

## Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

### Office of Admissions

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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.

**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 provide equal access to education for potential students throughout the state and region and promote 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 Admissions Mission.** The Office of Admissions seeks to enroll a full class of career-oriented students by delivering quality service and support to prospective students, faculty, and staff through interpretation of the admission criteria for Northwestern State University. Admissions also provide quality assistance to our stakeholders to assure a diverse student population has access to higher education by demonstrating consistency and fairness in the application review process. The Office of Admissions is committed to providing access to educational opportunities to meet students' academic needs.

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**Methodology:** The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the executive director.
- (2) The executive 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 executive director, in consultation with the staff and senior leadership, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

### Office of Admissions Effectiveness

#### Student Learning Outcomes

**SO 1** The Office of Admissions will ensure applicants, prospective students, faculty, and staff are provided with quality service and support.

**Measure 1.1.** As a result of ongoing efforts to provide high-quality service, prospective students, faculty, and staff will be able to easily locate and understand the university's admission criteria. To evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative, a brief survey will be administered to new applicants, gathering feedback on the clarity and accessibility of admissions information encountered during the application process. The target outcome is that 90% of respondents will indicate no difficulty in understanding the admission criteria, demonstrating the effectiveness of current communication strategies and resource availability.

**Finding:** Target was not met.

#### Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. The Office of Admissions implemented improvements to Ellucian CRM Recruit, streamlined communication workflows, and maintained a more user-friendly and mobile-accessible application process. Admissions also collaborated with Information Technology and Institutional Research to improve operational efficiency, resolve technical issues, and support applicant processing needs. As a result, the application process remained efficient, and the learning outcome was successfully measured.

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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. Admissions continued collaborating with Information Technology and Institutional Research to enhance Ellucian CRM Recruit functionality, improve communication workflows, maintain efficient processing timelines, and refine applicant survey strategies to gather feedback regarding admissions services and the applicant experience.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was not met. Although the Office of Admissions efforts to provide high-quality service and support to prospective students, faculty, and staff, the department's primary focus shifted during the assessment cycle due to a significant increase in fraudulent applications submitted to universities nationwide. During this cycle, Northwestern State University also became a target of these fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications. As a result, Admissions redirected a substantial portion of its operational efforts toward identifying, preventing, and managing fraudulent application activity. The Office of Admissions collaborated extensively with Information Technology to develop new procedures, implement technical system changes, and establish safeguards within Ellucian CRM Recruit to better detect suspicious application patterns and protect the integrity of the admissions process. Due to the urgency and priority of addressing fraudulent applications, the planned applicant survey measuring the clarity and accessibility of admissions criteria was not fully administered during the assessment cycle. While Admissions maintained communication with applicants and provided assistance throughout the application process, the department was unable to gather sufficient measurable survey data to formally assess this learning outcome. Current efforts to combat fraudulent applications remain ongoing, including continued policy development, workflow adjustments, and system enhancements.

### **Decision:**

In AC 2025-2026 the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the 2025-2026 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Office of Admissions will implement strategic operational changes in AC 2026-2027 to support workflow efficiency, student communication, and the integrity of the admissions process. While the department plans to utilize applicant surveys to assess the clarity and accessibility of admissions information, a major focus will remain on combating fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications. The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Institutional Research to implement necessary technical updates, workflow enhancements, and security measures within Ellucian CRM Recruit to better identify suspicious application activity and strengthen application review procedures. Additional policies, reporting processes, and monitoring efforts will be developed and refined to support fraud prevention and maintain compliance with institutional standards. The department will refine and distribute applicant surveys to gather feedback related to admissions services, communication, and the accessibility of admissions criteria. Survey results, along with system data and operational reporting,

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will be used to support continuous process improvement and data-informed decision-making.

These changes will improve the help maintain a secure, efficient, and student-centered admissions process while adapting to evolving challenges related to fraudulent application activity, thereby continuing the push the cycle of improvement forward.

**Measure 1.2.** Student satisfaction with the admissions process will be evaluated through a survey distributed via email to all new applicants. The survey will gather feedback on the overall effectiveness of the admissions experience and the clarity of admission criteria. The target outcome is for 90% of respondents to report no issues with the effectiveness of the admissions process.

**Finding:** Target was not met.

### **Analysis:**

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Admissions continued implementing improvements based on survey feedback, workflow enhancements, and system performance metrics. The continued refinement of Ellucian CRM Recruit improved the applicant experience through a more streamlined and mobile-accessible application process. Admissions also maintained collaboration with Information Technology and Institutional Research to resolve technical issues and improve communication workflows, contributing to increased applicant satisfaction and operational efficiency.

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 staff improved communication workflows and admissions processes through enhancements within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Admissions also refined applicant surveys to measure satisfaction with the admissions process and the clarity of admissions information while using feedback and operational data to guide process improvements.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was met. Although the Office of Admissions efforts to improve the effectiveness of the admissions process and maintain quality communication with applicants, the department experienced a major operational shift due to the increasing number of fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications being submitted nationwide. During this assessment cycle, Northwestern State University also became a target of fraudulent application activity. As a result, the Office of Admissions redirected significant attention toward fraud prevention initiatives, including collaborating with Information Technology to implement technical system changes, strengthen application review procedures, and develop internal processes to identify suspicious application behavior more effectively. These efforts became necessary to protect the integrity of the admissions process and ensure legitimate applicants continued receiving timely assistance. Due to the department's focus on addressing fraudulent applications and implementing operational safeguards, the planned applicant survey measuring satisfaction with the effectiveness of the

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admissions process was not fully administered during the assessment cycle. While Admissions provided support and communication to applicants throughout the process, insufficient survey data was collected to formally assess this learning outcome. Current efforts to combat fraudulent applications remain ongoing, including workflow adjustments, policy development, reporting enhancements, and technical improvements within Ellucian CRM Recruit.

### **Decision:**

In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the 2025-2026 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Office of Admissions will implement strategic initiatives to support workflow efficiency, applicant communication, and the overall effectiveness of the admissions process. While the department plans to utilize applicant surveys to measure satisfaction with the admissions experience and the clarity of admission criteria, a significant focus will remain on combating fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications. The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Institutional Research to implement necessary system enhancements, technical safeguards, and workflow improvements within Ellucian CRM Recruit. These efforts will support the identification of suspicious application activity, improve monitoring capabilities, and strengthen operational processes designed to protect the integrity of admissions operations. Admissions will refine and distribute online applicant surveys to gather feedback related to applicant satisfaction, communication effectiveness, and the accessibility of admissions information. Survey data, along with operational reporting and system analytics, will be used to guide continuous process improvement and support data-informed decision-making.

These changes will maintain an efficient, secure, and student-centered admissions process while adapting to evolving challenges related to fraudulent application activity, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**Measure 1.3.** Students will demonstrate satisfaction with the quality of service provided by the Office of Admissions. The target outcome is for 90% of respondents to indicate they were satisfied with the level of service received during the admissions process.

**Finding:** Target was not met.

### **Analysis:**

In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Although the applicant satisfaction survey was not fully administered, the Office of Admissions received very minimal complaints regarding customer service and applicant support, reflecting a generally positive perception of service quality. However, due to limited measurable survey data, the learning outcome could not be formally assessed.

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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 staff improved customer service and applicant engagement by maintaining efficient communication practices and refining applicant satisfaction surveys. The department remained committed to providing quality support throughout the admissions process while identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was met. The Office of Admissions provided quality service and support to applicants; however, the department's focus shifted significantly due to the rise in fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications affecting universities nationwide, including Northwestern State University. Admissions collaborated with Information Technology to implement technical changes and strengthen review procedures within Ellucian CRM Recruit to better identify suspicious application activity and protect the integrity of the admissions process. Due to the priority placed on fraud prevention efforts, the planned applicant satisfaction survey was not fully administered during the assessment cycle. Despite limited survey data, the Office of Admissions continued to receive very minimal complaints regarding customer service, demonstrating the department's continued commitment to providing quality support throughout the admissions process. Although formal survey data was limited during AC 2025-2026, the minimal number of complaints received regarding customer service reflects the Office of Admissions' commitment to providing quality support and maintaining a student-centered admissions process.

### **Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the 2025-2026 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Office of Admissions implemented operational improvements in AC 2026-2027 to support workflow efficiency, customer service, and the overall admissions experience. A significant focus will remain on combating fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications through continued collaboration with Information Technology and Institutional Research to implement necessary system enhancements and monitoring procedures within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Admissions will refine and distribute applicant satisfaction surveys to gather feedback related to customer service and the overall admissions experience. Survey results, operational reporting, and applicant feedback will be used to support continuous improvement and data-informed decision-making.

These changes will strengthen customer service practices, enhance applicant engagement, and support continuous improvement efforts while maintaining a secure, efficient, and student-centered admissions process, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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**SO 2.1** Decrease the processing time of applications to admit students more efficiently, thereby increasing university enrollment and staff efficiency.

**Measure 2.1.** Increase the number of freshmen students by 5% per semester.

**Finding:** Target was not met.

**Analysis:**

In AC 2024-2025 the target was not met. Improvements to workflow processes, staffing support, and enhancements within Ellucian CRM Recruit contributed to increased efficiency in application processing and applicant communication.

|             | New Freshmen | % Increase or Decrease |
|-------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Spring 2026 | 58           | 32% increase           |
| Spring 2025 | 44           |                        |
| Fall 2025   | 1065         | 1% increase            |
| Fall 2024   | 1052         |                        |

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 staff collaborated with Information Technology to enhance automation and address remaining issues within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Admissions maintained processing timelines, provided ongoing staff training, proactively communicated with applicants regarding incomplete applications, and utilized applicant feedback to improve service effectiveness and support enrollment growth.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was met. Both Spring and Fall enrollment increased compared to the previous year. Spring 2026 enrollment increased from 44 to 58 students (+32%), surpassing the 5% target. Fall 2025 enrollment increased from 1,052 to 1,065 students (+1%); however, the Fall target was not met because the increase did not reach the required 5% goal. Throughout AC 2025-2026, the Office of Admissions collaborated with Information Technology and Recruiting to improve workflow efficiency, strengthen communication processes, and enhance Ellucian CRM Recruit functionality. Admissions also focused heavily on addressing fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications by implementing additional review procedures and system safeguards to protect the integrity of the admissions process. Despite operational challenges associated with fraud prevention efforts, the department continued maintaining processing timelines, improving applicant communication, and supporting enrollment growth. The increase in Spring enrollment reflects the positive impact of continued workflow improvements, enhanced communication efforts, and ongoing system upgrades within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Although Fall enrollment increased slightly, the department did not meet the 5% growth target.

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|             | New Freshmen | % Increase or Decrease |
|-------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Spring 2026 | 58           | 32% increase           |
| Spring 2025 | 44           |                        |
| Fall 2025   | 1065         | 1% increase            |
| Fall 2024   | 1052         |                        |

### Decision:

In AC 2025-2026 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the 2025-2026 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Recruiting to improve automation, streamline application processing, and enhance applicant communication workflows. The department will also implement additional safeguards and review procedures to address fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications while maintaining efficient processing timelines. Admissions will utilize applicant surveys and CRM reporting data to evaluate service effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and support enrollment growth through a responsive and student-centered admissions process. Ongoing staff training and communication efforts will also remain a priority to support operational efficiency and applicant success.

These changes will improve operational efficiency, strengthen applicant communication, support enrollment growth, and maintain timely application processing, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**Measure 2.2.** Increase the number of transfer students by 2% per semester.

**Finding:** Target was not met.

### Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025 the target was not met. Workflow improvements, staffing support, and enhancements within Ellucian CRM Recruit contributed to increased efficiency in application processing and applicant communication.

|             | New Transfer | % Increase or Decrease |
|-------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Spring 2026 | 215          | 12% decrease           |
| Spring 2025 | 245          |                        |
| Fall 2025   | 462          | 20% increase           |

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|           |     |  |
|-----------|-----|--|
| Fall 2024 | 384 |  |
|-----------|-----|--|

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 staff leveraged workflow improvements and CRM enhancements to improve transfer admissions processing and applicant communication. Admissions strengthened outreach efforts through automated communication plans in Ellucian CRM Recruit, provided automated follow-up to students with incomplete applications, utilized reporting tools to identify areas for improvement, and continued staff development efforts to support transfer enrollment growth.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was met. Spring 2026 enrollment declined from 245 to 215 students (-12%), falling short of the 2% growth target. However, Fall 2025 enrollment increased from 384 to 462 students (+20%), surpassing the 2% target. Throughout AC 2025-2026, the Office of Admissions collaborated with Information Technology and Recruiting to improve workflow efficiency, strengthen communication processes, and enhance Ellucian CRM Recruit functionality. Admissions also implemented additional review procedures and system safeguards to address fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications while maintaining efficient processing timelines and applicant support. The increase in Fall transfer enrollment reflects the positive impact of continued workflow improvements, enhanced communication efforts, and ongoing system upgrades within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Although Spring enrollment declined, the department continued maintaining efficient processing timelines and applicant support throughout the assessment cycle.

### **Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2025-2026 the target was not met.

Based on the analysis of the 2025-2026 results, the staff will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Recruiting to improve automation, streamline application processing, and strengthen applicant communication workflows. The department will also implement additional safeguards and review procedures to address fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications while maintaining operational efficiency. Admissions will utilize applicant surveys, CRM reporting data, and communication campaigns to improve transfer recruitment, applicant engagement, and service effectiveness. Ongoing staff training and workflow enhancements will remain a priority to support enrollment growth and maintain a responsive, student-centered admissions process.

These changes will enhance transfer recruitment efforts, improve applicant engagement and service effectiveness, and support operational efficiency and enrollment growth, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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**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 the AC 2024-2025 results analysis.

### SO 1

**1.1** Admissions continued collaborating with Information Technology and Institutional Research to enhance Ellucian CRM Recruit functionality, improve communication workflows, maintain efficient processing timelines, and refine applicant survey strategies to gather feedback regarding admissions services and the applicant experience.

**1.2** The staff improved communication workflows and admissions processes through enhancements within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Admissions also refined applicant surveys to measure satisfaction with the admissions process and the clarity of admissions information while using feedback and operational data to guide process improvements.

**1.3** The staff improved customer service and applicant engagement by maintaining efficient communication practices and refining applicant satisfaction surveys. The department remained committed to providing quality support throughout the admissions process while identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.

### SO 2

**2.1** The staff collaborated with Information Technology to enhance automation and address remaining issues within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Admissions maintained processing timelines, provided ongoing staff training, proactively communicated with applicants regarding incomplete applications, and utilized applicant feedback to improve service effectiveness and support enrollment growth.

**2.2** The staff leveraged workflow improvements and CRM enhancements to improve transfer admissions processing and applicant communication. Admissions strengthened outreach efforts through automated communication plans in Ellucian CRM Recruit, provided automated follow-up to students with incomplete applications, utilized reporting tools to identify areas for improvement, and continued staff development efforts to support transfer enrollment growth.

### Plan of action moving forward:

#### SO 1

**1.1** The Office of Admissions will implement strategic operational changes in AC 2026-2027 to support workflow efficiency, student communication, and the integrity of the admissions process. While the department plans to utilize applicant surveys to assess the clarity and accessibility of admissions information, a major focus will remain on combating fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications. The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Institutional Research to implement necessary technical updates, workflow enhancements, and security measures within

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Ellucian CRM Recruit to better identify suspicious application activity and strengthen application review procedures. Additional policies, reporting processes, and monitoring efforts will be developed and refined to support fraud prevention and maintain compliance with institutional standards. The department will refine and distribute applicant surveys to gather feedback related to admissions services, communication, and the accessibility of admissions criteria. Survey results, along with system data and operational reporting, will be used to support continuous process improvement and data-informed decision-making.

**1.2** The Office of Admissions will implement strategic initiatives to support workflow efficiency, applicant communication, and the overall effectiveness of the admissions process. While the department plans to utilize applicant surveys to measure satisfaction with the admissions experience and the clarity of admission criteria, a significant focus will remain on combating fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications. The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Institutional Research to implement necessary system enhancements, technical safeguards, and workflow improvements within Ellucian CRM Recruit. These efforts will support the identification of suspicious application activity, improve monitoring capabilities, and strengthen operational processes designed to protect the integrity of admissions operations. Admissions will refine and distribute online applicant surveys to gather feedback related to applicant satisfaction, communication effectiveness, and the accessibility of admissions information. Survey data, along with operational reporting and system analytics, will be used to guide continuous process improvement and support data-informed decision-making.

**1.3** The Office of Admissions implemented operational improvements in AC 2026-2027 to support workflow efficiency, customer service, and the overall admissions experience. A significant focus will remain on combating fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications through continued collaboration with Information Technology and Institutional Research to implement necessary system enhancements and monitoring procedures within Ellucian CRM Recruit. Admissions will refine and distribute applicant satisfaction surveys to gather feedback related to customer service and the overall admissions experience. Survey results, operational reporting, and applicant feedback will be used to support continuous improvement and data-informed decision-making.

### SO 2

**2.1** The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Recruiting to improve automation, streamline application processing, and enhance applicant communication workflows. The department will also implement additional safeguards and review procedures to address fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications while maintaining efficient processing timelines. Admissions will utilize applicant surveys and CRM reporting data to evaluate service effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and support enrollment growth through a responsive and student-centered admissions process. Ongoing staff training and communication efforts will also remain a priority to support operational efficiency and applicant success.

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**2.2** The Office of Admissions will collaborate with Information Technology and Recruiting to improve automation, streamline application processing, and strengthen applicant communication workflows. The department will also implement additional safeguards and review procedures to address fraudulent and potentially fraudulent applications while maintaining operational efficiency. Admissions will utilize applicant surveys, CRM reporting data, and communication campaigns to improve transfer recruitment, applicant engagement, and service effectiveness. Ongoing staff training and workflow enhancements will remain a priority to support enrollment growth and maintain a responsive, student-centered admissions process.