

# Assessment Cycle 2020-2021

## Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships

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### **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 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.

### **Enrollment Management:**

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

### **Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships Mission:**

Our mission is to find the best possible aid package for a diverse student body to enable each of our students the financial ability to achieve their educational goal. Our office offers a wide variety of programs that are available from federal, state, and institutional funds under the general headings of loans, grants, third party funds and work opportunities. The Office of Financial Aid will keep students informed of all current federal regulations and changes in those regulations. We are dedicated in providing all students and their families with counseling and the services necessary to gain access to educational funds by promoting financial aid awareness, ensuring compliance with federal, state and institutional regulations and guidelines, while committing to honesty, fairness, equality and integrity in all aid awarded to all students of our university. We will be a leader among our campus community for high quality and innovative student

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services, which includes a more effective use of technology for both our processing and communication with students.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the director.
- (2) The director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met:
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required (show cause).
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff, will determine and propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships Effectiveness  
Service Outcomes:

### Service Outcomes:

**SO 1.** *Achieve 100% satisfaction rate with students for services provided.*

#### Measure 1.1.

Our office strives to, not only accomplish our duties accurately and efficiently, but to achieve complete satisfaction with each student that we assist. A student survey was used to determine a base satisfaction rate, so that we can determine what areas of service in need of improvement. We will give the students a chance to provide feedback on ways they feel our office could improve. This data will help us to strengthen areas of weakness within our procedures, so that we may better serve each one of our students and improve our satisfaction rate beyond just an acceptable rate of 75%, until we meet our target of 100% satisfaction.

**Finding:** Target was not met

**Analysis:** The 2018-2019 target was not met. However, the satisfaction rate increased by 9.64% to 89.7% with 824 surveys completed. The 2019-2020 target was also not met with an 83% satisfaction rate and 553 survey completions. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the customer satisfaction survey was enhanced to better capture areas needing improvement. As a result, in 2021-2021 we received a total of 380 surveys and an overall satisfaction rate of 77.89%. This is a decrease in the total

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number of surveys completed and our satisfaction rate decreased by 5.11% from the 2019-2021 year.

**Decision** – Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships will use the information received on the survey to continue to improve on customer satisfaction within office interactions with potential and incoming students, current and transferring students, and parents. Satisfaction surveys will be included in all emails to students by staff within the Office of Student Financial Aid as well as all Financial Aid events. An in-office survey box is utilized to allow surveys to be completed within our office. During 2021-2022 survey request will be provided during all in person events as we continue to strive to reach our goal of 100% satisfaction rate. Data will be used to determine areas of customer service interactions that may need additional training for staff members through various in-service programs throughout Enrollment Management areas.

### Measure 1.2.

To better assist students and help them understand the rules and regulations of what is required of our office, we aim to improve job performance of all our financial aid administrators. To accomplish this, our office administrators will receive continued training and education through the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Credentialing. Currently, eight (8) out of the fifteen (15) employees in the Financial Aid Office have two or more credentials through the NASFAA Credentialing Service. Our target is to have 100% of Financial Aid Administrators credentialed in all areas of financial aid services. This will increase the satisfaction rate by ensuring that our employees are able to offer the most current and accurate information to students and parents.

**Finding:** Target was not met

**Analysis:** In 2019-2020 seven employees received a total of 10 credentials due to funding availability through the Budget Enhancement process. During 2020-2021 no credentials were pursued due to lack of funding.

**Decision** – Decision or Recommendation: In 2020-2021 the target was not met. As a result, we will complete the Budget Enhancement Proposal Request for the 2021-2022 award year to allow our Financial Aid Administrators to continue with Credentialing opportunities. There are nine Financial Aid administrators who will pursue a total of 17 separate credential titles each for a total of 153 credentials. These credentialing tests consist of attending National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators classes and completing the credential test for each topic. Currently we have nine employees that have completed a total of 37 credentials. Our office will focus on completing additional credentialing courses through online trainings as funding becomes available.

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**SO 2.** *Increase Financial Aid Requirements Awareness to students by increasing workshops, presentations, and notifications.*

### **Measure 2.1.**

Increase the number of students receiving Financial Aid information to a broader populace of the student body. Present and host informational opportunities for students to inform them of the financial aid process. The target is to conduct six sessions, three per semester.

**Finding:** Target was not met

**Analysis:** In 2018-2019 we completed 5 financial aid informational sessions. In 2019-2020 we conducted 4 informational sessions. During the 2020-2021 only one in-person session was conducted due to the novel Coronavirus and the disruption of in-person campus events. As restrictions started to ease, we were able to conduct one in-person session at Spring NSide View.

**Decision – Decision or Recommendation:** Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, in 2021-2022 we hope to combine the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 events and any other events created to increase informational opportunities giving students every possibility to learn the importance of the financial aid requirements and responsibilities. For the 2021- 2022 academic year we will reach out to all departments campus wide to allow us to present financial aid materials to students both in person and virtually.

### **Measure 2.2**

Create a more tangible awareness of the Financial Aid Requirements, Federal Regulations and School policy to the student body through presentations, workshops and student notifications. Our target is to increase presentations, workshops and student notifications each year, until we reach a minimum of 75% of student organizations and athletic groups.

**Finding:** Target was not met

**Analysis:** In 2018-2019 the target was to increase our presentation to reach a minimum of 75% of students. Although we presented to 20 orientation classes, athletic student programming, housing events First Year Experience students, Louisiana Gear Up, Student Support Services and High school events we did not reach the 75% target. During the 2019-2020 year, our office provided Financial Aid requirements and policies to 20 orientation classes, including Shreveport and Leesville campuses. In addition,

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information was also provided during athletic student programming, Housing events, First Year Experience students and High schools events throughout Natchitoches parish. During 2020-2021 in person presentations were limited due to the novel Coronavirus. Although we presented in-person to one orientation class, New Student Orientation, and Freshman Connectors, our presentations were created in a virtual format and published not only on our website, but also through email to students and parents. To date, the virtual Financial Aid Overview has 850 views, which is well below our targeted 75% of student organizations.

**Decision – Decision or Recommendation:** In 2020-2021 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results we will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive improvement with our outreach. We will provide our virtual presentation to all students via email as well as resume our in-person events, such as FAFSA Bingo, Housing events, athletic student programming, Creative and Performing Arts Departments and local High school events.

### Measure 2.3

A Financial Aid knowledge questionnaire for students to complete each academic year to use the data, from year to year, to track the improvement of Financial Aid knowledge and awareness. We can also use the information to determine what areas we need to focus on in the presentations and workshops mentioned in Measure 2.1 Our target is to have students score 85% or higher on accurate responses received through the questionnaire.

**Finding:** Target was not met

**Analysis:** In 2018-2019 the target was to determine areas of focus to help students understand the complexity of the financial aid process. Our FAFSA Bingo event allowed our office to provide detailed information to students regarding all aspects of financial aid requirements. The financial aid knowledge questionnaire was not provided to students during the event. Due to the novel Coronavirus and the disruption of campus services during 2019-2020, our FAFSA bingo event was cancelled, and the financial aid knowledge questionnaire was not made available to students. In 2020-2021 we provided a survey to all students requesting feedback on items of interest that could be used to provide additional processes that could help students understand the financial aid processes. Unfortunately, the survey only resulted in 203 responses from students.

**Decision – Decision or Recommendation:** Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results in 2021-2022 we anticipate adding additional workshop opportunities to reflect positively on the next financial aid knowledge survey, as we strive to reach and exceed our goal of 85% accurate response rate. To achieve a greater student response, we will provide virtual sessions on topics of interest that were received from the survey, which

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will include FAFSA completion, Types of Federal Aid, Cost of Attendance, Summer Aid eligibility, Satisfactory Academic Progress, Return to Title IV and the Verification process. Each mini session will be provided to students via email, social media and housed on our website for access. We will also collaborate with University 1000 courses to complete financial aid knowledge survey during our presentations regarding policies and federal regulations. Financial Aid knowledge questionnaires will be provided within the office and at all in person events.

### **SO 3. Decrease Cohort Default Rate**

#### **Measure 3.1.**

Increase contact and notifications with students who have either graduated or ceased half-time enrollment. Our goal is to increase the number of completed exit counseling sessions to a minimum of 75% completion. We will do this by reaching out to all students who have graduated or ceased half-time enrollment and have not completed the exit counseling.

**Finding:** Target was not met

**Analysis:** For the 2018-2019 award year students were notified through electronic means and only 337 of the 1594 (21%) students who have an exit counseling requirement completed this requirement. For 2019-2020 only 172 students out of the 1513 students required to complete Exit requirements have completed the process. This 11% completion rate is 10% lower than the prior year completion rate and falls below the 75% completion rate. For 2020-2021 students were provided exit counseling requirements through Grad Fest to 80 students individually. We also emailed directly to 952 graduating seniors detailed information regarding Exit requirements and repayment options for their student loan debt. Students are also notified through our automated email process every 21 days until requested items are satisfied. As a result, only 286 students of the 1728 students required to complete EXIT requirements have completed the process. This 16% completion rate is a 5% increase to the prior year, it still falls well below our 75% targeted completion rate.

**Decision – Decision or Recommendation:** Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results in 2021-2022 our office will remove the exit-counseling requirements from the generic “unsatisfied requirement” email and create and “action required” specific email regarding the completion of the exit counseling. We will attach a follow up email every 21 days for student who do not complete the requirement after the first notification.

**Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results:** Based on the analysis of 2019-2020 results the following represents evidence of improvement based on those results in 2020-2021.

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- Based on the comparison from the 2019-2020 customer service survey, Financial Aid revealed an overall 77.89% for the 2020-2021 satisfaction rate. Although this is a decrease, our office strived to make each financial aid experience positive for our students. We worked to help students understand that satisfaction surveys are needed to help with individual experiences and not regarding the policies that are implemented.
- Although funding was not made available during 2020-2021 for credentialing opportunities, the Financial Aid office has completed a total of 37 credentialing topics. We will complete Budget Enhancement Request to secure additional funds to allow for future credentialing opportunities.
- The Financial Aid Office conducted one informational session during the spring term. Campus restrictions due to the novel Coronavirus pandemic required multiple on campus events to be cancelled, keeping us from meeting our goal. Social distancing requirements that were in effect for the 2020-2021-year required us to present virtual presentations to allow students to receive pertinent financial aid information.
- Individual email notices were sent to 952 graduating students regarding loan repayment and exit counseling requirements. Students are notified of exit counseling requirements at the time the student has ceased enrollment and will be notified every 21 days until they completed the Exit requirements.

**Plan of action:** The Office of Student Financial Aid will work to find ways to encourage students to complete survey data and participate in events that is needed to increase our satisfaction rate. We will request funding through the Budget Enhancement Proposal Request as funding is available to continue with credentialing opportunities. We will begin offering in person financial aid knowledge surveys during all Financial Aid events to allow our staff to answer any questions a student might have. Departments throughout campus will be contacted to determine all events that the Office of Financial Aid could provide Financial Aid information for students. The Financial Aid office will remove the exit-counseling requirements from the generic “unsatisfied requirement” email and create an “action required” specific email regarding the completion of the exit counseling. We will attach a follow up email every 21 days for student who do not complete the requirement after the first notification.