

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

Program: Bachelor of Science (BS) in UPSA (256)

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

College: Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern 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.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs. The School of Social Sciences and Applied Sciences at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, history, public safety, law, and public service.

Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service the School produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and a driving force in the economic development and improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. The School delivers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and History and Bachelor of Science degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration with concentrations in Law Enforcement Administration, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, Public Facilities Management, Nuclear Surety and Geo-Measurement. Certificate programs in Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies and Public Policy, Remote Systems Science and Technology and Administration are also offered. Minors offered include Pre-law and Paralegal Studies, Black Studies, Creole Studies, and American Indian/Indigenous Studies. The School also offers a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security and a Post-master's certificate in Global Security and Intelligence.

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Unified Public Safety Administration Mission Statement: The Unified Public Safety Administration program strives to develop students with an appreciation for the complexities of homeland security organizations, leadership, policies, ethics, and challenges through the review of pertinent literature, critical and synthetic thinking, research, and reflective analysis and assessment. The bachelor degree in Unified Public Safety Administration is unique in that it teaches students to develop plausible resolutions to the risks and threats currently challenging emergency response personnel through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences preparing graduates for life and career success in the expanding occupational field of emergency management in the public and private sectors. Courses are designed with the present and future administrator or leader in mind having direct application to the challenges of emergency management and public safety.

Purpose: The Unified Public Safety Administration program will prepare students for entry-level positions or advancement of current positions to leadership positions of greater responsibility in government and the private sector. They will do so with the ability to comprehend, influence, create, and respond to public safety policies from national, state, and local levels. The program will also prepare interested students for the pursuit of further/advanced degrees in Homeland Security, Emergency Management, Political Science, or Strategic Leadership at this or other institutions.

Methodology: The assessment process for the UPSA program is as follows:

- 1) Data from assessment tools (both direct or indirect, quantitative or qualitative) are collected by the Program Coordinator.
- 2) The Program Coordinator will analyze the data to determine if students have met measurable outcomes.
- 3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty and Director.
- 4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core and supporting courses if required (show cause).
- 5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the UPSA Advisory Committee and Director, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. First, second, and third-semester students will be able to describe the historical evolution and context of early Unified Public Safety Administration, domestic homeland security practices and challenges, hazards, risks, and the resources present in public safety preparedness and responses.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 2400: Introduction to Corporate and Municipal Emergency Management

UPSA 2550: Hazards Risk Assessment Methods

UPSA 2700: Planning and Decision-Making in Public Organizations

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Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, when offered, students enroll in UPSA 2400, 2550, and 2700 (all required courses for UPSA majors) will complete course assignments designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, challenges, and applications of emergency management principles. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to describe a basic understanding of these by scoring 70% or higher on all assignments of the course. Weekly worksheets from the two courses offered during the evaluation period will be used to make this decision. Weekly exercises from UPSA 2550 and UPSA 2700 will be used to measure the application of emergency management principles using the same metric.

Findings: Target not measured.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Nine of eleven students ($9/11 = 81.8\%$) met the required performance level, thereby exceeding the 75% threshold for the standard. Students exceeding the threshold did so throughout the semester. Students were able to use correct terminology and present understanding of the underlying principles of course content. For the two courses offered, grades and scores throughout the course were higher than normal.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was not measured, as none of the three courses for SLO 1 were offered. UPSA 2400, UPSA 2500 and UPSA 2700 were not in the course rotation for this reporting period.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met due to a lack of data. In AC 2026-2027, course materials will be examined for the inclusion of content as appropriate, consistent with university standards, curricular elements of cultural representation, equity, disparity, compassion within the subject matter, and to ensure content in this rapidly evolving subject matter is representative of the best current practices. The target for the objective will be examined for revision, if needed.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a course project/writing assignment in which they are required to research and submit academic research or service-learning projects in each course. This research project will be responsive to the research project requirements developed with the faculty responsible for the course and will evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of while working with a community partner as they meet the requirements set for the research project which contributes to the safety of the community. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

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UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, one hundred percent (100%) of students (7 of 7) completed the capstone projects and courses properly presenting the critical-thinking expectations specified in the objective. Students were able to complete projects enhancing public safety by working with a community partner. Projects were again diverse and unique and met with an identified need to achieve the goals of the partner and the partner's purpose. In UPSA 4700 (a capstone companion course), one hundred percent (100%) of students (1 of 1) completed the capstone projects and showed critical thinking skills specified in the objectives of the courses. All students (100%) who completed the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management or private sector situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards. Senior seminar projects continue to be impressive individual feats and allow "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. New reflection exercises incorporated diverse elements into the curriculum.

During AC 2024-2025, the two courses tied to this objective were offered - UPSA 4700 in Fall 2024 and UPSA 4480 in both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters. Given that these courses constitute the capstone experience for this degree, these results were not surprising. Senior seminar projects continue to be impressive individual feats and allow "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. Dialectic discussions and interviews were added to UPSA 4480.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the staff made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. A new system of evaluation was tested during this reporting period, in which verbal discussions triangulated to the individual project. Additionally, course objectives of courses in the UPSA curriculum and personal experiences in and during the course and prior learning experiences were joined to assess the students' understanding of the project from the perspective of the community partner. This modification proved successful as it fostered deeper understanding of the project and will be maintained along with elements of evaluation from the previous reporting period.

Presenting critical-thinking expectations are specified in the objective and discussing perspectives of other stakeholders of events and venues. Students were able to complete projects enhancing public safety by working with a community partner. Projects were again diverse and unique and met an identified need to achieve the goals of the partner and the partner's purpose. In UPSA 4700 (a capstone companion course), one hundred percent (100%) of students (1 of 1) completed the capstone projects and showed critical thinking skills specified in the objectives of the courses. All students (100%) who completed the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management or private sector situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards. Senior seminar projects were impressive individual feats and allowed "live work" to be accomplished in community settings. New reflection exercises incorporated diverse elements into the curriculum.

As a result of these changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met. One hundred percent (100%) of students (7 of 7) who completed the capstone projects and courses properly presented the critical-thinking expectations specified in the objective. Students were able to complete projects enhancing public safety by working with a community partner producing "live

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work” projects benefiting the employer’s place of work and indirectly enhancing public safety.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2026-2027. The faculty will revise the curriculum incorporating these changes into future evaluation periods. Additionally, the faculty will revise the curriculum delivery to include a restructuring of UPSA 4480 to refine restructured descriptive and guided discussions to replace a formal presentation.

SLO 2. Senior students will know the role and functions of the various agencies, laws, standards, risks, threats, tasks, and assignments in a comprehensive capstone exercise developed in conjunction with a community partner. The Senior Seminar course will include research, application, or analysis from all UPSA core courses.

Course Map: Tied to the course syllabus

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from the required courses listed above will be evaluated using a standardized research paper rubric by a panel of faculty members through the University of Louisiana Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, or a formal presentation to UPSA faculty. The papers and/or projects will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate basic knowledge of fundamental principles of emergency management, laws, practices, and procedures. The target is that at least 80% of students sampled will score 75% or higher on the evaluation.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: The target for AC 2024-2025 was met. All students (100%, 7 of 7) met the standard making a presentation to an appropriate audience. The definition of an acceptable presentation audience was expanded to include NSU Faculty to allow for presentation opportunities to those students unable to attend a professional or academic conference.

Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the following changes were implemented in 2025-2026. Faculty added didactic discussion work as an acceptable alternative and added the element of spontaneous interaction rather than a prepared/scripted presentation, as not all students were able to coordinate live presentations with scheduled options.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of these results, the faculty will make the following changes in 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. More structured and didactic discussions will take place throughout the semester, with questions triangulating the student project, perspectives of stakeholders, and learning objectives from core UPSA courses included. Further changes will be made developing didactic discussion of the student project or to permit a live presentation of findings to a formal academic audience or audiences of peers as well as faculty.

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Measure: 2.2. (Indirect – Attitude)

At the end of the term, students will be administered a telephone survey asking: "In my public safety administration courses, I provided a collegiate level of understanding of homeland security policy, strategy, threat assessment and trends, associated law and procedures, and how the various agencies interact across the spectrum of operations." The target is that at least 85% of students will respond that they agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. All students (7/7 = 100%) in exit interviews expressed satisfaction with the structure and level of instruction and expressed that the experience met and/or fulfilled their needs and expectations. All stated varying levels of gratitude for learning opportunities presented by the personal nature of the senior seminar. The 100% satisfaction rate exceeded the target goal of 85%.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026. The faculty redesigned the rubric for use in the evaluation of projects that went beyond the presentation itself, adding elements of discussion and spontaneous response to the presentations.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. All (7/7 = 100%) of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement. Conversations conducted as "exit interviews" with all graduating students found satisfaction with the program and, in many cases, testified to the strength of the curriculum and ability to work directly with faculty during the capstone project, insights gained from telephone discussions, and insights not found through personal research or experiences. Focuses of discussions also provided knowledge to participants beyond their personal roles in the projects and community partners.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2025-2026 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. A restructuring of the format and delivery of UPSPA 4480 will be refined with an expanded standard for oral presentation.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement Based on Analysis of Results:

The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2025-2026. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results.

Providing current information is achieved through the absence of the adoption of formal textbooks for the courses. Other benefits are lower costs for students and the ability to bypass the bookstore and more expedient delivery of content as the availability and delivery of textbooks is not an issue. Textbook selection has always been a concern for this program, finding appropriate and affordable content for students that is relevant to the course. While the university library has access to many resources, often the "best" academic sources are not available through existing university contracts, and the small enrollments of the courses do not

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justify subscriptions to these services.

- In Measure 1.1, three courses tied to the course map for this objective were not offered (UPSA 2400, UPSA 2550 and UPSA 2700) during the academic year so the outcome was not measured.
- In Measure 1.2, two courses tied to this objective were offered - UPSA 4700 in the Fall and UPSA 4480 in Fall and Spring semesters. One student was enrolled in UPSA 4700, and a total of seven students in UPSA 4480 (1 Fall and 6 Spring). For UPSA 4700, the student was successful in achieving all course measures for this course. The same was true for both offerings of UPSA 4480. Given that these courses constitute the capstone exercise for this degree, these results were not surprising. Senior seminar projects were impressive, filling with “live work” voids in operations of community partners. Newly added reflective discussions expand the critical analysis of projects by students.
- In Measure 2.1, not all students were able to coordinate live presentations with scheduled options. Faculty added didactic discussion work as an acceptable alternative and add the element of spontaneous interaction rather than a prepared scripted presentation.
- In Measure 2.2, the faculty redesigned the rubric for use in the evaluation of projects that went beyond the presentation itself, adding elements of discussion and spontaneous response to the presentations.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- In Measure 1.1, the target for the objective will remain unchanged, as none of three courses measured were offered.
- In Measure 1.2, the faculty will revise the curriculum delivery to include a restructuring of UPSA 4480 to refine restructured descriptive and guided discussions to replace a formal presentation.
- In Measure 2.1, the objective will be expanded to permit a live presentation of findings to a formal academic analysis of the project.
- In Measure 2.2, a restructuring of the format and delivery of UPSA 4480 will be refined with an expanded standard for oral presentation.
- Curriculum materials, including textbooks, will be evaluated with consideration of effectiveness, cost, appropriateness and with emphasis on review of open-source materials. The curriculum will be reviewed with consideration of merging or discontinuing specific courses. Actions will be initiated to return prior learning experience credit opportunities with procedures meeting university and recognized academic practices.
- The possibility of curricula revisions incorporating appropriate external course offerings and continuing professional education hours as components of courses for academic credit. Other parts of the university have incorporated private sector training courses into courses to assure student competence when seeking employment in the private sector.
- The faculty will assure that all UPSA objectives, standards, and degree requirements are

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consistent with the university catalog, policies of the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Social Science and Applied Programs.

- Efforts will be made to find additional student materials at no cost to the student. Textbooks meeting the need for most of the UPSA courses do not exist. In many cases selective journal and professional articles have been used. Recently more and more articles are well suited for the curriculum and course objectives are not available through the university library. NSU does not subscribe to a growing number of the major repositories of academic articles.
- This will be the first academic year where the UPSA coordinator will be following the standard curriculum load of university faculty. Some courses will accordingly be reduced in frequency of offering.
- Graduations of UPSA students have been consistent for the past decade, with an average of 8 students. Some students approaching graduation this and next year will be “traditional” campus based students for the first time in the history of the program.
- World events will be incorporated into curricula as appropriate. Major changes and challenges for public safety professionals continue to evolve daily, and the curriculum will be updated as appropriate to reflect these changes.
- Traditional campus-based students have enrolled in the program and done well. When completed, they will contribute to university's 6-year graduation measure.