

# AC 2019-2020 Assessment

## Unified Public Safety Administration Program

**College: Arts and Sciences**

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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.

**College of Arts and Sciences Mission.** The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

**Department of Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences.** The Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences Department at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, history, public safety, law, and public service. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service the department produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and a driving force in the economic development and improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. The department delivers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and History and Bachelor of Science degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration with concentrations in Law Enforcement

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Administration, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, Public Facilities Management, Nuclear Surety and Geo-Measurement. Certificate programs in Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies and Public Policy and Administration are also available in addition to a Pre-law and Paralegal Studies concentration and minor. The department hosts the Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Resource Management with concentrations in Human Resource Management, Industrial Technology-Manufacturing Management, Public Safety Management, Culinary Science, Environmental Science, Archaeology and Pre-law and Paralegal Studies. New admissions to this degree have been suspended. The department also delivers a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security, and a Post Masters certificate in Global Security and Intelligence.

**Unified Public Safety Administration Mission Statement:** Develop students in gaining an appreciation for the complexities of homeland security organizations, leadership, policies, ethics, and challenges, through the review of pertinent literature, critical and synthetic thinking, research, and reflective analysis and assessment. The Bachelor degree in Unified Public Safety Administration is unique in that it teaches students how to develop plausible resolutions to the risks and threats currently challenging emergency response personnel through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences preparing graduates for life and career success in this expanding occupational field of emergency management in the public and private sectors. Courses are designed with the present and future administrator or leader in mind having direct application to the challenges of emergency management.

**Purpose (optional):** The Unified Public Safety Administration program will prepare students for entry positions and enhancement of positions currently held to leadership positions of greater responsibility in government and the private sector with the ability to comprehend, influence, create and respond to government public safety policies from national, state and local levels in this region. It will also prepare interested students for the pursuit of further / additional advanced degrees in Homeland Security, Political Science or Strategic Leadership, at this or other institutions.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the UPSA program is as follows:

1. Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected by the program coordinator.
2. The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine if students have met measurable outcomes.
3. Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty and department head.

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4. Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core and supporting courses if required (show cause).
5. The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the UPSA Advisory Committee and department head, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

**SLO 1.** First and second year students will be able to describe the historical issues, evolution and context of early America domestic homeland security challenges hazards risks and resources in present public safety preparedness and responses.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 2400: Introduction to Corporate and Municipal Emergency Management

UPSA 2550: Hazards Risk Assessment Methods

UPSA 2700: Planning and Decision Making in Public Organizations

### Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, students enrolled in UPSA 2400, UPSA 2550 and UPSA 2700, all required courses for UPSA students, will complete course assignments designed to evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, challenges and applications of emergency management principles. 75% of enrolled students will be able to describe a basic understanding by scoring 70% or higher on the assignments of the course. Weekly worksheets from the three courses will be used in this determination. Risk Assessment Exercises from UPSA 2550 and Weekly Scenario Exercises from UPSA 2700 are used to measure application of emergency management principles using the same metric.

**Findings:** Target met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the results of AC 2018-2019, it was determined to apply a statistical treatment at the conclusion of this assessment cycle to neutralize skewing influences from students not submitting assignments. Clarification of instructions and grading rubric application were applied.

UPSA 2700 was not offered during this assessment period.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results and to drive continuous improvement in student learning, the following changes were implemented in AC 2019-2020 for UPSA 4700: 1) a new textbook with new assignments was used; 2) more stringent application and interpretation of grading metric was employed, in preparatory

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status for transition to the university rubric for the QEP project; 3) new and significantly revised course exercises were used (the exercises reflected changes in event security practices, the use of new technologies, and changes in law); 4) new readings allowed for side-by-side analysis and comparison literary and governmental critical event assessments; 5) a reflection component and element was added to the course as per the students' capstone experience, and rubric based evaluation of all assignments was implemented. The rubric applied requires external readings for all assignments.

During AC 2019-2020 assessment, two of the courses used in this measure were offered, UPSA 2400 and UPSA 4700. Seventy-eight percent (77%, 10 of 13) of enrolled students in UPSA 2400 were able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on semester assignments. All enrolled students in UPSA 4700 were able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) average for the course. This result is not surprising given the capstone standing of the course.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 findings, Measure 1.1 activities, exercises, and current writing project requirements required during the course are appropriate to evaluate student knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of the courses. To continue the pattern of continuous improvement, the faculty will continue to use the current SLO measure in AC 2020-2021, however a statistical treatment will be applied only if necessary, during assessment evaluation at the conclusion of this period to neutralize skewing influences from students not submitting assignments. During this reporting period, no treatment was necessary, giving the high level of participation by students in the evaluated courses. In courses applied to this measure, students will use weekly reflection exercises in which they are challenged with developing and explaining personal opinions.

### **Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)**

Students will demonstrate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a series of scenario-driven exercises in which they are required to analyze and develop a response to municipal management situations. In this response, they must create a plan that contains relevant, justifiable, feasible, and actionable recommendations based on the information presented. 70% of the students will score 8 or higher on the Critical Thinking – Problem Solving Rubric

**Findings:** Target met.

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**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. One hundred percent (100%) of students completing the capstone project scored above eight (8) as specified in the objective. One hundred percent (100%) of enrolled UPSA 4700 students completing the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards.

To drive continuous improvement in student learning, in AC 2019-2020, the faculty expanded the elements in exercises and assignments by incorporating university-wide defined standards for the QEP project. Changes from the previous year were first used this year, 2019-2020 with UPSA 4700 and UPSA 4480 becoming the capstone experience for the UPSA degree. As a result, in the first half of AC 2019-2020, 100% of students completing the capstone project scored above eight as specified in the objective. One hundred percent (100%) of enrolled UPSA 4700 students completing the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards. Current and new exercises are appropriate devices to provide students with the opportunity to display understanding of foundational concepts and theories of public safety and emergency management response to a complex fictional scenario involving multiple theoretical and pragmatic considerations. Mandatory citation and rubric evaluation of all assignments have expanded the breadth of materials encountered by students in the course.

In AC 2019-20 UPSA 4700 with its redesigned format with a textbook used for the third new and updated exercises and newly incorporated reflections have enhanced this course. Citation requirements and rubric evaluation of all exercises have forced the expansion of research performed by students throughout the course.

UPSA 4480 was piloted involving greater documented community partner interaction, reflection exercises and Research Day presentations. All students participated in presentations in a public setting or to faculty, although Research Day and the ULS Academic Summit were postponed. Interactions with community partners were expanded, despite COVID Pandemic restrictions.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, IN 2020-2021 Measure 1.2 research and writing project requirements are will be refined to demonstrate critical thinking skills in analysis and response preparation to municipal management situations. This concept remains critical and forms a foundational tenet of emergency management philosophy. Review and refinement of these courses will continue.

**SLO 2.** Senior students will know the role and functions of the various agencies, laws, standards, risks, threats, tasks and assignments in a comprehensive capstone exercise developed in conjunction with a community partner.

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Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.  
UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar  
UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

### **Measure: 2.1. (Direct – knowledge)**

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from the required courses above will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members through the University of Louisiana Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, using a standardized research paper rubric (attached) or a formal presentation to UPSA faculty. The papers and/or projects will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate basic knowledge of fundamental principles of emergency management, laws, practices, and procedures. At least 80% of students sampled will score 75% or higher on the evaluation.

**Findings:** Target met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. Based on analysis of the AC 2018-19 period and with implementation of the QEP for the degree, a course redesign was evaluated with a new textbook (2<sup>nd</sup> semester) and newly created or updated exercises for UPSA 4700 from the previous course offering. The expansion of course focused and covered in UPSA 4700 an all hazards proprietary risk course, expanding beyond the current security for a specific site and subject orientation was made.

During the assessment period (AC 2019-2020), from offerings of UPSA 4480, Senior Seminar projects were completed and, in all cases, demonstrated a satisfactory measure of principles of emergency management, applicable law, recognized practices, and procedures. All students (100%) met the 75% threshold of this standard. Senior seminar projects employ a progressive problem-solving analysis strategy, performed in conjunction with a community partner. From UPSA 4700 final grades satisfactorily demonstrated student understanding of recognized practices of municipal event security management was evident.

In AC 2019-20. A rubric was established and used for presentations, capable and allowing consistency in evaluation of presentations made by students in the multiple options of permitted forums.

The success of meeting the target objective is not surprising, given the capstone nature of these courses. Both courses were converted from compressed to full term courses. This conversion led to less student stress and a more time for student development of exercises and a more complete treatment and understand of concepts and objectives.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive continuous student learning improvement, in AC 2020-2021 faculty will implement the following changes. The senior seminar course will continue its requirement of a formal

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presentation at either ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, another appropriate professional conference, or to a panel of faculty. To allow for more complex exercises and assessments, both classes will be converted from eight- to sixteen-week periods of instruction with success.

### **Measure: 2.2. (Indirect – Attitude)**

At the end of the term students will be administered a survey asking: "In my public safety administration courses I was provided a collegiate level of understanding of homeland security policy, strategy, threat assessment and trends, associated law and procedures, and how the various agencies interact across the spectrum of operations." At least 85% of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Interviews conducted as "exit interviews" with all graduating students found satisfaction with the program, and in many cases testimonials to the impact of the advisor, curriculum and program were provided.

**Findings:** Target met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. Exit interviews of graduating seniors were conducted by the program coordinator. In all instances, students expressed satisfaction and gratitude for the NSU experience and satisfaction with their degree. No negative, critical, or offerings of recommendations for improvement were provided. This result is consistent with that from the previous year. A problem-solving rubric was implemented in the course. As a result, in AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive continuous student learning improvements, the following will be implemented in AC 2020-2021. The time in which students apply for graduation and contact their advisor as required by the Registrar's Office, will be used to perform the Exit Interview.

Also, to develop critical thought practices earlier in the curriculum and to measure student critical thought practices more accurately, a problem-solving rubric will be implemented into the scenario exercises of UPSA 2700 when the course is next offered. Consistent with new standards for the UPSA program, all assignments will require APA style and citation. Requiring APA style and citation will result in focused responses, increased clarity that are easily read and understand.

**SLO 3.** Senior students will demonstrate that they understand the current policies and procedures to mitigate, prevent and respond to a disaster, analyze and implement regimens for safety and risk reduction, the ethics of care and compassionate leadership, and the mechanisms for measuring all-hazards threat and recovery.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

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UPSA 3700: Disaster Response Operations and Management  
UPSA 4400: Legal Issues in Emergency Management  
UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar  
UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

### Measure 3.1. (Indirect – Knowledge / Attitude)

During the final semester of the senior year, the department will sample students with a performance survey. One question on this survey will state: "The Unified Public Safety Administration program at NSU has enabled me to conduct risk assessments, implement mitigations measures, navigate leadership challenges, and know the foundational concepts of the all-hazards approach to the emergency management process." Respondents will be able to respond with strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. At least 85% of students will respond that they agree or strongly agree with the statement.

**Findings:** Target met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. During this assessment period (AC 2019-2020), course offerings of UPSA 3700, 4480, and 4700 were offered. Results from available data found successful efforts of the course based on grades and student evaluations and fulfillment of university QEP requirements. Exit interviews of graduates were conducted. These interviews showed satisfaction with the degree, program, faculty, and university. Community partners expressed pleasure with service work projects produced by students. During telephone conferences with students, community sponsors were supportive of efforts. The respondent comments continued to express satisfaction and were consistent with comments from years past. As a result of the communication with community sponsors, in AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive continuous improvements in student learning, IN ac 2020-2021 the faculty will implement the following changes. Given the dynamics and fluid occurrences in emergency management from the 2020 Pandemic and nationwide civil unrest from incidents of excessive force by law enforcement. Impacts from these events will impact the emergency management discipline as it is practiced, and these changes and their foundations are appropriate subject content for the curriculum. Two courses subject to immediate modification are UPSA 2500: Social Dimensions of Disaster, and UPSA 4400: Law and Public Policy.

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

Based on an analysis of the AY2018-2019 data, the following changes were implemented in AY2019-2020:

- Course materials for UPSA 4700 were revamped to assure current content was again revised included and assignments restructured to reflect new textbook. Reflection components were added to the course.
- Exercises were expanded in UPSA courses to incorporate new controlling regulatory standard and reflect changes in law and expansion of course content to model an All Hazards Approach strategy. This practice will continue.
- Exercises and weekly assignments were updated to reinforce learning objectives in the class and to expand critical thought requirements for the student. Additional reflection exercises were added to three courses and will be included in all courses.
- UPSA 4480 was meshed with the newly revised UPSA 4700 to meet university QEP initiatives for the degree.
- APA citation is required for all assignments.
- All assignments are graded with rubrics.

### Plan of Action moving forward

The UPSA degree program continues to be an efficient, unique, and profitable offering for the university, extending support to students in multiple disciplines of the university beyond the degree program itself, specifically: criminal justice, resource management, general studies, family and consumer science, education, psychology, addiction studies and ROTC.

- All exercises in the UPSA curriculum will be evaluated by rubric posted in the course materials.
- APA style and citation will be required in all submitted assignments.
- Students will use weekly reflection exercises in which they are challenged with developing and explaining personal opinions.
- Research and writing project requirements will continue to be refined to demonstrate critical thinking skills in analysis and response preparation to municipal management situations.
- The senior seminar course will continue its requirement of a formal presentation at

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either ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, another appropriate professional conference, or to a panel of faculty.

- To allow for more complex exercises and assessments, both classes will be converted from eight- to sixteen-week periods of instruction with success.
- The time in which students apply for graduation and contact their advisor as required by the Registrar's Office, will be used to perform the Exit Interview.
- To develop critical thought practices earlier in the curriculum and to measure student critical thought practices more accurately, a problem-solving rubric will be implemented into the scenario exercises of UPSA 2700 when the course is next offered.
- Two courses subject to immediate modification due to national events in 2020 are UPSA 2500: Social Dimensions of Disaster, and UPSA 4400: Law and Public Policy.