

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Unit: Academic Success Center

Department: Academic Support and Auxiliary Services

Prepared by: Ashley Briggs

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Approved by: Jennifer Kelly

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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 **Academic Success Center** provides peer support, learning resources, and academic guidance to all students by building one-on-one relationships between students and tutors thereby ensuring students are academically prepared to earn a college degree. The Center's environment encourages good study habits and learning across all disciplines, especially the humanities and STEM subjects.

Methodology: The assessment process for the Academic Success Center is as follows:

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

(2) The unit head will analyze the data to determine whether the staff has met the measurable outcomes;

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed in an open forum with the staff and unit head's supervisor;

(4) Individual meetings will be held with staff;

(5) The unit head, with the assistance of staff, will determine if changes are required to meet the measurable outcomes or assessment tools for the next assessment period.

Service Outcome (SO):

SO 1. Provide peer tutoring by appointment with limited drop-in tutoring times to Natchitoches-based students as well as online via WebEx.

Measure 1.1 (Direct) At the end of the tutoring session, students will be given a paper survey to assess the appointment itself and the tutor. Respondents will be able to respond with strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree as well as other open-ended questions and rating of the experience of below average, average,

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and above average. The unit goal is for at least 75% of the students surveyed will respond with average or above average.

Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target Met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target Met.

Analysis: In AY 2016 – 2017, we met our goal. However, we had a very limited pool of results (two respondents out of 115 clients). In AY 2017 – 2018, we changed our delivery system for the surveys. This resulted in 93.85% (61 of 65) of students surveyed to respond with average or above average to the question on the student's opinion on both the value of the tutoring and their personal experience with the tutor. In-person clients were given surveys to complete at the end of the tutoring appointment with instructions to return the surveys to the director or graduate assistant on duty. Additionally, students who received services weekly (re-occurring appointments) were only survey at three points through the term: at the second appointment, midterm, and the week before finals. Surveys were recorded on a weekly basis. Additionally, students who received online services were sent a digital survey. However, only a very small percentage responded. Their answers were included in this analysis.

Decision: While time consuming, using a paper-based survey system ensures that we are able to collect data. Thus, this delivery method will continue to be our primary point of data collection. Additionally, those who receive online tutoring will be encouraged by the tutor to complete the digital survey.

Measure 1.2 (Direct) With assistance from the Academic Advising Services, students under an academic suspension appeal will be reminded via email about tutoring opportunities. The unit goal is for at least 50% of this cohort to use tutoring at least three times over the course of one term.

Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target not met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target not met.

Analysis: In both AY 2016 – 2017 and AY 2017 – 2018, we did not reach our target. In Spring 2017, a total of 34 students were re-admitted to the university under an academic suspension appeal. Of these students, seven students were required to attend tutoring. However, none of these students attended tutoring. Of the total 20 students from Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 required to attend tutoring or study hall, only one attended (5%).

Beginning in AY 2017 – 2018, those students who were readmitted from suspension were assigned a mentor, a graduate assistant from the Academic Success Center.

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These graduate students contacted these students via email between five to nine times through the term to remind each student of the terms of the Readmission from Suspension contract and services available to them.

Decision: We plan to continue our mentor program with contacts more frequently via email as well as phone. We feel that phone contacts may encourage the students to use tutoring and other services provided. Additionally, with more tutors on staff, we will be able to increase our online tutoring options for the students.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.

Information concerning tutoring services is sent out via Student Messenger, social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), and flyers. Additionally, those students who are considered “at-risk” such as the re-admit from suspension students, students on academic plans for financial aid, and those with low placement scores are contacted directly by the director concerning services. Additionally, the students who were re-admitted from suspension were assigned a mentor in the form of a graduate student in the Academic Success Center. These graduate students sent weekly contact emails to the students to urge them to use services.

Plan of action moving forward.

In the future, the plan is to increase tutoring services with the hiring of more undergraduate tutors. The focus will be on increasing services for writing across all disciplines, mathematics, and the sciences. These are the areas that are in the most demand as well as areas where students traditionally struggle. While some drop-in tutoring times will be available in lower level mathematics and chemistry, our student body tends to prefer the one-on-one model for individualized attention. Thus, by increasing staffing, we should be able to increase the options for students to schedule either face-to-face or online appointments. Additionally, information about online tutoring options will be made available via Student Messenger, social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), and directly to professors to share with their students.

SO 2. Provide faculty-led and peer-led workshops to contribute to the academic and personal success of all students.

Measure 2.1 (Direct) At the end of each workshop, participants will be surveyed to determine the quality of the workshop experience. Respondents will respond with strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree as well as answer open-ended questions. The goal is for at least 75% of the participants to provide an answer of average or above average on the quality of the workshop.

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Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target Not Met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target Met.

Analysis: In Spring 2017, surveys were administered digitally at the end of the term for the six workshops presented. This resulted in no responses. In AY 2017 – 2018, we administered surveys at the end of each workshop (a total of 20) to ensure that data would be collected. As a result, we found that 94% (115 of 122) of the respondents answered average or above average. As part of this survey, we asked what future workshops would be wanted and used this to base our future workshops. Additionally, in Spring 2018, we launched three online workshops which were recordings and videos of previously presented workshops for our online students. Those who “attended” the online workshop completed a digital survey as a way to mark attendance as well as provide feedback.

Decision: While time consuming, using a paper-based survey system ensures that we are able to collect data. Thus, this delivery method will continue to be our primary point of data collection. Also, in future terms, the number and scope of online workshops will be increased. We feel that this will encourage more students to “attend” these workshops.

Measure 2.2 (Direct) With assistance from the Academic Advising Services, students under an academic suspension appeal will be reminded via email about workshops. The unit goal is for at least 50% of this cohort to attend the workshops over the course of one term.

Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target Not Met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target Not Met.

Analysis: In AY 2016 – 2017, students who were required to attend workshops were notified individually of upcoming workshops by the director. Unfortunately, of the ten students required to attend workshops, only four of the students attended at least one workshop. Only two of the four attended two workshops. Thus, only 20% of the students attended the required workshops. In AY 2017 – 2018, students were not only contacted by the director but by an assigned mentor, a graduate assistant from the Academic Success Center, as well. Of the total 63 students from Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 required to attend two workshops, only 22 of the 63 attended at least one workshop, or rather 34.9%. Only 23.8% (15 of the 63) attended two workshops.

Information about the workshop schedule was available on the unit’s website as well as via Student Messenger and various social media platforms. Additionally, in Spring 2018,

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all students on Readmission from Suspension contracts were offered the opportunity to test the online workshops via Microsoft Stream with a direct link to the site before they were available to the general NSU population. It is unknown why students did not access the workshops that were available for viewing online.

Decision: We plan to continue our mentor program with contacts more frequently via email as well as phone. We feel that phone contacts may encourage the students to use tutoring and other services provided. Additionally, we will launch more online workshop options in AY 2018 – 2019. We believe that the expansion of online options in both scope and number will increase the number of attendees.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.

One of the major differences in AY 2016 – 2017 and AY 2017 – 2018 was the number of workshops presented with many more presented in the later academic year. Additionally, as part of the survey, students were asked to identify what workshops they would like to see in the future. Using these answers, we created workshops to meet these needs. Additionally, to make the workshops accessible to our non-Natchitoches students, we have begun the process of launching online workshops via Microsoft Stream. This simple to use platform is similar to Youtube in both viewing and maintenance. The advantage to this system is the control – most notably students must sign in with their university credentials.

Plan of action moving forward.

We plan to continue to use student feedback to grow our workshops while continuing to present previously created workshops. Additionally, we will grow our online workshop repository with a minimum of two new workshops each regular semester. A number of these workshops will be the work of graduate assistants and upper class undergraduate students. We also plan to continue to partner with academic departments to continue our series on major exploration as well as partnering with other units such as Career and Counseling Services to present on topics including stress management and résumé writing.

SO 3. The director will provide academic advising to specific student cohorts, including Liberal Arts majors and those admitted conditionally or by exception.

Measure 3.1 (Direct) At the end of each semester, students who receive advising services will be administered an academic advising survey to assess their advising experience (knowledge, helpfulness, accessibility, timeliness, etc.). Respondents will be able to respond with strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The unit goal is for at least 75% of the students surveyed will respond with agree or strongly agree in regard to the professionalism and availability of the advisor.

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Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target Met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target Met.

Analysis: In AY 2016 – 2017, the survey was sent at the end of the term by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources at the end of the spring 2017 term. The two students responded with agree or strongly agree to those question related to the professionalism and availability of the advisor. Thus, a 100% result.

In Fall 2017, the survey link was sent directly by the director in mid-November. Of the twenty students who responded, at least 16 of the twenty (80%) marked agree or strongly agree to the questions concerning the professionalism and availability of the advisor. The personalization of the email as well as the timing can be contributed to the higher number of responses. In comparison, the survey link for Spring 2018 was sent to nearly 200 students by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources after the end of the semester; only seven students responded. Of these seven, five (71.4%) answered agree or strongly agree to the questions concerning the professionalism and availability of the advisor.

Decision: In the future, the survey request should come directly from the director approximately three weeks prior to the ending of the term for the best results. It appears that a mixture of timing and the personalization of email results in a higher number of respondents.

Measure 3.2 (Indirect) At the end of each semester, a sample of conditionally admitted or exception students will complete an advising survey. One question will state, “My academic advisor is knowledgeable about academic policies and procedures, degree requirements, and campus resources.” Respondents will be able to respond with strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The unit goal is for at least 75% of the students surveyed will respond with agree or strongly agree.

Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target Met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target Met.

Analysis: In the AY 2016 – 2017, two students responded with agree or strongly agree to those question related to this question. Thus, a 100% result. In AY 2017 – 2018, a much higher number of students responded to the request. Of the total of 27 students who responded, 21 of the 27 (77.78%) marked agree or strongly agree to this question.

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Decision: The number of students admitted conditionally and by exception continues to grow each year. Thus, the decision was made that effective Fall 2018 these students would be advised by an advisor within their major. This will streamline the student experience and allow for individualized degree plans as the student completes his/her developmental math or English needs.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.

Each year, more and more students select Northwestern as their university of study. Thus, the number of students admitted conditionally and by exception grows as well. Due to the growing numbers, these students will no longer be advised in the Academic Success Center but will be assigned a departmental advisor. This will allow these students to grow close ties with those in their department as well as allow for individualized plans of study to best benefit them moving forward. The director will continue to work with those majoring in Liberal Arts.

Plan of action moving forward.

The director plans to create more individualized plan of studies for those majoring in Liberal Arts. Additionally, the director will devote more time contacting and working with this set of students while continuing to work with academically at-risk students.

SO 4. The director will create individualized academic plans for students who have filed an appeal to receive financial aid. The financial aid department determines placement for academic plan.

Measure 4.1. At the end of each semester, students on academic plans will be evaluated based on his/her progress for that term. The unit goal is for at least 75% of the students to pass and continue into the following term.

Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target Not Met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target Not Met.

Analysis: In AY 2016 – 2017, we only examined Spring 2017 data. Of the 321 students who received financial aid under an academic plan, a total of 224 students were successful in the spring 2017 semester. This means that a total of 69.78% of the students were successful.

In AY 2017 – 2018, we combined the two regular semesters. Between the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, a total of 939 students received financial aid while on an academic plan. Overall, a total of 56.12% of students (527 students) were successful while on the plan. When we look at the individual semesters, the Fall 2017 semester has a pass rate of 49.8% (258 students passed out of 518 students). The Spring 2018 semester has a

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pass rate of 63.9% (269 passed out of 421 students). The spring cohort of students is smaller than the fall – thus, students pass at a higher rate. Averaged together we find that only 56.12% pass and continue to the next semester (or graduate). In both academic years, students were contacted by the director via email to check in and provide support. Students were reminded of tutoring services available as well as other resources on campus (counseling, ODS, etc.).

Decision: The director will continue to make contact with students via email. Per the students' academic plan, each student is required to contact the director at both the midterm exam and final exam time. Not all students do so however. The director will also continue to encourage the students to contact their advisor to ensure that they are taking the proper classes for graduation.

Measure 4.2. At the end of each semester, the unit goal is for at least 10% of the students to either reach SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress set by the Department of Financial Aid) or graduation.

Finding:

AY 2016 – 2017: Target Not Met.

AY 2017 – 2018: Target Met.

Analysis: In AY 2016 – 2017, of the 321 students receiving financial aid under an academic plan, thirteen students graduated in spring 2017 and eight reached SAP (a total of 6.54%).

In AY 2017 – 2018, a total of 939 students received financial aid. Of those who were successful on the plan, 13% (70 total students) reach SAP or graduated while on the plan. A total of 51 students graduated under the academic plan (27 in Fall 2017 and 24 in Spring 2018) and a total of 19 reached SAP (10 in Fall 2017 and 9 in Spring 2018). Many of those who reached SAP or graduated in AY 2017 – 2018 had been on an academic plan for four semesters. Thus, as we continue this program, each semester more students will graduate and complete their plans.

Decision: The director will continue to contact the students throughout the semester to encourage the student and remind the student of available services. Additionally, the director will urge the students to be in contact with his/her advisor to ensure he/she is on track for graduation.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.

The number of students on academic plans changes as each semester passes. Many of the students are assigned term lengths of up to eight semesters while some are given lengths as short as one. Additionally, the number of students who are on the academic

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plan changes slightly due to resignations, graduations, and failure of the academic plan. Thus, it is difficult to pinpoint ways to assist these students in improving their chances of success.

Plan of action moving forward.

The director will continue to remain in contact with these students throughout the semester (typically at the 6-week, 11-week, and 16-week mark) via email. These points of contact remind the student of their unique academic plan's requirements while also urging them to use the resources available to them, such as tutoring, disability support, and counseling services. While the target was not met this academic year, the academic plans allow students who would not typically be allowed to receive aid the opportunity to receive financial aid and better their life circumstances. In the future, those with numerous failing grades at the midterm mark will also be contacted by phone to discuss options. Additionally, these students will be emailed with a copy to their assigned academic advisor to discuss the best academic course of action.