

# Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

## Recruiting Office

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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 Student Experience** provides the University community with programs and services to support the academic mission of creating, disseminating and acquiring knowledge through teaching, research and service while empowering a diverse student population to achieve their highest educational potential. The Student Experience creates a stimulating and inclusive educational environment that is conducive to holistic personal growth. The commitment to students initiates prior to entrance, sustains throughout the college experience and continues beyond graduation. Enrollment Services provides equal access to education for potential students throughout the state and region and promotes economic stability and financial access to citizens. Student Affairs enhances student development and broadens intellectual, social, cultural, ethical, and occupational growth. The Student Experience works closely with faculty, staff, students, and the community to ensure graduates have the capability to promote economic development and improvements in the region.

**The Office of Enrollment Management** is a student-centered division that is future focused providing educational access to students in our region to improve the lives of our citizens. High School Relations, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Admissions work collaboratively with University faculty and staff to provide services and programing that are innovative and surpasses state and federal guidelines. Enrollment Management fulfills the university's mission and commitment to academic quality, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**The mission of Recruiting** is to increase the quantity and quality of all new student enrollment to Northwestern State University. New student enrollment includes all first-time freshmen, transfer students, and new graduate students. Increase in quality is determined by increased ACT/SAT composite scores, GPA and leadership skills. In support of this mission, the Recruiting staff provides prospective students with accurate information necessary to the admissions and enrollment processes, while presenting the public with a positive image of Northwestern State University. The Recruiting staff are always focusing on an increase in diversity and access to higher education for all populations.

**Methodology:** The assessment process includes:

(1) Data from weekly applicant and admission reports that compares applicants and

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admits from each parish and state to the application and admissions numbers from the previous year on the same date.

- (2) The Director, along with the Enrollment Manager, will analyze the data and determine whether the applicable outcomes are met.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be disseminated and discussed with the appropriate staff.
- (4) Weekly staff meetings will be held to discuss the progress.
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff and senior leadership, will determine and propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes

### Service Outcomes:

**SO 1.** Recruitment efforts will lead to an increase in student enrollment and be representative of the regional community.

**Measure.1.1** Student enrollment will increase by 8% per freshmen class. 6% is acceptable.

**Finding.** Target not met.

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was not met. Last year's growth, Fall 2016 (1459) to Fall 2017(1542) was 83 students or 5.6% The growth from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 of 1542 to 1562 is 20 students or 1.3%. Based on the analysis of these results and the increasing impact on infrastructure this year NSU anticipated housing shortfalls and strategically reached out to off campus housing options through private businesses. We met with and encouraged many off-campus housing options to accept financial aid and house students only. We continue to be burdened by an increasing demand for on campus housing. It is becoming increasingly difficult to increase on-campus students with limited bed space on campus. We are continuing to seek and or develop additional housing options.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 recruiting strategies for Fall 2019 will be to evaluate and increase the scholarship packaging and increased communications. Although we missed our target by 54.7% we realize that it will be a challenge to continue to increase until we have more housing available on our campus. Moving forward we anticipate having an increase of 6% entering freshman for the class of 2019, we are continuing to increase housing options off campus. We will have more beds across the street from campus as the Cottage will have more available units. In addition, the Frog Pond and Northwestern are working towards an agreement on housing students, this agreement is projected to finalize in spring 2019.

We are going to continue to address this issue with our housing partners both on campus and off to help ensure bed space for our traditional students wanting to take courses on the Natchitoches campus.

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**Measure 1.2.** New Graduate student enrollment will increase by 3% per academic year.

**Finding.** Target not met.

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was met. For the Fall 2018 new graduate enrollment decreased from 389 to 302 for a decrease of 87 students or 22.3%. Although we did not meet the target, we realize that our competitors have increased online offerings for this market. Ten years ago, we were the leader in online degree offerings, but many universities have increased their efforts in this market and eroded our market share for this market. Based on the analysis of these results in 2018-2019 we were able to add additional online sections and aggressively encouraged students to register for classes with an email communications plan as well as doctoral programs growing. It was also very helpful in this market that we added additional degree plans and emphasis areas.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 we will work to enhance the recruiting efforts for programs that are drawing new graduate students in Education and Nursing. NSU is adding a doctorate program in Education and is enhancing the doctorate program in Nursing. Form a graduate school recruiting council to develop collaborative efforts to recruit graduate students for all NSU post baccalaureate programs. Moving forward, we will continue to monitor the market for additional degree programs that students are wanting based on market research. We will also continue to try to eliminate paperwork and useless processes and procedures for these students where possible.

**Measure 1.3.** The student body will be representative of university's regions in terms of diversity.

**Finding.** Target met.

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was met. In the fall of 2017, we enrolled students from 60 of the 65 parishes in the state of Louisiana, matching the 2017 numbers and missing our regional goal. In the fall of 2018, we enrolled 60 of the 65 parishes. In addition, NSU recruited students from out of state representing 22(16 in 2017) states and several countries. International student increased from 129(2017) students to students for an increase of 10%. Although our out of state enrollment missed our target and decreased from 93 to 83 students. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2018 results, we found that many students were coded as out of state students IF they were home schooled or from an unknown high school in Louisiana for fall 2017 therefore, we are not positive this was a clean comparison. There were lots of new schools created in Louisiana last year that were coded as unknown out of state. We have strategically gone through all of the new schools and coded them as in-state within their parish or region. In addition, we did a study of ethnic breakdown of NSU verses the state of LA and found our level of diversity (non-white) exceeded the state of LA's level of diversity by approximately 2%.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the

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university will expand the recruiting region by increasing ACT purchased names in a larger area. We will also increase the travel in the East Texas region by sending 3 recruiters during the aggressive college fair schedule in Dallas, Houston and the East Texas region to cover all college fairs. We will also expand into Austin and San Antonio. We will also implement an action plan to recruit out of state children of alumni. We will reach out to this market through the alumni columns and with good contact information in the alumni affairs database targeting alumni that graduated from NSU 1985-2000.

### **SO 2. Students who participate in NSide View Events, personalized campus tours on campus will learn the steps necessary in the admissions process.**

**Measure 2.1.** Ninety percent (90%) of students who participate in Nside View and campus tours will respond these events are very helpful in understanding the admissions process by responding, “strongly agree’ on their student survey. Students were able to select from 5 responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

**Finding.** Target met

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was met. In the first test group on the campus tour surveys for the fall of 2018 seniors, overall stated that 80% strongly agreed the events were helpful and 95.8% Agreed or strongly agreed the event was helpful. August of 2018 rated the experience as 87.5% helpful. In the September test group that number increased to 89.4. All groups surveyed in October, November, December and January rated the experience as 100% helpful. (will add in 2019) In February and March that number dropped to 97.5%. (will be evaluated spring 2019) For the recruiting receptions all were ranked an average of 85% helpful. The tour surveys indicated that those that toured in the early part of the recruiting cycle of August and September were less satisfied than those that toured in later part of the recruiting cycle. For the receptions those less satisfied of 75% were those that were very large receptions in Shreveport, Lafayette and Natchitoches. (this will be evaluated in the spring 2019)

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 tour guides will be given additional training. We will bring in our recruiting ambassadors 3 days prior to the actual Move in day for the university. This will allow time for extensive training as opposed to just the day before move-in day. For the recruiting receptions, we will work to increase seating at the 3 receptions with the 75% rating.

**Measure 2.2.** Ninety percent (90%) of students who participate in Nside View Events campus tours & recruiting receptions will respond these events are very helpful in understanding the Financial Aid process and associated requirements by responding “strongly agree’ on their student survey. Participants were given 5 choices on the measurement from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

**Finding.** Target met

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was met. For the fall 2018 group, an average of 96.4% of students and parents filling out the survey indicated that their tour

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guide was knowledgeable regarding the admissions and financial aid process. This question was reworded in this year's evaluation cycle to include questions specific to financial aid and the admissions process. In previous measurements the surveys did not address these specific areas. The evaluations moving forward will include previously mentioned data. For 2019.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 full time staff members will meet privately with each tour and their family to discuss more specific information about the information the student needs and questions they were not able to have answered. Our goal for next year will be to have 100% understanding rate for students and parents that evaluate the process.

### **SO 3. Enrollment of Transfer students will increase each year.**

**Measure 3.1.** Transfer student enrollment will increase by 2% each year.

**Finding.** Target Not Met.

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of these results in 2018-2019 we implemented an expansion of the territory recruited with more college transfer fair visits and private visits. In fall of 2018 enrollment decreased by 125 or 17.1%. This was a measure of the total number of transfer students and not just those enrolling for the fall semester as new transfer students. As more students in Louisiana are pushed to the junior and community college, the university is developing more crosswalk agreements. When the state of Louisiana moved to selective admissions in 2005 and increased standards again in 2010, it forced more students to the community college system in Louisiana. This market continues to increase because of this influx of students as well as more non-traditional students wanting to start college.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 we will continue to increase our recruiting efforts by expanding our territory and increase the number of junior and community college agreements across our state and out of state. We will increase our goal for next year accordingly. We hope to enroll at a minimum of 700 transfer students for the fall of 2019.

### **SO 4. Entering freshmen will have scores and grade point averages that are above the state average and have cited leadership skills.**

**Measure 4.1.** Freshmen ACT average for fall 2018 is 21.67. We will increase the average ACT for fall 2019 to 22.5. Acceptable targets are 22 ACT composite averages.

**Finding.** Target not met.

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of these results in 2018-2019 we implemented an expansion of ACT names purchased and aggressively reworked scholarship packaging. The average ACT for fall 2018 decreased by 0.41 from 22.08 (2017) to 21.67. We will continue to review other university scholarship scales to be sure ours is very competitive and focuses on students with higher GPAs.

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**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 to meet our 22 ACT goal, we will re-work and analyze our scholarship packaging to aggressively increase the higher ACT students to be more competitive with other universities. In addition, we will continually work to increase the number of students attending the Louisiana Scholars' College at Northwestern State. We will include the number of entering freshman in the Louisiana Scholars' College as a measure in our next plan.

**Measure 4.2.** Ten percent (10%) of entering freshmen will have documented leadership skills as part of their application process for programs like the Presidential Leadership program and the student ambassador program.

**Finding.** Target not met.

**Analysis.** In 2017-2018 the target was met. Based on the analysis of these results in 2018-2019 we implemented an aggressive outreach from recruiters to identify these leaders. Fall 2018, we offered 112 ambassador and leadership scholarships. Our first-time freshman numbers increased by 20 students, the 2018 percentage was a decrease of 9.2%, making the target just out of reach. For fall 2017, we offered a lower amount of ambassador and leadership scholarships of about 110 and we had an increase in the number of freshmen to 1542 which lowered our percentage to 7% of the freshman class having cited leadership skills. With the increase in the number of first-time freshmen to the university, we will re-evaluate our percentages to match the number of incoming students. We will instead use the actual number of first time/full time students which was 1288 and not the full 1542 entering freshman. That is a better measure since those are the targeted students for this measure.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 moving forward, we will re-evaluate the wording of this measure to include the number of entering freshman entering the Louisiana Scholars' College. Although we missed our target of 10% of the class, we are re-working the measure to be 10% of the entering freshman class that is first time/full time and those with high school graduation years of 2019

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

- NSU strategically reached out to off campus housing options through private businesses. We encouraged many off-campus housing options to accept financial aid and house students only. NSU worked with on campus housing provider to develop strategies which made more beds available to new students.
- This year we were able to add additional online sections and aggressively encouraged students to register for classes with an email communications plan. It was also very helpful in this market that we added additional degree plans and emphasis areas.
- Instituted four surveys to better identify concerns. As a result, we will bring in our

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recruiting ambassadors 3 days prior to the actual Move in day for the university.

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This will allow time for extensive training as opposed to just the day before move-in day.

- Reworded questions in this year's evaluation cycle to include questions specific to financial aid and the admissions process. In previous measurements the surveys did not address these specific areas.
- Used the University Budget Enhancement request process to gain additional recruiting material.
- We added an unclassified Office coordinator with a 4-year degree to run the day to day operation in the recruiting office to coordinate the campus tours and entitled the position as an in-house recruiter.
- As more students in Louisiana are pushed to the junior and community college, the university is developing more crosswalk agreements.
- We made many improvements to our assessment pieces of each of our recruiting events and initiatives although we need to revise some of the wording in a few of our assessments that might have confused students and parents.

### **Plan of action moving forward.**

In addition to the action plans described above, we will focus more on the likelihood of enrollment in addition to the understanding of processes and procedures. In the recruiting process the time, effort and resources spent on each of our recruiting events should reflect on the enrollment rates. Office staff will attend some additional Strategic enrollment national conferences with the purpose of gathering important information and ideas for communication in the future in the college student market. We are revamping our student ambassador training entirely to have better recruiting tours. Lastly, we are adding additional training on data entry before the recruiting season begins.