

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

First Year Experience and Leadership Development

Prepared by: Katarina Haymon

Date: July 13, 2021

Approved by: Reatha Cox

Date: July 14, 2021

Northwestern State Mission

Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

The Student Experience Mission Statement

The Student Experience provides the University community with programs and services to support the academic mission of creating, disseminating, and acquiring knowledge through teaching, research and service while empowering a diverse student population to achieve their highest educational potential. The Student Experience creates a stimulating and inclusive educational environment that is conducive to holistic personal growth. The commitment to students initiates prior to entrance, sustains throughout the college experience, and continues beyond graduation. Enrollment Services provides equal access for education to potential students throughout the state and region and promotes economic stability and financial access to citizens. Student Affairs enhances student development and broadens intellectual, social, cultural, ethical, and occupational growth. The Student Experience works closely with faculty, staff, students, and the community to ensure graduates have the capability to promote economic development and improvements in the region.

Student Affairs Mission

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

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

First Year Experience & Leadership Development Mission

The Office of First Year Experience and Leadership Development, in collaboration with the University community, is committed to engaging, supporting, and empowering first-year students as they take ownership of their college experience. By providing programs, resources, and strategic services that meet the diverse needs of first-year students and families, we facilitate a successful transition to university life and set the tone for academic success, personal growth, and meaningful connections.

Methodology:

1. The First Year Experience and Leadership Development department is both service-oriented and focused on student learning. Therefore, both service and learning outcomes will be utilized. Assessment methods will be qualitative and quantitative, direct and indirect, and summative.
2. The Director is responsible for the assessment process.
3. The Director will share assessment results with both University and external stakeholders, and community agents.
4. Based on the sharing of data, revisions and recommendations for improvements will be made for the next assessment period.

First Year Experience Service Outcomes

SO 1. First Year Experience programs will create a climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all.

Measure 1.1. Ninety percent (90%) of students will respond, "Strongly Agree" on the First Year Involvement Challenge assessment that the program met the stated objectives. DATA: Freshman Connection 2.0 – Fall 2020

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was not met. Only 80% indicated that they strongly agreed that the FYI Challenge met the stated goals. Data reflected that only 89% of the students remained for the entire program, including small group discussions and processing. The action plan for improvement consisted of a stand-alone program for the First Year Involvement Challenge (FYI Challenge) and enhanced training and development for facilitators.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data and a complete review of the service outcome, it was determined that the First Year Involvement Challenge does not meet the goal of creating a climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all. In

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

addition, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was impossible to facilitate the program as a simulation exercise in the traditional manner.

As a result, the AC 2020-2021 target not met.

Decision, Action or Recommendation: In AC 2020-2021 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of AC 2020-2021 outcome the director will research and implement more effective programming and initiatives that more appropriately address the service outcome to drive the cycle of improvement for creating a climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all students.

Measure 1.2 Thirty (30%) of on-campus students participate in the Demon Days (42 total) program activities, specifically Freshman Connection, The Inferno, Color Chaos, Convocation, President's Picnic, and First Pep Rally. DATA: Freshman Connection Registrations Stats 2020; Freshman Connection 2.0 Fall 2020 Stats; Convocation RSVPs Fall 2020; Inferno T-Shirts at Pep Rally

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met. An average of 71% of first-year on campus students participated in the major First Year Experience programs. 75% of first-year students attended New Student Convocation and 66% attended the First Pep Rally and/or participated in The Inferno Run during AC 2019-2020. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results the following plan of action was put into place for AC 2020-2021: Collecting feedback from all first-year programming in a timely manner and utilizing digital app surveys to collect results. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in AC 2020-2021, some traditional Demon Days events did not happen.

As a result of these changes in AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Highlights include:

- 78% (1,187 of 1,518) of entering first-year students registered for Freshman Connection 2020.
- 70% (828 of 1,187) of entering first-year students who registered for Freshman Connection 2020 registered for the FC 2.0 orientation program held in August, 77% (636 of 828) attended the FC 2.0 programs. The FC 2.0 program was designed to cover the topics and events that were not presented during the virtual summer 2020 orientation program.
- 66% (1,000 of 1,518) of entering first-year students submitted a RSVP for New Student Convocation and 45% (680 of 1,518) of first-year students attended New Student Convocation.

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

- 8% (126 of 1,518) of entering first-year students participated in The Inferno Run at the first home football game/homecoming pep rally. More than 300 Inferno t-shirts were distributed on the Natchitoches campus and another 150 Inferno t-shirts were distributed to first-year students at the Alexandria, Leesville, and Shreveport off-campus instructional sites.

Decision, Action or Recommendation: In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the Director will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive improvement: Utilize ID swipers for more accurate data of attendees for survey purposes, work with student and faculty/staff focus groups to evaluation programming initiatives, increase first-year programming on off-campus instructional sites, and increase marketing strategies such as Mongoose texting.

SO 2. Parents participating in the University's First Year Experience will be satisfied with the program and services offered.

Measure 2.1 Ninety percent (90%) of parents will be very satisfied with program and services stating, "Very Satisfied" as measured by a satisfaction survey. DATA: Parent Connection Evaluations Summer 2021

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis: In the AC 2019-2020, the target was not met as only 78% of parents indicated they were "very satisfied" with the programs and services provided during the virtual summer orientation parent program. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results the following plan of action was implemented: Utilizing feedback from faculty, staff and administrators to improve the content of the program and relevant programming was evaluated and improved. As a result of these changes, in the AC 2020-2021, the target was not met. Only 70% of parents indicated they were "very satisfied" with the programs and services provided during AC 2020-2021 Freshman Connection.

Action: In AC 2020-2021 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the Parent Connection program will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement: utilize digital surveys, email again to all parents after program has concluded, and call registered parents along with sending an email prior to the session they are attending. These changes will improve communication with the parents prior to them arriving on campus and will facilitate opportunities for more resources and connections for parents and their students.

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

SO 3. Training of select students will allow them to coordinate, lead, and facilitate First Year Experience activities.

Measure 3.1. At least 100 students will volunteer to participate in the selection process for orientation leaders understanding only 30 are selected. DATA: Fall 2020 Freshman Connector Informational Meetings/Applications/Interviews

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met with 124 students attending the informational sessions and 112 submitting applications. The target was achieved with increased marketing and an emphasis on utilizing a text message platform. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results the First Year Experience staff made the following changes in AC 2020-2021: Utilizing social media and student messenger to disseminate information. As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021 the target was not met. A total of 82 students attended at least one of the informational sessions on becoming a Freshman Connector and 67 completed the application. The changes that were implemented did not reach as many students as the changes that were made in AC 2019-2020.

Decision, Action or Recommendation: In AC 2020-2021 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of AC 2020-2021, the director will implement the following initiatives to drive the cycle of improvement AC 2021-2022. Expand the outreach to students through different platforms of social media, create marketing resources, and begin the outreach process earlier in the fall semester. These changes will improve the recruitment strategy for recruiting and identifying students to serve as Freshman Connectors and in other First Year Experience leadership positions.

Measure 3.2. Ninety-five percent (95%) of volunteers will attend the required activity training. DATA: Orientation Leader Training (OR 1100), Retreat Evaluations, and Orientation Leader Outcomes Pres and Post Test 2021.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, 100% (24) orientation leaders attended training and the target was met. A pre- and post-test for leadership readiness, the addition of more life skills development, participating in a semester-long course, Orientation 1100, and more than 100 hours of out-of-class activities to supplement the experience were used to reach the previous assessment cycle target. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the First Year Experience staff implemented additional training to address the current critical areas of programming for first-year students for AC 2020-2021. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest across the country, an even greater focus was put on inclusion and diversity training and healthcare and mental health. As a result of these changes, in the AC 2020-2021, the target was met. All orientation leaders (25), student coordinators (2), and Demon Volunteers (33) attended training prior to the Freshman Connection orientation programs.

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

Action: In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the director will review all existing programs and services for new students and will implement revised training and development programs for all volunteers and staff in AC 2021-2022. These changes will improve competence in student leaders when working with other students, faculty, staff, and parents. Revised training will facilitate a working and communicative relationship between all students that make up the volunteer teams and will provide them with the resources and information needed to form decisions on their own.

First Year Experience Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1. Students who participate in the President's Leadership Program will be able to apply foundational leadership concepts, develop a personal leadership philosophy, become self-aware, understand the dynamics of decision-making, become involved in the community, and engage in a positive - inclusive learning experience.

Measure 1.1. Ninety-five percent (95%) of students will respond they "Strongly Agree" that their expectation of this program was met. DATA: Spring 2021 President's Leadership Program Evaluations

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was not met. Only 84% of participants indicated that they "Strongly Agree" that expectations of the President's Leadership Program were met. However, 99% of students indicated that they "strongly agree or agree" that expectations were met. The end of year experience evaluations indicated that students were engaged in the process and there was a strong interest to do more on campus and in the community. The NSU Leadership Certificate was not implemented. The Sophomore Experience was in a research phase; however, it did not gain momentum. The pre-survey/instrument to assess a student's likelihood to engage was not identified. A revised recruitment plan was put in place.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, the program director implemented the following changes in AC 2020-2021. Weekly meetings with the peer mentors were established. A mid-year survey was administered to all participants at the end of the fall 2020 semester. The program director collaborated with the peer mentors and determined seven (7) students were ineligible to continue in the program for spring 2021, due to lack of interest and engagement. Retention of participants from fall to spring was 80%, with only two (2) students not returning to the University for the spring semester. All other students not continuing in the program were related to class conflicts, and/or lack of interest in continuing in the program.

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021 the target was not met. We found that while 98 – 100% of program participants strongly agreed or agreed that their expectations of the program were met in every component of the program, however, there were categories where only 87% of participants indicated that they strongly agreed. Surveys were completed by all 56 program participants. This number is down from 87 participants in 2019-2020, due to the smaller number of students that could be accommodated.

Decision, Action, or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021 the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the director will make improvements in the recruitment and interview process for first-year students interested in the program. The director will work with the PLP Mentors to implement new initiatives, opportunities for engagement, and develop new programming to address all areas of the expected outcomes. The director will also develop learning outcomes for the PLP Mentors.

Measure 1.2. Sixty percent (60%) are engaged in campus activities in a leadership role by the end of their first year. DATA: Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 President's Leadership Program Evaluations

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met with 90% of the students participating in the President's Leadership Program indicating that they had assumed leadership roles in over 44 recognized student organizations.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, small group discussions with the peer mentors were implemented at least once a week to help participants identify opportunities for campus involvement and engagement.

As a result of these changes, in AY 2020-2021, the target was met. 98% of students (55) reported engagement in campus life programs and student organizations, and 80% (45 participants) had assumed a leadership role in at least one student organization, or program by the end of the spring semester.

Decision, Action or Recommendation: In AC 2020-2021 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the following actions will be taken to continue making campus leadership and engagement a priority for the President's Leadership Program participants. The program director will recruit a diverse group of peer mentors who are engaged in a variety of campus programs. Mentors will provide timely information on opportunities for engagement in student organizations, activities,

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

and events. Additional information on service opportunities, recruitment, and organizational browse events will be provided to all participants.

SLO 2. Each student will complete a Community Impact Project incorporating the lessons learned in the program.

Measure 2.1. Students will attain a minimum score of 80 on their Community Impact Project per a multi-component grading scale. DATA: Spring 2021 President's Leadership Program student reflections, course grades, class presentations, and mentor reflections on the Community Impact Projects

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met with 97% of the students achieving a minimum score of 80 or higher on the Community Impact Project. The program director assisted students with selecting projects that have a sustainable impact on the community versus those programs with a one-time impact. The final program surveys indicated that 85% of students gained insight and understanding throughout the project and 85% indicated significant growth and personal development in leadership development through their Community Impact Project. The Community Impact Project group presentations, mentor feedback and student reflections were also used for evaluating the program. In AC 2019-2020 data, students indicated a preference for engaging in the impact projects earlier.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, the Community Impact Project process was introduced earlier in the program for AC 2020-2021. Beginning in the fall semester, additional time was allowed for group discussion, project research, and planning. Alumni and community agency representatives participated in class discussions and provided additional information on the concept of servant leadership.

As a result, in AC 2020-2021, the Community Impact Projects were introduced earlier in the curriculum, allowing more time for students to collaborate on sustainable projects. Although there were numerous challenges in working with community agencies, several were identified for spring 2021 projects. In one area of the multi-component scale used for students assessing their project, Community Partnerships, only 73% of students indicated that collaboration between the community partner and student group was excellent. However, 98% indicated that there was excellent/very good collaboration and interaction.

Decision, Action or Recommendation:

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the program director will meet with community leaders to identify potential new partners. Additional information on effective committee planning will be presented earlier in the program. Invite alumni and community representatives to speak on the importance of community service and

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

servant leadership. Elevate the weekly meetings with peer mentors with more intentional dialogue.

Measure 2.2. Ninety percent (90%) of projects will be sustainable through infrastructure and community commitment as judged by a focus group of faculty, peer mentors, and community representatives. DATA: Spring 2021 President's Leadership Program Experience Community Impact Projects and Class Presentations

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, nine (9) Community Impact Projects were identified as sustainable in the Natchitoches Community and the target was met. Although the community-based service fair was not held in the fall semester due to COVID-19 restrictions and community agencies were not open to outside visitors due to the pandemic protocols, students found a way to make the projects work. The data suggested that 74% of the participants recognized that their work met an actual need in the community and 86% gained insight and understanding through reflection of their work on the Community Impact Project. 86% of students indicated significant growth or personal development in their leadership journey. Increased time with the peer mentor allowed for more in-depth small group discussions, as many of the projects were suspended due to the pandemic restrictions placed on community agencies.

Also based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 data, a stronger focus was placed on the service initiative in 2020-2021.

As a result, in 2020-2021, 75% of the participants engaged in the [1 of 7] service kickoff in the fall, leading up to the community service component of the program. In the spring 2021, seven (7) Community Impact Projects were implemented, and all were identified as sustainable to the Natchitoches community:

- Literacy
- Mental Health
- Veterans/Military
- Youth Programs – The Little Demons
- Sexual Assault Awareness
- Citizens with Special Needs – A Very Exceptional Festival
- Senior Citizens

Participant surveys indicated that 80% indicated significant growth or personal development. It was determined through class and small group discussions that while some projects may have a greater impact, all were worthwhile and sustainable. Another observation was the early struggles the groups had with community partners, as many

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

agencies were not open to outside visitors. Several groups had to abandon the initial project and start over with a new project and partner.

Decision, Action or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the program director will introduce the topic of servant leadership at the PLP Emerging Leaders Day programs for prospective students. The President’s Leadership Program website and publications will continuously be revised to incorporate major components of the program. In addition, discussions with community leaders and agency representatives will take place earlier in the program to identify new partners and opportunities.

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

SO or SLO	Measure	Key Evidence
SO 1	1.2	The FYE Staff created additional orientation program initiatives with the FC 2.0 program held in August to compliment the summer virtual 2020 Freshman Connection program. 42% of all first-year students (including off-campus instructional sites and online students) attended.
SO 1	1.2	Hosted a COVID compliant New Student Convocation in August with 45% (680 of 1,518) of first-year students attending.
SO 1	1.2	Hosted/Facilitated the 2020 Demon Days Welcome with more than 70 collaborative campus and community partners: offering more than 120 programs, activities, and services. More than 220 student volunteers were involved with program facilitation.
SO 1	1.2	Created fire marshal plans and protocols for all first-year programs that followed CDC, state, and University COVID-19 guidelines and staff.
SO 1	1.2	Over 74% of students indicated in the Freshman Connection Session surveys that they felt “a sense of pride in being a member of the ‘Demon Family’” after attending Freshman Connection.
SO 2	2.1	70% (717 of 1,023) of Parents indicated they were very satisfied with Freshman Connection / Parent Connection programming.
SO 3	3.1	Hosted a total of four informational sessions and revised the orientation leader interview process to meet COVID protocols.
SO 3	3.1	Redeveloped the Demon Volunteers program to meet the current trends of campus engagement.
SO 3	3.1	Hosted more than 30 opportunities for students to learn more about facilitating FYE programs, including

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

		the [1 of 7] service initiative, the NSU Food Pantry, Demon Days Welcome, and Demon Volunteers informational meetings.
SO 3	3.2	FYE Volunteers participated in more than 23 specialized training/development programs, including: To Be a Demon Reader's Theatre, New Student Orientation, N-Side View Day, Leadership NSU 2021, Spring Retreat, Summer Leadership Retreat, and the 16 week/3 hour Orientation Leader Course, OR 1100.
SLO 1	1.1	The President's Leadership Program (PLP) website, recruiting materials, and application process was revised.
SLO 1	1.1	Weekly meetings with the peer mentors.
SLO 1	1.2	80% of the students in the first-year President's Leadership Program have assumed leadership roles on campus; 98% involved in at least one campus organization or program.
SLO 2	2.1	The President's Leadership Program successfully implemented 7 Community Impact Projects in the spring 2021.
SLO 2	2.2	The President's Leadership Program and Alpha Lambda Delta First-Year Honor Society successfully renovated The NSU Pantry through the SGA Grant process. Students provided 1,307 volunteer service hours at The Pantry during 2020-2021.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

SO or SLO	Measure	Plan
SO 1	1.2	Reassess the goals and objectives of the First Year Involvement Challenge to foster more of an inclusive and supportive environment in a student's first year. Training student leaders that facilitate the program with more one-on-one and small group facilitation training will be key to reaching the measure of this service outcome.
SO 2	2.1	Incorporate more technology and automated programs to collect survey results from parents attending Freshman Connection to ensure a more accurate analysis of the results.
SO 2	2.1	Provide programs requested by survey feedback, such as having a campus living session for all parents to attend versus it being offered in only a breakout session. Another plan of action moving forward would

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

		be to update parents regularly through the program about what their students are taking part in as well.
SO 3	3.1	Continue to offer various days of training throughout the week that matches the schedules of students in between their classes and in the evenings.
SO 3	3.1	Expand outreach to students through different platforms such as Mongoose texting services, social media, and the NSULA marketing media pages to advertise and highlight orientation leader interviews and the benefits of becoming an orientation leader.
SLO 1	1.1	Revise the President's Leadership Program (SAHE 1020 and SAHE 1030) curriculum with a focus on the expected outcomes and lessons, projects, and activities that specifically address each component of the program.
SLO 1	1.1	Implement a retreat or workshop for the PLP Mentors prior to fall.
SLO 1	1.1	Develop learning outcomes for the PLP Mentors.
SLO 2	1.1	Introduce campus leadership opportunities earlier in the program by providing timely information on events, activities, and programs available to first-year students.
SLO 2	2.1	Identify new community partners for involvement in the Community Impact Project component. Invite alumni and community representatives to speak on the importance of service and servant leadership.

Source Map: Freshman Connection 2.0 – Fall 2020; Freshman Connection Registrations Statistics 1999-2020; New Student Convocation RSVPs Fall 2020; Inferno T-Shirts at Pep Rally; Parent Connection Evaluations Summer 2021; Fall 2020 Freshman Connector Informational Meetings/Applications/Interviews; Orientation Leader Training (OR 1100), Retreat Evaluations, and Orientation Leader Outcomes Pre and Post-Test Spring 2021; Spring 2021 President's Leadership Program Experience Evaluations; Spring 2020-2021 President's Leadership Program Experience, Course Grades, Class Presentations, Student Reflections, and Mentor Reflections on the Community Impact Projects; President's Leadership Program Spring 2021 rubric for assessing the Community Impact Projects