

# Assessment Cycle 2019-2020

## 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.

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**Methodology:** The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from weekly applicant and admission reports that compares applicants and 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 2018-2019 the target was not met. Last year's growth, Fall 2017 (1542) to Fall 2018(1560) was 18 students or 1.2% The decrease from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 of 1560 to 1515, of 45 students or -2.9%. Based on the analysis of these results and the increasing impact on infrastructure this year NSU anticipated housing shortfalls and in AC 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021 recruiting strategies for Fall 2020 will be to evaluate and increase the scholarship packaging and increased communications. Although we missed our target by 8.9%, 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 2020, 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 The Quad and Northwestern are working with an agreement on housing students. 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

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wanting to take courses on the Natchitoches campus.

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

**Finding. Target met.**

**Analysis.** In 2018-2019 the target was not met. For the Fall 2019 new graduate enrollment increased from 302 to 315 for an increase of 13 students or 4.3%. 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 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021 we will enhance the recruiting efforts for programs that are drawing new graduate students in Education and Nursing. NSU has 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 2018-2019 the target was met. In the fall of 2018, we enrolled students from 60 of the 65 parishes in the state of Louisiana, matching the 2017 numbers and missing our regional goal. Based on the analysis of the AC 2018 - 2019 in the fall of 2019, we enrolled 58 of the 65 parishes. In addition, NSU recruited students from out of state representing 23 (22 in 2018) states and several countries (10). International student increased from 141(2018) students to 148 (2019) students for an increase of 5%. Although our overall diversity among parishes decreased, we had in increase in the total number of state representation (4.5%) and country representation.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021 the 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.

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**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 that these events are very helpful in understanding the admissions process by responding, “strongly agree” or “agree” on their student survey. Students were able to select from 5 responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

**Finding. Target met**

**Analysis.** In 2019-2020 the target was 90%. In the campus tour surveys for the fall of 2019, seniors overall stated that 72.3% strongly agreed the events were helpful and 94.8% agreed or strongly agreed the event was helpful. Based on the analysis the AC 2018-2019 results, in AC 2019-2020 all groups were surveyed in July, August, September, and December of 2019 rated the experience as 100% helpful, with the October survey groups showing that found the it 84.6% and November showing 83.3%

**Action.** In AC 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the results in AC 2020-2021 for the next recruiting cycle, tour guides will be given additional training. We will bring in our recruiting ambassadors 5 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.

**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” or “agree” on their student survey. Participants were given 5 choices on the measurement from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

**Finding. Target met**

**Analysis.** In 2019-2020 the target was 90%. For the fall 2019 group, an average of 95.4% of students and parents filling out the survey indicated that their tour 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.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021 full time staff members will continue to 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.

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**Analysis.** In 2018-2019 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of these results, in 2019-2020 we implemented an expansion of the territory recruited with more college transfer fair visits and private visits. In fall of 2019 enrollment decreased by 4 or .7%. 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 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021 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 2018-2019 the target of 22 was not met. Based on the analysis of these results in 2019-2020 we implemented an expansion of ACT names purchased and aggressively reworked scholarship packaging. The average ACT for fall 2019 increased by 0.15 from 21.67 (2018) to 21.82. We will continue to review other university scholarship scales to be sure ours is very competitive and focuses on students with higher GPAs.

**Action.** Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021 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 2018-2019 the target was 151. Based on the analysis of these results in 2018-2019 we implemented an aggressive outreach from recruiters to identify these leaders. Fall 2019, 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

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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 2019-2020 results, in 2020-2021 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 tour surveys to better identify concerns. As a result, 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.
- 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.

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### **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.

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