

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

Information Technology Services

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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.

Information Technology Services (ITS) provides services, support, management, and administration of university-wide technology resources. The unit's goal is to ensure that technology is apparent, stable, and supportive of the campus mission and its constituents. These mentioned services must meet the requirements and expectations of the University community.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Deputy Chief Information Officer (DCIO).
- (2) The CIO and DCIO will evaluate and examine the data with the ITS staff to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met.
- (3) Findings from the assessment are to be reviewed with the appropriate personnel.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required.
- (5) The CIO and DCIO, in consultation with staff members, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, and, if necessary, changes to existing service offerings.

Information Technology Services

Service Outcomes:

SO1. Provide technical support to faculty, staff, and students to ensure their success in fulfilling their educational goals and job responsibilities.

Measure 1.1. After each closed support ticket, an email notifying the user of the closed support request includes a link to a satisfaction survey. ITS will maintain an average satisfaction rating of 90% or better.

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Finding: The target was met.

Analysis:

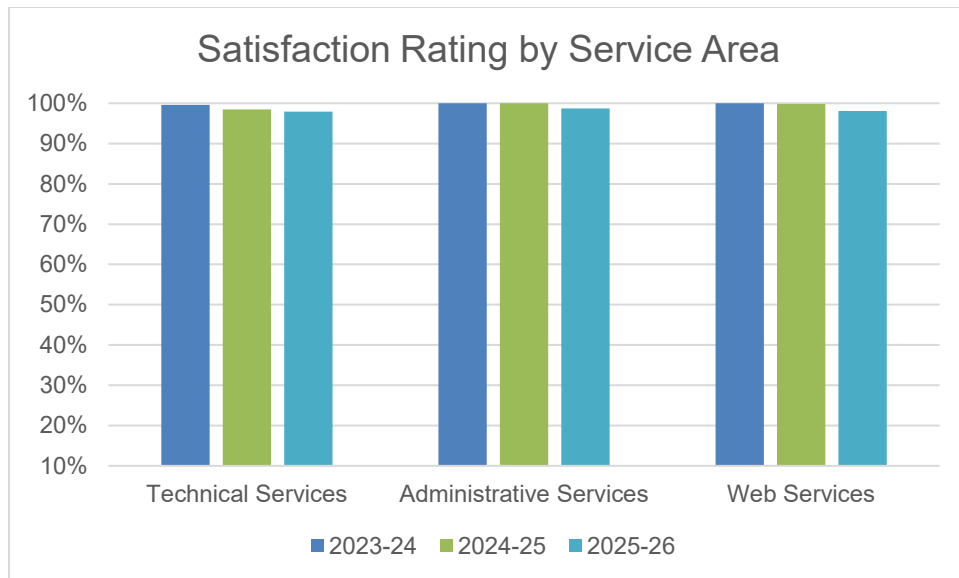
In 2024-2025, the target was met. ITS uses a service request ticket system to help route the customer's request to the appropriate service area and classify the severity of the issue. This system allows the ITS department to streamline the process and resolve high-priority issues as quickly as possible. In 2024-2025, ITS had a total of 6,519 service tickets submitted for technical assistance of some type during the academic year. After the tickets for service requests were completed, the customer received a satisfaction survey with "satisfied" or "unsatisfied" options regarding the service received. Of these tickets, ITS received 1,621 (24.87% of the population) survey responses.

Service Requests by Service Area

Service Area	Ticket Count			Survey Count			Response Rate		
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2022-23	2023-24	2025-26	2022-23	2023-24	2025-26
Technical Services	3398	4457	3570	528	1028	569	15.60%	15.54%	15.94%
Administrative Services	570	628	1389	54	104	311	11.80%	9.47%	22.39%
Academic (Web) Services	982	1434	1036	244	489	318	21.70%	24.85%	30.69%
TOTALS:	4950	6519	5995	826	1621	1198	16.69%	24.87%	19.98%

Based on the analysis of the results of 2024-2025, the staff made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. ITS focused on maintaining the survey responses while achieving a 90% or greater satisfaction rating. We made it a point to ask people to respond to the survey either at the resolution of the issue or in a follow-up message after the ticket was closed. The charts below identify the satisfaction results for each service area. In 2025-2026, ITS had a total of 5995 service tickets submitted for technical assistance of some type during the academic year. After the tickets for service requests were completed, the customer received a satisfaction survey with "satisfied" or "unsatisfied" options regarding the service received. Of these tickets, ITS received 1198 (19.98% of the population) survey responses.

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As a result of these changes, in 2025-2026 the target was met. As the data shows satisfaction rates have remained consistent and stayed well above the target.

Decision:

In 2025-2026 the target was met. Based on analysis of the 2025-2026 results, the staff will implement the following changes in 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. ITS leadership will raise the target satisfaction rating to above 95%. After this change ITS staff will focus on maintaining the new satisfaction rating above the 95% target.

Measure 1.2. The Help Desk will provide services to faculty and staff, both in-person, via email, remote assistance, and via telephone, for at least 40 hours per week during all periods that the University is officially open.

Finding: The target was met.

Analysis:

In 2024-2025 the target was met. With variations in staff schedules, the help desk has been able to provide at least 45 hours of service to the university's faculty and staff. ITS has staff members available from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Fridays.

Decision:

In 2025-2026 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2025-2026 results the ITS leadership will maintain the practice of ensuring staff schedules cover a minimum of 40 hours per week.

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SO2. Employ innovative and out-of-the-box ideas to develop and deliver technology-based services that enhance collaboration, communication, and the overall student experience at the University.

Measure 2.1. Determine the upgrade needs in the upcoming year by reviewing the current network and server infrastructure so costs can be included in both University's budgeting process.

Finding: This target was met.

Analysis:

In 2024-2025 the target was met. The ITS network team completed the deployment of a new Wi-Fi and network in Varnado Hall, and all campuses and sites are now running on Wi-Fi 6 technology. Additionally, the team secured funding to upgrade the network core, the F5 load balancer, and the Shreveport campus network. Now the team is currently expanding the network to new buildings (Alost Hall and the Athletic Health Performance addition to the Field House) and to all athletic fields. The ITS TAC team also completed the deployment of the Windows 11 operating system using existing licenses to computers across the university that were compatible. The focus will now be on keeping all computer operating systems on current supported versions.

Decision:

In 2025-2026 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the results, Technical Services was able to secure funding to refresh critical campus network infrastructure in academic across multiple campuses and the core network. Additionally, the University's data center equipment was all near or already past its projected useful life. Datacenter servers, storage, and equipment should be refreshed every 4 to 5 years. Some equipment in the NSU data center is more than 10 years old. Much of this equipment was replaced with new, more capable equipment with active support contracts. These replacements and upgrades will allow for more reliable, faster, and more capable IT services for all university populations. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the ITS staff will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. ITS will work diligently to secure additional funding for critical projects such as additional security measures and practices, more reliable power delivery systems, more reliable and higher quality HVAC systems, and additional IT or AI capabilities in the upcoming fiscal year(s).

Measure 2.2. Complete replacement of the campus telephone system.

Finding: The target was met.

Analysis:

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In 2024-2025 the target was met. 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. In 2019-2020 the pilot project Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) was considered a viable option for NSU telephony needs to replace the outdated campus telephone system. With the interruption of COVID-19 and the introduction of work-from-home requirements, discussions had turned to offering a more flexible cloud-based system that could facilitate the changing workforce environment.

ITS evaluated cloud-based telephony options and presented a summary of costs to the administration. Decisions were made to implement a Microsoft Teams Voice solution. In 2022-2023, the project was divided into three parts. Part One addressed the core voice system and brought over the university's business and academic units. Part Two concentrated on transferring the University's "service tone." Service tone would include items such as emergency call lines in elevators, fire alarm panels, and security alarm panels. Part Three addressed fax services.

Much was accomplished in 2025-2026, and the target was fully met. Implementation of the Teams VOIP solution has been deployed, users trained, Fax and service tone lines have all been transferred to new VoIP service, and the old phone system is ready to be decommissioned and sent to state surplus. Technical Services was able to follow through with implementing the Teams Voice VoIP solution. Technical Services also concluded the evaluation of solutions to transition the University's service tone from the old Nortel phone system, presenting a summary of options and costs to the administration, and implemented the desired solution.

Decision:

In 2025-2026 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. ITS has transitioned this from a project and now maintains it as a day-to-day standard operation and removes this measure from this plan.

Measure 2.3. Continuously maintain and enhance the University Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system (Banner) at 100% to ensure optimal delivery of services for the University to carry out its daily operations.

Finding: The target was met.

Analysis:

In 2024-2025 the target was met. 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. The target for 2024-2025 was to implement CRM-Recruit, Ethos,

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Degreeworks 5, FASA moderation, and keep the Banner modules and servers up to date. Banner software is mission-critical due to its ties to the essential services of the university. As a result of meeting the target, the university was able to enhance the student's ability to reliably access key information and improve the reliability, responsiveness, and security of our ERP system. It was recommended that ITS focus on two initiatives for 2024-2025 to meet the challenges of cost savings and maintenance updates. The ITS team and partners were able to find operational and licensing efficiencies by replacing the existing 21 virtual application servers with 14 newly created and updated virtual servers. Additionally, the ITS team have now updated all ERP modules and applications to current and support versions and implemented a patching plan that keeps all systems within the recommended timelines set by the manufacturers.

Decision:

In AC 2025-2026 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, ITS staff will implement the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The installation of patches, updates, and improvements on recommended manufacturer timelines ensures the continued security and stability of institutional systems. Also, ITS staff will further implement and expand Ellucian components, including CRM GradApp, Workflow, Banner Document Management, Insights, and Ellucian Experience to meet the needs of the university community.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements 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 analyzing the AC 2024-2025 results and lessons learned.

Quality Technical Support:

- Quality Technical Support to Faculty and Staff
ITS focused on requesting survey responses from end users and maintaining a 90% or greater satisfaction rating. We made it a point to ask people to respond to the survey either at the resolution of the issue or in a follow-up message after the ticket was closed. Satisfaction rates stayed well above the target of 90%.

Maintain and Enhance Technology Infrastructure:

- Upgrade Needs by reviewing Current Network and Server Infrastructure
NSU was not able to secure all the funding required to refresh the entire campus network. Instead, ITS focused on the most critical components of the network and data center during the first phase. The cost and scale of completely updating all network and data center components was too great for staff to complete in a single year. Instead, as core components of the systems have approached end

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of life ITS has been able to replace these components. During the academic year 2025-2026, ITS replaced the core network switch, the data center network, the network load balancer, data center servers, storage, backup systems, and the Shreveport campus network. ITS is on track to replace ageing equipment in the backup disaster recovery data center by end of the summer. These upgrades are not only needed to operate a stable network, but to enable NSU to adopt modern standards and infrastructure to support services.

- Campus Telephone System
Implementation of Microsoft Teams Voice cloud based VOIP solution has been successfully completed and is now part of the regular operations of the university.
- Continuously Maintain and Enhance the University Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system (Banner) at 100%
The ITS team was able to implement CRM-Recruit, Ethos, Degreeworks 5, FASA moderation, and keep the Banner modules and servers up to date during the past assessment cycle. The University's ERP software is mission-critical due to its ties to essential services across key areas of the university. As a result of meeting the target, the university enhanced the student's ability to reliably access key information and improve the reliability, responsiveness, and security of our ERP system.

Plan of action moving forward.

Quality Technical Support:

- Quality Technical Support to Faculty and Staff
IT will focus on maintaining a satisfaction rating above 95% and set a target response rate of 20% or greater. Additionally, we will hire talented and qualified staff as positions open or additional staff funding becomes available.

Maintain and Enhance Technology Infrastructure:

- Upgrade Needs by reviewing Current Network and Server Infrastructure
Technical Services has not secured all required funding to refresh the campus network and datacenter infrastructure. Current funding, supply chain issues, silicon chip shortages and delays in the delivery of equipment are obstacles outside of our control. It is becoming critical that we secure additional funding for the infrastructure refresh, ITS will be working diligently to get these in place for the FY 2026-2027 and beyond. ITS has done an assessment and created a list of equipment replacement needs. Additionally, a priority has been assigned to and will be replaced as funding is available.
- Campus Telephone System
Technical Services has concluded implementation of the Microsoft Teams Voice cloud-based VOIP Solution and presented a summary of the project to the

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administration. Technical services will follow through with the maintenance and upkeep of this system and remove this measure from the plan.

- Continuously Maintain and Enhance the University Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system (Banner) at 100%

ITS will implement the following changes in 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. We will complete the installation and configuration of several Ellucian components, including CRM GradApp, Workflow, Banner Document Management, Insights, and Ellucian Experience (VIC). To reduce the university's technological debt, ITS staff and vendors will continuously install patches and updates as they become available to ensure systems are not falling behind. We uphold our commitment to investing in and modernizing our technologies and methods as the university's needs evolve.