

## 2017-2018 Assessment

### Office of Disability Support

**Division or Department: The Student Experience**

**August 2017 - May 2018**

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

The **Office of Disability Support (ODS)** is a student-centered division making students with disabilities full participants in the university program, services, and activities through its compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The ODS coordinates services, accommodates students with disabilities, serves as an information center concerning disability-related issues, and provides equal educational opportunities to diverse students. The ODS supports the university's mission through its commitment to provide services that are innovated and surpass the federal guidelines for those with disabilities.

**Methodology:** The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from the assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the director;
- (2) The director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required (show cause);
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

**Service Outcomes:**

**Service Outcome 1:** *All students seeking registration with the Office of Disability Support will receive specialized and individualized support at Northwestern State University in a timely manner.*

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**Measure 1.1:** Students seeking services/accommodations will receive information through ODS staff outreach. Each summer ODS staff will be present for summer programming. The target is that all students needing services/accommodations be identified during summer programming and thus receive information about the services available to them.

**Finding:** Not met. 70.5% of incoming students needing accommodations register with ODS prior to the first day of class for the Fall 2017 semester.

**Analysis:** As recommended in the 2016-2017 assessment cycle, ODS staff was present at 4 summer programming events and information was disseminated to all students attending via tri-fold brochures. Data indicates this combination was effective but the target of 100% was not met. In 2016-2017 64% were identified prior to the first day of class and in 2017-2018, 70.5% (86 students of the 122 new students) were identified prior to the first day of class. 29.5% of those registering with ODS were not identified during summer programming. Not all students attend summer programming and we have open enrollment throughout the year.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** Based on the analysis of data, ODS recommends changing the target from 100% to 75% due to not all students attending summer programming. It is also recommended that on the NSU online application for admission, there be a field for students to elect to be identified as having accommodations in high school and/or transfer university and possibly needing services at NSU.

**Measure 1.2:** Upon student completion of registration packet/paperwork with ODS, we will notify and coordinate services with faculty/staff within 24 hours. Each semester a review of available documentation of new registrants will confirm faculty/staff received accommodation notices within 24 hours of student registration completion.

**Finding:** Target met. 90.2% of students had letters available to instructors within 24 hours of completed registration paperwork. These letters notify and coordinate services with faculty staff.

**Analysis:** In 2016-2017, 81% of new students had letters available within 24 hours of classes beginning and in 2017-2018, 100% of 86 new students who registered during the summer had accommodation letters ready by the 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes. Late registrants, those registering after the 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes, accounted for 36 additional students. Of those, 66.7 % had letters available within 24 hours of completed registration paperwork. Accommodation letters available does not equate letters received by instructors. Since the students determine which instructors receive accommodation letters, the ODS staff will continue to encourage communication and early intervention to prevent lapses in accommodations.

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**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** Based on the analysis of results, ODS will continue to notify and coordinate services with faculty/staff within 24 hours. The target will be that 95% of student accommodation letters will be available within 24 hours of completed registration.

**Service Outcome 2:** *Students registered with ODS are taken care of in a comprehensive and systematic manner in accordance to their specific needs.*

**Measure 2.1:** Individual support will be seamless. Eight out of ten students will say they received services in a timely manner on an end-of-semester questionnaire.

**Finding:** Target Met. 83.6% of students rated receiving services in a timely manner.

**Analysis:** The data shows that the student responses on the survey regarding their ODS experience was positive. A total number of 127 evaluations were completed, online and face-to-face, representing 36.4% of 350 active, registered ODS students. Compared to 2016-2017, when only 35% of active students registered with our office completed the survey. The ODS staff is not pleased with only 1.4% increase in student response rate when offering the survey both electronically and as a paper version. It is observed that more students provided responses electronically. However the rating scores did drop slightly by only 1.1% in services being delivered in a timely manner.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** The ODS staff will continue to offer services in a timely manner. It is recommended the survey/email will be delivered the survey in week 14 of the semester and a reminder in week 16.

**Measure 2.2:** Students will identify and engage strategies that effectively offset their disability and enhance academic success. This will be measured by the number of students receiving information about their disability and responding to a Likert-scale inventory question on an end-of-semester questionnaire. Eight out of 10 will report improvement in their ability to offset their disability and enhance academic success.

**Finding:** Target met. 80.3% of students rated "excellent" in the effectiveness of accommodations and services provided which offset the disability and enhance academic success.

**Analysis:** The data shows that the student responses on the survey regarding the ability to offset their disability and enhance academic success were positive. A total number of 127 evaluations were completed representing 36.4% of the 350 active, registered ODS students. Again, the electronic survey results were lower than the 2016-2017 survey results. There is a 1.7% decrease in the rating of excellent in the effectiveness of accommodations and services. This is explained in the anonymity of an electronic survey.

In the 16-17 assessment cycle, the ODS staff planned on developing/implementing a peer mentoring program. This was not accomplished

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in a formal manner. However, ODS staff did delegate to student employees and GA for providing support for high need/at-risk students. ODS staff coordinated employee personality and leadership strengths to the needs of the students.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** Analysis shows the target is met but students are not fully satisfied with the effectiveness of accommodation and services provided to offset their disability and enhance academic success. The ODS staff will again attempt to create a peer mentoring program in a “students help students” mindset. We will continue matching student employee leadership and personality styles to match the needs of high-needs/ at-risk students.

**Measure 2.3:** The number of students utilizing academic testing accommodations will be proportional to the number of students registered with ODS. This will be measured by comparing total students registered with total students completing course exams under ODS supervision each semester. Success is defined as having 75% of ODS students leveraging this service.

**Finding:** Target Met. 86.5% of students utilize testing accommodations.

**Analysis:** In AY 2016-2017, 710 exams were proctored. Based on the analysis of the results from this year, 283 of 327 active students eligible for testing accommodations utilized services. 1555 exams were requested, obtained, proctored and returned to faculty by the ODS staff. This is an increase of 84% from the previous year cycle. Lockers were donated to provide a secure location for personal belongings. Student workers were utilized to provide assistance with this process. However, feedback from instructors was negative regarding maintaining exam security.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** Analysis of data shows a marked increase in the number of proctored exams. The ODS center continues to need more space/room available to provide improved distraction reduced environment an additional entry-level position within ODS would provide necessary manpower to manage testing accommodations. In addition, this would allow Master leveled staff to utilize their skill set/training for the continued growth, intensity and student demands.

**Measure 2.4** Satisfactory test completion will be evaluated. Satisfactory test completion includes the following indicators: (1) student scheduled exam 48 hours in advance. (2) Instructors responded to exam requests. (3) No incidence of cheating. (4) Student reports the positive experience as indicated on an end-of-semester questionnaire.

**Finding:** Target met.

**Analysis:** This was not a formal measure for AY 2016-2017. However, we noticed about 60% of students did not schedule exams 48 hours in advance and incidences of cheating occurred. Therefore, this measure was added. Based on the analysis of the results from this year, (1) Approximately 80% of students did

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schedule exams 48 hours in advance. (2) Approximately required by the ODS staff. An excel spreadsheet are used to organize the number of potential test takers by course and date/time schedule. Reminder emails were sent to all instructors 24 hours prior to exams. (3) Exam security was strictly enforced. This is evidenced by a >1% incidence of cheating. ODS staff take appropriate precautions such as all student belongings (smartphones and watches, bookbags, etc.) are placed in lockers. The exam room is monitored by a student worker at all times and periodic walk-throughs of fulltime ODS staff. (4) Overall student experience with ODS was positive. 79.5% of students rated the ODS staff effectiveness, knowledge, sensitivity and availability as excellent.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** Analysis of data indicates the ODS staff is managing the 84% increase in exams proctored while maintaining positive student experiences with great success.

**Service Outcome 3:** *ODS will assess student note-takers hired to provide notetaking services for students receiving notetaking accommodations. The data will ensure students with disabilities receive quality notes in a timely manner. The data will be shared with ODS staff and evaluated to see if adjustments need to be made to procedures for hiring student note takers, and to improve notetaking services.*

**Measure 3.1:** All notetakers will complete required training prior to being assigned to support an ODS student. Target is 100 percent of training to be completed prior to assignment.

**Finding:** Target met. All note takers completed professional development prior to the assignment of student for which they note take.

**Analysis:** In AY 2016-2017 student note-takers were not trained and were assigned to ODS students. ODS students reported low-quality notes and we experienced numerous frequently asked questions. In AY 2017-2018, all note-takers completed training. As question/problems did arise, they were addressed during the semester on a case-by-case basis. One of these problems was poor class attendance by the students needing a peer note-taker. A policy was written to resolve this problem. Another frustration of ODS students was the amount of time it took to receive class notes. The process was refined so notes are now sent to ODS staff with 48 hours and immediately forwarded to students.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** Based on the analysis of the results this year, ODS will continue to provide professional development prior to assignment of the student. Additionally, students needing a peer note-taker will complete a peer note-taking evaluation at the end of each semester.

**Measure 3.2:** 80% of those receiving notes will complete the locally developed ODS notetaking survey. The target is for all students to respond with "Excellent" to a Likert-scale inventory question on an end-of-semester questionnaire.

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**Finding:** Target met. Based on the analysis of the results from last year, ODS acquired and utilized a note-taking software program called Sonocent to assist students needing to strengthen their own notetaking ability. 100% of those surveyed want to continue using the Sonocent software.

**Analysis:** Students report an increase in note quality by 63% when utilizing Sonocent. 57% report improved grades.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** Data indicates students are satisfied with the notes received by Sonocent. ODS will continue to provide notetakers for those students with severe visual and hearing impairments, while others will have access to the Sonocent software.

**Service Outcome 4:** *The ODS office will be able to provide crisis planning and intervention in order to assess and meet the immediate needs of students.*

**Measure 4.1:** Identify NSU and Natchitoches community resources to maximize student independence. 80% of students will self-report a clear understanding of resources available on an end-of-semester questionnaire.

**Finding:** Target met. 81% of students rated staff's knowledge of disabilities, accommodations and technology used as excellent. As the ODS staff shares knowledge, students have a clear understanding of the resources available which promotes student independence.

**Analysis:** Based on the analysis of last year's results, ODS instituted a survey to measure students understanding of the resources available. Data indicates that of the 127 surveys completed, 63% of students utilize ODS services 4 or more times per semester. Due to the various types of disabilities and the needs associated with each, there is a high acuity of need - assistance, support, counseling, advising, mediation, advocating, and crisis intervention.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** The nature of student need is beyond the scope of student employees and graduate assistants. The ODS staff will continue to utilize this survey and other NSU campus and Natchitoches community resources as needed.

**Measure 4.2:** Students can identify their own personal strengths and understand the impact of their disability on academic performance. 80% of students will demonstrate a more independent use of their accommodations through improved communication with instructors on an end-of-semester questionnaire.

**Finding:** Target met. 86.5% of students demonstrated improved communication with instructors.

**Analysis:** Based on the analysis of last year's results and an increased focus on customer service 283 students of 327 (86.5%) consistently communicated with

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instructors and ODS staff to request accommodations, exams and advising/registration.

**Action-Decision or Recommendation:** The ODS staff will develop an in-depth needs assessment to determine the areas of high risk for the students and their academic success.

**Service Outcome 5:** *ODS will increase disability awareness within the NSU community. The university community will increase awareness of disability-related issues and share the responsibility for making the NSU experience accessible for all.*

**Measure 5.1:** Weekly awareness campaigns will run on student messenger/messenger, and ODS billboard as educational awareness. Eight out of 10 will report “seeing/learning” something new each week on an end-of-semester questionnaire.

**Finding:** Target not met.

**Analysis:** With the exponential growth in the numbers and acuity of the students registering with ODS, this service outcome was not prioritized. The task of completing a weekly awareness campaign was delegated but not completed.

**Action-Decision or Recommendations:** The ODS staff will continue this service outcome. The ODS staff will prepare the weekly awareness campaign to run on the student messenger/messenger as educational awareness. The ODS staff will present at the Fall Faculty Institute to inform and train faculty and staff on the changes with ADA as well as policy and procedures.

### Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results:

- Early identification of incoming students during summer programming has been beneficial in allowing the ODS staff to create a baseline prior to the fall semester.
- The registration process has been streamlined with new forms.
- The turnaround time in receiving registration from students and notification to instructors overall has improved through efficiency in the process.
- Streamlined process and time management have allowed for the accommodation of a 200% increase in students. The number of students requiring accommodations has grown by 96% for first-time registrants. (67 new students in 2016-2017 to 131 new students in 2017-2018).
- Purchased access to Sonocent to assist with note-taking services.
- Successfully exercised the use of the Universities Budget Enhancement process to acquire department needs.

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- Partnered with Student Support Services to provide lockers for personal belongings during exams, and a color printer for exams with graphics.

### **Plan of Action Moving Forward:**

- ODS staff has decreased its classroom instructional commitments from 9 academic hours to 3 academic hours per academic year.
- As the demand for ADA services continues to grow, the ODS office would benefit from qualified/trained personnel to be present 40 hours per week to receive/respond to student questions, manage oversight of student employees, and manage exam proctoring.
- Several proposed programs in the 2017-2018 assessment cycle, such as the peer mentoring program and a weekly awareness campaign, could not be accomplished without jeopardizing the student experience. Additional personnel would allow staff the time needed to create and launch these programs.
- Additional student technology monies and strategic enhancement monies have purchased enlarged font keyboards, privacy screens for computer monitors to prevent cheating, added camera surveillance for the testing room, and scanners which will convert written text to spoken word. These items were received following the end of the spring 2018 semester.