment.
MSRS program	Used Teams, Webex, faculty created videos, YouTube, Wakelet, Eduflow, and Flipgrid throughout program to increase student engagement and interaction.
ALHE 4520 & NURB 3160	Created interdisciplinary course utilizing faculty created videos, Eduflow, Teams, Flipgrid, Wakelet throughout the course. This was done to promote student interaction across disciplines and increase engagement with course content.
BSRS program	Using iPads and Exam Soft (testing platform). Use Anatomage and Shaderware to help students with anatomy and physics principles. Cahoot is used to review concepts in class. RadTech bootcamp is used to help students reinforce concepts presented in class and review material from previous semesters.
ALHE 4610	Used Teams, faculty created videos, Wakelet, Flipgrid, and Eduflow for more student engagement and interaction.

Analysis:

As requested by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic administrators submitted **all** courses that implemented current technologies or best practices, and Table 8 represents a selected sampling of courses presented. The request was to submit all in honor of the major shift that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. The samples were selected to demonstrate how faculty expect their students to use current technologies to learn or to apply the subject matter. Also, courses were sampled to illustrate how faculty use best practices in teaching the subject matter.

This year's sample of courses was higher than the sample sizes in prior years. COVID-19 necessitated that all courses convert to the online environment in some way; it was felt that the higher number this year was a better representation of what occurred.

Decision:

The technologies and best practices highlighted in Table 8 clearly illustrate effective and innovative instruction occurring at Northwestern during the academic year. The target for 2021 was a sample of 35-50 courses. This year's target was exceeded. We will continue the upward trajectory, and will continue to evolve the current technologies and best practices in Academics.

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

Metric:

3. Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).

Findings:

Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 summative results for courses and instructors from the Student Evaluation of Instruction are given in Table 9.

Table 9

a. Fall 2019 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	228	1.30%
Poor	(2)	479	2.74%
Fair	(3)	1688	9.64%
Good	(4)	6467	36.93%
Superior	(5)	8650	49.39%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
16,022/42,543 (37.66%)	4.30	0.85	4.00
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	244	1.40%
Poor	(2)	466	2.67%
Fair	(3)	1428	8.18%
Good	(4)	5475	31.37%
Superior	(5)	9842	56.38%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
15,975/42,543 (37.55%)	4.39	0.85	5.00

b. Spring 2020 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	111	0.79%
Poor	(2)	293	2.09%
Fair	(3)	1237	8.82%
Good	(4)	5068	36.15%
Superior	(5)	7311	51.15%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
12,496/37,297 (33.50%)	4.37	0.79	5.00
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as...			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	129	0.92%
Poor	(2)	279	1.99%
Fair	(3)	1086	7.75%
Good	(4)	4199	29.98%
Superior	(5)	8311	59.35%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
12,475/37,297 (31.25%)	4.45	0.80	5.00

Analysis:

Results of student surveys, distributed at the end of fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters, revealed students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard. The mean for all courses was 4.33/5 and all instructors was 4.41/5. The overall response rate was 36%, which is considered a good response rate for an internal survey. The overall student course evaluation of instruction in 2017-2018 was 4.3/5.0 and remained 4.3/5.0 in 2018-2019; the response rate over the past three years has also improved, moving from 37% to 41% to 43% respectively. In 2019-2020, the response rate dipped slightly, but shows consistency over a four-year period. Response in Spring 2020 was slightly lower due, in part, to COVID-19, revised academic calendar policies, and student access to the internet.

Decision:

The quality of instruction at Northwestern is good. Over 87% of students rated courses/instructors as superior or good. With continued professional development of faculty and students, we will obtain our target in course/instructor effectiveness by 2021. We will continue to encourage students to participate in course/instructor evaluations and raise the overall response rate to 45% by 2021.

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

Objective 2:

Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.

Strategies:

- Expand the online resources available through the Academic Success Center to include discipline-specific links to useful websites and resources/tutorials
- Appoint course stewards for each course in the University core curriculum

- Review and strategically monitor the size of classes in the University core curriculum
- Review student satisfaction with instruction in core classes
- Evaluate the measure(s) for each core competency to insure alignment
- Develop a proactive advising system for students not successful in University core classes, beginning with procedures to follow for students not passing the first exam or first major assignment.

Metrics:

1. *Average class size in University core courses.*
2. Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses.
3. *Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.*

Metric:

1. *Average class size in University core courses.*

Findings:

Since the University teaches multiple Dual Enrollment classes, especially those included in the core, these sections were removed from the data set. In addition, multiple sections taught synchronously via compressed video were combined, as were paired sections taught in HyFlex mode in AC 2020-2021. The average class size over 44 University core courses in fall 2020 was $M = 29.67$ ($SD = 12.28$, $N = 432$) and spring 2021 was $M = 26.63$ ($SD = 11.76$, $N = 374$; Table 10).

Table 10

Average Class Size in University Core Courses, Fall 2019 and Spring 2020

Course	Fall 2020			Spring 2021		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
ANTH1510	34.13	4.52	8	32.29	5.02	7
ANTH2020	13.00		1	21.00	12.17	3
BIOL1010	33.13	6.75	8	28.75	3.10	4
BIOL1020	22.33	9.02	3	28.00	22.84	5
BIOL2250	38.41	13.97	17	32.73	15.07	11
BIOL2260	30.00	16.39	8	28.23	13.31	13
BUAD2200	25.80	5.07	5	24.40	5.13	5
CHEM1030	47.67	25.58	3	42.00		1
CHEM1040	39.00		1	28.67	14.29	3
CHEM1070	36.83	18.85	12	36.50	19.09	8
COMM1010	25.12	3.10	26	22.11	5.99	27
COMM2500	24.55	3.50	11	24.75	2.06	4
ECON2000	33.71	9.03	7	30.80	8.29	5
ENGL1010	21.05	5.38	40	18.94	5.67	16
ENGL1020	21.45	6.40	20	19.56	6.63	34
ENGL2070	16.00		1	14.50	0.71	2
ENGL2110	23.38	4.19	37	22.37	5.49	30
EPSY2020	29.50	10.32	8	22.00	12.30	7
FA1040	35.45	18.79	31	29.83	11.80	24
GEOG1010	37.38	5.01	8	37.75	8.92	8
GEOG1020	22.00	21.21	2	28.67	10.12	3
HIST1010	35.33	5.82	6	35.00	1.55	6
HIST1020	34.00	1.73	3	34.33	0.58	3
HIST2010	38.44	12.82	9	33.63	4.21	8
HIST2020	25.40	10.53	10	23.17	16.85	6
MATH1020	26.43	8.49	35	20.52	9.35	21
MATH1035	23.00	8.29	7	30.67	12.58	3
MATH1060	32.33	8.67	18	26.42	9.54	31
MATH1090	25.00	9.97	4	23.50	6.61	4
MATH1100	6.00		1			
MATH1810	19.00		1	7.00		1
MATH2010	31.50	2.12	2	21.67	6.11	3
MATH2100	9.00		1	10.00		1
MATH2110	3.00		1	5.00		1
PHIL1010	32.67	9.29	3	40.00		1
PHYS2030	44.00	15.56	2	50.00		1
PSCI2010	32.33	5.09	6	35.25	0.50	4
PSYC1010	40.81	15.51	16	32.33	10.10	12
PSYC2050	32.75	6.52	12	21.40	8.40	15
SCI1010	37.47	13.13	15	36.80	18.67	10
SCI1020	40.13	13.84	8	46.67	23.57	6
SCI2010	30.14	12.05	7	28.11	12.67	9
SCI2020	20.25	8.34	4	30.33	0.58	3
SOC1010	45.50	11.70	4	38.80	7.43	5

Analysis:

A strategic goal for academic excellence has been to decrease the average size of the University core courses to better achieve our student learning objectives. With the implementation of the redesigned University core curriculum in 2018-2019, the number of courses offered for each baccalaureate curriculum has decreased (51 to 44 courses). Forty-four University core courses were offered in fall 2020 and spring 2021. Fall 2020 courses with the largest enrollment included Chemistry 1030 ($M = 47.67$), Sociology 1010 ($M = 45.50$), Physics 2030 ($M = 44.00$), Psychology 1010 ($M = 40.81$), and SCI 1020 ($M = 40.13$). For Spring 2021, the highest enrollments occurred in Physics 2030 ($M = 50$), Science 1020 ($M = 46.67$), Chemistry 1030 ($M = 42$), Philosophy 1010 ($M = 40$), and Sociology 1010 ($M = 38.80$). For both semesters, core courses with the lowest enrollments were Math 1100, 1810, 2100, and 2110 with an average of 8.43 students for the year ($SD = 5.22$, $N = 7$).

Several trends were discovered. In AC 2020-2021, the mean class size in University core courses fell significantly in both fall and spring semesters, compared to AC 2018-2019: fall semester courses dropped on average 11.9% (from 33.7 to 29.7, $p < .001$), while average enrollment in spring semester courses dropped 8.59% (from 29.1 to 26.6, $p = .006$). In fall 2020, only three courses experienced an increase in average class size of more than one; in 32 of the 43 courses taught both years, the average class size dropped by one or more, with nine courses reducing average class size by 10 or more students. In spring 2021, average class sizes increased by 1 or more students in nine courses, with the greatest increase occurring in Physics 1030; 23 courses had average enrollment drop by one or more students, with the greatest decrease occurring in Biology 1020, where average enrollment dropped by more than 50%. The only course with consistently higher enrollment in both semesters was English 2070, which was taught in three sections in each assessment cycle. In AC 2020-2021, enrollment increased to 15 students per class from 13.7 in AC 2018-2019, still a reasonable class size. This increase may have been brought on by the opening of seats to any majors across campus as opposed to restriction to English majors only.

Decision:

NSU is pleased to report an average class size of 28.26 in University core courses. During 2019-20, Dept. Heads, School, Directors, Academic Deans, Course Stewards, and the Provost/VPAA, along with the General Education Committee, reviewed University core data from 2017-2019, such as the number of sections, class size, and student success rates, to evaluate cost efficiency and instructional quality across all baccalaureate programs. We have also paid careful and cautious attention to class sizes to be cognizant of any changes that might relate to COVID-19. Committee members should continue to evaluate to determine whether core courses should have a minimum enrollment per semester or year, and if the course is meeting general education requirements. The 2021 target will remain a mean of 28 in University core courses, as a result of the recommendation provided in this section. While it would be easy to adjust this target, caution must be made for how the data might have been affected through new and innovative ways we delivered instruction during the pandemic, as well as taking into account section numbers and limitations.

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

Metric:

2. Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses.

Findings:

The average course rating and average instructor rating on the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) in core courses (Table 11) were higher in Fall 2019 when compared to fall 2018; the same was true for Spring 2019 and 2020.

Table 11

Average Evaluation of Course and Instructor in University Core Courses

Semester	N	Core Course Mean	Response Rate Mean	Core Instructor Mean	Response Rate Mean
Fall 2017	51	4.19	35.9%	4.28	35.75%
Spring 2018	52	4.27	41.7%	4.36	41.64%
Fall 2018	43	4.19	47%	4.20	47%
Spring 2019	44	4.27	35%	4.37	35%
Fall 2019	390	4.6	33.19%	4.48	32.77%
Spring 2020	91	4.7	27.91%	4.65	27.91%

Analysis:

The overall rating by students for University core courses was 4.65/5.00; this compares to an 4.15/5 average rating in the baseline year. The mean instructor effectiveness score in core courses was 4.56/5.0 an increase (4.14/5.0) in comparison to the baseline year. Student participation rates in University core courses have increased from 2016-2019, moving from 31% (2016-2017) to 39% (2017-2018) to 41% (2018-2019). A significant drop occurred between Fall 2018 and 2019; a marginal drop between Spring 2019 and Spring 2020.

Decision:

Northwestern achieved the 2021 target of superior ratings (4.5/5.0) in *all* University core courses. We will continue to review student evaluations in University core courses in an effort to retain our achieved target. Our goal is to earn an average 42% response rate from students.

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

Metric:**3. Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.****Findings:**

Seventeen University core courses had a designated course steward in AC 2020-2021 (Table 12).

Analysis:

Based on recommendations from 2017-2018, the University's course steward plan was revised to give priority to core courses with multiple sections and large student enrollment (400+ students). In fall 2018, 11 such courses were identified, including Biology 2250; Chemistry 1070; Communication 1010; English 1010, 1020, 2110; Geography 1010; Psychology 1010, 2050; Fine Arts 1040; and Science 1010. In 2018-2019, we were unable to find course stewards for several courses due to faculty shortages and overloads in departments. The situation improved for 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 (Table 12), and we provided course stewards for 17 courses with the addition of several new, crucial stewards (SCI 1010 and the ENGL 1010/1011 co-requisite). Course stewards were given an extra services contract and were expected to complete an effort schedule to show their level of stewardship.

The purposes of naming course stewards are to ensure course goals/objectives/key assessments are the same across all course sections offered and to ensure that instructors are engaging with students and responsive in meeting their learning needs.

Table 12

Course Stewards for AC 2020-2021

Course #/Title	Course Steward
COMM 1010—Oral Communication	Emily Zering
COMM 2500—Interpersonal Communication	Dorian Eaton
ENGL 1010/1011—Composition & Rhetoric I/Enrichment	Ms. Mariann Wilson
ENGL 1010—Composition & Rhetoric I	Dr. Thomas Reynolds
ENGL 1020—Composition & Rhetoric II	Dr. Thomas Reynolds
ENGL 2110—Introduction to Literature	Dr. Allison Rittmayer
FA 1040—Introduction to Fine Arts	Dr. John Dunn
MATH 1020—College Algebra	Ms. Carrie Maggio
PSYC 1010—General Psychology	Ms. Neeru Deep
PSYC 2050—Developmental Psychology	Ms. Shannon Wall-Hale
SCI 1010—Basic Concepts Physical Science	Mr. Michael Scanlan
CHEM 1070—Fundamentals of Chemistry for Nursing and Allied Health Majors	Dr. Jennifer Hill
BIOL 2250—Anatomy and Physiology I For Nursing and Allied Health Majors	Dr. Jerry Brunson
NUTR 1030—Human Nutrition	Mrs. Catherine Bass (all fall under one course steward contract)
NUTR 1050—Child Nutrition	
NUTR 1070—Nutrition for Children and Families	
EPSY 2020—Introduction to child and adolescent psychology	Dr. Greg Bouck

Decision:

The General Education Committee should review data findings from 2016-2021 and recommend solutions for better meeting the purpose and goals of metric three, objective two. Should all core courses be assigned a steward, either fall or spring semester or both? Or should only core courses with multiple sections and large enrollments be assigned a steward? In addition, we must continue to recruit course stewards for the University core courses that do not have one.

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

Objective 3:

Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.

Strategies:

- Establish a workshop series to prepare students for graduate/professional school admission exams.
- Support student and mentor travel to present research at professional conferences.
- Offer mini-courses/workshops on test-taking skills, tips on the application process, and interview preparation.
- Offer discipline-specific courses focused on student transition from undergraduate to graduate/professional school.

Metrics:

1. Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.
2. Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.
3. *Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (GRE, LSAT, MCAT).*

Metric:**1. Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.****Findings:**

Graduate students presented 13 papers and posters at five conferences. Forty-two graduate students were accepted to deliver 14 presentations at NSU Research Day. Research Day was cancelled due to COVID-19.

The number of graduate research products required for graduation (summer 2019-spring 2020) included: Graduate theses ($N=7$), field studies ($N=2$), performance documents ($N=1$), Scholarly projects ($N=11$), Creative research projects ($N=5$), and Papers-in Lieu of Thesis ($N=252$).

Approximately 14% of Northwestern's full-time faculty were engaged in directing or assessing the capstone research of graduate students. On average, graduate supervisors worked with 5.7 graduate students. This data is unchanged from the previous assessment cycle.

Analysis:

The Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice Conference is held during the spring of even-numbered years, but was cancelled this year. In 2019-2020, 42 student authors would have presented on 14 graduate projects during NSU's Research Day had it not been cancelled.

This year, overall, the number of graduate students engaging in research and scholarly activities declined ($N = 329$ in 2018-2019; $N = 278$ in 2019-2020). The decrease was likely due to fewer graduate students registered in theses, field studies, creative projects, and paper-in-lieu courses ($N = 218$ in 2018-2019; $N = 191$ in 2019-2020), and perhaps due to the COVID-19 pandemic which caused many graduate students to halt their research until a time when it was again safe.

The percentage of full-time faculty mentoring graduate students remained steady (14% in 2019-2020; 14% in 2018-2019 compared to 25% in 2017-2018), as did the number of graduate students supervised by each full-time faculty member in a capstone course—approximately five students—consistent with the two previous years.

Decision:

The target for 2021 will remain at 80 graduate presenters at professional conferences and 29 presentations. To facilitate mastery of this goal, faculty across all graduate programs will mentor their students by recommending professional conferences to attend and will encourage them to submit their student research for consideration. Additionally, to obtain a yearly increase in the number of graduate presentations, Northwestern will partially fund (e.g., registration or travel) graduate students whose proposals are accepted to a national, regional, or state professional conference. Faculty mentors will have internal funding opportunities, such as endowed professorships or faculty grants, to support their scholarship.

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

Metric:**2. Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.****Findings:**

Seventy students (24 undergraduates, 46 graduate) were accepted to present papers and posters at professional meetings this year. NSU Research Day included 14 presentations by 42 graduate students and 10 presentations

by 26 undergraduate students. Student presenters and faculty mentors represented all four colleges. Due to COVID-19, all Spring conferences and symposiums were cancelled including NSU Research Day. Data remains inconclusive of conference proceedings and inclusion of abstracts or creative work in the proceedings. It is hypothesized that most, if not all, conferences have or will publish a program or proceedings at some point.

Analysis:

The number of undergraduate students making conference presentations was comparable to 2017-2018 (70 in 2019-2020; 77 in 2018-2019; 76 in 2017-2018, but fewer presentations were made, perhaps due to less participation at the University of Louisiana Lafayette Undergraduate Research Conference in November, and cancellation of all conferences in Spring 2020. Northwestern undergraduates presented at 15 other conferences, including internationally at the School of Economics and Business-Universitat d'Alacant Universidad de Alicante. All undergraduates attended conferences with one or more faculty mentors.

Research Day provides a venue for students to present thesis research and research projects in progress that may not yet be ready to present at a conference.

Decision:

Northwestern will continue to emphasize the importance of graduate and undergraduate research/scholarship by providing partial or full funding to conduct research or to travel to professional meetings to present research findings.

The number of student presenters will represent all colleges and increase by 10% each year at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The 2021 target will remain as is—154 students mentored by faculty and presenting or performing in scholarly endeavors in a professional setting. Collecting this data during AC 2020-2021 will be imperative to have accurate data and a comparison to COVID-19 affects.

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

Metric:

3. *Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (GRE, LSAT, MCAT).*

Findings:

Test scores on graduate or professional school exams were verified for 99 undergraduates and graduating seniors for tests administered during the period June 1, 2020, to May 31, 2021. The largest number of students took the GRE (Verbal: 145.6 ± 0.947 , Quantitative: 142.2 ± 0.947 , $N = 43$)

From June 1, 2020-May 31, 2021, 20 current students and graduates completing their degree after June 2019 took the LSAT at least once. The average score was 143.9 ($SD = 9.25$), while the average percentile rating was 28.2 ($SD = 24.4$). The percentile ranking of the average score is 22.2%. LSAT scores ranged from a low of 128 to a high of 160.

In the evaluation period, 11 graduating seniors, 1 senior, 2 juniors, and 22 graduates from 2019 or later took the MCAT (95% confidence interval--Total: 495.3 ± 2.9 , CBPS: 122.7 ± 0.88 , CARS: 124.7 ± 0.71 , BBFL: 123.6 ± 0.85 , and PSBB: 124.3 ± 0.92 , $N = 36$).

Analysis:

In AC 2020-2021, 12 (28%) of those completing the GRE scored above the national median on the verbal component, while one (2.3%) scored above the median on the quantitative reasoning component, both

statistically comparable to last year. Northwestern's Graduate School requires a composite score (V + Q) of at least 280; 31 (72%) attained this benchmark, a significantly smaller proportion than AC 2018-2019 ($p < .001$). However, the distribution of test scores may not have been representative, since 40% fewer undergraduates took the GRE compared to AC 2018-2019, possibly because many graduate programs nationwide waived this requirement for applicants, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LSAT scores range from 120-180; the median over the last three years is 152. Four of this year's test-takers (20%) scored above the median. In the 2020 application year, 21 students completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to law school. Fourteen (66.7%) were accepted by one or more schools. All 14 (100%) matriculated to a law school in fall 2020, five more than in 2019.

The majority of the MCAT scores and sub-scores were below the national median. The best performance was on the CARS sub-score where 22 (61%) scored above the national median. Overall, nine (25%) scored above median, a percentage comparable to AC 2018-2019; the highest score improved from the 88th to the 96th percentile. In the 2021 application year, 13 students completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to medical school. Five of these (38%) were accepted by at least one medical school, including three early admissions to LSUHSC-Shreveport; three applicants remain on the alternate list at this time. This is not significantly different from the national average acceptance rate.

Decision:

The 2021 target for GRE test takers this year was not attained. Fewer than 90% of test takers earned verbal and quantitative scores acceptable for admission into graduate schools. In subsequent evaluation periods, the target for GRE scores will remain at least 90% of test takers to score at or above the level of 280, combined verbal and quantitative.

On the LSAT, just over half of the scores (55%) were in the first quartile, a small improvement over AC 2018-2019. However, the number scoring above the national median improved from one to four, more than meeting the target. The target for subsequent evaluation cycles will be to raise the number of students scoring above the national median by one each year. Acceptance data for the current cohort lags one year behind the application data.

Curricular and advising changes were made two years ago by the two academic units advising pre-medical students, but these changes will not be fully reflected in the performance of medical school applicants for another year. (The 2021 cohort as the first to complete the new curriculum.) The target for subsequent evaluation periods is to raise the number of students scoring above the national median on the total score for the MCAT (*Median* = 500) by one each year.

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

Objective 4:

Foster quality student-faculty interactions.

Strategies:

- Create and utilize program-specific advising packets to improve/streamline the advising process
- Establish a Meet the Faculty program
- Identify successful/meaningful student-faculty interactions

- Provide transportation or other funds for faculty and students who take educational trips or engage in experiential learning activities
- Reward faculty who serve as recognized student organization sponsors
- Create a space for faculty/staff and students to meet in informal gatherings and engage in conversations about educational and social topics
- Create and promote opportunities for faculty to interact with students and their families such as academic recognition ceremonies or extracurricular activities

Metrics:

1. Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).
2. *Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together.*

Metric:

1. **Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).**

Findings:

Just over a third of student enrollments rated their instructors in the fall 2019 (Table 13) and Spring 2020 (Table 14) Student Evaluation of Instruction. University-wide, the response rate for student evaluation of instruction for fall was 38.20% and 34.09% for spring

Analysis:

Student evaluations for fall 2019 and spring 2020 indicate superior student-faculty interactions. Overall, 76.21% of students indicated Northwestern teachers *always* encourage interaction between faculty and students; 10.21% stated their teachers *usually* encourage interaction. The mean for both semesters was 4.60/5.

For the criterion, *my teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments*, 76.02% responded *always* and 11.70% answered *usually*. The mean for both semesters was 4.57/5.

Seventy-four percent of students believed their teachers *always* displayed an appropriate demeanor both inside and outside the learning environment; 9.34% stated their teachers *usually* displayed an appropriate demeanor. Overall, the mean for this criterion was 4.67/5.

Decision:

The mean scores of these components, obtained as selected items from the overall student evaluation of instruction, indicate an exemplary relationship between faculty and students at Northwestern. These items were first collected during the 2017-2018 year, with the mean scores identical to those for 2018-19. Data for these components indicate a slight decrease, but much of that is due, for Spring 2020, to COVID-19 and its effects on the academic calendar and grading changes. Data will be collected and analyzed in 2020-2021, as they specifically address objective four: quality student-faculty interactions.

Table 13
Fall 2019 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	521	2.96%
Occasionally	(2)	508	2.89%
Sometimes	(3)	938	5.33%
Usually	(4)	1891	10.75%
Always	(5)	12799	72.77%
Not Applicable	(0)	931	5.29%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
17,065/42,543 (37.76%)	4.56	0.96	5.00
My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	466	2.65%
Occasionally	(2)	675	3.84%
Sometimes	(3)	930	5.29%
Usually	(4)	2019	11.48%
Always	(5)	12973	73.75%
Not Applicable	(0)	528	3.00%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
16,068/42,543 (37.77%)	4.54	0.96	5.00
My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	380	2.18%
Occasionally	(2)	479	2.75%
Sometimes	(3)	635	3.65%
Usually	(4)	1642	9.43%
Always	(5)	13026	74.78%
Not Applicable	(0)	1257	7.22%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
15,921/42,543(37.42%)	4.64	0.88	5.00

Table 14
Spring 2020 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	273	1.93%
Occasionally	(2)	338	2.40%
Sometimes	(3)	649	4.54%
Usually	(4)	1441	10.21%
Always	(5)	10752	76.21%
Not Applicable	(0)	665	4.71%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
12,56/37,297 (33.68%)	4.64	0.85	5.00
My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	296	2.10%
Occasionally	(2)	422	2.99%
Sometimes	(3)	660	4.68%
Usually	(4)	1650	11.70%
Always	(5)	10724	76.02%
Not Applicable	(0)	355	2.52%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
12,556/37,297 (33.66%)	4.61	0.88	5.00

Table 14
Spring 2020 Student Evaluation of Instruction (continued)

My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	233	1.66%
Occasionally	(2)	285	2.04%
Sometimes	(3)	442	3.16%
Usually	(4)	1241	8.86%
Always	(5)	10900	77.85%
Not Applicable	(0)	901	6.43%
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
12,471/37,297(33.44%)	4.70	0.79	5.00

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

Metric:

2. *Number of department or college events, such as social functions or academic ceremonies, that bring faculty, students, and families together.*

Findings:

Faculty, students, and (many times) family members of students participated in more than 185 events during the year. This compares to an average of 152 events documented in 2017-2020, and 93 events during the baseline year.

A sample of events includes:

- **Advising and Registration Round-Up Event, fall 2020, and Business and Industry Showcase, spring 2020** linking College of Business and Technology faculty, staff, and students together for the purposes of encouraging students to register for the next semester and providing an innovative venue for faculty and students to showcase their research and innovative projects to members of the business community.
- **Engineering Technology Annual Robotics Competition** opened to middle school students within 200 miles of Natchitoches (December 1, 2020), **Engineering Technology Open house** (October 19, 2020), and **year-long STEM** activities in collaboration with NPL.
- **Virtual Freshman Connection Sessions** held summer 2020 to register freshman for fall classes, make connections between students and their families and university faculty/staff, and acquaint them with the NSU campus and services; six separate events occurred.
- **Graduation Ceremonies/Receptions** by each College to recognize all graduates of each degree program; NSU Commencements (December 2020 and May 2021). Student quintet and singers from the School of Creative and Performing Arts provided musical accompaniment for commencement ceremonies.
- **Department of Music**

McCutcheon Honors Recital: Each year the recital participants are chosen by the applied faculty in their respective areas as the most outstanding based on their fall juries, January 26, 2020.

Guillory Scholarship Concert for Vocal Excellence: Students are nominated by the applied voice faculty to perform on the scholarship concert. Megan Guillory, former NSU student, awards up to 3 scholarships for the following year, January 30, 2020.

Senior Recital Performance: Bachelor of Music students present the culmination of their four years of applied study with a recital performance guided by their major professor. This recital is the final capstone

requirement for the BM degree in all concentrations- Performance, Music Business, and Sacred Music. Nine required recitals were performed in the Fall 2019 semester and 10 for the Spring 2020 semester.

Ensemble Performances: NSU ensemble groups presented numerous concerts throughout the 2019-2020 AY which often highlighted various students within the ensemble as soloists. Those ensembles included the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Orchestra, Chamber Choir, Concert Choir, Percussion Ensemble, Lyrica, Men's Chorus, Wind Symphony, NSU Concert Bands, NSU Opera Theater Ensemble, and the Steel Band Ensemble.

- **Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts:**

Journalism and Media Day (JaM Day) The Department hosted a virtual **JaM Awards** ceremony, taped and aired on March 19, 2021. NMJCA hosts its in-person JaM Day on November 5, 2021.

Student Media Showcase, celebrating the best in news and feature photography, held a virtual awards ceremony April 14, 2021. (The last in-person awards ceremony was March 3, 2020.)

Senior Recognition and Scholarship Awards Ceremony, May 6, 2021 (in-person): NMJCA recognized its top students and seniors during this event, announcing scholarship winners and the department's most valuable players.

- **Department of Theatre and Dance**

State of the Union, Theatre West, Students learn about dos and don'ts from Faculty as well as best practices to be successful in Theatre & Dance (August 23, 2020)

Louisiana Thespians Conference, hosted 900 HS students and teachers for a 2-day conference, (January 24-25, 2020).

Moving Through Time, Spring Dance Concert Performance, AA Fredericks (February 13-15, 2020)

Doubt, Theatre West, Two week performance season got cut short due to the pandemic but performances were from (March 11-14, 2020)

On Friday March 13, 2020 the department realized that we would all be leaving school without knowing when we would return so in an effort to see everyone's work the department had an informal showing of all projects that would be cancelled; *Newsies* (Act 1 only), *Senior Dance Concert* (Graduating senior's capstone), Directing Scenes from class and Dance Composition showings.

- **Louisiana Scholars' College** hosted five academic ceremonies to welcome, encourage, and celebrate its students. Those events included LSC faculty, staff, students, and often parents and friends. The Scholars' College also hosted four academic lecture events and 18 thesis defenses that were delivered face-to-face or online to broad audiences that included students, faculty, and staff from the College and across NSU, as well as family and friends of LSC stakeholders. The College also hosted at least seven social events for students and faculty of LSC.

Academic Ceremonies

- The 2020 LSC First-Year Convocation for incoming students and their parents, during which faculty and administration formally welcomed new students to the Scholars' College.
- The Fall 2020 Scholars' Baccalaureate Degree Ceremony to celebrate our four fall graduates with their families and friends.
- The Pinning Ceremony to celebrate second-year students to celebrate their persistence as Scholars' students, including students, faculty, and staff of LSC.
- The Thesis Bar-b-que at which students, faculty, and staff of the college celebrate the successful completion of our seniors who have written their undergraduate theses.
- The Spring 2021 Scholars' Baccalaureate Degree Ceremony to celebrate our 15 spring graduates with their families and friends.

Academic Lectures

- 18 Thesis Defenses delivered in person and/or via Teams/WebEx to faculty, staff, and students of the College as well as family, friends, and faculty from across NSU.
- Dr. Anatol Reibold of Germany gave the 2020 Rogozhin Lecture, co-hosted with The Institute of Mathematics and Informatics of Moldova (IMM), online on “An Example for Mathematical Engineering: Machine Learning and Deep Learning,” bringing together students and faculty from across campus and around the world.
- The Fall 2020 Big Ideas Conference on Paranoia, a panel that included College faculty and alumni, as well as faculty from across campus, who presented on the theme to LSC and NSU students.
- A 2021 World Logic Day Keynote Address from renowned American mathematicians Martin Davis on “Algorithms, Equations, and Logic,” which was hosted on WebEx and delivered to faculty and students from the College and across campus and the world.
- The Spring 2021 Big Ideas Conference on Absurdism, a panel that included College faculty and alumni, as well as faculty from across campus, who presented on the theme to LSC and NSU students.

Social Functions

- The Beginning of Year LSC Socially Distanced Social for new and returning students to welcome students back to the Scholars’ College, introduce the Interim Director, and facilitate the LSC Mentor Program.
- The 2020 Louisiana Scholars’ College T-Shirt Design Competition that included 5 student entries, votes from most of the College students and faculty, awards for the winner and runner-up, and an online sale of the winning design to students, family, faculty, alumni, and other stakeholders that raised \$1,023 for student scholarships.
- The LSC Forum Council Halloween Trivia Event for students and faculty, including the chance to win LSC swag provided by the Director.
- LSC Forum Council Basket Auction for students and faculty to raise money for Forum Council by auctioning off donated items in the most entertaining ways possible.
- LSC Forum Council Bob Ross Paint Night for students and faculty provided mid-semester stress relief.
- “Life after Scholars’ & Life because of Scholars’,” a panel featuring four Scholars’ alumni who presented virtually from the Washington, D.C. area to College students and faculty.
- LSC Forum Council Casino Night for students and faculty provided end-of-the-semester stress relief.

● **Cammie G. Henry Research Center hosted or sponsored 17 activities:**

- On September 6, 2019, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives Inventions; one post went up featuring the work of Constantine Neklutin.
- From September 12, 2019-January 13, 2020, the CGHRC hosted an exhibit on Steel Magnolias in the Natchitoches Tourism Center downtown on Front Street.
- On October 4, 2019, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives Ancestors; one post went up with three pictures featuring the Metoyer family.
- On October 10, 2019, 5:00pm-7:00pm, the CGHRC hosted an exhibit opening for a display featuring NSU history from Normal School days to the present.
- On November 1, 2019, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives Facial Hair; one post went up.
- On December 6, 2019, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives Sweater Weather; three posts went up using pictures of Natchitoches in the snow.
- On January 23, 2020, 5:00pm-7:00pm, the CGHRC hosted an exhibit opening for a display featuring 100-year-old pictures of Shreveport on loan from Ed Chopin.
- On February 7, 2020, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives History Crush; one post went up with a picture of Cammie Jr.
- On March 13, 2020, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives Ladies Who Lead; one post went up with one picture.
- On April 3, 2020, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives Pen Pals; one post went up with a letter from a scrapbook

- On May 1, 2020, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of Archives Virtual Visit; one post went up with two pictures.
- From June 30-August 27, 2020, the CGHRC hosted a digital exhibit on all social media platforms on the theme of North Louisiana in the Movies. 24 posts went up using materials relating to Horse Soldiers, Steel Magnolias, and several Louisiana authors.
- On July 1, 2020, the CGHRC hosted an Archives Hashtag Party on Twitter along the theme of “Archives Huzzah”. A total of six posts went up using the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for quotes.
- From Thursday-Saturday, September 19-21, 2019, the CGHRC hosted a tri-fold exhibit on the books collected by Lyle Saxon concerning his research for the Federal Writer’s Project book, *Gumbo Ya Ya*, along with documents from the FWP collection for the Louisiana Conference held in the NSU Magale Fine Arts Building.
- On Friday, September 27, 2019, the CGHRC hosted a tri-fold exhibit concerning Preservation of documents and books that Sharon Wolff created. The exhibit was displayed during the NSU Creole Heritage Center’s Creole Conference in the NSU Ballroom.
- Saturday, November 9, 2019, hosted a loaned Steel Magnolias exhibit and volunteered from 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. as a docent for the APHN Blush and Bashful weekend event at the Lemee House. Spoke to crowds of visitors on the Steel Magnolias material that was loaned to the APHN.
- On Friday, March 13, 2020, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., the CGHRC hosted a tri-fold exhibit depicting images and documents concerning the German Mathematician, Carl Fredrich Gauss, during the Louisiana State NSU Demon Math Competition.

Analysis:

Adhering to the recommendation from the baseline year, academic units in 2018-2019 and 2017-2018 kept better records of events hosted for faculty, students, and families. As a result, events documented by colleges or departments/schools increased 70% during 2018-2019; another significant increase was seen in 2020-2021. These events serve an important purpose for faculty and students interacting with one another in both social and academic settings.

Decision:

This measure contributes to the purpose of objective four. During AC 2019-20 and AC 2020-2021, academic units improved their record-keeping, and will continue to do so. The target of 180 events was met in 2021. It will be important to continue to capture events and promote them using social media.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, Director of Marketing, and NSU Press.

Objective 5: Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.

Strategies:

- Survey faculty to determine needs in teaching, research, and service.
- Establish policies for internal research and travel funding opportunities.
- Participation (directly/indirectly) in the strategic budgeting process.
- Promote the goals/activities/outcomes of The Center for Faculty Excellence in Research and Teaching.
- Develop methods for establishing faculty workload policies.
- Ensure that faculty across the University are equitably compensated for their rank, expertise, and service to the University, profession, and/or community.
- Inform faculty of University endowed professorship policies and encourage their participation in

the application process.

- Recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, and service.
- Ensure that all classroom/laboratory technologies are functional and updated and that faculty are trained on their usage

Metrics:

1. Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.
2. *Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.*
3. *Number of faculty attending department or college-sponsored workshops focusing on innovative instruction in content or pedagogy.*
4. *Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including lunch and learn.*
5. Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies.
6. *Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service.*

Metric:

1. **Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.**

Findings:

Twenty-five faculty were awarded research or travel grants by the Office of Academic Affairs; sixteen utilized the award. Five faculty received research or instructional enhancement grants and eleven received travel grants to support their participation in professional meetings during the year. A total of \$25,000 was budgeted for this purpose; a total of \$17,000 was used. Due to COVID-19, many spring conferences and symposiums were cancelled, or research trips interrupted.

QEP Learning for Life Coordinators ($N = 8$) were awarded up to \$2,000 each to redesign their curricula to include experiential learning as a capstone course. QEP implementation Team ($N = 5$) were awarded \$2,000 each, and the QEP Assessment Team ($N = 5$) were awarded \$1,250 each. Up to \$35,250 was budgeted to support this work.

The Office of Academic Affairs was set to host the ULS Academic and Performing Arts Summit, but the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. Fifteen undergraduates were slated to present 9 undergraduate research projects; 1 student was selected to perform on the performing arts showcase; and 2 students had 5 pieces selected for the visual arts showcase. Additionally, Academic Affairs paid registration fees for 42 faculty to attend the *ULS For Our Future Conference*, January 30-31, 2020 at the University of Louisiana Monroe. Approximately \$5,000 was used to support these events, which focused on undergraduate research, service learning, visual and performance arts exhibits, and higher education topics.

Seventy-one faculty received endowed professorships and three faculty were endowed chair recipients. Seven endowed scholarships were awarded. The 74 honorees were provided \$821,444 to support their professional development during the year. An additional \$260,539 was utilized from the spend-down requirement from the Louisiana Board of Regents. A total of \$1,119,652 was funded through Endowed Professor and Chair monies.

The Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (18 members) did not receive budget enhancement requests in 2019-2020 due to budget restrictions. In 2018-2019, 40 enhancement requests totaling \$692,048 were funded. Using the committee's recommended priority list as well as the recommendations of the President's advisory team, NSU directly funded 11 initiatives totaling \$102,848 in new resources awarded in the

2019-20 year. Additionally, by leveraging other sources of funding, two other requests were partially funded. For 2017-2018, 14 initiatives were funded for approximately \$500,000.

Analysis:

Due to COVID-19 in Spring 2020, many of the faculty research support fund grants were not utilized. The faculty grants committee reviewed applications twice during 2019-2020. Due to over-awarding of faculty grants in 2017-2018, the faculty grants chairperson and committee members were encouraged to monitor their budget more carefully in 2018-2019. Thus, \$25,000 was allocated for 25 faculty recipients, whereas 34 faculty were awarded in 2017-2018 for a total of \$29,829. The faculty grants committee reviewed applications two times during 2018-2019 and three times during 2017-2018. During the baseline year, 31 faculty grants were awarded, including four grants involving students' research projects.

The number of faculty awarded endowed professorships increased by nine this year (48 to 57 or 18.75%). Of the funds available to faculty (\$764,141), 86.5% was used for professional development purposes (\$661,304) and 13.5% (\$102,837) will carry-over to the 2019-2020 year. In comparison, over \$1 million was available to faculty in endowed spending for 2017-2018, as compared to \$562,009 in the baseline year, 2016-2017.

Decision:

Monies dedicated to support faculty in their research and professional development should be increased during 2020-21. For example, a budget of \$30,000 or 30 recipients for the new year. The target will remain as 45 faculty grants for the year 2021.

Endowed professor recipients will be encouraged to mentor new faculty, including adjuncts, during 2020-2021 by financially assisting them in professional development activities. Examples include using endowment funds to pay a new or adjunct faculty member's expenses for participating in a professional meeting where their research findings are co-presented; or inviting a nationally recognized content expert to campus to inform or update faculty knowledge and skills. NSU needs to secure 13 additional endowments to reach our 2021 target of 70.

Responsibility: NSU Foundation, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

Metric:

2. *Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.*

Findings:

Due to COVID-19, many external grant applications were frozen, discontinued, or did not reach fruition. For this reason, the data for 2019-2020 is included (cumulatively) in this year's report. In 2019-2020, 35 grants were funded for a total of **\$7,743,868**. The largest grants were from LOSFA for LAGearUp, and the NCPTT. Additionally, we are in year 2 of 5 for a CLIP grant of \$3.4 million. In 2020-2021, our total of funded grants was **\$8,917,913** (Table 15).

Analysis:

During the past three years, the number of NSU employees receiving grants from external agencies has declined; it should be noted, however, that the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health has had an increase of funding from external agencies, including a generous \$3,000,000 from Willis Knighton to assist in developing a DNP-CRNA program. For the baseline year, 37 administrators, faculty, or staff received external grants; 32 were funded in 2017-2018; and 30 in 2018-2019. Funds received increased

from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 (~\$4,685,348 to ~\$6,006,857, and decreased from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 (~\$6,006,857 to \$4,475,338). Due to COVID-19 and related initiatives, we have seen an increase.

Table 15
Funded grants in 2020-2021

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program	1,781,849
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Comprehensive Child Care Resource and Referral (Response Care-COVID 19)- Amendment #3	630,786
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Bossier Parish Lead Agency	65,100
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Statewide Child Care Career Development System	367,783
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	COVID-19 Community Childcare Recovery	170,000
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Caddo Parish Covid-19 Response for Child Care Centers	200,000
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Type I and Type II Child Care Guidance Support	24,600
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Emergency Response to Hurricane Delta	100,000
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Statewide Early Learning and Child Care Scholarship Program-Amendment 1	161,340
Alexander, Nancy	College of Education and Human Development	Child Care Screening and Consultation for Choice Neighborhood Project	13,500
McAlister, Kimberly	College of Education/ Teaching, Leadership and Counseling	Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership (CLIP), Year 3 of 5	84,011
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and Allied Health	MOU Addendum to extend the Joint Venture for BSN Nursing in Alexandria between RRMCMC & NSU-Year 2 of 5	150,000.
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and Allied Health	Extend MOU between Christus Health Louisiana/St. Frances Cabrini Health System and NSU, Year 3 of 5	92,882
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and Allied Health	Christus Health LA & NSU for Undergraduate Nursing Faculty Support in Alexandria, Year 2 of 4	92,882
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and Allied Health	CHRISTUS-NSU MOU NP Faculty Support (2 Years) to Transition to Undergraduate Faculty Support (2 Years) Year 2 of 4	130,906
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and Allied Health	WKHS-NSU MOU to Support BSN to DNP-CRNHA Program-Year 2 of 6	365,500
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and Allied Health	WKHS Undergraduate Faculty Partnership Grant-Year 3	75,000
Clawson, Dana	College of Nursing and Allied Health	Natchitoches Regional Medical Center/NRMC Foundation-NSU MOU for BSN Faculty Support-Year 3	77,250
Johnston, Donald	College of Nursing and Allied Health	NIH/AACN All of Us Research Grant (Post COVID)	10,500
Gregory, Hiram F. (Pete)	LA Creole Heritage Center/ CJHSS	NSU Student Archaeology Training - Modification 2	10,000
TOTAL 2020-2021			\$8,917,913

Decision:

Due to the decline in the number of NSU grant recipients and the fact of fewer funds awarded to NSU from external agencies, it is recommended for Northwestern to dedicate at least one full-time person to grant writing or to provide release time for one faculty member in each College for discipline specific grant writing. Last year, it was stated that “it is unlikely that Northwestern will reach its target of 45 grant recipients in 2021 without human resources to support this measure.” This continues to be accurate, and we did not meet the target for 2020-2021. In AC 2020-2021, a cross-college grants committee was formed with representatives for each College. Their charge is to work collaboratively for professional development and grants opportunities within and across colleges.

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

Metric:

3. *Number of faculty attending department or college-sponsored workshops focusing on innovative instruction in content or pedagogy.*

Findings:

Not measured due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The following narrative and corresponding sample is just a snapshot of some of the workshops and innovative activities that occurred during the pandemic.

A sample of the professional activities includes:

- A total of 20 music faculty participated in/presented at in person and virtual conferences in their discipline. These pedagogy conferences included the 2021 Virtual Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, The International Music by Women Festival, the Connecticut Music Educators Association Conference, the Louisiana Music Educators Association Conference, the North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference, the Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars International Annual Conference, the Peabody Institute’s Lunch and Learn series, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing Southern Region Conference/ Panhandle DFW Chapter Conference/Louisiana State Conferences.
- Five faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences (3 music faculty, 2 science faculty) were part of an interdisciplinary team to design and test PPE for Vocal and Brass Musicians.
- At one of the monthly College of Business and Technology meetings, one of the faculty members conducted a professional development session on the use of Teams for meeting with advisees.
- CoNSAH February Spring Faculty Event (2 separate Sessions)
- #1 Morning–“Let’s Talk About the Other Student Diversities” & “Promoting Student Inclusivity”–35 RN attendees
- #2 Afternoon–“Clinical Reasoning, Judgement & Debriefing” - 30 RN Attendees
- Broussard Healthcare Conference–44 RN attendees
- Broussard Healthcare DON Bootcamp–in planning
- LNHA Winter Updates January 2020–38 RN attendees, total 117
- LACANE Fall 2020: Inclusive Practices for Students with Disabilities: A Clinical Accommodation Update–66 RN attendees
- LNHA LABENFA Seminar–48 RN attendees, 116 total
- LNHA MDS Webinar: Additional OBRA MDS Items Effective 1/1/2021–5 separate sessions
 - #1–32 RN, 98 total
 - #2–28 RN, 94 total
 - #3–24 RN, 83 total

- #4 - 22 RN, 65 total
- #5 - 23 RN, 75 total
- LNHA MDS Updates December Webinar—37 RN attendees, 114 total
- NGN NCLEX Review Webinar—33 RN attendees
- TeamSTEPS Master Training Course Faculty Activity: 65 RN Attendees, total 71
- Broussard Healthcare DON Bootcamp (2 separate offerings)
- #1 Baton Rouge— 42 RN, 44 total
- #2 Shreveport—41 RN, 44 total
- Beta Chi Research Conference—37 RN attendees, total 40
- Beta Chi GPS Lecture: “Nursing Through the Storms of Life: Caring for Nursing Students and the Community”—36 RN attendees, 99 total
- LNHA COVID 19 Pandemic Gross Negligence Webinar—38 RN attendees, 71 total
- 5 Activities Planned and cancelled due to COVID
- 36 University Faculty and Staff participated in two separate professional development programs in management and leadership; NSULeAds (18 participants during the 2020 fall semester) and NSU IGNITE (18 participants during the 2020-2021 academic year).

Analysis:

This metric was not adequately measured during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The baseline for this measure in 2016-2017 was 582; however, wording for the measure changed in 2017-2018, resulting in lower faculty participation numbers ($N=284$). Originally, “the number of students and/or faculty...” was used; during 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, “the number of faculty...” was recorded to give greater attention to meeting the objective “supporting faculty...”.

Nevertheless, the total number ($N=893$) of faculty participants for the year increased. It is uncertain as to the cause for the increase. This number represents an estimate (only) of faculty participation in department or college sponsored workshops and such workshops may not always focus on innovation or pedagogy.

Decision:

It is suggested that this metric be measured again next cycle. Because faculty learning and use of innovative practices in teaching a discipline are important, academic leaders will be encouraged to keep an accurate record of faculty headcount specific to meeting this measure (innovation in content or pedagogy) in 2019-2020. Metric three and four (objective five) overlap somewhat and should be differentiated or further clarified before the 2019-2020 year. The target for 2021 is revised to 900 faculty participants.

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

Metric:

4. *Number of faculty/staff attending University, department and/or college-sponsored professional development workshops including lunch and learn.*

Findings:

This metric was deeply affected by COVID-19 and the inability to gather in person for much of the Academic Year. In both Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, Academic Affairs collaboration with the Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity and the Center for Inclusion and Diversity to offer PD for F/S. Three virtual sessions were

offered during on-call week in the Fall with a total attendance of 761 (some may be double-counted). In the Spring, the groups from NSULeAds collaborated with the VP for Inclusion and Diversity to present PD sessions on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity initiatives. A total of 543 F/S attended these sessions virtually.

In addition to innovative, discipline-specific professional development activities offered by colleges or departments (see metric three, objective five), Northwestern provided other professional development opportunities during the year. A sampling of the sessions and participation numbers for each session are provided below.

- **Faculty Institute**, August 2020; January 2021. *Referenced above.*
- **New Faculty Orientation**, August 2020; January 2021. Required for all new faculty. Topics included: Human Resources & Payroll Policies and Procedures; Required Annual Trainings; Academic Resources; Student Conduct and Accommodations; and Academic Affairs Policy and Procedures. **100** participants. *Held virtually.*
- **Technology and Innovation Professional Development Sessions** offered to faculty and staff (small groups and individual classes); taught by staff in the Office of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development. **170** participants.
- **Research Day**, April 22, 2021. Faculty and students reported their research findings in virtual presentations/posters ($N=30$ faculty; $N=17$ UG; $N=18$ GR). There were 100 presenters, and 117 authors. Twenty-two faculty served as faculty mentors to oral student presentations.

Analysis:

As sessions were held virtually, and F/S double-counted in some instances, it is difficult to estimate the total number of faculty and staff who participated. However, 1,304 F/S attended virtual on-call week in professional development sessions sponsored by the Provost/VPAA and Dean of Graduate Studies, the Vice President of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development, the Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity, or the President. The sessions support University efforts, such as accreditation, research, e-learning, or student recruitment. Keeping faculty current on higher education and K-12 topics is essential for academic program growth. Showcasing faculty expertise is also helpful for student recruitment and retention and maintaining community relations.

Trend analysis for this metric reveals the following: During 2016-2017, 730 faculty (full-time; part-time) and staff participated in University and/or college, department, or school professional development workshops. Participation rates increased 96% ($N = 1,434$) in 2017-2018, but a slight decline has been noted for the 2018-2019 year ($N = 990$). However, the total number of faculty participating in metrics three and four was 1,883. During 2020-2021, data was spotty due to virtual attendance.

Rewording metrics three and four (objective five) occurred in 2017-2018 and may have accounted for the 96% increase. However, it remains challenging to keep an accurate headcount of faculty participation in professional development activities. There must be a clear distinction and better understanding of what is being measured in both the third and fourth metrics of objective five. It is hoped that during the next cycle, a return to in-person events will stabilize numbers across all measurements.

Decision:

Professional development opportunities will continue to be a priority for Northwestern. The 2021 target for this metric will remain at 1,600 participants. While we did meet this target, it is suspected that a return to in-person gatherings, meetings, and PD sessions will push us over this number. It is recommended that metrics three and four (objective five) be revisited by the responsible parties and

clarification offered, if appropriate, before the 2019-2020 year begins. The university will continue to emphasize Professional Development, as well as UG and Graduate research and research collaborations.

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

Metric:

5. Number of departments or sites acquiring new classroom or laboratory technologies.

Findings:

Twenty-seven campus sites acquired new classroom or laboratory technologies (Table 16).

Table 16
New Technologies Acquired in AC 2019-2020

Site Name/Location	Purpose
College of Arts and Sciences	
Biological and Physical Sciences	New Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GCMS)
Biological and Physical Sciences	LabQuest Equipment/Chemistry
Biological and Physical Sciences	Polarimeter/Organic Chemistry
Biological and Physical Sciences	Computer for A&P Lab/Biopac Software
Biological and Physical Sciences	Drones and TV Studio Equipment/Natural Science and Physics
Biological and Physical Sciences	Software updates for GIS computers (w/CJHSS)
Biological and Physical Sciences	Robotics Equipment
English, Foreign Languages, & Cultural Studies, 327, 329 & 331 Kyser Hall	116 Chromebooks; four charging cabinets; three cell-phone charging stations
English, Foreign Languages, & Cultural Studies, 316-J Kyser Hall	Purchased Content Creation
English, Foreign Languages, & Cultural Studies, Kyser Hall	5 professional-level camcorders; 5 media storage cards for camcorders; podcast studio equipment and software
Mathematics, 401-G Kyser Hall	8 iPads and 8 Apple Pencils; Math software
CAPA: Fine and Graphic Arts; Sculpture Lab	Plastic recycling, Glowforge, Blacksmith Forge
CAPA: Music, Magale Recital Hall	Projector and video upgrades to livestreaming system
CAPA: New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts; Kyser 400 and 404	Upgrade computers, software, and AV system
CAPA: Theatre/Dance	Computer Numerical Control Machine; Computerized Stage Turntable
CAPA: Theatre/Dance	Theatre History classroom technology upgrades
Scholars'/Morrison Hall 221 and 223	Microsystem with wireless keyboard and mouse
Scholars'/Morrison 115, and 146	New projector, webcam
College of Business and Technology	
HMT, Rooms 119 and 230	Instructor podium upgrades
HMT, Room 225	Wall mount TV, microcomputer
College of Education and Human Development	
HHP 113, 115, 117, 123	New projector upgrades for Smart Boards
HHP 119	Screen, projector, podium, computer
HHP 125 (Dance Studio)	Big screen TV and sound system
Social Work, Kyser 310	Upgrade to webEx video conferencing suites
College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	
Warrington/Rapides Radiology Labs monitors and Codec equipment	
Alexandria/Air Park Clinical Lab	
203 and 205 Distance Education Upgrades	
Other Units and Off-Campus Instructional Sites	

Analysis:

In 2019-2020, the number of departments or sites acquiring new or upgraded classroom or laboratory technologies decreased. This was likely due to strategic budget enhancement grants not being awarded, and freezes on other funding sources due to COVID-19. In 2018-2019 the number of departments or sites acquiring new or upgraded classroom or laboratory technologies increased from 17 units (2017-2018) to 38 units (2018-2019), and from 27 (2016-2017) to 38 (2018-2019). Data collected for this measure was obtained from department heads/directors, deans, and the student technology coordinator.

Decision:

Computer and classroom laboratories located in on- and off-campus instructional sites will receive upgrades on an annual basis, typically every three years with funding provided by student technology fees. The Louisiana Board of Regents provides a cycle of funding for most academic disciplines. Although the application is competitive, Northwestern faculty have been successful in receiving funds to support technology use in the classroom. Private donations, including endowed professorships, also contributed to classroom upgrades this year. A systematic University-wide process (Jump Start) was established in 2018-2019 and will provide computer upgrades for faculty on a rotational basis. Our target is adjusted by 10% or 42 departments or units by the year 2021.

Responsibility: Office of Information Technology Systems, Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors/Department Heads.

Metric:

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

Findings:

This metric was not measured this year due to COVID-19 and our general lack of ability to gather to celebrate the outstanding work of our Faculty and Staff. One hundred and ninety-nine events were documented for recognizing faculty and staff for their work in teaching, research, or service.

Analysis:

The University recognizes outstanding teachers of each College and one or two advisors of the year at its first fall semester workday, *Faculty Institute*, and followed by the University-wide luncheon. The NSU News Bureau distributes a press release, which is printed by local newspapers and shared by social media platforms. This year, 128 press releases related to faculty teaching, research, and professional service were filed. The outstanding teachers of the year were also recognized at halftime for a home football game. For colleges hosting a reunion during Homecoming, such as Education and Business, the distinguished faculty member was presented to a different audience.

At the fall luncheon following Faculty Institute, faculty and staff are recognized for their years of service to the University-25, 30, 35, etc. Twenty-six service awards were given at the University Faculty/Staff Luncheon. Another way to recognize personnel who go beyond the call of duty is called Above and Beyond Awards. Approximately 20 staff members received one of these awards at the University luncheon, fall 2018.

During Northwestern's Research Day (April 25, 2019), faculty were selected for outstanding contributions in three areas: research, lifetime achievement, and Louisiana studies. The criteria for each award are published and nominations are presented to the Research Council for review. The outstanding Research Award, named to honor Dr. Mildred Hart Bailey, began in 1989; the Lifetime Achievement named for Dr. Jean D'Amato Thomas began in 2011; and the Louisiana Studies award,

first given in 2012, honors Dr. Marietta LeBreton. The 2019 recipients for each respective award were Dr. Sarah McFarland, Dr. Massimo Bezoari, and Dr. Shane Rasmussen. An NSU Press Release followed the event and posted to social media.

The President and First Lady of NSU sponsored breakfast and luncheon events to honor faculty and staff for their contributions to NSU. The Maggios held 20 departmental luncheons and four birthday breakfast events during the year.

The following activities, hosted by a college, school, or department or a professional organization, represent a sample to honor faculty for their teaching, research, or service:

- Collier Hyams exhibit of research and artwork, NSU campus, September 20, 2018.
- Clyde Downs, Matt DeFord, and their students, Fine Arts Group Exhibition, New Mexico, September 10, 2018.
- Biology Ball, School of Biological and Physical Sciences, spring 2019; recognizing Distinguished Professor of the Year: Millard Mangrum; Excellence in Teaching Physical Sciences: Dr. Daniel Rivera; Excellence in Research Mentorship: Dr. Shreyashi Ganguly; Excellence in Teaching Biological Sciences: Dr. Allyson Spence; Excellence in Research Mentorship in Biological Sciences: Dr. Zeljko Radulovic.
- English, Foreign Language, and Cultural Studies Honors Convocation, April 2019: Recognized department advisor of the year (Dr. Rebecca Macijeski) and department 'shining star' recipients (Ms. Mariann Wilson and Mr. Daniel Gordy).
- Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Honors' Ceremony, April 29, 2019.
- New Media Awards Day, May 1, 2019: All faculty and staff were recognized for their work with students.
- Patrice Moulton Book Signing, Kathmandu, Nepal, April 2019.
- Paula Furr Retirement Reception, May 3, 2019.
- Neeru Deep's service to Eta Mu Chapter of Phi Beta Delta and Ben D. Johnson Education Center as a member of the Board of Directors for each professional group, fall 2018 and spring 2019.
- College of Nursing and School of Allied Health:
 - Jaime Usie, Anna Morris, and Leah Ann Young completed DNP degrees, August and September 2018;
 - Pam Holcombe elected Shreveport District Nurses' Association President, August 2018;
 - Leah Pearce, Melissa Rennie, Tamara Baxter, Dana Clawson, Pamela Simmons, and Windy Jaep completed Certified Nurse Educators program, September 2018;
 - Leah Ann Young, Dana Clawson, and Pamela Simmons passed the NLN Certified Nurse Educators Exam, October 2018;
 - Pamela Simmons elected CCNE Board of Commissioners Vice Chair 2019;
 - Julie Gayle, 2019 Nurse of the Year; Patricia Akins 2019 Educator of the Year; Ann Deshotels, 2019 Above & Beyond, and Maxine Johnson, 2019 Distinguished Alumni of the Year; and
 - Connie Hale, Danita Potter, and Callie Roberts completed the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate program, May 2019.
- Watson Library
 - Sharon Wolff earned certification by the Academy of Certified Archivist, August 2018 and
 - Mary Linn Wernet was honored by the St. Augustine Historical Society for her consistent dedicated service to this group, January 2019. She was also recognized for her assistance in preserving the history of Jefferson Highway at their 8th Annual Conference, April 2019. She was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, April 2019.

During the baseline year, eight events or activities recognized faculty accomplishments. Twenty-one events were documented in 2017-2018; 199 in 2018-2019. Obviously, awareness and better record-keeping by

academic and University leaders resulted in the number increase. In AC 2020-2021, the number of press releases ($N = 128$) by NSU News Bureau also contributed to the increase. From 2016 to 2019, the number of events or activities for recognizing NSU faculty and staff increased markedly (2,387%).

Decision:

Northwestern values its faculty and staff members and will continue the tradition of honoring faculty/staff for their excellence in teaching, research, and service to the University or to their profession. Our target is adjusted to 200 events or activities by 2021. NSU made good progress in meeting the revised target set in 2017-2018. This metric will be measured during the 2021-2022 cycle.

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

Comprehensive Summary

For AC 2020-2021, it is difficult to state, “all academic excellence (AE) objectives were met.” While we were on target to meet all objectives and exceed the metrics to support them, the onset of the pandemic and COVID-19, along with two Hurricanes and several ice and snowstorms, affected our ability to measure accurately, required quick changes that didn’t always consider the objectives and metrics associated with them, and skewed our data. Nonetheless, metric results to support the identified objectives remained consistent or exceeded, in some cases, the gains made last year. Noteworthy accomplishments included impactful technology upgrades in many classrooms and departments, advantageous use of spend down allocations in Endowed Professorships and Chairs that resulted in new or upgraded technologies used for student instruction and responsiveness to current students and securing a private partnership to implement the BSN-DNP-NA program in the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. A new UC in Remote Systems Science and Technology was approved by the ULS Board of Supervisors and Board of Regents, and a generous grant from SWECPO provided support for the UC. While COVID-19 impacted faculty and staff ability to utilize internal funding opportunities awarded through the Faculty Research Support Fund, as well as travel and presentation at conferences, data indicated we were on par to stay consistent or exceed prior AC numbers. While the response rate of students evaluating course and instructor effectiveness declined slightly, satisfaction remained consistent or improved; the average class size in University core courses remained declined; and the course steward program continued to develop, grow, and reinforce efforts to develop consistency of content and delivery across all sections.

While the course steward target of 100% across multi-section core courses was not achieved this year, it is important to note that criteria for this metric changed fall 2018, producing different results in comparison to 2017-2018. During AC 2018-2019, University course stewards were identified for core courses with multiple sections and 400+ students. Eleven courses met this criterion, and 10 of the 11 designated a steward for course oversight. For AC 2019-2020, 100% of multi-section core courses had the oversight of a course steward. This metric has direct effects on course evaluations and student satisfaction, and we must prioritize this again for AC 2021-2022 to maintain the 2022 target of 100% multi-section core courses. It is likely that more course stewards must be appointed to assist in the evolving work and responsibilities of a course steward.

An area of concern during the last cycle in the AE focus area pertained to how COVID-19 will affect data collection in support of objectives and metrics for AC 2021-2022. Many conferences cancelled in-person, but most executed virtually. We are seeing the trend of professional conferences occurring in-person, so we will need to reflect this in our reporting next year and may need to evaluate how we look at data in support of our Academic Mission.

The AE focus area will strive to address the following concerns during the 2021-2022 year: Dedicate time to data analysis provided in this year’s report for the purpose of AE improvement, including clarification of what to measure and how to efficiently and accurately count faculty/staff participation; provide consistent oversight by course stewards of all University core courses with multiple sections and large enrollment; seek ways to engage our faculty and staff in professional development opportunities, and seek ways for growing graduate school enrollment and graduate student opportunities in research/scholarship. In addition, we will continue to focus on and embed in our courses and AE focus area the need to dialogue about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and to continue to move that conversation forward.

Diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Diversity is a University core value: “Diversity helps define who we are. We welcome and respect everyone traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.” The University is not just an institution but also a community, defined by the diversity of its members, dependent on how well that community respects and supports the rich differences of students, staff, faculty, and the broader community around it. Northwestern’s commitment to its strategic plan—to strengthen the student experience, to attain academic excellence, to meet the demands of a global economy, to achieve athletic prominence, and to enrich the local and regional community—requires the University to cultivate diversity, be inclusive, and embrace equity. Northwestern cannot meet these goals and achieve its mission unless it guarantees equitable access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff at every stage of education and career.

Northwestern’s commitment to this effort is reflected in its establishment of the position of Vice President of Inclusion and Diversity. Dr. Michael Snowden’s appointment was approved by the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System effective May 1, 2021.

The overarching goal of the Office of Inclusion and Diversity is to foster a sense of institutional belonging where everyone can thrive and become their very best. To that end, the Office will establish and promote cultural competence by promulgating diversity, equity, and inclusion across campus and in all activities to close the gap in recruitment and retention. To quantitatively measure its progress, Northwestern will establish *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity* as its sixth Strategic Focus Area (SFA) in its new *Strategic Plan 2023-2028—A New Day*.

The following objectives will drive this process:

- Increasing diversity and equity among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration.
- Integrating diversity and inclusion throughout the academic curriculum and support programs.
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion are reflected in policies, procedures, budgeting, staffing, facility management, and other areas of university operation.
- Developing a more inclusive campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.

To set the conditions, the following professional presentations took place in AC 2020-2021:

- August 11, 2020—Moving the Needle of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; NSU On-Call Week
- August 12, 2020—Creating Capacity for Change Through the Inclusive Excellence Model; NSU On-Call Week
- August 13, 2020—Managing Diversity Flashpoints; NSU On-Call Week
- September 25, 2020—NSU Leads Presentation

- October 16, 2020–Presentation to Recognized Student Organizations
- October 28, 2020–Presentation for Stem Summit
- October 30, 2020–Presentation for the NSU IGNITE Program
- January 6, 2021–How to uncouple bias from the decision-making process (NSULeads Team A)
- January 7, 2021–Shifting the paradigm from Non-Racist to Anti-Racist (NSULeads Team B)
- January 21, 2021–Presentation to the Mayor’s Leadership Team, Natchitoches, LA
- February 3, 2021–What Black History Means to Me; Black History Month Lecture Series
- February 10, 2021–Confronting a Painful Past; Black History Month Lecture Series
- March 10, 2021–Black Achievements; Black History Month Lecture Series
- March 24, 2021–Presentation to the Freshman Connectors

To stimulate campus engagement:

- October 14, 2020–DemoNSUnite For Change Event
- October 21, 2020–Panelist for Central Louisiana Society for Human Resources Virtual Seminar
- November 15, 2020–Served as a Judge for Alpha Phi Alpha Miss Black and Gold Pageant
- December 2, 2020–When They See Us: Black Males Navigating Historically White Institutions–NCORE Webinar
- January 27, 2021–The Forgotten Constituency: Engaging Staff in Campus DEI Initiatives–NCORE Webinar
- April 7, 2021 –Killing Me Softly: Suicide among African American, Asian, Pacific Islander and LGBTQ+ Students–NCORE Webinar
- April 27, 2021–The Mis-Education of the Black Male Student-Athlete: How Socio-demographic (Self) Identifiers Influence their identity Development and their Involvement in College–NCORE Webinar
- April 27, 2021–Using Autoethnography to Develop Race Cognizance in White Folks on Campus–NCORE Webinar

To promote civic engagement:

- Participated in the Natchitoches Parish Voters and Civic League.
- Served on events planning committee for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

In addition to the development of the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity SFA plans, include campus-wide inclusive coaching sessions (training/workshops); the addition of Harbor Institute training for first-time students; the continuation of NCORE Webinar Series, faculty DEI Institutes, and speaker series; a University Inclusive Excellence Conference; and the establishment of Affinity Groups and donning of the Stoles Event.

Research within its mission

The *Research Council* enables, supports, enhances, recognizes, and promotes research activities by undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff across all academic units of the University. The Council advises the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Provost on guiding principles and policies for the OSP, as well as on policies and guidelines for administering competitive grant programs, Research Day, research awards, participation in undergraduate research conferences, and other research activities.

Within the University’s mission, research plays multiple roles. *Undergraduate Research* is a pedagogical tool to increase understanding of theory through practice and to prepare students for success in graduate and professional programs, business, and other career paths. As stated in the Graduate School’s *Guidelines for Preparing Your Final Research Document at Northwestern State University*, Graduate Research, “provides graduate students an opportunity to design and implement research, explore historical and current trends,

create new designs and products, and engage in problem-solving” as a component of their professional training. Both undergraduate and graduate research activities represent best practices in higher education. The research activities of *Faculty and Staff* contribute to the generation of new knowledge in their disciplines and to innovation, best practices, and problem-solving in applications ranging from Northwestern’s traditional strengths in education and nursing to newer areas such as computer information system and engineering technology. Collectively, research activities at Northwestern contribute to a more capable workforce, service to the community and industry, innovation in the classroom, and an increase in scholarly knowledge. Thus, it is important to foster a culture of scholarship at all levels (faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students).

AY 2020-2021 Key Findings (in comparison to AC 2019-2020):

- 13 presentations by 41 graduate students at 2 scholarly conferences (unchanged).
- 16 presentations by 40 undergraduates at 4 conferences (up 45%). Conferences, including the University of Louisiana System Academic Summit, were held virtually due to COVID-19.
- Research Day was produced as a synchronous virtual conference with three categories of presentations: long oral presentations, brief oral presentations, and virtual posters. When not restricted by copyright issues, oral presentations were also recorded for asynchronous viewing; posters were presented orally and archived for asynchronous viewing as well.
- 18 presentations were presented virtually by 42 graduate students for Research Day (up 29%).
- 17 presentations were presented by 34 undergraduate students for Research Day (up 70%). Fourteen faculty members served as research mentors.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- Develop a new system using Interfolio to capture faculty presentations and publications. Not all faculty have adopted the system yet.
- Launch Undergraduate Research Fellows and Undergraduate Research Mentors programs to better capture student presentations and publications and faculty mentoring efforts.
- Secure funding for supplies and equipment necessary to produce research posters for conference and Research Day presentations for students and faculty.
- Prepare for a virtual version of Research Day, in case it is needed.

General Education Competencies

During Assessment Cycle 2020-2021, the COVID-19 virus forced Northwestern to reevaluate how to execute its mission. Through deliberate planning, the University substantially modified courses, programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning while protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff.

Assignments and student learning assessments were modified to maximize the principles of equitable evaluation and assure the highest quality in-person classes, online delivery of courses, and hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources were updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

Student learning outcomes guide the design and delivery of instruction to ensure student learning. While the assessment process continues, it would be naïve to assume this core curriculum has not been affected—the degree of which is based on individual courses and student. However, because of the tireless efforts of the faculty and staff, we continually strive to provide extraordinary academic and experiential student learning opportunities despite these trying times.

The current broad-based core curriculum leverages six key competencies central to the University's mission and is consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents' requirements for general education. The selection of courses encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. The requirements are designed to improve students' writing and speaking skills; provide students with mathematical skills at the level of college algebra and above; strengthen students' understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences; and develop an appreciation and knowledge of the arts and humanities. These courses provide the breadth of a student's educational program while the degree program requirements provide the depth.

The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their respective degree programs, to obtain appropriate learning outcomes for the general education competencies. The effort in Fall 2018 was to validate the tool/method of assessment while cataloging the number of students being tested. In some cases, there was no formal assessment completed other than as mentioned. In Spring 2019, all core competencies conducted a full assessment of the student learning outcomes. The only exception was in Behavioral and Social Sciences, where the data for each measure was not specified/reported. Nonetheless, the data collected did reflect whether the student met or failed to meet the student learning outcome. AC 2019-2020 is the first complete (fall/spring) iteration of assessing the University's core competencies.

The AC 2020-2021 core competency assessment is located on the University Institutional Effectiveness website under Assessment Cycle Reports, AY 2020-2021, General Education Core Competencies.

The AC 2020-2021 Core Competency assessment results: *17,838 student assessments were completed, representing a 6 % increase over the 16,703 assessments in AC 2019-2020.* (Some courses have more than one assessment and some students may have been assessed in more than one course.) Seven of the 12 Student Learning Outcomes (58%) were met compared to 11 of 12 (92%) last year. Of the 31 measures, 19 (61%) were positive as compared to 21 (68%) last year. Twelve measures (38%) were not met this year compared to 10 measures (32%) last year. The findings for each competency are provided below.

English. To demonstrate writing as a purpose-driven process of communication within specific contexts. *1525 students were assessed (392 were Dual Enrollment) a 13% decrease over AC 2019-20.*

SLO 1. Students will write a variety of types of texts for diverse audiences, purposes, and contexts. Note. All targets were increased from 75% to 80% in AC 2020-2021. Additionally, *Results include 392 Dual Enrollment students.*

Measure 1.1. Target: 80% of student portfolios assessed from ENGL 1010 in the fall semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 1.1.

Findings: 763 of 821 students (92.9%) met the target, scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, a 5% improvement over AC 2019-2020. Target met.

Measure 1.2. Target: 80% of student portfolio letters assessed from ENGL 1010 in the fall semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 1.2.

Findings: 739 of 821 students (90%) met the target scoring 2 or higher on the evaluation, a 3% improvement over AC 2019-2020. Target Met.

SLO 2. Students will perform writing as a process of planning, researching, prewriting, drafting, evaluating, and revising to develop and strengthen their compositions.

Measure 2.1. Target: 80% of student portfolios assessed from ENGL 1020 in the spring semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 2.1.

Findings: 629 of 704 students (89%) met the target, scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, a 1% improvement over AC 2019-2020. Target met.

Measure 2.2. Target: 80% of student portfolio letters assessed from ENGL 1020 in the spring semester will score 2 (acceptable) or higher on Rubric 2.2.

Findings: 604 of 70 students (85%) met the target, scoring 2 or higher on the assessment, a 2% improvement over AC 2019-2020. Target met.

In AC 2020-2021, 82% of enrolled students (704/829) were assessed, a 10% increase despite the attendance issues created by COVID 19. Further, training was provided to all instructors that reviewed the portfolio assignment and rating process, training that will continue in AC 2021-2022. In Spring 2020, 28.5% of Dual Enrollment courses were assessed. In Spring 2021, 70% of Dual Enrollment sections were assessed, an increase of 41.5%. Overall, these numbers illustrate that the training implemented in Spring 2021, which was directly tailored to instructors working in K-12 settings, worked to assist faculty in understanding how to collect and report data more effectively.

Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning. To apply mathematical and analytical reasoning skills. *1327 were assessed (60 were Dual Enrollment), a 12% decrease from AC 2019-2020.*

SLO 1. Students will apply mathematics/analytical reasoning skills by translating a word problem into an appropriate mathematical model and translating the solution of a model into an answer to a practical problem.

Measure 1.1. Target: 70% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on the questions that ask the student to pick an appropriate mathematical model for a problem.

Finding. 1327 students (of whom 60 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed; 872 met the goal (65.7%). Target not met.

Measure 1.2. Target: 80% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on questions that ask the student to interpret the solution to a mathematical model as an answer to a practical problem. Further in each course, at least 70% of students will attain a score of 2.

Finding. 1327 students (of whom 60 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed 1095 met the goal (82.6%). Two of the eight courses did not meet the goal of 70%. Target not met.

SLO 2 Students will demonstrate the ability to solve a mathematical problem through algebraic, graphical/geometrical, or numerical/statistical methods as appropriate.

Measure 2.1 Target: Target: 75% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on the that ask a student to solve a problem stated in mathematical symbology. Further, in each course, at least 70% of students will attain a score of 2.

Finding. 1327 students (of whom 60 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed; 1065 met the goal (80.3%). Three of the eight courses did not meet the goal of 70%. Target not met.

Measure 2.2. Target: 70% of students will attain a score of 2 (Acceptable) on the questions that ask a student to solve a word problem.

Finding. 1327 students (of whom 60 were Dual Enrollment) were assessed; 911 met the goal (68.7%). Target not met.

Natural Sciences. To understand the universe through the study of life and physical sciences. *1034 students were assessed (a 27% increase from AC 2019-2020); 333 were Dual Enrollment.*

SLO 1. Students will identify the parts of the scientific method and design scientifically-sound experiments.

Measure 1.1. Target: 80% of students will attain a grade of $\geq 70\%$ on a quiz where they identify the parts of the scientific method, including observations, hypotheses, and the various forms of experimental variables.

Finding. Only 604 of 1034 students (58.41%) scored 70% or higher on the quiz. This is well below our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz and substantially lower than the AC 2019-2020 assessment, where 488 of 751 students (64.98%) met the standard ($p = .002$).

Measure 1.2. Target: 80% of students will attain a grade $\geq 70\%$ on a quiz demonstrating the ability to recognize scientifically sound experiments by identifying relevant dependent and independent variables and understanding how to use them to design appropriate experiments to test a given hypothesis.

Finding. Only 544 of 1034 students (52.61%) met the standard of scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is below our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz and lower than the AC 2019-2020 assessment (397/747, 53.15%).

SLO 2. Students will analyze scientific data to draw conclusions about the natural and physical world.

Measure 2.1. Target: 80% of students will attain a grade $\geq 70\%$ on a quiz demonstrating their ability to predict experimental results using their knowledge of the scientific method and experimental design.

Finding. Only 497 of 1034 students (48.07%) met the target of scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is well below our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz, but a significant improvement compared to student performance on the AC 2019-2020 assessment (296/751, 39.41%, $p < .001$).

Measure 2.2. Target: 80% of students will attain a grade $\geq 70\%$ on a quiz demonstrating the ability to interpret scientific data presented in verbal, tabular, or graphic form then use those interpretations to provide scientific explanations for the results.

Finding. Only 433 of 1034, 41.88% of students met the target of scoring 70% or higher on the quiz. This is far below our goal of 80% of students in BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250, and SCI 1020 scoring $\geq 70\%$ on the quiz, but a significant increase in student performance compared to the AC 2019-2020 assessment (272/751, 36.22%, $p = .008$).

Humanities. To understand the diversity of human knowledge and experience across cultures as examined through the humanities. 3,933 students were assessed (465 were Dual Enrollment), a 14% increase from AC 2019-2020.

SLO 1. Students will communicate an understanding of the diversity of human experience, including issues such as nationality, ethnicity, race, language, gender, sexuality, exceptionalities, religion, and culture. This SLO was assessed by at least one measure in 2,745 students.

Measure 1.1. Target: 70%. One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110. The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate basic awareness and understanding of cultural differences (behaviors, expressions, etc.). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. 1,181 students were assessed; 142 were Dual Enrollment. In ENGL 2070, 87.9% of students and in ENGL 2110, 86% of students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the

assessment. In our Dual Enrollment sections, 88% of ENGL 2070 students and 92% of ENGL 2110 students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the assessment. Target met.

Measure 1.2. Target: 70%. One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110 (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of social, literary, and historical contexts. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. 605 students were assessed; 71 were Dual Enrollment. In ENGL 2070, 95.4% of students and in ENGL 2110, 85.2% of students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the assessment. In our Dual Enrollment sections, 100% of ENGL 2070 students and 82% of ENGL 2110 students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the assessment. Target met.

Measure 1.3. Target: 70%. One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students taught will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110 (attached), to determine students' ability to analyze literary material and show understanding of diversity through that literary analysis. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. 892 students were assessed; 162 were Dual Enrollment. In ENGL 2070, 89.2% of students and in ENGL 2110, 86.2% of students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the assessment. In our Dual Enrollment sections, 91% of ENGL 2070 students and 94% of ENGL 2110 students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the assessment. Target met.

Measure 1.4. Target: 70%. One written assignment of at least 500 words from all ENGL 2110 and 2070 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized Assessment Rubric for ENGL 2070/2110 (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic understanding of the relationships between identities and writing. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. 511 students were assessed; 51 were Dual Enrollment. In ENGL 2070, 91.3% of students and in ENGL 2110, 81.9% of students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the assessment. In our Dual Enrollment sections, 100% of ENGL 2070 students and 82% of ENGL 2110 students scored a 3 (competency) or higher on the assessment.

Measure 1.5. Target: 70%. Students will demonstrate competence in researching and delivering an effective oral persuasive presentation designed for diverse audiences and contexts. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. 1,776 students were assessed; 303 were Dual Enrollment. Target met.

Measure 1.6. Target: 70%. Students will recognize and analyze how verbal and nonverbal communication styles vary across cultures and affect the way people communicate by completing a Culture Project and Presentation. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. 1,776 students were assessed; 303 were Dual Enrollment. Target met.

Measure 1.7. Target 70%. One team-created written assignment and one team or individual presentation of the written assignment from all BUAD 2200 students will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members. The writing and oral presentation will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic awareness and understanding of cultural differences

(socialized norms, politics, religion, etc.). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. A total of 183 students were assessed; none were Dual Enrollment. 94% of the students assessed completed the project with an average score above 70%. This is a slight decrease of 1% from the results of the past assessment cycle (2019-2020).

SLO 2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how various political, economic, social, and cultural movements emerge, evolve, and influence human thought and experience over time. This SLO was assessed by at least one measure in 640 students.

Measure 2.1. Target: 70%. Students will demonstrate their understanding of political, economic, social, and cultural movements. Comprehension of how human thought and historical concepts emerge over time will be evaluated in a post-class survey, in each of the four core classes (HIST 1010, 1020, 2010, and 2020). At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (Competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding. A total of 569 students were assessed; none were Dual Enrollment. Students exceeded the target in all four HIST courses by between 6 and 15 percentage points. All courses had a higher percentage of students meeting the goal compared to the previous year, although not significantly higher. Collectively, the success rate in the four courses combined improved significantly (from 82% in AC 2019-2020 to 86% in AC 2020-2021; $p = .0411$). Target met.

Measure 2.2. Target: 70%. The specific assessment is to be chosen by the instructor of each section of PHIL 1010, consisting of a written assignment of at least 400 words integrated into some part of the course. The writing can be obtained in several ways: as a Discussion Forum posting, as an essay question on an exam, a journal entry, or something similar. At least 70% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding: A total of 102 students were assessed; none were Dual Enrollment. In AC 2020-2021, 90 students (88%) scored a 3 or higher on the assessment, a 4% increase over AC 2019-2020. This positive trend was not statistically significant ($p = .1859$). Target met.

Social/Behavioral Sciences. To demonstrate an understanding of human behavior and the relationship between individuals and their societies. A total of 7,438 students assessed, a 80% increase from AC 2018-2019.

SLO 1. Students will develop the skills to think critically, analyze, and discuss geographical, political, economic, and cultural variances in today's global environment.

Measure 1.1. Target 70%. Students will demonstrate their critical thinking skills through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum of 70% on the assessment rubric.

Finding: 77% of students, or 2,526 out of 3,271, scored 70% or higher. This percentage was higher than in AC 2019-2020, but not significantly so ($p = .2171$). The percentage meeting the standard improved in four courses (PSYC 2050, SOC 1010, GEOG 1010, and PSCI 2010), declined in five courses (EPSY 2020, ANTH 1510, ANTH 2020, ECON 2000, and GEOG 1020), and remained the same in one (PSYC 1010). Target Met.

Measure 1.2. Target 70%. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the concept of culture and its importance through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Finding: 76% of students, or 2,304 out of 3,022, scored 70% or higher, a significant increase over AC 2019-2020 ($p < .001$). Although scores dropped in four courses (EPSY 2020, ANTH 1510, ANTH 2020, and ECON 2000), large improvements in PSYC 1010 (from 20% in AC 2019-2020 to 62%) and PSYC 2050 (from 22% in AC 2019-2020 to 63%) led the way to an overall improvement. Target Met.

Category	Course Name	Measure 1.1		Measure 1.2		Term
		Methodology	% scoring 70% or higher	Methodology	% scoring 70% or higher	
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	70%	Pretest/Post-test	70%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Pretest/Post-test	68%	Pretest/Post-test	62%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Pretest/Post-test	41%	Pretest/Post-test	63%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Pretest/Post-test	99%	Pretest/Post-test	99%	Fall/Spring
Social Science	ANTH 1510	Exam 4	68%	Exam 1	20%	Fall
	ANTH 2020	Pretest/Post-test	83%	Pretest/Post-test	81%	Spring
	ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	62%	Pretest/Post-test	60%	Fall/Spring
	GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	86%	Pretest/Post-test	91%	Fall
	GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	88%	Pretest/Post-test	90%	Spring
	PSCI 2010	Exams 3 and 4	98%	Exams 3 and 4	96%	Fall/Spring

SLO 2. SLO 2 applies to the Behavioral Science Core courses. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and socialization thereby developing the skills necessary to navigate professional and personal landscapes.

Measure 2.1. Target 70%. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and its impact on group and individual interactions through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Finding: 63% of students, or 606 out of 958, scored 70% or higher, a slight decline over AC 2019-2020. Target Not Met.

Measure 2.2. Target 70%. Number assessed 1,124. Student will demonstrate their understanding of the socialization process and traditional and contemporary theoretical schools of thought through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Finding: 87% of students, or 827 out of 952, scored 70% or higher, which was comparable to the results in AC 2020-2021. All courses exceeded the target. Target Met

Category	Course Name	Methodology	Measure 2.1	Measure 2.2	Term
			% scoring 70% or higher	% scoring 70% or higher	
Behavioral Science	EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	72%	72%	Fall/Spring
	PSYC 1010	Pretest/Post-test	68%	98%	Spring
	PSYC 2050	Pretest/Post-test	37%	81%	Fall
	SOC 1010	Pretest/Post-test	63%	97%	Fall/Spring

Fine Arts. To explore purposes and processes in the visual and performing arts and the ways in which fine arts conceive and express the human experience. 1816 students were assessed (355 were Dual Enrollment) a 3% increase from AC 2019-2020.

SLO 1. Students identify genres, artists, works, techniques, and trends within the arts

Measure 1.1. Target 30% growth, 80% participation. The student will recognize important terminology used in describing the arts, important individual works of art, famous composers, playwrights, artists, choreographers, and performers, and identify important historical periods and trends in the arts. **Target:** 30% growth between the two tests with at least 80% of the students enrolled taking the exam. 40% growth is ideal. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of basic terminology, important artists, and critical moments in the history of art.

Finding. Of 1816 students enrolled in FA 1040 (including 355 Dual Enrollment), 1618 (89.1%) took the pretest and 1260 (69.4%) took the post-test, comparable to last year's participation. The average score improved from 44.8 on the pretest to 67.0 on the post-test, 49.6% growth. Target met for growth percentage and pretest participation. Target not met in post-test participation.

Measure 1.2. Target 30% growth, 80% participation. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the arts in European culture as well as the arts and culture of other countries. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of European and non-European cultural trends and important examples and people in the artistic community.

Finding. Of 1816 students enrolled in FA 1040 (including 355 Dual Enrollment), 1618 (89.1%) took the pretest and 1260 (69.4%) took the post-test, comparable to last year's participation. The average score improved from 44.8 on the pretest to 67.0 on the post-test, 49.6% growth. Target met for growth percentage and pretest participation. Target not met in post-test participation.

SLO 2. Students will examine the arts through event attendance and reflection.

Measure 2.1. will attend, review, and analyze a music event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the music performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a musical performance.

Finding: 1288 of 1816 (71%) students successfully completed the assignment with 355 of those total students being Dual Enrollment students. Target met.

Measure 2.2. Target 70% of students will attend, review, and analyze a theater event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the theater performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a theatrical performance.

Finding: 1228 of 1816 (68%) students completed the assignment during the 2020-2021 AY, with 355 of those total students being Dual Enrollment students. Target not met.

Measure 2.3. Target 70% of students will attend, review, and analyze an art gallery using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques: By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the visual art performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on going to an art gallery.

Finding. 1225 of 1816 (67%) students completed the assignment during the 2020-2021 AY, with 355 of those total students being Dual Enrollment students. Target not met.

Measure 2.4. Target: 70% of students will attend, review, and analyze a dance event using Standard American English with 70% student participation. Performance Critiques. By the end of each of the fall and spring semesters, the student will have completed the dance performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a live dance performance or viewing of a pre-approved list of dance films.

Finding. 1189 of 1816 (65%) students completed the assignment during the 2020-2021 AY, with 355 of those total students being Dual Enrollment students. Target not met.

Plan of Action Moving Forward. Each core competency will implement strategies for improvement ensuring standardization in the application of the measures to the variety of courses applicable. Each competency will deliberately integrate Dual Enrollment students into the assessment.

Quality Enhancement Plan

“*Learning for Life: Experience Your Future*” entered its final phase of completion in AY 2020-2021. The grant and implementation teams have completed their work, and all academic programs have begun delivering capstone coursework. The *Learning for Life* initiative is now focused on gathering University and program quantitative data to assess the impact of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report due in Spring 2023.

The assessment team will also begin gathering qualitative data in AY 2021-2022 to identify program limitations and achievements in implementing proposed curricular revisions. This will be a valuable contribution to the Impact Report, which includes discussion of changes made to the QEP due to practical experience and feedback. The assessment team includes representatives of each academic college who will communicate with QEP coordinators in relevant departments to gather information about challenges in implementing the QEP; changes made to the QEP coursework; and examples of program improvement and innovation, a key component of the University’s strategic framework.

In AY 2020-2021, no programs elected to change the wording of Learning for Life rubrics. Program coordinators continue to state that learning how to evaluate students with the existing rubrics is more important than changing descriptor language at this juncture. QEP assessment team meetings were held once each semester, and individual meetings with Program Coordinators were held as needed. The COVID-19 Pandemic and weather events in both fall and spring semesters made program implementation and data collection challenging. However, as of 18 June 2021, 63.9% of programs had reported *Learning for Life* data for AY 2020-2021. All reporting programs met the university benchmark of “each SLO item will have an average score of 3 or better.” Below is a benchmark tracker, which indicates the percentage of complete data reported for each implementation group.

Benchmark Tracker

2020 Implementation Cohort 1: Benchmark met (87.5 % reporting)

2019 Implementation Cohort 1 and 2: Benchmark met (55.4% reporting)

2018 Implementation/Cohort 1,2, and 3: Benchmark met (65% reporting)

2017 Implementation/ Cohort 1,2 and 3: Target met (74.8% reporting)

Indirect assessment (student surveys)—Student surveys will continue to be collected for the Impact Report through the fall of 2022. Many programs are in the process of developing surveys and assessment tools that will be used in place of the Learning for Life instruments.

Strategic Focus Area 3–Market Responsiveness

Education will change significantly over the next decade as competitiveness becomes increasingly driven by learning and the need to deliver a highly productive workforce. Institutions are positioning themselves to redesign to deliver the skills required for the disruptions ahead. These changes have the potential to offer more inclusive economic growth and innovation through technology. In the context of the transformation to knowledge and learning that technologies have created, universities are developing new models and strategies that include the expansion of experiential learning and new learning formats for students.

Universities are building more collaborative environments in which the need for a broader perspective and open dialogue between the institution and business and industry partners.

Northwestern State University often has acted as a connector by establishing partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and employers to ensure students are aware of and reach the educational options most relevant to their goals. These collaborations create experiences and build programs that provide them with the skills they need as technology and the job market changes.

We engage industry partners to solicit input on current and future needs. Their feedback is invaluable as we enact changes that involve continuous assessment of programs and reflection about the needs of graduates.

Established in year one of our assessment cycle, clear benchmarks (Table 16) provide quantifiable measures to assess our progress and gauge our success. Progress towards meeting these targets include:

- 100% of departments have active advisory councils or established processes that reflect the University's efforts to productively engage alumni, employers, and the community to ensure that programs are aligned with workforce demands.
- The vast majority of new alumni (91%) continue to feel that they are well-prepared upon graduation and have increased their knowledge in the academic field. Confidence in the acquired knowledge in one's field is recognized as a driver of productivity and economic growth.
- 86% of graduates feel that they completed requirements for a job in their chosen field. Due to the nature of certain programs or demands by industry, some occupations operate under a high degree of regulation and oversight from associations, governmental agencies, or legislation. Other occupations require on the job training, so the time between degree completion and acquisition of such training may be delayed.
- Graduates responded that 56% have full-time jobs at graduation, and 10% of graduates planned to pursue an advanced degree. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2020, the employment rate was higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, the employment rate was highest for young adults with a bachelor's or higher degree (86%). While the target metric remains the same, the data obtained from NSU graduates provides an opportunity to explore further internal and external factors that contribute to the post-commencement full-time employment of NSU students.
- Collaboration among 2-year and 4-year institutions and industry partners has been widely viewed as a positive endeavor. The University has successfully established 133 articulation agreements to provide the clearest pathway for students to transfer credit towards a degree. This represents a 3.10% gain towards achieving the 2022 target.

- Of the 70-degree programs offered in 2020 at NSU, 61 (87%) have been modified in the last 5 years, and 51 (73%) have been modified in the last 3 years.
- The labor market has changed significantly, and institutions are using terms like *market responsiveness* as a form of rebranding. Northwestern State University continues to be focused on the importance of preparing a skilled and dynamic workforce capable of thriving in what will be the next generation economy.

Table 16

Metrics for Assessing Market Responsiveness—those in blue were assessed in 2020-2021. Those in black were assessed in 2019-2020 and those in 2018-2019 serve as the comparison year.

AC 2018-2019	AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	Market Responsiveness Metrics	AC 2022-2023 Target
86%	87%		New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet workforce needs	100%
23		11	<i>Number of faculty funded for faculty development</i>	45
122	129		Number of academic articulation and industry partnership agreements	300
97.2%		91%	<i>Percent of recent graduates who feel they are well-prepared upon graduating (increased knowledge in academic field)</i>	100%
96.3%		86%	<i>Percent satisfaction of recent graduates who feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field</i>	100%
60.8%		56%	<i>Percent of recent graduates who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation</i>	100%
64.5%		10.0%	<i>Percent of recent graduates who will pursue an advanced degree</i>	50% Target Met
1	5		Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts 11 (16-17) + 2 (2017-2018) + 1 (2018-2019) + 5 (2019-2020)	3 (Annually)
4	Target Met		Processes for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs	4 Target Met
95% (21/22)	100%		Number of departments that have active advisory councils or established processes	100%

Note. Benchmarks for AC 2018-2019 are reflected on the far left with AC 2019-2020 results to the immediate right and AC 2020-2021 to the far right. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured. Blue italicized text indicates metrics evaluated in 2020-2021.

AC 2020-2021 metrics and objectives and AC 2023 targets were reaffirmed per the AC 2020-2021 Assessment Report briefed to the President, his Leadership Team, and University Assessment Committee in February 2021.

We understand that the university’s role is vital in developing a productive and dynamic labor force to the meet the demands of the global economy. The processes being established will continue and be refined as we continue our dialogue with alumni and our workforce partners in this process to identify key indicators required for market responsiveness.

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

Objective 1:

Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.

Strategies:

- As required, increase the number of faculty members with industry-recognized certifications and competencies.
- Analyze current and projected academic program needs.
- Develop University funding opportunities for faculty development, education, certifications, and skill development.

Metrics:

1. New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.
2. *Number of faculty funded for faculty development.*

Metric:

1. **New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.**

Findings:

Of the 70-degree programs currently offered at NSU, 61 (87%) have been modified in the 5 years from 2015-2016 through 2019-2020, and 51 (73%) have been modified in the 3 years from 2017-2018 through 2019-2020. This is not statistically different from AC 2018-2019 (58 of 69 and 52 of 69, respectively).

Curriculum changes approved by the CRC during AC 2019-2020 included revised courses, three new concentrations, one master's degree, and four certificate programs submitted to and approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents.

- New concentrations:
 - Nuclear Surety Management; Unified Public Safety Administration
 - Academic Content (MEd); Gallaspy Family College of Education & Human Development
 - Nurse Anesthesia (DNP); College of Nursing and School of Allied Health
- Master of Science in Computer Information Systems
- Undergraduate certificates:
 - Strategic Communication; New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts
 - Business Analytics; College of Business
 - Leadership Studies; College of Business
 - Remote Systems Science and Technology (RSST)
- Post-Master's certificate, Adult-Gerontological Acute Care Nurse Practitioner; College of Nursing and School of Allied Health

Analysis:

Departmental curriculum review is a process that employs data and feedback from internal and external constituents to guide curriculum development and redesign.

Curriculum development and redesign has become an economic-endorsed effort, since curriculum should mirror the needs of the global economic market. To produce well equipped and professionally skilled graduates for the 21st century work environment, the University collaborates with internal and external stakeholders to identify and understand the skills required by employers. Northwestern State University has created a forum by which business and industry partners can be actively become engaged and communicate their knowledge of required skills.

The University and its partners consult and revise programs and courses as necessary as we work to realize a shared vision for the region. University departments assess local industry and business needs and set forth strategies for the region's workforce development system consistent with the state's strategic workforce system goals. The University is deeply committed to the economic vitality of the community and has confidence in our ability to redesign programs and curricula to meet workforce needs and evolving talent demands in local and global economies. Unless approval by outside agencies is required, departments can revise or develop new courses, concentrations, and minors internally, with the approval of the Curriculum Review Council; new majors, degrees, and certificate programs require additional approval from the Board of Regents. It is evident by the analysis of data that the University is deeply committed to responding to workforce needs.

Decision:

This process provides relevant information for decision making by academic departments. Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to remain at the forefront of leading trends. As a result, the institution remains focused on activities that lead to the production of relevant programs and courses that are taught by highly qualified faculty while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today's economic opportunities.

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

Metric:

2. *Number of faculty funded for faculty development.*

Findings:

Institutional professional development opportunities during AC 2020-2021 included:

1. The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) offered 155 workshops to enable faculty to design or redesign online courses and learn more about the latest teaching practices and quality standards in online education.
2. In 2020-2021, 11 faculty received funding through the Provost's Professional Development Program.
3. In addition to the professional development offered by the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education, special sessions were offered during Faculty On-Call Week in advance of the start of classes. Three sessions were conducted in the fall, and each were attended by 316, 222, and 211 faculty. During the spring term, two sessions were held in which 169 faculty participated in session one and 173 faculty participated in session two.

Analysis:

Our work in faculty development is aimed at continuous improvement of our faculty, and this guides sustainable engagement. Professional development is generally initiated by faculty but may be provided at the institutional level or arranged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (*Faculty Handbook*, p.

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

The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) provides monthly professional development workshops for faculty that are offered face-to-face, via WebEx, and online. Of the 155 workshop opportunities offered, 122 were conducted, based on faculty demand. An extended program engages faculty in the design or redesign of online courses and provides media and instructional support as they learn more about the latest teaching practices and quality standards in online education. *The Tech Toolbox* was added to the website in 2018 to archive the monthly newsletters available for faculty which include new upcoming technology and tools for course improvement and productivity.

The Faculty Research Support Grant program prioritized funding for faculty grants for 2020-2021. Eleven faculty members, representing all four colleges, received a total of \$8,319.00 for professional development, awarded on a competitive basis. Proposals were evaluated on the benefit to the individual faculty member, their students, their department, and the University, in addition to their budget justification.

In addition to the professional development offered by the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education, special sessions were offered during Faculty On-Call Week in advance of the start of classes. Three sessions were conducted in the fall, and each were attended by 316, 222, and 211 faculty respectively. During the spring term, two sessions were held in which 169 and 173 faculty participated.

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

Decision:

The university has embraced technology advancements and is proactive in its efforts to provide opportunities for faculty development, education, certification, and skills development. Professional development is important because education is an ever-growing, ever-changing field. Professional development allows teachers to learn new teaching styles, techniques, and tips and interact with educators from other areas to improve their own teaching. Additional professional development for faculty and staff will be provided as new technology and software become available to the university. Moving forward, the university will continue to explore professional development needs and develop opportunities that support faculty in their professional growth.

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.
- Monitor the development of public and private agreements.
- Develop or redesign programs to align with workforce demands.
- Monitor graduate success and preparedness using alumni and employer feedback.

Metrics:

1. Number of academic articulation and industry partnership agreements
2. *Percent of recent graduates who feel they are well-prepared upon graduating (increased knowledge in academic field)*
3. *Percent satisfaction of recent graduates who feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field.*
4. *Percent of recent graduates who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation*
5. *Percent of recent graduates who will pursue an advanced degree.*

Metric:

1. Number of academic articulation and industry partnership agreements

Findings:

An additional 7 articulation agreements and partnerships were added in AC 2019-2020 to better enable students to pursue industry-specific credentials or advanced degrees.

Analysis:

As of Spring 2020, the University has 129 articulation agreements and partnerships to provide clear pathways for the articulation of credit. For example, Departments engage both public and private institutions and organizations to provide seamless pathways by which students can be successful in achieving work-ready skills while advancing through curriculum patterns coordinated to promote student achievement.

Decision:

Collaboration between the university and its partners is a critical driver of the innovation economy. These agreements simplify the college transition of credit from technical and 2-year programs and highlight the University's acceptance of credit while providing very specific course plans for students. Forging long-term relationships with industry partners provides opportunities for students through internships, cooperatives, and research. Further, these relationships provide firsthand knowledge about the immediate and long-term needs for an industry's workforce. In the broadest sense, these relationships create public good while satisfying the mission and objectives of each partner.

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

Metric:

2. *Percent of recent graduates who feel they are well-prepared upon graduating (increased knowledge in academic field)*

Findings:

The Graduating Student Survey is administered to graduating seniors through the Handshake platform. Although data collection is not complete until October following a spring graduation, preliminary results from data available in May is used for this metric. In AC 2020-2021, of the 477 graduates completing the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey by May 25, 2021, 91% (432) were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way their experiences at NSU increased their knowledge in their chosen academic field.

Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, only 108 graduating seniors completed the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey by the end of the assessment cycle. Of the initial 108, 97.2 % (105) were "satisfied" or "very satisfied"

with the way their experiences at NSU increased their knowledge in their chosen academic field. On the other hand, in AC 2020-2021 over four times as many graduates completed their assessment in the first month after graduation, compared to AC 2018-2019, potentially due to more frequent reminders sent to students who had not submitted their surveys. Of the 477 respondents, 432 (90.56%) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the attainment of knowledge in their chosen academic field. While this represents a significant decrease ($p = .023$), the difference in survey administration may have been a contributing factor, with the most highly satisfied graduates being more likely to respond without prompting and thus making up a larger proportion of the AC 2018-2019 results.

Decision:

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

Metric:

3. *Percent satisfaction of recent graduates who feel they completed the requirements for a job or career in their chosen field.*

Findings:

In AC 2020-2021, 409 of the 477 graduates completing the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey (86%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way their experiences helped them complete job or career requirements.

Analysis:

Of the 108 graduating seniors completing the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey in AC 2018-2019, 104 (96.3 %) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way their experiences at NSU helped them complete job or career requirements. Although a high proportion of students (86%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” in AC 2020-2021, satisfaction level dropped considerably ($p = .003$). Reductions in experiential learning opportunities due to COVID-19 restrictions may have affected student satisfaction with career preparation, especially for majors in Education, Nursing, and Allied Health, all of which depend upon internship and clinical experiences.

Decision:

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

Metric:

4. *Percent of recent graduates who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation*

Findings:

In the *First Destination* module of the Graduation Student Survey, respondents are asked about their plans in the first six months following graduation. In AC 2020-2021, of the 477 graduates completing the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey, 56.4% (269) indicated that their principal activity upon graduation would be full-time employment.

Analysis:

Of the 108 graduating seniors completing the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey in AC 2018-2019, 60.8 % (66) planned to work full-time following graduation. The proportion of students planning full-time employment (56.4%) in AC 2020-2021 was similar to AC 2018-2019 ($p = .371$) The slight reduction in the proportion of Spring 2021 graduating seniors planning to work full-time may reflect continued challenges as Louisiana emerges from pandemic restrictions.

Decision:

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

Metric:

5. Percent of recent graduates who will pursue an advanced degree.

Findings:

In AC 2020-2021, of the 477 graduates who completed the Spring 2021 Graduating Student Survey, 10.0% (46) indicated that they would enter graduate or professional school to pursue an advanced degree.

Analysis:

Of the 108 graduating seniors completing the Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey in AC 2018-2019, 64.5% (70) planned to attend graduate school following graduation. The large drop in this proportion in AC 2020-2021 is significant ($p < .001$). While employers continue to demand master's level credentials, graduates may be concerned about debt and have an increased interest in the attainment of micro-credentials in lieu of advanced degrees.

Decision:

The University will continue to monitor alumni preparedness for the workforce and workforce trends using alumni and employer feedback and use the results in academic program design and redesign.

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

Objective 3:

Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies.

Strategies:

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

Metric:

Number of new degrees, concentrations, or certifications approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.

Findings:

During AC 2019-2020, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved three undergraduate certificates in Leadership Studies, Business Analytics, and Strategic Communication. The Master of Science in Computer Information Systems received approval as well as a post-master's certificate in Adult-Gerontological Acute Care NP.

Analysis:

During 2019-2020, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved 3 new undergraduate certificates, 1 master's program, and one post-master's certificate for Northwestern State. The process involves a review of market demand data and input from stakeholders by departments to determine changes that are needed to existing curriculum and future academic needs.

In September 2019, the university received approval for a certificate in strategic communication. This program was intended to give students more options to learn skills that employers look for today in media professionals. The department adopted significant curriculum changes, and the new 18-credit certificate in Strategic Communication was part of this effort. The department undertook these changes as a response to the current media environment, which requires all candidates to possess a trove of skills to be employable and what employers indicated that they wanted in hiring prospective employees.

In February 2020, the university received approval for a certificate in Leadership Studies and Business Analytics. The certificate in business analytics is designed not only to prepare students for business analytics positions such as market research analyst, management analyst, and financial analyst, but to bridge the gap between employer needs and student skills in business data analysis. Key workforce needs identified by NSU that can be served by this program include accounting, business administration, and computer information systems. University officials conducted a job search on the LA Works website and found 282 five-star jobs posted for business analyst positions.

The certificate in leadership builds on the successful Presidential Leadership Program (PLP) which selects 90 student participants per year, starting in their freshman year. The program utilizes a combination of classroom instruction and experiential learning. PLP is designed to build the soft skills employers report lacking in recent graduates, such as problem solving and the ability to work on a team, while also building students' confidence and ability to work autonomously. The program is designed to supplement a student's undergraduate studies in any major to provide work-place valued leadership, mentoring, mediation, and communication skills. These skills also translate into the employer desired traits of critical analysis and problem solving.

The approval of the MS in Computer Information Systems was a milestone for the University. The program was the first graduate program offered by the School of Business in more than 30 years. The program was established to address a business need to improve organizational information systems in a growing information technology sector in Louisiana. Three of the top 10 largest areas of growth requiring a baccalaureate degree are in the computer information system field. Students who have already earned a bachelor's degree can return to college to increase computer information systems skills and develop new skills. Those without information systems backgrounds can develop new skills to transition to an occupation with a higher salary and larger number of job prospects.

The post masters certificate in Adult-Gerontological Acute Care NP was approved in September, 2019 and addresses a state and national shortage of advanced practice registered nurses who possess specialized nursing knowledge and advanced nursing skills to provide quality health care to adults, older adults, and the elderly who are critically or chronically ill, have urgent or emergent conditions, a traumatic injury or are at risk for life-threatening instability or rapid physiologic health deterioration. NSU employer partners fully supported the offering of this program, and their support was instrumental in gaining approval.

The addition of the master's program and 4 certificates approved in 2019, combined with programs previously approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents includes 19 programs or certificates approved in the last three years.

The development and proposal of new programs and certificates require an analysis to determine current and future program needs and may be driven by the department, by alumni input, or by employers. At all levels of the continuum, academic departments and employers work closely together to analyze workforce needs and develop curriculum and training to meet those needs.

Table 17

New Programs Submitted on Behalf of Northwestern State University and Approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents for 2019-2020 (Fiscal Year 07/2019–07/2020)

CIP Code	Degree	Subject/ Discipline	Approved
620213	UC	LEADERSHIP STUDIES	2020/02
521301	UC	BUSINESS ANALYTICS	2020/02
090909	UC	STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION	2019/09
110401	MS	COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS	2019/08
513821	PMC	ADULT-GERONTOLOGICAL ACUTE CARE NP	2019/08

Decision:

Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to continue to remain at the forefront of leading trends. As a result, the institution remains engaged in activities that lead to the production of relevant programs while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today’s economic opportunities.

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

Objective 4:

Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead.

Strategies:

- Increase efficiency in which information is collected, analyzed, and disseminated that is needed to make institutional decisions that affect our graduates’ abilities to work, learn, lead, and achieve success in their chosen careers.
- Create a process for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.
- Collect feedback from alumni, advisory councils, and employers.

Metrics:

1. Processes for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.
2. Number of departments that have active advisory councils or established processes.

Metric:

1. **Processes for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.**

Findings:

Systematic data collection includes:

- Graduating Senior Survey
- Review of departmental advisory councils
- Newly approved degrees and certificates
- Current academic and industry partnerships

Analysis:

During AC 2019-2020, the process for data gathering included the collection of data by individual departments. This represents data acquired from state and national workforce authorities, departmental advisory councils, surveys, a compilation of newly created degrees and certificates, and an analysis of existing academic and industry partnerships.

The departments have established advisory councils or processes to assist in providing input into programmatic alignment with workforce needs. Business and industry partners assist academic departments by advising on relevant industry expectations, identifying experiential work-based learning and mentorship opportunities for students, actively participating on committees to enhance curricula and student achievement, strengthening career and college pathways by linking the integration of academic instruction and industry needs to real jobs, or participating as guest lecturers to share their professional expertise with students and give credibility to the curriculum. Departmental processes also include the use of data sources and research to inform curricular change and opportunities for innovation.

Decision:

Faculty and administrators at colleges and universities are accountable to stakeholders for the relevancy and quality of academic programs. Advisory boards support academic program accountability by providing guidance and feedback and serving as partners in community collaborations. The data collected provides appropriate and relevant information for academic departments, and the process by which the data is collected and made available has been established. Annually, data will continue to be collected and analyzed by departments. Further discussion regarding advisory boards will be conducted to determine how best to improve upon or establish new processes in the engagement of industry and community partners.

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

Metric:

2. Number of departments that have active advisory councils or established processes.

Finding:

100% of academic departments have active advisory councils or processes which included employer representation.

Analysis:

All departments at the University have established advisory councils or processes to provide guidance on workforce needs. Some, such as the School of Nursing or School of Business advisory councils, have been established for a long time and enable their departments to be particularly nimble in identifying new trends in workforce needs.

Decision:

Efforts will continue to engage business and community partners and refine processes that provide input into the future of workforce needs to prepare graduates to be job ready upon commencement.

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

Comprehensive Summary

The University is evolving and becoming an even greater partner in our state's and nation's economic vitality.

The analysis reveals a united effort in the responsiveness of university departments across specific occupations and degree programs combined with alumni who reveal satisfaction with preparation and preparedness for the workforce.

The University eagerly engages in partnerships with employers, embraces curriculum alignment and redesign, and prepares alumni to enter the workforce to embark upon long-lasting, successful careers as educators, engineers, law enforcement personnel, lawyers, doctors, nurses, artists, authors, business owners, chief executive officers, legislators, military service members, and other professions of elite status. Our institution has a long history of being a responsive university.

Maintaining and enhancing the institution's responsiveness to students and employers is important. Activities targeted for development are based on the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to make informed and effective decisions about the alignment of Northwestern's program offerings to market demand. The University's efforts must be agile to meet the needs of constituents.

The institution must continue to build upon its existing partnerships to provide additional pathways for students, engage business and industry partners through its advisory councils and solicit their feedback for program alignment with workforce needs. To this end, the institution will maintain and enhance strategies that allow it to be market responsive and deliver educational programs that directly address the needs of a 21st century workforce.

Supporting Documentation and References:

Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>

Electronic and Continuing Education. <https://www.nsula.edu/ece/professionaldevelopment/>

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

Louisiana Board of Regents CRIN: Inventory of Degree and Certificate Programs.

<https://apps.regents.state.la.us/Reports/Report.aspx?reportPath=/CRIN/CRINDLOAD>

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

National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=561>

Northwestern State University Articulation and Partnership Agreements. University Registrar.

<https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/articulation-partnership-agreements/>

Northwestern State University Curriculum Review Committee Minutes. <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>

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

Northwestern State University Graduating Senior Student Survey.

Strategic Focus Area 4–Community Enrichment

This strategic focus area is benchmarked by world-class performing arts programming, robust alumni engagement, mutually beneficial donor relationships, institutional culture of collaboration and accountability, and thriving town-gown relationships in cities where University instructional sites are located. We surveyed more than 6,700 alumni, business and industry representatives, educators, appointed and elected officials, and others to determine their interest in our existing community enrichment programs and the effectiveness of these activities. We also requested their recommendations for expansion of community enrichment efforts. Based on survey results, we have numerous new initiatives under way and existing programs have been enhanced to address various aspects of our plan for continued and increased community enrichment, shared governance, and the engagement of University stakeholders.

Growth in AC 2020-2021 includes:

- Frequency of e-communications and number of participants is up 32% due to the PCI data campaign.
- Student Alumni Association membership has increased by 21% and staff resources have been added to support growth.
- Alumni Association membership is up 56% from AC 2018-2019 and back on track to reach the AC 2022-2023 target.
- Partnerships with business and industry have increased by 16% with the addition of new articulation and transfer agreements.
- The number of advisory volunteers is up by 28% from 2018-2019 and a new platform designed to drive additional growth is scheduled to launch in fall 2021.
- Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off campus instructional sites has increased by 20% and continues to grow annually as additional resources are provided for expansion.

By 2023, we will have experienced tremendous growth and expansion in all areas of community enrichment. World-class performance arts programming will be evidenced through increased participation and widespread program awareness. Robust alumni engagement and mutually beneficial donor relationships will be revealed through increases in communication, participation, and financial support. An institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability, as well as thriving town-gown relationships, will be illustrated through the growth of internal and external partnerships and increased brand identity and awareness. By achieving success in community enrichment, the institution will move ever closer to becoming “the nation’s premier regional university.”

We will continue our dialogue with all stakeholders to best identify and modify the key indicators of program improvement.

Table 18

Metrics for Community Enrichment—those in blue were assessed in 2020-2021. Those in black were assessed in 2019-2020.

AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	AY 2020-2021	Community Enrichment Metrics	AY 2022-2023 Target
36,830	27,050		Number of patrons attending recitals, concerts, art exhibits, theater/dance productions	35,000
34	31		Number of off-campus performances	30
35,474.47		16,980	<i>Expenditures dedicated to advertisement</i>	\$51,136.78
15,408	15,433		Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets	10,000
22,744		29,841	<i>Frequency of e-communications and number of participants</i>	20,000
54		78	<i>Number of Student Alumni Association members</i>	200
24		24	<i>Number of active alumni chapters nationwide</i>	35
627*		977	<i>Number of Alumni Association members</i>	1,500
8,173	8,995		Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets	10,000
5,516,859.92	5,010,624.29		Amount of annual private support	\$6,000,000
2,444	1,724		Number of individual contributors	5,000
\$40,087,912.27/ 181,986.87	\$44,294,756.67 \$284,487.26		Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets	\$50,000,000/ \$1,000,000
58*		67	<i>Number of partnerships with business, industry, and government agencies</i>	40
1,602		2,040	<i>Number of advisory volunteers</i>	3,000
81		97	<i>Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off campus instructional sites</i>	100
349	306,304/157		Number of projects and internships involving students in University and community activities and events	400

Note. Benchmarks for AC 2018-2019 are reflected on the far left with AC 2019-2020 results to the immediate right. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured. Blue italicized text indicates metrics evaluated in 2020-2021. *Since January 1, 2019

Five objectives support community enrichment.

Objective 1: World Class Performing Arts Program

Strategies:

- Increase emphasis in Natchitoches and other communities on the excellence of Creative and Performing Arts at the University.
- Increase regional and national recognition of “The Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band.”
- Expand advertising for other groups such as the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, NSU Jazz Orchestra, and the NSU Dance Company.
- Expand performance schedules to include state conferences, community events, arts festivals, and master classes for citizens from Natchitoches and surrounding communities.
- Increase regional and national recognition of our Creative and Performing Arts programs through events such as the President’s Command Performance, a high-profile program that attracts alumni and other friends from the local community and far beyond.

- 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 social media activities to increase attention in the community and develop stronger relationships between the University and stakeholders who have an interest in Creative and Performing Arts.

Metrics:

1. Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions
2. Number of off-campus performances
3. *Expenditures dedicated to advertisement*
4. Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets

Metric:

1. Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions

Findings:

The number of patrons attending on-campus events in AC 2019-2020 are down from 2018-2019 (Table 19):

Table 19

Attendance at Campus Events

Event	Attendance			Decrease 2018-2019 to
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2019-2020
Classic on the Cane Marching Contest	9,500	9,500	9,500	0.0%
GALA	15,000	15,000	10,000	33.3%
GALA at the Strand			1,100	
Theatre/Dance Mainstage	6,700	6,700	3,700	44.8%
Journalism Day	130	130	(cancelled)	
Symphony Concerts	2,200	3,000	1,500	50.0%
Art Exhibits	2,500	2,500	1,250	50.0%
Total	36,030	36,830	27,050	26.6%

Analysis:

The number of patrons attending on campus events is down due to cancellations related to COVID-19. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, renovations to A.A. Fredericks Auditorium required the annual Christmas to be held off campus reducing the capacity for attendance.

Decision:

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

Metric:

2. Number of off-campus performances

Findings:

Number of off-campus events are down from 2018-2019 (Table 20):

Table 20

Attendance at Off-Campus Events

Event	Performances			Change 2018-2019 to 2019-2020
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	
Musical Theatre @ Civic Organizations	5	10	10	0.0%
Design Center Students with outside contracts	6	6	8	0.0%
Voice Faculty @ Community Events	1	4	4	0.0%
Regional Symphony Performances	8	8	4	50.0%
Modern in Motion Dance Concert	2	2	2	0.0%
Mardi Gras Balls Performance	2	2	2	0.0%
The Natchitoches Christmas Parade	1	1	1	0.0%
CAPA on the Cane		1	(cancelled)	
Total	25	34	31	8.8%

Analysis:

The number of off-campus performances is down due to COVID-19 event cancellations. However, the number of off campus events still exceeded the target.

Decision:

The number of off campus performances has a healthy window for growth and the School of Creative and Performing Arts will seek more opportunities in this area, as well as a stronger way to track such performances. The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to explore strategies to become more visible throughout the state and region. GALA at the Strand will be held in Shreveport in December 2019.

Metric:

3. Expenditures dedicated to advertisement

Findings:

Expenditures dedicated to advertisement in AC 2020-2021 totaled \$16,980 as compared to \$35,474.47 in AC 2018-2019.

Analysis:

Expenditures dedicated to advertising are down in AC 2020-2021 due to COVID related performance cancellations.

Decision:

Expenditures dedicated to advertising will be increased to meet the target, as COVID related cancellations are not expected to be an issue for the 2021-2022 cycle.

Metric:

4. Number of users on CAPA social media outlets

Findings:

Number of users on CAPA social media outlets are up from AC 2018-2019 (Table 21).

Analysis:

The number of users on CAPA social media outlets continues to rise and is significantly above the target.

Table 21

Users on CAPA Social Media Outlets

Organization/Platform	Users			Increase 2018-2019 to 2019-2020
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	
CAPA Facebook	2,866	3,448	3,718	7.8%
SON Facebook	4,492	5,061	5,801	14.6%
Theatre/Dance Facebook	1,698	1,773	1,863	5.1%
NSU Choirs Facebook	176	1,011	1,121	10.9%
CAPA Twitter	1,194	1,414	1,425	0.8%
SON Twitter	829	951	1,003	5.5%
NSU Theatre Alumni Facebook	350	1,750	320	400.0%
NSU Choirs Alumni Facebook			182	
Total	11,605	15,408	15,433	0.2%

Decision:

Promotions of special events and increased financial investments will help social media outlets continue to grow.

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

Objective 2:**Robust Alumni Engagement****Strategies:**

- Expand communications through online initiatives such as the “Purple Pulse” e-newsletter and “DemoNSUnite” networking platform to provide opportunities and information to alumni and to increase membership and participation in alumni activities.
- Establish a Student Alumni Association to focus on membership, spirit and traditions, alumni connections, student philanthropy and other aspects of Student participation in alumni-related activities.
- Utilize the Natchitoches Alumni Chapter as a model to expand the role and involvement of community chapters across the state and nation in University alumni initiatives.
- Increase social media activities such as Twitter Chats, Alumni Spotlights, “Why I Love NSU” campaigns, and other programs.
- Inform soon-to-be graduates of opportunities for participation in alumni events and endeavors through expansion of the Gradfest program, free first-year Alumni Association membership, and the new Fork ‘em Farewell program.
- Establish programs to better connect graduates with careers and jobs through social media and websites, new databases, links to Fast Start, partnerships with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, electronic and magazine advertising and the establishment of a career-based Speakers Bureau and Directory.
- Establish a dues-based Alumni Association program to include expanded benefits and a membership card with tracking capabilities.
- Increase number of active chapters, alumni events, and activities throughout Louisiana and across the nation.

Metrics:

1. *Frequency of e-communications and number of participants*
2. *Number of Student Alumni Association members*
3. *Number of active alumni chapters nationwide*
4. *Number of Alumni Association members*
5. Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets

Metric:

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

Findings:

The Purple Pulse e-newsletter is sent monthly to 29,841 alumni (number of alumni with active email addresses on file). This is up 32% from 22,744 reported during AC 2018-2019.

Analysis:

Continued growth of verified e-mail addresses is attributed to utilizing data mining strategies. The PCI Oral History Project was a success, allowing for an increase in 2,266 verified email addresses. Monthly e-communications to alumni and supporters continue to assist in fundraising and event awareness activities. A review of open and click rates was conducted and format changes were made to increase interactions.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to utilize data mining strategies to capture valid email addresses. A third-party data mining firm will be contracted every three years to assist with updates and membership renewals.

Metric:

2. *Number of Student Alumni Association members*

Findings:

The NSU Student Alumni Association currently has 78 members up from 54 reported during AC 2018-2019.

Analysis:

Growth has increased slightly, but additional support is needed to meet the 2022-2023 target.

Decision:

To increase growth of the Student Alumni Association, a special committee of the NSU Alumni Association board of directors was established. Staff members were also added to the NSU Alumni Career Readiness committee. A full-time staff member was hired to focus on membership, alumni reunions and special interest groups including the Student Alumni Association.

Metric:

3. *Number of active alumni chapters nationwide*

Findings:

NSU has 24 active alumni chapters nationwide. No new chapters were established during AC 2020-2021.

Analysis:

Efforts to add additional chapters have continued but did not result in the establishment of new chapters during the 2020-2021 cycle. Staff resources were dedicated to sustaining the 24 chapters currently in place and increasing database capabilities for future engagement efforts. (Table 22).

Table 22
NSU Alumni Chapters

City	State	Name
Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles Chapter
Washington, DC	DC	Washington DC Chapter
Orlando	FL	Orlando Chapter
Pensacola	FL	Emerald Coast Chapter
Atlanta	GA	Atlanta, GA Chapter
Bloomington	IL	Bloomington, IL Chapter
Alexandria	LA	Central LA Chapter
Baton Rouge	LA	Baton Rouge Chapter
Houma	LA	South Louisiana Chapter
Lafayette	LA	Lafayette Chapter
Lake Charles	LA	Southwest LA Chapter
Mandeville	LA	Northshore Chapter

City	State	Name
Monroe	LA	Northeast LA Chapter
Natchitoches	LA	Natchitoches Chapter
New Orleans	LA	New Orleans Chapter
Shreveport	LA	Northwest LA Chapter
Raleigh	NC	Carolina’s Chapter
New York	NY	New York Chapter
Seattle	OR	Pacific Northwest Chapter
Austin	TX	Austin Chapter
Dallas	TX	DFW Chapter
Houston	TX	Houston Chapter
San Antonio	TX	San Antonio Chapter
Tyler	TX	East Texas Chapter

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to identify opportunities to add chapters in areas where alumni are concentrated. A focus on sustaining existing chapters will continue as post COVID event activities have resumed and staff members are actively traveling to chapter events. Self-sustaining activity will continue to be a focus at chapter events to ensure a strong base of consistent support is established.

Metric:

4. Number of Alumni Association Members

Findings:

Since January 1, 2021, 977 alumni have renewed their membership, up 56% from 627 reported in 2018.

Analysis:

Consulting with a third party to assist with membership efforts has proven successful. The PCI data campaign was effective in securing updates and membership renewals.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will utilize the strategies employed by PCI and appeal to a larger base through the addition of appended contact information. A third-party consultant will be contracted every three years to secure updates and assist with membership efforts.

Metric:

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

Findings:

The NSU Alumni Association *Facebook* “likes” for the fiscal year ending 2020 were 5,963. The NSU Alumni Association *Twitter* page has 2,077 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2020. The *Instagram* page has 955 “followers” for the fiscal year ending 2020. Total active users among the three outlets number 8,995. Each has increased in numbers during AC 2019-2020.

Analysis:

Growth of social media outlets is attributed to increased participation of volunteers, additional funds dedicated to advertising, and the addition of the Assistant Director of Marketing for University Advancement position.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue the use of social media platforms with a focus on increasing exposure. Paid advertisement and sponsored posts on these platforms will continue to be utilized to increase engagement. The Associate Director of Marketing for University Advancement will continue to work with the NSU Alumni Association to increase participation.

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

Objective 3:**Mutually Beneficial Donor Relationships****Strategies:**

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

Metrics:

1. Amount of annual private support
2. Number of individual contributors
3. Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets

Metric:

1. Amount of annual private support

Findings

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, the NSU Foundation secured \$5,010,624.29 in private funding for the institution. This is down 10% from \$5,516,869.92 recorded during the 2018-2019 cycle.

Analysis:

Non-revenue contributions have increased. However non-contribution revenues have decreased. Increases in non-revenue contributions are attributed to larger gifts by existing donors. Decreases in non-contribution revenues is attributed to event cancellations and related registration fees.

Decision:

Development officers will continue to seek contributions from both current and new donors. As development officers build relationships through the cultivation process, more opportunities for solicitation will arise resulting in increased contributions. Vacancies in development positions will restrict the ability to secure non-revenue contributions. It is recommended that vacant development positions be filled as soon as financially feasible.

Metric:

2. Number of individual contributors

Findings:

The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, was 1,724. This is down 30% from 2,444 recorded during the 2018-2019 cycle.

Analysis:

The number of individual donors has decreased. As cited previously, overall participation is down due to event cancellations. Number of individual donors is recorded by total number of revenue participants as opposed to participants providing non-revenue contributions alone.

Decision:

The NSU Foundation has contracted with a marketing consultant to analyze strategies to increase participation. However, event participation will continue to be at issue if COVID restrictions are extended. Focus will be shifted to non-event participation strategies.

Metric:

3. Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets

Findings:

As of June 30, 2020, restricted endowment assets totaled \$44,294,756.67 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled \$284,487.26. Totals are up from approximately \$40,000,000 and \$181,000 reported during the previous cycle.

Analysis:

Restricted endowment growth has continued by securing large, endowed gifts and the anticipated surge of \$520,000.00 in state matching funds. Unrestricted endowment growth has continued, but not at the level needed to meet the target. While Columns Fund giving has increased, increased expenditures requiring the use of unrestricted funds has limited to ability to increase the unrestricted endowment.

Decision:

The NSU Foundation will continue to promote the “Columns Fund” by educating donors on the purpose and importance of giving to the unrestricted account. As increases in unrestricted giving are realized, and expenses are mitigated, an annual percentage will be set aside and added to the NSU Foundation endowment to ensure perpetuity. Annual yield from the endowment will be applied to the corpus to grow the fund until annual unrestricted budgetary needs can be paid through interest earnings.

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

Objective 4:

Institutional Culture of Collaboration and Mutual Accountability.

Strategies:

- Expand decision-making at the administrative level through an internal Leadership Team structure that includes more than 20 individuals from across the campus.
- Enter partnerships with business, industry, government agencies, and especially cities where NSU instructional sites 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 designed to expand validation of the University’s brand, core goals, and mission directed at all stakeholders.

Metrics:

1. *Number of partnerships with business, industry, and government agencies*
2. *Number of advisory volunteers*

Metric:

1. *Number of partnerships with business, industry, and government agencies*

Findings:

NSU is currently engaged in 67 cooperative endeavors with public and private entities, up 16% since AC 2018-2019. These include relationships such as those with the Building our Region’s Future organization to invest in startup companies, the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance to promote manufacturing in the region, the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development, the Bossier Parish Chamber of commerce to promote military events, and numerous state agencies and institutions, comprising 50 articulation and partnership agreements: <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/articulation-partnership-agreements/>. The potential for growth in this area is large, as the benefits the University can provide to private partners are vast and readily available.

Analysis:

Growth of partnerships with business, industry and government agencies is healthy. Cooperative endeavors with private partners allow for shared cost and mutual invested interest. Growth of articulation and partnership agreements allow for expanded academic flexibility and assist greatly in increasing the number of transfer students. The NSU Campus Marketplace has proven successful as a model for future real estate investments and private revenue streams.

Decision:

The University will continue to seek partnerships with business, industry, and government agencies and work closely with the recently formed special committee of the NSU Foundation board of directors to identify investment and revenue opportunities. The University will continue to identify opportunities for partnerships with business, industry, regional support groups, and peer institutions to enhance opportunities for mutual growth.

Metric:

2. *Number of advisory volunteers*

Findings:

The demoNSUnite.net platform currently has over 2,040 users comprised of advisory volunteers, internship providers, and occupational network supporters, up from 1,602 in 2018-2019. The NSU Foundation, Alumni Association, and Demons Unlimited Foundation maintain 84 volunteer board members serving in fiduciary roles overseeing private investments and outreach initiatives.

Analysis:

The demoNSUnite.net platform was launched in April of 2016 and has since grown to over 2,040 users. Of these users, 76% indicated they are willing to help by serving in a mentor or ambassador capacity. The response rate of 76% demonstrates the willingness of participants to provide a service. While the response rate has continued to increase, survey results show that the platform would benefit from additional efficiencies. Market competition has driven the price down and an RFP was conducted to consider options.

Decision:

The demoNSUnite.net platform will continue; however, a new service provider was contracted for FY 2021-2022. Platform costs will decrease by 25% while service capability will increase substantially. Staff members are working with the new provider to address issues of efficiency and a relaunch is scheduled for fall 2021.

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

Objective 5:

Thriving Town-Gown Relationships

Strategies:

- Plan activities such as athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs to increase awareness of the University at sites away from the main campus.
- Identify and establish a database of graduates who earned degrees online or at sites other than the main campus to help provide a network to expand town-gown relationships at all of the University's educational sites.
- Promote increased involvement of online and off-campus learners in both community and University events and programs.
- Expand community service projects and internships involving Northwestern students with a focus on youth programs, food bank initiatives, beautification, preservation, economic development, literacy, improved health, and other initiatives that provide valuable experiences for students, positive recognition for the University, and beneficial assistance to the communities.

- Increase cooperative programs with the community and technical colleges, public schools, business and industry, and other entities that cultivate town-gown relationships for the University, not just at its main campus in Natchitoches but also in Shreveport-Bossier City, Leesville-Fort Polk, Alexandria, and Marksville, where the University offers classes at the Tunica Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resources Center.

Metrics:

1. *Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off-campus instructional sites*
2. Number of hours students spend serving the community through projects and internships.

Metric:

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

Findings:

Ninety-seven events are held annually at off-campus instructional sites, up from 81 in AC 2018-2019.

Analysis:

Event and activity growth at our off-campus instructional sites continues to thrive. Many events previously exclusive to the main campus, such as Freshman Connection, Welcome Week, Gradfest, and Student Activity Board events, are now held at our off-campus instructional sites. Other activities include events such as the “Victory Tour” promoting athletic events, “Transfer Day” highlighting students transferring in from 2-year institutions, and “Military Appreciation Day” at instructional sites located on military installations.

Decision:

The University will continue to develop strategic initiatives and activities and host events at off-campus instructional sites. Growth in this area is possible and increases will continue with proper planning and adequate funding.

Metric:

2. Number of hours students spend serving the community through projects and internships.

Findings:

During AC 2019-2020, NSU students spent 306,304 hours serving the community. The economic impact of these hours (calculated at \$7.25 per hour) is \$2,220,704.00. For AC 2019-2020 students collaborated with 157 campus and community partners.

Analysis:

Previously, this metric was assessed by the total number of University and community activities gathered through a survey. Reporting and tracking was cumbersome. Three major service areas provided information for the report this year providing the number of hours rather than the number of activities. Data on the number of campus and community partners was also collected.

Decision:

The Office of Service Learning will continue to gather information from the major service areas and will provide data in the form of total hours served and number of campus and community service partners

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

Comprehensive Summary

Community Enrichment is essential in increasing the major growth areas of enrollment and funding. Every aspect plays a unique role in achieving success in these areas. Whether it be national recognition for world class performing arts or local prestige through regional outreach and community service, the identity and reputation of the institution are crucial to continued success.

To ensure Community Enrichment initiatives continue to thrive, respective increases in financial investments will be required. As state funding decreases, funding from private sources will be necessary to sustain growth. By building the perpetual endowment fund and investing in programs that provide a return on investment, the institution will be able to achieve financial independence and continue toward the goal of becoming the nation's premiere regional university.

Community and Public Service Within the Mission

Northwestern Community/Public Service Mission Statement:

The university is committed to serving the citizens in its region through organized community and public service projects that are relevant and meaningful to the volunteers and to those being served. Service projects that target community-identified needs enhance (and are enhanced by) university-community partnership.

Purpose:

Service projects provide an educational platform through which the university can contribute to the quality of life of the citizens of its region. Students benefit by learning, first-hand, about social responsibility. Meanwhile, the community benefits from responsive service projects that address real-life matters.

Data Collection:

The University has an efficient plan for reporting and tracking university-wide Community/Public Service data. Community/public service hour estimates are drawn from three university divisions:

- Academic Affairs
- The Student Experience
- Athletics

Estimates are submitted by the administrators involved with the highest-volume producers of community/public service hours within each division. This happens after the Fall and Spring semesters.

AY 2020-2021 Key Findings (with comparisons to AC 2019-2020)

- For AC 2020-2021, the grand total of service hours was **325,916.5 hours**, approximately 6% more hours than last year's grand total of 306,304.
- For AC 2020-2021, NSU's service hours have an estimated economic impact of \$2,362,894.63, calculated at federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.
- For AC 2020-2021, students collaborated with 158 Campus and Community Partners. This number is relatively unchanged as compared to last year's report of 157 partners.
- AC 2020-2021 Community/Public Service projects at NSU addressed all 11 previously established community/public service focus areas of the University. This is the same as last year.
 - Healthcare (Physical & Emotional)
 - Sports & Fitness
 - Education
 - Environmental Stewardship

- Economic Development
 - Creative & Performing Arts Exhibitions
 - Event Planning & Entertainment
 - Historical & Cultural Preservation
 - Community Safety & Emergency Preparedness
 - Protection of Vulnerable Children & Adults
 - Combatting Poverty, Hunger, and Homelessness
- This year, four students presented on three separate community/public service projects at the University of Louisiana System’s Academic Summit on Experiential Learning. This conference was conducted virtually between March 25-26, 2021. Last year’s Summit was cancelled due to COVID-19.
 - University Press Releases and the President’s Weekly Update showcased NSU Student Community/Public Service Activities and Events involving:
 - Community Safety: Hurricane Laura Recovery Efforts
 - Healthcare: Responding to COVID
 - Education: Early Childhood
 - Environmental Stewardship: Clean-up and Beautification Projects
 - Combatting Hunger: Food Bank Donations
 - To incentivize student organizations to report their community and public service hours to Student Experience administration, a new service award was established. The **NSU Student Organization Award for Community & Public Service** was awarded to AOP Fraternity’s *Arthritis Foundation Virtual Run and Fundraising Project*. This project involved 16 members who volunteered for 14 hours each, for a total of 224 hours of service.

Plan of action moving forward.

1. The university will continue to provide safe opportunities for students to engage in service activities. These include options for participating in-person or remotely. They will be aligned with the current Student Affairs Event and Activity Guidelines, first introduced in Fall 2020.
2. The community will benefit from responsive service projects that address the community’s unique and evolving needs.
3. Faculty and staff will have access to resources with which to track, enhance, and promote their students’ involvement in community/public service.

University Capital Outlook

The Capital Outlay Office works with the University President and administration to develop capital outlay, deferred maintenance, and small capitalization projects that meet the needs of the University’s Strategic Plan and Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs). It is also responsible for maintaining a five-year plan for facilities in compliance with the State Legislature’s capital outlay program. Over the last several years, the State has elected to direct capital outlay resources to both new construction and (primarily) deferred maintenance. In support of these efforts, the University’s Capital Outlay Office identified and addressed several critical deferred maintenance needs using resources from the State and the University General Fund. Completed projects in 2020-21 include the demolition of Dodd Hall (an unused residential space) and the construction of new student event spaces in the Student Union. These include an Esports gaming center for student training and competition and an adjacent gathering space for University conferences and events. Projects in progress include the replacement of the elevator in Turpin Stadium. Projects in the planning stages for 2021-22 include the resurfacing of Caspari Drive (North) and adjacent parking lots; the resurfacing of Sam Sibley Drive from Caspari to the Wellness, Recreation and Activity Center (WRAC); and the demolition of Caddo and Prudhomme Hall. The University and the Division of Administration are also in the final planning

stage for the new academic building which will be located where Caddo Hall is now. These projects address all five of the University's SFAs. The University also continues to address ADA components of the Five-Year Plan at all sites. In 2020-21, the University initiated a study to identify numerous ADA upgrades that will be performed during the Summer and Fall of 2021.

During the 2019 Regular Legislative Session, the University's Capital Outlay Office secured 37.4 million dollars for the construction of an academic building to add additional classroom space, faculty office space, laboratories, and classrooms. In 2020-21, the State Legislature maintained this budget item, awarding 2.2 million dollars in Priority 1 funding and the remainder in Priority 5. The University has requested capital outlay funding for several additional projects, including funding to replace campus roofs, address ADA priorities, improve streets and parking, and remodel campus buildings. These include a request for capital outlay funding to remodel the Warrington building at the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health in Shreveport, a 12.7-million-dollar project. The state has also allocated funding for building deferred maintenance to address HVAC needs in numerous campus buildings. In 2020-21, the state's allocation of pandemic relief funds helped address safety precautions for students, faculty, and staff in support of the University's reopening and return-to-work procedures. The construction of a new academic building will be a momentous accomplishment for the University, its administration, and the Capital Outlay Office; it will be the first new academic building constructed on the Natchitoches campus in more than 39 years (1982). Going forward, the Capital Outlay Office's priorities focus on securing emergency funding and capital outlay funding for roof repair and replacement, for ongoing ADA improvements, and for the extension of South Jefferson Street for emergency entrance and exit to the Highway 1 Bypass west of campus. The Capital Outlay Office is in the process of developing a new five-year plan to continue moving the University forward in support of its Mission and Strategic Plan.

Technology at Northwestern State University—2020-2021

Information Technology Services creates a foundation that provides faculty, staff, and students the tools and services they need to succeed. IT resources must be evident, practical, and useful to the campus community and align with the overall University mission. Technology must be stable, and services must meet the needs and expectations of users. The ITS staff strives to provide excellent support and simple processes. With these statements in mind, IT planning at NSU includes these 10 fundamental ideals.

- **Innovation:** promote new and creative ideas to improve and enhance communication with constituents and deliver services
- **Leadership:** actively work with campus offices and groups to identify and incorporate proper technologies to enhance the student experience
- **Collaboration:** foster and encourage an environment of collaboration
- **Student Experience:** support activities and projects that are student-centered and considerate of how they influence student recruiting and retention
- **Infrastructure:** develop infrastructure capable of supporting access to the services needed to help our students, faculty, and staff
- **Customer Service:** support projects, processes, and interactions originate with a focus on customer service
- **Support:** supply technical and functional support to the campus community
- **Availability:** focus on the creation, delivery, and maintenance of high-availability services
- **Mobile:** embrace strategies focusing on creating applications and supporting services accessible from any device
- **Security:** prioritize the security of campus resources and records

During AC 2020-2021, Information Technology Services focused on several strategic initiatives to enhance and expand service offerings. An overview of essential projects includes:

- **Cloud Services**—The global pandemic has seen more and more companies accelerate their move to the cloud, reinventing their offerings, and becoming more cost-efficient, agile, and innovative in how they operate their businesses. As an on-demand, self-service environment, cloud is now vital to achieving end-to-end digital transformation. The institution evaluated solutions that were deemed appropriate for cloud services and will move forward with recommendations in 2021-2022.
- **Cyber Security**—Basic file scan anti-virus systems are not enough to protect organizations from the variety of threats found online today. A new comprehensive approach is required to evaluate more than the files being written or executed on a computer. Other vectors open to attack are system memory, processes, and other hosts communicated with over the Internet. All these metrics must be analyzed to determine the level of today's threats. The University is in the procurement stage of a new service to better combat threats. It allows for complete system protection regardless of its position on the network, on-campus or at home.
- **Email Security and Phishing**—ITS obtained a cloud-service designed to automate the identification and mitigation of phishing email attempts and other email-based threats. This system continues to dramatically enhance tools available to data center staff to protect the faculty, staff, and students from cyber threats propagated via email.
- **Voice Services**—Both internal and external communications are critical to our success. ITS staff continues to work to secure funding for the VoIP (Voice over IP) project. This project will replace a traditional aging Nortel PBX and supply a new system that will be more flexible and allow for services to extend to places off-campus. This mobility will be beneficial during disaster recovery incidents or situations like the COVID-19 response.
- **Modern Workplace**—ITS staff offers support in the adoption of Microsoft Teams across the University. A platform like Teams provides a better toolset for collaboration. Data and communications can be accessible for a variety of devices and performs well on mobile devices. The platform also offers better methods to organize discussions, meeting documentation, files, and other associated data. Teams is extensible and allows for tight integration to other Microsoft services.
- **Technology in Classrooms**—Instructional Technology staff worked with all colleges to enhance more than 50 classrooms with new presentation technology. These enhancements supported innovative audio and visual systems to make the classroom space more engaging and to help faculty in the delivery of content while instructing.
- **Facilitating Core University Operations**—Maintenance and operation of the campus-wide ERP software systems continue to be the primary charge of Administrative Services. The support of these applications affects the institution's broader mission by helping the admissions, registration, financial aid, accounting, and human resources processes with a focus on student success.

ITS works closely with the university community to aid in determining needs and to advocate on their behalf when pursuing funding. Examples of this work include the acquisition of the Real Visions Imaging software in Business Affairs and the SMS Texting software now used in the Student Experience areas.

As we look to the future, the landscape of higher education is changing rapidly. Students arrive having been immersed in modern technologies and applications, and Northwestern State recognizes that it is an expectation to supply proper tools and services for our internal and external constituents. We eagerly embrace the future as we redefine customer engagement for a new generation of students.

Strategic Focus Area 5–Athletic Prominence

It is often said that an athletic program is the “front porch of a university” based on the exposure that success can provide for an institution. Achieving the identified goals associated with the *Athletic Prominence* component of NSU’s Strategic Framework will result in outcomes for student-athletes that emphasize academics, leadership, service learning, competitiveness, and an experience that will ultimately prepare them for life after NSU. The athletic prominence area will also provide all students, community members, and alumni with entertainment and pride at an unmatched value.

Several individual and team highlights during 2020-2021 generated positive publicity and a high level of alumni/community pride. Furthermore, the academic and citizenship emphases continued to produce positive results. Specifically, the athletic department’s three core values all yielded levels of success:

Academic Achievement

- All teams exceeded the 930 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmark.
- The most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rate report reflected that NSU student-athletes set yet another all-time high—85%.
- Eight teams—men’s basketball, women’s basketball, baseball, men’s cross country, women’s cross country, softball, women’s tennis and women’s track and field—recorded perfect 1,000 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores as reported this spring for the 2019-20 academic year.
- NSU Athletics qualified for the NCAA academic financial unit for the second time since its inception two years ago, garnering a distribution of nearly \$60,000.
- Three teams—men’s cross country, volleyball, and women’s tennis—earned “Public Recognition” for recording four consecutive years of perfect scores on the NCAA Academic Progress Rate.
- Women’s track and field student-athlete Natasha Jackson was named the Southland Conference Student-Athlete of the Year in her sport.

Personal Responsibility

- The NSU Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) spearheaded an initiative to provide at least one item for every athletic department coach, staff member and student-athlete to be sent to Lake Charles/McNeese State University for hurricane recover efforts and far exceed their 500-item goal.
- NSU student-athletes despite the challenges of COVID registered 1,544 hours of community/campus service and engagement for the 2020-21 year.

Competitive Success

- The women’s track team earned the runner-up trophy at the Southland Conference Indoor and Outdoor Championships Meets. That program, while not earning a championship trophy, has finished second or third at every indoor and outdoor meet for the past five years.
- Several NSU student-athletes achieved extraordinary individual honors during the 2020-21 year:
 - Sophomore Haley Hoang was named the Louisiana Volleyball Libero of the Year.
 - Juniors Acelya Aydogmus and Nicole Henry were named the Southland Conference Goalkeeper and Defender of the Year, respectively. Henry was also named to the Midwest All-District team for the second straight year.
 - Second baseman Daunte Stuart was named to the Collegiate Baseball Magazine Freshman All-American team.

- Pitcher/Utility Player E.C. Delafield was named first team All-Southland and All-Louisiana, as well as a third team NFCA All-South Region honoree.
- Punter Scotty Roblow was named to the Freshman All-American team while linebacker Jomard Valsin was named to the American Football Coaches Association Second Team.
- Natasha Jackson was named the Outstanding Running Event performer at the Southland Outdoor Championship Meet and finished her career with 19 gold medals, second best in conference history.
- Junior long jumper Jasmyn Steels earned Honorable Mention All-America honors at the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track and Field Championships and competed in the U.S.A. Olympic at the Olympic Trials.

The Athletic Department continued to expand the program’s external scope and brand by increasing social media reach, generating revenue, and expanding the program’s profile through enhanced community service efforts. Furthermore, noticeable facility updates were completed as part of the “Victorious” facility campaign.

Table 23

Metrics to Assess Athletic Prominence—those in blue were assessed in 2020-2021. Those in black were assessed in 2019-2020.

AC 2018-2019	AC 2019-2020	AC 2020-2021	Athletic Prominence Metrics	2022-2023 Target
92,374	54,727		Yearly event attendance for all sports	151,361
\$2,537,545	\$2,434,233		Yearly revenue (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships)	2,380,264
11/52		11/97	<i>Number of merchandise outlets/licensees</i>	18/110
19,498		20,614	<i>Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes</i>	25,458
9,747		10,700	<i>Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers</i>	11,511
\$35,695	\$44,683		Licensing royalties (LRG)	\$70,746
396/\$14,000		210/\$8,385	<i>N-Club membership/revenue</i>	182/\$14,000
101/\$3,435		46/\$2,760	<i>Vic's Kids Club membership/revenue</i>	162/\$4,000
295		182	<i>Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e., Leesville, Shreveport, Alexandria, Bossier City)</i>	405
23		7	<i>Camps and clinics for area youth</i>	20
500	500		Establish transparent budget exposures (i.e. Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors, current/potential donors) and sustain/grow annually.	60
17		30	<i>Student-athlete participation in campus activities, (SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM)</i>	20
6,268		1,544	<i>Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).</i>	4,000
2.965		2.979	<i>Student-athlete GPA</i>	3.11
222	246		Number of Dean’s/President’s List honorees per year.	250
197	217		Southland Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll honorees per year.	200
987/980	971/979		Single- and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores.	940
17	17		Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.	10
4/14	3/9		Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or finish in the upper third of the conference standings.	14

Note: Benchmarks for AC 2018-2019 are reflected on the far left with AC 2019-2020 results to the immediate right. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

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

Objective 1:

Enhance Marketing Opportunities, Game Day Experience and Resource Acquisition

Strategies:

- NSU Athletics must be more externally assertive in terms of brand awareness and merchandise availability through increased advertising and affinity.
- Improving product variety and availability of merchandise through regional merchants, as well as informing fans of media coverage and outlets with which to engage dynamic content, will 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 a 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 Central Louisiana, if appropriate. These locations will add new segments to our fan base.

Metrics:

1. Yearly event attendance for all sports
2. Yearly revenue for all sports
3. *Number of merchandise outlets*
4. *Social media exposure (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)*
5. Licensing royalties
6. *N-Club membership and revenue*
7. *Vic's Kids Club membership and revenue*
8. *Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)*

Metric:

1. Yearly event attendance for all sports

Findings:

Compared to AC 2018-2019, both total attendance and average attendance per event were down in 2019-2020 for all sports except volleyball, which had higher attendance despite playing one less game than in 2018-2019. Although fall sports were not affected by COVID-19 restrictions, attendance was still down (Table 24).

Analysis:

While sports such as soccer, volleyball and women's track had successful seasons, the lack of success by the programs (football, men's basketball, and women's basketball) that have the potential to produce revenue for the athletic program affected the athletic department's bottom line, specifically as it related to ticket sales. Also unfortunate was the fact that the spring sports teams were all predicted to either challenge for a championship or finish in the top three to four in the regular season standings, but their seasons were cancelled due to the pandemic. The football team, which was predicted to continue improving after a good 2018 season, started its 2019 season 0-7 before winning three of its

Table 24

Change in Game Attendance by Sport, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020.

Sport	2016-17			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020		
	Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance	
		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average
Football	5	39,714	7942.8	5	37,749	7549.8	5	38,914	7782.8	5	33,122	6624.4
Soccer	7	2,196	313.7	7	1,867	266.7	10	1,981	198.1	2	238	119
Volleyball	9	2,489	276.6	9	3,057	339.7	10	2,721	272.1	9	2,891	321.2
M-Basketball	13	18,909	1454.5	14	16,175	1155.4	14	17,988	1284.9	14	15,722	1123.0
W-Basketball	16	14,943	933.9	15	12,715	847.7	15	10,585	705.7	15	10,072	671.5
Softball	27	11,286	418.0	23	8,976	390.3	26	7,395	284.4	4	1,061	265.3
Baseball	27	13,845	512.7	27	11,893	440.5	23	12,790	556.1	12	6,220	518.3
Total		103,382			92,432			92,374			54,727	

last five games. The men's basketball team made the conference tournament for the first time in five years with an 11-9 Southland record, while the women failed to qualify for the conference tournament for the third straight year, necessitating a coaching change. On the flip side, the volleyball team registered its best season since 2014 and the best under fifth-year coach Sean Kiracofe, who was named Louisiana Coach of the Year. The team won the program's first conference tournament match since 2014 and was selected to play at the University of Wyoming in the National Volleyball Invitational Tournament. Co-head soccer coaches Jess and Anna Jobe, in just their second year, led a team consisting of 23 freshmen and sophomores, with just one full-time senior starter, to the best regular season Southland Conference finish since 2005. The team also won the program's first conference tournament match since 2005, with quarter-final and semi-final wins to advance to the championship match. The Jobses were named Louisiana Coaches of the Year. The women's track team claimed the runner-up trophy at the Southland Conference Indoor Championships in Birmingham as junior sprinter Natasha Jackson was the meet's high point scorer. Jackson was named the conference's Indoor Track and Field Athlete of the Year, as well as the Runner of the Year, while teammate Jasmyn Steels was named the Field Event Performer of the Year.

Metric:

2. Yearly revenue for all sports

Findings:

Revenue from three main sources (tickets, Demons Unlimited Foundation attainment, and licensing/advertising/sponsorships) was \$94,324 less than a year ago. Totals for AC 2019-2020 were \$254,926 for ticket sales (season and single game), \$1,143,125 for Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted and restricted gifts (cash and in-kind), and \$1,036,082 for sponsorships. Several factors are noted regarding this disparity: cumulatively, annual donations and sponsorships were \$20,000 higher than a year ago, despite the economic impact of the COVID pandemic on the economy during the final quarter of AC 2019-2020; tickets sales were approximately \$100,000 less than a year ago, due, in part, to the limited competitive success of the football and basketball programs, in addition to the cancelation of spring sports events (the baseball and softball teams were projected to have successful seasons); ticket sales totals from the 2018-2019 year were, to an extent, an anomaly based on inflated single game totals for the Grambling football and LSU baseball games. Licensing revenue was the highest to date.

Analysis:

While ticket sales lagged for 2019-20, several other revenue producing areas reflected an uptick in production. The athletic endowment fund surpassed the \$2 million mark for the first time; licensing revenue was an all-time

high, as was N-Club membership; and the annual fund surpassed the previous year's total. The external staff members (Greg Burke, Haley Taitano and Mike Jaworski) developed a plan to communicate with donors during the COVID-19 "stay at home" directive with the intent of expressing concern for their well-being. Those efforts, in part, contributed to a t-shirt fund raiser with a local sporting goods store that generated revenue for that small business while also resulting in nearly \$2,000 from that business to NSU. A "#GivingTuesdayNow" initiative in May generated nearly \$30,000, which served as a positive start to the 2020-2021 annual fund drive.

Metric:

3. *Number of merchandise outlets/licenses*

Findings:

- Businesses continuing to carry NSU apparel included Wal-Mart, Walgreen's, Lids, NSU Marketplace, Barnes & Noble, Posey's, Super 1 (2), Hibbett (Natchitoches and Leesville) and Simply Chic.
- The total number of licensees authorized to produce items featuring the NSU logo increased from 52 to 97 over the past two years. Those vendors request approval to sell the NSU brand through Licensing Resource Group (NSU's licensing partner), which in turn confirms approval from NSU.

Analysis:

The increase in number of vendors desiring to sell merchandise (i.e., glassware, apparel) bearing an NSU logo reflects an increase in recognition and awareness of the NSU brand.

Metric:

4. *Social media exposure (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)*

Findings:

Social media year over year numbers reflected the following in AC 2020-2021:

- NSU Demons Facebook likes increased between AC 2018-2019 and AC 2020-2021 by 8.62%, from 19,498 to 21,278; much of that increase took place after the marketing position, vacant for over six months due to COVID hiring restrictions, was filled.
- Twitter (@nsudemons) followers for the general athletics account increased between AC 2018-2019 and AC 2020-2021 by 9.78%, from 9,747 to 10,700. More noteworthy is the fact that the nine sport-specific twitter accounts total over three times (33,639) the number of followers for the general account.

Analysis:

The continuing effectiveness of the athletic department's social media connectivity, which was impacted by a partnership with BoxOut Sports Graphics, combined with an enhanced level of social media presence by each sport has expanded the NSU brand. Also, the department's partnership with Mobile Cause continues to enhance on-line giving and text to give campaigns (text "Demons" to 71777 to donate). Finally, credit for an uptick in social media numbers partly belongs to newly hired Director of Marketing Candler Harris, whose time investment and creativity has given NSU a more appealing look.

Metric:

5. *Licensing revenues*

Findings:

Licensing revenues through the Learfield IMG (purchased former partner Licensing Resource Group), based on the last three quarters of calendar year 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 reflected an increase of \$9,000 over the previous year (Table 25).

Analysis:

Aside from AY 2016-2017, which included a one-time payment of \$12,000 from IMG during the previous year, the most recent licensing revenue figure (\$44,683) represents the best four-quarter total ever.

Table 25

Licensing Resource Group Revenue by Academic Year

AY	4th Qtr. (prior yr.)	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	Total
2013-2014	8,307.49	7,809.99	5,596.91	5,298.57	27,012.96
2014-2015	7,146.06	6,585.08	7,103.51	5,249.65	26,084.30
2015-2016	8,495.75	8,312.63	7,977.94	9,757.60	34,543.92
2016-2017	12,508.86	18,009.30	10,580.81	6,047.17	47,146.14
2017-2018	10,040.00	10,144.24	7,973.51	7,475.91	35,633.66
2018-2019	9,294.65	8,917.83	6,744.10	10,738.22	35,694.80
2019-2020	13,177.43	10,381.34	15,627.44	5,496.60	44,682.81

Metric:

6. *N-Club membership and revenue*

Findings:

N-Club membership decreased from 405 in 2019-20 to 210 in 2020-21 while revenue also decreased from \$13,540 to \$8,385.

Analysis:

The decrease in N-Club membership can, in part, be the result of COVID-related financial challenges plus the inability to hold events (i.e., reunions, Hall of Fame induction ceremony) for 18 months.

Metric:

7. *Vic's Kids Club membership and revenue*

Findings:

Vic's Kids Club membership generated \$2,760 (46 members) in AC 2020-21.

Analysis:

The impact of COVID was also felt in this area as a good percentage of Vic's Kids memberships are sold in the late summer in anticipation of football season. Since NSU did not play fall sports, however, and all sports were played in the spring, it was more difficult to market memberships based on continued concern about being in environments which could lend themselves to the spread of COVID, plus NSU played all home athletic events in the spring and that included only three home football games.

Metric:

8. *Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)*

Findings:

In AC 2020-2021, all athletic events except men's/women's basketball were played from January-May. Although the number of season ticket holders during AC 2020-21 decreased from 725 to 504, the percentage of season ticket holders from outside of Natchitoches across football, men's/women's basketball, baseball, and softball remained in the 30th percentile (36%).

Analysis:

The 2020-21 year was challenging in several external “measurables” as potential investors chose to not attend games/events or financially provide support (i.e., ticket purchases, N-Club memberships). Generating an uptick in merchandise outlets and licensees also was challenging as many businesses struggled to recover from the pandemic shutdown.

Decision:

The Athletic Department must capitalize on the public’s emergence from “COVID hibernation” and the uptick in the nation’s financial climate by assessing ways in which generating revenue and expanding brand recognition can better position the department and help it also recover from the impact of the pandemic. The hiring of a staff member whose job description is dedicated solely to increasing the Demons Unlimited Foundation annual fund drive can pay dividends to the point that annual dollars do not just cover the cost of basic operating expenses but can also supplement team budgets. The challenge will also continue to be balancing the importance of generating dollars (i.e., annual fund, sponsorships, special events, licensing, etc.) to underwrite current expenses while also focusing on the need to raise funds for long-term benefit (i.e., endowment, facility enhancements). This will be a three-person effort—Athletic Director, Deputy Athletic Director, Assistant Athletic Director of Development and Donor Engagement—by individuals who also have a myriad of other responsibilities but must keep these initiatives top of mind.

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

Objective 2:

Promote Campus/Community Service, Appreciation, and Engagement

Strategies:

- Establish a community service approach through heightened interaction between coaches/ student-athletes and the NSU campus and the Natchitoches community.
- NSU Athletics will collaborate with youth organizations to offer special products and opportunities and look for ways to provide low-income families scholarship-like offers to summer camps on a limited basis.
- 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.
- Increased transparency of budgets and spending will increase appreciation and spur engagement.

Metrics:

1. **Camps and clinics for area youth**
2. Establish transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.

Metric:

1. Camps and clinics for area youth

Findings:

Seven total camps (two each by men's basketball, women's basketball and football with baseball conducting one camp) were held in June 2021.

Analysis:

July and August, which are normally "camp heavy" months, produced zero camps in 2020 due to COVID. The baseball program also conducts other camps (i.e., Christmas break) throughout the school year but was precluded from doing so by the pandemic.

Metric:

2. Establish transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually.

Findings:

Communication with donors that went beyond soliciting donations but also focused on increasing transparency and awareness of Athletic Department and Demons Unlimited Foundation budget numbers and mechanics—and how those dollars are spent—continued to be a focus and reflected increased engagement during the 2019-2020 year on several levels. During this assessment cycle the Athletic Director

- formally met twice with Faculty Senate President, who follows the Athletic Director on Twitter and often "likes" posts about the athletic program
- met with all head coaches and executive staff members for a total of three department meetings. (The final two of the Spring semester were cancelled due to COVID-19).
- met with Student-Athlete Advisory Council on eight occasions
- met with all teams at the beginning of each semester and his talk included information about the importance of the Demons Unlimited Foundation and N-Club as it relates to providing resources for the department
- met regularly (every four to six weeks) with the CEO of the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center to discuss the department and, in particular, its sports medicine program
- discussed budget mechanics with Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors at three official meetings
- discussed budget mechanics with the NSU Athletic Council at its fall semester meeting (spring meeting cancelled)
- provided details about the department's financial profile and need for increased revenue via social media and media (i.e., newspaper, radio) interviews
- held weekly WebEx meetings during the COVID-19 "stay at home" period with all head coaches and several staff members that included ongoing discussion of the current year and upcoming year budgets

A meeting with football alumni and supporters in January assessed ways in which the football program can be more successful. Participants completed surveys prior to the meeting, held overall group and sub-group discussions during the meeting, and were also presented with the athletic department budget.

Analysis:

In AC 2019-2020, the Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director, and Director of Development and Donor Engagement averaged at least one point of contact (i.e., in-person meeting to solicit support or cultivate a donor; attendance at and involvement in community organizations and events; attendance

at alumni functions) per business day. Unofficially, these three staff members had over 500 interactions with individuals or groups over the past year. Furthermore, and while it would be difficult to quantify, the engagement by these three staff members plus other coaches and staff via phone calls, text messages, and social media interaction further strengthened the bond and confidence level of alumni and former athletes in the direction and operation of the athletic department.

The Athletic Director's efforts to provide transparency regarding the Athletic Department's direction, especially as it relates to finances, was again complemented by the time investment of the Deputy Athletic Director and the Director of Development and Engagement. The initiation of the "Victorious" facility campaign provided further opportunities to engage and inform investors about the inner workings of the athletic program.

Decision:

Engagement on all levels must continue to be a focus of the Athletic Department whether it be donors, community members, youth, on-campus faculty and staff, student-athlete alumni and more. Some of these outreach efforts will result in revenue generation while others will either serve as "friend raisers" which will provide opportunities for the athletic program to be seen in a positive light or as avenues through which transparency can attest to the integrity of the athletic department.

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

Objective 3:

Enhance University and Community Collaboration and Support.

Strategies:

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

Metrics:

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

Metric:

1. *Identify and sustain/grow annually student-athlete participation in campus activities.*

Finding:

Student-athletes participated in many campus organizations, activities and initiatives during AC 2020-21: Addiction Studies Club, African American Caucus, Alpha Epsilon Delta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Alpha Phi Alpha, Alpha Omicron Pi, Baptist Student Ministry, Beta Beta Biological Honor Society, Blue Key Honor Society, Catholic Student Organization, Demon Dental Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Helping Hands, Kappa Alpha Order, Kappa Alpha Psi, Kappa Psi, Kappa Phi, Kappa Sigma, NSU Freshman Connectors, NSU Psychology Club, NSULA Pride, Pi Kappa Alpha, Presidential Ambassadors, Sigma Sigma, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Student Government Association, University Programming Council, Zeta Phi Beta.

Also noteworthy is the creation of the “Demons4Equality” student-athlete group to create awareness of and sensitivity to inclusion and diversity inequities. COVID precluded the group from meeting in-person, but several virtual meetings were held. Vice-President for Inclusion and Diversity, Dr. Michael Snowden, also engaged the group on several occasions. Demons4Equality leaders were included on the agenda for the campuses’ “Demons Unite for Change” rally hosted by the Office of Inclusion and Diversity.

Campus and community groups in which coaches and staff participated or engaged in AC 2020-21 included civic clubs, community events and boards, church functions, and charity/non-profit events and functions.

Six members of the athletic department also attended the “Black Male Summit” hosted by the University of Louisiana System on the campus of the University of Louisiana-Lafayette.

Analysis:

Despite limitations imposed by COVID, community and campus engagement continued to be a focus within the Athletic Department.

Metric:

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

Finding:

NSU student-athletes compiled 1,544 hours of community service during the 2020-21 year (Table 26).

Analysis:

Considering two factors—student-athletes had minimal opportunity to engage in community service during fall semester due to higher concerns about COVID and then during spring break, all 14 teams participated in their competitive seasons—the total hours of 1,544 was commendable.

Table 26
Community Service Hours Contributed by NSU Athletics by Team, 2016-2017 to 2020-2021

NSU ATHLETICS COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS				
TEAM	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2020-2021
Soccer	52.5	230.25	347	122
Men's Basketball	378	418.5	397	125
Women's Basketball	533	648	502	45
Football	237.5	211.5	1086.5	425
Baseball	92	239.25	193.5	84
Softball	487	1159.225	289.5	75
Tennis	253	53	74.5	60
Men's Track	31.5	699.5	306.5	64
Men's Cross Country	(with Track)	(with Track)	30.5	0
Women's Track	9	400.5	166	45
Women's Cross County	(with Track)	(with Track)	14	0
Volleyball	203.5	317	666.5	147
ALL TEAMS	N/A	N/A	385	352
Total Hours	2277	4376.725	4458.5	1544

Decision:

With (hopefully) the ability to interact with and engage with community constituents more regularly, a renewed focus on this area will be instituted for the upcoming academic year. A dynamic related to this for

student-athlete involvement will be the fact that with the departure of Kaitlyn McCanna, a new Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development will need to continue the emphasis in this area.

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

Objective 4:

Enhance Success and Avenues to Recognize/Promoting It.

Strategies:

- Revise the plan for publicizing the Student-Athlete of the Month as well as Dean’s and President’s List honors, drawing more attention to the academic success of student-athletes.
- New programming, which may include speeches or seminars and social media pieces, will help highlight the real-world success of former and current Student-athletes. Rewards and incentives will remain in place to reward success on the playing surface, in the classroom, and in the community (as allowed by NCAA, University, and UL System regulations), including for some staff and coaches.
- Athletics will increase emphasis on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities in any way possible. The discussion will be initiated regarding a facility campaign that will need to be underwritten through private support.

Metrics:

1. *Retain or improve student-athlete GPA to a minimum of 3.0*
2. Number of Dean’s/President’s List and Southland Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll honorees.
3. Increase single year and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores (always above the 930 threshold).
4. Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.
5. The eight teams that register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men’s basketball, women’s basketball, baseball, softball, women’s tennis) will compile a winning percentage of .600 or better in Southland Conference play annually. The cross-country and indoor/outdoor track teams will finish in the top one-third of the standings at the conference championship meet.

Metric:

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

Finding:

The athletic department GPA for the 2020-21 academic year was 2.979 (Table 27).

Table 27

Average Cumulative Grade Point Average for Student-Athletes, AC 2020-2021

2020-2021 (Fall/Spring GPA)				
		Total Quality Points	Total Quality Hours	GPA
Fall 2020		14,840	4,885	3.038
Spring 2021		13,412	4,593	2.920
Combined GPA		28,252	9,478	2.981

Analysis:

While narrowly missing the goal of having a cumulative department GPA of 3.0 or better for the year, the fact that all 14 teams participated in their competitive seasons created more challenges for student-athlete to keep up with their course load. Furthermore, the academic staff functioned with one less staff member for most of the semester and while staff members went the “extra mile” to fill the personnel shortage, it was also challenging for those staff members to keep pace during an unprecedented four-month stretch.

Metric:

- 2. Number of Dean’s/President’s List and Southland Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll honorees.

Finding:

The number of student-athletes was higher year over year in terms of representation on the NSU President’s and Dean’s list, as well as the Southland Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll (Table 28).

Analysis:

The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong on an individual basis as well as collectively, as evidenced by NSU academic honors (President’s and Dean’s List) and the Southland Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll.

Table 28

Student-Athletes Receiving Academic Honors AC 2014-2015 to AC 2019-2020

Term	President's List	Dean's List	Total	Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll
Spring 2014	16	34	50	71
Fall 2014	27	76	103	71
Spring 2015	32	60	92	86
Fall 2015	34	72	106	99
Spring 2016	40	69	109	101
Fall 2016	49	67	116	101
Spring 2017	38	65	103	107
Fall 2017	47	82	129	111
Spring 2018	46	67	113	101
Fall 2018	41	77	118	93
Spring 2019	44	60	104	104
Fall 2019	44	67	111	95
Spring 2020	60	75	135	122

Metric:

- 3. Increase single year and multi-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores (always above the 930 threshold).

Finding:

NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) numbers are officially reported the spring following an academic year. In the report for 2018-2019, all NSU teams’ APR exceeded the 930 benchmarks on both a single and multi-year level. As a department, NSU’s 2018-19 APR was just one point (979) off the record set the previous year. Furthermore, three NSU teams—men’s cross country, volleyball, and women’s tennis—received “Public Recognition” from the NCAA for having a perfect 1,000 APR score for four straight years (Table 29). This marked the second straight year that three NSU sports were so recognized.

The new NCAA Academic Performance Unit, funded by a 15-year multi-billion-dollar NCAA television agreement for rights to air the NCAA men’s basketball tournament and Final Four, was to be awarded

for the first time to Division I athletic programs based on data from the 2018-2019 academic year. Division I institutions are eligible to earn the unit on a year-by-year basis and qualify for the academic unit disbursement by meeting one of three criteria (APR, GSR or Federal Graduation Rate). NSU was the only Southland Conference school to qualify for two of the three units (point of clarification—qualifying for more than one unit does not result in any additional funding) and thus, was to receive approximately \$38,000 for its 2019-20 budget. Unfortunately, the economic impact of the pandemic on the NCAA budget precluded the first-ever academic unit from being distributed. NSU will not know if it qualified to receive the award for the 2019-20 year until graduation rates are announced in the fall. The amount of the award will continue to increase (i.e., the 2020-21 disbursement will be approximately \$75,000).

Table 29

Three Year NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) by Sport, AC 2016-2017 to AC 2018-2019

Teams	Year	APR	
		Multi-Year	Single-Year
Baseball	2016-17	971	981
	2017-18	976	981
	2018-19	981	991
Men's Basketball	2016-17	948	941
	2017-18	958	981
	2018-19	967	945
Women's Basketball	2016-17	973	960
	2017-18	981	1,000
	2018-19	976	962
Football	2016-17	960	955
	2017-18	963	955
	2018-19	961	958
Soccer	2016-17	973	963
	2017-18	975	973
	2018-19	967	969
Softball	2016-17	986	990
	2017-18	986	1,000
	2018-19	987	982
Tennis	2016-17	992	1,000
	2017-18	1,000	1,000
	2018-19	983	935
Men's Cross Country	2016-17	977	1,000
	2017-18	1,000	1,000
	2018-19	1,000	1,000
Women's Cross Country	2016-17	991	1,000
	2017-18	1,000	1,000
	2018-19	988	950
Men's Track	2016-17	963	965
	2017-18	968	969
	2018-19	963	962
Women's Track	2016-17	964	976
	2017-18	980	986
	2018-19	991	1,000
Volleyball	2016-17	984	958
	2017-18	984	1,000
	2018-19	989	1,000
Institutional	2016-17	967	974
	2017-18	980	987
	2018-19	979	971

Analysis:

The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong across all teams, as evidenced by the NCAA Academic Progress Rate, which exceeded the national benchmark. The NCAA Academic Performance Unit “ups the ante” for making academic achievement a priority for Division I athletic programs.

Metric:

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

Finding:

The NSU athletic program officially announced its “Victorious” facility campaign with the “crown jewel” of the initiative being a \$6 million project that would provide for new and expanded areas for the strength and conditioning and sports medicine divisions of the athletic department. These two areas, located in an athletic fieldhouse constructed in 1977, are significantly undersized to accommodate the growth in number of teams and student-athletes. A major donor has been approached about the project and is interested in supporting the project if the athletic program can secure private donations to equal their gift. The “crown jewel” of the project will be an 11,600 square foot annex to the back of the fieldhouse. Once the annex is completed, the current weight room will be converted to a high-tech rehab center and the current athletic training room will be refurbished. The plan also outlined a track and field locker room, baseball operations building/locker room, and women’s tennis locker room to be developed in the future.

The baseball program also renovated its locker room at a cost of \$50,000 through privately funded gifts.

The Athletic Department is exploring the potential of a new video board in Prather Coliseum, as well as new video boards for the baseball and softball complexes. Prices have been obtained and the next step will be securing sponsors to underwrite the cost of the boards.

Other facility projects started, completed, or on the drawing board include:

- Baseball Locker Room Renovation-completed December 2019 (\$50,000)
- Baseball Operations Building–on hold (\$2.5M)
- Baseball Grandstand Project–completed March 2020 (\$550,000)
- Tennis Locker Room-approximately \$100,000 in funds committed for \$350,000 project
- Track Complex Upgrades--Locker Room–future
- Volleyball Locker Room–near future
- Soccer dugouts–July 2019 (approximately \$12,000)
- Carpet (Fieldhouse 2nd Floor, MBB Locker Room, VB Locker Room)–Completed by Sept. 23, 2019 (\$35,000)
- Strength/Conditioning and Sports Medicine Annex/Renovation project -\$6,000,000

**Total of Projects Completed or Pending (including \$3.5 strength and conditioning center) =
\$9,497,000**

Analysis:

The main facility enhancement focus for the department is generating significant funding for the strength/conditioning and sports medicine upgrades; in light of other enhancements made throughout the athletic facilities, this could be because the project will benefit all 14 sports.

Metric:

5. The eight teams that register win-loss records (football, volleyball, soccer, men’s basketball, women’s basketball, baseball, softball, women’s tennis) will compile a winning percentage of .600

or better in Southland Conference play annually. The cross-country and indoor/outdoor track teams will finish in the top one-third of the standings at the conference championship meet.

Finding:

Three teams met our performance goals. The soccer team registered an 8-2-1 (.614) record in conference play while the volleyball team's conference record was 11-5 (.606). In track and field/cross country, the women's indoor team claimed the runner-up trophy at the Southland Conference Indoor Championships.

Analysis:

Of the eight teams with a potential to register a .600 or better winning percentage in conference competition, five were able to complete their seasons while three others (baseball, softball, and women's tennis) had their seasons cut short by COVID. Thus, two of five teams (40%) met the standard, which is below what would be expected.

Decision:

The Athletic Department academic support staff (academic coordinators, compliance coordinators, and Faculty Athletic Representative) will continue to meet monthly to assess academic performance with the intention of monitoring success/problems and sustaining the high level of academic performance in place. Regular interaction with coaches, especially for program which traditionally have student-athletes who may need additional guidance, will also continue. The Demons Unlimited Foundation Board in collaboration with the NSU athletic administration must continue to secure resources, most notably for the strength and conditioning annex, to enhance current student-athlete experience as well as impact the recruiting process and ultimately, impact the program's level of competitiveness.

Responsibility: Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator/Associate Athletic Director of External Relations, Director for Development and Engagement, Athletic Business Manager, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, and staff.

Comprehensive Summary of findings and changes/decisions because of the above

A year ago, the comprehensive summary to this report stated, in part,

The unprecedented and draconian financial impact of COVID-19 on the NSU athletic budget (i.e. loss of \$154,000 in NCAA funding for AC 2019-2020 and an additional \$258,000 for AC 2020-2021) combined with significant losses in state revenue which, in turn, has negatively impacted higher education funding, will make the upcoming year perhaps the most challenging in the history of NSU Athletics.

That statement proved to be prophetic as the 2020-21 year was indeed perhaps the most difficult ever for the NSU athletic program. Revenue shortfalls; staff vacancies and turnover; the inability to engage public and private sectors for fund raising and community services opportunities; the stress brought about by COVID testing which resulted in missed/cancelled contests; financial ramifications (i.e., NCAA and University funding reductions, loss of game guarantee funds, cost of extra year spring sport senior scholarships, team operating budget decreases, etc.); other weather-related occurrences; and a lack of team success in several sports challenged administrators, staff, coaches and student-athletes to stay the course. Following a staff/coach retreat in June which included a SWOT analysis of the department's status, the focus on re-energizing the department on all levels (financial, competitive, branding, etc.) is in place.

Section III.

College Performance and Assessment Cycle AC 2019-2020

The College of Arts and Sciences (COAS)

The College of Arts and Sciences is a diverse community of scholars, educators, artists, and students working collaboratively to connect varied ideas and themes across a wide range of academic disciplines grounded in the liberal arts and natural and applied sciences. The College uses transformational, high-impact, experiential learning practices, research, and service to equip students with the skills needed to reason and analyze as well as express their creativity and thoughts. Our graduates progress through an education that builds on itself throughout life and serves to promote economic and social development while improving the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, engineering technology, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

As the large College at the University, it is also one of the most diverse from several perspectives. Bookended by two large Schools (Creative and Performing Arts and Biological and Physical Sciences), the state's designated Honor's College, and Departments that complete the Liberal Arts and Sciences experience, we span a diversity of degrees and concentrations offered, activities presented, outreach completed, and courses offered/taken.

COAS Degree Programs

The COAS enrolls over 2700 undergraduate and graduate students in twenty-six (26) Degree programs and fifty-nine (59) concentration areas within those degrees. The Louisiana Scholars' College, housed within the COAS, has joint degree programs with all other Colleges, Departments, and Schools at Northwestern State University. In addition, the vast majority (39/43 or 91%) of the University's general education CORE classes are nested within the COAS, thus serving the entire academic population of the University, and reaching all students multiple times during their academic career.

More than 160 full-time faculty and 40 part-time faculty teach courses throughout the College. The Faculty and Degree Programs offered by the COAS spans two (2) Schools, nine (9) Departments, and the Louisiana Scholars' College, and includes the following:

Associate Degree: Veterinary Technology

Associate of Science: Engineering Technology

Associate of General Studies

Bachelor of Arts: Communication, Criminal Justice, English, History, and Liberal Arts

Bachelor of Fine Arts: Fine and Graphic Arts; Dance

Bachelor of General Studies

Bachelor of Science: Applied Microbiology, Biology, Electronics Engineering Technology, Industrial Engineering Technology, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Theatre, and Unified Public Safety Administration

Bachelor of Music

Bachelor of Music Education (*offered in conjunction with the School of Education*)

Master of Arts: Art, and English
Master of Science: Homeland Security
Master of Music: Performance and Music Education

In Academic Year 2016-2017 (Summer, Fall, Spring) the COAS awarded 585 degrees, 606 degrees in AY 2017-2018, 612 degrees in AY 2018-2019, and 682 degrees AY 2019-2020. During AY 2020-2021, the COAS awarded 631 degrees.

Alumni and Student Success

Alumni of the College have been very successful in professional engagements, and state that the hands-on involvement of faculty, linked with the outstanding field-experiences and internships while at NSU, have allowed them to make professional connections, take auditions, transition from intern to full-time employee, and enroll in graduate/professional school. A few recent alumni successes are highlighted here:

Alumni

- Susie Scifres Kuilan Bryant, Ph.D. (Alumna of the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies) serves as the Associate Dean of Strategic Security and Protection Management at National American University, Rapid City, SD. She is a Brigadier General in the U.S. Army Reserve and was recently named Commander of the 95th Training Division, Fort Sill, Lawton, Oklahoma. She is the first woman to serve in this post.
- Reatha Cox (1987, BA in Journalism) was named NSU's VP for The Student Experience and Dean of Students
- Jennifer C. Walsh (1991, BA in Liberal Arts from the Louisiana Scholars' College) is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.
- Alexander Billioux, MD (2003, BA in Liberal Arts from the Louisiana Scholars' College) is the Vice President for Social Determinants of Health, UnitedHealthcare Government Programs. Dr. Billioux received the Jimmy D. Long, Sr. Louisiana Scholars' College Outstanding Alumni Award for 2021.
- Kelli West (2005, BA in Journalism) received the 2021 Member of the Year Award from the Public Relations Association of Louisiana.
- Trevor Bailey (2011, BM in Performance) was named Assistant Director of Bands and Assistant Professor at Western Carolina University.
- LeAndre Benton (2015, BME - Trombone) was named Assistant Principal at J. J. Pearce High School in Richardson, TX.
- Holli Conway (2016, BS in Theatre) will be returning to Broadway on October 8, 2021, to star in the Tina Turner Musical.
- Demetri Hill (2017, BS in Biology and 2021, MAT Secondary Education 6-12)—selected as the 2020 Southwest Association of Student Assistance Programs (SWASAP) TRIO Achiever Awardee for Louisiana.
- Jaylen Mumphrey (2017, BS in Biology) has recently accepted a position as a research scientist at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.
- Thirteen Louisiana Scholars' College graduates completed their terminal degrees:
 - Paul Jannise (2005)—PhD in Drama from University of Huddersfield, UK
 - Juliette Gray (2013)—PsycD from Adler University
 - Jebha Babu (2014)—DO from Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, Auburn
 - Marquez Wilson (2015)—PsycD from Adler University
 - Paige Anderson (2016)—DVM from Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine
 - Amber Babin (2016)—DPT from University of Texas Health, San Antonio

- Megan Duhon (2016)–DDS from Louisiana State University School of Dentistry
- Thomas Moore (2016)–DPT from Harding University
- Blake Schouest (2016)–PhD in Biomedical Sciences from Tulane University School of Medicine
- Rose Tusa (2016)–MD from Louisiana State University School of Medicine, New Orleans
- Chelsea Thibodeaux (2017)–JD from University of Wisconsin School of Law
- Michael Thrower (2017)–JD from Louisiana State University School of Law
- Ryan Ware (2017)–MDiv from Duke Divinity School
- Three recent graduates from New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts have been hired in their fields:
 - Savannah Stevens (2020, BA in Communications)–videographer/editor with skillzplus Entertainment (Shreveport)
 - Madelyn Dupont (2020, BA in Communications)–videographer/editor with KTBS (Shreveport)
 - Travis Mitchell (2020, BA in Communications)–multimedia journalist with KCWY (Casper, WY)
- Thirty current or recent graduates of the Department of Theatre and Dance were gainfully employed during the Summer of 2021 at 14 different entertainment venues across the country.
- Eight recent graduates in Music/Music Education have been accepted into prestigious music graduate programs throughout the country:
 - Emily Adams (2021, BM Performance/Voice) - Georgia State University
 - Jose Bustillo Agüero (2021, BM Performance/Cello) - University of Southern Mississippi
 - Lane Clevenger (2021, BM Performance/Trumpet) - Stephen F. Austin State University
 - Christina Coley (2021, BME/Trumpet) - Stephen F. Austin State University
 - Oliver Lear (2021, BM Performance/Organ)–University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music
 - Zachery Moreau (2021, BM Performance & Music Business/Voice) - Florida State University
 - Alejandro Restrepo Cardozo (2021, BM Performance) - University of Southern Mississippi
 - Jami Rivers (2021, BM Performance/Oboe) - Arizona State University
- Fourteen graduates of the School of Biological and Physical Sciences have been accepted into their professional school of choice for medical school, veterinary medicine school, dental school, physician assistant school, or graduate school.
 - Jordan Bringedahl, Abigail Poe, Patrick Juneau, Jasmine Nunley, Christian Baker, and Alex Gautreaux–LSU Health Shreveport Medical School
 - Haley Tucker and Mallory McConathy–LSU School of Veterinary Medicine
 - Skylar O’Brien–LSU School of Dentistry
 - Connor Donaldson–LSU Health Shreveport School of Allied Health (Physician Assistant)
 - Juan Gonzalez–University of Notre Dame Graduate School
 - Ela Iwaniuk–Northern Illinois University Graduate School
 - Isabel Melhado–University of Indianapolis Graduate School
 - Olivia Warren–LSU New Orleans Medical School Post Baccalaureate Program

Current Students

- Three current Music students won awards at the Charleston International Music Competition:
 - Santiago Uribe–1st place in Cello age 20-24
 - Emily Adams–1st place in Voice age 20-24
 - Dara Pressley–2nd place in Voice age 20-24
- Ashley Eubanks (Liberal Arts, Louisiana Scholars’ College) was one of 50 recipients nationwide of the 2021 Jo Anne J. Trow Undergraduate Scholarship from Alpha Lambda Delta National Honors Society.
- Two Communications majors were awarded scholarships by the Shreveport Journalism Foundation
 - Leanna Coy–*Kerry Garland Memorial Scholarship*
 - Brianna Corley–*Orlando Dodson Memorial Scholarship*.

- Sydney Bulot (Communications) won the “Best in the South” award presented by the Southeastern Journalism Conference for her report on Dark Woods.
- Devon Smith (Biology and Applied Microbiology) won 1st place for his presentation (“The Fish Menace: Survey of Aeromonas Prevalence Within the Natchitoches Waterways”) at Louisiana Academy of Science.
- Christian Baker and Juan Gonzalez (both Biology majors) won 1st place for their presentation (“Helminthological survey of channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) in aquaculture hatchery (Natchitoches, Louisiana, USA)”) at the 6th Annual LSU Regional Student Scholars Forum.
- Students working with Prof. Anna Dugas successfully launched their DemonSats-2 payload into space on June 12, 2021, as part of the LaACES (Louisiana Aerospace Catalysts Experiences for Students) program. Students involved were majoring in Biology and Engineering Technology.
- Evan Chapman (Engineering Technology) won the state Louisiana Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition and competed in the 5-state regional competition.

Academic Engagement

National Rankings

- The Graduate Program in TESOL was ranked 10th in the nation in the “Best Masters in English Language Learning” category by Intelligent.com. The program was also commended for having the “best study abroad options.”
- The online Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies concentration in the Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice program has been ranked the Best Bachelor’s Program in Intelligent.com’s ranking of the nation’s Best Online Criminal Justice Degree Programs. This ranking is based on program flexibility, cost, course strength, reputation, and faculty.
- The online Bachelor of Arts in History program has been ranked by Best Schools.org in the top 25 online history programs in the nation. This website ranks degree programs based on academic excellence, return on investment, and indirect and secondary benefits to the student.
- The Master of Science in Homeland Security has been ranked as the Best in the South by Intelligent.com.
- The online Bachelor of History has been ranked as the most military friendly online program by Intelligent.com

COAS participates in several current and future activities and initiatives to ensure student success, maintain rigor, emphasize integrity, encourage student responsibility, and promote recruitment, retention, graduation, employment, and professional/graduate school acceptance. Our efforts include a continued emphasis on and promotion of academic advising throughout the semester, assessing our general education CORE classes, early interventions for students struggling in classes, and promotion of the Academic Success Center.

In addition, specific strategies bring increased visibility and impactful meaning to our programs, including:

New Programs/Initiatives

- The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts launched a very successful experiential learning initiative in AY2020-2021 to assist students needing to complete internships during the COVID crisis. **NSU News Service** is a student-run video news service that provides senior-level (COMM4910 Internship) students with real-world experience running a local news bureau. Student work in this award-winning initiative is used by local TV affiliates in Shreveport and Alexandria.
- A new Remote Systems Undergraduate Certificate program has been approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents. Developed by Dr. Tommy Hailey (Professor of Anthropology), Dr. Billy Culver

and Mr. JD Cox (both Assistant Professors of Biology), this program is a joint endeavor of the Department of Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences and the School of Biological and Physical Sciences. It addresses the predicated exponential increase in demand for certified remote (or drone) pilots and will provide students with a foundation in remote systems applications, operation, and regulations. Students can enroll in the program beginning Fall 2021.

- A new Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Production and Design has been approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents. This program was developed by faculty in the Department of Theatre and Dance with the intent of educating students in technical theatre in preparation for work in lighting, sound, costumes, and scenic and technical direction, as well as stage management. Students can begin enrolling in the program during the Fall 2021 semester.

Community Engagement/Recognitions

- Faculty members in the School of Biological and Physical Sciences designed and created 250+ face shields that could be used as personal protective equipment. These devices were donated to Natchitoches Regional Medical Center for use by medical professionals and Northwestern State University's Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts for use by students, faculty, and staff during courses, lessons, and performances.
- In July 2020, the School of Biological and Physical Sciences shared via social media the blooming of its corpse plant (*Amorphophallus titanum*) affectionately named "Mr. Stinky". Over 400 people from the community and beyond (some as far as Oklahoma) visited our campus to view the plant during the 3 to 4-day blooming period and over 200,000 people engaged with the social media posts. Pollen was collected and shipped to Cal Tech for the first ever attempt at an artificial pollination of this plant.
- In July 2020, the Department of Engineering Technology held a Risk Management workshop. Over 30 industrial partners (including one international) attended.
- The School of Biological and Physical Sciences has begun working with the City of Natchitoches to promote and advocate for the Grady Erwin Nature Reserve. Several community-wide "clean up days" were hosted to help clear hiking/biking trails used by the public. The COAS has created two biology liaison positions that will help to manage and educate the public on acceptable behaviors in this ecologically sensitive area.

Program Successes

- Professor Anna Dugas (Assistant Professor of Physics), Dr. Masahito Kuroda (Associate Professor of Music), Professor Terrie Sanders (Interim Department Head and Associate Professor of Music), Professor Michael Scanlan (Assistant Professor of Physics), and Dr. Nick Cummins (Associate Professor of Music) have collaborated to create and evaluate the design of various forms of personal protective equipment for use in music education. This work was highlighted as an exemplary example of collaboration during the ULS Academic Summit Keynote address.
- Two Louisiana Board of Regents' Targeted Enhancement program grants submitted by the COAS were funded. These grants will enhance course offerings in the respective academic units/programs and improve upon the student experience in those areas. The awarded grants were:
 - Dr. Mark Thompson (Department of Music)–"Enhancement of Methods Course Offerings through the Acquisition of Musical Instruments" \$110,228.00
 - Dr. Xinjia Chen (Department of Engineering Technology)–"Enhancement of Automation, Robotics and Operation Research Infrastructure for Engineering Technology" \$28,075.00
- The Bachelor of Science in Theatre degree received full accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

- Faculty associated with the Remote Systems Science and Technology were awarded a grant of \$84,247 from American Electric Power/Southwestern Electric Power Company for development of the “drone laboratory” in Kyser Hall.
- The Bachelor of Science degrees in Electronics Engineering Technology and in Industrial Engineering Technology received full accreditation by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).
- Paige Parks (2021) was the first student to graduate from the Louisiana Scholars’ College/Department of English, Foreign Language, and Cultural Studies’ joint BA in Liberal Arts/MA in English degree program.
- Student-run NSU News Service Students along with peers in COMM3430 (News Producing), COMM4420 (Advanced Video Journalism), and COMM4470 (TV Producing and Reporting) classes won five Telly Awards in the categories of General–Local TV News (silver), General–Educational Institution and General Student (two bronze); Online–General Education Institution and Online–General Education (one bronze each).
- Prof. Melody Gilbert’s COMM4420 (Advanced Video Journalism) class was awarded the Society of Professional Journalists’ Mark of Excellence award for its “News from Our Rooms” election 2020 special.
- Prof. Melody Gilbert’s COMM4240 (Documentary Production) class was awarded the Southeastern Journalism Conference’ “Best Public Service Journalism” award for its “March 2020” documentary.

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

- *STEM Robotics Summer Camp*: The Department of Engineering Technology offered the first ever virtual STEM Robotics summer camp for middle school and high school age students.
- *6th Annual Robotics Competition and Smart Structures Show*: The Department of Engineering Technology offered this competition again (as a virtual event this time) for middle school students in the region.
- *Band Extravaganza*: The Spirit of Northwestern entertained the audience at Turpin Stadium on October 29, 2021, during which they showcased the artistry and work of the students under the direction of School of Creative and Performing Arts.
- *JaM Day*: The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts hosts this annual event that attracts over 150 high school students to participate in various journalism, communication, and new media contests. This year, the virtual event was held on Friday, March 19 with the awards broadcast live on YouTube.
- *Scholars’ Day*: The Louisiana Scholars’ College hosts this event each semester to showcase its offerings and accomplishments. Potential students sit in Scholars’ classes taught by faculty, engage with current students in the program, and gain insight into what daily life is like as a Scholars’ student.
- *Writing/Coloring Contests*: The Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies facilitated two brand-new community outreach programs: the 1st Annual Easter Writing and Coloring contest (grades K through 5), and the 1st Annual St. Patrick’s Day Creative Writing Contest (grades 6 through 8). Over 325 students from 6 different regional schools participated.
- *2nd annual Destination Science Camp*: The School of Biological and Physical Sciences hosted the 2nd annual Destination Science Camp from June 21-25, 2021. The camp immersed children from ages 8-15 to various workshops/activities in anatomy, physiology, microbiology, chemistry, physics, veterinary science, drone technology, and natural sciences. Over 30 children from the community attended.

College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning

Responsiveness and Future Innovations

As we continue to work collaboratively as scientists and artists, we strive to transform the human experience while blurring the lines between liberal arts and applied and natural science education. To do this, we must continue to evaluate our students' learning, in both the traditional and experiential senses, to maximize its impact on our students as they prepare themselves for lives in the Arts and Sciences professions. It will be imperative that we develop students' communication and critical thinking skills; it is essential that we continue to encourage and support faculty and students as they work collaboratively on research that has the potential to bring greater meaning to our work in the Arts and Sciences; and it is critical that we engage in deeper conversations with our alumni and advisory committees who serve as valuable resources as we continue to evolve as a responsive College. These goals will be realized with the development of innovative and responsive programming (such as an interdisciplinary undergraduate certificate in scientific communication) as well as with the establishment of collaborative centers focused on creating cross-disciplinary and professional works.

We will continue to engage in crucial conversations, in which we realize that the work of the between liberal arts and applied and natural science—though difficult and demanding—is critical to our lives as we create graduates who are responsive and respectful, and stellar contributors to their chosen professions. As we continue to consider best practices for delivery of instruction, we will constantly evaluate how education delivered in a residential, online, or blended format can best serve the students, programs, and departments within the COAS, and how we can continue to evolve in the scope of our influence.

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD)

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD) is a community of eclectic students, faculty, and staff, working to increase knowledge, skills and dispositions through teaching, research, and service. The GCEHD offers a wide variety of exemplary undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare candidates for career success across the spectrum of professional roles and settings. These programs include teacher education, child and family studies, adult learning and development, educational technology leadership, educational leadership, special education, student affairs in higher education, counseling, health and exercise science, health promotion, psychology, addiction studies, social work, and military science. GCEHD consists of nine academic and support units (School of Education, Department of Health and Human Performance, Department of Psychology, Department of Social Work, Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, Military Science, NSU Child and Family Network, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, and NSU Middle Laboratory School).

The Mission of the college states the GCEHD is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the academic and support units within GCEHD, the College produces knowledgeable, innovative, and inspired graduates ready for lifelong learning and endeavors that contribute to the communities in which they reside.

Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their parents related to learning and development.

During AC 2020-2021, the GCEHD continued its response to a global pandemic, impacting every aspect of

University life. With the immediate pivot to 100% online instruction in March 2020, GCEHD faculty and students entered AC 2020-2021 with myriad revisions to field work, Hy-flex classwork, increased simulations and the modifications to internships and residency placements. The resilience and flexibility of GCEHD faculty and students was evident in every program and classroom. In the metric comparison from AC 2019-2020 to AC 2020-2021, GCEHD students and faculty are persistent in their pursuit of educational attainment.

Degree Programs

In fall 2020, the GCEHD enrolled 2434 undergraduate and graduate students in 32 programs (BA, BS, BME, BSW, MAT, MA, M.Ed., Ed.S, Ed.D) and 13 certificate programs. A total of 494 students (ages 3-14) were enrolled in the NSU Elementary and Middle Laboratory schools and Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center (CDC). In addition, University core and support courses are offered in the social/behavioral sciences (Psychology, Educational Psychology), Nutrition, First Aid, Child and Family Studies, Human Performance, and Social Work.

Students in GCEHD maintained an average GPA of 3.02 in fall 2020 and 3.08 in Spring 2021 with an overall average GPA of 2.98 for AC 2020-2021. Within departments, average GPA ranged from 2.70 in Psychology to 3.26 in Education. GPA metrics were within 0.1 of AC 2019-2020.

Within the GCEHD, academic success is measured through multiple metrics including overall grade point average, being in good standing with the University (GPA of 2.0 or higher), progress towards graduation, average number of credit hours earned and student retention (persistence).

For AC 2020-2021, 88.4% of GCEHD students (fall and spring) achieved a GPA of 2.0 or higher (Table 30). For a third year, this is an increase from AC 2019-2020 where 87.86% of GCEHD students achieved a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

Another measure of student academic success is academic progress, moving towards earning a degree. In AC 2020-2021 (summer, fall, spring), 508 GCEHD students earned degrees, compared to 509 in AC 2019-2020.

Table 30

GCEHD Students Obtaining 2.0 Cumulative Grade Point Average or Better, AC 2020-2021

Department	Fall 2020		Spring 2021	
	% students obtaining 2.0 or higher	Number of students within the department	% students obtaining 2.0 or higher	Number of students within the department
Education	92.27%	1200	93.56%	1097
Health & Human Performance	84.26%	315	82.25%	245
Psychology	84.70%	559	87.60%	498
Social Work	86.16%	360	89.26%	297
GCEHD (overall)	88.48%	2434	89.94%	2137

Additionally, academic success can be measured by the percentage of full-time students completing an undergraduate degree within a 6-year window. For those full-time students beginning college in fall 2015, the GCEHD boasted a graduation rate of 47.65% for AC 2020-2021. This is a decrease from AC 2019-2020 (51.7%). A total of 508 graduates completed their program of study during AC 2020-2021.

Academic progress is also determined by the number of credit hours earned by our students per semester. In Fall 2020, the average number of credit hours earned by GCEHD undergraduate students

was 11.31 hours with 11.01 earned credit hours in spring 2021. This metric was encouraging with the combination of COVID19 restrictions and multiple weather-related struggles (hurricane, extreme winter storm) during AC 2020-2021.

More than 50 full-time faculty and 65 part-time faculty teach courses throughout GCEHD. In fall 2020, GCEHD generated 24,445 Student Credit Hours (SCH) of a total of 122,834 generated for NSU. Of this total, Psychology (9,582) and Education (9,222) generated most of these hours for GCEHD.

Alumni and Student Success

Alumni:

Alumni of the GCEHD have been very successful in their chosen professions. A few recent alumni successes are highlighted below:

- A total of 12 Health and Human Performance graduates (2020-2021) have successfully entered professional graduate programs (PT, PTA, OT, MBA, MS) to continue their education in fall 2021.
- Dr. Cade Brumley (BS, 02) has been named Louisiana State Superintendent, May 2020.
- Grant Eloi, (M.Ed., 2013) has been named Natchitoches Parish School Superintendent, fall 2020.
- Lieutenant General Joseph M. Cosumano, Jr. was named the 44th recipient of the Omar N. Bradley Spirit of Independence Award, bestowed upon outstanding American citizens or organizations that symbolize the spirit of freedom and independence on which the United States was founded. Past recipients include John Wayne, Bob Hope, and the Tuskegee Airmen.
- Jared Prentiss, LPS (MS, 07) owns Prentiss Counseling and Consulting, PLLC in middle Tennessee. He serves as one of a few African American male therapists in this area of the country.
- Jennifer Burch (BA, 01) is currently the Director of Graduate Medical Education at Baton Rouge Medical Center. Ms. Burch currently serves on the Louisiana Board of Social Work Examiners.
- Erin York, LAC, LPS is the clinical Director for Uprising Addiction Center, helping individuals recover on an individualized path. She is a SMART recovery facilitator, with certifications in crisis intervention and domestic violence prevention.
- Jasmyn Steels (M.S., Health and Human Performance) was named to the Southland Conference Indoor All-Academic team and the SLC Indoor Field Events Performer of the Year.

Current Students:

- Kyle Swanson (M.S., Health and Human Performance) earned national recognition as CoSIDA 3rd Team Academic All American and Southland Conference Baseball Student Athlete of the Year.
- In fall 2020, five African American men were named as cohort 1 of Call Me MISTER program at Northwestern State University, pursuing degrees in education.
- Three students graduated with the Ed.D in Adult Learning and Development in May 2021. These are the first graduates in this doctoral program.
- Cohort 1 of the Central Louisiana Instructional Program (CLIP) graduated in August 2020 as middle mathematics and science teachers. Cohort 2 of the CLIP grant program began in summer 2020 with expected graduation of August 2021.
- Tiffany Howard (Ed.D, Adult Learning) wrote a proposal for \$8 million aid to Career and Technical Colleges that passed the LA House and Senate Education Committees and slated for consideration by full legislature.
- Four SOWK students were awarded the Child Welfare Scholars Program with a stipend of \$7500 to intern and enter the career path of Child Welfare.

Academic Engagement

National Rankings:

The Bachelor of Science in Addition Studies at NSU has been named among the top online programs for both quality and affordability according to guidetoonlineschools.com.

The Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education has earned a grade of A in Early Reading Standards set by National Council of Teacher Quality (NCTQ), one of four given nationally. Programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels were recognized as exemplary in early reading instruction.

Northwestern State University of Louisiana was named one of the Best Online Bachelor's in Social Work programs for 2021.

The EdD program in Adult Learning and Development is recognized as number 1 by Great Value Colleges. NSU was selected not only for the program's affordability but also for the institution's overall outstanding reputation, its faculty's excellence, and the unerring commitment to providing non-traditional students a high-quality education and in doing so, giving them the tools needed to achieve their future career goals.

New Initiatives:

Flat rate pricing and heavy recruiting for the alternative certification program PREP has increased enrollment during 2020-2021.

The Social Work department in conjunction with the Center for Inclusion and Diversity sponsored a "Voices of Diversity" series in spring 2020. The first community and university-wide event was held in March 2020, focusing on the diversity of ability/disability. The second event, originally scheduled for April 2020, was hosted in fall 2020.

The School of Education offered state mentor in 2020-2021, increasing the number of certified mentors in central Louisiana. Free training was offered to Natchitoches parish teachers to increase the number of mentors locally.

Faculty and Staff Awards/Recognition:

- Dr. Charles King (Psychology) presented in the University of Louisiana System Summer Bridge program regarding Opioids.
- Dr. Patrice Moulton (Psychology) has been named as President for LA Fulbright Chapter.
- Steven Gruesbeck (Psychology) is serving as Executive Director of La Gear Up projects at Northwestern, administering a multi-year, \$3.2 million grant for programming across NSU departments for first generation students.
- The Social Work Department submitted a 3-year renewal of the Title IVE Child Welfare Scholar's program grant during 2019-2020. NSU's role in this statewide initiative continues to grow and includes 4 faculty/staff positions who contribute both to the statewide program and Northwestern's program of study. The program completed its third year of a 3-year grant cycle and submitted grant for July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2023. For the last three-year cycle, July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2020, the grant amount was \$4,640,250.00, with a yearly average of \$1,546,750.00.
- NSU Child and Family Network provided respite care for dependents of healthcare workers when COVID19 closed area day care facilities in March 2020. Funding for grants and scholarships rose for 2020-2021, providing funding for scholarships and professional development to Early Learning Centers in 15 north Louisiana parishes (regions 7 and 8).

- Andrew Fultz, Title IV-E Child Welfare Scholar Program Manager has joined the National Title IV-E Roundtable Steering Committee.
- Dr. Ruth Weinzettle was reaffirmed by Governor John Bel Edwards for another 3-year term on the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners, the Social Work Regulatory Board.

College of Nursing & School of Allied Health

Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH) continues to live into its mission statement. The mission statement for CONSAH was updated in 2020 and states:

Northwestern State University College of Nursing and School of Allied Health serves an increasingly diverse student population while advancing the mission of the University by offering excellent and innovative undergraduate, graduate, certificate, and continuing education programs that are designed to assist individuals in achieving their goals to become responsible and contributing members of an interprofessional global community that improves the health of our region, state, and nation.

The COVID pandemic which began in the spring of 2020 created some issues regarding the clinical and didactic education of students. Specifically, due to lack of supplies within the healthcare institutions, students were forced to be removed from the clinical rotation for a short period of time. Since then, however, students, staff, and faculty have thrived during the return to campus.

COVID provided CONSAH's faculty/staff with several opportunities to creatively modify both clinical and didactic learning and achieve quality student learning outcomes. For example, after quickly transitioning from in-class to online learning environments, faculty found themselves in need of development to become adept at creating engaging online courses. CONSAH integrated mandated faculty engagement in teaching-learning educational offerings into the CONSAH strategic plan initiatives. Faculty utilized the ULS's Bridging the Digital Divide series, as well as other teaching-learning educational offerings, to become experts in the creation of active learning in the online environment. Additionally, because CONSAH's graduates from the nursing and radiologic science programs are vitally needed in our service areas and because laboratory/simulated learning experiences enhance health-profession student learning, faculty worked diligently to modify laboratory/simulated learning experiences to ensure students obtained quality laboratory/simulated learning experiences, producing quality health professions graduates. Finally, faculty worked closely with clinical agencies to ensure students safely continued their mandatory clinical education learning experiences. CONSAH administrators met weekly during COVID's early phases to ensure a proactive plan was in place to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff. CONSAH administration worked with the bookstore and ancillary services to ensure students and faculty had needed safety equipment while engaged in the clinical setting and potentially exposed to COVID.

As students, staff, and faculty returned to campus, many online teaching and learning experiences were converted to hybrid learning format. Hybrid learning was embraced by faculty, staff and students and has proven learning outcomes equal to those in the traditional learning environment.

In addition to the changes within the classroom and clinical environment, the pandemic affected the ways that programs are accredited. BSN, MSN, and DNP programs were all fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) virtual visit in the spring 2021. The BSN to DNP-NA program became the first nurse anesthesia program to be virtually accredited during Spring 2021.

A part of the CONSAH's mission is to assist individuals to *"become responsible and contributing members of an interprofessional global community that improves the health of our region, state, and nation."* During the COVID crisis, CONSAH students, staff, and faculty contributed to the elimination of COVID-19 by participating in multiple vaccination clinics throughout the state. Further, the Shreveport campus served as a vaccine point of distribution (POD) for students, staff, faculty, and the community.

During the upcoming 2021-2022 Academic year, the CONSAH will continue to produce healthcare heroes who are empathetic, value diversity, treat people fairly, embrace free-expression, communicate effectively, challenge ideas with respect, promote inclusion, empathize, exhibit openness and sensitivity, are future-thinkers who exceed challenging goals, demonstrate integrity in professional behaviors, act ethically, maintain professional expertise, persevere when challenged and see themselves as integral members of an interprofessional healthcare team. In essence, we will continue to produce nurses, healthcare heroes, who exhibit the CONSAH core values!

Degree Programs

The CONSAH offers 8 degree-programs spanning from the associate degree to the practice doctorate, 3 post masters certificates in nursing and 3 post baccalaureate certificates in radiologic science. The CONSAH currently enrolls nearly 3300 undergraduate and graduate students in these degree programs. Many of these programs on off-campus learning sites in Alexandria, Leesville, Natchitoches, and Shreveport.

CONSAH has 73 full-time faculty members; an additional 40 adjunct faculty members teach courses throughout CONSAH. Degrees offered through the College of Nursing include:

1. Associate of Science Degree in Nursing (ASN)
 - a) Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to ASN
 - b) Paramedic/Military Medic to ASN
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
 - a) LPN to BSN
 - b) RN (ASN) to BSN
 - c) BS to BSN
3. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
 - a) Nurse Educator
 - b) Nurse Administrator
 - c) Nurse Practitioner
 1. Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
 2. Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
 3. Family Nurse Practitioner
 4. Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
 5. Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
 6. Women's Health Nurse Practitioner
4. Post-Masters Certificate Programs
 - a) PMC Family Nurse Practitioner
 - b) PMC Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
 - c) PMC Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
5. Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
 - a) MSN to DNP: Organizational Systems Leadership DNP with two routes (non-APRN to DNP and APRN to DNP)
 - b) BSN to DNP: Nurse Anesthesia

Degrees offered through the School of Allied Health include:

1. Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Science (BSRS)
 - a) RT to BSRS
2. Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAHA)
3. Post Baccalaureate Certificate Programs
 - a) PBC Cardiac Radiology Intervention
 - b) PBC Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Therapy
 - c) PBC Computed Tomography (CT)
4. Master of Science in Radiologic Science (MSRS)

The Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) has approved all four nursing degree programs and all concentrations of each degree program. The *Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)* nationally accredits the ASN program through 2022. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) nationally accredits the BSN, MSN, PMC, and DNP degree programs. All programs are accredited by the CCNE through 2030. The BSN to DNP-NA degree program received full accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) for the maximum time of five years (2026). The CON is also accredited as a provider of Continuing Education in nursing by the American Nurses’ Credentialing Center on Accreditation (ANCC) and was recently re-accredited in 2018.

Multiple substantive changes and updates were sent to the LSBN and national accrediting agencies such as CCNE, ACEN and to ensure the organizations were kept apprised of changes within the College and University. First, an update regarding changes in the University and College’s mission were sent. Additionally, updates regarding the naming of the Interim Dean, Dean, and Chief Nurse Administrator were reported. Finally, the results of accreditation visits and substantive change submissions to both CCNE and ACEN were forwarded to the LSBN to ensure ongoing compliance.

The BSRS degree program is nationally accredited through the Joint Review Commission on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) through 2025. A mid-cycle report was submitted and accepted by the JRCERT in spring 2021.

Over the last three assessment cycles, the number of degrees awarded by CONSAH has increased by 12%, with consistent increases in all categories except undergraduate degrees in SAH.

	CONSAH Degrees Awarded								
	CON			SAH			Total		
Academic year	UG	Grad	total	UG	Grad	Total	UG	Grad	Total
2018-2019	411	71	482	87	4	91	498	75	573
2019-2020	412	92	504	74	9	83	486	101	587
2020-2021	432	123	555	78	9	87	510	132	642

Program Growth

The need for nurses and allied health professionals continues to drive the enrollment of the CONSAH. In Fall 2020, CONSAH enrolled 3250 (28.5%) of NSU’s total enrollment. Even more impressive is the fact that since 2014 CONSAH’s enrollment has increased by nearly 1100 students. The CONSAH remains committed to providing accessible, quality educational opportunities that develops future healthcare professionals. The commitment to provide **quality accessible education** was exemplified in 2020-2021 in several ways:

- CON began admitting students into BSN to DNP-NA program in Spring 2021.
- CONSAH held three annual advisory council board meetings (two in northern LA and one in central LA) to discuss workforce needs, quality of CONSAH graduates, and potential education-workforce partnerships.

Alumni, Faculty, and Student Success

Alumni:

CONSAH alumni are successful professionals who bring regional and national prominence to NSU through their achievements. CONSAH alumni are involved in professional organizations, inpatient and outpatient healthcare management, and are engaged with current NSU students as mentors. Examples of recent alumni successes include:

- *Dr. Pamela Simmons*, Board Member of CCNE's Board of Commissioners.
- *Dr. Donald Johnston*, recognized with 2020-2021 CONSAH 'Educator of the Year'
- *Dr. Kelli Haynes*, elevated to Fellow of the American Society of Radiologic Technologists
- *Ms. Tiffany Rogers*, recognized as the CONSAH 'Nurse of the Year'

Faculty:

CONSAH faculty members are interprofessional collaborators committed to the development of graduates who demonstrate the characteristics of resilient critical thinkers, compassionate and empathetic caregivers, and healthcare professionals who demonstrated this year, that their capability and flexibility of handling healthcare challenges. CONSAH's commitment to excellence continues to be exemplified through faculty members who constantly strive to promote students' success in their pursuit of academic and professional career goals. To maintain the mandated faculty to student ratios within the CONSAH, each year external funding for faculty positions must be obtained. Currently the CONSAH has 14 fully externally funded faculty/staff positions.

Examples of CONSAH Faculty achievements for 2020-2021 include:

- 3 Faculty earned doctorates
- 1 Faculty is secretary for Board of Trustees for LA Nurses Foundation
- 2 Faculty serve as President of Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
- 1 Faculty serve on the Board of the CCNE Board of Commissioners
- 1 Faculty serve as a member of the Substantive Change Review Committee for CCNE
- 2 Faculty are CCNE on-site reviewers
- 1 Faculty presented to national audience on CCNE evaluation standards
- 1 Faculty served as panelist for the National Association of Diversity Officers in Education (NADOE)
- 1 Faculty serves as ACEN evaluator
- 1 Faculty received academic rank promotion
- 9 Faculty received tenure
- 7 Faculty published articles
- 1 Faculty published textbook
- 1 Faculty elevated to Fellow of the American Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 1 Faculty received research grant from American Society of Radiologic Technologists
- 18 Endowed Professors

Students:

CONSAH Student achievements for 2020-2021 include:

- Participated in multiple vaccination clinics throughout Northwest Louisiana
- Three undergraduate students received Rotary Club Scholarship
- Two undergraduate students selected to join Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists' Leadership Academy
- Produced over 10 scholarly project practice change projects (DNP capstone projects)
- Six doctorate scholarly projects published/presented on state/regional/national level
- Two undergraduate students inducted into Lambda Nu National Honor Society for Radiologic Science
- 5-year economic impact of CONSAH graduates on Caddo and Bossier Parishes estimated at \$69.5 million.

Program Success

Measures of program success include passage rates on licensure and certification examinations, national program rankings, progression from admission to graduation data and employment data. Additionally, alumni and employer ratings of program and graduates are used to evaluate program success. The following are indicators of program success:

Licensure, Certification Examination Passage Rates Trended and AC 2020-2021:

Licensure as a registered nurse occurs when students successfully complete their national council licensure examinations. Licensure as a radiologic technologist occurs when students successfully complete their registry examinations. Licensure as advance practice registered nurses occurs when master's degree students successfully complete certification exams specific to a patient population. CONSAH's licensure, certification, and registry passage rates for 2015-2020 are:

- **ASN national council licensure examination pass rates:**
2015 = 88.5%; 2016 = 93.26%; 2017 = 97.47%; 2018 = 95.92%; 2019 = 94.29%; 2020 = 88.8%
- **BSN national council licensure examination pass rates:**
2015 = 91.36%; 2016 = 96.32%; 2017 = 95.65%; 2018 = 95.1%; 2019 = 95.15%; 2020 = 90.2%
- **Total Undergraduate Nursing National Council Licensure Examination Pass Rate:**
2018 = 95.4%; 2019 = 94.75%; 2020 = 84.9%
- **MSN national certification examination pass rates:**
2015 = 98%; 2016 = 93%; 2017 = 95.52%; 2018 = 96.22%; 2019 = 93.75%; 2020 = 86.7%
- **BSRS registry examination pass rates:**
2015 = 83%; 2016 = 91%; 2017 = 97%; 2018 = 96%; 2019 = 83%; 2020 = 94%

National Program Rankings and Recognition:

- #1 ranked online allied health program by intelligent.com
- #1 Most Affordable RN-BSN program in Louisiana (RNtoMSN.org)
- #11 best Radiologic Science program in U.S. (bestvalueschools.org)
- #4 Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program in the US.
- #1 Producer of licensed registered nurses in Louisiana in 2019 (2020 NCLEX report)
- #1 Producer of Nurse Practitioners in Louisiana (2020 LSBN Report)
- #1 Nurse Practitioner program ranking by Intelligent.com (2020)
- US News and World Report top 100 "best master's in nursing online program" 2021

Enrollment, Graduation, Employment Rates:

CONSAH

- CONSAH Fall 2020 total student enrollment has increased 50% or 1089 students since Fall 2014.
- CONSAH total student enrollment for Fall 2020 was 3270; a 4.4% (140 student) increase from Fall 2019.
- CONSAH employment rates maintained above 95% for past seven years.
- CONSAH alumni satisfaction rates above 90% for the past five years
- CONSAH employer satisfaction rates above 90% for the past six years

CON

- CON undergraduate nursing student enrollment (ASN, BSN) for Fall 2020 was 2833 students. That is an increase from Fall 2019 of 111 students.
- ASN Program Enrollment for Fall 2020 was 854; a 10 % increase from 2018.
- BSN Program Enrollment for 2020 was 1746; a 10% increase from 2019.
- MSN Program Enrollment for Fall 2020 was 303; a 28% increase from 2019.
- PMC Program Enrollment for Fall 2020 was 14; a 16% increase from 2019.
- DNP Program Enrollment for 2020 was 30; a decrease from 2019.
- ASN Program Completion Rates for 2020 were 82%.
- ASN Program Employment Rates: 2015-2020= 100%
- BSN Program Employment Rates: 2015-2020=100%
- BSN Program Completion Rates (based on time students enter clinical courses): 2020 = 78%.

SAH

- SAH total student enrollment for 2020 was 437; a 7% increase from 2019.
- SAH total undergraduate student enrollment for 2020 was 394; an 5.6% increase from 2019.
- SAH total graduate student enrollment for 2020 was 43, a 22% increase from 2019.
- BSRS Program Completion Rates (based on time students enter clinical courses): 2020 = 71%
- BSRS Program Employment Rates: 2015-2020 = 100%

The Future

Each year, the University sets a goal to increase enrollment by 6%. CONSAH exceeded this goal from 2014-2019. While the enrollment from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 fell slightly below the 6% goal (4.4% growth), the overall enrollment growth for CONSAH since 2014 is 50%. To meet enrollment goals, our plans are to maintain current traditional undergraduate enrollment, focus on increasing online non-traditional undergraduate enrollment and graduate enrollment in addition to evaluating available physical and fiscal resources to meet our current and future needs.

Last year, CONSAH's strategic plan included the following short-term goals: 1) A successful accreditation virtual site visit with CCNE for all CON programs except for ASN and receive full 10 year accreditation status; 2) A successful accreditation site visit with COA and receive full initial accreditation status for the BSN to DNP-NA concentration of the DNP program; 3) Admittance of a first full cohort of 20 students into the BSN to DNP-NA program; 4) Submission of a substantive change document to CCNE which adds the BSN to DNP-NA concentration to the DNP program; 5) Submission of a BS to BSN substantive change document to CCNE; 6) Retaining a first BS to BSN cohort of students who are successful on the NCLEX examination; 7) Finding the next CONSAH Dean; 8) Safely retaining clinical students in quality clinical learning environments/settings during COVID crisis; 9) Safely retaining faculty in clinical learning environments/settings during COVID crisis; 10) Developing strategies to increase student retention in undergraduate CONSAH programs; and, 11) Strategically marketing the RN to BSN program's flat rate tuition to increase enrollment.

In the 2020-2021 academic year, the CONSAH was accredited by the CCNE for the maximum of 10 years. Further, the BSN to DNP-NA program received the maximum accreditation award of five years. The BSN to DNP-NA program admitted the inaugural cohort of 20 students in the spring 2021. Substantive change reports were submitted and accepted by the CCNE regarding the addition of the BSN to DNP-NA and BS to BSN programs. The BS to BSN program has retained 100% of its first cohort. This cohort will graduate in summer 2021 and take the NCLEX exam at that time. Through the efforts of many, protective masks, hair covers, and eye protection were made available to all clinical students and faculty to ensure their safety during the COVID crisis. Due to these measures, no student contracted COVID through their clinical rotations. Efforts continue to increase student retention using academic advising and mentors. Finally, multiple marketing campaigns were begun to bring awareness of the RN to BSN flat rate tuition.

CONSAH's strategic plan included the following long-term goals: (1) procuring funding for a new building on the Shreveport campus, (2) developing a doctor of osteopathy program housed within the school of allied health, and (3) developing a PhD in nursing degree. In the 2020-2021 academic year, funding for the new building was not actively pursued due to the need to focus on mitigating COVID issues. The doctor of osteopathy program was delayed until the BSN to DNP-NA program is implemented and the PhD in nursing degree was delayed until SACSCOC level change can occur.

The administrative council retreat was held virtually in July 2020. A strategic plan with specific initiatives to enhance and expand on the existing University Strategic Plan was developed during the retreat, as well as a plan for faculty/staff and students to return to a hybrid learning campus in Fall 2020.

The third edition of *Nursing Columns* was mailed to CON alumni in the Summer of 2020. Due to the pandemic and the altruistic heroic actions of many of our CON faculty, students and alumni, the plan for the columns to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the CON was changed. Instead of celebrating the 70th anniversary, the third edition celebrated the Heroes the CON has produced over the past 70 years!

Short term goals for 2020-2021 academic year: 1) Successfully transition to new senior director of nursing; 2) receive approval from ACEN for ASN self-study reports; programs; 3) develop sonography program as pathway for current radiologic science students; 4) develop sonography program as option for radiologic science graduates; increase grant writing as opportunities for program development; 5) work with new College of Nursing director to restructure nursing organizational chart; 6) develop 4th Alumni *Nursing Columns*.

Long term goals: 1) Continue transition of CON director positions as tenured faculty plan for retirement; 2) enroll first cohort of sonography students in spring 2023; 3) retain > 90% of first sonography cohort 3) Post all program outcomes to web page; 4) Continue fund-raising for CONSAH building on Shreveport off-campus learning site.

Innovation

In AC 2020-2021, CONSAH expanded the use of iPad technology in the undergraduate nursing and allied health classroom to facilitate online testing, with iPads used in all BSN, ASN, and BSRS levels.

Use of exam soft testing software has been fully implemented in the ASN, BSN, and BSRS programs. This software is a testing platform that provides secured testing for many professional healthcare programs across the US and in Louisiana. This testing platform allows faculty to correlate all test items to specific program outcomes.

The DNP program, working with the Graduate School, has piloted a centralized application system for their programs This system provides a way for students to use a single online application, streamlining the process of admittance. The DNP program has also implemented a clinical tracking system that provides congruency between clinical tracking and the documentation of student experiences.

Funding for the building campaign on the Shreveport campus came to a halt during the pandemic and because of the need to acquire funds for the BSN to DNP-NA program. However, it is our hope that by Fall 2021 fundraising can resume for the building campaign. Plans have begun for a permanent footprint on the Natchitoches campus that will include state-of-the-art nursing simulation labs and smart classrooms.

College of Business and Technology

The College of Business and Technology (CoBT) employs 27 full-time faculty members, 1 part-time faculty member, 3 twelve-month coordinators/administrators with teaching release time, 1 nine-month coordinator, and 3 administrative support staff members. The dean's position is currently vacant. The CoBT serves 1,227 (14-day count Fall 2021) undergraduates and graduate students enrolled in the following degrees:

The School of Business:

- BS in Accounting
- BS in Business Administration with concentrations in business analytics, entrepreneurship, finance, international business, management, and marketing (eSports Management beginning Fall 2021)
- BS in Computer Information Systems with concentrations in application development, cyber security, networking and system management, and web development
- BS in Hospitality Management and Tourism with concentrations in culinary arts, hospitality services, and travel and tourism
- Minors in accounting, business administration, computer information systems, hospitality management and tourism, and culinary arts.
- MS in Computer Information Systems
- Undergraduate certificate and post baccalaureate certificate in business analytics

The CoBT faculty are providing an engaging, applied learning environment for our students.

Academic Success

At the College, academic success means our students are meeting university, college, and school expectations. One measure of student academic success is being in good standing [GPA of 2.0 overall and in major]. For the overall AC 2020-2021 academic year, 84.03% of students achieved a GPA of 2.0 and above. In Spring 2021, 89.41% of students achieved a GPA of 2.0 and above.

Another measure of student academic success is academic progress, moving towards earning a degree. In AC 2020-2021, 199 CoBT students earned degrees as compared to 208 CoBT students earning their degrees in AC 2019-2020. Academic progress is also determined by the number of credit hours earned by our students per semester. In fall 2020, the average number of credit hours earned for CoBT students was 9.88 with 10.41 earned credit hours in spring 2021.

To assist with ensuring academic success, we provide our students with access to the following:

1. Proper prerequisites for course success.
2. Supplemental instruction. Instructors provide supplemental instruction, video captured lectures, and students can also access tutors in our 24-hour Lab.
3. Relevant connections between what our students are learning in college and their current or future life by providing reality-based learning experiences such as guest speakers, business cases, problem-based or project-based learning, role plays, and simulations.

4. Experiential learning opportunities such as internships and service-learning programs. (NSU Coding Club, NSU Demon Tech Clinic, Mentor Protégé Program, and Capstone Community Projects).
5. Relevant course lectures and assignments enhance our students' knowledge and skills.
6. Connecting students with key academic support and student development through involvement with the Student Advisory and Outreach Board activities and guest speakers.
7. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Please see SACSCOC document for more information.

Accreditation is also a reflection of academic success. In Spring 2021, the School of Business was reaccredited by AACSB.

Student Success

The College also defines student success as:

1. student retention (persistence). In AC 2020-2021 the School of Business persistence rate for all students was 78.24% and the persistence rate for our full-time entering freshman (1st to 2nd year) was 68.13%.
2. number of graduating students. In AC 2020-2021, 199 CoBT students earned degrees, compared to 208 students in AC 2019-2020.

The College and faculty participate in the following events and activities that also contribute to student success: (1) first-year convocation ceremonies; (2) enhanced advisor/instructor/student relationships (Registration Round-up Event); (3) student recognition (Phi Beta Lambda, Beta Alpha Psi, SAOB, EDP, Honor Societies, competitive events, and leadership award ceremonies); and (4) student engagement with and participation in J. Walter Porter Forum, College of Business and Technology Advisory Board meeting, and College of Business and Technology Homecoming Activities, including the Hall of Distinction. In non-pandemic years, HMT hosts several social events such as the Columns Cafe dinner events and lunch events, and special luncheon demonstrations each semester.

Research and Innovation:

The CoBT faculty continue to incorporate experiential simulation projects (ESP) and community service project and activities as innovative and engaging assignments within the course curricula.

In fall of 2020, we held our 3rd Inferno Pitch competition—Hottest Idea Wins!! This competition provides real-world education in entrepreneurship and boosts awareness and innovation commercialization in our region to our business students. Participants submitted their ideas, and the top 5 pitched their hot ideas to a panel of judges. The Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program [EAP] has adopted our model and is encouraging other schools to use this model. In 2020-2021, the College of Business and Technology collaborated with the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce to present several webinars regarding sustainability in times of crises. In 2020-2021, Hospitality Management and Tourism presented a Grab and Go option in lieu of the Columns Cafe. As part of this experiential learning component, students planned, prepared, and served the meals.

HMT continued its Student Advisory and Outreach Board to provide feedback about program improvements as well as serve as ambassadors for the HMT program. Some of the members participate and are members of the College of Business and Technology's Student Advisory and Outreach Board.

Initiated in fall 2016, our CoBT Industry Showcase, which strengthens our business and industry partnerships and provides our faculty and students the opportunity to showcase special projects and initiatives, was cancelled in spring 2020 and Spring 2021 due to COVID-19. We hope to resume these activities spring 2022.

We continue to innovate in the classroom through technological and pedagogical changes (usage of Webex and Teams to connect with students not in the classroom and the usage of hybrid classes). Our faculty members continue to incorporate real-world business scenarios into classroom assignments and projects, and bring guest speakers into classes. NSU-School of Business Start the Spark Series was launched with Dr. Nita Landry-co-host from the Emmy Award winning show 'The Doctor.' Due to COVID-19, the 2nd Start the Spark Series was canceled. This event will be held in spring 2022.

The CIS faculty and the College of Education faculty continued to provide STEM training to middle-school math and science teachers in high-need schools within the Central Louisiana School Districts-CLIP initiative. The CIS area participated in the LA GearUp initiative for summer 2019 and summer 2020. We were also awarded another grant opportunity for a Cyber Security Talent Initiative.

Outlook-Action Plan

Supporting innovation and educational success, we continually seek feedback from our stakeholders and make appropriate changes to our curriculum. We will continue to advise and promote the **15 to Finish** during advising sessions with our students. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to write notes about advising and scheduling recommendations on each student's degree audit.

Moving forward we will continue to develop additional programs identified as needed by the workforce and that link and support our business and industry partners. CoBT is exploring the creation and implementation of appropriate programs that will enhance our students' skillsets and are highly sought after by business and industry. Hospitality Management and Tourism is seeking to align with a different accrediting body. HMT is also considering adding a four-year degree in Culinary Arts to provide for needs in the industry.

It is the goal of the College of Business and Technology to reach a student enrollment of 2,000 by Fall 2022.

Moving Forward

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021 completes the University's fifth iteration of holistic assessment within the Strategic Plan 2016-2023 framework. The University can move forward into AC 2021-2022 with confidence knowing its commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in the progress made toward our vision. Organizationally, we have learned a tremendous amount about ourselves over the past year as we posture for Assessment Cycle 2021-2022.

COVID 19 is still active across the globe. The virus is a driving force requiring Northwestern to adapt to the increasingly complex environment and associated policy changes at the system and state levels. The University stands ready to continue or initiate any adjustment necessary to its academic programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning and protect the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Student learning assessments maximize the principles of honest evaluation and assure the highest quality of coursework, whether through in-person classes, online delivery, or hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources are continuously updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

The University is actively preparing for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Fifth-Year Report. The Fifth-Year Report addresses an institution's continued compliance with standards and requirements identified at the time of an institution's last review. Northwestern will submit its Fifth Year Report to SACSCOC on March 15, 2023.

With the July 1, 2021, retirement of NSU President, Dr. Chris Maggio, Northwestern welcomes Dr. Marcus Jones back to the University to serve as the Interim President. Dr. Jones, Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer for the University of Louisiana System, is no stranger to Northwestern as he previously served as the Executive Vice President for University and Business Affairs. Dr. Jones has set assessment as a top priority for his administration and has already met with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to ensure the momentum carries forward.

The annual assessment process is not complete until the recommendations and proposed decisions are mediated and agreed upon, the final report is written, and the briefing presented. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process, we still have work to do in convincing faculty and students of the power of assessment.

Based on our analysis of assessment activities, we have identified four strategic goals/challenges for the next five years:

- **Improving analysis of assessment results to improve critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and writing skills.** Determining how best to pilot a methodology that would apply to all degree and certificate programs regardless of discipline.
- **Expansion of External Stakeholders' participation and knowledge** of SLO assessment so they have a better understanding of the process and can offer more relevant and timely feedback. The initiative would require a mix of surveys and evaluation rubrics.
- **Assessment of High-Impact Practices–Lessons Learned** requires a collaborative effort between academic and student affairs focused on service-experiential learning. The QEP assessment results are critical in the evaluation of these co-curricular student experiences.

- **Increasing all aspects of diversity and inclusion.** Being a leader in understanding, accepting, and valuing differences between people while removing all barriers, discrimination, and intolerance so that everyone feels included and supported.

As a road map to the future, we have also identified immediate (3 x months), near-term (6 x months), and short-term (12 x months) activities to guide our efforts.

Immediate:

- Capture the 2020-2021 lessons learned and implement decisions
- Update AC 2020-2021 Assessment Plans as necessary
- Finalize AC 2020-2021 assessments—data collection at the degree and unit level
- Continue to assess recommendations—build consensus and establish predictability

Near Term:

- October—Receive President's guidance on Strategic Plan 2022-2028
- December—Annual SACSCOC Conference
- Azimuth check on AC 2021-2022 assessment process (SFA/Program/Unit)
- Gain intelligence on 5th Year Report Standards
- Maintain continuity in data collection
- April/May complete draft response for each SACSCOC Fifth Year Requirement

Short Term:

- October and beyond—thinking about the way forward—reshaping the strategic plan
- May 13—Commencement ends assessment cycle
- June 17—AY 2020-2021 Degree, Unit, Core Assessments complete and submitted to DIE
- July 1—Final Draft of Fifth Year Report Requirements
- August—Assessment Cycle AC 2022–2023 Report—*A New Day* begins
- September—Brief to President

Through the commitment of our entire University community, we will realize our vision of becoming the nation's premier regional University.