

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Student Support Services

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 Student Experience Mission Statement:

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 for education to 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.

Student Affairs Mission:

The Division of Student Affairs prepares students to be productive members of society and to improve the quality of life of students. Student Affairs provides support services in career development and placement, advocacy and accountability, academic support, mental and physical health, disability accommodations, student activities and organizations, student union life, and opportunities in leadership, community service, and programs for new students. Through hands on involvement in programs and services, Student Affairs promotes personal development in a student-centered environment, which delivers innovative practices in an environment of respect. Student Affairs encourages integrity, diversity and collaboration with all members of the university community.

Student Support Services:

TRIO Student Support Services (TRIO SSS) supports students who are first-generation, modest income, or students with disabilities who have potential to meet the challenges of higher education by strengthening and developing their academic and self-management skills. The

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

program's goal is to graduate participants with a baccalaureate degree within four to six years. TRIO Student Support Services provides resources to enhance students' academic success, financial literacy, and personal and social skills in support of the University's mission to develop productive members of society.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) will be collected and returned to the director;
- (2) The director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes were met;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required to determine actions required;
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and where needed, service changes.
- (6) The director, along with the staff, will use quantitative data to formulate an Annual Performance Report for the US Department of Education to determine if SLOs have been achieved, and for modifying, as needed, services offered by TRIO SSS Department.

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. The TRIO Student Support Services **Peer Mentoring Program (PMP)** will promote student success by helping first year students become socially and academically integrated into the NSU community. Mentees will be recruited from the three sections of ACSK1010 taught by TRIO SSS Instructors. Junior/Senior TRIO SSS Project participants will serve as mentors.

Measure 1.1 Mentors will help mentees access the necessary resources, such as tutoring, academic advising, study groups, and meeting with instructors, to increase academic achievement. Success will be defined as 1) 82% or more mentee's will persist from one academic year to the next; and 2) 80% of mentees will successfully complete their first year in college with a GPA of 2.0 or above.

Findings:

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| AY 2018-2019: Target 1 was Met. | 85% (28/33) of mentees persisted from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019. (this was determined by students registered for fall '19 classes) |
| AY 2018-2019: Target 2 was Not Met. | 73% (23/33) of mentees enrolled in the PMP completed their first year at NSU with at least a 2.0 or above. |

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the target was not met. Unlike the PMP for AY 2017-2018

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

where peer mentors were not recruited until mid-September and then trained in late September, in AY 2018-19 mentors were recruited during the summer months and formally trained before classes began. Mentors and Mentees were selected and paired before the Fall 2018 semester began.

Based upon recommendations from the last assessment cycle, and in the hope of forming a better connection between mentor/mentee, mentors and mentees were matched based upon majors and demographic information. At the end of the academic year, 14 of the 16 mentors remained active and engaged with mentees, while 33 of the 40 mentees remained in the program and engaged. Seven of the initial mentees withdrew from the ACSK 1010 class and opted out of the TRIO SSS Program.

At the beginning of the second semester, mentees were required to attend a meeting to discuss the importance of being actively engaged in the mentoring program and the benefits of having a mentor. The mentors met earlier in the semester to discuss effective ways to engage their mentees and the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship.

Based on the analysis of the AY 2017-18 assessment cycle results, more activities were planned throughout the semester to allow the mentors and mentees to form a quicker and stronger bond. Several off-campus trips were planned, with one being an overnight trip. Additionally, mentors were able to establish a relationship with their mentees at the very beginning of the academic year and to strengthen that bond throughout the year. Mentors and mentees participated in several *Demon Days* activities together during the first two months of the semester. By attending fun and informational activities, it made it easier for mentees to hold conversations with their mentors, and thus opening the door for mentors to discuss academic concerns with mentees and to direct them to the available campus resources to help them overcome academic and/or personal challenges. All of this played a part in meeting target 1 which resulted in 85% of the mentees persisting from AY 2018-2019 to AY 2019-2020. This, however, was not enough to meet the goal of at least 80% ending the academic year with at least a 2.0 GPA.

Action: The director and the coordinator of the PMP program have met and based upon the analysis of the AY 2018-2019 results, in AY 2019-2020 the following decisions/modifications will be made to help more mentees stay in good academic standing and persist from one academic year to the next.

- Since most mentor/mentees were matched by major, a weekly study group/session will be established. Both mentor and mentees will attend said sessions. The study group will either be led by the mentor or by a TRIO SSS tutor. This will accomplish two things: 1) it will be a way to monitor mentee's academic progress and provide regular interventions, if needed. 2) build cohesiveness and a stronger relationship of mutual trust and respect between mentor and mentees with the goal of the mentees returning in the fall and completing their degree program.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Measure 1.2 Through relationship building with mentors, one-on-one and group meetings/activities, 90% of mentees will have an enhanced ability to cope with the challenges of college life (non-cognitive attributes) and will become comfortable in expressing questions and concerns in a safe environment. Pre and Post-test, using the *ACT Engage* will measure mentee's motivation, social engagement, and self-regulation. Success will be defined as 90% of mentees showing improvement based upon ACT Engage post-test.

Findings:

AY 2017-2018:	Target Not Met	Had not purchased assessments
AY 2018-2019:	Target Met	100% (33/33) of mentees showed improvement based upon LASSI post-test scores.

Analysis:

In AY 2017-2018 the target was not met because the ACT Engage was not purchased, because it was determined that it was not the best assessment for the type of information that was being sought, plus it was very costly. Instead, the LASSI (Learning And Study Strategies Inventory) was purchased prior to the beginning of the AY 2018-2019 academic year and administered to all mentees during the third week of the semester. The LASSI measures ten areas: anxiety, attitude, concentration, information processing, motivation, selecting main ideas, self-testing, test strategies, time management, and using academic resources.

In accordance with the plan of action established in AY 2017-2018, all mentees were given the LASSI during the third week of the semester. The results of the LASSI were made known to the mentees and mentors and that information was used to plan and facilitate mentor/mentee meetings, both in one-on-one meetings and in group settings. TRIO SSS staff conducted several one-on-one meetings with mentees and used the results to provide educational and social interventions. As a result, in AY 2018-2019 all mentees took the LASSI post-test at the end of the academic year (spring semester), with 100% of the students showing improvements in several areas.

Recommendation/Action: Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results the PMP Coordinator, Director, TRIO SSS Staff, and mentors saw an increase in LASSI scores, however the increase in scores was not as high as desired. Therefore, in AY 2019-2020 more activities and programs that will assist mentees in becoming more motivated, socially engaged and self-regulated, must be developed and offered. One such activity will be to have TRIO SSS PMP mentees check into the residence halls a couple of days prior to the beginning of the semester ahead of regular registrants. Mentees would participate in a one-day workshop designed to help them realize the relevancy of the mentoring program and begin the process of connecting with their mentor. The LASSI would be administered during the workshop rather than three weeks into the semester which would allow TRIO SSS staff to begin the evaluation and intervention process much earlier.

The PMP Coordinator, along with the TRIO SSS staff will research more innovative ways

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

to connect with our Generation Z mentees. Studies have shown that this generation prefers to be along, they have an affinity for texting, messaging on mobile apps or online platforms over in-person, face-to-face communication. Prior to the start of AY 2019-2020, explainer videos, and other forms of visualization will be developed as a means of connecting, educating, and enhancing mentees coping abilities.

Measure 1.3 Students participating in the TRIO SSS Peer Mentoring Program will have a high level of socialization, as evidenced by their participation in campus activities and/or student organizations. Questionnaires on campus involvement, OrgSync, as well as reports from mentors, and meetings with TRIO SSS Advisors will be utilized to determine if target is met. Success will be defined as 90% of mentees regularly participating in campus activities and/or joining at least one student organization.

Findings: Target Not Met. Only 88% (29/33) mentees regularly attended student/campus activities; and only 36% (12/33) joined a student organization.

Analysis: In AY 2017-2018 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AY 2017-2018 results, a new plan of action was developed which among other things, included mentors and mentees selecting several activities and/or events and attending these selected activities together. Although mentees did attend more activities in AY 2018-2019 than in AY 2017-2018, the number that joined a student organization was low.

Data collected from the SSS Peer Mentoring Program satisfaction/evaluation survey showed that only 12 out of the 33 mentees or 36% were motivated enough to join a student organization. Data showed that 29 out of 33 or 88% regularly attended student/campus activities.

Action: Based on the analysis of the AY 2018-2019 results, in AY 2019-2020, the PMP Coordinator will work with mentors and TRIO SSS staff to provide more activities for mentors and mentees. Since research indicates that this Generation Z student often prefers information delivered via online platforms, mentors, PMP Coordinator and TRIO SSS Staff will devise innovative ways to digitally connect mentors and mentees and to have the delivery platform for some activities online. Additionally, a new component will be added to the grading rubric for the TRIO SSS ACSK1010 course curriculum. It will be required for each class participant to investigate three student organizations of interest. Bonus/extra credit will be given to those student mentees that join a student organization.

Comprehensive Summary of Key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results:

- Identified mentors prior to the beginning of the semester to ensure that mentors were in place, trained and ready to go by the first week of classes.
- Improved strategy for pairing mentees with mentors was implemented. The new method was based upon majors and other demographic information.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

- The PMP coordinator teamed with TRIO SSS Staff to develop and provide more activities for mentees and mentors.
- Implemented a pre and post-test for mentees. A comprehensive assessment, the LASSI, was procured to measure motivation, social engagement, and self-regulation. The assessment was administered during the first month of the assessment year. A post-test was administered prior to the end of the assessment year.
- A full spectrum of resources was made available to mentees to promote student success. Resources included calculators, textbooks, scantrons, tutoring services, workshops, and one-on-one assistance.
- Mentors were paid a salary which proved invaluable in retention, engagement, and persistence.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

TRIO SSS Staff will work with mentees to develop an academic plan which will be monitored and modified as necessary. This plan will be used throughout the academic year to track grades and to keep students on track towards graduation.

In AY 2018-2019, mentors were required to attend a retreat prior to the beginning of the semester. In AY 2019-2020, both mentors and mentees will be required to attend a retreat prior to the beginning of the academic year. Mentees will be offered the opportunity to live in a Living Learning Community in the resident hall. The TRIO SSS PMP will offer a section of University 1000 (UNIV1000) for TRIO SSS mentees/participants.

To promote social integration into the campus student life, a component will be added to the ACSI1010 class in AY 2019-2020: all class registrants will be required to investigate three student organizations and will be given bonus points if they join a student organization.

Study groups/sessions will be held on a weekly basis for mentees and mentors, along with a TRIO SSS tutor, if needed.

Information and trainings will be delivered not only face-to-face, but via online platforms.

Mentees will participate in a one-day workshop designed to help them realize the relevancy of the mentoring program and begin the process of connecting with their mentor. The LASSI will be administered during the workshop rather than three weeks into the semester which will allow TRIO SSS staff to begin the evaluation and intervention process much earlier.

The TRIO SSS PMP will collaborate with the First Year Experience (FYE) office to help promote more activities for participants. Since most students in the program are first-generation college students, a campus wide event will be planned for the annual First-Generation College Celebration! on November 8, 2019.