

Assessment Cycle 2019-2020

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources

Division or Department: Institutional Effectiveness

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Date:

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Date:

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 Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources is a responsive administrative service and support unit that provides University leaders with information to be used in strategic planning and evidence-based decision-making and human resource programs and services. The Office assesses, collects, analyzes, reports, and disseminates data on behalf of the University and supports all University units in assessment-based improvement efforts. Reporting of information is in accordance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and federal and state regulations. The Office develops and delivers innovative human resource programs and services designed to support the mission of the University, including its core services and competencies such as staffing, employee relations, organizational and employee development, risk management, compensation and benefits, human resource information management, and regulatory compliance.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness assists university leaders with strategic planning, assessment, and evidence-based decision-making. The office assesses, collects, analyzes, reports, and disseminates data on behalf of the university and supports all university units in assessment-based improvement efforts. Assists in the reporting of information per the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), federal and state regulations.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (direct & indirect and quantitative & qualitative) are collected and returned to the executive director;
- (2) The executive 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;

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- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required (show cause);
- (5) The executive director, in consultation with the staff and senior leadership, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

Institutional Effectiveness

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. Ensures the institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

Measure 1.1.

The University compiles and publicizes its documented institutional effectiveness process. The target is to have a publicized process with 100% of the 155 academic and administrative units completing the process annually per the published timelines for annual assessments submission while also meeting the assessment element (s) requirements per rubric 2 (with enclosure). Once complete, the assessments are made available for public view on the Director of Institutional Effectiveness website <https://www.nsula.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/>.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2018-2019 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results and while the target was met, timeliness and oversight of report production and submission remained an issue. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness implemented additional milestones and structured oversight by coordinators to help drive the report submission/production process. Additionally, more refined examples of reports were provided to help guide the formatting and structure of reports. As a result, in 2019-2020, submission of the vast majority, 85% were on time (within a week of the dateline date).

Decision, action or recommendation. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will develop a more visible tracker/process for senior administrators as an incentive for timely submissions, provide direct assistance to programs and units having issues in completing their reports and develop tools to help streamline report construction.

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Measure 1.2.

The University has established a systematic review of the institutional mission, goals, and outcomes. Target is to conduct at least one comprehensive analysis of the mission, goal, and standards each year. We request revalidation and / or approval of the university mission, vision statement, and core values through our Board of Trustees once every five years in accordance with the Strategic Plan development process.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In AY 2018-2019, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the results, in 2019-2020 a plan of action and the associated timeline for the fifth-year review was developed. As a result, each requirement has been apportioned to the appropriate university office and it has been factored into the Universities long-range calendar. The University will complete the fifth-year report no later than spring 2022 to have ten months from the submission date (March 2023) to refine the report. In addition, the University Strategic Planning Team has conducted a complete mission analysis of the University's mission. The University mission was approved by the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors on 28 Feb 2020.

Decision, action or recommendation. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will establish July 1, 2020 for the new mission statement to become effective. During the mission analysis process, the University determined it would be better served by extending its current strategic plan timeframe from 2016-2021 to 2016-2023. This extension facilitates the nesting of the University Strategic Plan with the Board of Regents Strategic goals for Northwestern while improving the alignment with their recently published master plan. Drafting of a new updated strategic plan will begin in 2023 in order to continue to drive organizational improvement.

Measure 1.3.

University senior leaders brief the University President on the findings of the strategic plan assessment cycle to better inform strategic decision making, thereby ensuring the University is accomplishing its mission and maximizing resources for targeted improvement in institutional quality. Target is to conduct and document the annual assessment briefing capturing and actioning areas of concern.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In AY 2018-2019, the target was met. The Strategic Planning Team and University Assessment Committee delivered an executive AC 2018-2019 Assessment Report briefing to the President on September 11, 2019. The briefing captured the key strategic decisions made over the academic cycle and the impact those decisions had on the University. Based on the analysis of the results, in AC 2019-2020 the

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University implemented the plan of action for 2019-2020 and conducted a mid-year review via independent desk-side brief as opposed to a full brief in order to gain efficiency in time usage allowing for more time for dialogue as opposed to simply reporting results to drive continuous improvement.

Decision, action or recommendation. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will conduct the AY 2019-2020 Assessment Briefing in September 2020 that will be more inclusive and address additional areas of scholarship, infrastructure, innovation, and potentially budget.

Source Map: Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
Louisiana Board of Regents Higher Education Bylaws

SO 2. Assist with the identification of key indicators of performance related to the strategic plan, academic programs, and academic support units.

Measure 2.1.

Each of the 155 academic programs and administrative units has identified expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results. Target is 100% compliance.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2018-2019 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, the University institutionalized the approach to assessment across all degree programs and units ensuring that each addresses the three primary components of SACSCOC new Requirement 7.3 and Core Requirement 8.2., those being the identification of student learning – service outcomes for each academic program and unit, and now also University Core Competencies through assessing the extent to which those outcomes are achieved; and provides enough evidence of improvement based on the analysis of the results. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed the format to ensure the key components of the assessment were addressed in each assessment report. As a result, in 2019-2020 each program and unit provided all three components of these requirements meeting the fundamental requirement.

Decision, action or recommendation. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will develop a ‘by the numbers’ assessment tool that unit and program coordinators can use to

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ensure they write to the requirement in the right format using SACSCOC language thereby driving continuous improvement.

Measure 2.2.

The University will produce a holistic University assessment report using the findings from the Strategic Plan AC 2019-2020 assessment and the 155 separate academic programs and administrative unit assessments. The assessment report will highlight key findings for consideration in strategic decision-making and resource allocation. The report and briefing will be completed in June of each Academic Year. Target is to leverage a completed Strategic Plan Assessment and 100% of individual program and unit assessments in the development and presentation of an annual assessment report by 30 August of the academic year.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In AY 2018-2019, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results in 2019-2020, the University leveraged its Strategic Planning Team (SPT) to drive the University Assessment Reporting as opposed to the University Assessment Committee. The SPT is led by the University President and membership includes the Provost and all Vice Presidents and special staff. The report centers on the five Strategic Focus Areas (SFA) in which the Vice President (VP) for The Student Experience writes and assesses the SFA-Student Experience; the Provost writes and assesses SFA - Academic Excellence; the Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development writes and assesses SFA – Market Responsiveness; VP External Affairs writes and assesses SFA Community Enrichment; and the Intercollegiate Athletics Director writes and assesses SFA – Athletic Prominence. The report includes an update from each college dean on topics such as research and community outreach. The report captures the most significant findings and decisions over the past academic year, proposed or actual changes based on the assessment results (including an analytical assessment of the effects of the changes made), and an update on the status of new assessment plans. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness consolidated these reports into an executive presentation to the University President. This year's briefing took place on September 11, 2019. This briefing will, in turn, be used to provide a University-wide update either by the President or his designated representative at the beginning of the 2019 fall semester.

Decision, action or recommendation. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will attempt to refocus the brief to those areas needing improvement as opposed to those areas of success. By focusing time and resources on areas that need attention, we should be able to drive continuous improvement.

Source Map:

Resources Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors

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Louisiana Board of Regents Higher Education Bylaws

SO 3. Facilitate all aspects related to accreditation, including standards compliance, applications, reviews, and self-evaluation processes and documents.

Measure 3.1.

All SACSCOC Standards are apportioned to the appropriate university office for incorporation and integration into daily operations. Target is to complete the task within three months from the date of publication of new SACSCOC standards.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2018-2019 the target was met. Based on the 2018-2019 results, in 2019-2020 the SACSCOC fifth-year report requirements have been apportioned to the appropriate offices to ensure they are incorporating them into the daily operations of the University. Solidifying ownership of these requirements will ensure better consistency in both measurements and accurately documenting the status of the requirement. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness developed a plan that walks the owners of the standards through a process to write to the standard in a systematic way. As a result, in 2019-2020, the Strategic Planning Team initiated the crawl, walk, run approach to the fifth-year report development.

Decision, action or recommendation. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will have each fifth-year report requirement defined, then drafted and in a position to only require updating in Fall 2022, allowing for a seamless submission in March 2023.

Measure 3.2.

All university strategic planning and assessment documents will be stored so that the information remains secure and accessible and from any location via the internet.

Finding. Target Met.

Analysis. In 2018-2019 the target was met. In 2018-2019 the University determined it will continue to use an analog approach and not look to automate the assessment process near term. The IE Website will serve as the host for all assessment related data and is being marketed as a resource for the staff and faculty regarding the assessment-related activity. Based on the analysis of these results the Director of Institutional Effectiveness updated the University IE website to make it more simplified and user friendly. The site serves as the host by which the University presents its formal IE related actions to include its response (s) to SACSCOC. As a result, in May 2020, the University again (submitted in May 2019 also) submitted itself for the NIOLA

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Excellence in Assessment award as a validation of its approach using the website as the medium for its submission.

Decision, action or recommendation. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness will redesign the IE Website to facilitate the submission of the SACSCOC Fifth Year Report, to include all historical documents associated with the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

Comprehensive Summary of Key evidence of improvement based on the analysis of results.

- Updated the University mid-year assessment model.
- Integrated Institutional Research, Registrar, and Director of University Affairs into the Strategic Planning Team.
- Completed a six-month mission analysis that produced an updated University mission statement approved by the USL Board of Supervisors and Board of Regents.
- Revamped Mid-Year update brief to the President, making the brief more holistic, highlighting areas of success and those needing more focus or decisions to be made.
- Designed a “crawl, walk, run” approach to preparing the University’s Fifth-Year SCASCOC Report that deliberately and methodically produces a report ensuring compliance and oversight.
- Redesigned the IE Website to facilitate the submission of the Scascoc Fifth-Year Report.

Plan of action moving forward.

The University will continue to leverage the Institutional Effectiveness Model systematically and comprehensively. The University senior leadership remains the forcing function to establish the culture of continuous assessment further. The purpose, reasoning, and value of the assessment is slowly becoming clear to University administrators, faculty, and staff. The tangible value in this process directly impacts organizational improvement and is being more understood across campus. We must continue to right-size our assessments. Having run through four iterations, we now have a far better understanding of what we should be assessing. Our task is to continue to fine-tune what needs to be assessed, determine how best to evaluate it, and leverage the results to drive continuous improvement routinely.