

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

Academic Advising Services

Department – Academic Support

Prepared by: Steve Hicks

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Approved by: Dr. Handel

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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 mission of **Academic Advising Services** is to provide academic advising to undergraduate students, to facilitate a University Studies course (UNIV 1000) for entering freshmen and to provide academic support services for students, faculty, staff and external partners.

Methodology: The assessment process for the Academic Advising Services is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) will be collected and returned to the unit head.
- (2) The unit head will analyze the data to determine whether the service provider has met the measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the advising team and unit head's supervisor;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with advisors/instructors;
- (5) The unit head, with the assistance of advisors/instructors, will determine if changes are required to meet the measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, where needed, programming changes.

Academic Advising Services

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. Provide quality academic advising to specific student cohorts.

Measure 1.1. General Studies Students

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On an annual basis, General Studies students who receive advising services from Academic Advising Services (AAS) will be administered a survey to assess their advising experience. The survey has questions that use a Likert scale to assess knowledge, helpfulness, accessibility, concern and overall quality of experience. Respondents will select from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The unit goal is for at least 85% of the students surveyed to respond with agree or strongly agree.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: AC 2019-20, the target was met. Student participation improved by 6% and survey data showed that 90% of students responded favorably (strongly agree or agree). Although there was a 6% increase in participation from the previous year, not as many students participated as desired. Based upon the results of the AC 2019-20, the Director, along with his advising team, promoted pre-registration through e-mails, class announcements and flyers. Also, direct contact was made with a captive UNIV 1000 audience in fall '20. All UNIV 1000 students are required to early-register (30 points awarded, second highest assignment point value in the class). This survey was administered and 52 of 199 students participated (26.1%). This survey yielded the highest response rate to date (26% in '20 vs. 16% in '19 vs. 10% in '18). As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21 the target was met. 89% of the students surveyed responded favorably (agree or strongly agree) to this specific advising survey for General Studies students.

Decision, action, or recommendation: In AC 2020-21 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-21 results the Director will drive continuous improvement by making a couple adjustments. Surveys will be administered in fall term '21 (fall has higher response rate than spring) and most likely spring term '22, along with at least one "mini-survey" during the add/drop window. The purpose of this survey is to measure the quality of advising and the survey will yield more accurate results with a higher response rate. For this reason, a response-rate goal of 33% has been set for AC 2021-22.

Measure 1.2. Pre-clinical Nursing Students (Natchitoches campus)

On an annual basis, pre-clinical nursing students in Natchitoches will complete an advising survey. The survey has five questions that use a Likert scale to assess knowledge, helpfulness, accessibility, concern and overall quality of experience. Respondents will select from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The unit goal is for at least 85% of the students surveyed to respond with agree or strongly agree.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-20, the target was met as 100% of students surveyed responded favorably (agree or strongly agree). There was a response-rate increase of 8%, resulting with 27% response-rate. It was speculated that the response rate was too low and could be increased with a December survey since there is a more captive set of advisees in November due to: (1) higher need for ALT PIN, and (2) UNIV 1000

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campaign with all pre-clinical nursing UNIV 1000 instructors promoting early registration through a class assignment. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-20 results the Director made some changes in 2020-2021. This AC, December '20, the survey was administered and 33% of the students surveyed responded (80/241). This survey yielded the highest response rate in the last three years (33% vs. 27% vs. 19%). The target was met with 95% of the students who responded favorably (agree or strongly agree). Additionally, it was interesting to note that of the 65 total respondents, only 24.6% were advised from the professional staff advisors, as 47% of respondents obtained advising from their UNIV 1000 instructor, who was also a faculty nurse (either Shreveport, Alexandria, or Natchitoches faculty member).

Decision, action, or recommendation: In AC 2020-21 the target was met. Based upon the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the director will drive continuous improvement by making a couple adjustments. Surveys will be administered in fall term '21 (highest yield) and most likely spring term '22, along with at least one "mini survey". This 'mini survey' link was embedded in each advisor's e-mail signature in January, during add/drop phase in January '21. The purpose of this survey is to measure the quality of advising and the survey will yield more accurate results with a higher response rate. For this reason, a response-rate goal of 40% has been set for AC 2021-22.

Measure 1.3

On an annual basis, all advisees who participate in add/drop transactions (week before semester begins thru last day of add/drop) can complete a 'mini survey'. This survey link is found above the academic advisor's e-mail signature line. Unlike Measure 1.1 or 1.2, this survey is non-major specific. The intent of the survey is to obtain feedback and trouble-shoot immediate problems to assist students. The unit goal is to ensure 100% of all student inquiries will be answered to best assist students.

Findings: Target was not met

Analysis: In 2019-2020, this survey link did not exist. AC 2020-21 was the pilot year. The Director implemented this quick survey (stole/borrowed concept from NSU's Financial Aid Office as they have used a SurveyMonkey link on their respective staff signatures). During a two-week window of implementation (January 11 thru 25), AAS received feedback from 30 students. Although this participation was lower than expected during such a peak advising window, the mini survey provided useful feedback, such as:

- 2/30 attended face-to-face,
- 20/30 used email,
- 7/30 were not our student advisees, etc.
- 28/30 students reported 'all of advising questions were answered'.

The final survey question was a follow-up to the 2 students who indicated all their questions were not answered. Question #6 asked 'what can the advisors in this office do to better assist you?' Only 1 of the 2 students responded to this question.

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Decision, action, or recommendation: In AC 2019-20 the measure did not exist. However, based upon anecdotal information, it was determined there was a need to assess advising during the add/drop and late registration phase. In AC 2020-21 the target was not met. Based upon the analysis of AC 2020-21 pilot year data, the director will drive continuous improvement by launching this 'mini survey' again, at least twice during the drop/add phase of AC 2021-22. The director, in consultation with Director of Institutional Effectiveness, who helped craft the survey, anticipated more negative feedback from students who had not secured a schedule until the week before (and first week) of the semester. The thought was students attempting to secure classes during this window would be angry and bitter about limited course options, thus it was anticipated a higher percentage of students would respond more negatively. The data and comments were helpful. AC 2021-22 goal will be to more than double participation (60 or more) with a 90% student inquiry / satisfaction rate.

SO 2. Provide a comprehensive UNIV 1000 curriculum to incoming freshmen.

Measure 2.1. (NSU-Natchitoches face-to-face cohort)

All UNIV 1000 students had the opportunity to complete the end-of-semester assessment: Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor. The course steward reviewed responses to all 16 questions (a five-point Likert scale) which allowed students to respond and provide feedback regarding both course (8 questions) and instruction (8 questions). The unit goal is for responses to all 16 questions to have an aggregate mean score of at least a 4.4 (or above) on the five-point scale.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In 2019-20 the target was met. All 16 survey questions answered had an aggregate mean score of 4.0 or higher, which evaluated both course and instruction. This was the first cycle reports were reviewed separately face to face (F2F) cohort compared to online cohort. With UNIV 1000 being a first-year seminar college class, it is critical for all instructors to promote participation in end-of-course assessments, which helps establish a sound culture of student participation for other end-of-course assessments. In response to last year's results, for 2020-2021 *the target was increased from 4.0 aggregate mean unit goal to a 4.4 aggregate mean (or above)* for all 16 questions. Note 39% of all students 239/615 participated. The question lowest to 4.4 aggregate mean was, "Overall, I would rate this course as" On this question, 42% responded with "Good" and 52% responded with "Superior", which scored a mean of 4.46.

Decision, action, or recommendation: In AC 2020-21 the target was met. Based upon the results of this data, in 2021-2022, the course steward will drive continuous improvement by making a couple adjustments. First, the course steward will increase the target aggregate mean score of 4.4 to 4.5, which could be considered lofty, considering the aggregate mean goal was set at 4.0 just two years prior. The purpose of this survey is to assess the course and instruction and a higher participation rate will yield more accurate results with a higher response rate. For this reason, a response-rate goal of 43% has been set for AC 2021-22.

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Measure 2.2. (Online-only cohort)

All UNIV 1000 students had the opportunity to complete the end-of-semester assessment: Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor. The course steward reviewed responses to 16 questions (a five-point Likert scale) which allowed students to respond to the assessment and provide feedback of both course (8 questions) and instruction (8 questions). The unit goal is for all responses to all 16 questions have an aggregate mean score of at least a 4.4 (or above) on the five-point scale.

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: In 2019-20 the target was met. All 16 questions had an aggregate mean score of 4.0 (or above). With UNIV 1000 being a first semester seminar college class, it is critical for all UNIV instructors to promote participation in end-of-course assessments, which will help establish a sound culture of student participation for other end-of-course assessments during their career. In 2020-2021 the target was increased from a 4.0 aggregate mean to 4.4 aggregate mean score. AC 2020-21, the target was not met. Students responded to the 16 questions with a mean score of at least 4.4 on 15 of the 16 questions related to course and instructor. The one question with a score of less than a 4.4 mean average was, "Overall, I would rate this course as" ...the mean score was 4.33. It is speculated that many students, although difficult to know exactly how many, did not desire to enroll in UNIV 1000 as an online-only student, but they had to, due to limited class size space with COVID-19 social distancing limitations. It should be noted that 140/384 (36%) of all students completed the end-of-year assessment. It is projected next year AC 2021-22 online-only students will have a higher mean average since online-only format will be their choice, not a second option format assigned to them.

Decision, action, or recommendation: In AC 2020-21 the target was not met. Based upon the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022, the course steward will drive continuous improvement by making a couple adjustments. First, the course steward will keep the unit goal of an aggregate mean of 4.4 (or above) on all 16 questions. Second, the course steward will increase the participation goal to 40% (or more) students to complete the end-of-course assessment. The purpose of this survey is to assess the course and instruction and a higher participation rate will yield more accurate results with a higher response rate.

Measure 2.3

Each fall semester, all University Studies 1000 students complete a pre-UNIV 1000 quiz in the first week. At the end of the course, they complete the same assessment (post-quiz). To measure student learning, the unit goal is to demonstrate a 10% increase in score for each question (pre- vs. post-quiz).

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-20 the target was not met. 2019-20 some pre and post data was collected, but via SurveyMonkey. 713/1073 (66%) of all students completed the pre-survey and 766/1073 students (71%) completed the post-survey. There was at least a

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10% increase in the number of correct responses for 14/20 questions. In AC 2020-21, a change was implemented to better capture data. Survey Monkey was not used, rather a formal pre-quiz / post-quiz format was, using Moodle. This new assessment was better for data collection and populated the post-quiz score automatically in the UNIV 1000 gradebook for all UNIV 1000 students (required pre- and post-quiz). Data was reviewed and some analysis compared F2F student responses to online student responses. Below are some findings:

- 1296 (623 F2F/Hyflex and 673 online) UNIV students completed the pre-quiz
- 1115 (537 F2F/Hyflex and 578 online) UNIV students took the post-test
- F2F pre-quiz students scored 52%, Online pre-quiz students scored 54%
- F2F post-test students scored 76%, Online post-quiz students scored 77%
- The main findings are that some questions within the pre/post quiz need to be evaluated against the UNIV 1000 curriculum to ensure the topics are emphasized in the course discussions to increase student knowledge.
- Question 9 – Knowledge of Academic Guidelines – Face to face (F2F) improved more than online.
- Question 12 – Referencing books in the Watson Library – F2F barely improved and online decreased.
- Question 13 – Knowledge of 120 hours required for bachelor's degree – Online students improved higher than F2F.
- Question 16 – Probation information – in pre-quiz, both formats did poorly and only half of both formats improved their respective scores.
- Question 19 – Referencing unwanted sexual activity – the pre-quiz reflected both sectors having little knowledge. Both increased in the post-quiz and online improved over F2F students.
- Question 22 – Services provided by Registrar's Office – only half of all students scored the correct post-quiz response, thus attention is needed in this area.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21 the target was not met. However, student responses revealed gaps in content instruction. Sections can be taught more in depth. Enhancing instruction content will assist future students to improving in post-quiz results, regardless of format.

Decision: In AC 2020-21 the target was not met. Based upon the analysis of the AC 2020-21 results, the course steward will drive continuous improvement by implementing several adjustments. During the UNIV early August '21 faculty development session, the director will share the above results, along with other several other findings to emphasize several important content areas to focus on. This new pre- and post-quiz assessment was a first-year effort, switching from SurveyMonkey to the Moodle quiz to collect data and grades more efficiently. The course steward will better educate instructors, who in turn, will prioritize and focus on the most important content. The unit goal has been adjusted for students to demonstrate a 20% overall increase score from pre-test to post-test.

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SO 3. Provide academic support services for students, administration, and external partners/constituents.

Measure 3.1.

Every fall and spring semester all AAS professional staff advisors will make a minimum of four separate contacts with their assigned advisees. The first is a general welcome email that shares office hours, contact information, link of student resources, etc. The second contact involves the early warning system grades (five-week-grades). The third contact involves mid-term grades. The fourth contact promotes visiting with advisor prior to early-registration for upcoming semester. Regarding the second and third contacts, AAS advisors will take immediate action by contacting all 'at-risk' advisees for both five-week and midterm grades. Response time is critical for student success (access to tutoring and other resources, awareness of add/drop deadline after mid-term, etc.). The unit goal is for every AAS advisor is to contact 100% of his/her advisees at least four times a semester, and specifically within two business days of receiving both five-week and midterm grade reports.

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met. This was a positive step, as the target was not met in the previous (AC 2018-19). Based upon analysis of the results, adjustments were made to better monitor advisor/advisee contacts. One adjustment included four contacts per semester for 2020-21, as opposed to three the year before. Fall '19, for example, all seven advisors recorded successful and timely contacts with advisees in both fall and spring (21/21). AC 2020-2021, the target was not met. Fall semester '20, we adjusted to a minimum of four contacts per advisor, thus generating 28 total documented contacts. Fall '20 we had 26/28 successful contacts within 48-hour window in the fall. Spring '21, we were at 24/28. There were only a couple factors had hindered 100% successful contact, which included fall '19 COVID staff quarantine (advisor was sick leave) and spring '21 being down one advisor (retirement) for first 3.5 months.

Decision, action, or recommendation: AC 2020-21 the target was not met. Based upon the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the Director of Academic Advising will drive continuous improvement by making a couple adjustments for the upcoming year. Adding a fourth contact for each semester was positive since all advisors should be reaching out during these peak contact periods. An updated checklist will be created, that will include a monthly timeline, with specific checkboxes, to document all fall and spring advisor contacts.

Measure 3.2.

Academic Advising Services serves as a clearinghouse for all suspended undergraduate students and facilitates all readmission contracts. At the end of each fall and spring semester, AAS completes an end-of-semester report for the VP of Academic Affairs and Academic Deans. It is critical the above-mentioned administrators have this report in-hand, especially in December, in preparation for onset of spring semester. The unit goal is two-fold: 50% or more of students under contract will earn a 2.00 semester GPA or above and this end-of-semester report will be completed and disseminated each fall and

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spring within three business days after final grades have been posted.

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: The target was not met for AC 2019-20. Fall '19 data revealed only 36/99 (36%) readmitted students earned the 2.0 to remain eligible to return for spring '20. Spring '20 reporting data was delayed, due to COVID-19 grading options getting pushed back by approximately 20 days (*students with "F" grades had option to convert to "W" after spring '20 term ended*). 32/54 (59%) of all spring '20 readmitted students earned a 2.00 GPA or above. Based on the analysis of AC 2019-20 results, the Director made several changes. He assigned an advisor and graduate assistant to make a series of contacts (phone and email) throughout the semester including available support resources, review 5-week grade (if available) and ensure midterm grade conferences take place. Also, the Director appointed AAS administrative coordinator to have all possible data fields (for end of semester report) populated so once all final grades were posted and academic action program had been administered (fall and spring), the remaining fields of academic standing, term GPA, cum. GPA, were populated in as efficient a manner possible. As a result of these changes in AC 2020-21, the target was not met. Fall '20 data revealed 21/51 readmitted students (41%) earned a 2.00 semester GPA. Spring '21 data dipped lower, recording 8/34 readmitted students (23%) who earned a 2.00 GPA or above. The end-of-semester report was disseminated to the VPAA/Provost and his deans Wednesdays, MAC 12, less than 48 hours after final grade submission deadline.

Decision: AC 2020-21 the target was not met. There were unique barriers in AC 2020-21 as significantly less students were enrolled in 'face-to-face' (F2F) classes due to social distancing, COVID, etc. A readmitted student is high-risk and often they will have a stipulation of F2F only classes. This could not be the case for most fall '20 classes. Based upon the analysis of AC 2020-21 results, the director will implement a key change. The Director will assign all professional advisors, the AAS graduate student and several ASC graduate students (with their Director's consent) to this student cohort, thus providing a better mentor/mentee ratio for all tracking and various contacts. This change will provide mentors with more time with these high-risk students.

Measure 3.3

On an annual basis, Academic Advising Services will assess the Associate of General Studies dual enrollment advising partnerships, which involves working closely with our high school constituents (LSMSA, Vernon Parish Schools, Pineville High School, etc.) The unit goal is for 100% of all schools with eligible graduation candidates attend at least one mid-semester in-service to enhance AGS knowledge and strengthen rapport between academic advisor and DE AGS high school constituents.

Findings: Target was met

Analysis: AC 2019-20, the target was not met. In spring '19, measure 3.3 was created to better educate our high school counselors in our service region. The creation of 3.3 stemmed from several costly AGS advising mistakes by HS counselors who were not

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consulting professional NSU advisors. Based on review and feedback and anecdotal findings in 2019-20, adjustments were made to increase awareness, knowledge and enhance rapport with all high school liaisons. AC 2020-21, the target was met. The following changes were made to drive improvement:

- In August '20, Director assigned three (3) NSU advisors to be point of contact with 11 participating high schools and their respective high school counselors.
- Curriculum worksheets were created for several degree programs to allow the DE AGS student to maximize DE courses to apply to their ultimate 4-year major once they formally attend college after HS graduation.
- These 3 advisors performed audits after each final grade cycle and updated curriculum sheets (spring '20 grades, then after fall '20 final grades and finally after spring '21 final grades were posted).
- In March '21, one Academic Advisor and Instructor was promoted with new title of: Academic Advisor, Instructor and AGS DE Coordinator, to move program forward.
- A private mid-semester in-service was developed and administered to all 11 high schools (all DE schools in service region with AGS candidates) to provide counselors an opportunity to review procedures, review new student application, study annual timeline, and then address questions/concerns.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was met. All 11 DE AGS high schools participated in one private mid-semester in-serve with an AAS advisor. Communication lines are more effective, and no advising errors were made. As of June 17, 2021, a record number 76 dual enrollment students have fulfilled all AGS degree requirements. They will formally have their NSU AGS degrees conferred August 5, 2021.

Decision: In AC 2020-21, the target was met. Based upon the data and findings, the Director will make several adjustments to drive improvement. The Director will hire a new DE AGS Coordinator in July '21, as the current coordinator will leave NSU June 30. The Director, with the assistance of the out-going DE AGS Coordinator, will fine-tune a 12-month timeline/calendar checklist of all activities to ensure total transparency and open communication between professional advisors, NSU support offices and all high school liaisons. An end-of-workshop survey will evaluate the session. The Director will also require all participating high schools to complete one in-service per semester (as opposed to one in mid-spring). Finally, to ensure all NSU units involved in HS DE AGS program are aware of timelines and responsibilities, the Director of Academic Advising will facilitate one informational session with all NSU stakeholders (ECE, Admissions, Registrar, Academic Advising, etc.) to streamline and collaborate processes.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results: Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 data the following changes were implemented to drive the cycle of improvement.

- AAS has maintained comprehensive advising logs the last two years. AC 2020-21 experienced almost 7,000 separate, individual documented contacts (*note: only-one separate contact per day counted, even if student e-mailed 2-3-4 times that given day*). The weekly breakdown averaged out to 195

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contacts per week, which equates to almost 28 students served per advisor, per week.

- The Director, with significant support from his advisors and other content experts, assembled an excellent fall '20 UNIV 1000 course shell. Traditional F2F seminars that traditionally combined 2-3-4 sections in one venue were modified to online streaming sessions to accommodate smaller classrooms and honor social distancing.
- Modified online modules and lessons for traditional F2F sections, became a 'win-win'. They were utilized for other formats, enhancing content in online-only, HyFlex and online-synchronous UNIV 1000 sections.
- UNIV 1000 shifted from a SurveyMonkey instrument (fall '19) and implemented a more detailed assessment: a 25-question pre-test and post-test assessment (fall '20) for all University Studies 1000 sections to measure student learning.
- The Director of Advising, along with NSU-Natchitoches Nursing Campus Manager, facilitated a November '20 WebEx with a record-high 90 pre-clinical advisees. It was recorded and posted for future access.
- AAS launched two separate advising surveys in December (as opposed to April) and captured record-setting response-rates from the two advising cohorts.
- Job titles and responsibilities were re-aligned after a couple retirements. January '21 highlighted a promotion and title change for our QEP point person. Her title of Academic Advisor, Instructor and *Capstone Coordinator* went into effect. Also, another staff member experienced a title change to serve as Academic Advisor, Instructor and *Graduation Coordinator*, who monitored DW audits and candidates weekly, and our unit celebrated over 130 AGS/BGS and BA LA graduates in MAC '21.
- The first two-week window in January '21 (during add/drop phase of late registration) all advisors piloted a 6 question SurveyMonkey link. This link was placed above all professional advisors' e-mail signature lines to provide students the opportunity to give immediate feedback of session.
- March '21 highlighted the appointment of one advisor who received a promotion and carries the title, "Academic Advisor, Instructor and DE AGS Coordinator". Immediate improvements to processes became evident (student application, mid-semester WebEx in-service with each HS DE counselor).
- August '21 will highlight **76** DE AGS students **from 11 high schools** in our service region and beyond who have AGS degrees conferred. Within the last year we have almost doubled the total number of DE AGS graduates (44 in summer '20) and more than doubled the high schools (5 HS in '20) who had graduates.

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Plan of action moving forward:

- In July '21, the Director will work to replace the vacant position of Academic Advisor, Instructor and DE AGS Coordinator.
- AAS will administer advising surveys in fall semester '21 and most likely spring term '22.
- AAS will implement least one "mini-survey" during the add/drop window using SurveyMonkey link placed above all professional advisors' e-mail signature line.
- UNIV 1000 course steward will keep the unit goal of an aggregated mean score of 4.4 (or above) for all F2F sections for NSU Evaluation of Course and Instructor end-of-course assessment, while increasing participation rate to 43% (or more).
- In early-August, during the UNIV 1000 faculty development session, the director will share pre- and post-test results from fall '20 administration to educate instructional staff. Sharing these findings may help to emphasize and prioritize key content areas to focus on. Additionally, aggregate data about evaluation of course and instructor will be shared.
- An updated checklist will be created, that will include a monthly timeline, with specific checkboxes, to document all fall and spring advisor contacts.
- Effective AC 2021-22, the Director, and newly appointed DE AGS Coordinator will provide semester in-services, along with surveys and outreach to enhance communication and transparency with all external constituents in our service region.