

Academic Cycle 2018-2019

Business Affairs

Division or Department: N/A

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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.

Business Affairs provides an array of responsive financial support services to students, faculty and staff including accounting, purchasing, grants, contracts, accounts payable and reporting. These services contribute to the enhancement and delivery of the University's primary mission of being a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research and service thereby preparing our students to become productive members of society, promoting economic development, and improving the quality of life in our region.

Purpose: Business Affairs is dedicated to providing personal, prompt and efficient service to all students and campus offices, support for the University's fiscal operations and accurate and timely financial reporting that is compliant with state and federal guidelines and regulations.

Methodology: The assessment process for Business Affairs' Department is as follows;

- (1) Data from administrative assessment tools is collected:
- (2) Data is analyzed by the Business Affairs' Department Chair and Coordinator to determine if the Department has met measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results of assessment tools are discussed with the Department's staff and staff is asked for input on improving future outcomes;
- (4) The Department Chair, Coordinator and Committee Members will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, make appropriate changes to improve future outcomes.

Service Outcome Measures:

SO 1. Provide increased online student bill view and payment process options while reducing the University's paper footprint.

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Service: Student Billing Services

Measure 1.1 (Direct – Usage)

The University has transitioned from paper to electronic bills for students beginning in Spring 2017. This service provides students with 24/7 access to current and historical billings plus payment history and payment processing from their computer and, in the future, their phone, through the MyNSU mobile app. Academic year 2017-2018 was the first full academic year of only electronic bills, and the target was a 30% usage rate. Our targets are 50% second year, 70% third year, 90% fourth year and 100% at the fifth year. The percentage usage of the online system is quantitatively tracked for future outcome measure adjustments if required.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: The target was met for 2018-2019. For academic year 2017-2018, the target was met with a 38% usage rate. Based on the analysis of the results, the Business Affairs Office actively marketed the electronic bill system to students through bill system email messages, web announcements, the MyNSU portal, and summer Freshman Connection sessions to help further enhance student electronic bill usage rates. As a result, in AY 2018-2019 54% of students billed viewed their electronic bills through the MyNSU portal during academic year thereby meeting the 50% second year target. The University's third year target is at least a 70% usage rate.

Plan of Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the AY 2018-2019 results in AY 2019-2020 Business Affairs will work with Information Systems to implement Cashnet on the MyNSU mobile app to further promote the viewing of electronic bills by students. This delivery method is highly used by this demographic.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Usage)

With the University transitioning from paper to electronic bills for students in Spring 2017, the number of paper bills being processed and mailed, which currently averages 6,000 paper bills per month, will be reduced annually with the goal of 0 paper bills per month once the student population becomes accustomed to viewing the online system. This could take up to 5 years. The target is to decrease paper bills by 20% per year until 0% paper bills is reached. The number of paper bills generated will be quantitatively tracked for future outcome measures.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: The target was met for 2018-2019. For 2017-2018, the target was met with an average of 4,836 electronic bills generated of which 38% of students viewed through the MyNSU portal and an average of 300 printed bills per month were generated and mailed to a select population of students. Based on the analysis of the AY 2017-2018 results, in AY 2018-2019 Business Affairs continued to minimize paper bill usage and to actively market the electronic bill system to students through bill system email messages, web

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announcements, MyNSU portal announcements, and summer Freshman Connection sessions while also working with the Office of Information Technology Services and the University's third-party online billing and payment provider to implement electronic bill view and payment capabilities using the MyNSU mobile application. As a result, in AY 2018-2019, the target was met with an average of 4,417 electronic bills being generated of which 54% of students viewed through the MyNSU portal and an average of 150 bills per month were generated and mailed to primarily dual enrolled high school students thereby meeting and exceeding the 20% second year reduction target. The University's third year target is another 20% reduction in printed bills.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results in AY 2019-2020 Business Affairs will coordinate efforts with the NSU Dual Enrollment program office in to better inform high school students, counselors and the students' parents about the online electronic bill and payment option thereby getting us closer to a 0% paper bill usage rate.

SO 2. The Business Affairs' Department will complete all fiscal reporting and audit requirements accurately in compliance with state and federal guidelines and regulations.

Service: Fiscal Operations

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – Compliance)

Every other year the University is audited by the Louisiana Office of the Legislative Auditor for compliance in the accuracy of the University's financial records, reporting, and compliance with all state and federal guidelines and regulations. The outcome of this SOM will be the number of audit findings related to financial activity received by the University. The target is zero (0) audit findings related to the financial activity.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: The target was met for fiscal year 2016-2017 as the University received zero (0) audit findings related to financial activity for fiscal year 2016-2017 according the Management Letter received in 2017-2018 from the Louisiana Office of the Legislative Auditor. The next audit rotation will be in fiscal year 2018-2019 with the management letter issued in fiscal year 2019-2020.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The Business Affairs Office will closely monitor the University's financial records to ensure zero (0) audit findings related to financial activity for the combined audit of fiscal year 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 that will be conducted during the fiscal year 2018-2019 audit rotation. Based on the results of the fiscal year 2016-2017 audit, the University will make efforts to educate the University community on the importance of compliance with fiscal policies. All changes to policies and procedures as well as reporting regulations will be disseminated via messenger as well as be updated in the online user manuals which are available to the University community. Effective communication has been found to be the most effective tool for maintaining financial compliance and zero (0) audit findings related to financial activity.

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SO 3. Adequate utilization, knowledge, and training of staff among each unit of the Business Affairs' Department to provide efficient and responsive service and action/conclusion to the student, parent, and campus inquiries and concerns.

Service: Student and Campus Support

Measure 3.1. (Indirect – Satisfaction / Attitude)

Business Affairs personnel are evaluated on their customer service through a Student Satisfaction Survey administered every other year by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources (OIEHR). The target is to be at or above Level 5-Somewhat Satisfied and above the National Four-Year Publics Satisfaction Ratings.

Finding: Target was Met.

Analysis: The target was met for 2018-2019. According to the 2017 Student Satisfaction Survey administered every other year by OIEHR, the University received a 5.80 satisfaction rating which was .55 above the National Four-Year Public satisfaction rating of 5.25. The satisfaction results were maintained, and there was a slight increase above the national average. Based on the 2017 results, Business Affairs continued to provide high quality customer care to students, parents, campus employees and customers through staff training and evaluation, streamlined processes, and continuous review of policies and procedures. As a result, in AY 2018-2019, the University received a 5.82 satisfaction rating which was .29 above the National Four-Year Public satisfaction rating of 5.53. The satisfaction results continue to be maintained and increased slightly over the 2017 survey results.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of 2019 survey, the University will provide high quality customer care to students, parents, campus employees and customers through staff training and evaluation, streamlined processes, and review of policies and procedures. Additionally, the University will actively market the electronic bill system to students through bill system email messages, web announcements, MyNSU announcements, and summer Freshman Orientation sessions. Furthermore, the University's Office of Information Technology will work with the University's third party online billing and payment provider to implement billing and payment services available through the MyNSU mobile application to further increase student electronic bill and payment usage rates, and Business Affairs will coordinate efforts with the NSU Dual Enrollment program office in 2019-2020 to better inform high school students, counselors and the students' parents about the online electronic bill and payment option. Since this survey is only performed every other year, the next year for analysis will be during academic year 2020-2021 during Spring Term 2021.

Measure 3.2 (Indirect – Satisfaction)

Satisfaction with billing policies and reasonableness will be evaluated on the Student Satisfaction Survey administered every other year by the Office of Institutional

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Effectiveness & Human Resources (OIEHR). The target is to be at or above Level 5-Somewhat Satisfied and above the National Four-Year Publics Satisfaction Ratings.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: The target was met for 2018-2019. According to the 2017 Student Satisfaction Survey administered by OIEHR, the University received a 5.53 satisfaction rating for “Billing Policies are Reasonable.” This rating was .65 above the National Four-Year Publics satisfaction rating of 4.88. Based on the 2017 results, Business Affairs provided high quality customer care to students, parents, campus employees and customers through staff training and evaluation, streamlined processes, and continuous review of policies and procedures. Additionally, the University began actively marketing the electronic bill system to students through bill system email messages, web announcements, MyNSU announcements, and summer Freshman Orientation sessions. As a result, in AY 2018-2019, the University received a 5.48 satisfaction rating which was .50 above the National Four-Year Public satisfaction rating of 4.98. The satisfaction results continue to be maintained.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of 2019 survey, the University will provide high quality customer care to students, parents, campus employees and customers through staff training and evaluation, streamlined processes, and review of policies and procedures. Additionally, the University will to actively market the electronic bill system to students through bill system email messages, web announcements, MyNSU announcements, and summer Freshman Orientation sessions. Furthermore, the University’s Office of Information Technology will work with the University’s third party online billing and payment provider to implement billing and payment services available through the MyNSU mobile application to further increase student electronic bill and payment usage rates, and Business Affairs will coordinate efforts with the NSU Dual Enrollment program office in 2019-2020 to better inform high school students, counselors and the students’ parents about the online electronic bill and payment option. Since this survey is only performed every other year, the next year for analysis will be during academic year 2020-2021 during Spring Term 2021.

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

- Actively marketed the electronic bill system to students through web announcements, the MyNSU portal, and summer Freshman Connection sessions to help enhance student electronic bill usage rates.
- Reduced printed and mailed bills to an average of 50% per month.
- Educated the University community on the importance of compliance with fiscal policies by disseminating via messenger all updates to University policies and procedures that affect University financial activities as well as updated online user manuals.
- Provided high quality customer care to students, parents, campus employees and customers through staff training and evaluation, streamlined processes, and continuous review of policies and procedures

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Plan of Action Moving Forward:

- Work with the University's third-party online billing and payment provider to implement billing and payment services available through the MyNSU mobile application to further increase student electronic bill and payment usage rates.
- Coordinate efforts with the NSU Dual Enrollment program office in 2019-2020 to better inform high school students, counselors and the students' parents about the online electronic bill and payment option to reduce the number of printed and mailed bills.
- Educate the University community on the importance of compliance with fiscal policies. All changes to policies and procedures as well as reporting regulations will be disseminated via messenger as well as be updated in the online user manuals which are available to the University community.
- Continue to provide reasonable, high quality billing services to students.