

Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

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 programming 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 2019-2020 the target was not met. There was a vast decrease from the previous 1515 to 1401 in Fall of 2020, by 114 students or -7.5%. Based on the analysis of these results, an overhaul in recruiting tactics, strategies and implementation would be needed in unprecedented times.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 recruiting strategies for Fall 2021 will be to develop a communications plan throughout the year with mail, email, social media, texting, and other platforms. Metrics and data analytics will also be utilized through the new software implementation of Banner of Recruit, and Ellucian product. This software will allow our recruiters to better analyze where students are located in our funnel of the recruiting process to help ascertain which students need to be reached out to at certain pivotal points throughout the year based on what the student has accomplished with the admissions process. Between better management of data, data driven decisions, and better overall strategic management of where recruiters are placed throughout the year, will help increase our Freshman population. Housing has nothing to do with freshman decision rates, as we're starting to notice this year due to pandemic related issues.

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

Finding. Target met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020 the target was met. For the Fall 2020, new graduate enrollment increased from 1,067 to 1,150, or 83 students, which is +7.8%. In looking at previous analysis in 2018-2019 assessment, wrong data was utilized for results. 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 2020-2021 we were able to implement aggressive marketing strategies to reach students who were interested in graduate level programming. It was also very helpful in this market that we added additional degree plans and emphasis areas.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 we will enhance the recruiting efforts for programs that are drawing new graduate students. We will be proactive in pursuing students to enroll at NSU, instead of waiting for them to find us. To accomplish this, we must understand our demographic data, and where we're finding our current graduate students. In looking at the data, a few plans were formalized: In Education, Student Affairs and Higher Education students will be found by marketing to the new admissions counselors around the state and mining orientation leader senior lists from ULS schools. Further within Education, we will better market the Flat Rate Tuition program (PREP) on social media and billboards and to state lists of uncertified teachers. We will set up virtual fairs with school districts around the state to push PREP and Traditional Masters and Doctorate pathways. In Nursing, we will continue to push the Flat Rate RN to BSN program just like PREP. We also look to step up partnerships with more hospitals within the region to push other program. In areas like Art, Computer Information Systems, and Homeland Security, professional organization lists will be purchased in order to market to "low-hanging fruit". Several presentations were made to the Graduate Council in order to obtain the data needed to pursue fresh leads like the aforementioned programs.

Measure 1.3. The student body will be representative of university's regions in terms of diversity.

Finding. Target not met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020 the target was met. In the fall of 2019, we enrolled 58 of the 65 parishes, which was 2 parishes less than the prior year. In 2020, we enrolled 52 of the 65 parishes, with is a further 6 less parishes than the previous year. This is most likely due to the fact that students wanted to stay closer to home through the new landscape of the global pandemic. Further analysis will need to be done other than geographic representation of parish to determine the student body's diversity as it relates to the university and region.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 this measure will include more information other than geographic location of parish to determine diversity as noted in the Analysis. We will also look at race and ethnicity (which are both self-disclosed) AND geographic location to determine our regional diversity. The current US Census Breakdown of Race and Hispanic Origin in Louisiana is White – 58.4%,

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Black/African American – 32.8%, Hispanic or Latino – 5.3%, Asian – 1.8%, 2 or more Races – 1.8%, American Indian or Pacific Islander - .9%. Our target will be met when our student body diversity mirrors our state’s diversity in racial and ethnic breakdown and when all parishes are represented in our student body. As it relates to out of state, our territories have expanded to include South Arkansas, West Mississippi, and more schools in East Texas. New border discounts will be created and attempted with Arkansas and Mississippi to help attract students. We will look to diversity rich programs like Call Me MISTER and TRIO and Student Support Services to home in African American Students, along with a strategic school initiative to focus on Black Male students. We will also utilize the upcoming Native American Studies Concentration and updated application verbiage to include tribal designation to help focus on Native American and American Indian Students. Early determination can help with more federal and state aid focused on American Indian students. We look to develop similar programs for Asian and Hispanic students as well. We will also continue to push for males in traditional female programs like Nursing and Education.

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 the campus tour surveys for the fall of 2020, in AC year 2020-2021, seniors overall stated that 89.4% strongly agreed the events were helpful and 96.3% agreed or strongly agreed the event was helpful.

Action. In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the results in AC 2019-2020 for the next recruiting cycle, tour guides were given additional training. In AC 2020-2021, the entire Ambassador program was overhauled with training in class and out of class, as well as being more selective for touring. The office reverted back to only recruiters doing tours when in town, and only key students giving tours when not. This seemed to help dramatically.

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. For fall 2020, an average of 99% of students and parents indicated that the tour guide was knowledgeable. This question was reworded in last year’s evaluation cycle to include

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questions specific to financial aid and the admissions process. In previous measurements the surveys did not address these specific areas.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 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. We look to incorporate financial aid full time staff members in this process as well.

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.

Analysis. 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. In fall of 2020 enrollment increased by 8, or 1.5%. The goal was not met but was only missed by .5%. As more students in Louisiana are pushed to the junior and community college, the university is developing more articulation agreements. As more of those agreements are made, more strategy will be made to focus on those key demographics that are affected.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 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 2022.

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 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. With the same tactics in AC 2019-2020, the ACT for fall 2020 decreased to 20.3, which is a decrease of -1.52. Due to a new rule implementation from the Board of Regents, a student could potentially get into NSU without having to take the ACT, which effected our average. 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 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 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

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Louisiana Scholars' College at Northwestern State. Our goal for ACT 2020-21 was 40, and the goal was hit at 44. That goal will be increased to 60 next year, and a new measure will be created.

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, Louisiana Scholars' College and the student ambassador program.

Finding. Target met.

Analysis. In 2019-2020, 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. In 2019-2020, the target was 140 at was met. There were 81 PLP students, 24 Ambassadors, and 38 Scholars' students, for a total of 143, which is 3 over the total needed.

Action. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 moving forward, we will strive to recruit more students to all the aforementioned programs in the measure through tactics previously discussed.

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Reworked Assistant Director position to now include marketing and events to help with assessment, data, and logistics.

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- Started Banner Recruit implementation to create first ever CRM for Recruiting to help with data, analytics, and recruiting strategy.
- Redeveloped all recruiting materials to be more cohesive, less wordy, and more attractive.
- Implemented ability to hold virtual recruiting events, and a real time solution to meet in one-on-one virtual meetings.
- Developed social media calendars to enhance strategy and campaigns from recruiting office to be geared towards goals.

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. A new culture is being developed in the office to allow for competition in a friendly environment to help foster growth in numbers, but in a supportive way. If we can't compete in a supportive way, then we'll never grow.

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