

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Office of Disability Support

Division or Department: The Student Experience

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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.

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 75% of students needing services/accommodations will

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be identified during summer programming and thus receive information about the services available to them.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 data, the target was changed from 100% to 75% due to not all students attending summer programming, thus are unable to be identified to receive information about services. In 2017 – 2018, 86 students of the 122 new students (70.5%) were identified prior to the first day of class. In the AY 2018-2019, only 51 of 104 (49%) were identified prior to the first day of classes. Based on this change, the goal was not met. The ODS has an open enrollment policy and thus saw an increase in faculty referrals during this assessment cycle

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the ODS will recommend that the NSU online application for admission, provide a field for students to identify as having accommodations in high school and/or transfer university and possibly needing services at NSU to drive continuous improvement.

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. The target is that 95% of students registering will have coordinated services within 24 hours.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In 2017-2018, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 data, 100% of new students had accommodation letters ready by the first day of classes, or within 24 hours of completed registration. Therefore, no changes were implemented. In 2018-2019, all 51 new students who registered in the summer had letters ready by the first day of classes. However, late registrants, those registering after the first day of classes, accounted for 79 additional students. Of those 79 students, 83% had letters available within 24 hours of completed registration paperwork. It should be noted, that accommodation letters availability does not equate to letters received by instructors.

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 ODS will prioritize the completion of accommodation letters in order to notify and coordinate services with faculty/staff within 24 hours to drive continuous improvement. With the prioritization of letters, it is expected the target will be met for 2019-2020.

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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.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met when 83.6% of students rated receiving services in a timely manner. Based on the analysis of these results the survey was delived in week 14 of the semester and a reminder in week 16 in order to increase the number of students completing the online survey. Based on these changes, the 2018-2019 target was met. A total number of 87 online evaluations were completed with responses indicating 92% of students did receive services in a timely manner.

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis for the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the Office of Disability Support staff will move the target to 90%. This change is needed to drive continuous improvement. This change in target ensures more students will be satisfied in the timeliness of individual support.

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.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met when 80.3% of students rated the effectiveness of accommodations as excellent. Based on the analysis of these results, it was recommended a peer mentoring program be created to increase effectiveness. However, this change was not made due to limited office personnel. In lieu of the peer mentoring program, an intern from the Social Work department and a Business Administration major were utilized as volunteers. Additinoally, some improvement with office flow and technology issues were addressed. Based on these changes, in 2018-2019 the data shows the target was met when 81.6% of students rated "excellent" in the effectiveness of accommodations and services provided which offset the disability and enhance academic success.

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Analysis of the 2018-2019 results 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. In AY 2019-2020 we will to attempt to create a peer mentoring program in a "students help students" mindset. This program will drive continuous improvements and will increase the effectiveness rating.

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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. 92% of students completing the survey utilized testing accommodations.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met when 86.5% of student utilized testing accommodations. Based on the analysis of 2017-2018 results, in 2018-2019 a change in office flow decreased the number of students lingering in the test proctoring office and students were able to walk-in and write an exam request without interrupting testing procedures. Based on these changes, in AY 2018-2019, the target was met when 92% of students completing the survey utilized testing accommodations. Overall, 1650 exams were proctored. The changes made allowed an increase of 16% from 2017-2018. In the past 2 assessment cycles, there has been an increase of 132% of exams proctored.

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the results in 2018-2019, it is recommended the ODS will need an additional entry-level position within ODS for 2019-2020. This would provide necessary manpower to manage testing accommodations in order to drive continuous improvement student satisfaction and office effectiveness.

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: In 2017-2018 the target was met when (1) 80% of students did schedule exams 48 hours in advance, (2) approximately 90% of instructors did respond to exam requests, (3) a >1% incidence of cheating, and (4) 79.5% of students rated the ODS staff effectiveness, knowledge, sensitivity and availability as excellent. Based on the analysis of the results from AY 17-18, office flow was changed, procedural changes in test request emails to instructors, and student communication increased. As a result of these changes, in 2018-2019, (1) approximately 80% of students did schedule exams 48 hours in advance. (2) Reminder emails were sent to all instructors 24 hours prior to exams. Approximately 90% of instructors sent the exam before exam time. If exams were delayed, it was noted an improvement in instructor response when department heads were included on the 3rd reminder email. (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

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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) 96.7 % of students surveyed reported a positive testing experience with ODS. Indicators (1), (2), and (3) remained consistent for the last 2 years (2017-2018 and 2018-2019). However, the changes implanted in 2018-2019 resulted in an increase in student experience rating. The rating changed from 79.5% reporting a positive testing experience in 2017-2018 to 96.7% reporting a positive testing experience in 2018-2019.

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Based the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the ODS will strengthen off-campus instructional sites faculty/staff training to better support ODS students. In addition, students taking the exams on off-campus instructional sites, need specific instruction on who to contact and where to go for testing. This change will drive continuous improvements.

Service Outcome 3: *The ODS office will be able to provide crisis planning and intervention in order to assess and meet the immediate needs of students.*

Measure 3.1: 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 not met.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met when 81% of students rated staff's knowledge of disabilities, accommodations, and technology as excellent. Based on the analysis of these results in 2018-2019, the ODS staff continued to educate students on resources available to them. Based on this change, in 2018-2019 the target was not met when 78.2% of students rated staff's knowledge of disabilities, accommodations and technology used as excellent. Of the 87 surveys completed in 2018-2019, 92% utilized the testing resources, 41% utilized the classroom accommodations, 20% utilized academic advising, and 16 % visited the office to discuss a class problem. Students have strong awareness of the resources but struggle with the application or utilization of them. 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: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, it is recommended in 2019-2020 that the office hire a full-time, trained staff to assist with awareness and support programming. Additional manpower to manage accommodations and programming will drive continuous improvement student satisfaction and office effectiveness

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Measure 3.2: 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. 80% of students demonstrated improved communication with instructors.

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was met when 86.5% of students demonstrated improved communication with instructors. Based on the analysis of these results, in 2018-2019 the ODS staff should have developed an in-depth needs assessment to determine the areas of high risk for students and their academic success. This change did not occur due to limited staff. In 2018-2019 the target was met when 80% of students surveyed reported consistently communicating with instructors and ODS staff to request accommodations, exams and advising/registration. While the target was met, it is clear that the ODS staff cannot be solely responsible for this measure. It should be noted there was a drop in the percentage of students demonstrated improved communication from the 2017-2018 cycle to the 2018-2019 cycle.

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the ODS staff will increase staff to student communication in order to increase student to faculty communication. This will be accomplished by implementing a weekly awareness campaign. This campaign will drive continuous improvement in student communication and knowledge of personal strengths.

Service Outcome 4: 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 4.1: Weekly awareness campaigns will run on student messenger/messenger, 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: In 2017-2018 the target was not met when exponential growth in the numbers and acuity of the students registering with ODS did not allow time for the creation of the campaign. The task of completing a weekly awareness campaign was delegated to student workers but not completed. Based on the analysis of these results from 2017-2018, it was expected to prioritize the weekly campaign in 2018-2019. However, the task of completing a weekly awareness campaign was not completed again due to limited staff.

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Action-Decision or Recommendations: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the ODS staff will prepare the weekly awareness campaign during summer 2019. The campaign will then run on the student messenger/messenger as educational awareness weekly during the regular semester. This change allows current staff to utilize summer as administrative preparation thus driving continuous improvement during regular semesters. It is recommended in 2019-2020, that the office hire an additional full-time, trained staff to assist with awareness and support programming. Additional manpower to manage accommodations and programming will further drive continuous improvement student satisfaction and office effectiveness

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

- ODS received budgeted money allocated for supplies and travel. The Director completed EMDR training/certification. This will assist with crisis intervention.
- Modifications to office flow has improved student experience as well as increased staff productivity.
- Mandatory ADA training was to be completed by all NSU faculty/staff. While the focus of the training was not exclusively student oriented, all attendees received valuable information regarding compliance. This raised campus wide awareness of services within the ODS.
- Exam proctoring continued to be strongly utilized accommodation for students, as demonstrated with 1,650 exams proctored during the AY 2018-2019 cycle.
- Our note-taking software program completed its first complete year in use at NSU. Students rated it 88% effective in receiving more satisfactory classroom notes.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

- 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. In the AY 2018-2019, the data indicates a decrease in the percentage of students reached in summer programming, which results in a higher need during the semester when ODS staff is already busy assisting other students. Therefore, the 24 hour turn-around time is not met.

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Additional staff would allow all students, registered or new, to receive appropriate accommodations in a timely manner.

- Several proposed programs in the AY 2018-2019 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.
- Identification of students needing accommodations on the online admissions application would encourage early registration with ODS as well as raise awareness of services that are available at NSU.
- During the AY 2019-2020, surveillance cameras will be placed in the testing room to deter cheating and increase student academic honesty.