NORTHWESTERN STATE
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

Strategic Plan 2023-2028



Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

Leading the Way

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Preface

Northwestern State University of Louisiana's (NSU) *Strategic Plan 2023-2028* provides the framework and context for our actions in 2023-2028. While the plan is designed to be flexible and responsive to the challenges of higher education, it remains a steadfast guide for innovative change and positive transformation. It embraces and builds upon the history, traditions, and core values of a University that has been the region's educational, cultural, economic, and social bedrock for 141 years. *Assessment Cycle 2025-2026, Leading the Way*, is the tangible evidence that Northwestern is a learning institution committed to holistic organizational improvement. Northwestern is on a path of growth, adaptation, and innovation to deliver the highest-caliber educational experience in the region through transformative student learning.

On 3 December 2023, the Board of Trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approved Northwestern's Fifth-Year Interim Report, recognizing its continued compliance. On 30 October 2024, Dr. Belle Wheelan, the president of SACSCOC, notified the University that it had been approved to participate in the Differentiated Review Process for the reaffirmation Class of 2027, based in part on its high-quality fifth-year report. This commitment to excellence by the entire university community will continue to drive Northwestern toward securing its vision of becoming the nation's premier regional university. Northwestern is unmatched in preparing its graduates for life and career success. This document reflects the strategic guidance of President James T. Genovese and Northwestern's senior leadership. President Genovese's priorities for AC 2025-2026 are:

- Provide responsive student services to recruit, retain, and promote student success.
- Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.
- Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands–foster public and private partnerships.

With the following objectives in direct support:

- Enhance marketing opportunities, game day experience, and resource acquisition.
- Expand world-class performing arts program and promote mutually beneficial donor relationships.
- Develop a more inclusive (*thriving*) campus environment that fosters success and meaningful participation for all students, faculty, and staff.

Members of the leadership team have ownership of the Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs) and their associated objectives and strategies:

President, James T. Genovese

Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff: Dr. Drake Owens

SFA The Student Experience: Vice President for The Student Experience, Ms. Reatha Cox

SFA Academic Excellence: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Greg Handel

Research within Its Mission: Chair, Research Council, Dr. Margaret Cochran

SFA Market Responsiveness: Executive Director, Economic Development and University Advancement, Ms. Laurie Morrow

SFA Community Enrichment: Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff, Dr. Drake Owens

Community/Public Service:Service-Learning Coordinator, Mr. Steven Gruesbeck

University Capital Outlook: Executive Director for University Affairs, Ms. Jennifer Kelly

Technology at Northwestern State University: Chief Information Officer, Mr. Ron Williams

SFA Athletic Prominence: Director of Athletics, Mr. Kevin Bostian

Dean, Graduate School: Dr. Mary Edith Stacy

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences: Dr. Frances Lemoine

Dean, Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development: Dr. Neeru Deep

Dean, College of Business and Technology: Dr. Scott Wysong IV

Dean, College of Nursing and Allied Health: Dr. Aimee Badeaux

Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Human Resources, Ms. Roni Biscoe

Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Mr. Frank Hall

NORTHWESTERN STATE
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

Executive Summary

James T. Genovese, President
September 23, 2026

The 2025–2026 academic year was a year of investment, implementation, and measurable progress for Northwestern State University. Across our five strategic focus areas—The Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, and Athletic Prominence—we strengthened the systems that support students, expanded connections with employers and communities, invested in learning environments, and translated planning into action.

Northwestern stands at an important point in its history. For more than 140 years, the University has adapted to meet the changing needs of Louisiana while remaining grounded in a mission of teaching, service, and opportunity. Today, NSU serves students across multiple campuses and online, prepares graduates for critical workforce needs, enriches communities through scholarship and the arts, and contributes to the economic vitality of the region. Our vision—to become the nation's premier regional university—continues to guide our decisions and hold us accountable for meaningful results.

The Student Experience remained central to our work. Full implementation of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan established a university-wide framework for recruitment, retention, persistence, and completion. Although overall enrollment declined from 8,523 students in Fall 2024 to 8,402 in Fall 2025, entering freshman enrollment stabilized and increased from 1,059 to 1,065. These results underscore both the effectiveness of focused recruitment efforts and the need to accelerate growth among transfer, online, adult, and continuing students.

Student persistence continued to improve. First-to-second-year persistence for first-time, full-time freshmen increased to 71.44%, while first-to-third-year persistence rose to 58 percent. Both remain below our strategic targets, but the sustained upward movement reflects the impact of expanded academic support, proactive financial-aid communication, and more intentional outreach. Six-year graduation rates also increased slightly but remain below our 53% goal. In response, NSU is strengthening early intervention, stop-out recovery, academic mapping, degree-completion communication, and cross-divisional coordination throughout the student life cycle.

Student satisfaction provides encouraging evidence that these efforts are making a difference. Results from the 2025 Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory showed statistically significant gains in campus services, student centeredness, registration effectiveness, recruitment and financial aid, counseling availability, safety and security, and the overall condition of the campus. NSU exceeded both University of Louisiana System and national norms across most measures. These findings affirm that students recognize a campus culture that is welcoming, responsive, and committed to their success.

Technology and new service models improved the way students connect with the University. Campus ESP expanded communication with families; Vector Solutions and SUNY Student Conduct Institute resources strengthened education related to safety, wellness, conduct, and institutional expectations; and Suitable created a more accurate system for documenting co-curricular engagement. During its

first year of implementation, Suitable recorded 17,169 activity completions across 744 events. A total of 1,849 students attended at least one tracked event, and 75.79% of first-year students participated in recorded activities. Membership in recognized student organizations increased from 823 to 1,292 students.

Leadership, belonging, and service also advanced. Participation in living-learning communities increased from 68 to 168 students, and 62% of students completing the President's Leadership Program reported serving in a peer leadership role. All program completers who responded to the survey indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the experience. Students contributed 28,478 reported volunteer service hours, including 1,043 hours in The Pantry, where 75 volunteers served 409 students. The University also sponsored 178 health-related programs and opened or improved student-centered spaces, including a larger Office of Accessibility and Disability Support, the Collegiate Recovery Center, and a relocated eSports Center.

Career preparation remained an essential part of the student experience. Handshake connected more than 30,000 students, alumni, and employers, and the University approved 1,610 new employers on the platform during the year. Among graduates who submitted the First Destination Survey, 93.3% reported that they were employed, continuing their education, or serving in the military. Because the response rate declined, NSU will strengthen graduate-outcomes tracking and use more consistent data sources to assess employment, continuing education, and workforce alignment.

Academic Excellence showed substantive progress across all seven metrics assessed during the cycle, with results in six metrics exceeding their targets. Student-learning assessment expanded to all 106 academic degree and certificate programs. Of the 332 student learning outcomes assessed, 291 (88%) met or exceeded their established targets, while 453 of 566 assessment measures (80%) were successfully achieved. These results reflect mature assessment processes and a university-wide commitment to evidence-based improvement.

Student performance and faculty support also advanced. Average LSAT and MCAT results improved, 53 faculty grants supported teaching and scholarship, and 52 classrooms or laboratories received new technology—exceeding the strategic target of 42. Student evaluations reflected strong faculty-student interaction, and research, scholarly activity, and professional presentation continued to provide students with opportunities to learn through inquiry, mentorship, and creative work.

The College of Arts and Sciences, which serves more than 2,700 students and houses 93% of the University's general education core courses, awarded 621 degrees during the year. Academic innovation included new Mathematics concentrations in Computer Science and Sport Analytics, supported by a $100,000 programming laboratory and a $60,000 Trackman partnership with NSU Athletics. Music updated its Music Business curriculum and received approval from the National Association of Schools of Music for an online Master of Music in Music Education. A new Forensic Testimony course connected students with legal and scientific professionals, while a redesigned Criminal Justice curriculum expanded credit for prior learning and experiential opportunities.

Research and interdisciplinary collaboration flourished across Arts and Sciences. CREATE—the Center for Research, Education, and Artistic Teamwork Exploration—expanded into a university-wide collaboration incubator and supported projects spanning science, communication, professional skills, technology, and the arts. Twelve faculty members received research and scholarly grants through the new College of Arts and Sciences Enhancement Fund. Biology launched paid, grant-supported internships with the ARGO Lab, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the National Fish Hatchery system; Physical

Sciences strengthened industry-based research with Arq; and Engineering Technology students earned national recognition for research in facility design and indoor environmental quality. Outreach by the School of STEM directly engaged 5,601 students, while the Christmas Gala reached approximately 10,000 audience members and brought together more than 300 students, faculty, and staff.

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development enrolled 1,810 undergraduate and graduate students across 50 degree and certificate programs and awarded 391 degrees. An additional 507 children were served through the laboratory schools and the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, and seven ROTC cadets were commissioned as second lieutenants. Retention across the college's academic units ranged from 83.67 to 86.49%. The School of Kinesiology reported a 100% acceptance rate among Health and Exercise Science students applying to physical and occupational therapy programs, while all Clinical Psychology graduate students presented research at NSU Research Day.

GCEHD advanced several programs with direct workforce and community impact. The Master of Social Work program earned Council on Social Work Education Benchmark 1 approval and admitted 21 students to its second cohort. The School of Education completed its seven-year Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation review, earning continuing accreditation for initial licensure programs through 2033. The Title IV-E Louisiana Child Welfare Scholars Program provided substantial student support and workforce development, the Cenla Mental Health Workforce Accelerator began helping early-career counselors and social workers advance toward licensure, and the Rapides Foundation Future of Health C.A.R.E. initiative introduced 470 students from 26 high schools to behavioral-health and healthcare careers. The Child and Family Network delivered 300 professional-development sessions and more than 3,000 hours of coaching across 16 parishes, while the Collegiate Recovery Program received an additional $100,000 and engaged approximately 500 participants through wellness, education, and recovery-support activities.

The College of Nursing and School of Allied Health enrolled approximately 2,458 students across nursing and allied health programs offered in Alexandria, Leesville/Fort Johnson, Natchitoches, Shreveport, and online. Flexible nursing pathways were reorganized to include Allied Health-to-ASN, Military Medic and Paramedic-to-RN, and LPN-to-RN options. The Master of Science in Allied Health welcomed its inaugural cohort, the Doctor of Nursing Practice launched distinct Educational Leadership and Executive Leadership concentrations, and Nurse Anesthesia sustained three concurrent cohorts to address statewide demand.

Accreditation and student outcomes affirmed the quality of these healthcare programs. Radiography received the maximum eight-year continuing-accreditation term from the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology, and Nurse Anesthesia completed its continued-accreditation site visit. The ASN and BSN programs exceeded established first-time NCLEX-RN benchmarks, with pass rates of 95.45% and 91.06%, respectively. Nurse practitioner programs exceeded their certification benchmark, and Radiography maintained an 87.09% five-year examination average. Both the 2025 and 2026 Diagnostic Medical Sonography classes achieved 100% pass rates on the Sonography Principles and Instrumentation examination, with graduates earning specialty credentials in abdominal, obstetric and gynecologic, and vascular sonography.

External support expanded opportunity across Nursing and Allied Health. A $2.597 million HRSA workforce-expansion award for the 2025–2029 project period is strengthening nursing education, clinical training, academic support and workforce development, while a separate $519,115 HRSA award for the same period supports psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner preparation for rural and

underserved communities. Additional state, federal, foundation, and healthcare-partner awards supported enrollment capacity, equipment, scholarships, and clinical preparation. In total, 239 students received more than $1.3 million in scholarships, stipends, and traineeship support administered by the college. Expanded digital simulation, modernized clinical laboratories, and continued development of a high-fidelity operating-room simulation environment in Alost Hall further strengthened experiential learning.

The College of Business and Technology advanced academic quality, workforce readiness, digital agility, and experiential learning across Accounting, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, and Hospitality Management and Tourism. The School of Business continued implementing AACSB standards, while Hospitality maintained ACPHA accreditation as Louisiana's only four-year hospitality program with that distinction. The college awarded 151 degrees, and most students remained in good academic standing while completing a median of 12 credit hours in both fall and spring. Assessment findings are guiding additional work in advising, early intervention, persistence, and degree completion.

Innovation was especially visible in cybersecurity, analytics, artificial intelligence, and applied learning. A $40,000 Central Louisiana Cyber Security Talent Enhancement award, including $10,000 in matching internship support from Natchitoches Regional Medical Center, expanded cybersecurity workforce development. Computer Information Systems opened the Sandbox Application Development Lab, fielded its first team in the International Collegiate Programming Contest, launched a multi-course open-source video game project, and strengthened graduate research support. Accounting students posted strong results in professional communication, advanced analysis, and ethics, while Business Administration continued the Inferno Pitch competition, professional-development programming, consulting projects, and industry credentials through the Society for Human Resource Management.

Hospitality Management and Tourism developed an Event Management concentration and minor with embedded national certifications and secured Curriculum Review Council approval for a fully online hospitality degree. Students gained experience through Columns Café, Chef's Table, regional industry visits, community event partnerships, and an international study tour to Greece and the Mediterranean. Across the college, faculty integrated AI literacy, ethical technology use, cybersecurity, data analytics, authentic assessment, and professional communication into coursework, positioning graduates to succeed in a rapidly changing economy.

Market Responsiveness remained one of NSU's defining strengths. Of the University's 73 degree programs, 57 (78.1%) have been created or updated within the last five years. Thirty-seven certificate programs provide focused pathways in areas that include nursing, education, strategic communication, leadership, medical humanities, critical and analytical thinking, and professional ethics. The Master of Social Work, Master of Science in Allied Health, and three undergraduate certificates approved during recent cycles demonstrate our commitment to developing programs that respond to student demand and workforce need.

Partnerships continued to connect classroom learning with professional practice. Students participated in 416 documented interactions with business and industry through career fairs, guest speakers, field experiences, interviews, and service-learning projects. University administrators completed 56 engagements with business and industry partners, while the four academic colleges maintained a broad network of employers, advisory groups, internship providers, and community organizations. These relationships help ensure that curricula remain current and that students graduate with relevant knowledge, practical experience, and professional connections.

Flexible learning and workforce development expanded significantly. Electronic Learning and Global Engagement (ELGE) offered 1,321 face-to-face and online continuing-education and career-training opportunities. Faculty support included 71 workshops across 32 topics, reaching 197 individual faculty members and 337 total participants. ELGE staff completed 25 professional-development experiences to remain current in online instruction, instructional technology, and emerging workforce trends. Twelve specialized leadership programs extended learning beyond the classroom, while Student Technology resources supported 318 classrooms and laboratories across instructional sites, including 80 classrooms and 44 computer labs dedicated to student learning.

Community Enrichment grew through the arts, alumni engagement, private support, partnerships, and service. Attendance at on-campus creative and performing arts events increased following renovations to A.A. Fredericks Auditorium, and off-campus performances rose from 215 to 236. Faculty and students shared NSU's artistic excellence regionally, nationally, and internationally, while growth across Creative and Performing Arts social media channels extended the University's reach.

Alumni engagement strengthened through more frequent communication and renewed participation. The Purple Pulse and the president's weekly update now reach 28,906 alumni with active email addresses, an increase of 10.7%. NSU sustained 24 active alumni chapters nationwide, and 919 alumni renewed their Alumni Association memberships beginning in January 2026, a 13.6% increase. The DemoNSUnite networking and mentoring platform maintained a substantial reach with 34,371 registered users, and Alumni Association social media channels reached a combined 10,310 followers.

Private support reached a new level. The NSU Foundation secured $8,043,482 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, an increase of 6.9%. Restricted endowment assets grew to $87.26 million, while unrestricted endowment assets increased to $1.86 million. Although the number of individual contributors declined modestly to 1,942, the growth in private support and endowment value reflects extraordinary confidence in Northwestern's mission and creates lasting support for students, faculty, programs, and facilities.

NSU's community impact extended well beyond campus. Students contributed at least 228,378 hours of professionally based community and public service, representing an estimated economic value of $1.66 M when calculated at the federal minimum wage. When separately reported volunteer service is included, the total estimated value of student service approached $1.9 M. Working with 194 campus and community partners, students provided service in healthcare, education, economic development, public safety, the arts, environmental stewardship and other areas. These contributions demonstrate that service is not an accessory to an NSU education; it is an essential expression of our mission.

Institutional collaboration also expanded. NSU maintained 159 cooperative endeavor agreements with 68 governmental agencies and institutions, hosted 106 activities at off-campus instructional sites, completed redevelopment of the University website, and initiated a comprehensive brand-perception study. Together, these efforts are strengthening the University's visibility, responsiveness, and relationships across the region.

Institutional investment supported progress across every strategic focus area. Major facility, technology, and infrastructure projects improved classrooms, laboratories, student-service spaces, performing arts venues, and athletic facilities. These investments, supported by state appropriations, federal funding, private gifts, and institutional resources, strengthened the learning environment, expanded experiential opportunities, and positioned Northwestern to meet emerging workforce and community needs.

Athletic Prominence was marked by strong academic performance, championship success, facility investment, and community service. NSU graduated 96 student-athletes during the year. The department achieved an overall GPA of 3.225, exceeding its 3.11 target, and the Fall 2025 GPA of 3.23 was the highest fall-semester result since at least 2014. A total of 211 student-athletes earned Dean's List or President's List recognition, and 216 were named to the Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll.

Academic Progress Rate results further demonstrated sustained achievement. The department's multi-year APR increased for the third consecutive year to 970, while the single-year rate reached 985. Seven teams earned perfect single-year APR scores of 1,000, and NSU qualified for an NCAA Academic Performance Unit for the first time in a decade, making Northwestern one of five Southland Conference institutions to earn the distinction.

Competitive success continued to build. Six of NSU's 14 varsity programs finished among the top four in the Southland Conference or posted a conference winning percentage above .600. Women's track and field captured its third consecutive Southland Conference Outdoor Championship, while soccer won the conference regular-season championship. These achievements reflect the resilience of our student-athletes and the steady work of coaches and staff across the department.

Athletics also deepened its impact through service and outreach. Student-athletes contributed 4,287 community-service hours, exceeding the strategic target of 4,000, and participated in 48 campus organizations and activities. Coaches and programs hosted 33 camps and clinics for area youth, more than double the number offered two years earlier.

Facilities improved through seven projects started, completed, or advanced during the year. Investments included the new Mondo surface, lighting, and video board at the track complex; LED video boards at the baseball and softball facilities; new baseball wall padding; and continued work on the David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center. These improvements strengthen safety, performance, recruiting, and the overall student-athlete and fan experience.

Athletics generated $3.78 million in ticket sales, private support, sponsorships, and game guarantees, exceeding the long-range strategic target but declining from the prior year, when results included the largest one-time gift in program history. Overall attendance decreased 2.67%, driven by basketball, while football and baseball attendance increased. Licensing revenue and the number of non-Natchitoches season-ticket holders also declined modestly. These results make clear that future competitive success will require a focused approach to revenue generation, corporate sponsorship, ticket sales, licensing, name-image-and-likeness opportunities, revenue sharing, and donor engagement.

Across all five strategic focus areas, the evidence shows meaningful progress alongside clear opportunities for improvement. We are building stronger systems for retention and completion, aligning programs with workforce demand, investing in faculty and learning environments, extending the University's impact through partnerships and service, and supporting student-athletes in the classroom, in competition, and in the community.

The University's continued participation in the SACSCOC Differentiated Review Process for the Reaffirmation Class of 2027 further reflects the strength of its institutional-effectiveness practices and commitment to continuous improvement.

As we enter 2026–2027, our priorities are clear.

Within the Student Experience we will strengthen enrollment and student success by increasing recruitment in high-potential markets, expanding transfer and dual-enrollment pathways, improving conversion and yield, deploying earlier academic and financial interventions, and sustaining support beyond the first year.

We will advance academic excellence and market responsiveness by investing in faculty, expanding high-demand and flexible credentials, integrating emerging technologies, strengthening research and experiential learning, and using employer and alumni feedback to keep programs relevant.

We will deepen community enrichment by expanding engagement with alumni, donors, public agencies, schools, employers, and cultural partners; improving the way we communicate Northwestern's value; and increasing opportunities for students to serve and learn throughout the region.

We will elevate Athletic Prominence by sustaining academic achievement, investing in facilities and student-athlete development, strengthening revenue and donor engagement, and building programs capable of competing consistently for Southland Conference championships.

The progress of 2025–2026 reflects the commitment of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and partners. Together, we are creating a stronger Northwestern—one that honors its history, responds to the present, and prepares Louisiana for the future.

Introduction

All components of our strategic plan support and enhance the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of Northwestern State University.

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.

Vision. Northwestern State University will become the nation's premier regional university through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences that prepare graduates for life and career success.

Our Core Values. Our core values capture the guiding principles for how we make decisions and work together. They are the foundation for the type of university community and regional partner we strive to become. Our guiding values are:

- **Our students are our priority**. We provide each student with transformational and experiential learning experiences to assist in the development of an ever-growing individual, scholar, and professional.
- **Diversity helps define who we are**. We welcome and respect all traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.
- **We are future focused**. We are in constant search of individual and organizational improvement by seeking new, inclusive, and innovative opportunities to develop our students and improve our University.
- **Innovation is leading the forward edge of change**. We strive to be at the forefront of all we do.
- **We honor and respect the ideals of freedom**. We protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views.
- **We are careful stewards**. We responsibly and sustainably manage the economic and natural resources entrusted to us.
- **Integrity is our cornerstone**. We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards as educators, scholars, students, and professionals.
- **We are a team**. We are a collaborative community that focuses on ensuring the success of every member.

Section I. Assessment Cycle 2025–2026

Purpose. Assessment Cycle 2025-2026–*Leading the Way* is the third full quantitative assessment of Strategic Plan 2023-2028. On February 27, 2025, the BOS for the ULS approved Northwestern's request for revalidation of its Mission, Vision, and Values statement.

On June 19, 2026, the University completed the ninth cycle of assessment of its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and core competencies as part of the *Assessment Cycle (AC) 2025-2026.* Uninterrupted, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation enable Northwestern to make informed strategic decisions, ultimately leading to institutional improvement. The assessment encompasses five strategic focus areas (SFAs): Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, and Athletic Prominence. Note, in AC 2025-2026, the University dissolved the Cultural Competence SFA and returned the metrics to the Student Experience SFA for efficiency and alignment. It became evident that the metrics for Cultural Competence were a subset of the data already collected by The Student Experience.

The University is now moving forward with 23 objectives, 81 metrics, 170 academic programs, administrative units, and core competency assessments underpinning its annual assessment. These strategic focus areas, programs, administrative units, and competencies continue to capitalize on their independent findings, analyses, and decisions/actions. This structured, cyclic review of our mission, objectives, and outcomes enables the University leadership to make informed decisions that continuously propel it toward its vision of becoming the premier regional university.

The institutional assessment process is improving the quality of our academic programs, academic support services, administrative support services, and strategic decision-making. More importantly, it demonstrates to the region's stakeholders that Northwestern is quantifiably accomplishing its mission and striving to improve the region's socioeconomic conditions.

In the spring of 2025, the University of Louisiana System (ULS) released its Strategic Plan, *One System. One Mission*. The plan is built on a framework focused on four key priority areas:

Operational Efficiency and Excellence: Leverage the UL System's scale to drive operational efficiencies, standardize administrative processes, and strategically invest in shared services that reduce costs, increase institutional capacity, and uphold fiscal responsibility across all institutions.

Student Access and Success: Leverage the UL System's collective voice to champion the value of higher education, expand student access, improve outcomes, and support talent retention across Louisiana.

Research and Talent Development: Position the UL System as the state's leading source of applied, industry-aligned research and innovation while equipping students with the skills, experiences, and opportunities needed to thrive in rapidly evolving industries.

External Affairs: Leverage the UL System's statewide presence to advance strategic priorities through advocacy, policy engagement, public affairs, and stakeholder alignment–building trust, influence, and support among government leaders, industry partners, media, and communities.

Northwestern's Strategic Plan 2023–2028 demonstrates strong alignment with the University of Louisiana System's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. Approximately 90% of NSU's objectives and metrics operationalize the

System's four strategic priorities. The remaining areas—leisure learning, athletics recognition, and culture—complement the System's priorities by enhancing student experience and institutional distinction. Together, the plans advance a shared mission of providing responsive, student-centered, and economically relevant education for Louisiana.

Most non-aligned metrics reinforce Northwestern's identity as a student-centered, community-engaged institution. While not mirrored at the System level, these measures provide valuable insight into campus engagement, faculty recognition, and sustainability efforts.

These metrics represent areas where Northwestern's local mission and institutional culture exceed or differentiate from the UL System framework. They enhance campus engagement, promote well-being, and reinforce Northwestern's unique identity while remaining complementary to ULS goals.

Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Model. The Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System hold institutions accountable for achieving positive outcome measures in academics and support services. Our ability to offer students federally based financial aid depends on our accreditation by SACSCOC. Accreditation requires higher education institutions to demonstrate an active assessment process that examines all programs and services, leading to improvement and the accomplishment of their mission (Figure 1). SACSCOC adds, "Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against the mission in all aspects of an institution."

A policy and procedure backbone (Figure 2) was established to fully leverage its strategic planning and institutional effectiveness model, ensuring participation, standardization, flexibility, and accountability.

Figure 1
The Institutional Effectiveness Process

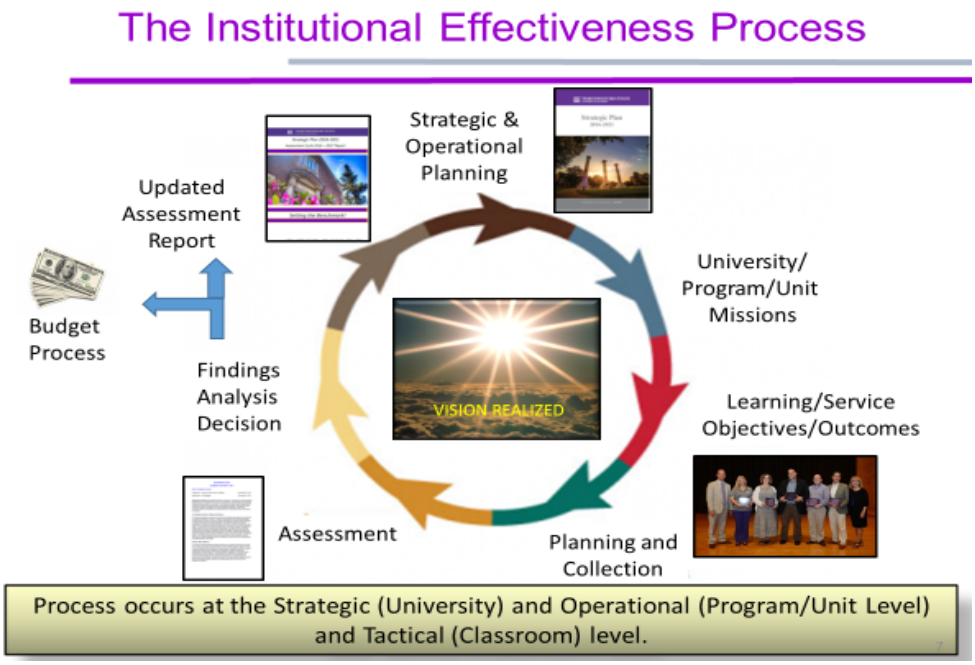
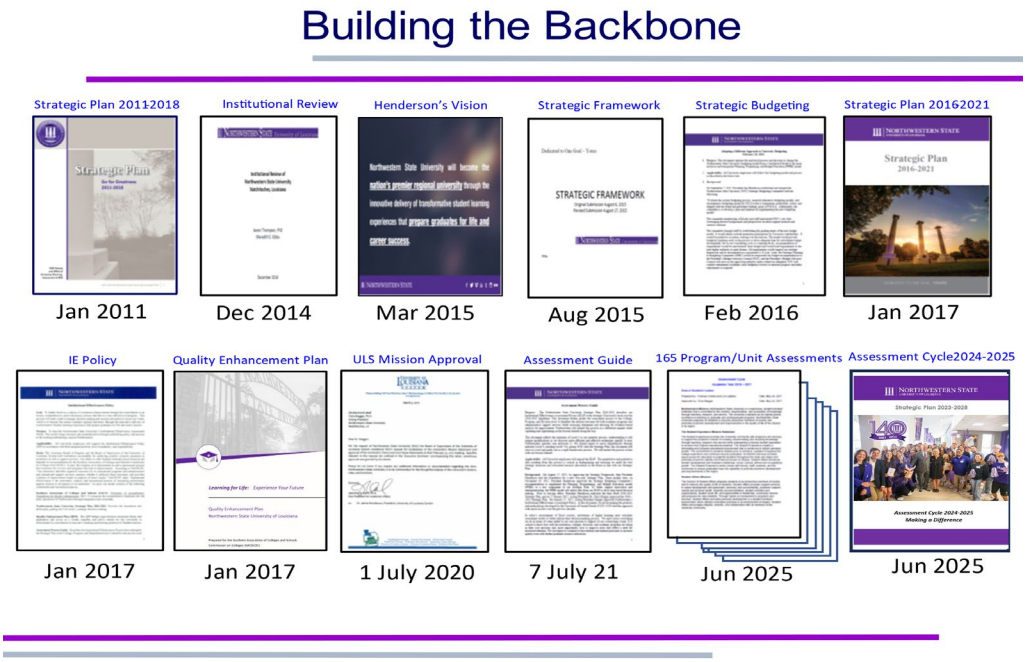


Figure 2
Literary Backbone



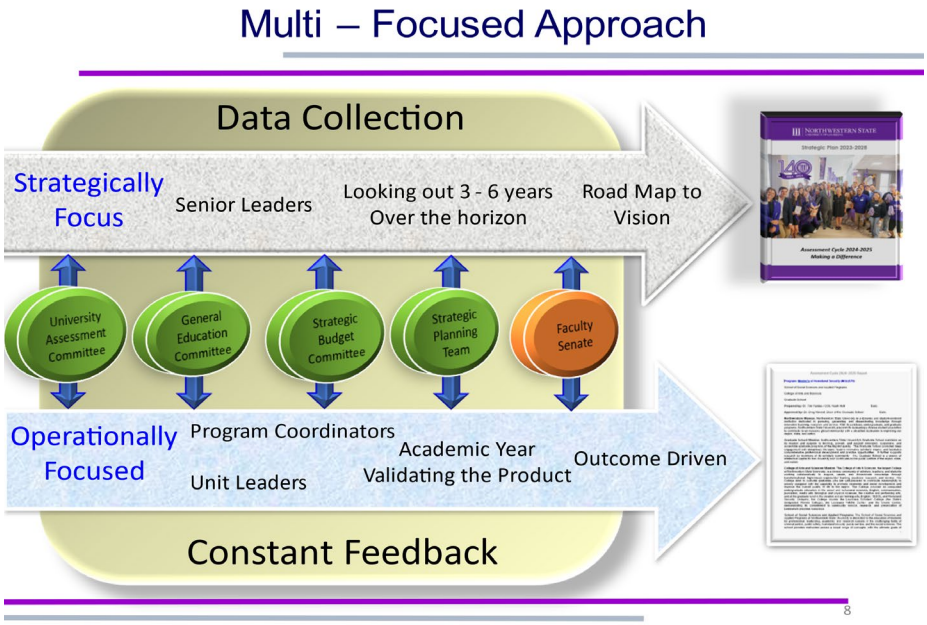
The supporting organizational structure (Figure 3) is established through the President's Leadership Team, which provides the strategic vision and serves as the forcing function to drive the process, ensuring various model components stay aligned and mutually supportive. The University Strategic Planning Team looks over the horizon and steers the process around hazards and toward the vision. The University Assessment Committee provides for standardization, predictability, and quality in the process. The program and unit coordinators, faculty, staff, and students are instruments in maintaining the integrity of the process. The University General Education Committee ensures Northwestern has a broadly based core curriculum that is central to the University's mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents' requirements for general education survey courses applicable to all students regardless of their major. Lastly, the Strategic Budgeting Committee helps align resources to university priorities, improve transparency, reward entrepreneurial efforts, reconcile program costs and revenue, and promote improved fiscal stewardship and accountability.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) *Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement,* 2018*.* The University has assigned each applicable standard to the appropriate authority for ownership, evaluation, and integration into the University's daily operations.

Northwestern Assessment of its Strategic Plan 2023-2028. The University's strategic plans provide the framework and context for our actions through 2023-2028. The annual assessment of the plan, Assessment Cycle 2025–2026 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Driving Change, allows for adaptation, innovation, and adjustment based on the findings and the evolving higher education and socioeconomic environments.

Each September and March, the Strategic Planning Team, University Assessment Committee, General Education Core Competency Coordinators, faculty, staff, students, and guests participate in a semiannual review of progress through an update to the President from each Strategic Focus Area (SFA) team leader and special topic area. As appropriate, the President or designated senior leader will update all faculty, staff, and

Figure 3
Organizational structure



community partners at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters as part of the Faculty and Staff Institute, strategic communications, or similar activity. In mid-March, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will initiate that year's assessment report in coordination with each SFA. This report captures strategic decisions made during the year and addresses adjustments to the Strategic Plan moving forward. Each SFA team leader presents an update to the President and the leadership team in September as a status check of each area's progress. During these forums, the President reviews all proposed adjustments to the objectives, strategies, or metrics. The University publishes the Assessment Cycle Report within 30 days of this meeting. The report in purple below is ongoing.

Beginning with Assessment Cycle (AC) 2019-2020, each SFA determines which objectives/metrics it will assess that year based on its data collection plan. Those objectives and metrics not assessed during AC 2019-2020 were assessed in 2020-2021, thereby completing a full assessment every two years. The University did not conduct an assessment in AC 2021-2022 to allow for a period of reflection and enable senior leadership to focus on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) fifth-year interim review, ensuring the University is following all Federal Laws and Department of Education policies.

1. Assessment Cycle 2016–2017 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Setting the Benchmark.
2. Assessment Cycle 2017–2018 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Validating Our Approach.
3. Assessment Cycle 2018–2019 to Strategic Plan 2016-2021–Building Momentum.
4. Assessment Cycle 2019–2020 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Sustaining Success.
5. Assessment Cycle 2020–2021 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–The Way Forward.
6. Assessment Cycle 2021–2022 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023–Reflection Year–**No Report**
7. Assessment Cycle 2022–2023 to Strategic Plan 2016-2023 and 2023-2028–A New Day.
8. Assessment Cycle 2023–2024 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Driving Change
9. Assessment Cycle 2024–2025 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Making a Difference
10. **Assessment Cycle 2025–2026 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Leading the Way**
11. Assessment Cycle 2026–2027 to Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Setting the Standard

Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Objectives. Our objectives by strategic focus area are:

The Student Experience:

Objective 1. Utilize strategic and sustainable practices to achieve and maintain optimum enrollments.
Objective 2. Provide efficient and appropriate use of resources in support of enrollment and student success.
Objective 3. Foster student engagement through co-curricular experiences by providing multiple means of access and opportunity.
Objective 4. Provide an enhanced second-year experience through advising, living-learning communities, and mentorship.
Objective 5. Promote behaviors that enhance holistic health and safety.

Academic Excellence:

Objective 1. Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online.
Objective 2. Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies.
Objective 3. Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation.
Objective 4. Foster quality student-faculty interactions.
Objective 5. Support faculty in teaching, research, and service.

Market Responsiveness:

Objective 1. Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead.
Objective 2. Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands.
Objective 3. Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies.
Objective 4. Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement.

Community Enrichment:

Objective 1. Expand world-class performing arts program.
Objective 2. Increase robust alumni engagement.
Objective 3. Promote mutually beneficial donor relationships.
Objective 4. Expand institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.
Objective 5. Nurture thriving town-gown relationships.

Athletic Prominence:

Objective 1. Enhance marketing opportunities, game day experience, and resource acquisition.
Objective 2. Promote community service, appreciation, and engagement.
Objective 3. Enhance University and community collaboration and support.
Objective 4. Enhance recognizing and promoting success.

University Program and Unit Assessment Process. In coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, all academic programs review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. They identify the degree-awarding programs (diplomas, certificates, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral) that will participate in the assessment process. Each develops program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Simultaneously, University Vice Presidents determine which administrative units must review, amend, or revalidate their respective missions. Administrative and Student Support Units developed their Service Outcome Measures (SOMs) and assessment methodology.

Assessments occur during the Assessment Cycle (AC: June to May). Each academic program and administrative unit submits its assessment cycle plans for the coming year to its respective Academic or Administrative Review Committee Chair. The Dean or Vice President reviews and approves assessment

plans. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) will account for each Plan as part of the assessment process. Data is collected throughout the academic year, with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each year, faculty and staff collect data and compare the results of the previous year's assessment, the target, and the effectiveness of their action plans to the current year's results providing evidence of improvement or needed improvement based on the analysis of the results.

All assessments are due to the DIE no later than mid-June, the exact date determined by the DIE in concert with senior leaders. The DIE develops the Assessment Year presentation per the July Strategic Plan update. The University uses the Institutional Effectiveness website as the primary assessment repository.

Quality Enhancement Plan. The development and implementation of the *Learning for Life: Experience Your Future* Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) was a comprehensive seven-year process. Full implementation of the QEP was achieved in spring 2020, and the Impact Report was submitted to SACSCOC as part of the institution's Fifth-Year Interim Report. At the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December 2025, and in alignment with the new compliance review process introduced by the incoming SACSCOC President, Northwestern formally notified its assigned SACSCOC Vice President that it would not conduct a Quality Enhancement Plan as part of its 2027 Reaffirmation of Accreditation process.

Strategic Budgeting Process. The *Planning, Programming, and Budget Execution* (PPBE) model best fits the University's Budget Development. This model provides the appropriate incentives; it is inclusive, emphasizes a high level of transparency in concert with the principles of our strategic intent, while providing the information necessary for sound decision-making, supports innovation and entrepreneurship, and helps the University maximize support from campus stakeholders and private donors.

Student Learning Outcomes Statements. The University takes a deliberate approach to the structure of its assessment process, particularly regarding identifying outcome measures. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides faculty and staff with a guide to standardize the development of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Service Outcomes (SOs). The University Common Core SLOs support individual degree program SLOs, which underpin the Strategic Plan's Academic Excellence Strategic Focus area.

According to the University's *Guide to Outcome–Measure Development,* SLOs should be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and tied to a specific timeframe. Each outcome addresses knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The policy requires that outcome statements specify what students will know or be able to perform or demonstrate when they have completed or participated in the program, course, project, or activity.

As described in the University's *Guide to Outcome–Measure Development*, measures combine the assessment methodology and the target for the outcome. A direct measure, which is preferred, requires a student to demonstrate the skill or knowledge. An indirect assessment measure addresses the perception of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions. The University encourages setting targets that are difficult to attain to drive a constant pursuit of improvement. As such, Northwestern does not rely solely on course grades as an acceptable measure for assessing an outcome.

Per the *University Assessment Process Guide* and in coordination with the University Provost and College Deans, each academic entity reviews, amends, or revalidates its respective missions. The foundation of this assessment process emanates from the hierarchy of the University, College, Department, Program, or Unit mission. Each measure is mapped to a specific course from which data is collected. In most cases, multiple courses contribute to the data collection and analysis of a single measure. In 2017-2018, sixty-six (66); in 2018-2019,

ninety-three (93); in 2019-2020, ninety-five (95); in 2020-2021, ninety-nine (99); in 2021-2022 one hundred (100), in 2022-2023 one hundred and three (103), in 2023-2024 one hundred and four (104), in 2024-2025 one hundred and three (103) and in 2025-2026 one hundred and five (105) degree-awarding academic programs participated in the assessment process. Each developed program-specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and an associated assessment methodology from which they derived their findings. Each then analyzed their results, leading to decisions or actions to promote continuous improvement.

Evidence of Institution-level Student Learning. Assessment data collection occurred throughout the 2025-2026 academic year, with spring commencement ending the assessment cycle. Each program identified its findings, completed its analysis, and collectively determined the decisions/actions necessary to drive the improvement cycle. Program faculty compared current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the coming year (2026-2027). Once the Dean approves, program coordinators submit completed assessments to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) on June 19, 2026. The 2025-2026 Assessment Cycle Reports are posted on the Institutional Effectiveness website. An Academic Review Committee, composed of program assessment coordinators, oversees the assessment process within each of the University's four Colleges. After completing all program assessments, the four Academic Review Committee Chairs provide input to the annual assessment report. The report captures the most significant findings and decisions of the past academic year, including proposed and actual changes, an analytical assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the status of new assessment plans. This information is integrated into the Strategic Focus Area Academic Excellence findings, where recommendations for pedagogy, curriculum development, review, or adoption are made. The DIE consolidates these reports into one executive presentation for the University President's review/decision in June-July, typically presented in August or September.

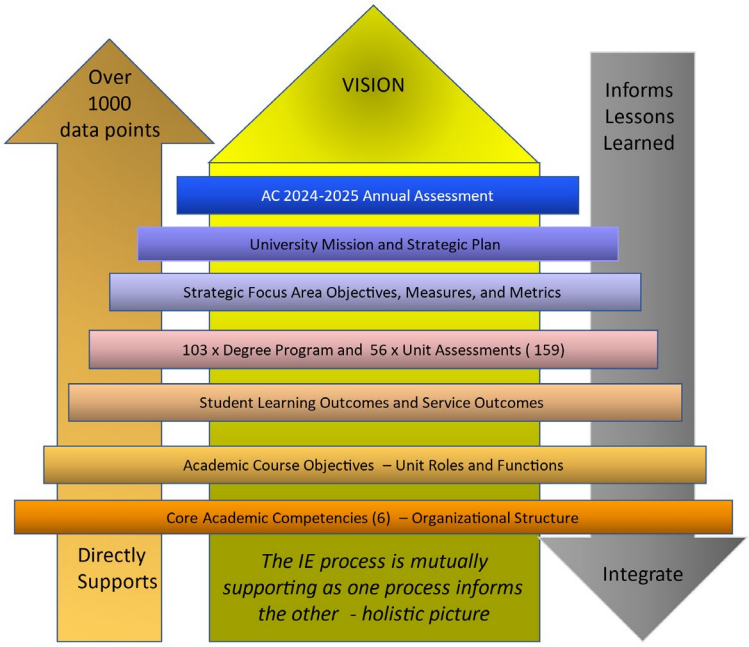
Institution-level Assessment Resources. Assessment resources are centralized on the IE website under the Assessment Process and Resources tab. In addition to the items listed, the DIE pushes best practices to program and unit coordinators as part of the monthly UAC meetings. The DIE also holds needs-based workshops and professional development sessions for organizations requiring or requesting assistance or those in coordinator transition. On average, the DIE conducts 15-20 assessment-related visits per semester.

Institution-level Assessment Activities. As Northwestern closes in on completing its eighth iteration of the institution-wide assessment process (for all strategic focus areas, academic programs, administrative support services, and academic and student support services), assessments enable the analytical comparison of results between the current year and the last measurement, as well as against established targets. (Some metrics are assessed annually, with the remainder evaluated on a two-year cycle.) The study of these results forms the foundation for developing executable action plans focused on improving student learning and institutional and program growth. The process allows the University to analyze program results across all colleges and schools to inform its strategic planning effort and make improvements based on the analysis of these results. As such, the University can provide its stakeholders with the required evidence of growth based on the review of findings.

Use of Institutional-level Student Learning. Informed assessment allows for enhanced environmental visualization, which drives our ability to make better decisions and navigate the future. The results indicate better-informed objectives, metrics, and associated strategies, allowing for holistic findings, comprehensive analyses, and informed strategic decisions. This cyclic analytical decision-making process will continue to require honest and, at times, sophisticated analysis of our current Plan. Through this process, we continue to find we must be flexible in modifying (including adding or deleting) objectives, metrics, and methods. The foundation of the process is organizational self-actualization and continuous assessment, adjustment, and refinement. All are focused on meeting our 2026 objectives.

At the tactical level, common core outcomes and classroom course objectives provide the data to inform the measure supporting the operational level degree program assessment measures supporting student learning outcomes, which in turn provide data to inform the metrics and objectives at the strategic level assessment of the Strategic Plan (Figure 4). This nesting of assessment data allows for a better appreciation of student learning while providing a more holistic view of progress in student learning, specifically in the Academic Excellence and Student Experience strategic focus areas. This process and the analysis of the associated results and lessons learned drive tactical, operational, and strategic decisions. The use and evidence of institution-level learning are evident in the AC 2025-2026 Assessment Cycle *Executive Summary,* which reflects the strategic decisions made across the University impacting a myriad of efforts from financial health; Board of Regents initiatives; academic programs; student, alumni, and community relations; and external affairs.

Figure 4
Assessment Process



Reflection, Growth, and Improvement Plan. Our model calls for a continuous cycle of annual assessments across multiple echelons with overlapping and mutually supporting outcomes and associated data. The process entails numerous inputs filtered through a diverse assessment structure with better-informed outputs (Table 1). The annual assessment process is not complete until the recommendations and proposed decisions reflected in the strategic assessment are mediated and agreed upon by the strategic planning committee, a final after-action review is conducted, the final report is written, and the brief presented. Each decision is discussed and closed with a consensus on the appropriate disposition. The results of the after-action review, incorporating input from across the University, is integrated into the final presentation to the President. Once delivered, recommended improvements to the process are made, and all artifacts are uploaded on the Institutional Effectiveness website.

The after-action report requires everyone in the assessment process to review their actions, roles, functions, and responsibilities. It also requires them to identify what works as designed and what can be done to improve the process. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process involving the entire University, we are addressing these challenges with a multifaceted approach. We now routinely

Table 1

Diversity in Assessment Structure

INPUTS	Diversity in Assessment Structure	OUTPUTS
Department of Education Policy Guidance	Board of Regents	Funding-Management Guidance/BOR
Academic Policy & Management Guidance	University of Louisiana System	Board of Supervisors Oversight
SACSCOC-BOR-ULS Guidance	Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources	SACSCOC Connectivity--provide all units' information to be used in decision-making and evidence-based planning
SACSCOC-BOR-ULS Policy Guidance	Director of Institutional Effectiveness	Advancing educational quality through assessment
Data source collection connectivity analysis	Office of Institutional Research	Support continuous review of assessment process
Higher Education Atmospherics	University President's Leadership Team	Setting the University's strategic direction
Advance transformative student learning	Provost--VP for Academic Affairs	Establish culture of Innovation and Collaboration
National-State student support initiatives	Vice President for Student Experience	Support academic experiences & promote student development outside of classroom
BOR Master Plan--National Trends--Initiatives	University Strategic Planning Team	Decisions made around assessment outcomes
SACSCOC requirements and University Policy	University Assessment Committee	Integrate culture of assessment consistent with the University mission
DOE, State, and BOR Policy	General Education	Assess institutional student learning outcomes
State and BOR Policy	Curriculum Review Committee	Advise on curricular matters including achievement of student learning outcomes
Faculty and student concerns	Deans Council	Provides info on the health of academic programs.
Faculty and leadership concerns--guidance	Faculty Senate	Liaison between faculty and admin on assessment
University, Dean, UAC, guidance	Degree Program Coordinators	Responsible for producing quality assessment reports
Discipline experts and academics	Academic Program Advisory Boards	Contributes to the currency and quality of the academic program
University department lessons learned	Degree Program Review Committee	Collect, analyze, support improvement actions
Credentialing National-State-University Policies	Degree Program Faculty	Backbone, integrity of assessment process

hold professional development sessions with targeted groups where the comfort level for participants is such that the exchange of ideas is much improved. We are consistent in our battle rhythm of meetings and activities, maintaining assessment activities on the radar of our participants and interested parties. We have added more precise language to our University Catalog regarding the purpose of assessment, student learning outcomes, and, specifically, students' required responsibilities in participation. The University now requires specific SLO language in each academic degree course syllabus, stating how the course either directly or indirectly supports the degree program assessment. We have developed tools for faculty, such as the anatomy of assessment, assessment of a measure by the numbers, fundamentals of assessment, and the transition checklist, designed to facilitate learning. Instituting a culture of assessment and continuous improvement is a work in progress, and the approach must be balanced to ensure support, compliance, ownership, and promotion. We are not there yet, but we are making significant progress.

Section II. Performance Indicators and Assessment Results

(Objectives–Strategies–Metrics–Findings-Analysis-Decisions-Responsibility)

Strategic Focus Area 1–The Student Experience

The Student Experience staff at Northwestern State University (NSU) are committed to providing the best possible experience for the students we serve. Our efforts focus on providing a student experience in which every student is supported, connected, and prepared for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

In pursuit of its strategic vision, Northwestern State University has demonstrated unwavering dedication to enhancing all aspects of the student experience. During the 2025–2026 academic year, this commitment was reflected through a series of impactful initiatives led by the Division of Student Experience. Key advancements included the full implementation of the Strategic Enrollment Plan and enhanced communication and educational tools such as Campus ESP, Vector Solutions, SUNY SCI, and Suitable system resources, and the expansion and optimization of student spaces to better meet the evolving needs of the campus community.

The Student Experience encompasses five areas of activities:

- Achieving and maintaining optimal enrollments.
- Supporting enrollment and student success.
- Fostering student engagement through co-curricular activities.
- Enhancing students' second-year experience.
- Enhancing holistic health and safety of students.

Except for enrollment data, most metrics (Table 2) were assessed using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNLSSI), administered spring every other year (2021, 2023, 2025) by the University of Louisiana System. The RNLSSI collects data on a 7-point Likert scale. RNLSSI also allows participating universities to add unique questions, discussed in this report. Students rate the *importance* of questions in addition to their *satisfaction* with items. (Higher scores represent higher importance or higher satisfaction.) Data collection occurred in spring 2025; Northwestern State University achieved a 13% response rate to the RNLSSI, the second highest of the UL System institutions.

Numerical values are not comparable from item to item or year to year. However, results from the local Spring 2025 administration of the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) show measurable improvement in student satisfaction across all items from AC 2022-2023 to AC 2024-2025. In addition, the institutional scores for Spring 2025 were higher than the UL System averages and the national norms for similar institutions; all but three averages for the ULS and three for the national norm (out of 45 items) were significantly higher at the $p < .001$ level. Students reported feeling welcomed on campus and confident in their ability to access the resources necessary for academic and personal success.

Table 2

Metrics for The Student Experience

AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	AC 2025-2026	The Student Experience Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
70%	71%	71.44%	*Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 2nd year*	73%*
48%	56%	58.04%	*Retention rate (full-time) 1st to 3rd year*	61%*
46%	45%	45%	*Graduation rates (SACSCOC-aligned)*	53%*
1,067	1,059	1,065	*Enrollment per freshman class, per year*	1,300
2,905	3,112	3,061	*Enrollment on Natchitoches campus*	3,700
8,847	8,523	8,402	*Overall Northwestern State University enrollment*	11,000*
	6.17		Satisfaction with support services and resources)	6.3
	5.86		Responsive and helpful staff (Student Centeredness)	6.3
	6.06		Understanding of University policies and procedures	6.3
84%	83.7%	85%	*Percentage of graduates working within 6 months of graduation ****	80%*
	5.80		On-campus facilities satisfaction survey	6.3
6,423	7,079	2,430	*Number of students involved in co-curricular activities ****	7,000
22,060	25,484.5	28,801	*Hours students engage in volunteer community service*	25,000**
23,376	39,445	30,376	*Number of students & stakeholders using career services platform*	11,000
105	68	168	*Number of 1st year students participating in living-learning communities*	TBD
17	26		Number of eligible 2nd year students participating in leadership programming	TBD
27/49 (55%)	28/47 (60%)	23/37 (62%)	*Percentage of students completing a leadership program who assume a peer leadership role within one academic year*	62%
42/49 (86%)	43/47 (91%)	37/38 (100%)	*Satisfaction with 1st year leadership programs*	88%
196	297	178	*Number of health-related programs and services*	125
	6.19		Satisfaction with health-safety related support programs	6.3
	5.56		Safety and security satisfaction survey	6.3

Note: Outcomes for AC 2023-2024 are reflected on the far left with AC 2024-2025 to the right and AC 2025-2026 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2025-2026. Black standard text was assessed in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

**Serves as Student Achievement Criterion.*

*** Total for volunteer and professional service hours*

**** Data collection for this metric shifted for this assessment cycle*

Five objectives support The Student Experience:

Objective 1: Utilize strategic and sustainable practices to achieve and maintain optimal enrollments

Strategies:

- Provide programs and services for achieving academic excellence.
- Better integrate admissions processes, financial aid, registrar services, and academic advising throughout the campus.
- Streamline policies and procedures to enhance responsiveness to students' needs.
- Develop programs and collaborate with Academic Affairs to boost Natchitoches campus enrollment.
- Develop practices to enhance Dual Enrollment conversions and matriculation rates.

- Increase overall number of recruiting contacts through lead generation best practices with a focus on the nine (9) parishes within the central Louisiana parish area.
- Implement Enrollment Management Plan developed throughout the prior year using Meauxmentum framework concepts.

Metrics:

1. *Retention rate (full-time) first to second year*
2. *Retention rate (full-time) first to third year*
3. *Graduation rates (SACSCOC-aligned)*
4. *Enrollment per freshman class per year*
5. *Enrollment on the Natchitoches campus*
6. *Overall Northwestern State University enrollment*

Metric:

1. Retention rate (full-time) first to second year

Findings:

The first year to second year persistence rate for first-time, full-time, baccalaureate-seeking entering freshmen continued to improve from 2023-2024 (70%), to 2024-2025 (71%). The fall 2024 to fall 2025 persistence rate increased to 71.44%, which did not meet the target of 73%.

Analysis:

The first-to-second year retention rate for first-time, full-time freshmen has shown steady, incremental improvement over the past three years, increasing from 70% in AC 2023–2024 to 71% in AC 2024–2025, and most recently to 71.44% in AC 2025–2026. While this upward trend reflects positive momentum and the impact of ongoing student success initiatives, the institution has not yet met its established target of 73%.

The modest gains suggest that current strategies are contributing to improved persistence, but at a pace that may not be sufficient to reach short-term goals without additional intervention. This indicates a need to further strengthen retention-focused efforts, particularly in areas such as early student engagement, academic support, and financial aid interventions.

Moving forward, continued emphasis on data informed decision making and targeted support for at risk student populations will be critical. Enhancing coordination across enrollment management, academic affairs, and student support services will be necessary to accelerate progress and close the remaining gap toward the 73% retention goal.

Decision:

While retention rates have shown steady improvement, the pace of growth indicates a need for more targeted and coordinated interventions to reach the 73% goal. To build on current momentum while accelerating progress toward achieving and sustaining retention goals, the institution will implement the following enhancements aligned with the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan:

- Expand early academic support initiatives–Increase utilization and awareness of programs such as Faculty Led Assistance in My Education (FLAME) program and corequisite support to improve first-year academic success.
- Strengthen proactive financial aid outreach–Implement earlier and more consistent communication with students regarding financial obligations, aid options, and balance resolution.
- Enhance first-year engagement efforts–Increase structured touchpoints for first-time freshmen, including orientation follow-up, early semester check-ins, and involvement opportunities.

- Improve identification of at-risk students–Utilize data analytics to flag students earlier in the term and deploy targeted interventions through advising and student support services using retention dashboards and standard operating procedures.
- Increase cross-divisional coordination–Strengthen collaboration between Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, and the Student Experience to ensure a seamless, student-centered approach to retention.
- Implement quarterly SEM progress reviews–Monitor retention metrics and initiative effectiveness, allowing for real-time adjustments to strategies as needed.

Metric:

2. Retention rate (full-time) first to third year

Findings:

The persistence of students from first to third year increased significantly ($p < .001$) from 48.37% for the fall 2021 cohort (n = 1,135) to 56.20% for the fall 2022 cohort (n = 879), and finally 58% for the fall 2023 cohort, but did not meet the target of 61%.

Analysis:

Persistence from first to third year has continued to improve, increasing from 56.20% for the fall 2022 cohort to 58% for the most recent cohort. While this reflects positive momentum and sustained impact of institutional initiatives, the University remains below the established target of 61%. The incremental growth mirrors trends seen in first-to-second year retention, suggesting that gains are compounding over time but at a slower pace than needed to meet short-term goals.

Progress can be attributed to expanded student success efforts, including academic support through FLAME, increased financial aid engagement, and targeted outreach initiatives such as Beyond Graduation. The Beyond Graduation program continues to scale its impact, now supporting a cohort of over 700 students and providing hundreds of documented student interactions and targeted interventions. This structured, high-touch support model reinforces student engagement from recruitment through completion and contributes to persistence gains.

However, the persistence gap indicates that additional focus is needed beyond the first year, particularly as students transition into their second and third years where engagement and support often decline. The institution must place greater emphasis on sustained engagement, academic progression, and targeted support for students beyond the first year. Strengthening second-year programming, refining early intervention systems with the help of enrollment specialists, and enhancing coordination across academic and student support units will be critical to accelerating progress and improving long-term persistence outcomes.

Decision:

The Director of Enrollment Management will develop and implement strategies within the SEM Plan to deploy enrollment coaches in six academic areas of campus to assist with registration, holds, reenrollment, and student service-based issues. These strategies are expected to:

- Explore the creation of a sophomore experience.
- Refine early intervention plans for academically at-risk students.
- Prioritize creating mentor programs, living learning communities, and successful academic mapping.

Metric:

3. Graduation rates (SACSCOC aligned)

Findings:

The 6-year graduation target for full-time degree-seeking students is 53%. The graduation rate for the Fall 2018 cohort was 43.2% which indicates a slight decline from prior years. The Fall 2019 cohort graduation rate was 43.56%.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, NSU achieved the six-year graduation rate of 46%. For AC 2023-2024, The Student Experience increased the target from 43% to 53%. The target was not met in AC 2024-2025 nor AC 2025-2026 but increased slightly in year-on-year comparison. A renewed focus on the implementation of the SEM Plan will ultimately help increase the graduation rate, and that will compound with time; early indicators are already starting to show the initial ascent.

Decision:

- Develop stop-out recovery strategies.
- Enhance career alignment and post-graduation visibility.
- Expand use of predictive analytics for completion risk.
- Strengthen faculty engagement in degree completion efforts.
- Improve communication around graduation requirements and timelines.

Metric:

4. Enrollment per freshman class per year

Findings:

The number of entering freshmen decreased from 1,067 in fall 2023 to 1,059 in fall 2024. That number has now increased to 1,065 in fall of 2025. This number included new students who first enrolled in the summer term and continued in the fall.

Analysis:

The number of entering freshmen has remained stable over the past three academic cycles, decreasing slightly from 1,067 in fall 2023 to 1,059 in fall 2024, before increasing to 1,065 in fall 2025. While the most recent increase indicates a positive shift in entering freshman, that enrollment has not yet demonstrated significant growth and remains essentially flat over the three-year period.

This stability suggests that current recruitment strategies have been effective in maintaining enrollment levels despite external challenges such as demographic shifts and increased competition. Additionally, the inclusion of summer-start students who persist into the fall reflects progress in creating alternative entry pathways. However, to achieve the institution's enrollment growth goals outlined in the SEM Plan, more aggressive and targeted recruitment strategies will be necessary.

The institution must focus on expanding its reach into new markets, increasing application conversion rates, and strengthening yield strategies. Continued alignment between recruitment, financial aid, and academic program offerings will be critical to driving sustainable growth in entering freshman cohorts.

Decision:

The Director of Enrollment Management will enhance recruitment strategies within the SEM Plan to move beyond stabilization and achieve measurable growth in entering freshman enrollment. Building on current efforts, the following actions will be implemented:

- Expand targeted recruitment territories and markets–Increase focus on high-yield regions in Louisiana and Texas, while identifying emerging markets aligned with academic program strengths.
- Strengthen application to enrollment conversion strategies–Implement more intentional communication plans, including personalized outreach, campus visit incentives, and timely follow-up with admitted students.
- Enhance dual enrollment and early pipeline initiatives–Grow partnerships with high schools to create stronger pathways from dual enrollment to full-time enrollment at NSU.
- Leverage data analytics to refine recruiting efforts–Utilize admit, yield, and melt data to adjust travel, outreach, and communication strategies in real time.
- Increase emphasis on program-specific recruiting–Align recruitment messaging with high demand academic programs to attract students with clear academic and career interests.
- These strategies are designed to build on current stability while creating intentional growth in freshman enrollment, aligned with institutional enrollment goals.

Metric:

5. Enrollment on the Natchitoches campus

Findings:

Enrollment of students taking at least one face-to-face class on the Natchitoches campus decreased by 53 students, from 3,112 in Fall 2024 to 3,061 in Fall 2025.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the University reevaluated how we classify Natchitoches students. Factors include students taking face-to-face classes, as well as students classified as high school, and students classified as online, both residing in Natchitoches.

While the overall trend remains above 2023 levels, the decline in 2025 suggests that gains in face-to-face enrollment may be sensitive to factors such as course availability, student scheduling preferences, housing capacity, and competition from online modalities. The fluctuation indicates that while institutional efforts to promote on-campus engagement have been effective, they require continued reinforcement and alignment across academic and student experience areas.

Decision:

- Enhance course scheduling and modality alignment.
- Strengthen the residential and campus experience.
- Leverage data to monitor modality trends and student.
- Expand first-year and sophomore on-campus engagement initiatives.

Metric:

6. Overall Northwestern State University enrollment

Findings:

Enrollment over all instructional sites and online was 8,523 in the fall of 2024. This was a decrease of 324 students from the fall of 2023 (8,847). It further decreased in the fall of 2025 to 8,402.

Analysis:

Overall enrollment at Northwestern State University has declined over the past two academic years, decreasing from 8,847 in fall 2023 to 8,523 in fall 2024, and further to 8,402 in fall 2025. This represents a continued downward trend across all instructional sites and online, indicating that while certain areas such as freshman enrollment and on-campus engagement have shown stability or growth, these gains have been

insufficient to offset broader enrollment declines. The sustained decrease suggests ongoing challenges related to demographic shifts, increased competition, and enrollment challenges affecting key populations including transfers, online learners, and continuing students. While current SEM initiatives have helped stabilize enrollment in certain areas, overall trends indicate the need for a more comprehensive and proactive enrollment growth strategy that supports students throughout the student lifecycle.

Decision:

- Strengthen transfer and pathway partnerships
- Enhance online and adult learner recruitment strategies
- Implement stop out recovery and re-enrollment campaigns
- Continue expansion of initiatives such as FLAME, Beyond Graduation, and financial aid outreach to support student success.
- Strengthen collaboration between Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, and Student Experience to create a unified enrollment strategy.

Objective 2: Provide efficient and appropriate use of resources in support of enrollment and student success

Strategies:

- Broaden programs and services for students, faculty, and staff geared to making the campus climate equally welcoming for all members of the community.
- Develop our students to be future leaders.
- Local recruiting to meet local economic development strategies.
- Educate campus community about available services, such as accessibility and disability support, career counseling, job location, food pantry, faculty-led academic mentoring, and prior learning assessments.

Metrics:

1. Satisfaction with support services and resources.
2. Responsive and helpful staff
3. Understanding of University policies and processes
4. *Percentage of graduates working within 6 months of graduation*

Metric:

1. Satisfaction with support services and resources

Findings:

Responses to the AC 2024-2025 RNLSSI Campus Services scale include library, computer labs, tutoring services, online access, career services, counseling services, and mentoring. The scale average (M = 6.17/7, SD = 0.98) was significantly above the average from AC 2022-2023 (M = 5.99/7, SD = 1.09, p < .001).

Analysis:

Northwestern improved significantly in overall student satisfaction for Campus Services compared to AC 2022-2023. Of the items reviewed, NSU improved in all eight; of these, six were statistically higher in AC 2024-2025. The average for each item was significantly higher than those for both the UL System and the RNL National Norm (p < .001).

Despite improving significantly overall (p < .001), *Computers and/or Wi-Fi are adequate and accessible*, did not change significantly for students living on-campus. In AC 2022-2023, students living in the residence halls had the lowest satisfaction on this item (M = 5.55, SD = 1.517, N = 232), significantly below the other three groups;

the average for the residence halls increased in AC 2024-2025, but did not change significantly (*M* = 5.74, *SD* = 1.283, *N* = 235, *p* = .072) and remained significantly lower than the other groups.

The item, *Counseling services are available if I need them* increased from 6.00/7 (*SD* = 1.50) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.19/7 (*SD* = 1.39, *p* < .01) in AC 2024-2025. Further analysis of this item, divided into five groups based on instructional delivery (*Completely in-person*; *Mostly in person*; *Half in-person, Half online*; *Mostly online*; and *Completely online*), found a significant difference between group means (one-way ANOVA, *p* = .004). A follow-up test with Tukey's HSD indicated that satisfaction among students enrolled completely online (*M* = 4.58, *SD* = 3.116, *N* = 135) was significantly lower than those enrolled half in-person and half online (*M* = 5.72, *SD* = 2.059, *N* = 107). Similarly, based on students' perception of the importance of this item, completely online students rated the availability of counseling services significantly less important (*M* = 5.29, *SD* = 2.844, *N* = 136) than those enrolled half in-person and half online (*M* = 6.19, *SD* = 1.763, *N* = 104). Although the importance scores indicate that online students may have lower expectations about the availability of counseling services they can utilize, their satisfaction scores indicate we may need to further address the needs of this group.

Decision:

- Counseling and Career Services will be separated to meet the unique needs of both the departments and the students utilizing the resources.
- Counseling Services will identify options for improving access to personal counseling.
- Career Services will develop a summer outreach program to develop the pipeline to NSU.
- Explore opportunities to have intentional conversations with students regarding majors and careers with community and industry stakeholders.

Metric:

2. Responsive and helpful staff

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Student Centeredness scale averaged 5.98/7 (*SD* = 1.11, *N* =) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.83/7 (*SD* = 1.22, *p* < .01) in AC 2022-2023.

The RNLSSI item within Campus Life scale, *Residence Hall Staff are concerned about me as an individual*, increased from 2022-2023 (*M*= 5.13, *SD* = 1.81), averaging 5.49/7 (*SD* = 1.60, *p* < .001).

Combining the five items results in a significant increase from a score of 5.66/7 (*SD* = 1.25, *N* = 466) in AC 2022-2023 to a mean score of 5.86/7 (*SD* = 1.10, *N* = 353, *p* = .008) for AC 2024-2025.

Analysis:

Each of the five individual items from the RNLSSI in this metric increased in student satisfaction between AC 2022-2023 and AC 2024-2025. The only increase that was not statistically significant was for the item, *Students are made to feel welcome here*, which was, nevertheless, a campus strength.

Previous analyses of the item, *Residence Hall staff are concerned about me as an individual*, did not distinguish between students who lived in a residence hall and those who did not. It is difficult to interpret the responses of students who reported that they did not live in the dorms. For instance, students who reported owning their home had the highest average score in AC 2022-2023 (*M* = 5.61, *SD* = 1.706, *N* = 76) and in AC 2024-2025 (*M* = 6.06, *SD* = 1.467, *N* = 52), despite the fact this category of student did not interact with Residence Hall staff. For this reason, the nonresident responses were excluded from the analysis.

Although individuals who lived in the Residence Hall were the group least satisfied with the Residence Hall staff in both AC 2022-2023 (*M* = 4.90, *SD* = 1.83, *N* = 217) and AC 2024-2025 (*M* = 5.18, *SD* = 1.77, *N* = 236),

this represented a significant increase (independent samples *t*-test, $p = .005$), indicating that the performance of Residence Hall staff had improved.

Decision:

- Facilitate Customer Service Training initiatives across campus.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and revise content presented at the residential community meetings.
- Implement a comprehensive professional development program for staff and student employees.
- Coordinate student focus groups to gain a better understanding of student needs.

Metric:

3. Understanding of University policies and procedures

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, University Policies and Procedures were evaluated using two scales on the RNLSSI, plus one item each from Campus Climate and Campus Life scales. Student satisfaction increased significantly on every item.

- Responses to the Registration Effectiveness scale (processes and procedures, billing policies, class registration, and convenient times) averaged 5.98/7 (*SD* = 1.03) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.81/7 (*SD* = 1.16) in AC 2022-2023.
- Responses to the Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale (five items addressing admissions and financial aid) indicate a mean satisfaction of 5.89/7 (*SD* = 1.23) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.65/7 (*SD* = 1.38) in AC 2022-2023.
- Responses to the statement, *Student disciplinary procedures are fair*, on the Campus Life scale averaged 6.13 (*SD* = 1.29) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.95/7 (*SD* = 1.46) in AC 2022-2023.
- The item, *I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus* from the Campus Climate scale averaged 5.66 (*SD* = 1.62) in AC 2024-2025 compared to 5.47/7 (*SD* = 1.75) in AC 2022-2023.

Analysis:

Clear and student-friendly policies and procedures play a vital role in student satisfaction, success, and retention. Streamlining policy has been a key objective within the Student Experience since the inception of the strategic plan. While progress has been made, additional efforts are needed to fully achieve this goal. We are, however, making significant strides in this area.

Comparing AC 2024-2025 to AC 2022-2023, the Registration Effectiveness scale increased significantly ($p < .001$). All four items, *Registration processes and procedures are convenient, Billing policies are reasonable, I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts,* and *I am able to take care of college-related business at times that are convenient for me*, all increased slightly. The recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness scale increased significantly. This scale rose by .34 points, 5.65/7 (SD = 1.38) in AC 2022-2023 to 5.89/7 (*SD* = 1.23, $p < .001$) in AC 2024-2025.

The average for *Student disciplinary procedures are fair,* increased by 0.18 points, 5.95/7 (*SD* = 1.46) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.13/7 (*SD* = 1.29, $p < .01$) in AC 2024-2025. A comprehensive revision of the Student Code of Conduct in AC 2024-2025, along with the creation of an accompanying flow chart, as well as facilitated student focus groups, may have impacted student satisfaction in this service area.

These results indicate systematic improvement in students' understanding of University policies across a wide variety of activities affecting the ways students interact with administrative staff in handling recruitment, financial aid, and registration. Combining these 11 items results in a score of 6.06/7 (*SD* = 0.952, *N* = 333) for 2024-2025, a significant increase compared to 5.85/7 (*SD* = 1.12, *N* = 496, $p = .002$) for AC 2022-2023.

Decision:

- Fully implement a policy management process to review existing policies and procedures that impact students.
- Enhance financial aid counseling opportunities throughout the undergraduate experience since this appears to have improved students' awareness of this service.
- The strategic enrollment plan will incorporate internal and external communication plans regarding tuition and fees.
- Develop programs and awareness campaigns to educate students on the Student Code of Conduct and policies.
- Leverage learning platforms (e.g., SUNYSCI, Vector) to enhance students' understanding of University expectations, policies, and procedures.

Metric:

4. Percentage of graduates working within 6 months of graduation

Findings:

Each semester, all graduating students receive the First Destination Survey in Handshake. To be consistent with NACE reporting standards, this metric uses the responses submitted by recipients awarded associate and bachelor's degrees in the period from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. By the end of June 2026, 348 of 1,591 undergraduate degree recipients (22%) had completed the survey. Of those, 325 (93.3%) indicated they were working (i.e., employed, continuing their education, or serving in the military). An additional 125 participants saved but did not submit their survey; of these, 121 indicated they were working, which would put the percentage at 94% working. However, this is a smaller response rate than the previous year.

Additionally, Handshake implemented a secondary tracking system called "sourced outcomes" which uses information found online on sites such as LinkedIn to record information on students. When including the sourced outcomes, there are 393 known outcomes with 335 students reported as working, military or continuing education. This puts the percentage of working students at 85% (335/393) when including the sourced responses.

Analysis:

Handshake is the NSU platform for recording and disseminating career and employment information to NSU students and alumni. Emails are sent periodically to remind graduates to respond. For students answering *Working* as their primary occupation, follow-up questions ask for details of the specific job, including start date, to distinguish between the intention to seek employment and employment itself.

Respondents are expected to *submit* their surveys when they are complete; however, close examination of responses *in progress* indicates that many simply save their document without formally submitting. Thus, both submitted and in progress surveys are included in our analysis.

The Spring survey closes each Assessment Cycle on October 5, six months post-graduation. However, few graduates respond near the end of the cycle, so by June 30 each year, the response rate is comparable for the August, December, and May graduations. The response rate of submitted and in progress surveys for AC 2025-2026 348/1,591 = 21.8%) was statistically lower than that for AC 2024-2025 (723/1479 = 48.9%). This is considered a *low* response rate. The proportion of respondents in the *working* category increased (two proportion z test, $p < .001$) from AC 2024-2025 (605/723 = 83.7%) to (325/348 = 93.4%). When counting the sourced responses, the proportion of respondents increased by a smaller margin (335/393 = 85%).

Decision:

- Incorporate the First Destination Survey into Capstone courses each semester prior to graduation.
- Utilize the division texting platform to remind students to complete the survey.
- Promote the First Destination Survey during pre-commencement with a QR Code on posters, text message, and graduate cards.
- Provide incentives through divisional programs such as graduation regalia and memorabilia for students who complete the survey.
- Incorporate the completion of the survey at Grad Fest, NSU Wellness Fest, and other programs throughout the Student Experience.

Objective 3: Foster student engagement through co-curricular experiences by providing multiple means of access and opportunity

Strategies:

- Transform campus spaces to create a unique and engaging campus environment, which adapts to the changing trends of a diverse student body to promote on-campus enrollment.
- Rebrand programming and initiatives to build affinity for NSU.
- Develop and implement a program to recognize students, faculty, staff, and student organizations.

Metrics:

1. On Campus Facilities Satisfaction
2. ***Number of students involved in co-curricular activities***
3. ***Hours students engage in volunteer community service***
4. ***Number of students and stakeholders utilizing career services platforms***

Metric:

1. On-campus facilities satisfaction

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, the RNLSSI item, *overall, the campus is well-maintained*, was used to measure satisfaction with campus facilities from item #44 from the Campus Climate scale. The mean score increased from 5.60/7 (*SD* = 1.61) in AC 2022-2023 to 5.80/7 (*SD* =1.49; $p < .01$) in AC 2024-2025. Satisfaction is above both the University of Louisiana System norm (5.54/7; *SD* = 1.64; $p < .001$) and the national norm 5.63/7 (*SD* = 1.55; $p < .05$).

An additional local survey from the Event Management System (EMS) assessing facilities in the Student Union is conducted annually. Of 23 entities answering the survey, 16 represented Recognized Student Organizations. The EMS survey for AC 2024-2025 (Table 3) shows total satisfaction for reserving facilities in the Student Union. Student Union utilization indicates high traffic in the building throughout the year, especially the Ballroom and the Lucile M. Hendrick Room, two large multi-purpose rooms used by NSU and members of the Natchitoches community.

Analysis:

Overall, the campus is well-maintained, changed from AC 2022-2023 (5.6/7; SD = 1.61) to AC 2024-2025 (*M* = 5.80, *SD* = 1.49), a satisfaction increase of 0.20 points.

During AC 2024-2025, in the Student Union: the Title IX Office moved into a newly renovated suite, the Parenting Room was completed, three meeting rooms on the 3rd floor received new carpeting, room 312 was converted from a storage room back to a meeting room, room 320 was upgraded with a new A/V system, new carpeting was installed throughout the Counseling Center, a teleconferencing unit was installed in Room 314, and paint was refreshed in high traffic areas throughout the building.

Table 3
Friedman Student Union Survey

ITEM	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
It was convenient to book the facility through the Event Management System.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.7% 2	86.96% 20	4.35% 1	23	3.91
The contract, rules, and booking details were clear and easy to understand	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	95.65% 22	4.35% 1	23	4.0
Pricing for the venue was reasonable.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	43.48% 10	56.52% 13	23	4.0
Confirmation for my event was received in a reasonable time.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	21.74% 5	73.91% 17	4.35% 1	23	3.77
My experience with the booking staff was satisfactory	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.65% 22	4.35% 1	23	4.0

Students, faculty, and staff appear satisfied with campus maintenance based on improvements in both facility maintenance ratings and increased facility usage patterns. However, comments within the RNLSSI indicate that despite these overall improvements, several campus-wide areas still require attention.

In written comments respondents identified concerns regarding campus roads, parking facilities, lighting systems, public restrooms, elevator functionality, classroom technology, and sidewalk hazards. These identified deficiencies suggest that while general maintenance satisfaction has increased, targeted improvements in these areas would further enhance the campus environment and address remaining user concerns. Addressing these issues could help maintain a positive trajectory in facility satisfaction while ensuring comprehensive campus maintenance standards across all areas of operation.

Decision:

- The Cabinet and facilities manager will utilize RNLSSI findings concerning student satisfaction with facilities to drive improvement.
- Reevaluate the Student Union's ability to meet the service, spatial, equipment, and technology needs of the University and greater community.
- Develop a five-year plan for furniture and equipment replacement and allocate funding to upgrade when opportunities exist.
- The Student Union Director will provide input on facility renovations, maintenance issues, and quality improvements in the Student Union, the courtyard, and all entrances to the building.
- Student Experience staff will identify new spaces for development and improvement to meet the changing needs of our students.
- Conduct satisfaction surveys for summer camp directors.
- Develop and implement a workshop for faculty, staff, and student organizations who host events.

Metric:

2. Number of students involved in co-curricular activities

Findings:

In fall 2025, the institution transitioned its student engagement platform from Presence to Suitable to strengthen the assessment and documentation of co-curricular student involvement. The implementation of Suitable provides more accurate data collection, tracking, and reporting capabilities for student organizations,

events, and engagement activities. The platform aligns with the university's strategic planning goals by enabling data-informed decision-making, identifying engagement trends, and supporting initiatives designed to improve student success, retention, leadership development, and campus involvement.

Student participation in co-curricular activities with at least one completion, as measured through Suitable, is now the primary metric for this assessment. While this number is significantly lower than in previous years, it more accurately represents student participation instead of platform enrollment. Additional event data are collected through the Event Management System (EMS), managed by the Director of the Student Union.

During the first year of implementation (AC 2025-2026), 8,670 enrolled students were registered in Suitable. Of those, 1,292 students participated in Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs). A total of 2,430 students attended at least one of the 744 events recorded in Suitable, with an average of 7.1 event completions per student. Overall, 17,169 activity completions were recorded between August 2025 and May 2026. First-year student engagement was particularly strong, with 790 students (75.79%) participating in activities and events tracked through Suitable.

In AC 2025-2026, RSOs reserved on-campus facilities 1,718 times through the Event Management System (Table 4). Student organization bookings on EMS decreased by 399 from 2024-2025 to 2025-2026. This is likely due to departmental staff reserving spaces for RSOs or hosting activities within their respective academic buildings or space availability, as EMS bookings in the Student Union and across campus are up significantly in 2025-2026.

In AC 2025-2026, students had access to 129 RSOs and club sports organizations. These groups hosted 744 events, including meetings, leadership training, networking opportunities, recreational activities, service projects, social events, fundraisers, and health-related programming. Of the 17,169 total activity completions, major contributors included First Year Experience programs (4,437), the Student Activities Board (2,841), The Pantry (2,043), and the Student Government Association (1,538).

Student involvement is growing across campus with Greek organization membership increasing from 234 new members in AC 2024-2025 to 241 in AC 2025-2026. Organization rosters expanded significantly, increasing from 823 students to 1,292 students, a 57% increase. It is important to note that these figures may not include participation in athletic programs, performance groups, intramural sports, and RSOs that do not fully utilize Suitable, or activities and events where attendance is not recorded, suggesting overall student engagement is higher than reported.

Analysis:

Data from Suitable is more accurate than in previous years, however the comparative data for students involved in co-curricular activities is not exact. While campus bookings for student organizations decreased in AC 2025-2026, a consistent method of data collection has not been utilized. The fact that students feel their activity fees are put to effective use as indicated on the RNLSSI (item #45 Campus Life Scale) AC 2024-2025 is also reassuring.

Table 4

Event Management System Reservations for Recognized Student Organizations

EMS Data	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Total Bookings (all EMS facilities)	1,924	2,117	1,718
Estimated Attendance at Booking	65,667	77,211	58,794

Decision:

- Broaden the definition of co-curricular involvement to include all forms of student engagement across campus.
- Enhance data collection efforts by encouraging campus departments and RSOs to consistently use the Suitable platform for tracking membership, student experience events, and programs.
- Deliver high-quality co-curricular programs and events that address a diverse range of topics, enriching the overall student experience.
- Develop leadership initiatives for RSOs that build community, promote collaboration and communication, and cultivate critical thinking and responsible decision-making, recognizing and advancing meaningful, individualized student engagement.

Metric:

3. Hours students engage in volunteer community service

Findings:

Community and public service hours involve both group and individual student reports. The Student Experience coordinates volunteer service activities. Northwestern State University students, including those in RSO's, fraternities and sororities, honor societies, and first-year students completed 28,478 community service hours in AC 2025-2026 compared to 25,484.5 hours in 2024-2025.

The Student Experience offers two campus-wide community service days, the [1 of 7] Service Kickoff (448) in the fall and the V. L. Roy Day of Service (130 hours) in the spring for a combined total of 578 hours. In addition, 75 student volunteers worked 1,043 hours in the campus food pantry, serving 409 students in AC 2025-2026.

These hours do not reflect the community service work of all students and student groups, including student-athletes. The hours reflect only those RSOs that reported hours.

Analysis:

Many students engage in community service independently, and those efforts are often not reported. Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) have opportunities to improve service reporting, as data from many organizations remain incomplete. Consequently, these totals do not fully capture the service hours contributed by individual students, all student organizations, or the agencies and communities they serve. Despite these reporting gaps, the available data demonstrate that Northwestern students are highly engaged in community service. However, more can be done to strengthen student engagement and community service initiatives.

Decision:

- Using the Suitable platform, develop a comprehensive system to accurately track and document community service hours completed by both student organizations and individual students.
- Create and launch a student engagement toolkit that helps students identify meaningful experiences that foster leadership development, civic responsibility, and community involvement.
- Expand opportunities for students to connect with and serve the broader community through public service, volunteerism, and community engagement initiatives.
- Establish a formal recognition program to acknowledge students who complete 100 or more hours of community service.

Metric:

4. Number of students and stakeholders using career services platform.

Findings:

As of June 2026, 30,376 NSU students, alumni and employers are using the Handshake platform (Table 5).

Table 5

Registered Users on the Handshake Platform, AC 2023-2024 through AC 2025-2026

User groups	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Employers	11,685	14,719	16,329
Undergraduate Students	9,098	17,625	8,101
Graduate Students	687	3,171	1,201
Alumni	1,906	3,930	4,745
TOTAL:	23,376	39,445	30,376

Analysis:

Handshake is an online career platform for NSU students and alumni designed to assist in career decision making and in matching employers with students. When they register for classes, the University loads undergraduate and graduate students into the system. However, students must activate their accounts to use the features. For AC 2025-2026, our career center approved 1,610 new employers within the Handshake platform.

Activity for 2024-2025 showed 39,445 students, alumni, and employees using Handshake. For 2025-2026 the number of Handshake users decreased by 9,096. However, Handshake did a major data overhaul that resulted in more accurate alignment with NSU's enrollment. Additionally, there are 2,013 *activated* student accounts that do not have a school year set within the platform. When including all *activated* and *not activated* accounts, there are a total of 29,279 Handshake student accounts across all school years.

Students value the connection between classroom learning, as measured by the RNL *Campus Services* scale. This area showed improvement, with satisfaction rising from 6.07/7 in the previous assessment cycle to 6.26/7. Further focus on strengthening this classroom-to-career connection will be essential for enhancing both student satisfaction and retention rates.

Decision:

- Assess Career Fair needs among University Departments to determine future programming.
- Career Services will collaborate with Academic Affairs to integrate career development services directly into classroom instruction and curriculum.
- Career Services will partner with local employers to expand employment and internship opportunities for students within the surrounding community.
- Provide seminars for students, faculty, and staff on Handshake best practices.
- Career Services will collaborate with Alumni & Development and the Office of Economic Development to leverage networks for mentorship, job placement, and career advancement opportunities.
- Collaborate with the Office of Economic Development on opportunities for engagement with the future Innovation Park.

Objective 4: Provide an enhanced second year experience through advising, living-learning communities, and mentorship

Strategies:

- Develop a series of high-impact experiential learning activities designed to engage students beginning their second year.
- Expand the number of living-learning programs and activities.
- Establish and implement programs that assist students in transition from one academic level to the next, beginning with a comprehensive first-year experience and progressing through high-impact experiences and career preparation opportunities.
- Streamline data collection for student experience events and programs.
- Establish resident mentors program.

Metrics:

1. Number of first-year students participating in living-learning communities
2. Number of eligible second-year students participating in leadership programming
3. *Percentage of students completing a leadership program who assume a peer leadership role within one academic year*
4. *Satisfaction with 1st year leadership programs*

Metric:

1. Number of first-year students participating in living-learning communities

Findings:

Northwestern currently has three communities: Leadership Living Learning, for students enrolled in the President's Leadership Program (PLP)/Ambassadors, Scholars' College at University Place, and the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) for CAPA majors living in Varnado Hall. In AC 2023-2024, 105 first-year students participated in a living-learning community (LLC), establishing the baseline. Although the number of students living in LLCs increased from 68 participants in AC 2024-2025 to 168 in AC 2025-2026, components of a true LLC were not fully implemented.

Analysis:

LLCs have not picked up momentum due to staffing, marketing, and recruiting for the LLCs, academic buy-in, inconsistent programming, and student interest.

Decision:

- This metric is no longer viable and will not be assessed in the future.
- A task force to evaluate existing LLCs, activities, and staffing will be established to explore opportunities for growth, mentorship, and leadership.

Metric:

2. Number of eligible second-year students participating in leadership programming

Findings:

The initial PLP cohort of 49 students from the 2023-2024 academic year served as the baseline group; these students are now in their second year during the 2024-2025 academic year. Leadership programming is defined as Leadership NSU and as a mentor within the PLP mentoring program. Of those 49, 14 students attended Leadership NSU as second-year students; 12 were mentors within the PLP mentoring program.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the recommendation was made to integrate Activity #2 of the Title III grant to expand the first- and second-year experience. This makes sense, given the student engagement focus of the grant and that of Student Experience. However, due to the delay in receiving and initiating the grant and staffing issues that have persisted in the first year of the grant, communication and misalignment have plagued the grant. Consequently, neither the comprehensive review of student leadership development opportunities nor a clear definition of *eligible second-year students* has been achieved, the latter of which remains elusive to define in the context of both traditional and transfer students as well as credits/hours versus chronological time. Therefore, the full, formal development of a leadership track has not been achieved. Accordingly, in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met.

Nevertheless, work to develop a leadership track has begun. The Title III Student Engagement Coordinator met with the Vice President for the Student Experience in the spring and initiated a review of models for programming. The Coordinator also initiated a leadership-focused program within Title III known as The Elevate-U Rise to Leadership Program. The first level of the program is Resident Mentors. Resident Mentors are meant to be facilitators attached to the Title III LLCs. Therefore, despite the target not being met, groundwork has been laid. In June 2025, the Title III Student Engagement Coordinator announced her resignation, and the Title III team will be reduced to the Program Director and the newly-appointed Principal Investigator/Project Director.

Decision:

- Realign the efforts between the grant team and the Office of the Student Experience.
- Review current leadership opportunities with an eye towards defining *leadership programming*. This will also facilitate the effort to define *eligible second-year students*.
- Integrate The Elevate-U Rise to Leadership Program into the Office of the Student Experience for wider promotion and recruitment, with a focus on the second-year student experience.

Metric:

3. Percentage of students completing a leadership program who assumed a peer leadership role within one academic year

Findings:

During AC 2025-2026 , 38 students completed the President's Leadership Program. Thirty-seven students responded to a comprehensive year-end survey requesting detailed information about peer leadership positions and responsibilities students held throughout the year. Of the respondents, 23 reported serving in a leadership role.

Analysis:

The 23 students who assumed a peer leadership role represent 62% of the AC 2025-2026 PLP cohort, comparable to 60% in the AC 2024-2025 PLP cohort (2-proportion z-test, $p = .40$). PLP remains the only formal leadership program for students. If additional leadership programs are established or identified, participants in those programs will be included in future analyses.

Decision:

- Investigate benefits and costs for administering The National Survey of Student Engagement.
- Engage academic units in discussions about opportunities to develop and support additional formal leadership programs.

Metric:

4. **Satisfaction with first year leadership programs**

Findings:

In AC 2025-2026 PLP cohort of 38 was used as the population. At the year's end, a comprehensive survey was administered to those who completed SAHE 1020 and SAHE 1030. This annual survey measures students' feelings about their sense of belonging, community, and support, especially as it relates to the first-year leadership program. In AC 2025-2026, 100% of respondents indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

Analysis:

Activity #2 of the Title III grant is dedicated to expanding the first- and second-year experience. Within Activity #2, an annual performance indicator is similar to this one; however, the population to be surveyed is all first-year students. The survey was not administered in AC 2025-2026. The set of questions developed for the first-year leadership program could be used to craft the data gathering for the greater population. Alternatively, the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) may frame the questions nicely.

Decision:

- Explore NSSE as a potential data source and framework.
- Update and implement expanded survey to broaden the first-year population through the First-Year Experience.
- Identify appropriate survey delivery methods and timing.

Objective 5: Promote behaviors that enhance holistic health and safety

Strategies:

- Expand and maintain campus and community partnerships which enhance student health and wellness.
- Create and implement appropriate outreach efforts which address the changing developmental needs of students.
- Provide health and wellness initiatives at off-campus instructional sites. Add health services at other off-campus instructional sites.

Metrics:

1. *Number of Health-Related Programs and Services*
2. Satisfaction with health-safety Support Programs
3. Safety and security satisfaction

Metric:

1. Number of health-related programs and services

Findings:

In AC 2025-2026 Northwestern sponsored 178 health-related programs. This metric quantifies events, programs, resources, and services; most are provided by departments and Recognized Student Organizations in The Student Experience division and Academic Affairs.

Analysis:

Northwestern recognizes the close connection between student health and academic achievement and has steadily enhanced its health and wellness programming over the years. The university provides a diverse array of presentations, awareness campaigns, and educational activities focused on topics including mental health and well-being, hazing prevention, suicide prevention, campus and residential safety, sexual assault prevention and advocacy, self-defense, financial literacy, stress management, internet safety, food insecurity, and healthy nutrition.

Although most of the programs, events, and services are hosted by departments and organizations within the Student Experience, impactful work is taking place across campus underscoring the need for an improved process to report and communicate these efforts.

Decision:

- Research grant opportunities that support health and wellness initiatives.
- Establish a campus-wide Wellness Committee and Hazing Prevention Task Force.
- Improve and communicate the process for reporting health-related programs and services across campus.
- Implement upgrades to the Medicat system for improved record keeping and data collection.
- Integrate Vector Solutions modules across campus to educate students, faculty, and staff on hazing prevention, sexual assault prevention, alcohol and drug misuse prevention, wellness and safety, career readiness, and personal development.

Metric:

2. Satisfaction with health- and safety-related support programs

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, satisfaction with the counseling component of support programs was measured by the RNLSSI item, *Counseling services are available if I need them*, from the Campus Services scale. The mean score increased from 6.00/7 (*SD* = 1.50) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.19/7 (*SD* = 1.39*)* in AC 2024-2025, a significant increase ($p < .01$). NSU's average on this measure remained higher than the national average for Four-Year Public institutions ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.54$, $p < .001$) and the ULS average ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.51$, $p < .001$).

Analysis:

On the RNLSSI, this item is a campus strength, with both high importance and high satisfaction and student satisfaction with counseling services remains high. Monitoring satisfaction in this area will help us maintain high-quality service for our students. A collaborative partnership with the Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development contributed to counseling services, with licensed, professional counselors assisting with the caseload throughout AC 2024-2025.

Decision:

- Counseling staff and leadership will explore strategies to increase student access to counseling services, particularly during high-demand and stressful periods.
- Review and revise the mental health component within University Studies 1000 to better prepare and inform first-year students.
- Redesign the Counseling Center layout to maximize space efficiency and foster a more inviting, accessible environment for students.

Metric:

3. Safety and security satisfaction

Findings:

Responses to the RNLSSI Safety and Security scale averaged 5.56/7 (*SD* = 1.27) in AC 2024-2025, compared to 5.36/7 (*SD* = 1.36; $p < .001$) for AC 2022-2023.

Analysis:

All items in this metric increased slightly. In terms of importance, the RNLSSI item, *The campus is safe and secure for all students*, from the Safety and Security Scale, ranked 1st of 45 items as the most important to

students, with a mean of 6.70/7. Satisfaction increased from 5.75/7 (*SD* = 1.39) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.01/7 (*SD* = 1.22) in AC 2024-2025; the importance to students is high and satisfaction is low and does not meet student expectations, as indicated by the gap of 0.69. While data indicates that safety and security is a challenge, the item, *Security staff respond quickly to calls for assistance* from the same scale, also increased in satisfaction from 5.89/7 (*SD* = 1.47) in AC 2022-2023 to 6.15/7 (*SD*=1.28) in AC 2024-2025. Increased satisfaction might be attributed to the implementation of the Campus Shield App, which provides students with a timely reporting mechanism to University Police. The item, *the amount of student parking space on campus is adequate*, also increased slightly from 4.72/7 (*SD* = 2.00) in AC 2022-2023 to 4.81/7 (*SD* = 1.96) in AC 2024-2025; however, students who live in the residence halls are significantly less satisfied with the amount of parking than those who live off-campus (*M* = 4.20, *SD* = 1.914, *N* = 235). The item, *Parking lots are well-lighted and secure*, also increased from 5.19/7 (*SD* = 1.72) in AC 2022-2023 to 5.38/7 (*SD* = 1.65; $p < .01$). Parking issues are unexplained.

Decision:

- Campus Safety leadership, University Cabinet, and senior administration will receive RNLSSI findings to develop strategies for addressing identified safety and security concerns across campus.
- The University Safety Committee will assess campus lighting and recommend improvements.
- The University Parking and Traffic Committee will evaluate the availability and allocation of parking spaces on campus and vehicle registration.
- University Affairs, The Student Experience, and the Student Government Association will collaborate to address safety and security concerns, utilizing focus groups, surveys, and the University Safety Committee.

Comprehensive Summary

The Division of The Student Experience remains committed to supporting students and ensuring they have an exceptional and meaningful experience at NSU. Our highest priority is creating an environment that promotes academic achievement, personal growth, belonging, and career readiness. This is achieved through inclusive support services, wellness initiatives, leadership development, and engagement opportunities that contribute to persistence, graduation, and lifelong success.

In AC 2025-2026, the division experienced steady improvement by concentrating on key initiatives in the Strategic Enrollment (SEM) Plan. Efforts included expanding academic support, strengthening financial aid communication, and promoting holistic wellness, safety, and belonging through a student-centered approach. Improvements in student satisfaction, co-curricular engagement, and career services utilization reflect a more connected and engaged student population. Spaces were created to align with student needs–the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support relocated to a larger and more accommodating space in Watson Library; the Collegiate Recovery Center opened in the Friedman Student Union; and the eSports Center was relocated to the Randall J. Webb Wellness Recreation and Activity Center. The Suitable platform was implemented to enhance student engagement and improved data collection. While progress has been made in several critical areas, ongoing challenges highlight the need for sustained and targeted initiatives.

Through an agreement with HMBR, Ltd., progress was made in the review of policies that impact students. Ensuring alignment with federal, state, and UL System compliance and mandates will be the focus for AC 2026-2027.

Through seamless collaboration among all departments and units that serve students, NSU will continue to provide integrated programs, services, and experience that foster student success.

Student Government Association

The Student Government Association (SGA) focused on several key priorities during AC 2025–2026, including organizational development, campus engagement, collaboration, and innovation. Throughout the year, SGA worked to introduce new events and programs designed to enhance the student experience and provide additional opportunities for involvement, leadership, and connection across campus.

A major focus of the organization was reevaluating and restructuring its internal operations to better reflect the needs of both the organization and the student body. Through adjustments to committee structures, expectations, and member responsibilities, SGA sought to create a more effective and sustainable framework that would allow student leaders to better serve Northwestern State University students.

Collaboration remained a vital component of SGA's efforts. The organization strengthened partnerships with university departments, student organizations, faculty, and administration to address student concerns, support campus initiatives, and create opportunities for meaningful engagement. By working alongside various campus stakeholders, SGA was able to broaden its impact and better represent the diverse needs of the student body.

Student Government continues to serve as an advocate for students while providing members with opportunities to develop leadership skills and engage with university decision-makers. Through committee work, campus partnerships, and student outreach efforts, SGA remains committed to ensuring student voices are heard and represented.

Looking ahead to AC 2026–2027, the Student Government Association plans to expand its outreach efforts and continue introducing innovative programs and initiatives that enhance student life. SGA will prioritize connecting with a wider range of students, strengthening relationships across campus, and identifying new ways to address student needs. By continuing to innovate, collaborate, and advocate, SGA aims to build upon this year's successes and further strengthen its role as the voice of the student body at Northwestern State University.

Student Achievement

Our assessment processes are continually refined and expanded. Northwestern measures student success by addressing specific components of its mission: ***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***. As such, the University examines eight appropriate criteria for Student Achievement (Table 6).

Northwestern annually measures student achievement across all students, instructional sites, and modes of delivery. This measurement is part of the ongoing, integrated institutional effectiveness process, which evaluates mission achievement, progress toward the vision, and adherence to core values.

Northwestern measures student success related to specific components of its mission: *"*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 University examines appropriate criteria concerning **enrollment, retention rates, graduation rates, completers, licensures, and placement rates** to document successful student achievement. These criteria align with a student's time at Northwestern. The SACSCOC Graduation rate definition serves as Northwestern's Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI). Northwestern measures student achievement, inclusive of all instructional sites and modes of

Table 6

Criteria for Student Achievement

Criteria	Goal for Fall 2028	Threshold of Acceptability	Reporting Period Outcome						
			2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Fall 2028
Fall Enrollment	11,000	8,000	9,389	8,847	* 8,523	*8,402			
1st Fall to 2nd Fall Retention	73%	60%	61%	71%	71%	71%			
1st Fall to 3rd Fall Retention	61%	48%	48%	48%	56%	58%			
Baccalaureate Completers	1,345	1,045	1,445	1,308	1,267	1,140			
Graduate Completers	315	225	309	298	304	312			
**** KSCI **** **SACSCOC Graduation Rate**	53%	40%	43%	47%	45%	43%			
Licensure Pass Rate	75-100%	50-98%	83-100%	82-100%	** 47-100%	**67-100%			
Job Placement Rates	80%	70%	78%	80%	85%	80			

Source: nsula.edu/oir/studentachievement/

	Met the Fall 2028 goal
	Above threshold but below the Fall 2028 goal (within the band of acceptability)
	Below threshold

Notes:

* AC 2024-2025 Threshold of Acceptability adjusted based on 20 years of historical enrollment data. Before adjustment, the Threshold of Acceptability was 9,000. Source: *NSU Factbook.*

** Northwestern's overall first-time pass rate is 92% (471/514). Education 100% (58/58). Nursing (DNP-NA) 75% (15/20), three-year average 80%. Nursing (MSN-NP/PMC) 86% (82/95), three-year average 86%. Vet Tech 66.67% (4/6), the three-year average is 62.2%.

delivery, annually as part of its ongoing, integrated institutional effectiveness process. This process evaluates how well it is achieving its mission, progressing towards its vision, and adhering to its values. The criteria developed by the University's Strategic Planning Team serve as key indicators of mission success. As such, the criteria are integrated into the University's Strategic Plan and the assessment of that plan.

The selected criteria allow the University to compare its outcomes to peer regional institutions and state and federal standards. These efforts result in deliberate measures of student achievement that demonstrate the institution's compliance with SACSCOC CR 8.1, its commitment to meeting the performance indicators monitored by the University of Louisiana System (ULS) and the Louisiana State Board of Regents (BOR), and its mission accomplishment to its stakeholders.

All eight criteria reflect elements covered by State and Federal-mandated reporting. Northwestern regularly reports against these criteria in various ways through State (Board of Regents-BOR) and Federal portals (IPEDS), where the data reported is consolidated, compared, and published on State (BOR Dashboard) and Federal websites (College Scorecard; National Center of Educational Statistics).

Based on data submitted by institutions, both the University of Louisiana System (ULS) and the Board of Regents provide interactive reports that allow for comparative analysis. These reports and the associated Factbooks display Louisiana's post-secondary metrics at the institutional level. Northwestern's Office of Institutional Research also has a student achievement dashboard to allow internal data analysis. Northwestern is comparable across all metrics to other regional peer universities within the University of Louisiana System (ULS).

Criteria developed and approved by the University's Strategic Planning Team serve as key indicators of mission success. The criteria align with the goals and objectives in the Board of Regents Strategic Plan for *Northwestern State University FY 2023-2024 through FY2027-2028*. As such, the criteria are integrated into the University's Strategic Plan.

Northwestern uses these criteria to internally compare performance outcomes over time, compare outcomes to BOR-designated peer regional institutions (McNeese State University, Nicholls State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, and University of Louisiana–Monroe), and evaluate state and federal benchmarks. In addition, Northwestern leadership employs the data collected for these criteria to identify trends, isolate potential issues, and drive decision-making.

Student achievement criteria guide the institution and ensure it meets its mission to "prepare its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation." When targets are not achieved, improvement plans are devised, implemented, and re-analyzed to promote continuous improvement.

The data indicate that Northwestern's students are enrolled and retained at comparable rates to our peer institutions (enrollment and retention metrics) and progress through the curriculum appropriately (course completion metrics). In AC 2024-2025, the Threshold of Acceptability was adjusted based on 20 years of historical enrollment data. Before adjustment, the Threshold of Acceptability was 9,000 based on pre-COVID enrollment data. Enrollment and retention remain the President's top priority as the University reviews its approach, means, and methods. Northwestern graduates leave the University with honed critical thinking and communication skills that allow them to be future leaders and serve their communities (graduation rates). Most importantly, Northwestern graduates successfully secure employment upon graduation (licensure/job placement metrics) and thereby make a positive impact on the region, state, and nation.

Student Achievement Criteria Outcomes are reflected on the University Institutional Effectiveness website.

Northwestern disaggregates each criterion by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age. The disaggregation categories align with the University's mission, the University of Louisiana's Strategic Framework, and the Board of Regents' Master Plan, all of which strive to increase educational access for all citizens of Louisiana.

A standardized approach describes each criterion. Each is defined with the source noted, the specific application to Northwestern provided, the goal for Fall 2028, and the target and outcome identified.

Fall Enrollment. The number of students enrolled in the fall at postsecondary institutions. Students reported are those enrolled in courses creditable toward a degree or other recognized postsecondary credential; students enrolled in classes that are part of a vocational or occupational program, including those enrolled in off-campus or extension centers; and high school students taking regular college courses for credit. **IPEDS Glossary Definition**

Goal. 11,000 Fall 2028**.**
Outcome. 8,402 Students for Fall 2025.

1st Fall to 2nd Fall Retention Rate. A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduates from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall. **IPEDS Glossary Definition**

Goal. 73.0%–Retained from Fall 2027 to Fall 2028.
Outcome. 71.0%–Retained from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025.

1st Fall to 3rd Fall Retention Rate. A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduate students' retention to the 3rd Fall from the cohort established for the 1st Fall-to-2nd Fall Retention rate metric. **IPEDS Glossary Definition**

Goal. 61.0%–Retained from Fall 2027 to Fall 2028.
Outcome. 58.0%–Retained from Fall 2023 to Fall 2025.

Baccalaureate Completers/Grad Completers. A student who receives a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award. To be considered a completer, the degree/award must be conferred. **IPEDS Glossary Definition**

Goal–Baccalaureate Completers. 1,345 in Academic Year 2027-2028**.**
Outcome–Baccalaureate Completers. 1,140 in Academic Year 2024-2025**.**

Goal–Graduate Completers. 315 in Academic Year 2027-2028.
Outcome–Graduate Completers. 312 in Academic Year 2024-2025.

Graduation Rate. (Note. The SACSCOC Graduation rate serves as Northwestern's **Key Student Completion Indicator** (KSCI). The SACSCOC Graduation rate is calculated based on the Annual Profile information (cohort size and number receiving a degree) that institutions provide to the Commission (as of spring 2018). **SACSCOC Definition**

Goal. 53% in Academic Year 2027-2028 (Fall 2020 cohort).
O**utcome**. 43% Academic Year 2024-2025 (Fall 2018 cohort).

Licensure. To receive, to apply to take or to take the examination required to receive, a local, State, or Federal license, or a nongovernmental certification required as a precondition for employment, or to perform certain functions in the States in which the educational program is offered, or to meet additional conditions that the institution knows or reasonably should know are generally needed to secure employment in a recognized occupation for which the program is represented to prepare students (Table 7). **Federal Regulation 34 CFR 668.50 Effective May 26, 2019**

Placement Rate. Placement rate is defined using the standards for career outcome rates approved by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in their *Standards and Protocols for the Collection and Dissemination of Graduating Students Initial Career Outcomes Information for Undergraduates.* As such, the placement rate for this report will include the following graduate outcomes: employed, continuing their education in the military, and volunteering within six months of graduation. Each year's graduating class includes those students who complete degrees between the periods of July 1 to June 30 each year, a time consistent with degree completion reporting requirements established by the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) program. **NACE Definition**

Table 7

Performance Rates on Professional Licensure Exams 2025–2026: First-Time Pass Rates

Discipline	Exam Required prior to Employment	Entity Granting Licensure	Year	Goal	Threshold of acceptability	# Students taking Exam	# Students Meeting Goal	Calculated % Meeting Goal
Nursing (MSN & PMC APRN concentrations)	Certification exam administered by one of: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board, American Nurses Credentialing Center, National Certification Corporation, Pediatric Nursing Certification Board, American Association of Critical-Care Nurses	LA State Board of Nursing	2025	80%	80%	95	82	86%
Nursing (DNP-NA)	National Certification Exam (NCE) by NBSCRNA	LA State Board of Nursing	2025	80%	80%	20	15	75% (3Y 80%)
Nursing (ASN, BSN; Pre-RN licensure concentrations)	NCLEX-RN	LA State Board of Nursing	2025 ASN BSN	 90% 90%	 80% 80%	 176 123	 168 112	 95.45% 91.06%
Radiologic Sciences	American Registry of Radiologic Technologists Exam in Radiography	LA Radiologic Technology Board of Examiners	2025	100%	75%	36	32	88.88%
Veterinary Technology	Veterinary Technician National Examination	Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine	2025	75%	50%	06	04	66.67
Education	*Praxis*® Subject Assessments—Principles of Learning & Teaching: measures candidates' pedagogical knowledge.	LA Department of Education	2025	100%	98.00%	58	58	100%
						514	472	92%

Source: Louisiana Board of Nursing, Radiologic Technology Board of Examiners, the Board of Veterinary Medicine, and the Department of Education. Northwestern's overall first-time pass rate is 92% (471/514). Education 100% (58/58). Nursing (DNP-NA) 75% (15/20), three-year average 80%. Nursing (MSN-NP) 86% (82/95), three-year average 86%. Vet Tech 66.67%, the three-year average is 62.2%. Detailed Licensure Data is provided for AC 2025-2026.

	Met the Fall 2028 goal
	Above threshold but below the Fall 2028 goal (within the band of acceptability)
	Below threshold

The 2024-2025 First Destination Survey (FDS) yielded the following results:

- 80% Working, Continuing Education, Military or Volunteering
- 18% Still looking for employment
- 02% Not seeking employment

Goal. Placement rate of 80% by 2027-2028.

Outcome. 80%

Strategic Focus Area 2–Academic Excellence

The Academic Excellence (AE) strategic focus area made substantive progress towards meeting AC 2025-2026 targets in all seven metrics measured in this cycle. One or more results in six of the seven metrics exceed their targets. It is especially encouraging to see the assessment of student learning outcomes (SLO) expand to encompass all 106 academic degree and certificate programs. Of the 332 SLO's used to evaluate student learning, 291 (88%) met or exceeded their established target, and 453 of the 566 assessment measures (80%) met or exceeded their targets. Assessment of the University Core Competencies also found considerable progress during this assessment cycle. Overall, 11 of 12 SLOs (92%) were met with 26 of 29 assessment measures (90%) successfully achieved.

As we enter AC 2026-2027 with mature processes in place, the University must identify and leverage the correct metrics to drive improvement, continue to support and elevate Academic portfolios by introducing new workforce-required programs, seek collaborative grant opportunities, and develop flexible ways students access programs and engage in scholarly dialogue and presentation. The mechanics of doing so are below (Table 8).

Table 8

Metrics for Academic Excellence

AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	AC 2025-2026	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
	103/103 (100%)		Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes to help drive effective and innovative instruction	100% Degree and Certificate Programs
N > 102		30/38	*(New) Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching*	20-40
	4.30/5 (C) 4.39/5 (I) (36% response rate)		Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness)	4.5/5.0 (90%) (35.2% response rate)
27.63		28.29	*Average class size in University core courses*	28
	4.28/5 (C) 4.37/5 (I) (24% response rt)		Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses	4.5/5.0 (90%) (42% response rt)
	14/14		Number of University core classes with a designated course steward	99% of multi-section courses
	226 Schol. Proj. 99 Prof. Conf. presenters	290 Schol. Proj. 97 Prof. Conf. presenters	*Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty*	300 Schol. Proj. 80 Prof. Conf. Presenters
	130 (99 G; 31 UG) Prof. Conf. presenters 84 Research Day presenters	146 (97G, 49UG) Prof. Conf. presenters 37 Research Day presenters	*Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting*	154 (20% increase)
GRE Verbal: *M* = 150 (42%) GRE Quan. *M* = 147 (8%)	GRE Verbal: *M* = 150 (25%) GRE Quan. *M* = 147 (13%)	No data available	*Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT)*	90% to score 280 GRE; Increase the # of students scoring above national median for LSAT & MCAT by one/year
LSAT: *M* = 148 (32%) MCAT: *M* = 492 (25%)	LSAT: *M* = 149 (34%) MCAT: *M* = 495 (32%)	LSAT: *M* = 151 (38%) MCAT: *M* = 498 (42%)		

Note : Outcomes for AC 2023-2024 are reflected on the far left with AC 2024-2025 to the right and AC 2025-2026 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2025-2026. Black standard text was assessed in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Table 8 (continued)
Metrics for Academic Excellence

AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	AC 2025-2026	Academic Excellence Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Targets
	4.61/5 4.61/5 4.70/5		Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., encouraged interactions between faculty and students; gave prompt feedback; and displayed an appropriate demeanor)	Improve scores in courses below 4.5/5.0
27 Faculty grants 69 Eps/Chairs 33 ULS attendees		53 Faculty grants 70 Eps/chairs 11 ULS attendees	*Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.*	45 Faculty Grants 70 EPs/Chairs
	12% (N = 37)		Number of faculty/staff receiving external grants	10% faculty (32 PIs)
74		*52*	*Number of rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies*	42
	32 press releases, 91 honorees		Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service	50

Note : Outcomes for AC 2023-2024 are reflected on the far left with AC 2024-2025 to the right and AC 2025-2026 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2025-2026. Black standard text was assessed in 2023-2024 and 2024-202. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Five objectives support Academic Excellence.

Objective 1: Provide effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online

Strategies:

- Foster the assessment of expected outcomes for the improvement of instruction
- Provide online and face-to-face instruction on technology/techniques that will improve the educational experience of our students and professional development of our faculty
- Create a program of faculty-led workshops for tutors in key areas (English, Mathematics, Sciences) to better equip peer tutors to meet the needs and expectations of our students
- Use student fee accounts for upgrading consumable classroom and laboratory equipment and supplies
- Develop a plan for online and off-campus students so these students have the same level of academic support and access to tutoring as our main campus students
- Ensure faculty and staff are well-informed about the services offered by the Academic Success Center so they may direct students who would benefit from these opportunities for academic support
- Provide stipends for faculty to design new or re-design established courses that focus on integrating technology with content to improve student learning

Metrics:

1. Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction.
2. *Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.*
3. Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).

Metric:

1. **Number of assessed academic degree and certificate programs with student learning outcomes that help drive improvements in quality and innovative instruction.**

Findings:

During the 2024-2025 Assessment Cycle, 100% (103/103) of 73 academic degrees and 30 certificate programs completed the annual assessment or reviewed their assessment plans, including two newer programs that had reached an appropriate size or age to be assessed.

Analysis:

Northwestern defines student learning outcomes for all degree and certificate programs. It measures how well these outcomes are achieved and provides evidence of seeking improvements based on analyzing the results moving forward. This validation of mission success reflects the hard work of the entire University community and demonstrates a genuine commitment to excellence.

On June 21, 2025, the University completed the eighth cycle of assessing its Strategic Focus Areas, academic programs, academic and administrative units, and core competencies as part of Assessment Cycle (AC) 2024-2025, Making a Difference. Consistent, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation enable Northwestern to make informed strategic decisions, ultimately leading to institutional improvement. The assessment covers all six strategic focus areas: Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, Athletic Prominence, and the newly integrated Cultural Competence.

The 103 academic degree programs assessed in 2024-2025 generated 320 SLOs and 537 measures, averaging almost two (1.68) measures per SLO. Of the 320 SLOs, 277 (87%) were met. Of the 537 measures, 428 (80%) were met. The change rate was 7%, 4% positive, and 3% negative. Six programs failed to meet the majority of their SLOs.

Decision:

Program faculty will compare current results to those of the previous year to better develop plans for the upcoming year (2025-2026). The most significant findings and decisions, including evidence of improvement (actual changes), assessment of the potential effects of the changes, and the initiation of new assessment plans, will be integrated into pedagogy, experiential learning experiences, curriculum development, and course review or adoption–all aimed at enhancing our programs and student learning.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and degree program coordinators.

Metric

2. Courses focusing on implementing current technologies or best practice principles in teaching.

Findings:

Of 38 new course approved During AC 2025-2026 by the Curriculum Review Council for existing degree programs, 11 (29%) focused on current technologies while 20 (53%) focused on implementing best practices in teaching.

Analysis:

Previous surveys of established courses indicated that across colleges and disciplines, best practices in teaching as well as current technologies were highly represented. To evaluate the degree to which this trend continues, courses newly added to the curriculum were assessed in AC 2025-2026. Of the 82 new courses approved, six were in support of the MS in Allied Health (beginning in fall 2026; prefix HC) and 33 were components of the proposed master's curriculum for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

(prefix STEM), which has not yet received Board of Regents' approval. An additional four courses will be part of the Event Management Minor (Hospitality Management and Tourism; prefix EVNT) beginning fall 2026. These courses were not included in the analysis.

Within the remaining courses (Table 9), examples of those emphasizing current technologies include CIS 2210 Cloud Computing Concepts (preparing students for the AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner exam) and MUS 2890 Principles of Sound Mixing (practice using industry-standard equipment and software). Best Practices include experiential courses, such as ANTH 4960 Anthropology Internship, SOC 4980 Sociology Internship, NURG 5997 Research III, and PLPS 4400 Mock Trial, as well as courses emphasizing current practices in a variety of disciplines, such as CJ 2800 Juvenile Justice Process, COMM 4280 Athletics Marketing and Sponsorship, and HMT 4300 Hospitality Industry Financial Accounting.

New courses not falling into these two categories (18%) filled content gaps in the University's course offerings by taking advantage of faculty expertise, particularly in history and literature.

Table 9

New Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices

Course	Title	Description
Current Technologies		
ALHE 2500	Introduction to Digital Concepts in Medical Imaging	"…radiographic medical imaging, digital imaging systems and equipment, radiation safety in digital imaging, computer hardware and software, system networking, MIMPS, artificial intelligence, and medical informatics."
BIOL 4880, CHEM 4880, PHYS 4880, SCI 4880	Biomaterials in Healthcare: Engineering and Market Solutions	"…integrates materials science, engineering, biology, and medicine to develop innovative engineering materials. It focuses on cutting-edge biomaterials for healthcare applications, commercialization process, psychological aspects, and includes ethical, societal, and environmental considerations to enhance student skills and knowledge to advance materials research and bring innovations to market."
BMET 4390	Biomedical Digital Communications	"Signals and systems; fundamentals of analog and digital communication systems; principles of digital signal processing; biomedical signal transmission techniques; data network protocols and standards; and transmission media."
BMET 4391	Biomedical Digital Communications Lab	"Signals and systems; analog and digital communication systems; digital signal processing; biomedical signal transmission techniques; data networks; and transmission media."
CIS 2210	Cloud Computing Concepts	"…overall understanding of cloud computing concepts, independent of specific technical roles. A detailed overview of cloud concepts, AWS core services, security, architecture, pricing, and support.
CSC 1061	Program Design I Laboratory	Structured programming. Emphasis on correct program design, algorithm analysis, and problem-solving methods.
MUS 2870	Pro Tools	"…fundamentals of audio recording, editing, and mixing using Pro Tools, the industry-standard digital audio workstation. Students will develop practical skills in music production, sound design, and post-production techniques"
MUS 2890	Principles of Sound Mixing	"In-depth study of sound mixing techniques for live and studio environments. Students will practice using industry-standard equipment and software to develop professional-level mixing skills across a variety of musical styles."
ANTH 4960	Anthropology Internship	"Field experience in applied anthropology. Internships may take place at a variety of sites including community organizations, cultural heritage centers, museums, social service agencies, advocacy groups, research institutes, neighborhood development agencies, and archives. Students will engage in professional work that applies anthropological theories and methods to real-world contexts."
Best Practices		
CJ 2110	Introduction to Criminology	"The study of crime, criminal behavior, and society's responses to crime. Students will examine how crime is defined and measured, explore major criminological theories analyze patterns of offending and victimization, and study key crime categories such as violent, property, white-collar, and cybercrime. Emphasis is placed on linking theory to real-world behavior, understanding crime data, and critically evaluating popular assumptions about crime."

Table 9 (continued)

New Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices

Course	Title	Description
Best Practices		
CJ 2800	Juvenile Justice Process	"The juvenile justice process from first contact to disposition and aftercare. How juveniles enter the system—through law violations, status offenses, or referrals and…the step-by-step procedures that shape outcomes: intake, detention, diversion, petitioning, adjudication, disposition, and correctional options. …Legal foundations, decision-making factors, due process protections, system disparities, and the unique developmental and legal status of youth."
COMM 4260	Athletics Marketing and Sponsorship	"Modern practices in athletic marketing and sponsorship. Students will navigate corporate contracts; implement and design contract activations; strategize to create appealing, effective, and mutually beneficial implementation proposals for athletics entities and corporate partners; study the budgetary impact of effective sponsorship practices in athletics; and document clear, concise, and effective communication with sponsorship partners to maintain good professional relationships"
HMT 4300	Hospitality Industry Financial Accounting	"Managerial accounting principles and practices essential for effective decision-making in hospitality operations. … Hospitality-specific accounting systems, budgeting processes, cost control techniques, and performance analysis methods used by managers in hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality enterprises. The application of the Uniform System of Accounts for the Lodging Industry (USALI) and key managerial accounting tools, including cost-volume profit analysis, variance analysis, capital budgeting, pricing strategies, and operational budgeting. Through case studies and practical applications, students will develop the analytical skills to use accounting information for planning, controlling costs, evaluating performance, and making strategic business decisions in the hospitality industry."
MUS 2860	Survey of Music Business	"…major functional areas of the music industry. Theoretical foundations and practical application of current business practices in the music industry including supporting organizations and the revenue flow from consumer to creator."
MUS 2880	Concert Management and Production	"…principles and practices of concert promotion and management, from planning and budgeting to marketing and artist relations. Students will gain experience in organizing live events while developing the skills needed to succeed in the music industry."
NURG 5025	Clinical Practicum for Nurse Educators I	"Immerses MSN nurse educator students in clinical teaching environments, enabling application of advanced educational theories, teaching strategies, and leadership skills in diverse clinical settings. Developing competencies in clinical instruction, mentorship, learner evaluation, and professional role development as nurse educators. Students will integrate evidence-based teaching and reflective practice to foster learner success and advocate for excellence in nursing education within academic and healthcare environments."
NURG 5035	Clinical Practicum for Nurse Educators II	"Application, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge, theories, and principles that create new, dynamic relationships for improving care of clients across the lifespan. Intervention priorities, innovative approaches, evaluation of outcomes to prepare nurse educators who are capable of advancing nursing education and practice through the application of educational theories, evidence-based teaching strategies, and scholarly inquiry."
NURG 5125	Clinical Practicum for Nurse Administrators I	"Concepts of nursing administration for advanced practice nurses assuming leadership roles in healthcare organizations. Effective communication strategies, collaborative relationship building with interprofessional teams, and the principles of creating and sustaining a safe, high-quality healthcare environment. Introduction to healthcare finance, policy, and organizational structures. Professionalism and leadership skills are cultivated through exploration of ethical decision making, role accountability, and self-awareness in the nurse administrator role. Guided experiences in application of the nursing process by faculty and nurse administrators in various primary, secondary, and tertiary patient care settings"
NURG 5135	Clinical Practicum for Nurse Administrators II	"Advanced strategies for communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution to strengthen collaborative relationships across diverse healthcare settings. Students analyze and apply business and management principles related to budgeting, staffing, and resource allocation to ensure operational excellence. Focus on fostering a culture of safety and continuous improvement in the healthcare environment. Professionalism and leadership are demonstrated through case-based learning, with students demonstrating accountability, integrity, and strategic thinking in complex administrative scenarios."

Table 9 (continued)

New Courses Implementing Current Technologies or Best Practices

Course	Title	Description
Best Practices		
NURG 5145	Clinical Practicum for Nurse Administrators III	"Students demonstrate mastery of effective communication and interprofessional collaboration in leading organizational initiatives. Business acumen is applied to strategic planning, program development, and evaluation, with an emphasis on financial stewardship and policy advocacy. The transformational leadership and the cultivation of professional practice environments that support staff engagement, innovation, and optimal patient outcomes. Students synthesize knowledge and skills to assume executive-level responsibilities in healthcare administration with professionalism, vision, and influence."
NURG 5997	Research Seminar III	"Build upon the scholarly paper in Research Seminar II to complete a professional paper in place of a thesis relative to the role of the masters-prepared nurse. This course allows students to complete a major paper by analyzing specific data, formulating conclusions, and providing recommendations for nursing practice, education, research, and administration. Students choose to disseminate information by participation in conference presentations or submitting the paper for publication."
PLPS 4400, PSCI 4000	Mock Trial	"Students will acquire real-world trial techniques while preparing for demonstrative or competitive mock trials. Includes trial preparation, application of the law to facts, development of effective argument, examination and cross-examination of witnesses, preparation of exhibits, evidentiary objections, and trial procedure."
PSYC 3030	Educational and Career Planning in Psychology and Addiction Studies	"This course is designed to enhance students' professional and academic skills by preparing them for post-graduate employment and graduate school programs."
SOC 4980	Sociology Internship	"Field experience in applied sociology. May take place at…sites including community organizations, cultural heritage centers, museums, social service agencies, advocacy groups, research institutes, neighborhood development agencies, and archives. Students…engage in professional work that applies sociological theories and methods to real-world contexts."
SOWK 6500	Trauma-specific Practice in Mental Health and Addiction Service	"The intersectionality of trauma, mental health, and addictions. Areas of focus will include trauma informed practice, in addition to approaches for the treatment of mental health and addictive disorders."
SOWK 6700	Trauma-informed Practice with Children and Families	"How traumatic experiences impact children and families. Provides advanced generalist social workers with knowledge and skills to engage in trauma informed approaches focusing on TF CBT to provide micro, mezzo, and macro level change for individual and family systems."
SOWK 6800	Practice with Communities Experiencing Poverty, Disasters and Environmental Injustice, and Historical and Generational Trauma	This course will prepare advanced generalist practitioners with necessary knowledge and skills to effectively work with communities experiencing a lack of equality. Physical and/or geographic inequities such as poverty, natural and man-made disasters, and environmental injustice will be discussed. Additionally, the impact of historic and generational trauma on communities will be identified and addressed.
Other New Courses		
ENGL 3840	Literature of the Global South	"A survey of literature produced in the Global South (regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania) falling outside the conventional literary cannon. Focusing on literature produced in the postcolonial period of these nations, this course provides an opportunity for students to come to a deeper understanding of the historical and sociopolitical circumstances that inspired them."
HIST 4240	Vietnam and the World	"Vietnam's struggle for independence over the last hundred years, as well as its influence in East Asia and on China, Japan, France, the United States, and individuals involved."
HIST 4480	Nuclear Weapons in World Affairs	"A historical study of the role played by nuclear weapons technology and politics since the early 20th century. The course is intended to highlight the interaction of science and international security."
HP 4620	Special Topics in Health, Kinesiology & Sport	"This course is designed to provide interdisciplinary opportunities for students to make an intensive, in-depth study of a health, kinesiology, and/or sport topic of interest. Topics selected will be designed to explore subjects of current interest, approved by the instructor."
SHIS 3880 subtitle 16 subtitle 17	Major Figures in History: The Pankhursts Cicero	
SHIS 4840	History of World War I	"The causes and course of World War I and its impact on societies around the world."

Source: Northwestern State University 2026-2027 Catalog

Decision:

The technologies and best practices highlighted in Table 9 clearly illustrate effective and innovative instruction occurring at Northwestern and show that the evolution and improvement of our curricula through new course content and delivery is sustained from year to year. We will adjust the target to reflect the upward trajectory in incorporating current technologies and best practices in Academics.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty.

Metric:

3. **Mean student evaluation of instruction for each course (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).**

Findings:

Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 summative results for courses and instructors from the Student Evaluation of Instruction are given in Table 10. The pooled average over both semesters for overall course quality was $M = 4.37$ ($SD = 0.829$, $n = 15{,}617$) and the pooled average for instructor's effectiveness was $M = 4.46$ ($SD = 0.820$, $n = 15{,}583$).

Analysis:

The average rating of student surveys distributed at the end of fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters are significantly higher for both course quality (two-variable t-test, $t = 7.86$, $p < .001$) and instructor effectiveness ($t = 8.08$, $p < .001$) compared to AC 2022-2023.

Although neither metric reached the target of 4.5, these evaluations indicate that at the end of the semester students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard, with over 87.5% of respondents rating both course and instructor either *Good* or *Superior.*

Table 10

a. Fall 2024 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	87	1.49%
Poor	(2)	146	2.50%
Fair	(3)	502	8.58%
Good	(4)	1884	32.22%
Superior	(5)	3229	55.22%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
5382/30925 (17.40%)	**4.37**	0.86	5
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	85	1.46%
Poor	(2)	133	2.28%
Fair	(3)	437	7.49%
Good	(4)	1505	25.79%
Superior	(5)	3675	62.98%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
5368/30925 (17.36%)	**4.47**	0.84	5

Table 10 (continued)

b. Spring 2025 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	102	1.04%
Poor	(2)	214	2.19%
Fair	(3)	842	8.62%
Good	(4)	3499	35.82%
Superior	(5)	5112	52.33%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
9769/28433 (34.36%)	**4.36**	0.81	5
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	105	1.07%
Poor	(2)	201	2.06%
Fair	(3)	718	7.35%
Good	(4)	2789	28.55%
Superior	(5)	5935	60.75%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
9748/28433 (34.28%)	**4.46**	0.81	5

Decision:

Although the Student Evaluation of Instruction does not directly measure course and instructor quality, it does reflect student *perceptions* of the classroom experience. Until a more granular approach is identified that allows some customization for a more impactful result and the ability to play a more proactive role in the evolving of the delivery of instruction, we will monitor and respond to student attitudes about instruction.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, and Faculty.

Objective 2: Demonstrate a comprehensive commitment to core competencies

Strategies:

- Expand the online resources available through the Academic Success Center to include discipline-specific links to useful websites and resources/tutorials
- Appoint course stewards for each course in the University core curriculum
- Review and strategically monitor the size of classes in the University core curriculum
- Review student satisfaction with instruction in core classes
- Evaluate the measure(s) for each core competency to insure alignment
- Develop a proactive advising system for students not successful in University core classes, beginning with procedures to follow for students not passing the first exam or first major assignment.

Metrics:

1. *Average class size in University core courses.*
2. Mean student evaluation of instruction in University core courses.
3. Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.

Metric:

1. Average class size in University core courses.

Findings:

Since the University teaches multiple Dual Enrollment classes, especially in the core, these sections were removed from the data for AC 2025-2026. In addition, multiple sections taught synchronously via compressed video were combined. The average class size over 43 University core courses in fall 2025 was *M* = 29.35 (*SD* = 11.67, *N* = 280) and spring 2026 was *M* = 27.09 (*SD* = 12.66, *N* = 247; Table 11).

Table 11

Average Class Size in University Core Courses, Fall 2025 and Spring 2026

Course	Fall 2025			Spring 2026		
	M	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
ANTH1510	34.00	12.27	4	36.00	10.49	4
ANTH2020	14.00	4.24	2	10.00	0	2
BIOL1010	37.60	5.68	5	39.67	8.39	3
BIOL2250	47.27	18.60	11	30.86	14.44	7
BIOL2260	30.00	15.70	7	49.00	18.79	8
CHEM1030	43.00	10.58	3	55.00		1
CHEM1040	17		1	30.67	5.13	3
CHEM1070	41.14	11.58	7	32.86	10.25	7
COMM1010	28.38	6.67	16	25.13	11.43	16
COMM2500	30.00	3.78	8	25.00	12.02	6
ECON2000	30.17	11.63	6	25.67	13.19	6
ENGL1010	24.92	5.64	24	19.13	9.96	8
ENGL1020	22.54	6.45	13	20.44	6.65	25
ENGL2070	20.00		1	10		1
ENGL2110	23.23	7.78	22	21.70	7.96	25
EPSY2020	18.40	10.83	5	23.25	7.80	4
FA1040	31.89	6.39	18	30.29	10.59	14
GEOG1010	33.50	11.10	8	30.29	16.22	7
GEOG1020	42		1	27.50	21.92	2
HIST1010	35.80	9.55	5	39.80	5.36	5
HIST1020	22.00	2.83	2	27.00	24.04	2
HIST2010	28.25	13.30	4	27.75	11.09	4

Course	Fall 2025			Spring 2026		
	M	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
HIST2020	25.80	14.72	5	24.00	14.45	4
MATH1020	27.75	4.15	24	17.73	9.43	11
MATH1035	15.50	6.98	6	10.00	8.19	3
MATH1060	29.50	9.59	14	29.38	9.98	21
MATH1090	15.00	7.94	3	23.00	10.23	4
MATH1100	11		1			
MATH1820	21		1	3		1
MATH1830	12		1	14		1
MATH2010	18.50	0.71	2	12.75	4.79	4
MATH2100	13		1	18		1
MATH2110	11		1	8		1
PHIL1010	8		1	40		1
PHYS2030	38.00	1.41	2			
PSCI2010	29.75	14.57	4	27.00	13.00	3
PSYC1010	40.67	9.39	9	35.71	5.77	7
PSYC2050	27.86	8.28	7	29.83	7.34	7
SCI1010	40.78	13.03	9	37.63	6.65	8
SCI1020	39.82	6.05	6	41.75	9.00	4
SCI2010	23.00	10.98	4	25.00	10.98	4
SCI2020	19.00	18.25	3	26.67	9.44	3
SOC1010	40.67	4.04	3	38.00	8.49	2

Analysis:

A strategic goal for Academic Excellence has been to decrease the average size of the University core courses to better achieve our student learning objectives. With the implementation of the redesigned University core curriculum in 2018-2019, the number of courses offered for each baccalaureate curriculum has decreased (51 to 43 courses). Forty-three University core courses were offered in fall 2025 and spring 2026. Fall 2025 courses with the largest enrollment per section included BIOL 2250 (*M* = 47.27), Chem 1030 (*M* = 43.00), Chem 1070 (*M* = 41.14), Science 1010 (*M* = 40.78), Psychology 1010 (*M* = 40.67), and Sociology 1010 (*M* = 40.67). For Spring 2026, the highest enrollments occurred in Biology 2260 (*M* = 49.00), Science 1020 (*M* = 41.75), History 1010 (*M* = 39.80), Biology 1010 (*M* = 39.67), and Sociology 1010 (*M* = 38.00). Only two core courses averaged 10 students Spring semester: Anthropology 2020 and Math 1035. Both courses had higher enrollment in the fall.

Compared to AC 2023-2024, the total number of sections of core courses dropped in AC 2025-2026; Fall semester 2025 had 10 fewer sections (-3.45%) while spring semester 2026 had 18 fewer sections (-6.20%). Within courses, the number of sections were more dynamic compared to AC 2023-2024. Including both fall and spring, only 42.9% of courses offered the same number of sections as they did in AC 2023-2024.

In 23 cases (27.4%)the number of sections offered dropped between 1 and 7; in 13 cases (15.5%) one or two additional sections were offered. Average class size and number of sections offered are inversely related. The average class size was at least one student higher than in AC 2023-2024 in 47.0% of courses; the comparable proportion for core courses in AC 2023-2024 compared to AC 2020-2021 was approximately one third. As the number of sections drop it becomes more difficult to target specific class sizes.

Overall, in AC 2025-2026 the average class size in University core courses was 28.29, (*SD* = 12.19, *N* = 527). Although this was numerically higher than the average for AC 2023-2024 (*M* = 27.63, *SD* = 13.17, *N* = 555, the difference was not statistically significant (Independent samples *t*-test, *p* = .196).

Decision:

Each semester the number of sections, class size, and student success rates is assessed by Dept. Heads, School, Directors, Academic Deans, Course Stewards, and the Provost/VPAA, along with the General Education Committee to evaluate cost efficiency and instructional quality across all baccalaureate programs. Committee members should continue to evaluate to determine whether core courses should have a minimum enrollment per semester or year, and if the course meets general education requirements. The current target will remain a mean of 28 in University core courses, because of the recommendation provided in this section.

Responsibility: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans/Directors/Department Heads, and Institutional Research.

Metric:

2. **Mean student evaluation of instruction for core courses (overall course quality) and course instructor (instructor's effectiveness).**

Findings:

On the Student Evaluation of Instruction the pooled average over both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters for overall core course quality was *M* = 4.28 (*SD* = 0.864, *n* = 3,062) and the pooled average for core instructor's effectiveness was *M* = 4.37 (*SD* = 0.870, *n* = 3,092; Table 12).

Analysis:

The average rating of student surveys distributed in core courses at the end of fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters are significantly higher for both course quality (two-variable *t*-test, *t* = 2.68, *p* =.004) and instructor effectiveness (*t* = 4.23, *p* < .001) compared to AC 2022-2023.

Typically, average course and instructor ratings are lower in core course than in the remainder of the curriculum, and this year was no exception. Nevertheless, averages were strong. Although neither metric reached the target of 4.5, these evaluations indicate that at the end of the semester students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard, with over 85% of respondents rating both course and instructor either *Good* or *Superior.*

In addition to difficulties with the launch of the new Student Evaluation of Instruction in the fall, our response rate in the spring may have been reduced due to a delay in ULS distribution of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz

Table 12

a. Fall 2024 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor in Core Courses

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	20	1.52%
Poor	(2)	47	3.57%
Fair	(3)	128	9.71%
Good	(4)	469	35.58%
Superior	(5)	654	49.62%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
1,316/7,419 (17.74%)	**4.28**	0.89	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	
Extremely Poor	(1)	19	1.44%
Poor	(2)	39	2.96%
Fair	(3)	123	9.33%
Good	(4)	396	30.05%
Superior	(5)	735	55.77%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
1,312/7,419 (17.68%)	**4.36**	0.88	5

b. Spring 2025 Student Evaluation of Course and Instructor in Core Courses

Consider this course: Overall, I would rate this course as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	20	1.13%
Poor	(2)	48	2.71%
Fair	(3)	191	10.77%
Good	(4)	682	38.44%
Superior	(5)	833	46.96%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
1,774/5,581 (31.79%)	**4.27**	0.84	4
Consider this teacher: Overall, I would rate this teacher as…			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Poor	(1)	19	1.07%
Poor	(2)	45	2.53%
Fair	(3)	161	9.04%
Good	(4)	570	32.02%
Superior	(5)	985	55.34%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
1,780/5,581 (31.89%)	**4.38**	0.83	5

Student Satisfaction Inventory, which has a lengthy demographic section, 118 additional multiple-choice reached the target of 4.5, these evaluations indicate that at the end of the semester students hold Northwestern courses and instructors in high regard, with over 85% of respondents rating both course and instructor either *Good* or *Superior.*

In addition to difficulties with the launch of the new Student Evaluation of Instruction in the fall, our response rate in the spring may have been reduced due to a delay in ULS distribution of the Ruffalo Noel

Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, which has a lengthy demographic section, 118 additional multiple-choice items, and a free answer section. The Student Evaluation of Instruction has 20 multiple choice items plus a free answer comments section; thus, students with a course load of 5 classes would have the equivalent of an additional 100 item survey to answer, all in the last month of the semester.

Decision:

We will maintain our target in course/instructor effectiveness moving forward and encourage students to participate in course/instructor evaluations to raise the overall response rate to 45% by 2026. Likewise, Academic Affairs will work collaboratively with the Student Experience to more proactively engage with students on their expectations for instruction and instructors.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads/Directors, and Faculty.

Metric:

3. Number of University core classes with a designated course steward.

Findings:

Fourteen University core courses had a designated course steward in AC 2024-2025 (Table 13).

Table 13

Course Stewards for AC 2024-2025

Course/Title	
BIOL 2250 Anatomy and Physiology and Allied Health Majors	Cynthia Doffitt
COMM 1010 Oral Communication	Ms. Zering
Comm-2500-Interpersonal Communication	Dorian Eaton
MATH 1035 Contemporary Mathematics	Dr. Mary Reeves
MATH 1060 Finite Mathematics	Dr. Leigh Ann Myers
MATH 1020	Ms. Carrie Maggio
ENGL 1010/1011–Composition & Rhetoric I/Enrichment	Dr. Jennifer Enoch
ENGL 1010–Composition & Rhetoric I	
ENGL 1020–Composition & Rhetoric II	
ENGL 2110–Introduction to Literature	Dr. Lilly Berberyan
NUTR 1030—Human Nutrition	Mrs. Catherine Bass (all fall under one course steward contract)
NUTR 1050—Child Nutrition	
NUTR 1070—Nutrition for Children and Families	
EPSY 2020—Introduction to child and adolescent psychology	Dr. Greg Bouck

Analysis:

Based on recommendations from 2017-2018, the University's course steward plan was revised to give priority to core courses with multiple sections and large student enrollment (400+ students). In fall 2018, 11 such courses were identified, including Biology 2250; Chemistry 1070; Communication 1010; English 1010, 1020, 2110; Geography 1010; Psychology 1010, 2050; Fine Arts 1040; and Science 1010. Since then, the courses receiving stewards have been adjusted to reflect enrollment patterns and changes in the core curriculum.

Course stewards ensure course goals/objectives/key assessments are the same across all course sections offered and ensure that instructors are engaging with students and responsive in meeting their learning needs. The use of course stewards has remained consistent, leading to improved integrity and rigor in our General Education core. Oversight for

consistency in teaching, as well as SLO measures has been centralized to the course steward and has resulted in improved consistency and outcomes across all classes with a designated course steward.

Decision:

The General Education Committee should review data from 2024-2025 and recommend any changes or upgrades to the course steward process. The consensus has been that this system is working very well.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

Objective 3: Offer exemplary graduate and professional school preparation

Strategies:

- Establish a workshop series to prepare students for graduate/professional school admission exams.
- Support student and mentor travel to present research at professional conferences.
- Offer workshops on test-taking skills, tips on the application process, and interview preparation.
- Offer discipline-specific courses focused on student transition from undergraduate to graduate/ professional school.

Metrics:

1. *Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.*
2. *Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.*
3. *Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (GRE, LSAT, MCAT).*

Metric:

1. Number of graduate students engaging in research/scholarly activities and mentored by faculty.

Findings:

Ninety-seven graduate students presented 48 papers and posters at eight professional conferences in five disciplines (Education, English, Music, Nursing, and Psychology). In addition, 15 graduate students were accepted to deliver solo presentations at NSU Research Day.

The 290 graduate research products required for graduation (summer 2025-spring 2026), included: dissertations (*N* = 47), graduate theses (*N* = 13), field studies (*N* = 2), performance documents (*N* = 9), scholarly projects (*N* = 38), creative research projects (*N* = 8), and Papers-in Lieu of Thesis (*N* = 173). Approximately 18.7% of Northwestern's full-time faculty were engaged in directing or assessing the capstone research of graduate students. This is comparable to the previous assessment cycle.

Analysis:

The Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice Research Poster Carousel was held this spring, on an annual, rather than biennial basis. This virtual conference is convenient for our online graduate students in Nursing since they do not need to travel to the event. Seventeen team presentations were made by 66 students; as a result, no Nursing students participated in Research Day this year. Fourteen Master's and doctoral students in Education presented at the Louisiana Educational Research Association conference in New Orleans; this was a 100% increase in participation over AC 2024-2025. An additional five presented at the Mid-South Educational Research Association Conference, comparable to last year.

Decision:

The target for AC 2026-2027 will remain at 80 graduate presenters at professional conferences and 29 presentations. To facilitate mastery of this goal, faculty across all graduate programs will mentor their students by recommending professional conferences to attend and will encourage them to submit their student research for consideration. Additionally, to obtain a yearly increase in the number of graduate presentations, Northwestern will continue to partially fund (e.g., registration or travel) graduate students whose proposals are accepted to a national, regional, or state professional conference. Faculty mentors will have internal funding opportunities, such as endowed professorships or faculty grants, to support their scholarship.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Faculty Grants Chair, Research Council Chair, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty

Metric:

2. Number of undergraduate and graduate students mentored by faculty who publish, present, or perform scholarly endeavors in a professional setting.

Findings:

One hundred forty-six students (49 undergraduates, 97 graduates) were accepted to present papers and posters at professional meetings this year. In addition, NSU Research Day included 15 presentations by 15 graduate students and 18 presentations by 22 undergraduate students. Student presenters and faculty mentors represented three of the four colleges; 66 graduate students in Nursing presented their research in a virtual conference.

Analysis:

The number of undergraduate students making conference presentations was slightly higher than the number accepted to present in AC 2024-2025. In addition to the University of Louisiana System Academic Summit, Northwestern undergraduates also presented at six other conferences, the same number as in AC 2024-2025. All undergraduates attended conferences with one or more faculty mentors.

Student participation in Research Day was lower in AC 2025-2026. Fewer undergraduates participated in Research Day because fewer presentations were conducted by teams. Graduate participation was reduced because Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing conducted their Research Poster Carousel on an annual basis this year, rather than biennially. Graduate students in the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health were encouraged to provide content for this continuing education opportunity for the RN/APRN community and made 17 presentations, rather than joining in with Research Day. These two combined events in AC 2025-2026 had four more presenters than Research Day in AC 2024-2025.

Decision:

Northwestern will continue to emphasize the importance of graduate and undergraduate research/ scholarship by providing partial or full funding to conduct research or to travel to professional meetings to present research findings. In AC 2026-2027 we will initiate a small research support fund for Graduate students.

Although most presentations are made in person, we will continue to offer the ability to present at Research Day via WebEx so distance learning students and students and faculty attending classes at our off-campus instructional sites can more easily view presentations and present posters and talks virtually.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Faculty Grants Chair, Research Council Chair, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

Metric:

3. Undergraduate student performance on graduate/professional school admission exams (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT).

Findings:

Test scores on graduate or professional school exams were verified for 41 undergraduates, graduating seniors, and recent graduates. No students graduating from NSU May 2025 or later taking tests administered during the period June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026 reported the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). The Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) was assessed for students graduating May 2024 or later taking tests administered during the period June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026. Because students applying to medical school often take a gap year, scores on the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) were assessed for students graduating in 2024 or later.

From June 1, 2025-May 31, 2026, 11 current students and graduates completing their degree in May 2024 or later took the LSAT at least once. The average score was 150.6 (*SD* = 10.44), while the average percentile rating was 41.6% (*SD* = 27.9%). The percentile ranking of the average score is 34.7%. LSAT scores ranged from 133 to 167.

Between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2026, 16 continuing students, graduating seniors, and graduates from 2023 or later took the MCAT (95% confidence interval–Total: 498.0 ± 6.48, CFBPS: 123.5 ± 1.75, CARS: 125.1 ± 1.82, BBFLS: 123.9 ± 2.00, and PSBFB: 124.8 ± 1.94, *N* = 16). Test-takers and medical school applicants must list all institutions from which they have earned undergraduate credits; the cohort for this metric excludes individuals with only dual enrollment credits from NSU and those earning an associate degree while still in high school (such as many students from LSMSA).

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the number of NSU students reporting the **GRE** declined to eight. This was consistent with a national trend of fewer graduate programs requiring this test for admission. At NSU, some degree programs stopped requiring the GRE for admission, especially those designed for individuals mid-career. Other programs only require the GRE for students below a particular undergraduate GPA. In AC 2025-2026, no qualifying students reported GRE scores to NSU.

LSAT scores range from 120-180; the national median for August 2025 to April 2026 is 154. Five of this year's test-takers (45.5%) scored above the median. Although numerically higher, the average score did not increase significantly (p = .335). One more student (5) scored above the median compared to last year, so the target was met. Admissions outcomes for NSU students applying to law school remained high. In the 2024 application year, 17 students recently completing a bachelor's degree at NSU applied to law school; 11 (65%) matriculated to a law school in fall 2025, one fewer than in 2024.

Except for the CARS subscale, the majority of the individual **MCAT** scores and sub-scores were below the national medians. Although numerically the average scores were above those for AC 2024-2025, none were significantly higher. The number of MCAT test-takers dropped by 27% compared to AC 2024-2025. Although the percent of students exceeding the national median was larger overall and for each subscale, the *number* of students scoring above the median dropped in each case, so the target was not met. As in previous years, the best performance for NSU students was on the CARS sub-score where 12 of 16 (75%) scored above the national median. For overall scores, seven (44%) scored above median, a percentage comparable to AC 2024-2025.

Seven students in the current applicant cohort (50%) were accepted to medical school for the 2025 or 2026 application year; four (57%) were accepted for early admission, two by LSU Medical School-Shreveport and two by LSU Medical School New Orleans. This is not significantly different from the national average acceptance rate (41% of applicants are accepted by one or more medical schools). Many aspiring physicians apply to more than one school, reapply if they are not initially accepted, or choose to withdraw before a decision has been made;

as a result, the acceptance rate *per application* is much lower for the two institutions where most of our students apply: LSU School of Medicine Shreveport (4.15%) and LSU School of Medicine New Orleans (5.84%).

Curricular and advising changes were made seven years ago by the two academic units advising pre-medical students (School of STEM and Louisiana Scholars' College). Even with some students delaying their applications until the year after graduation, these changes should be fully reflected in the performance of medical school applicants this year. Of the 51 graduates applying to medical school at least once for the application years from 2021 to 2026, 21 were accepted (41%). However, looking more closely at the credentials of the applicants, 100% of those who both scored higher than 500 on the MCAT and submitted a cumulative GPA higher than 3.80 were admitted; no one missing both benchmarks was accepted. In addition, nine of the admitted students qualified for early decision, an indication of highly competitive candidates. This provides clear benchmarks to help pre-medical students set goals and choose between the many professional paths available to them. No single academic program is best suited to prepare students for success in medical school, however about 80% of the admitted students from 2021 to the present chose a major in Biology or Applied Microbiology, while the remainder completed an honors degree majoring in Liberal Arts (Scientific Inquiry).

Decision:

We will continue to monitor participation in the GRE, however, based on local and national trends we expect that increased interest in accelerated Bachelor's to Master's degree paths at NSU and alternative pathways to graduate studies in a wide variety of disciplines will make this exam less useful to our graduates. As a result, the GRE is no longer a good assessment of the degree to which our bachelor's programs prepare our students to persist in advanced study.

On the LSAT, the number scoring above the national median rose from three to five, despite a drop in the number of students taking the exam. The target for subsequent evaluation cycles will be to raise the number of students scoring above the national median by one each year. Acceptance data lags one year behind the application data.

Approximately 40 students who have received academic credits from NSU apply to medical school each year. Of these, fewer than 25% graduated from NSU. Because of dual enrollment, including students from LSMSA, we teach many well-qualified students whom we lose to other institutions, such as LSU A&M and Louisiana Tech, where they pursue their bachelor's degree. Of the 18 applicants who received credits but did not graduate from NSU and were accepted by medical schools in the 2026 application year, 16 (89%) fall into this category. Individualized recruitment from this population could benefit the success of our pre-medical programs. The target for subsequent evaluation periods is to raise the number of students scoring above the national median on the total score for the MCAT (*Median* = 501) by one each year.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Graduate School, Institutional Research, and Deans/Department Heads/Directors.

Objective 4: Foster quality student-faculty interactions

Strategies:

- Create and utilize program-specific advising packets to improve/streamline the advising process
- Establish a Meet the Faculty program
- Identify successful/meaningful student-faculty interactions
- Provide transportation or other funds for faculty and students who take educational trips or engage in experiential learning activities
- Create a space for faculty/staff and students to meet in informal gatherings and engage in conversations about educational and social topics

- Reward faculty who serve as recognized student organization sponsors
- Create and promote opportunities for faculty to interact with students and their families such as academic recognition ceremonies or extracurricular activities

Metrics:

1. Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).

Metric:

1. Mean scores from student evaluation of instruction that represent quality student-faculty interactions (e.g., my teacher encouraged interactions between faculty and students; my teacher gave prompt feedback; and my teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor).

Findings:

Due to difficulties in launching a new platform, the Student Evaluation of Instruction was not collected for the fall A term and the evaluation period at the end of the semester was compressed; as a result, the response rate for fall 2024 (Table 14) was 19%. Just over a third of student enrollments rated their instructors in spring 2025 (Table 14). The pooled average over both semesters for *faculty/student interactions* was *M* = 4.61 (*s* = 0.898, *n* = 14,917), for *prompt feedback* was *M* = 4.61 (*SD* = 0.887, *n* = 15,285), and for *appropriate demeanor* was *M* = 4.70 (*SD* = 0.794, *n* = 14,658; Table 15).

Table 14

Fall 2024 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	150	2.55%
Occasionally	(2)	169	2.88%
Sometimes	(3)	306	5.21%
Usually	(4)	538	9.16%
Always	(5)	4426	75.36%
Not Applicable	(0)	284	4.84%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
5,873/30,925 (18.99%)	**4.60**	0.92	5.00
My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	137	2.33%
Occasionally	(2)	190	3.24%
Sometimes	(3)	269	4.58%
Usually	(4)	610	10.39%
Always	(5)	4528	77.11%
Not Applicable	(0)	138	2.35%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
5,872/30,925 (18.99%)	**4.60**	0.90	5.00
My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	114	1.96%
Occasionally	(2)	123	2.11%
Sometimes	(3)	211	3.62%
Usually	(4)	410	7.03%
Always	(5)	4638	79.55%
Not Applicable	(0)	334	5.73%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
5,830/30,925 (18.85%)	**4.70**	0.82	5.00

Table 15

Spring 2025 Student Evaluation of Instruction

My teacher encouraged interaction between faculty and students.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	216	2.20%
Occasionally	(2)	242	2.46%
Sometimes	(3)	498	5.07%
Usually	(4)	996	10.14%
Always	(5)	7376	75.10%
Not Applicable	(0)	493	5.02%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
9,821/28,433(34.54%)	**4.62**	0.99	5.00
My teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	204	2.08%
Occasionally	(2)	284	2.89%
Sometimes	(3)	460	4.69%
Usually	(4)	1098	11.19%
Always	(5)	7505	76.46%
Not Applicable	(0)	264	2.69%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
9,815/28,433(34.52%)	**4.61**	0.88	5.00
My teacher displayed an appropriate demeanor and enthusiasm both inside and outside the learning environment.			
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent
Never	(1)	155	1.59%
Occasionally	(2)	184	1.89%
Sometimes	(3)	338	3.47%
Usually	(4)	880	9.04%
Always	(5)	7605	78.11%
Not Applicable	(0)	574	5.90%
Response Rate	**Mean**	***SD***	**Median**
9,736/28,433(34.24%)	**4.70**	0.78	5.00

Analysis:

Student evaluations for fall 2024 and spring 2025 indicate superior student-faculty interactions. Frequency of responses appear relatively stable and exceed the target values. Overall, 75.20% of students indicated Northwestern teachers *always* encourage interaction between faculty and students; 9.77% stated their teachers *usually* encourage interaction. The mean rating was significantly higher than that in AC 2022-2023 (t = 3.12, df = 32,614, p < .001).

For the criterion, *my teacher gave prompt feedback to questions and assignments,* 76.71% responded *always* and 10.89% answered *usually.* The mean rating was significantly higher than that in AC 2022-2023 (t = 4.41, df = 32,133, p < .001).

Seventy-nine percent of students believed their teachers *always* displayed an appropriate demeanor both inside and outside the learning environment; 10.89% stated their teachers *usually* displayed an appropriate demeanor. The mean rating was significantly higher than that in AC 2022-2023 (t = 4.62, df = 32,909, p < .001).

Decision:

Although the Student Evaluation of Instruction does not directly measure course and instructor quality, it remains a reliable indicator of student *perceptions* of the classroom experience. Results from fall 2024 and spring 2025 demonstrate clear progress, with significant increases in ratings for faculty-student interactions, prompt feedback, and professional demeanor. Building on this momentum, the institution will continue to monitor student

attitudes while also capitalizing on opportunities to advance innovative approaches for engagement. These include developing more personalized feedback systems, expanding high-impact faculty-student interaction practices, and integrating emerging instructional technologies that foster dialogue and connection both inside and outside the classroom. By acknowledging the gains already achieved and committing to ongoing innovation, the institution ensures a dynamic learning environment that actively supports student success and strengthens the faculty-student partnership. Until a more granular approach is identified that allows some customization for a more impactful result and the ability to play a more proactive role in the evolving of the delivery of instruction, we will monitor and respond to student attitudes student/faculty interactions.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty, and Institutional Research.

Objective 5: Support faculty in teaching, research, and service

Strategies:

- Survey faculty to determine needs in teaching, research, and service.
- Establish policies for internal research and travel funding opportunities.
- Participation (directly/indirectly) in the strategic budgeting process.
- Promote the goals/activities/outcomes of The Center for Faculty Excellence in Research and Teaching.
- Develop methods for establishing faculty workload policies.
- Ensure that faculty across the University are equitably compensated for their rank, expertise, and service to the University, profession, and/or community.
- Inform faculty of University endowed professorship policies and encourage their participation in the application process.
- Recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, and service.
- Ensure that all classroom/laboratory technologies are functional and updated and that faculty are trained on their usage.

Metrics:

1. *Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting*.
2. Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.
3. *Number of rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies.*
4. Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service.

Metric:

1. Number of faculty participating and receiving internal funding opportunities, including grants, EPs, operating, and strategic planning and budgeting.

Findings:

In AC 2025-2026, 20 faculty were awarded research or travel grants by the Office of Academic Affairs. A total of $18,781.79 was awarded, an average of $939.09 per awardee. The College of Arts and Sciences awarded $20,000.00 on a competitive basis to eight faculty in the college to support their research and travel. The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development awarded $28,014.26 to support conference travel for 25 faculty members.

The Office of Academic Affairs supported registration and travel expenses to Hammond, LA, April 16-17 for undergraduate student presenters and faculty mentors to attend the ULS Academic Summit, a system-wide conference showcasing undergraduate research, service-learning activities, and fine and performing arts. Twenty-five student

authors were slated to present 8 undergraduate research projects and 4 service-learning projects; and 5 students had pieces selected for the visual arts showcase. Eleven faculty mentors attended at a total cost of $1,883.61.

Sixty-seven faculty received endowed professorships, and three faculty were endowed chair recipients. The 70 honorees were provided $787,530. to support their professional development during the year. The Strategic planning and budgeting process was not used to support faculty initiatives during AC 2025-2026, due to a lack of discretionary funds.

Analysis:

Faculty development grants have rebounded from the difficulties encountered during AC 2019-2020 and AC 2020-2021. Conferences have returned and are once again held in mostly face-to-face formats; the concomitant increase in conference expenses have increased the importance of these grants.

Expenditures for the two ULS conferences vary from year to year because they are hosted by system members on rotation. This year costs associated with the Academic Summit were moderate; registration fees were reduced by contributions from event sponsors, but the distance to Hammond required an overnight stay for participants from Northwestern. The ULS For Our Future Conference was not held this year.

One new professorship has been endowed since AC 2024-2025); the number of faculty awarded endowed professorships and chairs has gradually increased from 57 to 70 (23%). In this assessment cycle, funds available per professorship for faculty use ranged from $5,808 to $12,590.00, averaging $7,783.23.

Decision:

Monies dedicated to support faculty in their research and professional development play a vital role and should be continued during AC 2026-2027. For faculty without support from their departments or from a professorship, even a modest grant (less than $1,000) can be significant.

Supporting participation in the ULS Academic Summit and For Our Future conferences ensures the University will be well-represented at these multidisciplinary meetings. Therefore, monies budgeted for System-wide events should be adjusted each year to cover fluctuations in expenses as the conferences rotate.

Endowed professor recipients will be encouraged to mentor new faculty, including adjuncts, during AC 2026-2027 by financially assisting them in professional development activities. Examples include using endowment funds to pay a new or adjunct faculty member's expenses for participating in a professional meeting where their research findings are co-presented; or inviting a nationally recognized content expert to campus to inform or update faculty knowledge and skills.

Responsibility: NSU Foundation, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, and Faculty.

Metric:

2. **Percent of faculty/staff receiving external grants.**

Findings:

In AC 2024-2025, 41 new grants from 26 PIs were funded for a total of **$6,536,511.67** (Table 16)**.** The largest grants went to the Child and Family Network, NCPTT, and the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. An additional **$6,927,862.81** was brought to the University by continuations of multiyear grants first awarded in previous years to eleven additional PIs not represented in the new awards (Table 17). Thus, total grant income in AC 2024-2025 was **$13,464,374.48**, a 16% decline over AC 2022-2023**.**

Analysis:

Compared to AC 2022-2023, the number of NSU employees initially receiving grants from external agencies increased from 18 to 26 and the number of new grants funded increased from 22 to 41. The

Table 16

Newly funded grants in 2024-2025

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Cox, JD	Biological and Microbiology	Amendment to NSU Drone Remote Sensing and Soil Health Education Program	$49,368.00
King, Charles	Psychology and Addiction Studies	SSW AATC Grant	$25,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$2,000.00
Warren, Simeon	NCPTT	Designing and Implementing Pilot Resiliency Projects at South-eastern Coastal Fortifications at Ft Pulaski and Ft Massachusetts	$416,220.86
Warren, Simeon	NCPTT	Fort Jefferson Materials Monitoring Tool	$487,871.34
		(5) Federal Sponsored Awards Total:	**$980,460.20**
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Child Care Resource and Referral-Amendment 3	$944,344.00
Alexander, Nancy	Child and Family Network	Young Children with Disabilities	$61,600.00
Badeaux, Aimee	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Rapid Response Fund, Expansion of Healthcare Workforce	$490,000.00
Brunson, Jerry Cox, JD	Biology and Microbiology	Enrichment of Student Education through Development of a WBLE+ Program	$12,000.00
Cano-Lopez, Edgar	CAPA/Fine and Graphic Arts	LA Litho	$2,730.00
Cowan, Jennifer	Child and Family Network	Louisiana Pathways Career Development System	$367,873.20
Cowan, Jennifer	Child and Family Network	Louisiana Pathways Scholarship	$2,023,858.80
Cox, Reatha	Student Experience	Louisiana Board of Regents Hunger-Free Campus	$10,000.00
Dugas, Anna	School of STEM/Physical Sciences	DemonSats-6: Continued Student Payload Program at Northwestern State University and LSMSA	$12,000.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Birth to Three	$443,897.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Lead Agency for Bossier Parish	$90,300.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start Network for Bossier Parish	$100,000.00
Gruesbeck, Leslie	Fine and Graphic Arts	Work-Based Learning Experience Plus (WBLE+)	$12,000.00
Gruesbeck, Steven	College of Education and Human Development	Keep Northwestern State Beautiful: Reducing Single Use Plastic Waste at NSU's Cenla Campus	$5,000.00
Handel, Greg	Academic Affairs	Building a Competitive Workforce OER/CTE Course Redesign	$108,000.00
Handel, Greg	Academic Affairs	Meauxmentum Scholars Project	$10,000.00
Longlois, Julie	EDIO/Carl D. Perkins	Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century (Perkins V)	$48,118.08
Longlois, Julie	Electronic and Global Engagement/Carl D. Perkins	Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)-Postsecondary Basic Carryover Grant	$4,173.39
Morrow, Laurie DePriest, Jennifer	Economic Development, Innovation, and Outreach	Regional LASTEM Center	$275,000.00
Penrod, Curtis	School of Business	Central Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Enhancement Program	$40,000.00
Pursell, Elizabeth	Academic Success/Advising Services	Catapulting Student Success through Motivation, Transparency, and Support	$100,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2025 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$5,110.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	2025 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$8,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	44th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$2,585.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$2,285.00
Reynolds, Thomas	English, Languages, and Cultural Studies	NSU Mindset Meauxtivators	$4,231.00
Rivera-Vazques, Daniel	STEM/Physical Science	Acquisition of Ductless Chemical Fume Hoods for Chemistry Undergraduate Laboratories and Outreach Activities at NSU	$55,148.00
Salter, Valerie	Business/Hospitality, Management & Tourism	Enhancement of the Undergraduate Hospitality Management & Tourism (HMT) 10/24/2024 Culinary Arts Program	$135,107.00
Taylor, Dominique	New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts	Louisiana Community Journalism Initiative-MacArthur Foundation Year 1 of 2	$19,130.00
		(29) State Sponsored Awards Total:	$5,392,490.47

Table 16
Newly funded grants in 2024-2025 (continued)

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Brunson, Michelle	College of Education and Human Development	Remapping the Cradle to Prison Pipeline to Cradle to College Pipeline in Natchitoches through Early Literacy Intervention	$1,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	44th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$2,500.00
Fletcher, Ventric	Athletics	NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP)	$100,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	The 45th Annual Natchitoches- NSU Folk Festival	$4,800.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start for Bossier Parish Local Match for Tuition	$42,000.00
Taylor, Dominique	New Media, Journalism, and Communication	Louisiana Community Journalism Initiative-LUCE Foundation-Year 1 of 2	$10,761.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$2,500.00
		(7) Private Sponsored Awards Total:	$163,561.00
New awards: 2024-2025			**$6,536,511.67**

Table 17
Continuation of multiyear grants 2024-2025

PI	Department/College	Title	Funded Amount
Ammons, Kevin	NCPTT	Partnering for Preservation 2024-Modification 3	$399,148.14
Badeaux, Aimee	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship at NSU-Year 2 of 4	$54,079.00
Handel, Greg	Academic Affairs	Elevate-U Initiative-Year 2 of 5	$434,110.00
Simmons, Pamela	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	PHMHNP: Bridging the Behavioral Healthcare Gap-Year 4 of 4	$266,666.00
Welch, Frances	Student Support Services	Office of Postsecondary Education: Student Support Services Program-Year 5 of 5	$500,379.00
		(5) Federal Sponsored Awards Total:	**$1,654,382.14**
Fultz, Andrew	Social Work	Title IV-E Child Welfare Scholars Program-Year 2 of 3	$3,307,502.00
Wilhite, Lisa	College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	Establishing an LPN to RN Cohort in Collaboration with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center-Year 2 of 3	$246,800.00
		(2) State Sponsored Awards Total:	**$3,554,302.00**
Brunson, Michelle	College of Education and Human Development	Remapping the Cradle to Prison Pipeline to Cradle to College Pipeline in Natchitoches through Early Literacy Intervention	$1,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	44th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$2,500.00
Fletcher, Ventric	Athletics	NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP)	$100,000.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	The 45th Annual Natchitoches- NSU Folk Festival	$4,800.00
Duncan, Kimberly	Child and Family Network	Ready Start for Bossier Parish Local Match for Tuition	$42,000.00
Taylor, Dominique	New Media, Journalism, and Communication	Louisiana Community Journalism Initiative-LUCE Foundation-Year 1 of 2	$10,761.00
Rasmussen, Shane	LA Folklife Center	45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival	$2,500.00
		(7) Private Sponsored Awards Total:	**$1,719178.67.**
Continuations:	***2024-2025***		**$6,927,862.81**

average amount per grant ($445,895 in AC 2020-2021 versus $296,155 in AC 2022-2023 and $159,127 in AC 2024-2025) continued to decline, as participation by individual faculty members applying for smaller grant amounts increased. The Child and Family Network remains an impactful program that garners tremendous grant support, receiving about 30% of Northwestern's extramural funding; however, several other units accounted for significant amounts of grant support.

Decision:

Due to the increase in the number of new NSU grant recipients and the fact that more faculty and staff are applying for external grant funding, it was recommended that Northwestern dedicate at least one full-time person to grant writing or to provide release time for one faculty member in each College for discipline specific grant writing. Northwestern hired Merchant McIntyre, based in Washington, D.C., to assist in the grant writing process for federal grants, and to provide lobbying support with Congress. It is recommended that we continue our partnership with Merchant McIntyre to assist in federal grant writing and submission of applications. The potential for additional external grants through this partnership is promising, and we are excited about the potential. A committee of internal Faculty/Staff worked collaboratively with MM to submit a Title I grant, and in the upcoming year, the School of STEM will work with MM to revise and submit an NSF grant that was close to being funded this past year. Being awarded these grants would be a significant boost for Northwestern, and we look forward to our continued working relationship with MM. While we did not meet our target, the results are promising as evidenced by the number of faculty/staff receiving grant funding. In AC 2020-2021, a cross-college grants committee was formed with representatives for each College. Their charge is to work collaboratively for professional development and grants opportunities within and across colleges. While this committee has succeeded in supporting faculty with feedback and editing, as well as supporting local initiatives (IGNiTE, Faculty Development Communities, and Demonology), the committee will work further to provide specific support and present grant opportunities for faculty/staff. It is also suggested that we develop additional criteria to track the efficacy of working with Merchant McIntyre.

Responsibility: Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors/Department Heads, Faculty.

Metric:

3. Number of rooms equipped with new classroom or laboratory technologies.

Findings:

Fifty-two campus locations acquired new classroom or laboratory technologies in AC 2025-2026 (Table 18).

Analysis:

In AC 2025-2026, the number of departments or sites acquiring new or upgraded classroom or laboratory technologies decreased but still exceeded the target. Data collected for this measure was obtained from department heads/directors, deans, and the student technology coordinator. Of the 52 newly equipped or updated rooms, 26 (50%) were funded exclusively by departmental funds, external grants, or donations, as well as the complete classroom technology installations for 18 rooms in the newly opened Alost Hall. An additional room for English, Languages, and Cultural Studies was funded by a combination of Technology Fee and other sources.

The pace at which technology becomes outdated or innovative technology is introduced, as well as its cost, varies by discipline; the University attempts to distribute funds to provide state-of-the-art equipment equitably across the various academic units as well as encourage units with higher costs to secure external funding. This distribution of funds is particularly commendable because the allocation of Student Technology Fee monies is overseen by students, with turnover in the committee every year.

In the past. the Louisiana Board of Regents provided a cycle of course enhancement funding for most academic disciplines, also on rotation. Although the application was competitive, Northwestern faculty have received funds to support technology use in the classroom from this program. Unfortunately, this program was eliminated at the beginning of AC 2025-2026.

Table 18

New Technologies Acquired in AC 2025-2026

Site Name/Location	Purpose
Student Union 235; Watson Library 108H	Computer lab workstations
College of Arts and Sciences	
Biological and Physical Sciences, Fournet 227	Phase 2 ARC Project: TGA9/Spectrum Two FT-IR/Physical Science
Biological and Physical Sciences, Bienvenu 304/305/315	Computer lab workstations
Biological and Physical Sciences, Bienvenu 114/304	Instructor workstation
Biological and Physical Sciences, Fournet 123/231	Complete classroom technology installations (plus instructor workstations)
Biological and Physical Sciences, Bienvenu 105	*Complete classroom technology infrastructure installation
Biological and Physical Sciences, Bienvenu 232	*Complete classroom technology installation (plus instructor workstations)
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Alost 240	*Promethean Board
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Alost 240	*Instructor workstation
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Alost 240	Computer lab workstations
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Kyser 341	*Complete classroom technology installation (plus instructor workstations)
English, Languages, and Cultural Studies, Alost 205/206/207	*Complete classroom technology installations (plus instructor workstations)
Criminal Justice, Kyser 333	*Complete classroom technology installation (plus instructor workstations)
Mathematics, Kyser 401T	*Complete classroom technology installation (plus instructor workstations)
Mathematics, Alost 302/303/304/305/306/307/326/327/360/361/362	*Complete classroom technology installations (plus instructor workstations)
Mathematics: Brown-Stroud Field	Trackman stadium system data collection installation
CAPA: New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts; Kyser 225A	Computer lab workstations
Scholars': Kyser 132/139	Computer lab workstations
Scholars': Kyser 132	Instructor workstations
College of Business and Technology	
HMT, FACS 119	Instructor workstation
HMT, FACS 119	Computer lab workstations
College of Education and Human Development	
HHP 139	Computer lab workstations
HHP 113/115/117/119/123	Instructor workstation
TEC 113C	Computer lab workstations
College of Nursing and School of Allied Health	
Natchitoches: Alost 268/269/270	*Complete classroom technology installations (plus instructor workstations)
Natchitoches: Alost 203	*Complete skills lab technology installations (plus instructor workstations)
Shreveport 213/217/219 (nursing skills lab)	*Medical Station/Workstation on Wheels Replacement (WOWs)
Off-campus Instructional Sites	
Leesville, 121/03	Instructor workstations
Leesville 107A/112	Computer lab workstations

*Note: *items not funded by Tech Fees*

Decision:

We will continue to upgrade computer and classroom laboratories located in on- and off-campus instructional sites on an annual basis, typically on a three-year rotation, with funding provided by student technology fees.

Responsibility: Office of Information Technology Systems, Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors/Department Heads.

Metric:

4. Number of events or activities to recognize faculty for their contributions in teaching, research, or service.

Findings:

Northwestern State University recognizes the contributions of its faculty in research, teaching, and service through both major events and announcements of special recognition. This recognition is documented through press releases by the NSU News Bureau.

In AC 2024-2025 small groups of faculty were recognized through public events, such as the presentation of three major research awards at the Fall Faculty Institute—the outstanding Research Award, named to honor Dr. Mildred Hart Bailey; the Lifetime Achievement Award, named for Dr. Jean D'Amato Thomas, and the Louisiana Studies Award, which honors Dr. Marietta LeBreton. Also recognized at this time were the recipients of the Excellence in Teaching Awards for each college and the Outstanding Advisor awards for the University. Faculty and staff reaching milestones in their years of service to the University were recognized at the Faculty Luncheon.

Faculty newly elected to office in professional societies or receiving other professional recognition are typically announced to the University or community through a press release. This category also includes book launches from faculty authors and profiles and publicity for art exhibits or recitals. Faculty awarded grants are announced periodically.

Outstanding teaching is also recognized with stories about unusual classroom activities or faculty providing extracurricular academic experiences for their students.

In AC 2024-2025, NSU filed 32 press releases honoring 91 faculty and staff members. The University also established a Faculty Recognition Council to identify additional systematic ways to recognize faculty contributions.

Analysis:

The strong ratings from the Student Evaluation of Instruction in AC 2024-2025 highlight meaningful progress in faculty-student engagement. Over 75% of students consistently reported that their instructors always encouraged interaction, provided prompt feedback, and displayed professionalism, with statistically significant gains compared to AC 2022-2023. These outcomes are reinforced by the University's commitment to recognizing and celebrating faculty achievements in teaching, research, and service. Through faculty awards, press releases, and recognition events, NSU not only honors individual accomplishments but also fosters a culture of excellence that directly contributes to high-quality student experiences. Taken together, these data suggest that intentional recognition of faculty contributions, combined with expanded innovative practices such as personalized feedback systems and high-impact engagement strategies, can sustain and further elevate student-faculty interactions

Decision:

Northwestern values its faculty and staff members and will continue the tradition of honoring faculty/staff for their excellence in teaching, research, and service to the University or to their profession. Our target is 20 impactful and global events or activities in 2025-2026 and 50 press releases.

Responsibility: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Directors/Department Heads; and NSU News Bureau.

Comprehensive Summary

In AC 2025-2026 academic programs continue to show excellent trends toward consistency in measurement, ability to evaluate results, and creativity in making adjustments and decisions to move forward. Working in tandem with academic advisory committees, program faculty continue to evaluate how best to deliver instruction, be responsive to the preparedness necessary for moving into the profession after graduation and develop new ways to assess students and instruction.

Northwestern State University achieved substantive progress in advancing Academic Excellence during AC 2025-2026, exceeding targets in seven of seven key metrics. Student learning outcomes were assessed across all 106 academic degree and certificate programs, with 87% of outcomes and 80% of measures met—demonstrating a university-wide commitment to continuous improvement. Looking forward, NSU will build on this momentum by adopting more granular and adaptive evaluation methods, integrating emerging technologies into pedagogy, and expanding innovative faculty-student engagement practices. By acknowledging measurable gains and committing to innovation, the University ensures a dynamic and supportive learning environment that elevates student achievement, faculty development, and institutional distinction.

Research Within Its Mission

The *Research Council* enables, supports, enhances, recognizes, and promotes research activities by undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff across all academic units of the University. The Council advises the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Provost on guiding principles and policies for the OSP, as well as on policies and guidelines for administering competitive grant programs, Research Day, research awards, participation in undergraduate research conferences, and other research activities.

Within the University's mission, research plays multiple roles. *Undergraduate Research* is a pedagogical tool to increase understanding of theory through practice and to prepare students for success in graduate and professional programs, business, and other career paths. As stated in the Graduate School's *Guidelines for Preparing Your Final Research Document at Northwestern State University*, *Graduate Research* "provides graduate students an opportunity to design and implement research, explore historical and current trends, create new designs and products, and engage in problem-solving" as a component of their professional training. Both undergraduate and graduate research activities represent best practices in higher education. The research activities of *Faculty and Staff* contribute to the generation of new knowledge in their disciplines and to innovation, best practices, and problem-solving in applications ranging from Northwestern's traditional strengths in education and nursing to newer areas such as computer information system and engineering technology. Collectively, research activities at Northwestern contribute to a more capable workforce, service to the community and industry, innovation in the classroom, and an increase in scholarly knowledge. Thus, it is important to foster a culture of scholarship at all levels (faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students).

Northwestern State University is a member of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR).

AC 2025-2026 Key Findings (in comparison to AC 2024-2025):

Northwestern students presented at

- 3 national conferences: 11th Annual North American International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management, Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers (IISE) Annual Conference, and Sigma Tau Delta National Conference.
- 10 regional conferences: Louisiana Academy of Sciences, Louisiana Association of Computer Using

Educators (LACUE), Louisiana Education Research Association, Louisiana Political Science Association, Louisiana Studies Conference, Mid-South Educational Research Association, Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Conference (English), South Atlantic Modern Language Association, South Central Regional Tuba Euphonium Conference, and Southeast Psychological Association.

- 4 multi-university student conferences: LSU Discovery Day, LSUS Regional Student Scholars, University of Louisiana Lafayette Undergraduate Research Conference, and University of Louisiana System Academic Summit.
- 2 NSU conferences: Research Day, and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing Research Poster Carousel.
- 48 presentations by 97 graduate students at 10 scholarly conferences.
- 35 presentations by 49 undergraduates at 8 conferences, including the ULS Academic Summit.
- 66 Master's students made 17 presentations of Evidence Based Practice Research at the Beta Chi Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International & NSU College of Nursing Research Carousel, a continuing education program for Registered Nurses.
- The University of Louisiana Academic Summit was held at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. Twenty-two Northwestern undergraduate authors shared their work in three research presentations and four multi-author service-learning projects. Five students also created art pieces selected for the visual arts show.
- Research Day was held on April 9, 2026 in a face-to-face format with virtual presentations to accommodate distance learning presenters and students at other off-campus instructional sites. Oral presentations were streamed live via WebEx to allow virtual attendance for audience members who could not attend face-to-face. Student presentations included 8 posters, 26 oral presentations (15 minutes), and an additional 2 brief oral presentations (5 minutes). Three oral presentations were made virtually. Due to competition with the Sigma Theta Tau Conference, total presentations were less than AC 2024-2025.
    - 15 presentations were made by 15 graduate students (down by 4 presentations and 10 presenters).
    - 18 presentations were presented by 60 undergraduate students (down by 42%).
    - 30 faculty members presented their work (up by 3).
    - 14 additional faculty were coauthors or copresenters on one or more student papers (up 56%).

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- Develop a new system using Teams to document faculty and student presentations and publications.
- The Research Council will recognize Undergraduate Research Fellows and Undergraduate Research Mentors in AC 2026-2027 to better capture student presentations and publications and faculty mentoring efforts.
- Secure funding for supplies and equipment necessary to produce research posters for conference and Research Day presentations for students and faculty.

General Education Competencies

Northwestern's broad-based core curriculum leverages six key competencies central to the University's mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents' requirements for general education. The selection of courses encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. The requirements are designed to improve students' writing and speaking skills, provide students with mathematical skills at the level of college algebra and above, strengthen students' understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences, and develop an appreciation and knowledge of the arts and humanities. These courses provide the breadth of a student's educational program, while the degree program requirements provide the depth of education.

The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their degree programs, to achieve appropriate learning outcomes in the general education competencies. The effort in Fall 2018 was to validate the assessment tool/method while cataloging the number of students tested. In some cases, no formal assessment was completed other than as mentioned. In Spring 2019, all core competencies underwent a comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes. The only exception was in Behavioral and Social Sciences, where the data for each measure was not specified/reported. Nonetheless, the data collected indicated whether the student met or did not meet the student learning outcome. AC 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026 were complete (fall/spring) iterations of assessing the University's core competencies.

The Assessment Cycle (AC) 2025-2026 core competency assessments are located on the University Institutional Effectiveness website under Assessment Cycle Reports, Academic Year 2025-2026, General Education Core Competencies.

The AC 2025-2026 Core Competency assessment results(Table 19): *14,131 student assessments were completed, representing a 4.5% increase from the 13,517 assessments in AC 2024-2025*. (Note. Some courses have more than one assessment, and some students may have been assessed in more than one course.) In AC 2025-2026, 11 of 12 Student Learning Outcomes (92%) were met. Twenty-six of the 29 measures (89.7%) were met, while the remaining three were not. These results show a marked improvement between AC 2024-2025 and AC 2025-2026.

Table 19
University Core AC 2025-2026: 14,131 Assessments Completed (4.5% increase)

Competency	#SLO	Measures	Improved	No Change (+)	No Change (-)	Declined	Total/DE
ENGL	2	4	0	4	0	0	1031 / 573
MATH	2	4	4	0	0	0	1198 / 131
Natural SCI	2	4	2	0	2	0	1045 / 205
Humanities	2	8	0	7	1	0	2782 / 593
Soc/Beh SCI	2	4	0	4	0	0	6728 / 459
Fine Arts	2	5	0	5	0	0	1347 / 424
Total	**12**	**29**	**6**	**20**	**3**	**0**	**14,131 / 2,385**

Plan of Action Moving Forward. Each core competency will implement strategies for improvement, ensuring standardization in the application of the measures to a variety of applicable courses. Each competency will deliberately integrate dual-enrollment students into the assessment process.

Quality Enhancement Plan

In 2023, Northwestern State University completed a successful Quality Enhancement Plan: *Learning for Life: Experience Your Future.* The purpose of the *Learning for Life* QEP was to prepare students to "transfer theory into practice" as they transition "from University settings to a career or advanced study in graduate or professional schools." This purpose was developed in alignment with the University's Mission and Vision.

The most important thing Northwestern learned over the course of the QEP experience was that experiential education must remain a fundamental part of degree programs going forward, even after the QEP ends. In the *Learning for Life* QEP, the University asserted, "Changing dynamics in today's global economy

and changing skills and knowledge expected of college graduates require universities to be nimble and ready to adapt curricula to remain relevant." The COVID-19 Pandemic, and the dramatic social and economic changes that followed, make that statement even more germane today than it was in 2017. The practice of designing, developing, and implementing experiential education helps ensure that academic programs and degrees remain relevant and impactful in students' lives. The *Learning for Life* QEP continues to provide valuable guidance for the development of future improvement plans at Northwestern.

In 2023, SACSCOC selected Northwestern's *Learning for Life* QEP Impact Report for inclusion in the Resource Room at the 2023, 2024, and 2025 Annual Meetings.

In 2025, the University confirmed with its SACSCOC Vice President that it would not pursue a QEP as part of the 2027 reaffirmation process while SACSCOC reevaluates its Principles of Accreditation.

Strategic Focus Area 3–Market Responsiveness

Higher education will change significantly over the next decade as competitiveness becomes increasingly driven by learning and the need to deliver a highly productive workforce. Institutions are positioning themselves to redesign to deliver the skills required for the disruptions ahead. These changes have the potential to offer more inclusive economic growth and innovation through technology. In the context of the transformation to knowledge and learning that technologies have created, universities are developing new models and strategies that include the expansion of experiential learning and new learning formats for students. Universities are building more collaborative environments based on the need for a broader perspective and open dialogue between the institution and business and industry partners.

Northwestern State University often acts as a connector by establishing partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and employers to ensure students are aware of and reach the educational options most relevant to their goals. These collaborations create experiences and build programs that provide them with the skills they need as technology and the job market changes.

We engage industry partners to solicit input on current and future needs. Their feedback is invaluable as we enact changes that involve continuous assessment of programs and reflection about the needs of graduates.

Established in year one of our assessment cycle, clear benchmarks (Table 20) provide quantifiable measures to assess our progress and gauge our success. (During AC 2025-2026 the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education (ECE) was renamed the Office of Electronic Learning and Global Engagement (ELGE), so metrics referring to ECE have been updated to reflect this change.) Progress towards meeting these targets in 2025-2026 include:

- 416 student interactions with business and industry partners occurred through guest speakers, field experiences, service-learning, interviews, career fairs, and employer engagement activities.
- 1,321 continuing education and non-credit learning opportunities offered to support workforce upskilling, professional development, lifelong learning, and industry credentialing.
- 71 faculty development workshops offered across 32 topics to strengthen online teaching, instructional technology, and innovative course delivery methods.
- 25 professional development experiences completed by Electronic Learning and Global Engagement (ELGE) staff to remain current with emerging technologies, online learning practices, and workforce trends.
- 318 classrooms and labs supported through Student Technology resources**,** ensuring access to state-of-the-art learning environments across instructional sites.
- 12 leadership-focused student programs provided opportunities for students to develop communication, ethics, teamwork, and leadership skills outside the classroom.
- 27% of responding graduates indicated plans to continue their education through master's, doctoral, or professional degree pathways.

The University's role is vital in developing a productive and dynamic labor force to meet the demands of the global economy. The programs being established will be refined as we continue our dialogue with alumni and our workforce partners in this process to identify key indicators required for market responsiveness.

Table 20

Metrics for Market Responsiveness

AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	AC 2025-2026	Market Responsiveness Metrics	AC 2023-2028 Target
	78.1%		New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certificates approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce	75%
10		71	*Number of professional development opportunities ELGE support staff participated in to advance knowledge*	12
32		32	*Number of distinct professional development courses provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of on-line course delivery.*	32
	486		Number of bona-fide industry partners	250 (total)
85.4%		No data available	*Percent of online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation*	85%
20.2%		27%	*Percent of recent graduates pursuing an advanced degree*	25%
	5		Number of new degrees or certificates approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts	3
1,278		1,321	*Number of distinct non-credit courses offered annually through Electronic Learning and Global Engagement.*	1,350
38		58	*Number of engagements between administration and business industry partners*	48
268		318	*Number of classrooms and labs managed by Student Technology Funds to provide students state-of-the art technology*	300
12		12	*Number of specialized programs designed to develop leadership skills (outside the classroom)*	15
197		416	*Number of interactions offered to engage students with business and industry partners*	250

Note 1: Outcomes for AC 2023-2024 are reflected on the far left with AC 2024-2025 to the right and AC 2025-2026 to the far right. Blue italicized text were assessed in 2025-2026. Black standard text was assessed in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Note 2: AC 2021-2022 was a year of reflection; therefore, no Annual Report was generated.

Four objectives support our efforts to respond to our market needs.

Objective 1: Modify programs through continuous reflection and thoughtful advancement

Strategies:

- As required, increase the number of faculty members with industry-recognized certifications and competencies.
- Analyze current and projected academic program needs.
- Develop University funding opportunities for faculty development, education, certifications, and skill development.

Metrics:

1. New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certificates approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.
2. ***Number of professional development opportunities ELGE support staff participated in to advance knowledge.***

3. ***Number of distinct professional development courses provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of online course delivery.***

Metric:

1. New or redesigned programs, concentrations, or certificates approved by the Curriculum Review Council that meet the needs of the workforce.

Findings:

Of the 73-degree programs currently offered at NSU, 57 (78.1%) were updated in the last five years (AC 2020-2021 to AC 2024-2025) in the form of new degree programs, additional concentrations, and curriculum edits to established degrees or concentrations. Because the BA in Liberal Arts (220 and 820) includes two types of concentrations (five specialized interdisciplinary programs and seven individualized honors curricula) supervised by two different academic units, it is counted as two separate programs despite sharing a single Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code.

Northwestern offers 37 Certificate programs at the Undergraduate, Post-Baccalaureate, Graduate, and Post-Master's level. Two were approved in AC 2024-2025, six more approved since AC 2020-2021, and one established program was updated. Thus, 24.3% of these compact programs have content established or renewed in the last five years.

In AC 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved two new master's degree programs and three new undergraduate certificates developed and submitted by NSU:

- Master in Social Work (MSW)
- Master of Science in Allied Health
- Undergraduate Certificate in Honors Critical and Analytical Thinking
- Undergraduate Certificate in Honors Professional Ethics
- Undergraduate Certificate in Medical Humanities

Analysis:

Departmental curriculum review employs data and feedback from internal and external constituents to guide curriculum development and redesign. The pace at which disciplines change varies, driven by emerging technologies, scholarly research, and societal needs. Fields, such as healthcare and information technology, formally incorporate new concepts and skills into their courses and degree requirements each semester. Other areas adapt to change by offering their students a more fluid collection of new courses from which to choose to meet their requirements. Finally, in fields leading to licensure, regulatory boards may revise their standards, resulting in a need for changes or even new degree programs. In all fields, faculty, alumni, and employers reflect on student and graduate success and formulate no approaches to improve their degree programs. Unless external approval is required, departments can revise or develop new courses, concentrations, and minors internally, with the approval of the Curriculum Review Council; new majors, degrees, and certificate programs require additional approval from the Board of Regents. It is evident by the analysis of data that the University is deeply committed to responding to workforce needs.

NSU offers four degrees at the Associate's level; half of these were modified in the last five years. At the Bachelor's level, 39 of 40 degrees (97.5%) were modified in the last five years; three of these degrees were newly approved in the assessment period. Graduate programs were less likely to be updated, with 16 of 29 (55.2%) revised in the last five years, including two new degrees. Collectively, 57 of 73 degree programs (78.1%) are based on up-to-date concepts, practices, and standards.

The 37 certificate programs provide additional specialized training in Nursing or Education designed to supply a credential that fills workforce needs. In addition to technical skills in specialized fields, the undergraduate certificates include several topics intended to cultivate soft skills applicable to many careers, such as Strategic Communication, Leadership Studies, Medical Humanities, Critical and Analytical Thinking, and Professional Ethics.

Decision:

The institution and academic departments will continue to seek actionable insights that inform strategic decisions. Feedback from internal and external stakeholders will remain integral to maintaining alignment with emerging trends and industry demands. Programs and courses will be sustained and enhanced to ensure relevance, be led by highly qualified faculty, and produce graduates fully prepared to excel in today's economy. Based on AC 2024-2025 outcomes—where the 75% goal was exceeded—targeted curriculum enhancements will be institutionalized to strengthen recruitment and retention efforts further.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

2. ***Number of professional development opportunities for ELGE support staff to advance knowledge to faculty.***

During AC 2025-2026, ELGE staff participated in 25 professional development opportunities, including conference and webinar offerings by the Louisiana Board of Regents, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, American College of Education, University of Louisiana System, Google, Chronical of High Education, Quality Matters and third-party contractors for services such as Respondus, and Moodle.

Analysis:

Based on the analysis of AC 2025-2026, ELGE staff participated in 25 professional development opportunities.

It is critical that ELGE staff remain current with the ever-evolving technological advancements and are proactive in developing meaningful content for faculty and staff. Opportunities for continuing education through internal and outside agencies will be initiated by staff within budget constraints.

Decision:

Due to advances in technology and software updates, ELGE staff will continue participate in continuing education opportunities as available by the Louisiana Board of Regents, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and other reputable organizations. In turn, this will improve the quality of content produced by the ELGE Staff.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

3. ***Number of professional development courses provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of on-line course delivery.***

Findings:

During AC 2025-2026, 71 workshops were offered, encompassing 32 unique topics. ECE served 197 non-duplicated faculty or 337 duplicated attendees for this assessment cycle (Table 21). Based on feedback from participants, new workshops were developed which included: Creating Turnitin Assignments in Moodle, H5P Interactive Video, Creating Groups in Moodle, Stream Interactivity, and Microsoft Clipchamp.

Table 21
ECE/ELGE Workshop Enrollment, AC 2022-2023 to AC 2025-2026

Assessment Cycle	Duplicated enrollment	Non-duplicated enrollment
2022-2023	187	97
2023-2024	172	89
2024-2025	272	152
2025-2026	337	197

Analysis:
In AC 2025-2026, the target was 36 annual professional development courses for faculty and staff. ELGE maintains a goal of 120 non-duplicated attendees per year in professional development sessions. Based on the analysis, 71 distinct professional development courses were provided to faculty for continuous improvement and support of online course delivery.

For a more consistent analysis, the number of professional developments that ELGE support staff provide year-round to faculty, and the number of non-duplicated faculty and staff attendees will be measured. Professional development is usually initiated by ELGE staff but may be provided at the institutional level or arranged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Professional development is also viewed as a scholarly activity, and emphasis is placed on these types of activities (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 67).

Decision:
Based on the analysis of AC 2025-2026 results, the following changes will be implemented:

- Develop new ways of delivering workshops and new topics to offer.
- Improve scheduling strategies, considering both topic selection and timing to increase attendance. This includes courses covering the Moodle upgrade, artificial intelligence, and video development.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Objective 2: Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands

Strategies:

- Review current degree programs for productivity and connection to workforce.
- Monitor the development of public and private agreements.
- Develop or redesign programs to align with workforce demands.
- Monitor online learners' success and preparedness.

Metrics:

1. **Number of bona-fide industry partners.**
2. ***Percent of online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation.***
3. ***Percent of recent graduates pursuing an advanced degree.***

Metric:

1. **Number of bona-fide industry partners**

Findings:
An additional 333 industry partnerships were added in AC 2024-2025 to help strengthen the relationships that ultimately have an impact on students.

Analysis:
Industry partnerships are defined as those entities that serve on advisory councils, hire Northwestern State graduates, present to students as guest lecturers, or provide internships or training programs. As of Spring 2025 the University has 486 industry partnerships across four academic colleges. These business and industry relationships are vital to students' success upon graduation.

Decision:
Collaboration between the University and its partners is a critical driver of the innovation economy. These agreements provide financial assistance to students or academic departments in the form of services or donations. Forging long-term relationships with industry partners provides opportunities for students through internships, cooperatives, and research. Further, these relationships provide firsthand knowledge about the immediate and long-term needs for an industry's workforce and serve as corporate partners for faculty projects. In the broadest sense, these relationships create public good while satisfying the mission and objectives of each partner.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

2. Percent of online students who have a full-time job working in their degree field at graduation.

Findings:
This metric was not measured.

Analysis:
Historically, this metric was evaluated using Lightcast Alumni Pathways data provided by the UL System Office. However, the UL System Office no longer subscribes to Lightcast Alumni Pathways, and the data previously used to validate and supplement employment outcomes is no longer available.

Decision:
Because the Lightcast Alumni Pathways data source is no longer available through the UL System Office, future methods for analyzing and reporting this metric will need to be reevaluated. The University must identify alternative methods to monitor workforce preparedness, employment trends, and post-graduation outcomes to support student success and ensure alignment with workforce needs.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

3. ***Percent of recent graduates who are pursuing an advanced degree.***

Findings:

In AC 2025-2026, all students graduating in August, December, and May, including 1591 students earning a bachelor's degree were sent the First Destination Survey. Of those, 342 (22%) responded; 88 (25%) indicated they will pursue a master's or doctoral degree immediately after graduation. When factoring *in progress* and *unsubmitted* responses, the total number is 354 responses with 95 (27%) indicating they are continuing their education

Analysis:

The AC 2025–2026 findings indicate that 22% of survey respondents (88 of 342) reported plans to pursue a master's or doctoral degree immediately following graduation. When accounting for surveys categorized

as *in progress* and unsubmitted responses, 27% (95 of 354) indicated continued education. Although response rates and survey completion patterns vary across years, prior data provide useful context for trend analysis. The proportion of graduates pursuing advanced education in AC 2025–2026 is comparable to or slightly higher than historical benchmarks and reflects a sustained interest in graduate and professional education among recent graduates. However, interpretation of results should be approached cautiously due to response-rate variability and limitations in survey categorization, particularly the grouping of professional degrees (e.g., JD, MD, DPT) alongside research and academic doctoral pathways.

Decision:

Based on the AC 2025–2026 findings, the institution will continue monitoring graduate school pursuit trends while refining data collection and reporting processes to improve accuracy and consistency across reporting cycles. Efforts will focus on clarifying survey instructions to better distinguish between professional and doctoral degree pathways and increasing survey completion rates to strengthen data reliability. Future assessment cycles will also compare year-over-year trends to better understand shifts in graduate education aspirations and inform student advising, career planning, and graduate pathway promotion efforts.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Objective 3: Deliver class-leading employer service and industry-recognized competencies

Strategies:

- Evaluate and implement employer recommendations on competencies needed in curriculum and program development.
- Use results to create or redesign programs aligned with workforce demands.

Metrics:

1. Number of new degrees or certificates approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.
2. ***Number of distinct non-credit courses offered annually through Electronic Learning and Global Education.***
3. ***Number of engagements between administration and business industry partners.***

Metric:

1. **Number of new degrees or certificates approved by the Board of Regents that meet workforce needs and reflect occupational forecasts.**

Findings:

During AC 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved two new master degree programs for Northwestern State University: Master of Social Work and Master of Science in Allied Health (Table 22). In addition three undergraduate certificates were approved: Medical Humanities, Honors Critical and Analytical Thinking, and Honors Professional Ethics.

Analysis:

The approval process involves a review of market demand data and input from stakeholders by departments to determine changes needed to existing curriculum and future academic needs. Both the Master of Social Work and Master of Science in Allied Health are professional degrees intended to provide credentials for

Table 22

New Programs Submitted on Behalf of Northwestern State University and Approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents in AC 2023-2024 and AC 2024-2025.

CIP Code	Degree	Subject/ Discipline	Approved
513204	UC	Medical Humanities	08/2023
440701	MSW	Social Work	04/2024
380101	UC	Honors Critical & Analytical Thinking	12/2024
380104	UC	Honors Professional Ethics	12/2024
510000	MS	Allied Health	12/2024

employment in advanced healthcare-related fields. The three undergraduate certificates represent credentials for skills desired for employment and applicable across multiple disciplines.

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program is designed to prepare students for advanced social work practice in various settings, focusing on both individual and community well-being. The program equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values required to engage effectively with diverse populations and address complex social issues. The MSW program is available through a hybrid format, including both online and on-campus classes, and is structured to accommodate students from various geographic locations, allowing flexibility for working professionals. NSU's MSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), ensuring it meets national standards for social work education and prepares graduates for licensure.

The Master of Science in Allied Health (MSAH) program is designed for healthcare professionals who wish to advance their careers, deepen their expertise, and pursue leadership or specialized roles in healthcare. It typically targets individuals in allied health professions, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, radiologic technology, respiratory therapy, and clinical laboratory sciences. The MSAH program aims to provide healthcare professionals with advanced knowledge and skills to enhance their clinical, managerial, and research capabilities. Students are trained to take on leadership roles, improve patient outcomes, contribute to evidence-based practices, and influence the overall healthcare delivery system.

The undergraduate certificate in Medical Humanities offers perspectives on medicine and health drawn from art, philosophy, history, religion, literature, and other fields in the humanities and social sciences. It signals employers and professional schools that students have a broad understanding of medicine, including its social, ethical, cultural, and historical dimensions and provides insight into treating clients as whole individuals.

The undergraduate certificate in Honors Critical and Analytical Thinking provides students with high-demand skills that will allow them to be leading decision-makers and problem-solvers in their chosen fields. Its inter- and multidisciplinary curriculum provides instruction in critical and analytical thinking skills and allows students to practice applying those skills in their desired fields through discipline-specific courses. Critical and analytical thinkers can make effective and accurate decisions by understanding the details and complexities of situations, including all reasonable alternatives; they can reason through these complexities to decisions that are well-informed, based on evidence and observation, untainted by cognitive biases, and reflect appreciation of both their short- and long-term effects.

The undergraduate certificate in Honors Professional Ethics enhances students' career prospects and opportunities for advancement by demonstrating their ability to understand, make, and implement decisions about ethical issues that arise in their professions. A person with training in professional ethics can protect their organization against corporate malfeasance, sexual harassment and other forms of

discrimination, inequitable treatment of clients and partners, and waste, as well as ensure its compliance with all other relevant ethical norms and laws. The certificate is a particularly valuable credential for those seeking to serve on institutional ethics committees and compliance boards, and those pursuing leadership positions in business, their community, or government. It is also good preparation for graduate work in law, philosophy, business, theology, medicine, and public administration.

The development and proposal of new degree programs and certificates require an analysis to determine current and future program needs and may be driven by the department, by alumni input, or by employers. At all levels of the continuum, academic departments and employers work closely together to analyze workforce needs and develop curriculum and training to meet those needs.

Decision:
Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to continue to remain at the forefront of leading trends. As a result, the institution remains engaged in activities that lead to the production of relevant programs while producing graduates who enter the workforce prepared to engage in today's economic opportunities.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

2. Number of distinct non-credit course offerings annually through Electronic Learning and Global Engagement.

Findings:
AC 2023-2024 is the first year to assess non-credit course offerings offered through ELGE. During AC 2025-2026, ELGE offered 1321 distinct face-to-face course offerings and online career training opportunities.

Analysis:
In AC 2025-2026, the target was 1300 continuing education offerings. Continuing education is an opportunity for students to pursue learning opportunities not focused on a degree outcome. It also provides professional and community enrichment by delivering innovative, quality education and support services to learners in pursuit of lifelong learning, professional development, or career advancement.

A diverse range of courses were offered during AC 2025-2026 totaling 1321, which included face to face and online course offerings. Third party agencies are contracted through ELGE to provide on-demand training on a wide range of topics including real estate license preparation, human resource management, computer skills, and stress management. ELGE also solicits regional and University professionals to offer courses locally, including ceramics, private detective, notary public exam preparation, painting, water aerobics, and dancing. Through a partnership with the Office of Motor Vehicles, the University also offers a driver's education course. Customized training and refreshers for business and industry partners are administered within the ELGE.

Decision:
Input from internal and external constituents forges an opportunity for the institution to advance opportunities in this area. As a result, we remain engaged in activities that lead to the production of relevant continuing education programs while preparing students to have validated skills in learning.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

3. Number of engagements between administration and business industry partners.

Findings:

During AC 2025-2026, 58 engagements between administration and business industry partners occurred.

Analysis:

In AC 2025-2026, the target number of engagements between administration and business industry partners was 40 annually. To be responsive to our business industry partners, engagement with local and regional economic development entities must occur. Industry and academic leaders work together to drive innovation, solve problems, and create solutions. These strong partnerships help stimulate local economies and develop a more skilled workforce. The University-industry partnership also focuses on upskilling current employees to bridge the skills gaps in the workforce.

The engagement that the University had with local and regional chamber boards and economic development boards and Louisiana Economic Development (58 in total), nurtures innovation and initiative within the team while contributing to the success of a skilled and adaptable workforce. The result is potential for all parties to forge lasting partnerships to their mutual benefit.

Decision:

The institution will continue to strengthen and build upon these relationships by systematically tracking and following up on each engagement.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Objective 4: Prepare graduates to work, learn, and lead

Strategies:

- Increase efficiency in which information is collected, analyzed, and disseminated that is needed to make institutional decisions that affect our graduates' abilities to work, learn, lead, and achieve success in their chosen careers.
- Create a process for collecting data and monitoring workforce and industry needs.
- Collect feedback from alumni, advisory councils, and employers.

Metrics:

1. ***Number of classrooms and labs managed by Student Technology funds to provide students with state-of-the art technology.***
2. ***Number of specialized programs or organizations designed to develop leadership skills outside the classroom.***
3. ***Number of interactions offered to engage students with business and industry partners.***

Metric:

1. Number of classrooms and labs managed by Student Technology Funds to provide students with state-of-the art technology.

Findings:

During AC 2025-2026, 80 classrooms and 44 computer labs funded through the Student Technology Fee were available to provide NSU students with state-of-the-art technology, dedicated exclusively to enhancing and supporting student life and learning.

Analysis:

In AC 2025-2026, the Office of Instructional Technology and Student Support provides comprehensive technology support to the NSU student population, both on and off campus. In addition to delivering user support services, the Office manages and maintains 79 computer labs across all NSULA instructional sites, as well as 33 library research stations. The Office is also responsible for the design, installation, and ongoing maintenance of 206 classrooms across all instructional locations, the majority of which are dedicated to or equipped for distance learning.

A Student Technology Fee is assessed to all students enrolled at the University. Oversight and primary decision-making authority regarding the allocation of these funds is vested in the Student Technology Advisory Team (STAT), a self-sustaining committee composed exclusively of NSU students.

Decision:

Technology continues to evolve rapidly, and the University maintains a strategic plan to sustain and enhance these resources. This plan, supported by the Student Technology Fee, is regularly evaluated to ensure that students are equipped with the tools and skills necessary to succeed in the modern workplace.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

2. Number of specialized programs or organizations designed to develop leadership skills outside the classroom

Finding:

During AC 2025-2026, 12 unique specialized programs were identified that aim to develop leadership skills outside the classroom. These include College Panhellenic Council, Demon Mentor Network, Demon Volunteers in Progress (V.I.P.), Demons in Government, Leadership NSU, National Honor Society of Leadership and Success, NSU Freshman Connectors, Presidential Ambassadors, Presidential Leadership Program and Alumni, Purple Jacket Honor Society, Student Government Association, and Student-Athlete Advisory Council.

Analysis:

In AC 2025-2026, the target number of specialized leadership programs (10) was exceeded. Throughout the various programs, students engaged with professional staff, peer mentors, and like-minded individuals. Through the diverse leadership programs students could positively contribute to campus life at NSU and the community at large.

These organizations discussed leadership principles and topics like ethics, communication, conflict-resolution and working in groups. Students engaged in productive self-reflection, and learned to create inclusive environments, while learning about various leadership styles. Intensive, hands-on learning is a critical component of these leadership programs.

Decision:

The University believes that leadership can be taught, learned, and practiced. As a result, leadership training has been incorporated in a wide variety of settings. In AC 2026-2027, we will search for additional programs offered by the University, especially those associated with academic units, to include in this effort.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Metric:

3. Number of interactions offered to engage students with business and industry partners

Finding:

During AC 2025-2026, all four colleges at the University reported interactions for students to engage with business and industry partners. These 416 opportunities included career fairs, guest speakers and presentations, field trips to visit business and industry partners, class, and service-learning projects.

Analysis:

In AC 2025-2026, interaction with business and industry leaders enhanced student knowledge about their chosen career path. Students learned about the appropriate working environment in the industry and interacted with current employees. It provided students with better clarity about the real-world experience of work and current trends in the market.

Decision:

The University will continue to utilize the reporting template for Deans and Department Heads to gather accurate and consistent data to evaluate this metric. This template will be distributed each semester and will gather students' interactions with business industry partners in the areas of career fairs, guest speakers, field trips, auditions, interviews, and service-learning projects.

Responsibility: Executive Director for Economic Development and University Advancement, Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads

Comprehensive Summary

Northwestern State University continues to strengthen its role as a market-responsive institution by aligning academic programs, workforce partnerships, and experiential learning opportunities with the evolving needs of employers and regional economies. During AC 2025–2026, the University demonstrated continued progress through curriculum modernization, the approval of new workforce-aligned degree and certificate programs, expanded continuing education offerings, and increased engagement with business and industry partners.

The University's commitment to responsiveness is reflected in sustained collaboration with employers, advisory councils, alumni, and community stakeholders to ensure programs remain relevant, agile, and aligned with workforce demand. These partnerships provide valuable insight into emerging trends, support experiential learning opportunities for students, and strengthen pathways to employment, leadership, and continued education.

Assessment findings also highlight Northwestern's continued investment in faculty development, instructional technology, leadership programming, and student engagement with industry professionals to prepare graduates for success in a dynamic economy. Through intentional data-informed decision making and continuous improvement, the institution remains focused on producing graduates who are workforce-ready, adaptable, and equipped to contribute meaningfully to their professions and communities.

Looking ahead, Northwestern State University will continue to refine strategies, strengthen partnerships, and expand opportunities that position the institution as a catalyst for workforce excellence, regional growth, and student success in a rapidly changing world.

Supporting Documentation and References:

Bureau of Labor Statistics.
National Center for Education Statistics.

Strategic Focus Area 4–Community Enrichment

This strategic focus area is benchmarked by world-class performing arts programming, robust alumni engagement, mutually beneficial donor relationships, institutional culture of collaboration and accountability, and thriving town-gown relationships in cities where University instructional sites are located. We surveyed alumni, business and industry representatives, educators, appointed and elected officials, and others to determine their interest in our existing community enrichment programs and the effectiveness of these activities. We also requested their recommendations for expansion of community enrichment efforts. Based on survey results, we have numerous new initiatives under way and existing programs have been enhanced to address various aspects of our plan for continued and increased community enrichment, shared governance, and the engagement of University stakeholders.

Growth in AC 2025-2026 includes:

- The number of off campus performances has increased through the addition of music and voice faculty performances regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Number of users on CAPA social media outlets continues to grow through promotional efforts and the addition of new accounts.
- Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets has increased due to continued promotions and relevancy of content.
- For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, the NSU Foundation secured $8,043,482 in private funding for the institution.
- As of June 30, 2026, restricted endowment assets totaled $87,264,011 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled $1,832,604. Totals are up from approximately $78,211,104 and $1,252,889 reported during AC 2024-2025.
- NSU is engaged in 159 cooperative endeavor agreements with 68 government agencies and institutions.
- As of June 30, 2026, 34,371 users were registered on the “DemoNSUnite” alumni networking and mentoring platform.
- For AC 2025-2026, the grand total of students’ academic unit community/public service hours was 228,378; students collaborated with 194 Campus and Community Partners.

By 2028, we will have experienced tremendous growth and expansion in all areas of community enrichment. World-class performing arts programming will be evidenced through increased participation and widespread program awareness. Robust alumni engagement and mutually beneficial donor relationships will be revealed through increases in communication, participation, and financial support. An institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability, as well as thriving town-gown relationships, will be illustrated through the growth of internal and external partnerships and increased brand identity and awareness. By achieving success in community enrichment, the institution will move ever closer to becoming “the nation’s premier regional university.”

We will continue our dialogue with all stakeholders to best identify and modify the key indicators of program improvement (Table 23).

Table 23

Metrics for Community Enrichment

AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	AC 2025-2026	Community Enrichment Metrics	AC 2023–2028 Targets
31,713	28,225	28,259	*Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions*	35,350
196	215	236	*Number of off-campus performances*	350
36,996	38,784	45,251	*Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets*	50,000
31,426	26,107	29,906	*Frequency of e-communications and number of participants*	33,000
24	24	24	*Number of Alumni and chapter events held nationwide*	40
1,321	809	919	*Number of Alumni Association members*	2,000
10,027	10,123	10,310	*Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets*	11,000
$9,319,869	$7,527,524	$8,043,482	*Amount of annual private support*	$7,000,000
1,936	2,011	1,942	*Number of individual contributors*	2,200
$71,102,958	$78,211,104	$87,264,011	*Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets*	$70,000,000/ $1,000,000
$881,520	$1,252,889	$1,832,604		
Complete	Complete	Complete	*Reestablish platform for alumni networking and mentoring*	Complete
34,123	34,328	34,371	*Number of registered users on "DemoNSUnite"*	35,000
Contracted & designed	In progress	In progress	*Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines*	Complete
103	104	106	*Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off campus instructional sites*	100
250,732	243,018	261,466	*Number of hours students spend providing professional services (internships)*	350,000
58	62	68	*Number of institutional partners with articulation agreements*	100
Complete	Complete	Complete	*Establish content experts in respective fields to serve as editors*	Complete
In progress	In progress	Complete	*Launch an enhanced website designed to meet the needs of 21st century learners*	Complete

Note: Outcomes for AC 2023-2024 are reflected on the far left with AC 2024-2025 to the right and AC 2025-2026 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2025-2026. Black standard text was assessed in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.

Five objectives support community enrichment.

Objective 1: Expand world class performing arts program

Strategies:

- Increase emphasis in Natchitoches and other communities on the excellence of Creative and Performing Arts at the University.
- Increase regional and national recognition of *The Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band*.
- Expand advertising for other groups such as the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, NSU Jazz Orchestra, and the NSU Dance Company.
- Expand performance schedules to include state conferences, community events, arts festivals, and master classes for citizens from Natchitoches and surrounding communities.
- Increase regional and national recognition of our Creative and Performing Arts programs through events such as the President's Command Performance, a high-profile program that attracts alumni and other friends from the local community and far beyond.

- Each year induct distinguished alumni into the Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame, focusing widespread positive attention on the University and its music, dance, theater, and visual arts programs.
- Expand social media activities to increase attention in the community and develop stronger relationships between the University and stakeholders who have an interest in Creative and Performing Arts.

Metrics:

1. *Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions*
2. *Number of off-campus performances*
3. *Number of active users on Creative and Performing Arts social media outlets*

Metric:

1. *Number of patrons attending on-campus recitals, concerts, art exhibits, and theater/dance productions*

Findings:

The number of patrons attending on-campus events are up from 2024-2025. (Table 24)

Analysis:

The number of patrons attending on-campus events has increased due to the completion of renovations to A. A. Fredericks Auditorium in Spring 2025.

Decision:

The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to host annual on-campus events with a goal of reaching capacity for each venue.

Table 24

Attendance at Campus Events

Event	Attendance					% change 2019-2020 to 2025-2026
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	
Classic on the Cane Marching Contest	9,500	9,500	10,000	8,000	6,500	**32%**
GALA	15,000	**10,000**	12,000	12,500	12,500	25%
GALA at the Strand		1,100				
Theatre/Dance Mainstage	6,700	**3,700**	3,743	**1,225**	1,959	**47%**
Journalism Day	130	(cancelled)	200	350	**300**	
Symphony Concerts	3,000	**1,500**	1,500	1,650	**1,600**	6.7%
Art Exhibits	2,500	**1,250**	4,270	4,500	4500	260%
Total	**36,830**	**27,050**	**31,713**	**28,225**	**28,259**	**4.5%**

Metric:

2. Number of off-campus performances

Findings:

Number of off-campus performances are up from 215 in AC 2024-2025 to 236 in AC 2025-2026 (Table 25).

Analysis:

The number of off-campus performances in AC 2025-2026 has increased 9.8% from the total recorded in AC 2024-25. The increase is driven by music and voice faculty performances regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Table 25
Number of off-campus performances

Event	Performances						% change 2019-2020 to 2025-2026
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	
Musical Theatre @ Civic Organizations	5	10	10	0	6	4	60%
Design Center Students with outside contracts	6	6	8	8	8	6	0%
Voice Faculty @ Community Events	1	4	4	33	30	52	1200%
Music Faculty Regional/National Symphony Performances	8	8	4	122	130	57	613%
Modern in Motion Dance Concert	2	2	2	4	5	5	150%
Mardi Gras Balls Performance	2	2	2	2	3	3	50%
The Natchitoches Christmas Parade	1	1	1	1	1	1	0%
CAPA on the Cane		1	(cancelled)	1	1	1	0%
Voice Faculty @ Regional/National Performances				9	19	84	
Music Faculty @International Performances				16	12	23	
Total	**25**	**34**	**31**	**196**	**215**	**236**	**594%**

Decision:

The number of off campus performances still has a healthy window for growth, and the School of Creative and Performing Arts will seek more opportunities in this area, as well as a stronger way to track such performances. The School of Creative and Performing Arts will continue to explore strategies to become more visible throughout the state and region.

Metric:

3. Number of users on CAPA social media outlets

Findings:

Number of users on CAPA social media outlets are up from AC 2024-2025 (Table 26).

Analysis:

The number of users on CAPA social media outlets continues to rise.

Decision:

Promotions of special events and increased financial investments will help social media outlets continue to grow. The 2023-2028 target will be adjusted to 50,000 users.

Responsibility: Director of Creative and Performing Arts, Vice President External Affairs, Director of Marketing and Branding

Table 26
Users on CAPA Social Media Outlets

Organization/Platform	Users					
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
CAPA Facebook	2,866	3,448	3,718	5,700	5,870	5,901
SON Facebook	4,492	5,061	5,801	9,829	9,900	9,981
Theatre/Dance Facebook	1,698	1,773	1,863	8,300	8,470	8,491
NSU Choirs Facebook	176	1,011	1,121	1,900	2,000	2,198
CAPA Twitter	1,194	1,414	1,425	1,461	1,570	1,584
NSU Theatre Alumni Facebook	350	1,750	320	500	530	548
NSU Choir Instagram				1,700	1,174	1,507
NSU Flute Studio				4,410	4,700	4,810
NSU Horn Studio				1,800	2,100	2,305
SON Instagram						3,080
NSU Music Department Facebook						4,846
Total	11,605	15,408	15,433	36,996	38,784	45,251

Objective 2: Increase robust alumni engagement

Strategies:

- Expand communications through online initiatives such as the "Purple Pulse" e-newsletter and "DemoNSUnite" networking platform to provide opportunities and information to alumni and to increase membership and participation in alumni activities.
- Utilize the Natchitoches Alumni Chapter as a model to expand the role and involvement of community chapters across the state and nation in University alumni initiatives; increase the number of chapter events nationwide.
- Increase social media activities such as Twitter Chats, Alumni Spotlights, "Why I Love NSU" campaigns, and other programs.
- Inform soon-to-be graduates of opportunities for participation in alumni events and endeavors through expansion of the Gradfest program, free first-year Alumni Association membership, and the new Fork 'em Farewell program.
- Establish programs to better connect graduates with careers and jobs through social media, websites, new databases, links to Fast Start, partnerships with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, electronic and magazine advertising and the establishment of a career-based Speakers Bureau and Directory.
- Maintain a dues-based Alumni Association program to include expanded benefits and a membership card with tracking capabilities.
- Increase number of active chapters, alumni events, and activities throughout Louisiana and across the nation.

Metrics:

1. *Frequency of e-communications and number of participants*
2. *Number of Alumni and chapter events held nationwide*
3. *Number of Alumni Association members*
4. *Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets*

Metric:

1. Frequency of e-communications and number of participants

Findings:

The Purple Pulse e-newsletter is sent monthly to 28,906 alumni (number of alumni with active email addresses on file). This is up 10.7% from 26,107 reported during AC 2024-2025. The president's weekly update is sent each week to 28,906 alumni.

Analysis:

Increase in number of participants is attributed to data mining strategies capturing valid email addresses. Open and click rates are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The weekly update has increased the frequency of e-communications.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to utilize data mining strategies to capture valid email addresses. A third-party data mining firm will be contracted every three years to assist with updates and membership renewals.

Metric:

2. Number of alumni and chapter events nationwide

Findings:

NSU has 24 active alumni chapters nationwide (Table 27). No new chapters were established during AC 2025-2026.

Table 27

NSU Alumni Chapters

City	State	Name
Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles Chapter
Washington, DC	DC	Washington DC Chapter
Orlando	FL	Orlando Chapter
Pensacola	FL	Emerald Coast Chapter
Atlanta	GA	Atlanta, GA Chapter
Bloomington	IL	Bloomington, IL Chapter
Alexandria	LA	Central LA Chapter
Baton Rouge	LA	Baton Rouge Chapter
Houma	LA	South Louisiana Chapter
Lafayette	LA	Lafayette Chapter
Lake Charles	LA	Southwest LA Chapter
Mandeville	LA	Northshore Chapter

City	State	Name
Monroe	LA	Northeast LA Chapter
Natchitoches	LA	Natchitoches Chapter
New Orleans	LA	New Orleans Chapter
Shreveport	LA	Northwest LA Chapter
Raleigh	NC	Carolina's Chapter
New York	NY	New York Chapter
Seattle	OR	Pacific Northwest Chapter
Austin	TX	Austin Chapter
Dallas	TX	DFW Chapter
Houston	TX	Houston Chapter
San Antonio	TX	San Antonio Chapter
Tyler	TX	East Texas Chapter

Analysis:

Staff resources were dedicated to sustaining the 24 chapters currently in place and increasing database capabilities for future engagement efforts.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue to identify opportunities to add chapters in areas where alumni are concentrated. A focus on sustaining existing chapters will continue with staff members actively traveling to chapter events. Self-sustaining activity will be a focus at chapter events to ensure a strong base of consistent support is established.

Metric:

3. Number of Alumni Association members

Findings:

Since January 1, 2026, 919 alumni have renewed their membership, up 13.6% from 809 reported in 2025.

Analysis:

Membership counts previously included lapsed memberships up to 12 months after the renewal period.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will utilize data mining strategies to append contact information. A third-party consultant will be contracted every three years to secure updates and assist with membership efforts.

Metric:

4. Number of active users on Alumni Association social media outlets

Findings:

The NSU Alumni Association *Facebook* "followers" for the fiscal year ending 2026 were 7,074. The NSU Alumni Association *X* page (formerly *Twitter*) has 1,941 "followers" for the fiscal year ending 2026. The *Instagram* page has 1,295 "followers" for the fiscal year ending 2026. Total active users among the three outlets number 10,310, an increase of 1.8% from 10,123 reported for the fiscal year ending 2025.

Analysis:

Growth of social media outlets is attributed to increased participation of volunteers and additional funds dedicated to advertising; however growth was minimal. Budget reductions led to the elimination of the University Advancement marketing position and required a shift in social media responsibilities to other staff.

Decision:

The NSU Alumni Association will continue the use of social media platforms with a focus on increasing exposure. Paid advertisement and sponsored posts on these platforms will continue to be utilized to increase engagement. We will add a marketing position for University Advancement when financially feasible.

Responsibility: Director of Alumni and Development

Objective 3: Promote mutually beneficial donor relationships

Strategies:

- Increase number of staff members with job duties directly related to the cultivation and stewardship aspects of fundraising.
- Promote an "every contribution counts" concept to engage supporters not currently giving back to the University.
- Rebrand the *Columns Fund* annual giving program to provide an income stream to support non-scholarship needs at the University and endow a portion of revenue and contributions to generate perpetual earnings.
- Increase focus on income-generating initiatives such as the acquisition of property contiguous with the campus that will create new revenues and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area.
- Increase on-campus and off-campus events for prospective and current donors with a focus on recognition and awareness of giving opportunities.
- Showcase the positive impact of private funding through messages to alumni and public.

Metrics:

1. *Amount of annual private support*
2. *Number of individual contributors*
3. *Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets*

Metric:

1. Amount of annual private support

Findings

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, the NSU Foundation secured $8,043,482 in private funding for the institution. This is up 6.9 % from $7,527,524 recorded during AC 2024-2025.

Analysis:

Non-revenue contributions continue to increase. New sources of non-revenue contributions include additional grant funding and public-private partnerships. Existing donors' average gift amounts have also increased.

Decision:

Development officers will continue to seek contributions from both current and new donors. As development officers build relationships through the cultivation process, more opportunities for solicitation will arise, resulting in increased contributions. Reductions in the number of development positions will restrict overall capacity to secure non-revenue contributions. It is recommended that additional development positions be added as soon as financially feasible.

Metric:

2. Number of individual contributors

Findings:

The number of individual contributors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, was 1,942. This is down 3.4% from 2,011 recorded during the 2024-2025 cycle.

Analysis:

The number of individual donors has decreased. The decrease is primarily due to development officers focusing on major gifts. Efficient donor relations staffing continues to play a role in retaining existing donors through timely statement processing and increased benefit promotion, however increased staffing for both major and minor gifts is recommended.

Decision:

Donor relations staff will continue to focus on retention and reengagement strategies and assist with promoting mutually beneficial donor relationships. Additional fundraising staff is recommended to increase the number of individual donors.

Metric:

3. Value of restricted/unrestricted endowment assets

Findings:

As of June 30, 2026, restricted endowment assets totaled $87,264,011 while unrestricted endowment assets totaled $1,862,304. Totals are up from approximately $78,211,104 and $1,252,889 reported during the previous cycle.

Analysis:

Restricted endowment growth has continued by securing large endowed gifts and state matching funds. Unrestricted endowment growth has continued and is now on track to reach the target. While reporting on both principal and market values of the restricted and unrestricted portion of the endowment illustrates accurate values, it is only a snapshot that is subject to market volatility. Reporting on principal values would better illustrate growth and fundraising performance.

Decision:

The NSU Foundation will continue to promote the "Columns Fund" by educating donors on the purpose and importance of giving to the unrestricted account. As increases in unrestricted giving are realized, and expenses are mitigated, an annual percentage will be set aside and added to the NSU Foundation endowment to ensure perpetuity. Annual yield from the endowment will be applied to the corpus to grow the fund until annual unrestricted budgetary needs can be paid through interest earnings. Principal values will continue to be reported in AC 2026-2027.

Responsibility: Director of Alumni and Development

Objective 4: Expand institutional culture of collaboration and mutual accountability

Strategies:

- Expand decision-making at the administrative level through an internal Leadership Team structure that includes more than 20 individuals from across the campus.
- Encourage alumni, supporters, and other stakeholders to act in an advisory capacity for University activities.
- Develop an overarching communications strategy designed to expand validation of the University's brand, core goals, and mission directed at all stakeholders.

Metrics:

1. *Re-establish platform for alumni networking and mentoring*
2. *Number of registered users on "DemoNSUnite"*
3. *Conduct brand perception survey and set baselines*

Metric:

1. Reestablish platform for alumni networking and mentoring.

Findings:

The "DemoNSUnite" platform for alumni networking and mentoring was reestablished in 2023. The site has been re-established and registered users will be actively tracked as an ongoing performance metric.

Analysis:

Collaboration with the NSU Career Center and support from the NSU Alumni Association board of directors increased production bandwidth and accelerated progress.

Decision:

Registered users will be actively tracked as an ongoing performance metric.

Responsibility: Director of Alumni Affairs; University Advancement Database Manager

Metric:

2. Number of registered users on "DemoNSUnite"

Findings:

As of June 30, 2026, 34,371 users were registered on the "DemoNSUnite" alumni networking and mentoring platform.

Analysis:

The site went live in October, 2023. It now has 34,371 registered users, up from 34,328 in 2024-2025.

Decision:

Continue to promote the site and increase the number of registered users; explore options for other platforms to reduce cost.

Responsibility: Director of Alumni Affairs; University Advancement Database Manager

Metric:

3. Conduct Brand Perception Survey and set baselines

Findings:

NSU has partnered with Hanover Research to conduct a comprehensive brand perception analysis. The target populations have been identified, including current faculty and staff, current students, former students (non-completers), alumni within 25 years of graduation, Foundation Board members, and Alumni Board members. Survey items have been selected.

Analysis:

Survey was launched in August 2025, targeting 39,500 participants.

Decision:

Set baselines and targets for brand perception based on the results of the survey. Identify actions based on analysis of the results.

Responsibility: Chief Marketing Officer; Director of Marketing and Branding

Objective 5: Nurture thriving town-gown relationships

Strategies:

- Plan activities such as athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs to increase awareness of the University at sites away from the main campus.
- Identify and establish a database of graduates who earned degrees online or at sites other than the main campus to help provide a network to expand town-gown relationships at all the University's educational sites.
- Promote increased involvement of online and off-campus learners in both community and University events and programs.
- Expand community service projects and internships involving Northwestern students with a focus on youth programs, food bank initiatives, beautification, preservation, economic development, literacy, improved health, and other activities that provide valuable experiences for students, positive recognition for the University, and beneficial assistance to the communities.
- Increase cooperative programs with the community and technical colleges, public schools, business and industry, and other entities that cultivate town-gown relationships for the University, not just at its main campus in Natchitoches but also in Shreveport-Bossier City, Leesville-Fort Polk, Alexandria,

and Marksville, where the University offers classes at the Tunica Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resources Center.

Metrics:

1. *Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off-campus instructional sites.*
2. *Number of hours students spend serving the community through projects and internships.*
3. *Number of institutional partners with articulation agreements.*
4. *Establish content experts in respective fields to serve as editors.*
5. *Launch an enhanced website designed to meet the needs of 21st century learners.*

Metric:

1. Number of activities including athletic promotions, cultural events, and other programs at off-campus instructional sites

Findings:

In AC 2025-2026, off-campus instructional sites held 106 events, up from 104 in AC 2024-2025.

Analysis:

Event and activity growth at our off-campus instructional sites continues to thrive. Many events previously exclusive to the main campus, such as Military Appreciation Day and Transfer Day are now held at our off-campus instructional sites.

Decision:

The University will continue to develop strategic initiatives and activities and host events at off-campus instructional sites. Growth in this area is possible, and increases will continue with proper planning and adequate funding.

Metric:

2. Number of hours students spend serving the community through professional projects and internships.

Findings:

For AC 2025-2026, students' professional community/public service effort involved at least 228,378 hours of work. Community/Public Service Projects provide an avenue for students to gain direct experience working on projects that address community/public service focus areas including Healthcare (Physical & Emotional), Sports & Fitness, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Development, Creative & Performing Arts, Event Planning & Entertainment, Historical & Cultural Preservation, Community Safety & Emergency Preparedness, Protection of Vulnerable Children & Adults, and Combating Poverty, Hunger, & Homelessness.

The bulk of NSU's community and public service contributions involve students performing and polishing their professional skills. Students in this category collaborated with 194 Campus and Community Partners.

In AC 2025-2026, NSU's professional skills service hours have an estimated economic impact of at least $1,655,741; even though this is skilled labor, its value has been calculated at federal minimum wage of $7.25/hour.

Analysis:

In AC 2025-2026 we documented approximately 6% fewer professional hours than AC 2024-2025's total of 243,018. The total number of campus and community partners has remained stable, providing the same community/public service opportunities in 2026-2027.

Decision:

The University will:

- Provide opportunities for students to participate in community/public service activities through avenues within academic units, the student experience, and athletics.
- Provide faculty and staff resources to track, enhance, and promote student community/public service.

Responsibility: Executive Director of Economic Development and Advancement, Director of Service-Learning, Deans and Department Heads.

Metric:

3. Number of institutional partners with articulation agreements.

Findings:

NSU is engaged in 159 cooperative endeavor agreements with 68 government agencies and institutions. The potential for growth in this area is large, as the benefits the University can provide to private partners are vast and readily available.

Analysis:

Growth of articulation and partnership agreements allow for expanded academic flexibility and assist in increasing the number of transfer students.

Decision:

The University will continue to seek partnerships with other institutions and government entities.

Responsibility: Director of Economic Development and Advancement

Metric:

4. Establish content experts in respective fields to serve as editors.

Findings:

Content experts were reengaged in 2024-2025 to help with messaging and communication of value propositions to prospective students and their families. For 2025-2026 content experts were reengaged.

Analysis:

Northwestern State University reengaged Ted Stoik and Paul F. Brown, both accomplished higher education content writers, to handle tasks related to student recruitment. They effectively communicated the University's value propositions and detailed the program descriptions and career opportunities for over 100 degree programs.

Decision:

Continue to utilize the services of content experts in respective fields to serve as editors and copywriters on an as-needed basis.

Responsibility: Chief Marketing Officer

Metric:

5. Launch an enhanced website designed to meet the needs of 21st century learners.

Findings:

Northwestern State University completed the website redevelopment project.

Analysis:

The website redevelopment project was successful and baselines are being established.

Decision:

Set baselines and modify the metric to assess website traffic.

Responsibility: Chief Marketing Officer

Comprehensive Summary

Community Enrichment is essential in increasing the major growth areas of enrollment and funding. Every aspect plays a unique role in achieving success in these areas. Whether it be national recognition for world class performing arts or local prestige through regional outreach and community service, the identity and reputation of the institution are crucial to continued success.

To ensure Community Enrichment initiatives continue to thrive, respective increases in financial investments will be required. As state funding decreases, funding from private sources will be necessary to sustain growth. By building the perpetual endowment fund and investing in programs that provide a return on investment, the institution will be able to achieve financial independence and continue toward the goal of becoming the nation's premiere regional university.

Community and Public Service Within Its Mission

Community/Public Service Mission Statement: Northwestern is committed to serving the citizens in its region through organized community and public service projects that are relevant and meaningful to the volunteers and to those being served. Service projects that target community-identified needs enhance (and are enhanced by) University-community partnership.

Purpose: Community/Public Service projects provide an avenue for students to gain direct experience working on projects that address one or more of these 11 community/public service focus areas:

- Healthcare (Physical & Emotional)
- Sports & Fitness
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Development
- Creative & Performing Arts
- Event Planning & Entertainment
- Historical & Cultural Preservation
- Community Safety & Emergency Preparedness
- Protection of Vulnerable Children & Adults
- Combating Poverty, Hunger, & Homelessness

Data Collection: The University has an efficient plan for tracking and reporting student participation in Community/Public Service. These service hours come from three major divisions of the University:

- Academic units
- The Student Experience
- Athletics

Administrators within each division assist the Director of Service Learning with compiling this data at the end of each Spring semester. Despite this systematic approach, it is likely that some service contributions have been overlooked; thus, please consider the totals below as minimum estimates.

AC 2025-2026 Key Findings (with comparisons to AC 2024-2025)

- For AC 2025-2026, students' total community/public service hours were at least 261,466, approximately 2.5% fewer hours than AC 2024-2025's grand total of 268,502.5.
- The estimated economic impact of NSU's service hours declined from AC 2024-2025's grand total of $1,946,643 to $1,895,628 for AC 2025-2026, both calculated at federal minimum wage of $7.25/hour.
- For AC 2025-2026, students collaborated with approximately 194 Campus and Community Partners, the same as during AC 2024-2025.
- For AC 2025-2026, NSU's Community/Public Service projects addressed all 11 focus areas, unchanged from AC 2024-2025.
- For AC 2025-2026, 12 NSU students participated in four service-learning oral presentations at the 2026 University of Louisiana System Academic Summit on Experiential Learning. By comparison, 14 NSU students participated in four service-learning oral presentations during AC 2024-2025.

Plan of action moving forward.

1. The University will provide opportunities for students to participate in community/public service activities through avenues within academic units, the student experience, and athletics.
2. NSU Director of Service-Learning will serve on UL System's Service-Learning Council and Academic Summit Committee.
3. Director will provide resources to track, enhance, and promote student community/public service.
4. Director will advocate for NSU students to present outstanding community/public service projects at the annual UL System Academic Summit.
5. Director will coordinate a "What to Expect When You're Presenting" virtual workshop for students and faculty mentors to highlight local and regional presentation-making opportunities, expectations, and support services available to students at no cost.

The Director will collaborate with key personnel from academic units, the student experience, and athletics to efficiently compile and report university-wide community/public service.

University Capital Outlook

The University Affairs Office works with the University President and administration to develop capital outlay, deferred maintenance, and small capitalization projects that meet the University's Strategic Plan and Strategic Focus Areas' (SFAs) needs. It is also responsible for maintaining a five-year plan for facilities compliant with the State Legislature's capital outlay program.

In 2024, the State of Louisiana restructured higher education deferred maintenance funding through Act 751, creating a recurring allocation model focused on critical infrastructure needs. Northwestern State University received $2.5 million in FY 2024–2025 and $500,000 in FY 2025–2026 under this program. These funds are prioritized for essential system upgrades and infrastructure stabilization, including HVAC and mechanical replacements, central plant improvements, ADA corrections, building envelope repairs, and life-safety enhancements across the Natchitoches campus and instructional sites. Act 751 provides Northwestern with a funding stream that enables a proactive approach to reduce our deferred maintenance backlog, improve energy efficiency, and protect long-term campus assets.

Completed projects in AC 2025-2026 include Alost Hall Construction and the AA Fredericks rigging system replacement, both funded through the traditional Capital Outlay process and supplemented by ACT 751 funds. Watson Library elevator replacements and the Turpin Stadium lighting upgrade were also completed in 2025. Projects in progress or nearing completion include roof replacements at the Shreveport and

Leesville instructional sites, roof and fume hood replacements at Fournet Hall, and the David & Sherry Morgan Health and Human Performance Center.

Projects beginning the design phase include the Warrington Place renovations at the Shreveport instructional site and the Innovation Center at the Natchitoches campus. Additional projects on the Natchitoches campus, also in the design phase, include replacing the campus-wide Building Automation System and demolishing Prudhomme Hall. These projects address all five of the University's SFAs. The University also continues to address ADA components of the Five-Year Plan at all instructional sites. Sidewalks across campus have been repaired, and additional handicap parking was added during the Keyser parking lot resurfacing project.

University Architecture Update

During AC 2025-2026, Northwestern continues to advance its digital ecosystem through a broad slate of technology initiatives designed to strengthen campus systems and elevate the experience of students, faculty, and staff. This year's efforts span completed work, active projects, and upcoming plans. Each represents a step forward in modernizing and expanding the university's technological capabilities.

Completed

Upgrade of Fax and Service Lines and Dismantling of the Legacy Phone System

As part of the upgrade of the phone system, fax and service lines must be migrated off the old analog lines. Service lines provide connections to fire panels, security systems, and elevator call boxes. ITS took this opportunity to work with departments and reduce the number of fax lines. All sites are updated.

Banner Server Updates and Upgrades

Banner application server upgrade requirements forced Northwestern to update operating system and web server application software to maintain operability of on premises Banner servers. We were only given a few months to plan for an upgrade to these servers. The updated servers provide a more secure and stable foundation for our ERP solution. SIG has provided us with a detailed timeline for the completion of our Banner Technical Currency Project. The project is intended to update all the university's Banner Application Servers to Oracle Linux 8.x. This project also provides an opportunity to restructure our existing server layouts to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Ellucian Ethos

We were able to connect our cloud instance of Ellucian ETHOS to the local Student and Integration API's and populate their published resources to ETHOS! ETHOS is a prerequisite Ellucian cloud application that interfaces between on our on-premises Ellucian Banner platform and newer Ellucian cloud applications. This opens the door to configuring and utilizing several applications that have been unused and collecting dust at NSU.

Varnado Hall Network and Wi-Fi Upgrade

Varnado Hall remains a dynamic component of university housing in Natchitoches. The network upgrades provide dependable connectivity to its residents, ensuring they have access to resources essential for their academic success and overall campus experience.

Alost Hall Technology and Network

With the construction of Northwestern new instructional building, our aim is to ensure that its state-of-the-art technology infrastructure will support learning, administration, and meeting spaces effectively. ITS has worked with departments to ensure the classrooms meet each area's expectations and has completed technology installations in all classrooms, offices, labs, and meeting spaces. We have received positive feedback from instructional staff using the new classrooms.

Rollout of new copier contract and devices

The university sought a contract with a new copier vendor. ITS has worked to inventory current devices, find the appropriate model for each department's needs and work with the vendor to get all copiers installed. ITS is also working to scrub data from old copiers in preparation for disposal.

F5 Network Load Balancer

The existing web server load balancer appliance was out of support and experiencing issues that forced us to upgrade to a new version. This has improved our security posture and network segmentation.

Banner 9 Self Service modules for Students, Faculty, and Financial Aid

Several new Banner 9 Self-Service modules have been successfully installed and are currently undergoing testing and configuration to ensure seamless functionality. We are under a deadline to replace Banner Self-Service 8 with version 9 by the end of the year. Ellucian has set a December 31 date for SS8 end-of-life.

In Progress

Banner Document Management System

Training and installation have commenced to implement the Banner Document Management System. This system will streamline document management processes across the university.

Review and Revise ITS Policies

With feedback from the Strategic Planning Team and the Louisiana legislative auditors, ITS determined that our departmental policies should be reviewed and revised. Our ITS leadership team has been conducting a review of all policies. We are focusing on cybersecurity, data protection, and modern technologies.

Athletics Cabling Infrastructure Upgrades

Conference requirements for a new instant replace camera system facilitated the need for additional cabling to support this program. Necessary cabling has already been installed at Turpin Stadium and other athletic facilities. When construction of the fieldhouse addition is finished, this project will be completed.

Core Main Campus Network Upgrade

The end of hardware support on our current equipment, Internet upgrade and the data center replacement project are some important reasons for upgrading the universities core network. This equipment provides connectivity to our satellite campuses, main campus buildings, and data center services; ensuring network reliability that is critical to university operations.

Shreveport Campus Network Upgrade

The Shreveport campus houses one of our principal degree programs and the university's disaster recovery center. This critical infrastructure upgrade will provide reliable network access to our secondary data center and provide for growth of our nursing and allied health program. All the new equipment is currently installed. The project has exposed the aged and delicate condition of current fiber optical cable infrastructure; we are working to get this upgraded to finalize the installation.

Degree Works upgrade with integration into Experience portal (VIC)

Experience portal offers a tailored interface that powers day-to-day activities in a unified place for students and staff. Degree Works feeds directly into Experience portal to facilitate a connected experience for all campus users. Deployment and testing are well underway and will be completed by the start of the Fall semester.

Datacenter Replacement Main Campus

Cloud computing has been utilized for many critical university functions. Some university applications are still housed on premises. This upgrade will provide capacity for growth, reliability, and up-time our students and faculty depend upon. This is a multi-year project. We are working with vendors to generate final plans and to get competitive quotes for phase 2 and hope to order equipment soon.

Ellucian Experience Portal (VIC)

Experience portal offers a tailored interface that powers day-to-day activities in one unified place for students and staff. Degree Works and other self-service modules feed directly into Experience portal to facilitate a connected experience for all campus users. As work continues to modernize our web services, we have reached the point at which we need a new environment to develop and host the applets that will replace the functionality currently housed in myNSU. At the highest level, Ellucian Experience will serve as the user front-end to both Banner Self-Service applications and locally hosted applets that will be linked from Experience or contained within Experience Cards. These cards can be thought of as small, compartmentalized pieces of information grouped in much the same way we do now on the student pages of myNSU. Examples of these are Academic Program/Degree Audit information, One-Card balances, and financial aid awards. We also link to large custom applets such as vehicle registration and housing applications. ITS staff have gone public with Experience this past spring and have begun to decommission myNSU/Self-Service 8. At this time, we will also plan to release a companion native mobile app for Experience.

Field House Technology and Network

The expansion of the athletics facility will incorporate the necessary technology to support enhanced training, performance analysis, and administrative functions, ensuring that the facility meets the evolving needs of both athletes and staff.

Campus PC Replacement Plan for Staff

ITS has worked with Business Affairs and University administration to develop a plan to replace faculty and staff computers with the goal of making this an annual project. We are working 10 secure funding and find the best deployment method. Our plan is to refresh the university devices on a 5- to 6-year replacement cycle.

Planned

Campus network hardware replacement (100Gb Internet Connection)

The university aims to upgrade its core network equipment to accommodate an update of the LONI (Louisiana Optical Network Initiative) circuit from the current 10 Gbps to a faster 100 Gbps connection. We are following a plan for upgrading network and security appliances toward this goal. The new datacenter project will take full advantage of this 100GB connectivity.

Disaster Recovery Center rebuild in Shreveport

Upgrade current technology to improve and make more reliable our offsite data center

Innovation Park

Participate in discussions regarding technology requirements to best meet the needs of the community. We are working with LSMSA to discuss needs and develop a shared technology infrastructure.

Strategic Focus Area 5–Athletic Prominence

It is often said that an athletic program is the "front porch of a university" based on the exposure that success can provide for an institution. Achieving the identified goals associated with the *Athletic Prominence* component of NSU's Strategic Framework will result in outcomes for student-athletes that emphasize academics, leadership, service learning, competitiveness, and an experience that will ultimately prepare them for life after NSU. The athletic prominence area will also provide all students, community members, and alumni with entertainment and pride at an unmatched value. The steps for assessing our progress are given in Table 28.

Several individual and team highlights during AC 2025-2026 generated positive publicity and an elevated level of alumni/community pride. Furthermore, the academic and citizenship emphasis continued to produce positive results. Specifically, the athletic department's three core values all yielded levels of success:

Academic Achievement

- The department graduated 96 student-athletes during AC 2025-2026.
- The department achieved a single-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) of 985. For the first time in over 10 years, the department qualified for the academic revenue unit.

Table 28

Metrics for Athletic Prominence

AC 2023-2024	AC 2024-2025	AC 2025-2026	Athletic Prominence Metrics	2023-2028 Target
69,868	72,148	70,269	*Yearly event attendance for all sports*	75,000
$3,101,784	$5,022,018	$3,781,565	*Yearly revenue (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships, game guarantees)*	$2,380,264
23,472	35,943	38,210	*Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes*	25,458
11,786	11,830	12,794	*Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers*	11,511
$43,811	$31,969	$31,518.08	*Licensing royalties (LRG)*	$50,000
192 (holders) 812 (tix)	201 (holders) 836 (tix)	193 (holders) 801 (tix)	*Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e., Leesville, Shreveport, Alexandria, Bossier City)*	300
15	28	33	*Camps and clinics for area youth*	20
84	91	76	*Transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and DUF BoD, current/potential donors)*	60
37	42	48	*Student-athlete participation in campus activities.(SGA, SAB, Greek organizations, BCM)*	20
3,764	4,273	4,287	*Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).*	4,000
3.064	3.23	3.225	*Student-athlete GPA*	3.11
161	204	211	*Number of Dean's/President's List honorees per year*	250
197	224	216	*Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees per year.*	200
961/972	963/965	970/985	*Multi and single-year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores.*	940
6	10	7	*Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.*	8
4/14	7/14	6/14	*Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or finish in the upper third of the conference standings.*	10

- *Note: Outcomes for AC 2023-2024 are reflected on the far left with AC 2024-2025 to the right and AC 2025-2026 to the far right. Blue italicized text was assessed in 2025-2026. Black standard text was assessed in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Green reflects progress, orange reflects a decline, and grey demonstrates no progress or not measured.*

- Thirteen of the 14 teams exceeded the 930 NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmark.
- Six programs–baseball, softball, men's basketball, soccer, tennis, and men's cross country–posted perfect Academic Progress Rate single year scores of 1,000, a 100% increase over the previous year.
- Five programs–baseball, softball, tennis, soccer, and women's track & field–kept their multi-year rates at or above 975, with tennis remaining perfect.
- The department continues to do well in the classroom with an overall 3.225 GPA for AC 2025-2026 (fall 3.23 GPA/spring 3.22 GPA).
- NSU improved 1.5% in total student-athletes on the Southland Conference Commissioner's Spring Honor Roll, with 130 earning at least a 3.0 GPA during their semester of competition. This is the fourth straight year our representation in the Southland Conference Commissioner's Spring Honor Roll increased. Across both semesters, 216 NSU student-athletes were named to the Commissioner's Honor Roll.
- NSU continues to excel in graduating their student-athletes with a mark of 85% in the most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rate report. This was the seventh consecutive year NSU scored 80% or better.

Personal Responsibility

- NSU student-athletes registered 4,287 hours of community/campus service and engagement for the 2025-2026 year. This was a slight increase over AC 2024-2025.

Competitive Success

- Six of the 14 sport programs finished in the Top-Four in the Southland Conference or had a Southland Conference winning percentage over .600—soccer, women's basketball, men's indoor track and field, women's indoor track and field, men's outdoor track and field, and women's outdoor track and field.

Soccer

- Defeated No. 19 Texas for the program's first win against a ranked opponent.
- Won 2025 Southland Conference regular-season championship.
- Ian Brophy named SLC Coach of the Year
- Junior forward Emily Senatore named SLC Player of the Year and Midfielder of the Year
- Hosane Soukou named SLC Freshman of the Year
- Jessica Spitzer named SLC Defender of the Year and SLC Student-Athlete of the Year
- Senatore, Soukou, Spitzer, Paige Baumgartner and Riley Stern named first-team All-Southland Conference
- Kennedy Rist and Emma Pethel named second-team All-Southland Conference

Football

- Captured first win since Nov. 5, 2022, with a victory against Alcorn State on Aug. 28.
- Myion Hicks and Tyler Lewis named to the National Football Foundation's Hampshire Honor Society.

Women's Basketball

- Vee Atamah named Southland Conference Player of the Year, first-team All-Southland and first-team All-Louisiana.
- Nya Valentine was named second-team All-SLC
- Defeated Wichita State on Nov. 6 for the program's first win against an American Conference member.
- Team's 14 Southland Conference victories marked the most for the program in 23 seasons.
- Won a Southland Conference Tournament game for the second straight season, the first time the program has done so since 2014-15.

Men's Basketball

- Micah Thomas named second-team All-Southland Conference.

Tennis

- Martina Acebedo Bonocore was named Southland Conference Freshman of the Year and earned second-team All-SLC honors in both singles and doubles. She is the first NSU player to earn SLC Freshman of the Year honors since 2012.
- Athina Grigoriadou, Sofi Garcia, and Honoka Umeda all earned second-team All-SLC honors.
- Honoka Umeda reached No. 111 in the ITA rankings, NSU's first player inside the top 125 since 2018.

Softball

- Utility player Brynn Daniel was named first-team All-Louisiana while pitcher Mattison Buster was named second team.
- Buster was named SLC Newcomer of the Year and first-team All-Southland Conference. Daniel was named first-team All-SLC and JT Smith earned All-Defensive Southland honors.
- NSU won 17 games more than the previous season, equaling the largest turnaround by a Southland team in more than a decade and the second-largest improvement nationally in 2026.

Baseball

- Dylan Marionneaux and Brody Trosclair were named second-team All-Louisiana.
- Trosclair earned Southland Conference Freshman of the Year honors and first-team All-Southland honors. Marionneaux was named first-team All-Southland and to the All-Defensive Team while Thomas Marsala III and Brooks Leonard were named second-team All-SLC.

Men's Track and Field

- Team finished as runner-up in SLC Outdoor Championships.
- 15 competitors qualified for the NCAA East Regionals.
- The 4x400 relay team and Bruce Boon (decathlon) were named second-team All-Louisiana.
- Maxwell Gautreau (pole vault), Dishaun Lamb (110-meter hurdles), Roy Morris (long jump), Tarajh Hudson (discus), and 4x100 relay team were named third-team All-Louisiana in the 110-meter hurdles.
- The 4x400 relay team earned second-team All-American honors.
- The 4x100 relay, 4x400 relay, Morris (long jump), and Hudson (discus) earned first-team All-Southland honors.
- Achee (400) and Lamb (110 hurdles) were second-team All-SLC honorees.
- Bartholomew (400), Elijah Rowe (long jump), and La'Darion Dudley (shot put) were third-team All-Southland finishers.
- Achee broke the 50-year-old school record in the 400 meters in April.
- 4x400 relay set the school record in April.
- Kalen Beavers was named SLC Overall Male Athlete of the Year and Indoor Track Athlete of the Year.
- Beavers (60), Roy Morris (long jump), earned first-team All-SLC Indoor Team honors.
- Second-team All-SLC Indoor honorees were Achee (400), Eddy Vu (60), the 4x400 relay team, Randy Kelly (high jump), Marquis Butler (triple jump), and Donroy Brown (shot put).
- Earning third-team All-SLC Indoor honors were Desmond Duncan (400) and Keontae Gaines (60).
- The team finished as the SLC Indoor runner-up.

Women's Track and Field

- Team captured its third straight outdoor SLC championship.
- 12 competitors qualified for the NCAA East Regionals.

- Mike Heimerman was named Co-Coach of the Year on the All-Louisiana Women's Track and Field Team, the third straight year he has won or shared the award.
- The 4x100 relay team, Samari Finney (long jump), Margaret Mannering (hammer throw), and Anisha Gibbons (javelin) were named second-team All-Louisiana.
- Rushana Dwyer (400 meters), Ryah Dates (shot put), and Teodora Samac (javelin) were named third-team All-Louisiana.
- Dwyer earned honorable mention All-America honors in the 400 meters.
- Heimerman was named Southland Conference Coach of the Year.
- The 4x400 relay, Juvonna Cornette (100 meters), Dwyer (400 meters), Finney (long jump), and Gibbons (javelin) earned first-team All-Southland honors.
- Shakera Kirk (discus) and Mannering (hammer throw) earned second-team All-SLC honors.
- Third-team All-SLC honors went to Dates (shot put), Shantangelo Williams (discus) and Samac (javelin), the 4x100 relay, Farrell (100 meters), and Conteh (400).
- First-team All-SLC honorees were Dwyer (400), Dynia Lewis (60), Finney (long jump), and 4x400 relay team.
- Second-team All-SLC Indoor honors went to Farrell (60).
- Third-team All-SLC Indoor honorees were Dates (shot put) and Thea Ring (pentathlon).
- The team finished third in the SLC Indoors.

The Athletic Department continued to expand the program's external scope and brand by increasing social media reach, generating revenue, and expanding the program's profile through enhanced community service efforts. Furthermore, for the fourth straight year, noticeable facility updates were completed.

Four objectives support our efforts to gain and retain athletic prominence.

Objective 1: Enhance marketing opportunities, game day experience, and resource acquisition

Strategies:

- Increase external assertiveness in terms of NSU Athletics brand awareness and merchandise availability through increased advertising and affinity.
- Improve product variety and availability of merchandise through regional merchants, as well as inform fans of media coverage and outlets with which to engage dynamic content, to enhance school pride.
- Increase the visibility and awareness of student-athletes and coaches representing NSU, as well as adding opportunities for the department to connect with former student-athletes, to help keep those alumni engaged and cultivate supporters.
- Improve the game day experience with continuous attention to concessions and merchandise offerings, revamped tailgating amenities/options, and strategic in-game activities and giveaways to foster an environment that expands fan satisfaction, leading to heightened attendance and loyalty.
- Focus on the Northwest Louisiana market, inviting members of the Shreveport and Fort Polk instructional sites to participate in events both on the main campus and in Shreveport and Central Louisiana, if appropriate. These locations will add new segments to our fan base.

Metrics:

1. *Yearly event attendance for all sports*
2. *Yearly revenue for all sports (tickets, annual gifts, sponsorships, game guarantees)*

3. *Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes*
4. *Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers*
5. *Licensing royalties*
6. *Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)*

Metric:

1. Yearly event attendance for all sports

Findings:

Compared to AC 2024-2025, overall total attendance was down slightly (2.67%) in 2025-2026. The slight decrease in overall attendance is due to men's and women's basketball's continued decline in attendance. However, football and baseball increased total attendance and average attendance in 2025-26 (Table 29).

Table 29

Game Attendance by Sport, 2022-2023 to 2025-2026.

Sport	AC 2022-23			AC 2023-24			AC 2024-25			AC 2025-26		
	Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance		Games	Attendance	
		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average		Total	Average
Football	5	18,843	3,769	3	14,742	4,914	5	35,224	7,045	5	37,985	7,597
Soccer	8	1,149	144	7	882	126	9	1,250	139	9	957	106
Volleyball	10	1,333	133	13	3,588	276	9	1,162	129	9	1,055	117
M-Basketball	13	17,205	1,323	13	13,455	1,035	15	8,633	576	14	7,646	546
W-Basketball	14	9,220	659	11	5,434	494	14	5,725	409	13	3,375	260
Softball	18	4,172	214	16	6,576	411	22	4,729	215	19	3,729	196
Baseball	26	18,370	707	27	25,191	933	25	15,425	617	24	15,522	647
Total		70,292			69,868			72,148			70,269	

Analysis:

Total attendance for AC 2025-2026 decreased slightly from AC 2024-2025. The decrease in total mainly was due to men's and women's basketball, which have significantly declined over the last two seasons despite being competitive within the Southland Conference. Men's and Women's Basketball are revenue producing, and we need to do a better job of marketing these programs and generating interest which will result in increased attendance and revenue. On a positive note, football and baseball saw an increase in attendance for AC 2025-2026. Football seeing an increase despite only having one win over the last two years is a positive sign. The department has focused on providing a better fan experience and the continued enthusiasm that Coach Blaine McCorkle and his staff are building the program the right way and that the wins will come soon.

Metric:

2. *Yearly revenue for all sports*

Findings:

Revenues for AC 2025-2026 were $3,781,565, including $214,107 for ticket sales (season and single game), $2,006,458 for Demons Unlimited Foundation unrestricted gifts, restricted gifts (cash), and sponsorships and game guarantees of $1,561,000.

Analysis:

Ticket revenue in AC 2025-2026 was $214,107, representing a $26,534 decrease (12.39%) from the previous year's total of $240,641. The decrease in ticket sales is due to decline in men's and women's basketball attendance.

Demons Unlimited Foundation cash revenue decreased by 67.95%. The decrease is due to receiving the largest one-time donation in athletics history last year, $1,992,000, for baseball and softball facility upgrades. In addition, the department was without a full-time fundraiser and corporate sponsorship employee for 8 months. Game guarantees increased 10.59% in AC 2025-26. This is the second consecutive year for significant growth in game guarantee revenues. We have asked our coaches in revenue generating sports to increase game guarantees to help with our overall budget. Our focus for AC 2026-27 is to continue to drive revenue. To be competitive, we must increase revenue, and we are going to have to think creatively to do so.

Metric:

3. ***Number of NSU Demons Facebook likes***

Findings:

The number of likes on our Facebook account increased from 35,943 in AC 2024-2025 to 38,210 in AC 2025-2026, a 6.3% growth rate based on content shared on the platform throughout the academic year.

Analysis:

Our marketing department continues to focus on social media connectivity combined with an enhanced level of social media presence by each sport. In addition to Facebook's growth, Tik Tok and Instagram both continue to grow significantly in AC 2025-26. Our department believes our biggest future growth will continue to come from these two social media platforms. Also, the department's partnership with Mobile Cause continues to enhance on-line giving and text-to-give campaigns (text "Demons" to 71777 to donate).

Metric:

4. ***Number of @nsudemons Twitter followers***

Findings:

During 2025-2026, a small 8.15% gain from the previous year was recorded on the main Twitter account (@NSUDemons), averaging more than 22,300 impressions per month, an increase for the third straight year. Followers on the main account increased to 12,794. The athletics department has also seen significant growth on two other social media platforms, Tik Tok and Instagram.

Analysis:

As with Facebook likes, the effectiveness of the athletic department's social media connectivity combined with an enhanced level of social media presence by each sport, has expanded the NSU brand. Although Twitter's growth was modest, Tik Tok and Instagram both grew significantly in AC 2025-26. Our department believes our biggest future growth will continue to come from these two social media platforms.

Metric:

5. Licensing royalties

Findings:

Due to lags in reporting, licensing revenues through the Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) are assessed based on the last three quarters of calendar year 2025 and the first quarter of 2026. Total revenue of $31,518.08 was 26.4% below the long-term average and a 1.4% decrease from AC 2024-25 (Table 30). In Spring, Summer, and Winter, quarterly revenues were below the 9-year average; only Fall 2025 was above average.

Analysis:

Licensing revenues decreased significantly. The continuation of negative factors such as the decrease in student enrollment and football's continued losing season record may have contributed. Another potential

factor could be the lack of apparel and novelty items in retail stores. The University needs to consider ways to increase NSU licensed products in retail stores from Shreveport to Alexandria.

Table 30
Licensing Resource Group Revenue/CLC by Assessment Cycle

AC	April-June (previous)	July-September	October-December	January-March	Total
2016-2017	$12,508.86	$18,009.30	$10,580.81	$6,047.17	$47,146.14
2017-2018	$10,040.00	10,144.24	7,973.51	7,475.91	35,633.66
2018-2019	$ 9,294.65	8,917.83	6,744.10	10,738.22	35,694.80
2019-2020	$13,177.43	10,381.34	15,627.44	5,496.60	44,682.81
2021-2022	$ 9,415.62	12,616.94	7,764.38	11,021.47	40,818.41
2022-2023	$ 9,826.22	10,716.93	8,173.66	10,348.44	39,065.25
2023-2024	$ 7,444.33	15,632.29	9,362.19	11,372.13	43,811.04
2024-2025	$ 6,549.29	8,302.20	5,284.61	11,833.11	31,969.21
2025-2026	$6,402.01	9,188.23	9,198.26	6,729.58	31,518.08
M	**$ 9,406.49**	**11,545.48**	**8,967.66**	**9,006.96**	**38,926.60**
Difference from *M*	**($ 3,004.48)**	**(2,357.25)**	**230.60**	**(2,277.38)**	**(7,408.52)**

Metric:

6. Number of non-Natchitoches season ticket holders (i.e. Leesville, Shreveport, Bossier City)

Findings:

The number of season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parish decreased from 201 in AC 2024-2025 to 193 AC 2025-2026. The 193 season ticket holders collectively purchased 801 season tickets.

Analysis:

The small decrease in season ticket holders outside of Natchitoches Parish is a result of the football program not having a winning season since 2008. In addition, the increasing popularity of ESPN+ may hurt attendance, especially from fans outside of Natchitoches. However, we will continue to market and promote season tickets to North and Central Louisiana.

Decision:

Generating revenue is key for the athletic department as more resources are needed for our programs to cultivate long-term success. Ticket sales, licensing fees, corporate sponsorships, private donations, and crowd-sourced donations are areas of funding directly influenced by marketing efforts. By building strength in the Northwestern State Athletics brand, consistency in our presence in both online and physical spaces, and excitement for our student-athletes, coaches, and team outcomes, we can positively affect the public's commitment, and thereby support, of Northwestern State Athletics.

Specifically, in response to the current evidence, we will take the following actions in 2026–27:

- Having a new leader in our department overseeing external operations, I am very hopeful that the plan and initiatives we put forth below will result in increases in each category next year. I have a leader that will help me hold the external department accountable.
- For each sport program, develop marketing campaigns that identify niche audiences with customized communication strategies for each striation of the key publics.

- Include a strategic mix of traditional and new media platforms in each marketing plan to create a multi-impression experience for target audiences, strengthening the overall impact of each campaign.
- Increase volume of posted content across all NSU Athletics social media platforms in the form of reels, traditional videos, photos, graphics, and links in accordance with the structure set up in each program marketing plan.
- Develop marketing campaigns for specific NSU Athletics initiatives, like football season tickets or Giving Day, which provide goals, objectives, content plans, and identified metrics for evaluation at the conclusion of each campaign.
- Create targeted marketing strategies including use of social media, digital billboards, in-person appearances for coaches/student-athletes/staff, email campaigns, text reminders, and any target audience-specific channels that may be applicable to effectively communicate with each key public (e.g., military, primary schools, alumni, local business owners) in an authentic and powerful manner, which we expect to result in a higher rate of return on our tracked metrics (ticket sales, social media engagement, and licensing fees, for example).
- Include one-click avenues for donations and ticket sales through social media content (stories, grid posts, caption links, bio links) to simplify the purchasing/donating process for the engaged audience, thereby increasing likelihood of action completion.

Responsibility: Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Operations, Director of Marketing and Fan Engagement, Director for Ticketing, Associate Athletic Director for Media Relations, and Assistant Sports Information Director.

Objective 2: Promote campus/community service, appreciation, and engagement

Strategies:

- Establish a community service approach through heightened interaction between coaches/ student-athletes and the NSU campus and the Natchitoches community.
- Collaborate with youth organizations to offer special products and opportunities and look for ways to provide low-income families scholarship-like offers to summer camps on a limited basis.
- Explore and encourage opportunities for campus and community organizations to partner with athletic teams for service projects. Appreciation efforts will include the continued addition of strategic touches, giving student-athletes the chance to thank supporters, boosters, faculty, and students.
- Increased transparency of budgets and spending will increase appreciation and spur engagement.

Metrics:

1. *Camps and clinics for area youth*
2. *Number of transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors) and sustain/grow annually*

Metric:

1. Camps and clinics for area youth

Findings:

Thirty-three total camps (ten by football, six by volleyball and four each by softball and baseball, three by soccer, men's basketball, and women's basketball) were held in AC 2025-2026.

Analysis:

The increase in the number of camps can be attributed to football and volleyball. Both sport programs have continued to increase their visibility across the state and east Texas. June and July are the "camp heavy" months with baseball and softball conducting other camps (i.e., Christmas break) throughout the school year.

Metric:

2. ***Number of transparent budget exposures (i.e., Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate, and Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors).***

Findings:

As with previous years, communication with donors that went beyond soliciting donations but also focused on increasing transparency and awareness of Athletic Department and Demons Unlimited Foundation budget numbers and mechanics–and how those dollars are spent–continues to be a focus. Due to not having a full-time fundraiser and corporate sponsorship employee , engagement decreased during AC 2025-2026. During this assessment cycle the Athletic Director

- met with all head coaches and executive staff members monthly for eight department meetings,
- met with Student-Athlete Advisory Council on six occasions,
- met with all teams at the beginning of fall semester; discussions included the importance of the Demons Unlimited Foundation and N-Club as it relates to providing resources for the department,
- discussed budget mechanics with Demons Unlimited Foundation Board of Directors at three official meetings,
- provided details about the department's financial profile and need for increased revenue via social media and media (i.e., newspaper, radio) interviews

We held several meetings with football alumni (Demon Brothers Booster Club) and supporters (Beacon Society) in the spring to give an in-depth look into the football program including additional resources needed for revenue share and NIL. The goals of the meetings were for alums/supporters to understand the importance of providing the necessary resources for our programs to be successful. NSU is behind several members in the Southland Conference in resources, especially as it relates to revenue share and NIL, and for us to be competitive and have a chance to win championships these resources are essential.

Analysis:

In AC 2025-2026, the athletics department continued to prioritize meetings with donors to cultivate and solicit financial support for the athletics department. Staff turnover hindered our ability to engage new alumni and donors to get involved. However, we are now fully staffed, and we MUST continue to recognize how important alumni and donor support is for our athletic department and the need to continue reaching out, cultivating, and soliciting new donors. Despite the number of overall donor cultivation meetings decreasing during AC 2025-2026 our head coaches continue to make great strides in cultivating donors and soliciting support. Our coaches understand that fundraising is needed to survive based on our state funding.

The Athletic Director's efforts to provide transparency regarding the Athletic Department's direction, especially as it relates to finances, continue to be well received and appreciated by the various interest groups.

Decision:

Our primary focus MUST be to engage, on all levels, donors, community members, youth, on-campus faculty and staff, student-athlete alumni, and more. Some of these outreach efforts will result in revenue generation while others will either serve as "friend raisers" which will provide opportunities for the

athletic program to be seen in a positive light or as avenues through which transparency can attest to the integrity of the athletic department.

Responsibility: Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director for External Operations, Director of Ticketing, Head Coaches

Objective 3: Enhance University and community collaboration and support

Strategies:

- Develop a more cohesive bond between the Athletic Department and the campus.
- Improve Athletics' participation in University initiatives and activities.
- Create a presence on-campus and in the community by student-athletes, coaches, and staff.
- Collaborate with University entities to conduct research for Athletics' projects and partnerships through academic programming to educate about Athletics' traditions.

Metrics:

1. *Student-athlete participation in campus activities.*
2. *Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).*

Metric:

1. Student-athlete participation in campus activities.

Finding:

Student-athletes continue to participate in many campus organizations, activities, and initiatives during AC 2025-2026, including many of the Demon Days activities, Addiction Studies Club, Alpha Epsilon Delta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Alpha Phi Alpha, Alpha Omicron Pi, Baptist Student Ministry, Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society, Blue Key Honor Society, Catholic Student Organization, Demon Dental Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Helping Hands, Kappa Alpha Order, Kappa Alpha Psi, Kappa Psi, Kappa Phi, Kappa Sigma, NSU Freshman Connectors, NSU Psychology Club, NSULA Pride, Pi Kappa Alpha, Presidential Ambassadors, Sigma Sigma Sigma, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Student Government Association, University Programming Council, and Zeta Phi Beta.

Campus and community groups in which coaches and staff participated or engaged in AC 2025-2026 included civic clubs, community events and boards, church functions, and charity/non-profit events and functions.

Analysis:

Community and campus engagement continued to be a focus within the Athletic Department. It is important for our department to be involved in campus activities other than athletics. This improves team morale and integrates athletes into the larger student body. We will continue to encourage our student-athletes to engage in student and community activities. It is difficult due to their limited availability but as a department we recognize how important it is for the University and community.

Metric:

2. Yearly number of community service hours by the NSU Athletic Department (coaches, staff, and student-athletes).

Finding:

NSU student-athletes compiled 4,287 hours of community service during the 2025-2026 year (Table 31).

Analysis:

Community service is one of Athletics' three pillars for our student-athletes. Our goal is to help holistically develop all our student-athletes so that they support whichever community they serve upon their graduation

Table 31

Community Service Hours Contributed by NSU Athletics by Team, 2021-2022 to 2024-2025

	NSU ATHLETICS COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS				
TEAM	**AC 2021-2022**	**AC 2022-2023**	**AC 2023-2024**	**AC 2024-25**	**AC 2025-26**
Soccer	122	122	146	166	171
Men's Basketball	125	742	725	823	799
Women's Basketball	45	562	602	684	701
Football	425	525	430	488	530
Baseball	84	301	385	437	399
Softball	75	203	260	295	252
Tennis	60	68	73	83	77
Men's Indoor & Outdoor Track	64	152	141	160	172
Men's Cross Country	0	26	51	58	65
Women's Indoor & Outdoor Track	45	152	141	160	172
Women's XCountry	0	26	51	58	65
Volleyball	147	298	365	414	434
ALL TEAMS	352	447	394	447	450
Total Hours	**1,544**	**3,624**	**3,764**	**4,273**	**4,287**

from Northwestern State University. Some of the activities included were:

- Campus organizations and events: NSU Food Pantry, NSU Library, Reading to summer camps at the library, NSU Community service day
- Assisting local organizations: Boys & Girls Club, Special Olympics, Louisiana Sports HOF Camp Clinic (Football and Basketball)
- Literacy events: Reading to elementary school kids (Chris Waddell Day-Football; Volleyball going once a week to schools to read for an hour)
- Basketball clinics for low-income kids in the community
- Participating in local events: Clothing Drive for Homeless/Less Fortunate, Book Drive, Reading on the River
- Volunteering to work community Festivals/Events: Christmas Festival, NRMC 5K, Tap Tober
- FAUNA (assisting by giving dogs baths–both ones needing adoption and fundraisers)

Decision:

With the ability to interact with and engage with community constituents more regularly, a renewed focus on this area will continue to be our focus for the upcoming academic year. Athletics continued its partnership with the app Helper Helper to track our student-athletes community service hours. In addition, Associate AD Sports Medicine/Senior Women's Administrator Brittany Pajuluoma and Assistant AD Student-Athlete Development continue to work together and did an excellent job in providing and following up with student-athletes and coaches on community service opportunities.

Responsibility: Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development and staff, Head and Assistant Coaches.

Objective 4: Enhance success and avenues to recognize/promote it

Strategies:

- Continue to publicize the Student-Athlete of the Month as well as Dean's and President's List honors, drawing more attention to the academic success of student-athletes.

- Keep finding new ways of programming, which may include speeches or seminars and social media pieces, will help highlight the real-world success of former and current Student-athletes. Rewards and incentives will remain in place to reward success on the playing surface, in the classroom, and in the community (as allowed by NCAA, University, and UL System regulations), including for some staff and coaches.
- Athletics will increase emphasis on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities in any way possible. Discussion will be initiated regarding a facility campaign to be underwritten through private support.

Metrics:

1. *Student-athlete GPA*
2. *Number of Dean's/President's List*
3. *Number of Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees.*
4. *Single year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) team scores.*
5. *Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with available funding.*
6. *Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or who finish in the upper third of the conference standings.*

Metric:

1. *Student-athlete GPA*

Finding:

The athletic department GPA for Fall 2025 was 3.23 and Spring 2026 was 3.22; overall, the 2025-2026 academic year average GPA was 3.225.

Analysis:

Our student-athletes exceeded the goal of a cumulative department GPA of 3.11 or better for AC 2025-2026 with a cumulative GPA of 3.225. Our cumulative department Fall GPA of 3.23 was the highest semester GPA since Spring 2014. Our student-athletes continue to do well in the classroom. We are extremely proud of the staff and look forward to continuing to move the GPA needle higher.

Metric:

2. *Number of Dean's/President's List.*

Finding:

The number of student-athletes on the President's List and Dean's List continues to increase and was the highest since Spring 2020 (Table 32).

Analysis:

Overall, numbers had a modest increase for the President's List, Dean's List, but had a slight decrease in Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll. Our department has continued to make academics a priority, and the staff and coaches have done an excellent job in providing the resources necessary for our student-athletes to be successful. The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong on an individual basis as well as collectively.

Table 32

Student-Athletes Receiving Academic Honors AC 2016-2017 to AC 2024-2025

Term	President's List	Dean's List	Total	Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll
Fall 2016	49	67	116	101
Spring 2017	38	65	103	107
Fall 2017	47	82	129	111
Spring 2018	46	67	113	101
Fall 2018	41	77	118	93
Spring 2019	44	60	104	104
Fall 2019	44	67	111	95
Spring 2020	60	75	135	122
Fall 2022	37	41	78	84
Spring 2023	33	36	69	103
Fall 2023	31	45	76	83
Spring 2024	39	46	85	114
Fall 2024	42	54	96	98
Spring 2025	49	59	108	126
Fall 2025	39	52	91	86
Spring 2026	53	64	117	130

Metric:

3. Number of Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll honorees

Finding:

The number of student-athletes on the Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll (Table 32) was the highest in the last 10 years in Spring 2026.

Analysis:

Numbers of student-athletes on the Southland Commissioner's Honor Roll decreased by 12% in Fall 2025 but increased by 3% in Spring 2026 compared to Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, respectively. Since Fall 2016, the number of students recognized in the fall semester (M = 93.9, SD = 9.57, n = 8) was significantly lower than the number in spring (M = 113.4, SD = 11.3, n = 8; independent samples t-test, p = .001, df = 14). This may be due to the football season being played in the fall, demanding extra time from a large number of athletes.

Metric:

4. Multi and Single year NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR).

Finding:

NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) numbers are officially reported in the spring following an academic year. (Since many athletes are on both the indoor and outdoor track teams, these rosters are combined to avoid duplicate reporting, leaving a total of 12 teams for this metric.) In the report for 2024-2025, our benchmark was 940. All but one NSU team's APR exceeded the 940 benchmarks on a single year level and all but two on a multi-year level. As a department, NSU's 2024-2025 multi-year APR was 970. This is up for the third straight year. Football has continued to rebound from tragic circumstances involving the death of a student-athlete in AC 2022-23. All teams exceeded the minimum multi-year score of 930 to avoid any penalties for AC 2025-26. Seven NSU teams–baseball, men's basketball, softball, soccer, men's cross country, volleyball, and women's tennis–received a perfect 1,000 APR score (Table 33).

Table 33

Three-Year NCAA Academic Progress Report (APR) by Sport, AC 2022-2023 to AC 2024-2025

Teams	Year	APR	
		Multi-Year	Single-Year
Baseball	2022-23	969	951
	2023-24	962	973
	2024-25	977	1,000
Men's Basketball	2022-23	979	956
	2023-24	947	913
	2024-25	963	1,000
Women's Basketball	2022-23	962	938
	2023-24	945	957
	2024-25	950	927
Football	2022-23	936	898
	2023-24	928	N/A
	2024-25	931	953
Soccer	2022-23	985	989
	2023-24	977	948
	2024-25	985	1,000
Softball	2022-23	980	988
	2023-24	971	963
	2024-25	975	1,000
Tennis	2022-23	1,000	1,000
	2023-24	1,000	1,000
	2024-25	1,000	1,000
Men's Cross Country	2022-23	981	1,000
	2023-24	975	1,000
	2024-25	1,000	1,000
Women's Cross Country	2022-23	967	1,000
	2023-24	953	1,000
	2024-25	935	N/A
Men's Indoor and Outdoor Track	2022-23	930	976
	2023-24	932	935
	2024-25	950	978
Women's Indoor and Outdoor Track	2022-23	960	971
	2023-24	955	990
	2024-25	975	990
Volleyball	2022-23	989	1,000
	2023-24	984	936
	2024-25	989	1,000
Institutional	**2022-23**	**961**	**972**
	2023-24	**963**	**965**
	2024-25	**970**	**985**

NSU received the NCAA Academic Performance Unit for the 2024-2025 academic year, one of 5 Southland Conference institutions to qualify. Division I institutions are eligible to earn the unit on a year-by-year basis and qualify for the academic unit disbursement by meeting one of three criteria (APR, GSR, or Federal Graduation Rate). NSU qualified for one of the units by having a single-year APR of 985. This was the first time in 10 years NSU was able to qualify for the academic unit.

Analysis:

The academic profile of the NSU Athletic Department remains strong across most teams, as evidenced by the NCAA Academic Progress Rate, which exceeded the national benchmark. NSU is one of five institutions in the Southland

Conference who qualified for these funds this past year. The academic unit revenue is critical for NSU, and the staff and coaches will continue to work extremely hard to ensure we accomplish this metric.

Analysis:

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Metric:

5. Number of facility improvement projects planned or executed, commensurate with funding availability

Finding:

The NSU athletic program continues to make strides in upgrading all our athletic facilities. The department started, completed, or in progress on 7 projects in AC 2025-26. The David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center is coming together (albeit very slowly) with an official completion date of August 2026; the facility will officially open on October 24, 2026. This $10 million project will provide new and expanded areas for the strength and conditioning, sports medicine, and equipment divisions of the athletic department. These three areas, located in an athletic fieldhouse constructed in 1977, are significantly undersized to accommodate the growth in number of teams and student-athletes. Once the annex is completed, the current weight room will be converted to the athletic training room, the equipment room will become a high-tech rehab center, and the current athletic training room will be the new equipment room.

Thanks to university support, the department was able to put in a state-of-the-art mondo surface at track as well as lights and a new videoboard. The mondo surface is the same surface that was used in the recently complete Olympics in France. In addition, the department, thanks to a corporate partnership with BOM, was able to install new LED digital video boards at baseball and softball. This is the second consecutive year we have had significant upgrades to those two facilities.

The Athletic Department has identified several facility projects that need to be completed including renovation to the Athletic Fieldhouse, including football locker room and team meeting room ($5M); renovation of the suites at Turpin Stadium ($2M); lights at baseball ($330,000); new video board and lights at soccer ($500,000 total); and a new locker room and coaches' offices for women's soccer ($2M) and women's tennis ($600,000). The next step will be securing sponsors to underwrite the cost of these projects.

Facility projects started, completed, or in progress during AC 2025-2026 include:

- Track Mondo Surface and Lights ($1.8M)
- New LED Digital Video Boards (Softball, Baseball and Track & Field--$750,000)
- Baseball wall pads ($75,000)
- David and Sherry Health Performance Center ($12M)

Major Facility projects on the radar:

- Renovation of Athletic Fieldhouse—includes football locker room and team meeting room ($5M)
- Renovation of Turpin Stadium Suites ($2M)
- Indoor Practice Facility ($10M)
- Tennis Locker Room/Coaches Offices ($600,000)
- Baseball Operations Building ($3.2M)
- Track Locker Room/Coaches Offices ($1 M)
- Soccer Locker Room/Coaches Offices ($2M)

Analysis:

Facility upgrades are essential for the athletic department to continue to be competitive in the Southland Conference. The University and athletic department have continued to push forward to raise the funds necessary to complete these projects. A lot of progress has been made but much remains to be done.

Metric:

6. *Number of teams with a winning percentage of .600 or better in conference or who finish in the upper third of the conference standings.*

Finding:

During AC 2025-26 athletic season six varsity teams met our performance goal. Soccer, men's indoor track, women's indoor track, men's outdoor track, women's outdoor track and tennis all finished in the top 4 (top 1/3) of the Southland Conference. In addition, women's basketball finished 5th in the conference but their winning percentage was over .600. The women's track team claimed their third straight Southland Conference Outdoor Championship while soccer claimed the regular season Southland Conference Championship.

Analysis:

The AC 2025-2026 athletic department was successful athletically. Six of our 14 sports finished in the upper third (Top 4) of the conference standings. In addition, men's basketball was competitive, losing 7 games by 5 points or less and baseball and softball fought to host the Southland Conference tournament as a top 2 seed up until the last two weeks of the season. The expectation for AC 2026-27 is to continue this upward trajectory. Softball and Men's Indoor and Outdoor Track are poised for big years. Football will be better as they continue to build the program. NSU has a strong core of young and energetic coaches that fit the culture of NSU and the results on the court/field of play will show in the next couple of years. As long as the university and department can continue to provide the resources necessary to compete, the future is really bright.

Decision:

The Athletic Department academic support staff (academic coordinators, compliance coordinators, and Faculty Athletic Representative) will continue to meet monthly to assess academic performance with the intention of monitoring success/problems and sustaining the high level of academic performance in place. Regular interaction with coaches, especially for programs which traditionally have student-athletes who may need additional guidance, will also continue. The Demons Unlimited Foundation Board in collaboration with the NSU athletic administration must continue to secure resources to enhance the current student-athlete experience as well as impact the recruiting process and ultimately, impact the program's level of competitiveness.

Responsibility: Athletic Director, Deputy Athletic Director for Special Projects, Senior Woman Administrator, Associate Athletic Director of External Operations, Associate Athletic Director of Internal Operations, Athletic Business Manager, Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, and staff.

Comprehensive summary of findings and changes/decisions because of the above

Despite continued challenges with revenue shortfalls, AC 2025-26 was a resounding success. NSU graduated 96 student-athletes, had an overall GPA of 3.225, won two Southland Conference Championships, and dedicated 4,287 hours of community service to the University and surrounding community. The athletic department must continue to increase revenue to provide the resources necessary to be competitive, especially revenue share and NIL. NSU is a blue-collar institution, and all staff and coaches must continue to have their hands in the dirt and grind to make sure we provide our student-athletes with the best experience possible. NSU is on an upward trajectory and is set up to have an even better 2026-2027 academic year in the classroom, on the field/court, and in the community.

Section III. College Performance and Assessment Cycle AC 2025-2026

The College of Arts and Sciences (COAS)

The College of Arts and Sciences is a diverse community of scholars, educators, artists, and students working collaboratively to connect varied ideas and themes across a wide range of academic disciplines grounded in the liberal arts and natural and applied sciences. The College uses transformational, high-impact, experiential learning practices, research, and service to equip students with the skills needed to reason and analyze as well as express their creativity and thoughts. Our graduates progress through an education that builds on itself throughout life and serves to promote economic and social development while improving 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, mathematics, engineering technology, 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 Heritage Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and the preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

As the largest of the Colleges at the university, it is also one of the most diverse from several perspectives. Comprised of three large Schools (STEM, Creative and Performing Arts, and Social Sciences and Applied Programs), the state's designated Honor's College, and Departments that complete the Humanities/Liberal Arts experience, we span a diversity of degrees and concentrations available, activities presented, outreach completed, and courses offered/taken.

COAS Degree Programs

The COAS enrolls over 2700 undergraduate and graduate students in twenty-six (26) degree programs with sixty-seven (67) concentration areas within those degrees. The Louisiana Scholars' College, housed within the COAS, has joint degree programs with all other Colleges, Departments, and Schools at Northwestern State University. In addition, the vast majority (40/43 or 93%) of the University's general education CORE classes are nested within the COAS, thus serving the entire academic population of the University and reaching all students multiple times during their academic career.

More than 180 full-time faculty and 40 part-time faculty teach courses throughout the College. The Faculty and Degree Programs offered by the COAS spans three (3) Schools, eleven (11) Departments, and the Louisiana Scholars' College, and includes the following:

Associate Degree: Veterinary Technology
Associate of General Studies
Associate of Science: Engineering Technology
Bachelor of Arts: Communication, Criminal Justice, English, History, and Liberal Arts
Bachelor of Fine Arts: Dance, Fine and Graphic Arts, Musical Theatre, and Production and Design
Bachelor of General Studies
Bachelor of Science: Applied Microbiology, Biology, Electronics Engineering Technology, Industrial Engineering Technology, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Theatre, and Unified Public Safety Administration
Bachelor of Music
Bachelor of Music Education ***(offered in conjunction with the School of Education)***
Master of Arts: Art and English
Master of Science: Homeland Security
Master of Music: Music Education and Performance

The COAS awarded the following degrees in each of the indicated assessment cycles (Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters included; Table 34):

Table 34
Degrees Awarded by College of Arts and Sciences, AC 2016-2017 to AC 2025-2026

Assessment Cycle	Number of Degrees Awarded
2016-2017	585
2017-2018	606
2018-2019	612
2019-2020	682
2020-2021	631
2021-2022	750
2022-2023	738
2023-2024	632
2024-2025	682
2025-2026	621

Note: Assessment cycles include Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters as opposed to Academic Years, which include Fall, Spring, and Summer.

Alumni and Student Success

Alumni of the COAS have been extraordinarily successful in professional engagements and state that the hands-on involvement of faculty, linked with the outstanding field-experiences and internships while at NSU, have allowed them to make professional connections, take auditions, transition from intern to full-time employee, and enroll in graduate/professional school. A few recent alumni successes are highlighted below:

Alumni

- The Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) inducted three outstanding alumni into the CAPA Hall of Fame. Christopher Brown (Art) of Newark, Texas, Sherman Desselle (Theatre/Communication) of Houston and Mark Poole (Music) of Little Elm, Texas. These outstanding alumni were honored at a reception held on Saturday, March 7, 2026.
- **Emily Adams Whitney** (2021, BM) has had several notable accomplishments this year:
    - Contracted as a Sarasota Opera Studio Artist for 2026
    - Metropolitan Opera 2025-2026 Season Georgia District Winner. Moved to the next round which is the last step before the final competition.
    - Opera Guild of Atlanta's Tommy Trotter Competition Winner in May 2026.
- **Rikia Ancar** (2015, BS in Psychology) defended her doctoral project and will receive a Doctorate of Marital and Family Therapy from Loma Linda University in June. Rikia has also become an Affiliate Faculty Member in the Online Masters of Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Northwestern University.
- **Austin Anderson** (2024, BFA in Musical Theatre) has had multiple performances:
    - "Judas" in *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Northern Lake Arts–May-August 2025
    - *Ali Hakim* at Oklahoma Northern Lake Arts
    - "Roger" in *Footloose* at Palace Theatre in NH–April/May 2026
    - "Julian March" in *42nd Street* at Clear Space–Feb/March 2026
    - "Nicky" in *Avenue Q* at The Spot–Jan/Feb 2026
    - "Bob Crachit" in *The Christmas Carol* at Palace Theatre–Nov/December 2025
    - "Ray" in *The Bodyguard* at Palace Theatre–Oct/Nov 2025.
- **Zoe Barnett** (2016, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought) gave a presentation to the Classical Association of the Middle West and South on Latin pedagogy; she also earned her third teaching area certification (secondary Latin, English, Math).
- **Zoe Barton** (2023, BS in Biology) graduated from Oklahoma State University with a Master's in Forensic Science.

- **Maddison Benge** (2020, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought and BS in Psychology) graduated with a specialist degree in school psychology and earned National Certification (NCSP). She also earned the Specialist in School Psychology Academic Achievement Award for her cohort at LSUS. Maddison is now working in Frisco ISD in a middle and high school.
- **Katelyn "Liz" Bonnette-Becton** (2026, BFA in Production and Design) was accepted into the MFA program in Costume Technology at the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign. She joins the program with a full tuition waiver and a Graduate Assistantship.
- **Eric Bourg** (2018, BME) is the Assistant Choral Director at Chaparral High School, Killeen, TX. His Varsity Tenor-Bass Choir was chosen to perform at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference, February 4, 2026.
- **Abbie Boutte** (2024, BS in Biology and Physical Science) graduated from LSU with a MS in Chemistry and was hired as Quality Control Supervisor at Oxbow Calcining.
- **Cas Breaux** (2006, BS in Psychology) became the Vice President of Clinical Development and Mentorship at Centria Autism in Michigan.
- **William Broussard** (2000, BA in English/Professional Writing) was named Almabase "50 Champions of Advancement" and published a second book, *Perspectives on Fundraising at HBCUs* .
- **Sarah Celeste Bynum Jose** (BA in Liberal Arts-Humanities and Social Thought) graduated from Boston University with an MA in Gastronomy.
- **Autumn Campbell Doss** (2003, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought and BA in English; 2004, MA in English) was one of 12 teachers nationwide chosen to write the classroom curriculum to accompany Ken Burns' "The American Revolution" documentary, as an extension of her work on the Teacher Advisory Council of the National Constitution Center.
- **Michael Carrier** (2017, BS in Theatre) is a principal cast in *& Juliet* on Broadway
- **Emma Cockrum** (2025, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought, MA in English) was hired as a grant writer by the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement in 2025.
- **Holli' Conway**–(2016, BS in Theatre) is a lead performer in the *TLC Musical* on Broadway
- **Elizabeth Cook** (2025, BFA in Musical Theatre and Dance) choreographed the Musical Theatre Showcase at Interlochen Arts Camp, Interlochen, MI (Summer 2025) and Matilda at Avoyelles Public Charter School, Mansura, LA (Spring 2026); was a musical theatre performer at Tweetsie Railroad Amusement Park in Watauga County, NC (Spring/Summer 2026).
- **Brianna Corley** (2022, BA in English) was hired as an instructor at Tyler Junior College.
- **Fabian Enrique Correa Guette** (2019, BM) started a new position playing with West Michigan Symphony Orchestra, Percussion. He is currently the Performance Coordinator at Chicago College of Performing Arts.
- **Christopher Davison** (2017, BS in Theatre) was accepted into the MFA program in Costume Design at the University of Arkansas. He joins the program with a full Tuition waiver and a Graduate Assistantship.
    - Christopher is currently finishing a Stitching contract in Spain with Royal Caribbean Cruises for the shows *Voices* and *Columbus*.
- **Randi Ditta** (2014, BA in Liberal Arts–Fine and Performing Arts) acquired Counselor/Supervisor credential (LPC-S), led Autism Support Groups for SLU students, acquired specialist training in working with ADHD , and provided trainings on mental health topics for SLU Housing staff and SLU students, faculty, and staff.
- **Megan Duhon-Scannell** (2016, BA in Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry and BS in Biology) received a Fellowship Award from the ICOI (International Congress of Oral Implantologists) and was a Finalist for "Best of the (Tampa) Bay" Dentist category.
- **Derek Dupré** (2024, BS in Biology and Physical Science) published the article "Understanding microstructure-controlled brittle fracture and toughening through a probabilistic framework," in the *International Journal of Mechanical Sciences* (2026).
- **Juliet Ellinger** (2023, MA in English), published "Pedagogical Engagement and Extension: Pragmatic Approaches to Teaching First-Year College Writing to Struggling Writers" in *Insights into Learning Disabilities* with co-author Casey Hord, Professor of Special Education. Ellinger is currently working on her PhD in English, Rhetoric and Composition, at the University of Cincinnati.
- **Catelyn Errington** (2023, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought and MA in English Literature) started PhD in Creative Writing (Poetry) at ULL in Fall 2025 semester with full funding.

- **Caroline Franks** (2025, BS in Biology) was hired as a Forensic Drug Analyst at the Lake Charles Crime Lab.
- **Luis Gallo** (2019, BM Performance) is completing a one-year temporary position at Ithaca College. He will soon be starting a new position as Assistant Professor of Oboe at Appalachian State University–Hayes School of Music.
- **Brandon Granger** (2019, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought) was promoted to Captain in the United States Marine Corps. He also received Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for impact in international investigation.
- **Ford Haeuser** (2010, BA in Liberal Arts–Fine and Performing Arts) directed and choreographed productions of *Something Rotten*, *Holiday Inn*, *Oklahoma*, and *Newsies* and joined the faculty at Steps on Broadway, Broadway Dance Center, and Interim Dance–some of the biggest professional dance schools in the world.
- **Jeff Harman** (2021, BS in Psychology) had his company, CMGT, recently voted The Overall #1 Best Management Company in Baton Rouge, as well as the largest in Louisiana.
- **Hannah Hays** (2016, BS in Theatre) is a national commercial actor for FLOATIES in Atlanta, GA. She is currently the voice inside all Hyundai cars.
- **Sally Hernandez Alfred** (2003, BA in Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry; 2003, BS in Biology; 2004, BS in Nursing; 2007, MS in Nursing, Family Practice) became a member of the Washington State OSPI Curriculum Review Committee–Sexuality Education Curriculum.
- **Kelli Hickerson** (2019, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought) was promoted to HR Generalist at Kito Crosby in Longview, Texas.
- **Aliesa Hudlow** (2007, BME ; 2019, MM) is the president-Elect for the Louisiana Music Educators Association.
- **Allison Humphrey Smith** (2014, BME) was a 2026 Grammy Music Educator Award Finalist.
- **Donald Jones Jr.** (BS in Theatre and Dance) had opened The Barn Studios in New Orleans, LA.
- **Polanco Jones Jr.** (BS in Theatre) made his Broadway debut in *Titanique*.
- **Julia Kuchler** (2024, BFA in Musical Theatre) is a dancer/costume performer in DreamWorks Imagination Celebration at Universal Studios.
- **Stephanie LaGrone** (BA in Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry) is a veterinarian at In-Sync Exotics Wildlife Rescue and Educational Center. She traveled this year to rescue lions, tigers, and a couple of grizzly bears.
- **Thien-Kim Lam** (2000, BA in Liberal Arts–Fine and Performing Arts) published her third novel, *Something Cheeky* (Avon/HarperCollins March 2025).
- **Bethany Lee** (2019, BS in Theatre) is the Production and Facilities Manager of Le Petit Theatre in New Orleans, LA.
- **Tiffany Messick** (2014, MA in English) was hired as an Assistant Professor at Delta State University.
- **Jessica Miller** (2017, BS in Theatre) is the owner of Bachateras Dance Company in Philadelphia, PA.
- **Rachel Moran** (2017, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought and BS in Business Administration) was promoted to Director of Partnerships at Paleovalley and Wild Pastures.
- **Tyra Morrison** (2015, BS in Theatre) debuted the fifth season of her Los Angeles based podcast, *Affirmations for Black Girls*.
- **Nina Murray** (2024, MA in English) was hired as a content writer by the USDA Forest Service.
- **Tre Nelson** (2018, BA in Liberal Arts–Philosophy, Politics, and Law) launched Nelson Network Advisors, a federal consulting firm focused on healthcare and economic policy with a specialization in rural health and regional economic development.
- **Taylor Orgeron** (2013, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought) had the following publications:
    - Orgeron, Taylor. "Video games, Blackness, and the South: the procedural antiracist praxis of Mafia III." *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies*, August 2025. pp. 83-97.
    - Orgeron, Taylor. "Moral Combat: Violence, Videogames, and Metafiction." *Emerging Genres: New Formations of Game*, edited by Joshua Call, Betsy Brey, Gerald A. Voorhees, and Matthew Wysocki, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2026. pp. 271-294.
- **Bailey Perrilloux** (2023, BA in Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry and MA Teaching–Middle School Science) was recognized as a highly effective VAM educator for student testing performance in the 96th percentile for student test scores in the state.
- **Sherri Shalayne Pickering** (1996, BME) is the Choral Director at Liberty-Eylau Independent School District in Texarkana, TX. The Liberty Eylau Varsity Choir was chosen to perform at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference, February 3, 2026.
- **Peter Pindjak** (2009, BA in Political Science and BA in Piano Performance) published an article with *Security and Human Rights Monitor* (SHRM) on the future of the OSCE and European security architecture.

- **Emmanuel Reyes-Cortes** (2008, BS in Chemistry) launched a clinical trial in Japan in oncology and joined Pharma as a Medical Director.
- **Jordan Wayne Ricks** (BM in Sacred Music) is the Middle School Choir Director in Northeast ISD and Music Director at First United Methodist Church in Colleyville, TX. Jordan was a featured composer at the 2026 Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) Conference in February. One of his compositions was also performed by the Liberty-Eylau Varsity Choir at TMEA.
- **Dominic Ross** (2024, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought) is attending LSU Law School. Dominic was selected to participate in a summer program at the law school of the University of Jean Moulin III in Lyon, France.
- **Randall Schulz** (1999, BA in Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry) was promoted to Regional Director of Laboratories in New Mexico for CHRISTUS Health.
- **Jacob B. Smith** is an audio engineer at *Absinthe* at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, NV.
- **Ellie Spain** (2013, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought) began a new role as the Implementation Manager for Change Management at Stanley 1913.
- **Jacob Starks** is a performer in *Hot Jersey Nights* on Broadway.
- **Aron Stephens** (2020, BA in Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry and BS in Biology) was promoted to Director of Planning and Assessment at McNeese State University.
- **Sierra Stone** (2022, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought and BA in Criminal Justice) graduated from law school, passed the Texas State Bar Exam, and started practicing law at Foley and Lardner, LLP.
- **Joseph Tappel** (2021, BS in Business Administration) earned his Commissioned Bank Examiner Designation from the FDIC (his employer) and passed the Certified Fraud Examiner Examination.
- **Niko Tesvich** (2001, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought) was elected to second term as Plaquemines Parish School Board President. His Edward Jones branch office was awarded "Community Impact Business of the Year" by the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce.
- **Jordan Thomas** (2020, MA in English), was accepted into and joined the Doctor of Arts in English Pedagogy program at Murray State University.
- **Linda Treese** (2023, MA in English) was hired as an instructor at Northern Virginia Community College.
- **Asher Van Meter** (2019, BS in Theatre) is a performer in *Back to the Future* on Star of the Seas Cruise lines.
- **Kaci Waguespack** (2023, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought and BS in Psychology) earned a J.D. from The George Washington University Law School in May 2026.
- **Shae Wetzel** (2025, BS in Biology) became Student President of the Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars; was accepted into the Northwestern State graduate program in Clinical Psychology; and co-authored her first scientific article published in *Carbon Trends* (2025).
- **Meilyn Woods** (2022, BA in Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought, with Minors in Creative Writing and English), completed her MFA in Creative Writing and was hired as an instructor at McNeese State University.

Current Students

- Student in the New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts produced a promotional video focused on the local Colombian food truck. It explored the cultural and culinary impact of Colombian cuisine in Natchitoches through the story of a local Colombian food truck and the people behind it. The production, *"Colombian Food Truck,"* was entered into the 2026 Telly Awards national competition which honors excellence in video and television across all screens. This production earned a Bronze Telly in the professional category of "Promotional Video General–Food & Drink." The following students working under the direction of Dr. Dominique Taylor (Assistant Professor of Communication) were involved in the production:
    - Producer: **Dana Paola Barreto Arellano** (BA, Communication)
    - Host/Editor: **Martha "Mayte" Sierra** (BA, Communication)
    - Lead Camera: **Maria Camila Lopez Macias** (BA, Communication)
    - B-roll and Gimbal: **Leonardo Donado** (BA, Communication)
- Students from the Louisiana Scholars' College Ecological Conservation Club and those enrolled in Scholars' College Honors Ecology won Volunteer of the Year Awards from the Briarwood Nature Preserve at its Annual Spring Picnic. The student organization is advised by Dr. Margaret Cochran.

- Two Louisiana Scholars' College students presented their research at the ULL Undergraduate Research Conference November 14-15, 2025, in Lafayette, LA
    - **Keegan Martinez** (BA, Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry) presented on "The Impact of Gender Essentialism in Relation to Women in Ecology"
    - **Silas Weaver** (BA, Liberal Arts–Humanities and Social Thought; BS, Psychology, 2026) presented on "Optimism and Perceived Social Support in Gender Minorities: The Role of Minority Stress in LGBTQ+ Quality of Life."
- Three Louisiana Scholars' College students presented their research at the University of Louisiana System (ULS) Academic Summit April 16-17, 2026, in Hammond, LA:
    - **Annie Fruge** (BS, Social Work). "Puerto Rico is America too: The Bad Bunny Effect."
    - **Keegan Martinez** (BA, Liberal Arts–Scientific Inquiry). "Analysis of Manual Removal of the Invasive Shrub *Nandina domestica* in the Grady Erwin Nature Reserve."
    - **Silas Weaver** (BA, Liberal Arts–Humanities & Social Thought; BS, Psychology, 2026.) "Optimism and Perceived Social Support in Gender Minorities: The Role of Minority Stress in LGBTQ+ Quality of Life.")
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies awarded the first-ever ADVANCE English Scholarships for undergraduate students majoring in English. The recipients were senior English major **Koby Brevelle** and incoming English majors **Madison Swift** and **Katelynn Snell**. Each was awarded a$2,000 scholarship.
- The Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies received a scholarship donation from The Society of Sugar Magnolias, Inc., a vibrant, all-female Mardi Gras krewe nestled in the heart of historic Natchitoches, LA. Senior English major **Ashtyn Cook** received the $200 scholarship.
- Four graduate students from the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies presented at the Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Conference, University of North Georgia, virtual conference, on October 25, 2025, under the mentorship of **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**, Associate Professor of English.
    - **Jim Case** (MA, English). "Ongoing Entanglements: Time, Environment, and the Shaping of the Self."
    - **Shane Erath.** "Quantum Rhetoric: A Pedagogy of Ignorance."
    - **Angela Saefke.** "Mother/Child Relationship: How They Fuck Us Up."
    - **Sabrina Valentine**. "Feed me Laughing, Feed me Screaming: Humor and Disgust in Contemporary Gastro-Horror."
- **Jim Case** (MA, English) presented "Attending Across Time: Nomadic Subjectivity and the More-Than-Human World" at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference in November 2025 under the mentorship of **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland**, Professor of English.
- **Katie Grace Rion** (BA, English) published her story "In the Name of Someone I No Longer Know" in the March 7, 2026, issue of *Bloomin' Onion*.
- **Theresa Williams** (MA, English) presented "Revolutionize Your Classroom with BUILD Learning Stations: A Framework for Student-Centered, High-Engagement Learning" at the 25th annual LACUE: Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators conference in December 2025.
- From March 29 through April 1, 2026, members of Sigma Tau Delta participated in the International Convention in New Orleans, LA, under the mentorship **of Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**, Associate Professor of English.
    - **Kristin Bull** (BA, English) conducted conversations on the topic she curated, "Hope in Literature," one of roughly a dozen question-based subjects accepted into the Research in the Round event.
    - **Kiara Davis** (BA, English) read her poetry "Lost and Found: Dissecting a Lesbian Heart" in a session of creative work accepted for presentation at the convention.
- Two graduate students in the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies presented at NSU's 39th annual NSU Research Day on Thursday, April 9. 2026.
    - **Jim Case** (MA, English). "The Illusion of Rescue: Ecological Crisis and Narrative Evasion."
    - **Anthony Franklin** (MA, English). "Literally Folklore: Enhancing Perspectives on Hurston's 'Mother Catherine.'"
- The annual NSU-Argus Award for Excellence in Creative Writing was judged by Angela Giaimo, a well-published queer Latine writer and artist from Colombia. The winners were English majors **Anja Moore** and **Katie Grace Rion** and psychology major Gabrielle Williams. Winners read their work at the release party for the 50th edition of *Argus* on April 22, 2026.
- Five (5) English majors presented their work at the Senior Symposium and Honors Convocation on May 2, 2026:
    - **Koby Brevelle** showed and discussed his short film *Sanctum*, a home-invasion horror piece.

- **Kristin Bull** presented a section from her study "The Politics of Empathy: Why Controlling Historical Narrative Begins with Silencing the Storyteller."
- **Ashtyn Cook** presented a section from her study "Percy Jackson and Its Adaptations."
- **Megan McCarstle** read a section from her creative capstone project *The Theory of Soul*, a fantasy novel.
- **Kiwi Zachry** presented a scene from her screenplay for the pilot of her proposed series *Frankie & Jett*.

- Four (4) Industrial Engineering Technology Students, **Carson Comeaux**, **Christopher Ezernack**, **Ethan Goldberg**, and **Abdullah Yusuf**, (all BS in Industrial Engineering Technology) successfully completed the Fuji Automatic Numerical Control (FANUC) Certified Education Training (CERT) Level 1 Training.
- Four (4) ET students attended and presented 3 research and project papers at the 11th North American International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management (IEOM), in Milwaukee, WI, June 8-11, 2026. All three papers are accepted for publications in the proceedings.
  - The project "*Interactive Outdoor Learning Center: Smart Irrigation for Hands-On STEM Learning*" won First Place in the Senior Capstone Design Project Competition. The project was presented by recent graduates **Brad Powell** (B.S. in Industrial Engineering Technology), **Brett Brady** (B.S. in Electronics Engineering Technology), and **Sterling Player** (B.S. in Electronics Engineering Technology), and co-authored by **Spencer Yellott** (B.S. in Industrial Engineering Technology). The project was supervised by Mr. Craig Caskey, Dr. Xinjia Chen, and Dr. Shahriar Hossain.
  - **Maria A. Fariña** (BS, Industrial Engineering Technology) won First Place in the Undergraduate Student Paper Competition, sponsored by Siemens, for her paper "*Facility Layout Optimization for an Original Equipment Manufacturer: An Industry-Engaged Capstone Project*," co-authored by Dr. Shahriar Hossain. She also earned First Place in the Undergraduate Research Competition, sponsored by Daikin Applied, for her research project on "*Assessment of Indoor Environmental Quality in Elementary School Classrooms in North Louisiana*" co-authored by Dr. Shahriar Hossain and Dr. Michelle Morris.
- Three (3) BFA in Art Graduates (Spring 2026) have been accepted into graduate programs:
  - **Logan Boline**–MFA in Art program at the University of Colorado.
  - **Juan Sebastian Castillo**–MFA in Design program at the University of Arkansas–Fayetteville.
  - **Anna Claire Kent**–MA in Counseling Psychology program at LSUA to pursue a certificate in Art Therapy.
- Two (2) students in the Department of Biology and Microbiology were selected to participate in the Bayou North AHEC Rural Scholar Program, a program that provides support to undergraduate students from rural areas in applying to LSU Health-Shreveport-School of Medicine
  - **Geert Kor** (BS, Biology)
  - **Christopher Longoria** (BS, Biology and Applied Microbiology)
- Fourteen (14) recent graduates from the School of STEM have been accepted to the graduate/professional school of their choice:
  - Medical School
    - **John Acosta** (BS, Applied Microbiology)–LSU Health New Orleans
    - **Caleb Helms** (BS, Biology and Applied Microbiology)–LSU Health Shreveport
    - **Derek Walle** (BS, Biology)–LSU Health New Orleans
  - Veterinary Medicine School–LSU Veterinary Medicine School
    - **Coralie Deloach** (BS, Biology)
    - **Ella Jensen** (BS, Biology)
    - **Bryce Juneau** (BS, Biology)
    - **Ainsley Wilkins** (BS, Biology)
  - Dental School
    - **Emma Alleman** (BS, Biology)–LSU Health New Orleans
  - Physical Therapy School
    - **Madison Calamari** (BS, Biology)–Brenau University, Gainesville, Georgia
  - Pharmacy School
    - **Tanner Terrell** (BS, Physical Science)–University of Texas–Tyler
  - Graduate School
    - **Hayden Baldwin** (BS, Applied Microbiology)–PhD in Microbiology and Immunology LSU Health Shreveport

        - **Graham Christ** (BS, Biology)–MS in Data Science, Northeastern University, Boston, MA
        - **Alexis Ortega** (BS, Biology)–PhD in Microbiology and Immunology LSU Health Shreveport
        - **Cameron Possoit** (BS, Applied Microbiology)–PhD in Microbiology and Immunology LSU Health Shreveport
- Five (5) recent graduates from the Department of Music will be continuing their education in the graduate programs of their choice:
    - **Remi Blanchard** (BME, Instrumental), a student of Dr. Malena McLaren, will remain at Northwestern State to pursue her Master of Music Education.
    - **Lennon Cooke** (BM, Music Performance–Flute), a student of Dr. Stephen Clark, will attend the University of Southern Illinois Edwardsville to pursue a Masters in Music degree.
    - **Hayden Hirons** (MM, Music Performance–Saxophone), a student of Dr. Paul Forsyth, will pursue an Artist Diploma at the University of Memphis.
    - **Walker Libbe** (MM, Performance–Percussion), a student of Dr. Oliver Molina, will attend Louisiana State University to pursue a DMA.
    - **Tucker Uebersax** (MM, Music Performance–Flute), a student of Dr. Stephen Clark, will attend the University of Southern Mississippi to pursue a DMA.
- Six (6) Master of Music graduate students–**Taylor Carrol**, **Larz Lazo**, **Melissa Patina, Jack Stanley**, **Kathryn Wilkinson**, and **Tucker Ubersax** were invited to present their graduate research at the 2026 Louisiana Music Educators Association Conference in January 2026.
- Five (5) students from the Department of Music–**Erick Cabrera, Irene Gomez**, **Jose Luzuriaga**, **Steven Mendoza**, and **Melissa Patino** were invited to present at the North Texas International Piano Symposium in November 2025. Their successful presentation included research on piano music from Ecuador and Canada.
- Twenty-six (26) students participated in research projects within the Department of Physical Science
    - **Lexie Arceneaux**–(Dr. Chad Thibodeaux)–*Exploring isomer-dependent thermal behavior in lidocaine-phthalic acid systems.*
    - **Raylon Bailey–**(Anna Dugas)–*Heart monitor glove phase I: Design and construction.*
    - **Hillary Bennett and Alex Laurent**–(Dr. Christopher Lyles)–*Assessing Manganese mobility in a municipal reservoir lake using carbon-driving redox gradients* and *the natural attenuation of 2,4-Dicholorphenoxyacetic Acid (2.4-D) in freshwater enrichments.*
    - **Benjamin Castro**–(Dr. Daniel Rivera -Vazquez)–*Mn-EDTA complexes*
    - **Graham Christ** and **Cedric Scott**–(Dr. Damien Tristant)–*Feasibility of using fullerene (C_{60}) doped with GABA molecules as a potential drug transport mechanism across organic membranes (including the blood-brain barrier).*
    - **Zaiba Daud**–(Anna Dugas)–*CFD analysis of sounding balloon payload.*
    - **Isabella DiMaggio**–(Dr. Yohaselly Santiago)–*Microwave-assisted synthesis of copper nanoparticles for PFAS degradation.*
    - **Milayah Ealy–**(Dr. Duminda Samarakoon)–*Symmetry-driven excitonic behavior and moire effects in two-dimensional materials.*
    - **Mateo Este-McDonald** and **Anna Stook**–(Dr. Damien Tristant)–*Stability of g-C_3N_4 on TiO_2; Charge transfer during sodium-ion intercalation in graphite-like structures.*
    - **Landen Jett**–(Dr. Jennifer Hill)–Synthesis and NMR evaluation of a novel ACE inhibitor.
    - **Abram Johnston** and **Matthew Samaha**–(Dr. Daniel Rivera-Vazquez)–*Carbon dots synthesis and characterization.*
    - **Reese Kennedy** and **Anthony Ugokwe–**(Dr. Chad Thibodeaux)–Evaluation of trace metal transfer from coffee grinds to brewed coffee using ICP-OES.
    - **Shelby Minton**–(Dr. Chad Thibodeaux)–Quantifying ethanol in weathered gasoline using a handheld Raman spectrometer.
    - **Jaime Robertson** and **Kallie Wall**–(Dr. Daniel Rivera-Vazquez)–*Silver nanoparticle synthesis and characterization.*
- Fourteen (14) students who conducted research within the Department of Physical Science presented their results via poster presentations:
    - **Raylon Bailey** (BS, Biology)— *Heart Monitor Glove Phase 1: Design & Construction.* NSU Research Day poster, Fall 2025–Spring 2026.

- **Hillary H. Bennett** (BS, Addiction Studies and Psychology) and **Alex Laurent** (BS, Biology)—*"Assessing Manganese Mobility in a Municipal Reservoir Lake Using Carbon-Driven Redox Gradients"* and *"The Natural Attenuation of 2,4-D in Freshwater Enrichments"*—100th Annual Louisiana Academy of Sciences, March 7, 2026.
- **Isabella DiMaggio** (BS, Biology)—*"Microwave-Assisted Synthesis of Copper Nanoparticles for PFAS Degradation."* LSU Discovery Day, April 17, 2026.
- **Milayah Ealey** (BS, Applied Microbiology and Physical Science)—*"Symmetry-Driven Excitonic Behavior and Moiré Effects in Two-Dimensional Materials."* ULS Academic Summit, April 16, 2026.
- **Landen Jett** (BS, Biology)—*"Synthesis and NMR Evaluation of a Novel ACE Inhibitor."* Louisiana Academy of Sciences Centennial Meeting, March 6, 2026, Centenary College.
- **Reese Kennedy** (BS, Physical Science)—*"The Effect of Sulfuric Acid Exposure on the Thermal Properties of Microplastics."* LSU Discovery Day 2026.
- **Shelby Milton** (BS, Biology) and **Lexie Arceneaux** (BS, Biology)—*"Quantifying Ethanol in Weathered Gasoline using a Handheld Raman Spectrometer."* LSU Discovery Day 2026.
- **Cedric Scott** (BS, Physical Science)—*"Fullerene–γ-Aminobutyric Acid: An Alternative Drug Delivery Method."* 100th Annual Louisiana Academy of Sciences (Shreveport), NSU Research Day, and 2026 ULS Academic Summit, Southeastern Louisiana University.
- **Matthew Samaha** (BS, Biology) and **Abram Johnston** (BS. Biology)—*Tunable Carbon Dots from Sugars via Green Acid-Base Synthesis: Influence of Heating Method.* UL Academic Summit 2026 (Extramural).
- **Kallie Wall** (BS, Biology) and **J Robertson**–*Ultrafast Photochemical Formation of Silver Nanoparticles Using Eggshell-Derived Calcium Carbonate.* 11th Annual LSUS Regional Scholars Forum (Extramural).

- Twenty-three (23) students from the Department of Theatre and Dance are employed in their field of study, Summer 2026:
  - **Kema Amine** (BFA, Production and Design)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH (Dresser)
  - **Jaeda Barrett** (BFA, Dance)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH (Dancer in Happiness is a Celebration and Boardwalk Nights)
  - **Caleb Barton** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Playhouse on Park, West Hartford, CT (Playing Eddie, Mr. Black understudy in *The Wild Party*)
  - **ShayAnna Arlene Beatty** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Missoula's Children Theatre, Missoula, MT, (Performer in *The Little Mermaid*)
  - **J. Cole Becton** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–TEXAS! The Outdoor Musical (Chorus)
  - **C. Hope Chauffe** (BFA, Production and Design)–Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX (Carpenter)
  - **Abbigail Delanoix** (BS, Theatre)–Missoula's Children Theatre, Missoula, MT (Director/Actor)
  - **Kaydon Drake** (BFA, Production and Design)–Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX (Master Carpenter)
  - **Averie Duran** (BFA, Production and Design)–Missoula's Children Theatre, Missoula, MT (Director/Actor)
  - **Dylan Freeman** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Broadway Rose Theatre Company, Tigard, OR (playing Albert in *Newsies*)
  - **Ashley Harkey** (BFS, Production and Design)–Weathervane Theatre, Whitfield, NH (Sound Designer/A1)
  - **William Kielwasser** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH (Live Performer)
  - **Lola Meyn** (BFA, Production and Design)
    - Rivertown Theatre, Kenner, LA (Assistant Costume Design for *Cinderella Jr. in* June 2026)
    - Le Petit Theatre, New Orleans, LA (Stage management and costuming in July 2026)
  - **Tristan Olivier** (BS, Theatre)–Tulane Summer Lyric, New Orleans, LA (Playing Etienne and ensemble in *La Cage Aux Folles*)
  - **Halle Ortego** (BS, Theatre)–Missoula's Children Theatre, Missoula, MT (Actor)
  - **Kwincy Pierre** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Cumberland County Playhouse, Crossville, TN (Ensemble in *Shrek the Musical* and *Heartbreak Hotel*)
  - **Mia Jolie Rodriguez** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Fort Totten Little Theatre, St. Michael, ND (Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*)
  - **Ava Schorr** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Missoula's Children Theatre, Missoula, MT (Director/Actor)
  - **Makenzie Scroggs** (BFA, Dance)–Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky, OH (Dancer in *Happiness is a Celebration* and *Boardwalk Nights*)
  - **Tyler Sibley** (BFA, Musical Theatre)–Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Fort Myers, FL (Ensemble in *The Wizard of Oz*)

    - **Jamie Trosclair** (BFA, Production and Design and BS, Theatre)–Actor Therapy's Summer Intensive in New York, NY with Lindsay Mendez and Ryan Scott Oliver.
    - **Lauren Presley Walsworth** (BS, Theatre)–Shreveport Little Theater, Shreveport, LA (Kit Kat Club Girl in *Cabaret*)
    - **Gabe Williams** (BS, Theatre)–Stage Center Theatre, Shreveport, LA (Actor in *Frozen*)
- **Parrell Appolis** (MM, Music Performance–Flute), a student of Dr. Stephen Clark, will be a freelance performer and starting a private teaching studio in Texas.
- **Eileen Ashley** (BME–Vocal), a student of Adam Philley, will be working as a Phi Mu Chapter Consultant for the 2026-2027 academic year.
- **Connor Benoit** (BS, Physical Science) received a Research Experience for Undergraduate award to perform research in robotics at Tulane University (Summer 2026).
- **Shannon Boone**, **Masen Starks**, and **Natalie Sutton** (all BS, Mathematics) competed in both the Integration Bee and the Student Team Competition at the Louisiana/Mississippi Section of the Mathematical Association of America meeting. Masen tied for 4th in the Integration Bee.
- **Shannon Boone**, **Davyn Johnson**, **Korbin Richard**, **Madisyn Rippeon**, **Masen Starks**, and **Natalie Sutton** (all BS, Mathematics) represented Northwestern State in the International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC)/ Mid-Atlantic USA Regional Competition. The team consisting of Korbin, Davyn, and Madisyn came in 2nd for Division II. The team consisting of Shannon, Natalie, and Masen, came in 4th for Division II.
- **Jesus Calderon** and **Santiago Rovira** (BM in Music Business–Cello), both students of Paul Christopher, will be touring throughout the summer of 2026 with the Colombian Youth Philharmonic.
- **Taylor Carrell** (MM, Performance–Tuba), a student of Dr. Masahito Kuroda, was selected to present his research at South Central Regional Tuba Euphonium Conference of the International Tuba Euphonium Association at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley March 19-21, 2026.
- **Mateo Este-McDonald** (BS, Physical Science) was selected for the National Science Foundation EPSCoR Future Technologies and enabling Plasma Processes Regional Introduction to Plasma Physics summer program at Auburn University (Summer 2026).
- **Maria Farina** (BS, Industrial Engineering Technology) presented 2 research papers at the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers (IISE) Annual Conference, supervised by Dr. Shahriar Hossain. One of these papers was accepted for publication in the proceedings.
- Two students won Best Undergraduate Oral Presentation awards at the Louisiana Academy of Sciences 2026 Annual Meeting
    - **Maria Farina** (BS, Industrial Engineering Technology) supervised by Dr. Shahriar Hossain (Associate Professor of Engineering Technology).
    - **Aliyah Soileau** (BS, Biology) supervised by Dr. Joseph Straub (Assistant Professor of Biology)
- **Perla Hipp** (BM, Music Business–Violin), a student of Dr. Andrej Kurti, will participate in the Renova Music Festival in June 2026 in Pennsylvania.
- **Reese Kennedy** (BS, Physical Science) and **Emilie North** (BS, Biology) will begin paid internships during Fall 2026 under the workforce partnership between Northwestern State and Arq.
- **Ainsley Leaman** (BFA, Production and Design) has a summer internship with fashion designer, Yvonne LaFleur, in New Orleans, LA.
- **Jose Luzuriaga** (BM, Piano Performance), a student of Dr. Francis Yang, was the Youth Division Winner of the 2026 Rapides Symphony Concerto Competition on March 14, 2026. Jose performed the Grieg Piano Concerto with the Rapides Symphony in February 2026.
- **Kalyss Mall** (BS, Theatre) will be working with the Disney internship program.
- **Harmony Marsh Head** (BME–Instrumental), a student of Dr. Oliver Molina, will teach at Rivercrest Junior High and High School as Assistant Band Director.
- **Anselmo Mata** (MM, Performance–Piano), a student of Dr. Francis Yang, was selected to present his research at 2026 Music Teachers National Association Collegiate Symposium in Columbia, SC on January 17, 2026
- **Morgan McCrory** (BS, Physical Science) and **Shae Wetzel** (BS, Biology) completed NASA's RockOn program at the Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia (June 2025).
- **Anna-Clare Melancon** (BFA, Musical Theatre) was an intern at the Christian Youth Theatre in Lafayette, LA for their production of *Frozen, Jr.*

- **Steven Mendoza** (MM, Performance–Piano), a student of Dr. Francis Yang and **Gabriel Polo** (BM, Performance–Voice/Guitar), a student of Dr. Robert Cardwell, will perform at the Texas Musical Outdoor Theater in Canyon, Texas during Summer 2026.
- **Madelyn Misuraca** (BS, Biology) started a new recognized student organization–the Pre-PA Society–to help students prepare for and apply to physician assistant schools.
- **Alexis Ortega** (BS, Biology) received an LaSpace grant to present his research at the LaSpace Annual Conference. His work was supervised by Dr. Li Ma (Associate Professor of Biology).
- **Joel Ramos** (BM), **Valentina Restrepo** (BM), and **Yesenia Zapata** (BME), all oboe students of Leah Forsyth, will be attending the Southern Oboe Intensive at the University of Alabama Birmingham in July 2026.
- **Ada Shoup** (BFA, Musical Theater) was a featured singer during a masterclass at the Southern Regional meeting of the National Association of Teachers of Singers in January 2026.
- **Bryanna Stebane** (BS, Industrial Engineering Technology) successfully completed her Google Data Analytics certification.
- **Emily Waits** (BS, Accounting and Business Administration; BA, Liberal Arts–Business, Technology and Society) earned a $2,000 scholarship from the Society of Louisiana Certified Public Accountants, awarded to students planning to pursue the CPA exam as well as a Cookies and Careers in Banking Scholarship awarded by the Louisiana Bankers Association Education Foundation.
- **Kathryn Wilkinson** (MM, Music Performance–Voice), a student of Dr. Terrie Sanders, placed first in Advanced Commercial Music at the National Association of Teachers of Singing National Student Auditions, June 26, 2025, in Philadelphia, PA.
- **Abigail Williams** (BA, History) participated in a semester-long internship with the Creole Heritage Center during which she received first-hand experience in how to run a research and cultural center and engage with the public.
- **Hailey Wolff** (BA, Liberal Arts-Humanities & Social Thought) is serving as a page at the Louisiana House of Representatives during the summer of 2026.
- **Kirk Ybanez** (BME–Instrumental), a student of Dr. Oliver Molina, will be taking the position as Assistant Band Director and Percussion at Arp High School in Arp ISD, Arp, TX.
- **Maddie Ybanez** (BME–Vocal), a student of Dr. Marcy McKee, will be teaching at Sabine Elementary School in Sabine ISD, Kilgore, TX.

Academic Engagement

The COAS participates in several current and future activities and initiatives to ensure student success, maintain rigor, emphasize integrity, encourage student responsibility, and promote recruitment, retention, graduation, employment, and professional/graduate school acceptance. Included in our efforts is a continued emphasis on and promotion of academic advising throughout the semester, assessing our general education core classes, early interventions for students struggling in classes, and promotion of the Academic Success Center.

In addition, several specific strategies have taken place to bring increased visibility and impactful meaning to our programs. These include:

New Programs/Initiatives

- The College of Arts and Sciences received a generous donation from Dr. Kass Byrd which was used to create the COAS Enhancement Fund (CASEF). These funds have been used to support several initiatives in the Spring 2026:
    - Twelve faculty members were awarded $2,500 grants to support research and/or scholarly activity conducted this calendar year. Recipients include:
        - **Sean Callander–**Instructor of Art
        - **Dr. Xinjia Chen**–Associate Professor of Engineering Technology
        - **Kristen Culver–**Adjunct Instructor of English and University Studies/Academic Advisor
        - **Dr. Shahriar Hossain–**Associate Professor of Engineering Technology
        - **Dr. Chialing Hseih–**Professor of Music
        - **Dr. Nicole Lobdell–**Assistant Professor of English in the LSC
        - **Edgar Lopez Cano–**Assistant Professor of Art
        - **Dr. Li Ma–**Associate Professor of Biology

        - **Dr. James Mischler**–Associate Professor of English
        - **Dr. Katharine Scherff–**Assistant Professor of Art History
        - **Dr. Mark Teshera–**Assistant Professor of Biology
        - **Dr. Damien Tristant–**Assistant Professor of Physics
- The COAS established a faculty collaboration incubator–**CREATE**, the Center for Research, Education, and Artistic Teamwork Exploration. CREATE is a place for faculty/staff/students to share ideas for collaboration and to establish and nurture professional working relationships that are necessary to produce outstanding, interdisciplinary activity. During the 2025-2026 academic year, the program was expanded to a university-wide initiative, and CREATE sponsored five collaborative projects:
    - **Thinkers, Tinkers, and Talkers Podcast (continuation)**. A COAS-wide collaboration that seeks to highlight the interests and expertise of our faculty. Each episode explores a different topic related to an area of interest in the arts, the humanities, or the sciences. Listen to learn more about what gets our faculty thinking, tinkering, and talking!
    - **Establishment of a University Credential Focused on Professional Skills Development (continuation)**. This is a cross-university project that will be on-going. Faculty/staff are working to establish common skills needed by all academic areas and disciplines. The utilization of a new student engagement platform (Suitable) will allow students to create extra-curricular transcripts to monitor and document the achievement of professional skills offered through a series of courses and activities throughout the university.
    - **Demons Teach.** In the theme of science education videos such as those produced by the Amoeba Sisters, Demons Teach involves the production of a series of short videos in which Northwestern Students explain specific scientific topics (like the Kreb's Cycle) with a concise, easy-to-understand delivery including fun graphics/animations illustrating the finer details of the narrative. The project included students and faculty within the School of STEM as well as the School of CAPA.
    - **STEM Students Expand Their Fine Motor Skills.** Many STEM students preparing for professional schools like medical school and dental school need to improve their fine motor skills to enhance their professional skill repertoire. Faculty within the School of CAPA designed a series of workshops to help students develop those skills by teaching them crocheting, wool needle felting, and cross-stitching.
    - **Exploration of Collaborative Projects with the University of Belize.** Several faculty within the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs have traveled to Belize to explore potential collaborative projects with the University of Belize. Potential projects include exploration of abandoned sugar mills with ties to Louisiana ex-patriots. This has implications in the areas of history, creative writing, tourism, and agriculture.
- The university-wide initiative Faculty Development Communities (FDCs) engage faculty in a wide range of interests/expertise with the goal of establishing greater faculty community and interest. Multiple faculty from the COAS took part in one of three different FDCs sponsored by Northwestern State during the 2025-2026 academic year:
    - **Dr. Sean Bartley–**Assistant Professor of Theatre History
    - **Dr. Jerry Brunson**–Associate Professor of Biology
    - **Dr. Susan Campbell–**Assistant Professor of Social Work
    - **Craig Caskey–**Instructor of Engineering Technology
    - **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis**–Associate Professor of English
    - **Andrew Killion–**Assistant Professor of Lighting and Sound Design
    - **Dr. Li Ma–**Associate Professor of Biology
    - **Dr. Sarah McFarland–**Professor of English
    - **Dr. Malena McLaren–**Professor of Music
    - **Dr. Nabin Sapkota**–Associate Professor of Engineering Technology
    - **Dr. Joseph Straub**–Assistant Professor of Biology
    - **Dr. Damien Tristant**-Assistant Professor of Physics
- Under the direction of Nhan Ho (Assistant Professor of Dance), the COAS launched an interdisciplinary "MOVE/Catalyst" creative research project that integrated dance, sound interaction, technology, and multimedia performance. The group held six performances in three days to wonderful reviews.
- Faculty within the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs continue their historical background research on the Historic Sugar Mill Research Project with their Belizean partners–the Institute of Archaeology NICH and the

University of Belize. In July 2026, they will continue their fieldwork as they document two or three known sites and go in search of the Seven Hills Sugar Estate using drone-based LiDAR and photogrammetry.

- For the second year in a row, English faculty volunteered for Writing Enhancement for Future Professional School Applicants coordinated by **Dr. Li Ma** (Associate Professor of Biology) to provide a workshop for students in the biological sciences. **Sadeem El Nahhas** (Instructor of English), **Dr. Daniel Gordy** (Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and English), **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis** (Associate Professor of English), **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski** (Associate Professor of English), and **Oona Zbitkovskis** (Instructor of English) provided overall advice and individualized guidance to students.
- Faculty in the Department of Biology and Microbiology began a grant-funded, paid internship program during the Spring 2026 semester. Four students were awarded $2500 internships as well as 3 hours of earned credit in the BIOL 3080–Internship in Biology course. The interns were
    - **Nicholas Blanchard** (BS, Biology)–National Fish Hatcheries
    - **Baylee Johnson** (BS, Biology)–Northwestern State's ARGO Lab
    - **Braxton Speyrer** (BS, Biology)–Natural Resources Conservation Service
    - **Sophia Witman** (BS, Biology)–National Fish Hatcheries
- The Division of Mathematics launched two new concentrations: Computer Science and Sport Analytics effective Fall 2025. The developments included the creation of nine (9) new Computer Science (CSC) courses and three (3) new Mathematics courses.
    - In support of the new Computer Science concentration, a $100,000 investment was made to develop a state-of-the-art programming laboratory.
    - Students in the new Sport Analytics concentration will be gaining hands-on experience through a collaborative partnership with Northwestern State Athletics, which included a $60,000 grant for the Trackman Stadium System and Portable Trackman Unit.
- The Department of Music made several curricular adjustments to Music programs this year:
    - Updated the BM Music Business degree to align with current career trends.
    - Received approval from their accrediting agency (National Association for Schools of Music) for the MM Music Education online degree.
- Architect Lori Filbeck and Allen Hart, in collaboration with the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT), visited faculty from the Department of Physical Science on February 5–7, 2026 to study and digitally scan Fournet Hall. The goal of the project is to modernize the building while preserving the character of the 76-year-old structure. The resulting model will guide targeted updates to Fournet Hall rooms 107, 123, and 212 within the available restricted budget.
- **Dr. Sloane Artis** (Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre) began a Christmas Caroling initiative in which Northwestern State students took to the community singing in restaurants, parties, community events, Dark Woods and more.
- The faculty of the Dance program within the Department of Theatre and Dance will be offering a Summer Dance Intensive to bring prospective students to campus during Summer 2026. This program has the faculty expanding outreach and engagement with the broader dance community.
- Music Education faculty in the Department of Education initiated new programming aimed at giving music education students more engaging experiences:
    - **Dr. Molly Blair** (Assistant Professor of Music Education) piloted the first Chamber group experience for Instrumental Music Education majors within the Ensemble Lab. Students were randomly placed in small groups with diverse instrumentation that would align with similar experiences in smaller school settings. Student leaders chose music and arranged instrumentation to fit a small-scale ensemble group working with what they were given.
    - Students in MUS4200–Music Technology Class used a 3-D printer to create a musical tool or instrument.
    - **Dr. Molly Blair** (Assistant Professor of Music Education) took MUED 3140–Secondary Methods students to visit several regional schools. Students were able to earn field experience points with the benefit of having immediate discussion and feedback.
    - **Dr. Molly Blair** and **Dr. Jennifer Pulling** (Assistant Professors of Music Education) invited Dr. Neeru Deep as a guest speaker for MUED 3140–Principles of Teaching and MUED 4110 Elementary Methods. She shared her expertise in psychology and health/wellness in a timely presentation titled "The Importance of Holistic Well-being for MUED students."

- **Kristen Culver** (Instructor of English) delivered two workshops to assist general education students with research writing through the ElevateU Title III Department of Education grant program. In December 2025, she presented "Cite It Right," and she presented "How to Academic Research" in March 2026.
- **Heather Salter Dromm** (Instructor of English) served as a Success Coach for English courses through the "Catapulting Student Success through Motivation, Transparency, and Support" 2025 Meauxmentum Grants Project, providing weekly tutoring hours for students in general education English courses in Spring 2026. She also became co-sponsor with Dr. Rebecca Riall of the Native American Student Association registered student organization to revitalize the group and support that student population.
- **Dr. Keith Dromm** (Professor of Philosophy) and **Heather Salter Dromm** (Instructor of English) co-wrote a chapter for the book *Country Music and Philosophy* titled "What's Wrong with the Good Old Days?"
- **Sadeem El Nahhas** (Instructor of English) organized a Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TiLT) workshop for faculty in the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies with Shannon Wall-Hale of the Department of Psychology.
- **Sadeem El Nahhas** (Instructor of English) and **Dr. Shane Rasmussen** (Professor of English) held an MLA workshop for graduate students during "Grad Students Rock Week" in 2025.
- **Dr. Jennifer Hill** (Associate Professor of Chemistry) received IRB Quality Improvement verification in January 2026 for protocol associated with research on *"The Use of Case Studies in Nursing Chemistry"*. A publication will be submitted soon.
- **Nhan Ho** (Assistant Professor of Dance) filmed students in DAN 4400–Senior Seminar to facilitate students completed professional dance reels. He also assisted them in developing resumes, cover letters, websites, and company research portfolios to help them enter the professional field and graduate study.
- **Dr. Ereck Jarvis** (Associate Professor of English) presented a "Writing Skills Workshop," for the Bridge Program, NSU Athletics, Northwestern State University, July 2025, to help prepare student athletes for success at NSU.
- **Dr. Rondo Keele** (Professor of Philosophy) published the article "Relations in Summa Logicae," in *Ockham's Summa Logicae: A Critical Guide*, edited by C. Panaccio and J. Pelletier. Cambridge University Press: 2025, pp. 105-127. He was also invited to participate in a workshop on Differentia in the Medieval Latin West at the University of Lund, Sweden. The title of his presentation was "Chatton versus Ockham: The Individual Difference and the Indiscernibility of Identicals."
- **Dr. Nicole Lobdell** (Assistant Professor of English) was invited to present her research at the Keats-Shelley House in Rome, Italy. Her presentation was on November 27, 2025, and was titled "Stranger Than Fiction: Rediscovering Shelley and Mary". Dr. Lobdell was also awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities summer stipend.
- **Dr. Christopher Lyles** (Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the School of STEM) has worked with the Cane River Waterway Commission) to establish two scholarships/assistantships for students working on a delta waterfowl project or a project directly related to activities along Cane River. The $200,000 donation to the Northwestern State Foundation is being used to establish endowments to serve these areas.
- **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski** (Associate Professor of English) developed a new course in Fall 2025–English 4380: Special Projects–Literary Magazine. In the course, three students—**Kamryn Harris**, **Avery Pritchard**, and **Kathryn Sanders**—curated a single-issue literary magazine from concept through to publication featuring the work of Northwestern State and regional high school students.
- **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland** (Professor of English) participated in the NSU Faculty AI Club panel discussion "AI in Academia" on November 18, 2025, about the impact of "AI" to teaching practice, student skills, and intellectual and creative work in higher education.
- **Dr. Alexei Muravitsky** (Professor of Mathematics) presented "The Aesthetic Argument" and "Poetry and Poets" at The 13th Congress of the International Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Symmetry (Symmetry: Art and Science), Orthodox Academy of Crete, Kolymbari, Crete, Greece in August 23-31, 2025.
- **Dr. Mike Rast** (Assistant Professor of History):
    - Presented "National socialism in Britain, 1880s-1920s: debating nationalism and internationalism" at the Britain and the World conference at Northeastern University, Boston, April 24-25, 2026.
    - Presented "Explaining pre-First World War national socialism and its absence from Ireland" at the American Conference for Irish Studies, May 27-31, 2026 at the University of Colorado–Denver.
    - Published a book review of *The Trial That Shook Britain: How a Court Martial Hastened Acceptance of Indian Independence* for the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*.

- **Dr. Allison Rittmayer** (Associate Professor of English) earned a certification for Appreciative Advising through a course that ran May 5-July 16, 2025, funded by an ElevateU Title III Department of Education program grant. Rittmayer is the primary advisor for English majors.
- **Dr. Adonay Sissay** (Assistant Professor of Chemistry) was awarded a grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund for the project "Propagator Mixed with Machine Learning for the Time-Dependent Kohn-Sham Equations." The grant is for $ 31,766, and the duration of the project is one year.
- **Sofiko Tchetchelashvili** (Instructor of Viola) developed an additional String Quartet–The NSU String Quartet–which will provide additional opportunities for string students to be challenged and mentored in a chamber ensemble setting. In addition to developing higher level performance skills, the participating musicians will learn leadership skills as the students will learn to work together without the benefit of a conductor.
- **Dr. Chad Thibodeaux** (Associate Professor of Chemistry) designed and implemented a new course for the Forensic Laboratory Science concentration within the Physical Science degree program. This new course, CHEM3240: Forensic Testimony, was taught for the first time in Fall 2025. Several prominent guest speakers provided important professional perspectives for the students. Guests included Tom Gier (fingerprint expert) and LA 10th Circuit Judge Desiree Dyess.
- **Dr. Chad Thibodeaux** (Associate Professor of Chemistry) and **Dr. Christopher Lyles** (Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the School of STEM) worked with Arq, a carbon-based filtration company with a facility in northwest Louisiana, to develop a series of collaborative research projects for our faculty and students to gain work-based learning experiences on real industrial problems. The $25,000 gift from Arq will be used to improve technologies in the chemical analytical laboratory and provide student and faculty stipends/scholarships.

Community Engagement/Recognitions

- The School of STEM worked diligently to bring "edu-tainment" in the STEM areas to our regional middle and high schoolers through a variety of events throughout the year. Total Direct Student Engagement: **5,601 Participants** (Table 35).

Table 35
STEM Educational Events

Event	Participants	Audience / Reach
Fall STEM Day	285	High school students from **19 High Schools** across **9 parishes**
SECO-students exploring career opportunities	2,500	10th graders from **47 schools**
Nside STEM	12	Participants
Recipe for Rural STEM	710	Students representing **8 parishes**
Literary Rally STEM Zone	1,454*	High school students participating in STEM activities
State FFA STEM Zone	378	High school students from multiple Louisiana parishes
Natchitoches Workforce Summit	122	Junior students from **Natchitoches Parish** high schools
BPSTIL X2–Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning	~80	Handed out ~80 recruiting packets over two events, one in April and then in May
Mini STEM Day	60	Students from NSU Middle Lab

- The Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts produced the 37th annual *Christmas Gala* to approximately 10,000 audience members. Over three days in December 2025, more than 300 CAPA students, faculty, and staff combined their talents to present nine performances.
- The Department of Music planned and implemented the first fundraising campaign at Flying Heart Brewery in Natchitoches. The event was successful in exceeding our goal of $5000.00 for this one-night event in February 2026.
- Approximately twenty (20) faculty and students earned spots with regional orchestras including Arkansas, Texas, and throughout Louisiana.
- The Costume Shop within the Department of Theatre and Dance has partnered with the local 4H extension office to offer sewing classes for 4H club members from 4th through 8th grades.

- Faculty with the Dance program in the Department of Theatre and Dance have continued developing outreach and engagement opportunities with regional dance studios, including Bluebird Dance Academy in Lafayette and Power and Grace in Shreveport.
- **Dr. Sloane Artis** (Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre) and **Nhan Ho** (Assistant Professor of Dance) presented musical theatre workshops at Stage Center in Shreveport, LA and at Natchitoches Central High School in October 2025 and at Lafayette High School, Christian Youth Theatre, and Southside High School (Lafayette, LA) in December 2025.
- **Dr. Sloane Artis** (Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre) music directed a student showcase at the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center "Great Gatsby" fundraiser in April 2026.
- **Corbin Covher** (Associate Professor of Art) was a sculptor for the "Natchitoches in Bloom" public art project created by the Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission and Cane River National Heritage Area in partnership with Northwestern State University's School of Creative and Performing Arts.
- **Dr. Judith Covington** and **Dr. LeighAnn Myers** (Professors of Mathematics) offered Math4Fun, a series of professional development workshops for K-12 math teachers.
- **Dr. Greg Granger**, Professor of History, appeared as a guest on the podcast Billy West Live on March 2, 9, and 10 as well as April 17 to discuss national security issues as well as spoke to the Natchitoches Rotary Club on US foreign policy in January 2026.
- The School of Social Sciences and Applied programs hosted the Louisiana Political Science Association meeting on the Natchitoches campus in February 2026.
- **Dr. Hiram Pete Gregory** (Professor of Anthropology and Curator of the Williamson Museum), continued his outreach in the following ways:
    - Continued work on the Plants inventory with the Six Tribes and U.S. Forestry Service (USFS).
        - Along with Velicia Bergstrom, worked with the tribes to discuss the Plant conservation studies. Northwestern State will play a vital role in the River Cane Project associated with this work.
    - Along with Dr. Dayna Lee, participated in "To Bridge A Gap," the USFS meeting with the tribes across the Gulf South.
    - Conducted a training day on archaeology for the state Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- **Dr. Shahriar Hossain** (Professor of Engineering Technology) was recognized with the Outstanding Advisor Award for 2025–2026 at the 11th North American International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management (IEOM), in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on June 8-11, 2026.
- **Dr. Chialing Hsieh** (Professor of Music) developed the Natchitoches Community Concert Series at First Presbyterian Church. The concert series included a variety of performances from students and faculty.
- **Robert Page** (Associate Professor of Biology) and **Dr. Jerry Brunson** (Associate Professor of Biology) began a collaboration with the LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The project includes a research data agreement to analyze data associated with conservation efforts focused on the Louisiana pine snake.
- **Dr. Kent Peacock** (Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Creole Heritage Center (CHC)), served as a commissioner on the state of Louisiana's Folklife Commission.
- **Dr. Kent Peacock** (Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Creole Heritage Center (CHC)), oversaw the involvement of the CHC in several events/engagements:
    - Debuted a new online archive and exhibit platform in October 2025 to share highlights from the CHC's holdings and spread accurate knowledge about Louisiana Creoles to a broader public.
    - Participated in outreach to Creoles and the general public by participating in events throughout Louisiana and Texas, including the St. Augustine Catholic Church of Isle Brevelle's Creole and Family Festival, the Creole Krewe at the Houston Rodeo's BBQ Cookoff, Creole Heritage Day at Vermilionville, the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival.
    - Promoted the CHC's genealogical resources and taught individuals about doing genealogy research
        - Creole Crafting Day, an event hosted by the Cane River National Heritage Area with over 6 other local culture bearers/organizations and over 150 visitors at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame & Northwest Louisiana History Museum
        - through an invited talk at the Natchitoches Genealogical and Historical Association
        - with an event in partnership with Louisiana Public Broadcasting and local history organizations such as the Cane River Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

- Hosted Dr. Minchai Kim, a scholar in French and Creole linguistics at Korea's Kyung Hee University, to share resources and knowledge about Louisiana Creole communities and their heritage in and around Natchitoches.
- Started a weekly social media post on events and language opportunities of interest to Louisiana Creoles and those wanting to learn about them. This endeavor has boosted followers and visibility of the CHC.
- Welcomed over 20 visitors from places as far away as Michigan, Washington, California, and Germany to tour the CHC's exhibits and explore their family history in the CHC Resource Library.

- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin** (Professor of History) serves in several advisory positions in his discipline:
  - The Southern Review Advisory Board, 2025-Present
  - The Gulf South Historical Review Advisory Board, 2025-Present
  - The Gulf South Historical Association Board of Directors, 2024-Present
- **Dr. Shane Rasmussen** (Professor of English and Director of the Louisiana Folklife Center) has been active in many endeavors this year:
  - Hosted "Fiddlin' with the Finest! A Celebration of Louisiana Folk Fiddling," coordinating a roundtable discussion and music performance of Louisiana tradition bearers as a pre-festival event for the 45th Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival at the Many Train Depot in Many, LA, on June 14, 2025. The event served as a pre-event for the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival and attracted more than 30 attendees.
  - **H**osted "A Life of Zydeco: A Musical Informance with Chubbie Carrier." The music informance with zydeco musician Chubbie Carrier as a pre-festival event for the 45th Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival at The Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum in Natchitoches, LA, on June 21, 2025. The event served as a pre-event for the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival and attracted nearly 40 attendees.
  - **H**osted a free and open-to-the-public Native Crafts Workshop as a pre-festival event for the 45th Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival at The Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum in Natchitoches, LA, on July 12, 2025. The event served as a pre-event for the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival and attracted more than 70 attendees.
  - Directed the 45th Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival: "Crafting Louisiana" at Prather Coliseum at NSU on July 19, 2025. The event included the Louisiana State Fiddle Championship, a Red Beans and Rice Cookoff, and the Hall of Master Folk Artists Induction ceremony, as well as music, dance, craft, food, and narrative sessions. The festival attracted more than 1700 attendees.
  - along with **Dr. Daniel Gordy** (Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and English) served with others as Co-Chairs of the 17th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference: "Lyrical Louisiana" on September 13, 2025. The conference welcomed 90 attendees from across the state and region.
  - **C**haired the 17th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest. **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski**, Associate Professor of English, and **Shea Montgomery**, Instructor of English, served on the selection committee. The winners of the competition receive a stipend and a scholarship to NSU.
  - Served as a Folklife Ambassador on behalf of the Louisiana Folklife Commission for "Honoring Smithfield Fair" as part of the Fall ArtWalk by the Arts Council of Central Louisiana in Alexandria, LA, on October 17, 2025. The event attracted more than 50 attendees.
  - Directed the 17th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Multicultural Christmas Concert held at The Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum in Natchitoches, LA, on December 2, 2025. The concert attracted more than 150 attendees.
  - Worked with local agencies to present "Picnic in the Park" on April 7, 2026, featuring a free show by Gal Holiday and the Honky Tonk Revue at Natchitoches City Park. The concert attracted more than 50 attendees.
- **Dr. Damien Tristant** (Assistant Professor of Physics) was appointed Physics Chair of the Louisiana Academy of Sciences.
- Students in the Vet Tech Club held monthly Bathe the Dog Days at Bienvenu Hall during the 2025-2026 academic year. These events provide basic dog grooming services to local dog owners.

Program Successes

- Northwestern State's co-requisite mathematics program continues to be extremely successful. During the 2025-2026 academic year, 73% of students completing the program earned a passing grade of C or better. This success rate is significantly above national benchmarks.

- Our Student Media groups continue to have their work and talents recognized at the national level. At the Annual College Media Association meeting in New York City March 4-7, 2026, our Student Media groups won several David L. Adams Apple Awards which recognize outstanding achievements as the "Best of Show":
    - Argus (Literary Magazine)
        - Best Magazine Cover–1st Place
        - Best Magazine–Honorable Mention
    - Potpourri (Yearbook)
        - Best Yearbook Cover–Honorable Mention
        - Best Yearbook Spread–Honorable Mention
    - The Current Sauce (Newspaper)
        - Best Podcast–2nd Place
        - Best Opinion Column–2nd Place
        - Best News Website–Honorable Mention
    - Hispanic Student Journalist Association
        - Best Podcast–3rd Place
- Two Ensembles from the Department of Music were honored to be selected to perform this year:
    - **Northwestern State Chamber Choir**–invitation to perform at the Louisiana ACDA Convention, October 2025.
    - **Northwestern State Wind Symphony**–invitation to perform at the Louisiana Music Educators Association Conference, January 2026.
- On October 14, 2025, Friends All United for Natchitoches Animals (FAUNA) presented a $22,500 donation to the Northwestern State Foundation to support the FAUNA Vet Tech Endowed Scholarship.
- The online Master of Science in Homeland Security program completed the university's first virtual academic program review/self-study.
- The Criminal Justice program has undergone a degree plan redesigned to allow for better use of prior learning assessment and experiential learning opportunities. This resulted in the development of a memorandum of understanding with the Many Police Department that involved the sharing of training activities and the establishment of more opportunities for our students to participate in internships, ride-alongs, and forensic work.
- Faculty in the BFA in Musical Theatre program (**Dr. Sloane Artis** and **Jason Thomas**) created many experiential learning opportunities for their students:
    - June-August 2025: **Elizabeth Cook**, **Landon Kately**, and **Candace Paul** worked as faculty at Interlochen Center for the Arts Camp in Interlochen, MI.
    - October 2025: backstage tour of the Saenger Theatre with the production team of the national tour of *Kimberly Akimbo.*
    - November 2025: **Caleb Barton**, **J. Cole Becton**, **Dylan Freeman, Kwincy Pierre**, **Ava Schorr**, and **Tyler Sibley** performed for the chapters of the Natchitoches Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) on the LSMSA campus.
    - November 2025: 14 students attended the Southern Regional NATS Conference.
        - **Caleb Barton, Dylan Freeman**, and **Harleigh Miller** (all BFA, Musical Theatre) qualified to compete at the national conference.
        - **J. Cole Becton** qualified to compete at the national conference and went on to win 2nd place.
- **Anna Dugas** (Assistant Professor of Physics) was awarded a continuation of the La-SPACE grant to accompany six students (Brendan Donaghy, Sean Song, Annabel Schleifstein, Anika Chegireddy, Ebden Dorris, and Danny Ye) who are part of the Demon-Sats-7 team to launch a payload into space to collect atmospheric data. The launch occurred at 6:37am on May 19, 2026, from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility in Palestine, TX and landed in Tyler, TX.
- **Dr. Daniel Gordy** and **Dr. Mark Melder** with the SSSAP have been working with Katie Dawson (University of Louisiana System) on an LA Workforce Advancement Partnership with Elayn Hunt Correctional Facility and Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) to provide outreach and support for employees looking to complete their college degrees through the Compete LA program.
- The History program offered a new upper-level history course focused on women's voices and experiences throughout US history. The course (HIST3330: Women, Gender, and Sexuality in US History) was taught by **Dr. Kent Peacock** and had an enrollment of 14 undergraduate students in its inaugural offering.

- The Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies concentration within the Criminal Justice major
    - launched a mass mailer and social media campaign to law firms and courts in Rapides and Natchitoches Parish which has resulted in increased enrollment in the certificate of completion program.
    - began offering live classes and faculty office hours at the CENLA campus
    - had faculty appear on various radio shows to promote PLPS and mock trial class taught by Hon. K. Jacob Ruppert, hearing officer for the 10th Judicial District Court.
    - reduced the time to earn the certificate of completion to one year.
    - offered "So You Want to Go to Law School?" Panel including judges, attorneys, and judicial hearing officers answering student questions from perspective law students.
    - co-sponsored Justice Thurgood Marshall documentary screening with LA Public Broadcasting, the Jones Center, and Black Studies. The viewing was followed by a panel discussion in which judges and attorneys debated Justice Marshall's legacy.
    - organized jury trial observation for students, which included a meeting with the 11th Judicial District Court judge and 11th Judicial District assistant district attorneys.
    - worked with Southern University Law Center to offer free virtual LSAT prep to our students.
- The Anthropology and American Indian and Indigenous Studies minor
    - collaborated with the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies to broaden and redevelop four cross-listed linguistics courses.
    - Held the Native Film Series 8 in November 2025.
    - launched an online Southeastern American Indians class.
    - worked with the Native American Student Association to organized campus several events.
    - Co-sponsored the screening of the movie *Sinners*.
    - working with the LA Sports Hall of Fame on a stickball exhibit.
- **Kirstin Riehl** (Professor of Dance) participated in the American College Dance Association conference in Spring 2026 in which she presented two student works and taught a ballet class.

Research/Scholarly Activity/Grant Successes

- Alicia Book, **Dr. Jerry Brunson** (Associate Professor of Biology), **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck** (Associate Professor of Art), **Dr. Francene Lemoine** (Professor of Biology), Dr. Elizabeth Pursell, **Dr. Thomas Reynolds** (Professor of English), and Shannon Wall-Hale were co-authors and co-investigators for "Catapulting Student Success through Motivation, Transparency, and Support." 2025 Meauxmentum Grants Project from Louisiana Board of Regents. ($100,000)
- Faculty in the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies has been very productive with thirteen (13) different publications:
    - **Dr. J. Andrew Briseño** (Associate Professor of English) published the short story "Squares" (2025) in *The Crawfish*.
    - **Dr. Khirsten Doolan** (Assistant Professor of English) published the chapter "Holy Grounds" (2026) in *Get It While It's Hot: Gas Station, Roadside, and Convenience Cuisine in the US South*, edited by Constance Bailey, Shelley Ingram, and Casey Kayser, and published by Louisiana State University Press. Doolan also published the chapter "'And They Were Broommates': Sapphic WitchTok and its Effects on Practice and Representation" (2026) in *Recasting the Bygone Witch*, edited by Mariaelena DiBenigno and Aíne Norris, and published by Vernon Press. Finally, Doolan published a chapter "'Roll for Perception': Purposeful Queer Inclusion in Dungeons and Dragons" in *Queer Identities in Popular Culture: Essays on Representation Since 2010*, edited by Laura Getty and Josef Vice, published by McFarland & Company.
    - **Heather Salter Dromm** (Instructor of English) co-wrote with Dr. Keith Dromm the chapter "The Dangers (and Opportunities) of Nostalgia in Country Music" (2026) in *Country Music and Philosophy: Honky Tonk Meditations*, edited by Joshua Heter and Brett Coppenger, and published by McFarland Press.
    - **Dr. Rebecca Macijecki** (Associate Professor of English) published several poems, including "Theories of Wanting" in the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, volume 42, issues 1 & 2, Winter/Spring 2026 issue; "How to Read" in the Spring 2026 issue of *elsewhere: The Prose Poetry Magazine*; "How to Be Adrift" in *Gone Lawn: A Journal of Word-Things* in March 2026; and "The Photograph I Didn't Take, at Sixteen, when I Saw a Street Performer in Rome Smoking on His Lunch Break, No Longer the Statue of Liberty" *Muleskinner Journal* issue 64 "Sabotage" in December 2025.

- **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland** (Professor of English) published the article "Metamorphosing with Selkies: Shape-Shifting Instabilities in the Self-Conscious Anthropocene" in *Matrix: A Journal for Matricultural Studies* in the Winter 2025 issue. McFarland also published the chapter "Facing Predation: Embodied Entanglements with Animal Others" in *Women Who Write Animals: Feminine Literary Representations of the More-Than-Human World*, edited by Lorraine Kerslake and Diana Villanueva, published by Brill Academic Press in May 2026.
- **Dr. Allison Rittmayer** (Associate Professor of English) published the article "'This is political, she's doing a political move': Biopolitics and Conflict in *English Teacher*" in *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, July 2025.

- The faculty of the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies gave twenty (20) presentations/readings:
  - **Heather Salter Dromm** (Instructor of English) presented "'Slap that Dough:' The Past, Present, and Future of Fry Bread in Native American Communities" at the 17th Annual Studies Louisiana Studies Conference on September 13, 2025. Dromm also presented "Time on the Spectrum in Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, Maya MacGregor's *The Many Half-Lived Lives of Sam Sylvester*, and Holly Smale's *Cassandra in Reverse*" at the Conference for Young Adult Literature on November 7, 2025. Dromm also presented "Taking the Indian Out of Us: A Postcolonial Analysis of *The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Peters" at NSU's Research Day on April 9, 2026.
  - **Dr. Khirsten Doolan** (Assistant Professor of English) presented research on queer Southern literary nonbiological kinship between William Faulkner's Quentin Compson and the narrative voice in Hayley Williams's "True Believer" at the Society for the Study of Southern Literature's conference in Nashville, TN, March 28-31. Doolan also presented "To Be Known: Queer Southern Literary Genealogies" at NSU's Research Day on April 9, 2026.
  - **Sadeem El Nahhas** (Instructor of English) presented "Teaching Gen Z in the Age of AI" at the Conference for Young Adult Literature on November 7, 2025.
  - **Dr. Jennifer Enoch** (Associate Professor of English) presented "'I Don't Feel So Isolated: Using Video Discussion Boards to Create Engagement and Community in Online Graduate Courses" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Cleveland, OH, on March 6, 2026.
  - **Dr. Benjamin Forkner** (Associate Professor of French and Spanish) presented "What Can the 'no sabo kids' Learn from the Louisiana French Experience?" at the 17th Annual Studies Louisiana Studies Conference, September 13, 2025.
  - **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski** (Associate Professor of English) presented "Poetry and Proteus: (Re-)Imagining the Self as Protest, as Liberation" at NSU's Research Day on April 9, 2026.
  - **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis** (Associate Professor of English) presented research on the interpolation of Sanskrit poetry in Beryl Gilroy's novel *Inkle and Yarico* at the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, AL, March 5-7.
  - **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland** (Professor of English) presented "Facing Predation: Animal Adventures with Nastassja Martin and Val Plumwood" at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference in Atlanta GA, November 2025.
  - **Dr. James J. Mischler** (Associate Professor of English) presented "Finding Inspiration and Empowerment Today" as the invited keynote speaker at the 2025 Colorado TESOL Conference in Denver. Mischler also presented "The Readability of the Informed Consent Form in Research: Improving the 'Participant Match'" at NSU's Research Day April 9, 2026.
  - **Shea Montgomery** (Instructor of English) was a featured reader at the virtual VCFA Alumnx Reading, hosted by CalArts, on October 16, 2025.
  - **Shea Montgomery** (Instructor of English) and **Oona Zbitkovskis** (Instructor of English) gave readings of their work for the university community and the public at "Creating Balance" at NSU on October 22, 2025.
  - **Dr. Shane Rasmussen** (Professor of English) presented "Folk Narratives and False Assurances" at NSU's Research Day on April 9, 2026.
  - **Dr. Thomas Reynolds** (Professor of English) presented "Learning Mindsets in the Classroom: Essay Assignment Routines Intervention to Promote GPS Mindset and Student Success" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication on March 6, 2026.
  - **Dr. Allison Rittmayer** (Associate Professor of English) presented "Visions of Liberatory Queer Southern Spaces" at The Society of Southern Literature Conference in Nashville, TN, in March 2026.

    - **Mariann Wilson** (Instructor of English) presented "Reading as Collection, Collection as Reading: Pedagogical and Theoretical Approaches to A.S. King's *The Collectors*" at the Conference of Young Adult Literature in Louisiana, LSU-Shreveport, on November 7, 2025.
- Nine (9) faculty in the Department of Music) were invited to present at the Louisiana Music Educators Association Conference in January 2026: **Dr. Doug Bakenhus** (Professor of Music), **Dr. Andrew Blair** (Instructor of Music), **Dr. Molly Blair** (Assistant Professor of Music Education), **Leah Forsyth** (Associate Professor of Music), **Dr. Malena McLaren** (Professor of Music), **Dr. Adam Philley** (Assistant Professor of Music), **Dr. Jennifer Pulling** (Assistant Professor of Music Education), **Dr. Anthony Pursell** (Associate Professor of Music), and **Dr. Shane Thomas** (Assistant Professor of Music).
- **Dr. Moftah Ali**, Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology, presented and published a conference paper in the 2025 FIE conference in Nashville, TN on November 5, 2025.
- **Dr. Moftah Ali**, Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology, and **Dr. Xinjia Chen**, Associate Professor of Engineering Technology, each presented and published a conference paper in the 2026 American Society for Engineering Education Conference for Industrial and Education Collaboration in New Orleans, LA on February 5, 2026.
- **Dr. Sloane Artis** (Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre) presented two workshops on Musical Theatre at Louisiana Thespian Festival in January 2026.
- **Dr. Sloane Artis** (Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre) collaborated with the Northwestern State Orchestra and conducted the university's production of *She Loves Me*. She also secured a $1200 costume scholarship for this production which was performed in April 2026.
- **Dr. Andrew Blair** (Instructor of Music) successfully published a new composition–C. Alan Publications Proofs of "Bubby's Bounce" for Snare Drum and Fixed Media.
- **Dr. J. Andrew Briseño** (Associate Professor of English) served as a Series Editor for The Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Short Fiction, University of North Texas Press.
- **Paul Christopher** (Associate Professor of Music) successfully published a music review in the Journal *American String Teacher*–"Alejandro Rutty: Waking Up Down at the Bottom of the Sea."
- **JD Cox** (Assistant Professor of Biology) and **Dr. Jerry Brunson** (Associate Professor of Biology) were awarded a $12,000 Work-Based Learning Education grant from the LA Board of Regents. Funds were used to support the Fall 2025 Biology Graduate/Career Fair and provide paid internship experiences for 4 students during the Spring 2026 semester.
- **Edgar Cano Lopez** (Assistant Professor of Art) has received several awards/honors this year:
    - A prestigious Adolph and Esther Gotlieb Foundation Fellowship.
    - A South Arts State Fellowship–this award is a state-specific prize awarded to artists living in the South Arts region (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) whose work reflects the best of the visual arts in the South.
    - The "Percent for Art Project" for LSU Health Medical Center Shreveport, LA.
- **Dr. Robert Cardwell** (Associate Professor of Music) was selected as Musical Director of Texas Musical Outdoors, in Canyon, TX for the 2026 season.
- **Dr. Judith Covington** (Professor of Mathematics) was invited to give a presentation at the Mathematics Association of America Mathfest in Sacramento, CA on August 6, 2025, and at the Louisiana/Mississippi Section Activities: A More Robust Meeting on August 8, 2025.
- **Matthew DeFord** (Professor of Art) designed the 2026 Natchitoches Northwestern Folk Festival Annual Poster.
- **Matthew DeFord** (Professor of Art) designed ink with Hatch Creative and Endless Pens USA. This Monte Verde Ink is named "Medicine Hat Winter Teal"
- **Matthew DeFord** (Professor of Art) had an exhibition "Alone but Breathing" Pen & Ink on Paper, 10th Annual 5x5x5 National Small Works Exhibition at the River Oaks Square Art Center, Alexandria, LA, November 13, 2025–February 7, 2026.
- **Dr. Khirsten Doolan** (Assistant Professor of English) and **Dr. Thomas Reynolds** (Professor of English) participated in "Corequisite Policy and Practice Partnership," a grant-funded research program led by Carolyn Sanchez at The University of Texas at Austin, 2025-2026, $1,000 each.
- **Dr. Paul Forsyth** (Professor of Music) commissioned and performed a new piece with the *Three Reeds Duo"* in Costa Rica.
- **Drs. Christopher Gilson**, **James MacDonald**, and **Kent Peacock** presented original research on performance and literary histories related to Natchitoches at the 2025 Louisiana Studies Conference held on the Natchitoches

campus of Northwestern State University and at the 2026 Louisiana Historical Association Annual Meeting.

- **Drs. Christopher Gilson**, **James MacDonald**, **Kent Peacock**, and **Charles Pellegrin** attended multiple meetings of the North Louisiana History Association throughout central and northern Louisiana.
- **Dr. Daniel Gordy** (Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and English) served as Editor of the *Journal of Research in Business Information Systems* (*JRBIS*). Gordy was also recognized with the Outstanding Service Award presented by the Association of Business Information Systems/Federation of Business Disciplines in March 2026.
- **Dr. Greg Granger**, Professor of History, has had a Southern Studies book review accepted for publication at a future date.
- **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck (Associate Professor of Art)** presented "Your Future—I'm Listening": Applying Active Listening to Undergraduate Advising." at the ElevateU Advising Summit, Northwestern State University Natchitoches on January 6, 2026.
- **Dr. Leslie Gruesbeck (Associate Professor of Art)** completed that CenLA Board Builders Class of 2025, Community Development Works offered through the Rapides Foundation.
- **Dr. Shahriar Hossain**, Associate Professor of Engineering Technology, received the Outstanding Industrial Engineering and Operations Management (IEOM) Student Chapter Faculty Advisor Award at the 10th North American IEOM Conference in Orlando, held June 17–19, 2025.
- **Dr. Shahriar Hossain**, Associate Professor of Engineering Technology, received two grants:
    - Brown Foundation ($12,500)–for administration of camps during Summer 2025
    - Weyerhaeuser ($2,000)–for administration of workforce development workshops during Summer 2026
- **Dr. Shahriar Hossain**, Associate Professor of Engineering Technology, and **Dr. Nabin Sapkota**, Professor of Engineering Technology, co-authored 4 chapters on Introduction to Safety in an open educational resource textbook by LOUIS.
- **Dr. Chialing Hsieh** (Professor of Music) performed for the opening of the 9th Annual International Music by Women Festival at Mississippi University for Women on March 6, 2025.
- **Dr. Adam Hudlow** (Assistant Professor of Music) arranged "Winner Takes it All" for the Spirit of Northwestern 2025 Marching season. He also arranged two other shows for University of Pikeville Marching Band and Pickering High School Marching Band.
- **Dr. Ereck Jarvis** (Associate Professor of English) served as an invited reviewer of an article manuscript for *Global Nineteenth-Century Studies* in August 2025, an invited judge for the Karla Jay Prize for Emerging Writers in Gender and Sexuality Studies for the Lamda Literary Awards in summer 2025, an independent evaluator for a grant-funded program for the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities in summer 2025, an evaluator of student research submissions for the Sigma Tau Delta International Convention in fall 2025, and a panel moderator at the virtual Southern Regional Conference of Sigma Tau Delta, University of North Georgia, on October 25, 2025. Finally, Jarvis was selected as the new editor-in-general of the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies journal, *New Perspectives on the Eighteenth Century*.
- **Dr. Masahito Kuroda** (Professor of Music) collaborated with faculty members for the COAS on the project "MOVE" which culminated in several performances in the Spring 2026 semester.
- **Dr. Andrej Kurti** (Professor of Music) and **Sofiko Tchetchelasvilli** (Instructor of Music) performed at the International Music Festival "Suoni d'Abruzzo," Ortona, Italy in July 2025 and the International Chamber Music Festival, Ivanova Korita, Montenegro in August 2025.
- **Dr. Andrej Kurti** (Professor of Music) and **Sofiko Tchetchelasvilli** (Instructor of Music) performed a chamber music concert at The Cultural Center of Serbia in Paris, France on May 14, 2026 and will continue to perform throughout Europe during Summer 2026.
- **Dr. Rebecca Macijecki** (Associate Professor of English) served as a manuscript screener for the *Prairie Schooner* Book Prize Series, University of Nebraska.
- **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland** (Professor of English) was invited to be the Robert Penn Warren Visiting American Literature Scholar at Western Kentucky University, where she delivered the talk "Embracing Extinction: Ecocollapse Fiction and Resilience" in October 2025. McFarland also served on the editorial review boards of *Trace: A Journal of Writing, Media*, and *Ecology* and *Journal of Critical Animal Studies*.
- **Dr. Marcy McKee** (Associate Professor of Music) was selected to play the role of Mrs. Gilmer Gilmerson in the Paul Bunyan Playhouse production of "Church Basement Ladies" in Bemidjii, Minnesota.
- **Mark Melder**, Professor of Criminal Justice, presented "New Scholarship on the Far-Right in Louisiana in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries: A Panel Discussion" at the Louisiana Studies Conference in Natchitoches, LA in July 2025.

- **Dr. James J. Mischler III** (Associate Professor of English) served as a data analyst for "Evaluation of Large Language Model (LLM) Generated Text" research study, State University of New York–Downstate with principal Investigators: Nellis, K., Jumbo, A., Lichtman, R., & Zwicklbauer, E. Mischler also served as a member of the IRB for MD Anderson Cancer Center, The University of Texas Medical Center, Houston, TX. Finally, Mischler served as a reviewer for *Accountability in Research: Ethics, Integrity, and Policy* and was lead organizer and moderator of the panel "Arts-based Research in Applied Linguistics" at the Fall Workshop [Virtual] for the American Association of Applied Linguistics.
  - **Dr. Oliver Molina** (Associate Professor of Music) was selected as a 2027 Fulbright Scholar. He will spend the Spring 2027 semester in the Philippines at the University of Philippines College of Music in Quezon City. He will be teaching and studying the Filipino percussion instrument, the Kulintang.
- **Dr. Oliver Molina** (Associate Professor of Music) was invited to present at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference in San Antonio, TX, February 12-15, 2026.
- **Trenton O'Neal** (Assistant Professor of Biology) and **Dr. Jerry Brunson** (Associate Professor of Biology) received a $5,000 grant from International Paper. The funds are being used to support the Fall 2026 Biology Graduate/ Career Fair and various events which are designed to prepare students for professional school applications.
- **Jessica Parr** (Professor of Theatre) was invited to present at the Contemporary Fiber Artists of Louisiana's quarterly meeting in Opelousas, LA.
- **Dr. Kent Peacock**, Assistant Professor of History, presented original research about American settlers' marriages and divorces in early 19th-century Ohio at the Midwestern Historical Association's 2026 Conference at Miami University of Ohio in April 2026.
- **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Professor of History, participated in many conferences in his area of interest:
  - Presented "'Won't you please renew your sustaining membership…': The Association of Citizens Councils of Louisiana and the Business of Massive Resistance, 1959-1963," at Session 4 of the East Texas Historical Association Conference in Nacogdoches, TX, on October 2, 2025.
  - Attended the Gulf South History and Humanities Conference in New Orleans, LA, from October 9-11, 2025 where he
    - Presented "'I like Gravel very much, but he is dead wrong': Camille Gravel, Harry Gamble, Sr., and the Civil Rights Platform Plank Controversy, 1955-59," at Session 4.
    - Commented on "National and Southern Reform: Race, Gender and Cultural Identity in the Nineteenth Century."
    - Chaired the session "Business and Industry in the Gulf South."
  - Chaired "Staging the Past: History, Memory, and Performance in Louisiana, Louisiana Historical Association Conference, March 6, 2026.
  - Edited and published Vol. 32, Issues 1 and 2, of *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South* (2025).
  - Attended North Louisiana Historical Association's Winter Meeting in Shreveport, LA, February 28, 2026, along with **Dr. Kent Peacock**, **Dr. James MacDonald**, **Dr. Christopher Gilson**, and **Donna Baker.**
  - Attended North Louisiana Historical Association's Spring Meeting in Minden, LA, on April 25, 2026, along with **Dr. Kent Peacock**, **Dr. James MacDonald**, and **Donna Baker.**
  - Continued research into massive resistance against the civil rights movement:
    - Research into Leander Perez at New Orleans Public Library in May 2025.
    - Research into Harry P. Gamble, Sr., at Hill Memorial Library at LSU in Baton Rouge in May and June 2025.
    - Research into the South Louisiana Citizens' Council at Tulane University Archives and Amistad Research Center, July 2025.
    - Research into John Rarick at Southeast Louisiana Research Center, Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, July 2025.
- **Adam Philley** (Assistant Professor of Music) appeared in the Shreveport Little Theater's production of "Guys and Dolls" in July 2025.
- **Dr. John Price** (Assistant Professor of Music) performed "Rhapsody in Blue" with Orquesta Sinfonica de la Victoria in Honduras during Summer 2025.
- **Dr. Shane Rasmussen** (Professor of English) served as the General Editor of the *Louisiana Folklife Journal* and was awarded the Faculty Senate's inaugural Outstanding Faculty Service Award for the College of Arts and Sciences.

- **Dr. Shane Rasmussen** (Professor of English) submitted and received grants to support the 45th and 46th Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival in 2025-2026: National Endowment for the Arts, $12,000; with Jenni Daniels, Federation of State Humanities Councils "By the People: Conversations Beyond 250," $9,800; New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. Community and Partnership Grants, $3,500; Shreveport Regional Arts Council, Louisiana Division of the Arts, $6,040; Louisiana Office of Tourism, $1,535; Natchitoches Historic District Development Committee, $2,500; Cane River National Heritage Area, $2,000; Natchitoches Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, $1,500; Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, Non-competitive Strategic Partnership Grant, $8,000. Rasmussen also solicited and received $5,050 in charitable donations to support the 2025 Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival.
- **Dr. Mary Reeves** (Associate Professor of Mathematics) gave several presentations:
    - "Standards-based Grading for Teacher Education" presented at the Annual Meeting of the Louisiana/ Mississippi Section of the Mathematical Association of America, in Jackson, MS, on February 22, 2025.
    - "Standards-based Grading for Elementary Math Teachers: Preliminary Insights and Future Research" presented at the MAA MathFest Meeting, in Sacramento, CA, on August 7, 2025.
- **Dr. Thomas Reynolds** (Professor of English) was awarded the Faculty Senate's inaugural Outstanding Faculty Spotlight Award for the College of Arts and Sciences.
- **Dr. Rebecca Riall**, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, had several important advances in her legal and indigenous studies work:
    - Became a child custody and civil mediator under Louisiana law.
    - Worked as a judicial hearing officer in the 11th Judicial District Court (Many, LA) where she hears protective order and domestic cases (child support, divorce, child custody, community property).
    - Presented at the Louisiana Political Science Association annual conference on constitutional and policy conundrums posed by state recognition of American Indian nations or tribes.
    - Served as a volunteer with Ho Minti Society, Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to Choctaw-Apache Community of Ebarb culture. In this role, she taught about southeastern American Indian beadwork at the Ho Minti Society Culture Camp and served as an academic advisor for grants associated with the cultural center development project.
    - Co-organizing 20th anniversary celebration of the First Nations Educational and Cultural Center at Indiana University. Dr. Riall is a co-founder and founding steering committee member of the organization.
- **Dr. Duminda Samarakoon** (Assistant Professor of Chemistry) has submitted a grant to the National Science Foundation's Research in Undergraduate Institution's program. The grant entitled "Computational Quantum Materials Research and Undergraduate Integration at a Rural Primary Undergraduate Institution" requests $300,000 to establish a sustainable computational quantum materials research program at Northwestern State University. This grant was in collaboration with Drs. Robert Page, Nabin Sapkota, and Damien Tristant.
- **Dr. Nabin Sapkota** (Professor of Engineering Technology) and **Dr. Damien Tristant** (Assistant Professor of Physics) completed a certificate in Applied Machine Learning, Generative AI, and Agents from Johns Hopkins University.
- **Dr. Katharine Scherff** (Assistant Professor of Art History) had several publications:
    - "Mediatrix of All Graces: The Shrine Madonna and the Marian Gaze." Religions–Special Issue: Materiality and Gender Constructs in Hagiography: Saints and Sacred Space. 16, no. 9 (September 2025): 1-31.
    - Session Organizer and Respondent. "Inscribed Flesh: Semiotics of the Marked Body in Early Modern Visual and Material Culture." The Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA. February 2026.
    - Session Organizer and Respondent. "Flesh and Form: The Marked Body in Material and Visual Culture." International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI. May 2026.
    - *Guest Editor* Divine Visions: A Global Exploration of Devotional Art and Iconography, c. 1200–1700. A special issue of Art Journal (Fall 2026).
    - "The 'Living Image': Embodying Christian Identity and Devotion." Art Journal–Special Issue: Divine Visions: A Global Exploration of Devotional Art and Iconography, c. 1200–1700. (Fall 2026).
- **Dr. Dean Sinclair** (Professor of Geography) has submitted two manuscripts for publication:
    - Review of *Savannah's Midnight Hour: Boosterism, Growth, and Commerce in a Nineteenth-Century American City*. Lisa L. Denmark. *South Carolina Historical Magazine* (forthcoming).
    - Review of *Philadelphia Merchants on Western Waters: Commerce and Empire in the Riverine West, 1750-1803*. Km M. Gruenwald. *Historical Geography* (forthcoming).

- **David Steele** (Instructor of Fine Arts) presented his research "A New Understanding of Graphic Notation: Dimensions of Physicality and Sound" at the Surface Design Association Conference.
- **Dr. Shane Thomas** (Assistant Professor of Music) was a guest singer with the Philadelphia Orchestra Symphonic Chorus performance of Handel's *Messiah* in December 2025.
- **Dr. Mark Thompson** (Professor of Music) performed Bass Trombone with Des Moines Metro Opera during their summer season (June 14–July 21, 2025). They presented over nine performances which were all nationally broadcast on PBS and Iowa Public Radio.
- **Dr. Damien Tristant** (Assistant Professor of Physics) presented an invited talk entitled *"Toward a Self-Learning Institutional Framework for Student Retention and Success"* at the Association of Business Information Systems Annual Conference in Richardson, Texas, March 18–21, 2026.
- **Dr. Damien Tristant** (Assistant Professor of Physics) has initiated/maintained several research collaborations:
    - A memorandum of understanding has been developed with Tulane University's Dr. Cynthia Ebinger to study seismic vibrations from natural activity and fracking. A seismometer station has been installed near Fournet Hall in January 2026.
    - In collaboration with Paul Sabatier University and the Center for Materials Elaboration and Structural Studies (CEMES) in Toulouse, France, Dr. Tristant is conducting research on the study of assembling g-C_3N_4 with TiO_2.
    - Dr. Tristant is continuing his partnership with the French Building Federation (FFB) and the University of Technology of Troyes on preserving and maintaining historical buildings using IoT sensors and AI data analysis.
- Faculty in the Department of Physical Science have published four research articles this year:
    - Puech, P., **Tristant, D.**, Chen, S., Wetzel, S., Xiang, Y., Hu, T., Zhang, L., Monthioux, M., Li, F. "Charge transfer during sodium-ion intercalation in graphite-like anodes as determined by Raman spectroscopy." *Carbon Trends*, 20, 100547 (2025).
    - Rivera-Vázquez, D. Recrystallization lab article. *ChemEdX*. November 17, 2025.
    - Dupré, D. et al. "Understanding microstructure-controlled brittle fracture and toughening through a probabilistic framework." *International Journal of Mechanical Sciences* (2026).
    - Zhen, H., Ma, P., Yang, H., Meng, F., **Tristant, D.**, Cui, T., Lei, H., Karna, S., Lu, Z.-Y., Liu, Z. "Hund's rule coupling and interlayer hybridization of intercalated transition metal dichalcogenides." *Communications Materials*, 6(1), 220 (2025).

In addition, departments and schools host several events annually that strengthen our recruiting and retention efforts. To highlight a few:

The *Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies' Student Success and Persistence Committee* **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis** (chair, Associate Professor of English), **Dr. Khirsten Doolan** (Assistant Professor of English), **Christine Ferrell** (Instructor of Languages), and **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski** (Associate Professor of English) developed and has continued retention events that have positively affected enrollment, engagement, and persistence for English majors, English minors, Creative writing minors, French minors, Gender & Sexuality Studies minors, and Spanish minors. They hosted a welcome to the department "Taco Social" on September 11, 2025, a "Grab-n-Go: Ace Your Midterms" support activity on October 7, 2025, and a "Tea and Empathy" support activity on November 4, 2025. These events attracted over 100 students and resulted in excellent retention of ELCS students.

Other Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies retention events included:

- The **Cane River Reading Series (CRRS)**, which brings published authors to campus to work with students, welcomed Brianna Corley (an NSU Creative Writing Alumna), graduate of the New School and instructor at Tyler Junior College, for a reading and discussion with creative writing students and the public on October 13, 2025, in The Cammie G. Henry Research Center at Watson Library. The CRRS is coordinated by **Dr. J. Andrew Briseno** (Associate Professor of English). This year's event attracted roughly 20 students.
- **#Currently Reading**, an event to celebrate and share what faculty and students are reading, was held on September 24, 2025, and February 19, 2026. The event is organized by **Heather Salter Dromm** and **Sadeem El Nahhas** (Instructors of English) and attracted about 35 attendees.
- ***Demon Writers Guild (DWG)***, the creative writing group at NSU, met weekly during the fall and spring semesters in 2025-2026. **Shea Montgomery** (Instructor of English) is the faculty sponsor.

DWG also held special events, including a trivia night, a novel writing event for National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), and two public student readings.

- **NSU Student Film Society** met 10 times during the 2025-2026 academic year to view and discuss films. **Dr. Allison Rittmayer** (Associate Professor of English) serves as faculty sponsor. The group also held a trivia night in both semesters, attracting more than 25 students. On October 22, 2025, the Society held a public screening of the Oscar-winning film *Sinners*, in conjunction with Sigma Tau Delta, ELCS, Gail Metoyer Jones Center, Black Studies, American Indian & Indigenous Studies, that attracted more than 100 students. The organization also partnered with Native American Studies and NASA to host NSU's 7th Annual Native Film Series for a free, public showing of Lily Gladstone-Helmed *Fancy Dance*.
- **Sigma Tau Delta**, the English honors society, met bi-weekly during the 2025-2026 academic year. The group is sponsored by **Dr. J. Ereck Jarvis** (Associate Professor of English). In addition to regular meetings, the group attended regional and national conferences, held a Poetry Pharmacy as part of NSU's Wellness Fest, and held its annual new member induction ceremony.
- ***Argus***, the Literary and Art Magazine of Northwestern State, published its 50th edition, "Serendipity," and held a release party on April 22, 2026, in conjunction with the NSU Creative Writing Award Reading, attracting over 100 students and members of the public. Argus is student run, allowing Northwestern State students to publish their work and work through the publishing process, and overseen by **Dr. Rebecca Macijeski** (Associate Professor) of English. The *Argus* staff also hosted Zine Workshops to encourage and educate student writers at Northwestern State in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026, leading to the publications of Zines throughout the academic year: "Stellar 70's," "Eclectic 80's," "Notorious 90's," "Totes 2000's." *Argus* also hosted, in conjunction with KNWD, an open mic night on October 15, 2025. Finally, the *Argus* Editor-In-Chief and Website Manager took on NYC at the College Media National Convention, and *Argus* was awarded "FIRST PLACE: Best Magazine Cover" and "HONORABLE MENTION: Best Magazine."
- **Spanish Club** met monthly during the 2025-2026 academic year and is sponsored by **Dr. Benjamin Forkner** (Associate Professor of Languages). In addition to meetings, the group worked with the Language Resource Center, HSJA, International Student Association, and Gail Metoyer Jones Center on several events including Hispanic Heritage Month Game Night, Day of the Dead Celebration [with students from Spanish courses and the support **of Jim Crawford** (Assistant Professor of Spanish)], and Latin Dance Night which attracted nearly 100 students.

The Division of Mathematics has implemented a successful recruitment strategy that has resulted in consistent growth of enrollment in the area over the past three years. Beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year, Northwestern State will have 30+ mathematics majors–a mark not realized for over a decade.

The Department of Music held many events throughout the year that brought talented potential high school students to campus:

- All-State Day–August 2025
- NSU Choral Festival–October 3, 2025
- NSU SaxFest–January 31, 2026
- NSU String Day–February 7, 2026
- Flute Festival–March 1, 2026
- NSU Double Reed Day–March 7, 2026
- NSU Piano Day and Festival–March 14, 2026
- Percussion Day–April 11, 2026

The Department of Music hosted the Louisiana Music Educators Association Instrumental and Choral Assessments. This event covered several days over two weeks in April 2026.

NSU Art Camp: The Department of Fine + Graphic Arts offers several sessions of summer arts camps for over 90 young artists (ages 5-11) as well as over 20 advanced artists (ages 12-18) to explore their own creative twists on a variety of classic and modern art.

NSU Music Academy: The Department of Music continues to enroll children and adolescents in the Natchitoches Community for lessons in piano, guitar, percussion, strings, and voice.

NSU Music Kids Camp: The Department of Music re-established this camp in Summer 2025 to introduce students (K-5) to instruments, songs, and composition.

NSULA Rock Camp: The Department of Music offers this camp to middle school/high school students to learn to play rock music in an ensemble. This year's camp will be held June 22-26, 2026

STEM Robotics Summer Camp: The Department of Engineering Technology offered two different STEM Robotics summer camps for middle school (Junior) and high school (Advanced) age students.

Workforce Development Workshop: The Department of Engineering Technology is offering two workforce development workshops on Agile Project Management and Statistical Quality Control in July 2026 to provide important job skill training to current and future industrial workers.

Annual Robotics Competition and Smart Structures Show: The Department of Engineering Technology offers this competition for middle school students in the region.

Classic on the Cane: The Spirit of Northwestern hosts a statewide marching band competition at Turpin Stadium each October.

STEM Day: The School of STEM hosts this event twice each academic year that attracts over 400 high school students to participate in various STEM activities including robotics, mathematics, drone technology, physics, anatomy and physiology, botany, veterinary medicine, chemistry, and microbiology.

JaM Day: The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts hosts this annual event attracting over 300 high school students to participate in various journalism, communication, and new media contests.

Scholars' Day: The Louisiana Scholars' College hosts this event each semester to showcase its offerings and accomplishments. Potential students participate in Scholars' classes taught by faculty, engage with current students in the program, and gain insight into what daily life is like as a Scholars' student.

Regional Social Studies Fair: The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs host the regional social studies fair on the Natchitoches campus each Spring semester.

3D Digital Summer Field School: The ARGO Lab (School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs) in collaboration with the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training holds a summer field school camp each year engaging high school-age students from the local community in documenting Natchitoches' history, primarily in the African American neighborhoods of Jackson Square and the Hill. The experience teaches students the importance of historic preservation while providing them with valuable technology transfer skills.

Writing/Coloring Contests: The Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies facilitated two brand-new community outreach programs: the Annual Easter Writing and Coloring contest (grades K through 5), and the Annual St. Patrick's Day Creative Writing Contest (grades 6 through 8). Over 300 students from regional schools participated.

Annual Destination Science Camp: The School of STEM hosts the annual Destination Science Camp each June. The camp immerses children from ages 8-15 to various workshops/activities in anatomy, physiology, microbiology, chemistry, physics, veterinary science, drone technology, and natural sciences. Over 40 children from the community attended.

Demon Math Classic: The Department of Mathematics hosts this annual event each March, attracting over 200 high school students to participate in various mathematics-related contests.

College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning

With the guidance of SSA Consulting, LLC, the administration of COAS participated in a strategic planning exercise during Summer 2025. Each academic unit within the college as well as the college as a whole developed three-year strategic plans with specific and achievable measures. Each January, progress toward the measures/goals will be reviewed.

Responsiveness and Future Innovations

As we continue to work collaboratively as scientists and artists, we strive to transform the human experience while blurring the lines between liberal arts and applied and natural science education. To do this, we must

continue to evaluate our students' learning, in both the traditional and experiential senses, to maximize its impact on our students as they prepare themselves for lives in the Arts and Sciences professions. It will be imperative that we develop students' communication and critical thinking skills; it is essential that we continue to encourage and support faculty and students as they work collaboratively on research that has the potential to bring greater meaning to our work in the Arts and Sciences; and it is critical that we engage in deeper conversations with our alumni and advisory committees who serve as valuable resources as we continue to evolve as a responsive College. These goals will be realized with the development of innovative and responsive programming (such as an interdisciplinary undergraduate certificate in scientific communication) as well as with the establishment of collaborative centers focused on creating cross-disciplinary and professional works.

We will continue to engage in crucial conversations, in which we realize that the work between liberal arts and applied and natural science, though difficult and demanding, is critical to our lives as we create graduates who are responsive and respectful, and stellar contributors to their chosen professions. As we continue to explore best practices for delivery of instruction, we will constantly evaluate how education delivered in a residential, online, or blended format can best serve the students, programs, and departments within the COAS, and how we can continue to evolve in the scope of our influence.

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD)

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development (GCEHD) is a community of eclectic students, faculty, and staff working to increase knowledge, skills, and dispositions through teaching, research, and service. The GCEHD offers a wide variety of exemplary undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare candidates for career success and positively contribute across the spectrum of professional roles and settings. These programs include teacher education, child and family studies, adult learning and development, educational technology leadership, educational leadership, special education, student affairs in higher education, counseling, health and exercise science, health and physical education, sport and recreation management, health and human performance with sports administration, exercise physiology, and public health concentrations, psychology, addiction studies, clinical psychology, social work, and military science. GCEHD consists of nine academic and support units (School of Education, School of Kinesiology, Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies, Department of Social Work, Department of Military Science and Leadership, Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Child and Family Network, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, and NSU Middle Laboratory School).

The Mission of the college states that the GCEHD is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the academic and support units within GCEHD, the College produces knowledgeable, innovative, and inspired graduates ready for lifelong learning and endeavors that contribute to the communities in which they reside.

Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, the NSU Elementary Laboratory School, the NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network, and to assisting children and their parents with learning and development.

During AC 2025-2026, the GCEHD is proud to reflect on numerous revisions to fieldwork, increased opportunities for internships, improvements in curricula, an increase in scholarships, research, and service opportunities, enhanced admission procedures, increased collaboration, and the intentional creation of a positive environment. The resilience and positive attitude of GCEHD faculty and students were evident in every program and classroom. In comparing AC 2024-2025 to AC 2025-2026, GCEHD students and faculty are pursuing educational attainment, scholarly work, and service activities.

GCEHD Degree Programs

In the Academic year of 2025-2026, the GCEHD enrolled 1810 undergraduate and graduate students in 50 degree and certificate programs. Five Hundred Seven (507) students (ages 3-14) enrolled in the NSU Elementary and Middle Laboratory schools and the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center (CDC). Fifty-nine (59) military cadets were enrolled as full-time students in fall 2025.

More than 100 full-time and 40 adjunct faculty teach courses throughout the GCEHD. The Faculty and Degree Programs offered by GCEHD include:

Bachelor of Music Education (offered in conjunction with the School of Creative and Performing Arts)
Bachelor of Social Work: Social Work
Bachelor of Science: Addiction Studies, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Child & Family Studies, Health & Exercise Science, Health & Physical Education, Psychology, Secondary Education and Teaching, Sport, and Recreation Management
Master of Arts: Adult Learning and Development, Counseling, Student Affairs in Higher Education
Master of Arts in Teaching: Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Elementary & Special Education, Middle School Education, Middle & Special Education Mild/Moderate, Secondary Education, Secondary & Special Education Mild/Moderate
Master of Education: Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Education, Educational Leadership, Educational Technology Leadership, Special Education
Master of Science: Clinical Psychology, Health and Human Performance
Master of Social Work: Social Work
Educational Specialist: Educational Leadership and Instruction
Doctor of Education: Adult Learning and Development

The GCEHD measures academic success through multiple metrics, including overall grade point average, number of degrees awarded, and student retention (persistence).

During 2025-2026, the GCEHD awarded 391 undergraduate and graduate degrees compared to 447 in 2024-2025. Seven cadets were commissioned as 2nd lieutenants in the U.S. Army during 2025-2026.

For AC 2025-2026, retention rates for departments/schools within GCEHD ranged from 83.67% to 86.49%. GCEHD had a Fall 2024 to Fall 2025 retention rate of 75.13% for Entering Freshmen.

Alumni and Student Success

Alumni:

Alumni of the GCEHD have been remarkably successful in their chosen professions. A few alumni successes are highlighted below:

- The following alumni returned to their alma mater in the Fall of 2025 as honorary captains for Demon football. NSU recognized the military service of:
  CPT Gavin Bazer, on 4 October 2025
  LTC Calvin Hoover, US Army Retired, on 25 October 2025
  Kenneth "Scott" Ford, on 8 November 2025.
- 2023 marked the passing of NSU ROTC Alum **MAJ(R) Leonard "Ted" Fowler**. He graduated from NSU in 1968 and served in the Vietnam War from 1970 to 1971. From 1974 to 2005, he was a teacher and coach at various schools throughout Natchitoches Parish. He continued his life of service as President and Treasurer of the Natchitoches Association of Educators, and contributed over 20 years as a Eucharistic Minister at the Immaculate Conception Basilica of Natchitoches. Additionally, he was the Commander of the Natchitoches J.C. Keyser Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1962 and the 2nd Vice Commander of the Natchitoches American Legion, Gordon Peters, Post 10, for eight

years. MAJ Fowler returned to support the Demon Battalion by serving as the Chief of Staff and then Deputy Chief of Staff on the executive board of the Northwestern Demon Regiment Alumni Organization and was inducted into the NDR Hall of Fame in 2018. The **MAJ (R) Ted Fowler** Scholarship was established in his honor by his wife **Mrs. Deanna Fowler**, in the spring of 2026.

- During the annual Military Ball, **COL (R) Gayland D. Muse** was inducted into the NDR Hall of Fame. He graduated and was commissioned from NSU in 1974. An infantry officer, he later transitioned to become an Army Aviator and served with distinction for over 29 years on Active Duty. Upon retirement, he continues to volunteer at the local Veterans Affairs clinic and serves with the American Red Cross, assisting with disaster preparedness.
- **Dr. Matthew Magee** (Graduated in 2025 with a Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Development from the School of Education) has accepted a position as the Dean of Agriculture, Business, and Technology at Highland Community College.
- **Dr. Craig Leager** (Graduated in 2024 with a Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Development from the School of Education) has accepted a position as the Executive Dean of Instruction at Indian Hills Community College.
- **Lillie Christaw**, who graduated in 2026 from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies Master's in Clinical Psychology Program, has been accepted into the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at Jackson State University.
- **Hilary Bennett**, a Fall 2025 undergraduate in Psychology and Addiction Studies, was accepted into the Doctoral program in Clinical Psychology at Fielding Graduate University.
- **Macy Vascocu**, Spring 2026 Master's in Clinical Psychology graduate, received the Service and Community Engagement Fellowship through the Fulbright Association.
- Kinesiology (formerly HHP) had a 100% acceptance rate for all its health and exercise science pre-professional students who applied to physical therapy and occupational therapy graduate programs (2025–2026).

  Physical Therapy:
  - **Victoria Byrd**–Texas A&M Texarkana DPT
  - **Shiley Cartinez**–LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport (LSUHSC)-DPT (graduated May 2025)
  - **Katelynn Furlow**–ULM DPT (graduated Dec 2025)
  - **Latyriona Jones**–LSUHSC New Orleans DPT (graduated May 2025)
  - **Kaci McDaniel**–Texas Woman's University Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT; graduated Dec 2025)
  - **Jacob Mount**–University of Louisiana Monroe - DPT (graduated Dec 2025)
  - **Ja'Naya Woodard** – University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM)- DPT (graduated May 2026)

  Occupational Therapy:
  - **Caroline Blanchard**-LSUHSC Shreveport–OTD (graduated May 2026)
  - **Linzi Lampert**–ULM OTD (graduated Dec 2025)
  - **Arielle Logan–**LSUHSC Shreveport–OTD (graduated Dec 2025)
  - **Madison Raymond**–ULM–Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD; graduated May 2026)
  - **Madison Simms**–Texas Christian University (TCU) OTD (graduated May 2025)
  - **Kerrigan Vincent**–A.T. Still University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) graduated Dec 2025
  - **Tatum Waites**–LSUHSC Shreveport–OTD (graduated Dec 2025)
- **Reina Becnel Lim** (Graduated in 2025) was accepted into the Tulane University Master of Social Work Advanced Standing Dual Degree MSW/MS-DRL and is a Roll Wave Scholar. As a continuation of a class project in SOWK 3140, Mrs. Lim started a non-profit that supports veterans accessing service-based benefits and entitlements in the New York area.
- The second class of the NSU Master of Social Work accepted BSW graduates **Adrianna Maddox and Ava Ward**.

Current Students:

- **Cadet Colton Wood** earned Basic Airborne Wings after completing a 3-week Basic Airborne Course that trains Soldiers in Airborne operations at Fort Benning, Georgia.
- **Cadet Layla Wood**, named the 2026 Legacy Cadet, graduated and commissioned from NSU in May 2026 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a Concentration in Management and a Minor in Military Leadership. She will be a logistician and serve on Active Duty.

- The 76th Demon Battalion competed in the annual 6th Brigade Ranger Challenge at Fort Benning, Georgia, against the other 39 Senior ROTC programs in the 6th Brigade. NSU finished 19th overall and placed 1st among all Louisiana programs. Led by Coach Reeves Flurry and Co-Captains Miguel Flores and Jacob Mullican, competitors were:
  Cadet Joao Vitor Dos Santos
  Cadet Ethan Jones
  Cadet Brendan Campbell
  Cadet Tin Huynh
  Cadet Evyn Goree
  Cadet Joseph Resendez
  Cadet Arch Bandin
  Cadet Kyra Cole
  Cadet Skylar Fontenot
- The Superior Cadet Award recognizes those Cadets who show academic and military leadership and demonstrate strong officer potential. Award recipients are:
  Top MS I–**Cadet Joseph Resendez**
  Top MS II–**Cadet Evyn Goree**
  Top MS III–**Cadet Megan Franchino**
  Top MS IV–**Cadet Layla Wood**
- **CDT Layla Wood** is the recipient of the department's highest honor–the Major General Urban W. Wise Touchstone Award. The term "Touchstone" was taken from the Cadet Creed, and we use it to mark the character of the recipient. The award reads, "Touchstone: the standard against which others are measured." The award was presented during our annual military ball on April 11th.
- ROTC Commission for Spring 2026 includes **Christian Holmes**, BGS, Active-Duty Chemical Corps; **Ethan Jones**, BS Biology, Active-Duty Chemical Corps; **Lawson Turner**, BA Communication, Active Duty Armor; **Layla Wood**, BS Business Administration, Active-Duty Logistics. Cadets were commissioned as Second Lieutenants in a ceremony on 14 May with NSU Alum Lieutenant Colonel John Waller of the Louisiana National Guard as the guest speaker.
- NSU students attended the Future Educators Honor Roll ceremony, hosted by the State of Louisiana at the historic Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge on Tuesday, May 5th, 2026. This prestigious event recognized aspiring educators who are already making a meaningful impact in the field of education. Northwestern State University was proud to have three honorees: a graduating senior in elementary education, one in secondary education, and a high school student who will be attending NSU to pursue a degree in early childhood education.
- Two students at the School of Education attended the Teacher Leader Summit.
- The School of Education recognized 76 students for Teacher Candidacy on April 24, 2026, during the Red Apple Pinning Ceremony.
- The School of Education recognized seven residents on December 8, 2025, and 21 residents on May 4th, 2026, during the Gold Apple Pinning Ceremony.
- The School of Education collaborates with the NSU Career Center for the Spring Education Job Fair; 35 residents attended the event.
- Seventeen students were admitted to the Phi Alpha National Honor Society for Social Work.
- All of the graduate students in Clinical Psychology presented their research at NSU Research Day.
- The Psychology Department awarded a total of 29,000 in multiple scholarships to students, including Thornton Family, Flourishing Junior, and Senior Success Scholarships, which totaled $29,000.
- The Social Work Department awarded $10,000 in scholarships to students, and the Title IV-E grant sponsored $45,000 for Child Welfare Program stipends. The total scholarship amount was $55,000.
- Two students from the School of Kinesiology received National Scholar awards from the American Kinesiology Association. **Sileena Farrell** received the AKA Undergraduate Scholar Award, and **Tarajh Hudson** received the AKA Master's Scholar Award.
- One student from the School of Kinesiology presented at NSU Research Day Spring 2026.
- The GCEHD awarded $35,000 in need-based Tuition Scholarships to NSU- Elementary Lab and Middle Lab students.

- Fifty-two students received awards at the 2025-2026 Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Honors Convocation.

Academic Engagement

- The Department of Military Science hosted 58 JROTC Cadets from 6 high schools on March 13th for the annual Demon Challenge competition. Held at Noe Armory, the all-day, 10-event competition introduces high school students to a series of physical and leadership-based tasks designed to build relationships between schools and inspire Cadet excellence.
- Advanced Camp is the capstone leader development opportunity for all Cadets between their MS III and MS IV years of ROTC. Those who completed Camp at Fort Knox, KY, were:
  Cadet Todd Gladish
  Cadet Ethan Jones
  Cadet Lawson Turner
  Cadet Layla Wood
- Cadet Troop Leader Training provides the opportunity to shadow Army officers and learn how active-duty units operate and conduct training: **Cadet Layla Wood** served with the Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion for the United States Army Europe and Africa, Wiesbaden, Germany.
- The Department of Military Science had outstanding recruiting activities: they visited 89 high schools, 1 LA Youth Camp, 2 NSU N-Side View events, all NSU Freshman Connection Sessions, 3 counselor luncheons, 6 recruiting receptions, Caddo Parish JROTC Inservice, LA State JROTC Drill Meet, LHSAA Softball tournament recruiting, Leesville High School and Natchitoches Central High School JROTC Drill Meets, and they hosted Demon Challenge on NSU's campus as mentioned above.
- The School of Education proudly hosted the 2026 Regional Educators Rising Conference on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, centered around the inspiring theme, *For the Love of Education*. The event welcomed approximately 150 attendees, including middle and high school students, club sponsors, community presenters, and volunteer judges. Students competed across seven dynamic events, showcasing their passion and potential for future careers in education.
- Eighteen students and faculty from Northwestern State University's Department of Social Work got a close look at the workings of state government and the importance of advocacy during a two-day visit to Baton Rouge on April 13-14, 2026. The group participated in NASW-LA's lobby day, where social workers throughout Texas and Louisiana highlighted concerns specific to the field of social work. The group was recognized on the floor of the House, where they received a proclamation from the State of Louisiana. Rebecca Harris, Secretary for the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, visited with faculty and students and discussed concerns unique to the child welfare system in Louisiana. Students and faculty also spent meaningful time at the Department of Children and Family Services to learn more about that department's programs.
- The Bachelor of Science in Addiction Studies at NSU has been ranked among the best in the nation for affordability, quality, and accessibility.
- The EdD Adult Learning and Development program faculty encourages its students to present at the state and regional levels. Within the 2025-2026 calendar year, the Ed.D. faculty and students have presented at conferences 24 times.
- The EdD Adult Learning and Development program faculty created a week to celebrate our Ed.D. students and other graduate students with an initiative called Grad Students Rock. Grad Students Rock offers resources and guidance in scholarly writing as well as a chance to visit faculty.
- The EdD Adult Learning and Development program graduated 13 students and currently has 74 students enrolled for fall. Our EdD graduates serve in leadership positions such as Chancellor, Dean, Executive Director, Principal, CFO, VP, Executive Assistant, and in areas of governance for the ULS system.
- The Social Work Department accepted 21 new applicants for Master of Social Work Cohort 2. The second cohort will start in the fall of 2026 and offer part-time and full-time plans of study.
- Dr. Deep successfully delivered *Well-being Workshops for Future Educators* to 100 students in the School of Education and the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies.

- The GCEHD Faculty presented multiple topic sessions at state, regional, national, and international conferences. Many faculty members have been in leadership positions in professional organizations.
- The GCEHD Appreciation Day was well attended and received positive responses from students, faculty, and staff.
- The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development honored 52 students at the GCEHD Spring Convocation. Awards were given in each department, determined by criteria established and voted on by the respective faculties.
- The Title IV-E at Northwestern State University administers the Louisiana Child Welfare Scholars Program, which provides financial support and workforce development opportunities for students pursuing careers in child welfare at eight public universities throughout the state. Under the current grant structure, the program provides $372,000 in student stipends through the NSU contract over the three-year grant period.
- The Rapides Foundation Future of Health C.A.R.E. Program Grant aimed at Louisiana workforce development in Healthcare Careers, including Behavioral Health such as Social Work, Psychology, and Addiction Studies. Multidisciplinary partnerships involved GCEHD, College of Nursing, and School of Allied Health. Through this grant, GCEHD served 470 juniors and seniors from 26 High Schools. We have earned a strong, positive reputation at the eight Central Louisiana Parish (Veron, Allen, Rapides, Avoyelles, Winn, LaSalle, Catahoula, and Natchitoches) School Board Offices that help us identify and transport their high school students to engage with our team of faculty members and learn about healthcare careers and the academic pathways that lead to workforce entry.
- Through grants from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the NSU Child and Family Network provided 300 training sessions and over 3,000 hours of coaching in the 16-parish area.
- The Bossier Early Childhood Ready Start Network (BECRSN) serves as the community lead agency for Bossier Parish, coordinating quality improvement efforts across public school Pre-K, Head Start, and early learning centers. Analysis of 2024-2025 CLASS Performance.
- The Louisiana Pathways is a statewide scholarship and career development program for early childhood providers housed under the NSU Child and Family Network. In the last year, LA Pathways awarded 1357 scholarships totaling $1,655,777.30. The scholarships represent increased qualifications of personnel in early childhood.

New Initiatives:

- The Social Work Department received approval from the Council on Social Work Education for Benchmark 1 for the MSW program.
- **Connie Guillory**, the Deputy Assistant Secretary 2–Child Welfare for the Department of Children and Family Services, was the keynote speaker for the Child Welfare Symposium held in conjunction with NSU's homecoming on October 3, 2025. The Symposium had 110 attendees, consisting of 43 DCFS employees. Eight Continuing Education units were provided free of charge.
- The Social Work Department sponsored ten no-cost Lunch and Learn events virtually and in person for faculty, students, alumni, and the local professional community. A total of 440 participants attended these 10 Lunch and Learn events.
- In honor of National Social Work Month, the Social Work Department hosted its first annual appreciation for area social workers during the Lunch and Learn event on March 27, 2026. Twenty local vendors and community partners participated in the celebration, providing donations such as lunch, headshots, resource kits, flowers, and door prizes. One clinical continuing education unit was provided free of charge to 55 attendees (30 f2f and 25 online participants)
- Five Social Work faculty members submitted a proposal to present end-of-life planning for practitioners due to the sudden passing of a practitioner in the Natchitoches community. This proposal was approved for the Gulf States Conference in 2027.
- Three faculty members participated in two virtual Lunch and Learns sponsored by the College of Nursing.
- The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies presented 13 oral presentations at Research Day 2026.
- **Dr. Charles King** attended the American Society of Addiction Medicine Conference in San Diego, CA.
- The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies completed preliminary work for MOU with Houston City College.
- The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies faculty and students presented six presentations at the Southeastern Psychological Association Conference.
- The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies received an additional $100,000 from the Board of Regents for the Collegiate Recovery Program.

- Students in the Master of Clinical Psychology program can apply for Licensure in the State of Louisiana. **Dr. Lindsey** from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies advocated for our Master of Clinical Psychology program.
- The School of Education underwent its seven-year re-accreditation review by CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) on November 10–12, 2025. Initial licensure programs received accreditation from April 19, 2026, through June 30, 2033, while advanced programs received probationary accreditation from April 19, 2026, through June 30, 2028.
- **Dr. Christy L. Hornsby** and **Dr. Laura B. Norman** have released a new book titled, *The Beauty of Broken Pieces, Broken, Not Defined-The Broken Bowl Project.*
- The Department of Health & Human Performance was renamed the School of Kinesiology.
- The Roper Biomechanics and Motion Analysis Lab was officially named in the School of Kinesiology on April 24, 2026, in honor of **Chris Roper and his parents, Rick and Mary Roper**. The Ropers have raised over $427,000 in scholarships in their son's name.
- The GCEHD provided $12,362.50 to improve student engagement at the School of Kinesiology. The funds were used for the AMTI Force and Motion Force Plate. AMTI Force and Motion force plates are high-precision, multi-axis sensors that measure ground reaction forces (GRF), center of pressure, and moments in three dimensions (vertical, horizontal, lateral). Used extensively in biomechanics, sports science, and clinical rehabilitation, they analyze movements like walking, jumping, and running to assess balance, power, and injury risks.
- The GCEHD provided $4,580.70 for the School of Kinesiology's interactive conference room, $5,383 for the School of Education's interactive classroom, and $5,731.22 for psychological testing and assessment kits for the Master of Clinical Psychology Program.
- **Ms. Faith Stanfield**, Director of the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center (CDC), partnered with the NSU Child and Family Network to redesign their learning environment with the goal of creating a model space that other programs can visit and use as inspiration for their own transformations. With the guidance and support of Nancy Alexander and the Child and Family Network, the CDC team successfully reimagined the space to be more developmentally appropriate and reflective of Montessori and Reggio-inspired practices.
- **Ms. Faith Stanfield**, Director of the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center (CDC), highlighted that the CDC is planning to redesign the outdoor playground to reflect the inside redesign that just recently had a ribbon cutting for the innovative research and design that has been completed. We will serve as a model center for all other Natchitoches centers and the surrounding area.
- **Ms. Caron Coleman**, Principal of NSU Elementary Lab School, highlighted that the NSU Elementary Lab School demonstrated outstanding academic and organizational growth during the 2025-2026 school year. Students achieved proficiency growth in all content areas across every grade level, reflecting the dedication of both students and staff to continuous improvement and high achievement. The school also experienced growth in all Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) processes, strengthening instructional practices. A newly implemented teacher coaching plan model provided targeted support and feedback, resulting in exceptional growth in teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Additionally, leadership capacity increased significantly, as evidenced by improved scores on the annual TAP School Review. We had a fabulous year of learning at Little Lab!
- The NSU Child and Family Network distributed over 250 curriculum kits aligned with the new Louisiana Early Childhood Standards in the service area to centers where staff have participated in professional development related to curriculum implementation.
- The Director of Child and Family Network, **Ms. Nancy P. Alexander**, presented at three conferences: National Association for the Education of Young Children(NAEYC) with **Dr. Sandra Duncan** and **Ms. Faith Stanfield** on the redesign of the NSU child development center, another at the International Association on the Child's Right to Play on incorporating technology in play scenarios, and a third at the Southern early Childhood Association on incorporating technology in training adults.
- The NSU Child and Family Network received four new projects funded by LDOE focusing on family engagement, screening children with special needs, workforce development, and literacy. These four projects will carry over into the next budget period.
- The NSU Child and Family Network has been awarded the Lead Agency and Ready Start grants in the amount of $198,438 for the 2026-2027 school year. They look forward to continued growth in those programs.

- **Dr. Andrew Fultz**, Executive Director of the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy and former NSU Title IV-E Program Manager, is in the process of a three-year grant renewal through the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Southeastern Louisiana University. Pending contract acceptance, the grant is projected to provide approximately $8.84 million over three years to support child welfare education and workforce development across seven public universities in Louisiana.
- **Mr. Steven Gruesbeck** received the Cenla Mental Health Workforce Accelerator Program (Cenla MHWAP) grant on July 1st, 2025. The program aims to increase the number of master's level counselors and social workers who become licensed and practice mental healthcare in nine central Louisiana parishes: Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn. In consultation with The National Council for Mental Health and The Rapides Foundation, we built the infrastructure with which we are now engaging with three types of stakeholders: Early Career Masters-level Mental Health Professionals; Agencies that provide Mental Health Services; and Board Approved Clinical Supervisors. Our first cohort consists of 2 x LMSWs and 2 x PLPCs. All four of these 'candidates' work full-time at partner agencies in Central Louisiana, under the supervision of the Board of Supervisors. They will receive ongoing mentoring, professional development, and test preparation. We anticipate they will complete their licenses within two years.
- The Demons for Recovery Program organized and participated in multiple activities such as red ribbon week, ribbon cutting, open house, Christmas ornament decorating event, holiday food drive, rock painting, N Side view, sober tailgate event, wellness fest, learning seminars on how nicotine hijacks your brain, true colors personality assessment, mindfulness and visual imagery, importance of self-care, self-management and monitoring during stressful time, mastering time management, building resilience under pressure, giving yourself grace Narcan training. Approximately 500 participants attended these events. The champion stories highlight that one of the program graduates was accepted into a PhD in Clinical Psychology Program and Demons of Recovery Program's members 3.5 overall GPA.

Faculty and Staff Awards/Recognition:

- **Mrs. Shannon Wall-Hale** was selected to attend the NACADA National Academic Advising Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- **Dr. Christine Gilmore** successfully defended her Doctoral dissertation to earn a PhD in Counseling Psychology.
- **Dr. Patrice Moulton** was appointed Vice President of the Fulbright Association National Board of Directors.
- **Dr. Kristen Walker Authement** received the Faculty Excellence in Academic Advising Award and presented at the NACADA conference in Las Vegas.
- **Dr. Keicia Hawkins** was elected Vice-President/President Elect of MSERA.
- **Dr. Wendi O'Halloran** was appointed as LAATE (Louisiana Association of Teacher Educators) president, the LDOE TCAC (Teacher Candidacy Appeals Committee), and was selected to serve on the LDOE EPP Advisory Committee.
- **Dr. Michelle Morris** presented at the National Field Experience Annual Conference in Magnolia, AR.
- **Dr. Jessica Church** became an IGNITE facilitator and partnered with the LSU Gordon A. Cain Center for STEM Literacy and Capital Area STEM to host the first-ever IGNITE Elementary Computer Science Integration training for both pre-service and in-service elementary teachers at NSU.
- **Dr. Dylan Solice** was recognized on February 25, 2026, as a member of the Natchitoches Young Professionals "4 Under Forty" Class of 2025 by the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Solice serves on the executive committee of the Natchitoches Young Professionals.
- Ten Social Work and Title IV-E faculty and staff attended and participated in statewide, regional, and national conferences: CSWE–Denver, CO; BPD–New Orleans, LA (accepted presentations); NASW-LA- Baton Rouge, LA (accepted presentation); Title IV-E Roundtable–Denver, CO; (breakout session moderator) Gulf States Regional Conference–Gulf Shores, MS.
- **Dr. Neeru Deep** completed a Certificate of Leadership Excellence in Executive Development from Harvard University Division of Continuing Education.
- **Ms. Beverly Broadway** received the NSU Distinguished Teaching Award during the NSU on-call week.
- **Dr. Wendi O'Halloran, Ms. Shannon Wall-Hale,** and **Ms. Lisa Mount** received the GCEHD Distinguished Teaching Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.

- **Dr. Michelle Fazio-Brunson** and **Dr. Billie Myers** received the GCEHD Distinguished Scholar Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- **Dr. Lauren Mitchell, Ms. Sarah Ebarb,** and **LTC(R) Joshua Drake** received the GCEHD Distinguished Service Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- **Ms. Tammy Dobson, Mr. Fred R. Flurry,** and **Dr. Andrew Fultz** received the Distinguished Staff Award during the GCEHD Spring Convocation.
- **Ms. Margaret Bell**, Facilitator of Military Science and Office Manager, and **Ms. Stephanie Anthony-Smith**, Assistant to the Dean of the GCEHD, attended the Louisiana Institute for Administrative Assistants (LIAA) Conference in Fall 2025 at Lake Charles. The conference is geared toward individual professional development and networking opportunities for office personnel.
- **Ms. Natalie Ducote**, Principal of NSU Middle Lab School, highlighted that the NSU Middle Lab School Orchestra competed and won at Festival Disney in Orlando, Florida, on April 8-12, 2026. Festival Disney is the premier music festival where 50 orchestras, bands, and choirs perform with hopes of winning one of the coveted Mickey Mouse trophies. The Middle Lab Orchestra consisted of 75 string orchestra members from grades six through eight.
- **Ms. Natalie Ducote**, Principal of NSU Middle Lab School, shared that the NSU Middle Lab School is proud to recognize eighth-grader **Khloe Kaufman** for an extraordinary accomplishment. Khloe was recently named a Louisiana State Student of the Year Finalist, an honor reserved for only eight students statewide. Among approximately 45,000 eighth-grade students across Louisiana, Khloe distinguished herself through her outstanding academic achievement, leadership, character, and service, earning a place among the state's top eight students. Khloe's accomplishment reflects not only her hard work and dedication but also the support of her family, teachers, and school community.
- **Dr. Christy Hornsby** from the School of Education received a Freeport McMoran Endowed Professorship in Pluralistic Education for $11,855.
- **Dr. Neeru Deep** received an Arthur Watson Endowed Professorship for Excellence in Academic Accommodation for $9,659.
- **Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson** from the School of Education received the Melba L Steeg Endowed Professorship in Primary Education for $10,808.
- **Dr. Dylan Solice** from the School of Education received the Dan, Lily Chase and Daughters Marty Causey, and Lisa Chase Endowed Professorship in the College of Education for $8,282.
- **Dr. April Giddens** from the School of Education received a Thomas E Stewart Endowed Professorship in Education for $7,556.
- **Dr. Charles King** from the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies received Dr. Francisco A. Silva Endowed Professorship in Psychology (Addiction Studies) for $6,829.
- **LTC Joshua Drake** from the Department of Military Sciences and Leadership received a Demon Regiment Endowed Professorship in Military Science of $7,266.
- **Dr. Debra Hailey** from the School of Education received a Family and Consumer Science Endowed Professorship for $7,369.
- **Dr. Katrina Jordan** from the School of Education received a Carolyn Bellue Holly Endowed Professorship in Teaching and Learning for $12,267.
- **Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith** from the Department of Health and Human Performance received Dr. Violet Davion Shaver's Endowed Professorship in HHP for $6,162.
- **Dr. MaryAnne Candley** from the Social Work Department received Louise Mathilde's Bradford Endowed Professorship in Social Work for $6,049.
- **Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith** received the National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education (NAKHE) Distinguished Service Award on January 6, 2026.
- The GCEHD and the Social Work Department awarded multiple scholarships to faculty and staff to attend State and National Conferences.
- Four conference proposals were accepted from the Social Work department. Two faculty members presented at the National Conferences: The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors and

the National Association of Social Workers-LA.

- Four faculty members from the School of Kinesiology presented at the National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education (NAKHE) conference in January 2026.
- Twenty-five faculty and staff members received $28,814.26 in the GCEHD Research and Conference Scholarship. They represented NSU well in the local, state, regional, and national conferences.

Closing thoughts: The GCEHD is a beautiful college with deep roots in positively impacting and building flourishing communities through education, scholarly work, and service activities. As the Dean, I am very proud of the work we achieved this year as a team and thankful to the NSU Leadership team for always supporting us.

College of Nursing & School of Allied Health

Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH) comprises a diverse group of faculty, staff, and healthcare professionals dedicated to providing high-quality nursing and allied health education throughout Louisiana and the surrounding region. CONSAH strives to serve as an innovator and leader in preparing nursing and allied health professionals. Its programs, initiatives, and strategic priorities are guided by the following mission:

Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health advances the mission of the University through innovative teaching, experiential service learning, and scholarship. The College of Nursing and School of Allied Health offers quality healthcare education to a diverse student population to achieve their goal of becoming responsible healthcare providers who improve the health of our region, state, and nation.

In alignment with its mission to provide quality healthcare education and strengthen the regional workforce, CONSAH expanded educational pathways, supported program capacity, and prioritized workforce-responsive growth during the 2025–2026 academic year.

Within the College of Nursing, CONSAH continued to strengthen the Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs through expanded clinical partnerships, targeted recruitment, and flexible pathways for students entering or advancing within the nursing profession. The ASN curriculum was reorganized to incorporate the Allied Health-to-ASN, Military Medic/Paramedic-to-RN, and LPN-to-RN pathways within a unified registered nursing curriculum structure. Summer enrollment opportunities were also expanded to support student progression and timely degree completion.

Enrollment in the graduate nursing and post-master's certificate programs remained strong, particularly in the Family Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner tracks. These programs support the preparation of advanced practice registered nurses who provide primary and behavioral healthcare services across Louisiana, including rural and underserved communities.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice program continued to prepare advanced practice nurses and nursing leaders across several specialty areas. During 2025–2026, the former Organizational Systems Leadership concentration was replaced by two distinct pathways: Educational Leadership and Executive Leadership. Both were launched during the academic year to provide clearly defined options for nurses pursuing leadership roles in academic and healthcare settings. The Nurse Anesthesia concentration maintained three concurrently enrolled cohorts and sustained its expanded cohort capacity in response to statewide demand for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists.

Within the School of Allied Health, academic mobility and access remained strategic priorities. The Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health and the Radiologic Technologist-to-Bachelor of Science in Radiologic

Sciences programs provide pathways for credentialed allied health professionals seeking academic and professional advancement. Certificate offerings in Invasive Cardiovascular Technology, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, and Computed Tomography were structured as undergraduate certificates to improve access for eligible associate-prepared professionals.

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program continued its development following initial programmatic accreditation and enrolled approximately 25 students across three cohorts. Six students graduated during the 2025–2026 academic year. The Master of Science in Allied Health program enrolled its inaugural cohort, expanding graduate-level opportunities for allied health professionals pursuing leadership and administrative roles in healthcare.

An integral part of CONSAH's mission is preparing healthcare professionals who improve the health of the region, state, and nation. Students enrolled in applicable clinical programs complete extensive supervised clinical experiences in hospitals, clinics, community agencies, and other healthcare settings across North and Central Louisiana. Required clinical hours vary by program and are established in accordance with professional, regulatory, and accreditation standards.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, CONSAH continued to prepare graduates who recognize and respond to the holistic needs of patients, families, and communities. Faculty modeled and reinforced the core values that define CONSAH's culture and mission: excellence, respect, open communication, teamwork, empathy, compassion, integrity, ethical behavior, and interprofessional collaboration. These values support the development of healthcare professionals who practice with competence, compassion, accountability, and professionalism.

Degree Programs

CONSAH offers eight degree programs ranging from the associate degree through the practice doctorate, three post-master's certificate programs in nursing, three undergraduate certificate programs in radiologic sciences, and one post-baccalaureate certificate in diagnostic medical sonography. During Fall 2025, CONSAH enrolled approximately 2,458 undergraduate and graduate students, including approximately 2,003 students in the College of Nursing and 455 students in the School of Allied Health. Programs were offered at multiple locations, including Alexandria, Leesville/Fort Polk, Natchitoches, and Shreveport, as well as through online and hybrid delivery formats where applicable.

During 2025–2026, CONSAH employed 81 full-time faculty members and 74 adjunct faculty members who supported instruction across nursing and allied health programs.

Degrees offered through the College of Nursing include:

1. Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN)
    a) Traditional ASN
    b) Transition to RN
        1. Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)-to-ASN
        2. Paramedic/Military Medic-to-ASN
        3. Allied Health-to-ASN
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
    a) Traditional BSN
    b) Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)-to-BSN
    c) Registered Nurse (RN)-to-BSN
    d) Accelerated BSN (BS-to-BSN)
3. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
    a) Nurse Educator Concentration

    b) Nurse Administrator Concentration
    c) Nurse Practitioner Concentrations
        1. Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
        2. Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
        3. Family Nurse Practitioner
        4. Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
        5. Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
        6. Women's Health Nurse Practitioner
4. Post-Master's Certificate Programs (PMC)
    a) Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Concentration
    b) Family Nurse Practitioner Concentration
    c) Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Concentration
5. Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
    a) Educational Leadership Concentration
    b) Executive Leadership Concentration
    c) Nurse Anesthesia Concentration

Degrees offered through the School of Allied Health include:

1. Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health (BASAH)
    a) Health Science and Technology Concentration
    b) Health Sciences Leadership and Management Concentration
2. Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences (BSRS)
    a) Diagnostic Medical Sonography Concentration
    b) Radiography Concentration
    c) Radiologic Technologist (RT) to BSRS Concentration
3. Undergraduate Certificate Programs
    a) Invasive Cardiovascular Technology
    b) Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
    c) Computed Tomography (CT)
4. Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
    a) Diagnostic Medical Sonography
5. Master of Science in Allied Health (MSAH)
6. Master of Science in Radiologic Sciences (MSRS)

The Louisiana State Board of Nursing provides regulatory approval and oversight for CONSAH nursing programs as applicable. The Associate of Science in Nursing program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing through 2030.

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, post-master's certificate, and Doctor of Nursing Practice programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. CONSAH submitted the required CCNE Continuous Improvement Progress Report for the BSN, MSN, post-master's certificate, and DNP programs in June 2026.

The Nurse Anesthesia concentration, delivered through the BSN-to-DNP pathway, completed a Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs continued-accreditation site visit from April 29 through May 1, 2026. The final accreditation decision is expected in October 2026.

The College of Nursing is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation through 2027.

The Radiography program received eight-year term of continuing accreditation from the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology in December 2025, the maximum accreditation term awarded by the agency.

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program received initial accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs in May 2025, upon the recommendation of the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. Accreditation was awarded in the Abdominal-Extended, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Vascular concentrations.

These accreditation outcomes demonstrate compliance with applicable national educational and programmatic standards.

Degrees Awarded

CONSAH has consistently produced a substantial number of nursing and allied health graduates who contribute to Louisiana's healthcare workforce. During Academic Year 2019–2020, CONSAH awarded 587 degrees, including 504 through the College of Nursing and 83 through the School of Allied Health. In Academic Year 2020–2021, CONSAH awarded 641 degrees, including 554 nursing degrees and 87 allied health degrees. In Academic Year 2021–2022, CONSAH awarded 657 degrees, including 527 nursing degrees and 130 allied health degrees. In Academic Year 2022–2023, CONSAH awarded 579 degrees, including 481 nursing degrees and 98 allied health degrees. In Academic Year 2023–2024, CONSAH awarded 608 degrees, including 501 nursing degrees and 107 allied health degrees. In Academic Year 2024–2025, CONSAH awarded 579 degrees, including 470 nursing degrees and 109 allied health degrees.

During Summer 2025, CONSAH awarded 128 degrees. The College of Nursing awarded 111 degrees, including 43 Associate of Science in Nursing degrees and 68 Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees. The School of Allied Health awarded 17 degrees, including 13 Bachelor of Science degrees and 4 Master of Science degrees.

During Fall 2025, CONSAH awarded 226 degrees. The College of Nursing awarded 204 degrees, including 37 Associate of Science in Nursing degrees, 133 Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees, 27 Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees, and seven Master of Science in Nursing degrees. Five additional students earned post-master's certificates. The School of Allied Health awarded 22 degrees, including six Bachelor of Applied Science degrees, 10 Bachelor of Science degrees, and six master's degrees.

During Spring 2026, CONSAH awarded 236 degrees. The College of Nursing awarded 183 degrees, including 63 Associate of Science in Nursing degrees, 51 Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees, and 69 Master of Science in Nursing degrees. Seven additional students earned post-master's certificates. The School of Allied Health awarded 53 degrees, including seven Bachelor of Applied Science degrees, 45 Bachelor of Science degrees, and one master's degree.

During AC 2025–2026, CONSAH awarded 590 degrees. The College of Nursing awarded 498 degrees, and the School of Allied Health awarded 92 degrees.

Program Growth

The demand for nurses and allied health professionals remained high throughout Louisiana, and CONSAH continued to respond through strategic program growth, expanded educational pathways, external funding, and healthcare partnerships. During the 2025–2026 academic year, CONSAH submitted multiple grant proposals and maintained federal, state, foundation, and healthcare-partner awards supporting faculty, students, workforce development, program innovation, and access to healthcare education.

A major external funding achievement was the receipt of approximately $2.6 million through the four-year Health Resources and Services Administration Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention–

Workforce Expansion Program. The award supports nursing workforce expansion through enhanced education, clinical training, academic support, and workforce development initiatives.

CONSAH also expanded its healthcare workforce partnerships through approval of the CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital Cohort Program, which is scheduled to begin in Fall 2026. The program will provide selected NSU nursing students with specialized educational and professional-development opportunities, including NCLEX preparation, simulation and skills development, hospital shadowing, and early access to employment interviews. Up to 10 students may be selected each fall and spring semester. Eligible participants may receive substantial tuition and fee support as well as employment opportunities following graduation and successful licensure.

Collectively, these initiatives reflect CONSAH's continued commitment to expanding educational access, strengthening academic and clinical partnerships, and responding to Louisiana's evolving healthcare workforce needs. Through strategic program development, external funding, and collaborative partnerships, CONSAH remains focused on expanding student opportunity, supporting successful progression and completion, and preparing qualified nursing and allied health professionals to serve the region and state.

Alumni, Faculty, and Student Success

Alumni:

CONSAH alumni are accomplished professionals whose achievements bring regional and national recognition to Northwestern State University. Alumni serve in professional organizations, healthcare leadership, advanced clinical practice, education, and the military. Many also remain engaged with current students as mentors and professional role models. Recent alumni achievements include:

- ***Dr. Deborah "Debbie" Carambat*** (DNP, 2025) was nominated for the 2026 Louisiana Nurses Foundation Nightingale Award for Clinical Nurse Educator of the Year and Nursing Educator of the Year.
- ***Caleb Harkins*** (MSN, 2016) was nominated for the 2026 Louisiana Nurses Foundation Nightingale Award for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse of the Year.
- ***Dr. Denise Jones*** (DNP, 2019), Chief Nursing Officer for Willis-Knighton North and Willis-Knighton Rehabilitation, was nominated for the 2026 Louisiana Nurses Foundation Nightingale Award for Nursing Administrator of the Year and serves as Treasurer of the Louisiana State Nurses Association for the 2025–2027 term.
- ***Emily Jones*** (BSRS, 2024) successfully passed the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists Mammography certification examination in 2026.
- ***DeAnna Kamphuis*** (BSN, 1981; MSN, 2000), an acute care nurse practitioner in internal medicine with Highland Clinic, serves as Treasurer of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners in 2026.
- ***Dr. Michael Brown*** (DNP, 2023), a family nurse practitioner with St. Francis Medical Group, serves as President of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners for the 2026–2027 term.
- ***Samantha Thomas*** (BSRS, 2018; MSRS, 2023) was promoted to Assistant Radiology Manager at CHRISTUS Highland Medical Center in Shreveport.
- ***Charity Wesley*** (BSRS, 2025) successfully passed the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists Computed Tomography certification examination in 2026.

Faculty:

CONSAH faculty members are interprofessional collaborators committed to developing graduates who demonstrate resilience, critical thinking, compassion, empathy, professional accountability, and readiness to address evolving healthcare needs. Throughout 2025–2026, faculty members supported program growth, curriculum revision, accreditation activities, student success, scholarship, service, and workforce development across the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health.

Examples of individual and aggregate CONSAH faculty achievements during 2025–2026 include:

Awards and Recognition

- ***Tamara Baxter*** received a Faculty Recognition Council Award for Service.
- ***Alicia Book*** was named the 2026 CONSAH Nurse of the Year.
- ***Alicia Book*** and ***Katrina Seymore*** received Faculty Recognition Council Spotlight Awards.
- ***Dr. Heather Hayter*** was named the 2025–2026 CONSAH Nursing Educator of the Year.
- ***Robin Haydel Laborde*** was nominated for the 2026 Louisiana Nurses Foundation Nightingale Award for Nursing Educator of the Year.
- ***Jessica Love*** received a Faculty Recognition Council Award for Teaching.
- ***Barbara McGill*** was inducted into the Louisiana Nurses Foundation Hall of Fame in recognition of her lifetime contributions to nursing education, service, and practice.
- ***Donald Stafford*** received a Faculty Recognition Council Award for Advising.
- ***Megan Wedgeworth*** was named the 2025–2026 CONSAH Allied Health Educator of the Year.
- ***Dr. Jamie Usie*** was nominated for the 2026 Louisiana Nurses Foundation Nightingale Award for Nursing Educator of the Year.

Degrees, Certifications, and Professional Development

- ***Lakyn Aymond*** earned a Post-Master's Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner from Northwestern State University of Louisiana in December 2025.
- ***Dr. Sarah "Dianne" Girlinghouse*** earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in May 2026.
- ***Dr. Kendall Sneed*** earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Southeastern University in May 2026.
- ***Dr. Kendall Sneed*** completed the scholarly project, "Improving Mother-Baby Outcomes: Implementing an Interprofessional Evidence-Based Safe Discharge Protocol for Neonates in the NICU," under the direction of Dr. Luanne Billingsley.
- ***Michelle Gibson*** earned the Certified Nurse Educator credential through the National League for Nursing.
- ***Dr. Kristi Hylan*** earned the Certified Nurse Educator credential through the National League for Nursing.
- ***Misty Couvillion, Connie Durbin, Dennis Flynn, Alicia Book, and Katrina Seymore*** completed the Appreciative Advising Professional Development Program in Fall 2025.
- ***Rebecca Harrell*** renewed her Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification (MEDSURG-BC) through the American Nurses Credentialing Center in 2026.
- ***Dr. Myla Landry and Lisa Wilhite*** were selected and completed the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Access, Connection, and Engagement Leadership Institute during the 2025–2026 academic year.
- ***Alicia Book*** and ***Dr. Shaun Wheat*** were selected as Meauxmentum Scholars through the Louisiana Board of Regents for the 2025-2026 academic year.
- ***Katrina Seymore*** completed the NSU IGNITE Leadership Program during the 2025–2026 academic year.

Promotion and Tenure

- ***Dr. Kaylee Ackel, Dr. Meryn Olivier, Dr. Aaron Stigers,*** and ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** were awarded tenure.
- ***Dr. Kaylee Ackel*** and ***Dr. Aaron Stigers*** were promoted to Associate Professor, and ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** was promoted to Professor.

Professional Leadership and Service

- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** was appointed Chair of the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology State Organizational Development Committee for MY2026 and was appointed to continue serving as a committee member for MY2027.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** was appointed as an Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing peer evaluator and as a Chair Reviewer for the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** served as a reviewer for the 2026 American Association of Colleges of Nursing Exemplary Academic-Practice Partnership Awards.

- ***Alicia Book*** was appointed to the Louisiana State Nurses Association Healthcare Policy Committee as the representative for Region 6–Central Louisiana.
- ***Alicia Book*** served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Alexandria District Nurses Association during 2025–2026.
- ***Alicia Book*** served as a reviewer for the 2026 American Association of Colleges of Nursing Faculty Awards.
- ***Alicia Book, Misty Couvillion, Connie Durbin, Dr. Sarah Dianne Girlinghouse, Rebecca Helton, and Casey Young*** were inducted into the Louisiana Nurse Honor Guard during 2025–2026.
- ***Connie Durbin*** was elected Treasurer of the Alexandria District Nurses Association for 2026–2027.
- ***Rebecca Harrell*** served as Vice President of the Alexandria District Nurses Association during 2025–2026.
- ***Dr. Melissa Rennie and Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** served as members of the Nursing Subcommittee of the National Disaster Medical System Accelerated Training Research Committee***.***
- ***Katrina Seymore*** was elected Secretary of the Alexandria District Nurses Association for 2026–2027.
- ***Katrina Seymore*** participated in a medical mission to Honduras during Summer 2026.
- ***Donald Stafford*** was appointed Chair of the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists Self-Evaluation Examination Committee for 2025–2026.
- ***Linda Stringfield*** served as president of the CENLA Chapter of the Louisiana Nurse Honor Guard during 2025–2026.

Publications and Scholarly Works

- ***Dr. Laura Aaron, Mary Grace Renfro,*** and ***Dr. Cindy McGuire*** published "Psychological Safety of Radiologic Science Students" in *Radiologic Technology*.
- **Dr. Laura Aaron** had two manuscripts accepted for publication: "Perceived Professional Impact of the Master of Science in Radiologic Sciences Degree" in *Radiologic Technology* and "Psychological Safety of Sonography Students" in the *Journal of Diagnostic Medical Sonography*.
- ***Dr. Kari Cook*** and ***Dr. Laura Aaron*** published "Exploring the Effects of Gamification on Student Engagement, Outcomes, and Perceptions" in *Radiologic Science & Education*.
- ***Dr. Tammy Curtis*** co-authored the 16th edition of Merrill's Atlas of Radiographic Positioning & Procedures and its accompanying workbook.
- ***Dr. Sarah Dianne Girlinghouse*** completed the DNP scholarly project, "Enhancing HPV Vaccination Engagement and Uptake Among Young Adults Aged 17 to 26 Through a Multilevel, Multicomponent Intervention."
- ***Dr. Kendall Sneed*** completed the scholarly project, "Improving Mother-Baby Outcomes: Implementing an Interprofessional Evidence-Based Safe Discharge Protocol for Neonates in the NICU."
- ***Dr. Aaron Stigers*** published "Implementing Osteoporosis Screening in a Clinical Setting: A Quality Improvement Study" in *Geriatric Nursing*.
- ***Megan Wedgeworth*** served as a reviewer for the computed tomography chapter in the 16th edition of *Merrill's Atlas of Radiographic Positioning & Procedures*, published by Elsevier.
- ***Dr. Shaun Wheat*** served as a reviewer for Chapter 9, "Reality Shock in the Workplace," of the 10th edition of *Nursing Now!*, published by F. A. Davis.

Presentations

- ***Dr. Laura Aaron,*** *Dr. Kevin Clark, and Dr. Jeffrey Killion* presented "The Impact of the MSRS Degree" at the American Society of Radiologic Technologists Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in June 2026.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** and Brian Badeaux's presentation, "Bypassing Opioids: Regional Anesthesia for Lower Extremity Revascularization," was accepted for presentation at the 2026 American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology Annual Congress in Boston, Massachusetts, in August 2026.
- ***Alicia Book*** and Dr. Thomas Reynolds presented "Motivating and Engaging Learners: HITS and GPS Mindset" at Northwestern State University's Faculty Institute in August 2025.
- ***Dr. Geneva Caldwell*** delivered the keynote address at Texas Health School of Nursing's Fall 2025 graduation and pinning ceremony in Katy, Texas, in December 2025.
- ***Dr. Kari Cook*** and ***Megan Wedgeworth*** presented "From TikTok to Technologist: Connecting with the Next Generation of Radiography Students" at the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists Annual Meeting in Alexandria, Louisiana, in July 2026.

- ***Rebecca Farmer*** presented "Effective Succession Strategies for Academic Success in Higher Education" at the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists Annual Meeting in Lafayette, Louisiana, in July 2025.
- ***Rebecca Farmer*** presented "Leadership Development for Radiologic Technology Students" at the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists Annual Meeting in Alexandria, Louisiana, in July 2026.
- ***Dr. Donald Johnston*** presented "Nurse Caregiver Fatigue and Observation Hours" at Ochsner Health's 16th Annual Evidence-Based Practice and Nursing Research Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, in October 2025.

Grants and External Funding

- ***Emily Horton and Lisa Wilhite*** were awarded $2,597,000 through the Health Resources and Services Administration Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention–Workforce Expansion Program for the 2025–2029 project period to support nursing workforce expansion through enhanced education, clinical training, academic support, and workforce-development initiatives.
- ***Dr. Aaron Stigers*** was awarded $519,115 through the Health Resources and Services Administration Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program for the 2025–2029 project period to support the preparation of psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner students serving rural and underserved populations.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** was awarded $294,000 through the Louisiana Board of Regents and Health Works Commission Nurse Capitation Fund for the 2025–2026 academic year to support expanded enrollment capacity in undergraduate nursing programs.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** was awarded $23,800 through the Carl Perkins Basic Grant for the 2025–2026 academic year to support equipment needs in the Associate of Science in Nursing program.
- ***Dr. Anna Morris*** received a continuing award of $360,000 for Year 4 of the Louisiana Blue Foundation Collective Impact Grant to address Louisiana's healthcare workforce shortage by supporting alternative educational opportunities and nontraditional nursing students.
- ***Lisa Wilhite*** received a continuing award of $246,800 for Year 3 of the Louisiana Board of Regents LPN-to-RN Cohort Program to increase the number of registered nurses in northeast Louisiana.
- ***Dr. Leah Pierce and Alicia Book*** received a continuing award of $205,600 for Year 4 of The Rapides Foundation Healthcare Occupations Grant to increase the number of Bachelor of Science in Nursing clinical students admitted to the CENLA campus.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** received a continuing award of $67,418 for Year 3 of the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center and Natchitoches Regional Medical Center Foundation partnership to increase the number of baccalaureate-prepared nursing graduates in the NRMC service area.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** received a continuing award of $58,957 for Year 3 of the Health Resources and Services Administration Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship Program to provide tuition and traineeship support for nurse anesthesia students.
- ***Dr. Kristi Hylan*** continued a partnership with Mid-Louisiana Anesthesia Consultants and Rapides Regional Medical Center that provided $45,000 in stipend support for nurse anesthesia students during 2025–2026.
- ***Dr. Anna Morris*** received a continuing award of $32,200 for Year 5 of The Rapides Foundation Healthcare Occupations Grant to support interventions for at-risk Associate of Science in Nursing students and improve retention from the freshman to sophomore year.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** submitted "Strengthening Rural Nursing Workforce Capacity Through RN and Nurse Practitioner Education Pathways" to the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Rural Health and Transformation, for $4,000,000. Pending.
- ***Dr. Anna Morris*** and ***Dr. Melissa Rennie*** submitted "Academic Success Center for the NSU Shreveport Campus" to the Title III ElevateU Micro-Grant Opportunity for $13,964. Pending.
- ***Alicia Book*** and ***Casey Young*** submitted "Promoting Student Success with Learning Community Spaces" to the Title III ElevateU Micro-Grant Opportunity for $13,343. The proposal was not funded.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux*** submitted "Phlebotomy Career Pathway to the RN Workforce" to the Louisiana Department of Health through the Healthcare Employment Reinvestment Opportunity Fund for $1,279,010. The proposal was not funded.
- ***Megan Wedgeworth*** submitted "Improving Regional Access to Sonography Education Through Echo-Vascular Program Development and DMS Expansion" to the Louisiana Department of Health through the Healthcare Employment Reinvestment Opportunity Fund for $1,422,720. The proposal was not funded.

- ***Dr. Melissa Rennie*** is developing a proposal for the Health Resources and Services Administration Nursing Workforce Development Program (HRSA-26-095) for the maximum allowable request of $555,000.
- ***Tamara Baxter and Morgan Miller*** are developing a $3,000,000 proposal for the Health Resources and Services Administration Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention–Transition to Practice Program (HRSA-26-086), based on the maximum award of $750,000 annually over the four-year project period.
- ***Dr. Aimee Badeaux, Dr. Shaun Wheat, and Jessica Despino*** are developing separate $2,600,000 proposals for the Health Resources and Services Administration Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students Program (HRSA-26-096), based on the maximum award of $650,000 annually over the four-year project period, to support eligible students enrolled in the Associate of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences–Radiography programs, respectively.

Aggregate Faculty Outcomes

- Eighteen faculty members held endowed professorship appointments totaling $152,648.
- Ten faculty members served on the Board of the Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.
- Two faculty members served as Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education on-site evaluators.
- Two faculty members served as Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology site visitors.
- Two faculty members served on committees of the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists.
- Two faculty members served on committees of the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology.
- One faculty member served as an Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing peer evaluator.
- One faculty member served as an on-site reviewer and chair reviewer for the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs.
- Faculty members served in multiple leadership roles within the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists, including Executive Secretary of Membership, Executive Secretary of Finance, Meeting Planner, Chair of Louisiana Educators in Radiologic Sciences, and Chair of the Social Media Task Force.
- One faculty member served on the Board of Martin Luther King Health Center and Pharmacy.

Students:

CONSAH students distinguished themselves through academic achievement, scholarship, professional leadership, service, research, clinical excellence, and engagement in regional, state, national, and international opportunities. During 2025–2026, students received scholarships, stipends, traineeship support, awards, and professional recognition; participated in scholarly presentations, leadership programs, mission activities, community outreach, and service-learning initiatives; and demonstrated impressive performance on professional examinations. Recent CONSAH student achievements include:

- ***Kenzie Basco,*** (ASN, 2026), received the CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital Lily Award in May 2026.
- ***Mallory Saccaro, Cade Clifton, Makenzie Rains, and Lindsey Lee,*** (DNP–Nurse Anesthesia, expected 2026), participated in a nurse anesthesia mission trip to Guatemala in July 2026.
- ***Jaydon Evans*** (BSRS–Radiography, 2026) was selected to represent the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists in the American Society of Radiologic Technologists Student Leadership Development Program for a three-year term from 2026 to 2029.
- ***Rae Gardiner,*** (DNP–Educational Leadership, expected 2027), received a $7,500 Oncology Nursing Foundation Clinical Doctoral Academic Scholarship for the 2026–2027 academic year.
- ***Justin Melendez*** (DNP–Nurse Anesthesia, expected 2026) was selected to attend the U.S. Anesthesia Partners Leadership Conference in Austin, Texas, in April 2026.
- ***Kathryn Richardson***, (DNP–Educational Leadership, expected 2027), presented “Closing the Gap: Ensuring Equitable Care for Every Mother and Baby,” “Decoding the Beat: Fetal Heart Rates,” and “Pregnancy 101: A Nurse’s Guide to Maternal Care” at NurseCon 2026.

- ***William Torrent*** (DNP–Nurse Anesthesia, expected 2026) served as a guest judge for the preliminary review of submissions to Rm8: AANA Innovation Lab for the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology in February 2026.
- ***Douglas Walding*** (DNP–Nurse Anesthesia, expected 2026) served as a student member of the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Anesthesiology and attended the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology Mid-Year Assembly in Washington, D.C., in April 2026.

Aggregate Student Outcomes

- Twenty-seven Doctor of Nursing Practice students successfully completed their scholarly projects in Summer 2025.
- Through scholarship, stipend, and traineeship programs administered by CONSAH, $1,319,257 in financial support was provided to students during 2025–2026.
- A total of 239 students received scholarship, stipend, or traineeship support through programs administered by CONSAH during 2025–2026. These figures do not include additional scholarships or financial support administered by other University offices or external organizations.

Program Success

Measures of program success include passage rates on licensure and certification examinations, national program rankings, progression-from-admission-to-graduation data, and employment data. Additionally, alumni and employer ratings of programs and their graduates are used to evaluate program success. The following indicators are used to evaluate program effectiveness.

Licensure/Certification Examination Passage Rates, Academic Cycle 2025–2026

Licensure as a registered nurse occurs when graduates successfully complete the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses. Licensure as a radiologic technologist requires successful completion of the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists examination. Certification as a nurse practitioner or Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist requires successful completion of the applicable national certification examination. First-time examination pass rates (Table 36) are monitored as key indicators of graduate readiness and program effectiveness.

The ASN and BSN programs exceeded the 80% minimum benchmark for first-time NCLEX-RN performance. The MSN and post-master's certificate nurse practitioner programs also exceeded the 80% benchmark for first-time certification performance. Although the Doctor of Nursing Practice–Nurse Anesthesia program's 2025 first-time pass rate was 75%, the program maintained a three-year first-time pass-rate average of 80%, meeting the applicable COA accreditation benchmark. The Radiography program's five-year average of 87.09% exceeded the JRCERT minimum benchmark of 75%.

The inaugural Diagnostic Medical Sonography cohort graduated in 2025 and achieved a 100% pass rate on the Sonography Principles and Instrumentation examination. The Class of 2026 also achieved a 100% pass rate on the examination. Graduates from the Classes of 2025 and 2026 earned specialty credentials in Abdomen, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Vascular Sonography.

CONSAH Employer & Alumni Satisfaction:

- CONSAH alumni satisfaction rates have remained above 90% for the past five years.
- CONSAH employer satisfaction rates have remained above 90% for the past six years.

National Program Rankings and Recognition:

- #1 Online MSN Program in Louisiana, 2025 (RegisteredNursing.org).
- #1 Online Nurse Practitioner Program in Louisiana (RegisteredNursing.org).

Table 36
Licensure/Certification First-Time Pass Rate for Nursing and Radiologic Sciences, AC 2025-2026

Program	Licensure/Certification First-Time Pass Rate	Job Placement	Program Completion
Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN)	95.45% state: 89.51% national: 86.71%	100%	49.6%
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	91.06% state: 89.51% national: 86.71%	100%	67%
Master of Science in Nursing/Post-Master's Certificate (MSN/PMC)	86% national: 81%	100%	81%
Doctor of Nursing Practice—Nurse Anesthesia (DNP-NA)	75% national: 90.5%	100%	93%
Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences—Diagnostic Medical Sonography (BSRS-DMS)	100%* national: 74%	100%	50%
Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Sciences—Radiography (BSRS)	96% * national: 85.8%	100%	76%

The Future

Like many institutions across the state, CONSAH continues to navigate enrollment challenges associated with shifting demographics, increased competition, and evolving student needs. During the 2026–2027 academic year, CONSAH will strengthen recruitment and retention efforts for traditional and nontraditional learners through focused outreach, clinical partnerships, flexible enrollment pathways, clinical bootcamps, and other student-success initiatives. These efforts are intended to expand educational access, strengthen academic preparedness, support progression, and prepare graduates for high-demand healthcare fields.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, CONSAH's strategic plan focused on the following priorities: 1) improving internal operations and workflow efficiency across academic and clinical programs; 2) increasing enrollment through targeted recruitment and pathway expansion; 3) improving student retention and academic success through enhanced advising and student-support services; 4) strengthening faculty onboarding, mentoring, and instructional development; 5) using program-level data to inform decisions related to resource allocation, student outcomes, curriculum development, and strategic planning; and 6) increasing external funding through grants, partnerships, and philanthropic support.

CONSAH made measurable progress toward these priorities during 2025–2026. The Master of Science in Allied Health enrolled its inaugural cohort of approximately 10 students. Within the Doctor of Nursing Practice program, the former Organizational Systems Leadership concentration was replaced by distinct Educational Leadership and Executive Leadership concentrations, both of which were launched during the academic year. CONSAH also expanded enrollment pathways, student-support initiatives, healthcare partnerships, and external funding efforts across nursing and allied health programs.

Short- and Long-Term Goals: Building on the progress achieved during 2025–2026, CONSAH's goals for 2026–2027 are to: 1) improve internal operations and workflow efficiency across academic and clinical programs; 2) strengthen leadership development and succession planning across CONSAH; 3) implement governance revisions, including the reorganization of college and school committees to improve representation, accountability, communication, and decision-making; 4) increase enrollment through targeted recruitment, pathway expansion, and strategic

partnerships; 5) improve student retention, progression, and academic success through enhanced advising and student-support services; 6) strengthen faculty recruitment, onboarding, mentoring, retention, and instructional development; 7) use program-level data to inform resource allocation, student outcomes, curriculum development, and strategic planning; 8) expand interprofessional education and collaborative practice opportunities; 9) increase external funding through grants, partnerships, and philanthropic support; 10) strengthen faculty and student scholarship and research; and 11) advance simulation, technology, and facility resources across CONSAH locations.

Innovation

During the 2025–2026 academic year, CONSAH advanced academic and operational innovation through the strategic use of technology to strengthen assessment, testing, experiential learning, clinical-placement readiness, compliance, and institutional effectiveness.

CONSAH expanded its use of ExamSoft to support program-level assessment and curricular alignment. Faculty used the platform to map examination items and rubric criteria to course objectives and program outcomes, analyze student performance, and inform instructional and curricular improvement. The MSN program used ExamSoft for examinations and rubric-based assessment, while the MSN and DNP programs piloted remote testing to evaluate secure and flexible testing options for graduate students.

CONSAH also advanced simulation and experiential learning through expanded digital simulation, classroom technology upgrades, modernization of clinical skills laboratories, and continued development of a high-fidelity operating room simulation environment in Alost Hall.

To strengthen compliance reporting and clinical-placement readiness, CONSAH continued to use SentryMD and PreCheck across applicable programs. These systems support centralized tracking of student health records, background checks, immunization documentation, and other clinical requirements, helping ensure timely and accurate compliance with healthcare-partner expectations.

CONSAH implemented ContractSafe to centralize the management and monitoring of more than 400 clinical affiliation and academic agreements. The platform strengthened contract organization, renewal tracking, compliance oversight, and administrative coordination across programs and campuses.

CONSAH will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its assessment, testing, simulation, compliance, and contract-management technologies to improve academic quality, operational efficiency, student success, and accreditation readiness.

College of Business and Technology (CoBT)

Introduction

The College of Business and Technology (CoBT) continued its commitment to academic excellence, student success, workforce readiness, innovation, accreditation, and continuous improvement during Assessment Cycle (AC) 2025-2026. The College remained aligned with Northwestern State University priorities, AACSB and ACPHA accreditation expectations, and the College of Business and Technology Strategic Plan 2025-2029.

The College serves students through programs in Accounting, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Hospitality Management and Tourism, and graduate-level offerings designed to support workforce development in Louisiana and beyond. Across these programs, faculty emphasized innovative teaching, scholarly engagement, industry partnerships, experiential learning, and assessment-driven improvement.

AC 2025-2026 was a period of strategic transition. Following AACSB reaffirmation activities and completion of the CoBT Strategic Plan 2025-2029, the College strengthened its focus on Digital Agility, Artificial Intelligence Literacy, Workforce Alignment, Strategic Risk Management, Experiential Learning, Cultural Competence,

and Societal Impact. These priorities were reflected in curriculum review, assessment activities, student engagement, grant work, and program-level decision-making.

AC 2025-2026 also marked an important leadership transition, with the new Dean of the College of Business beginning his tenure in January 2026. This transition provides an opportunity to build existing strengths in experiential learning, professional engagement, entrepreneurship, continuing education, and workforce-aligned credentials while continuing to advance the College's strategic priorities. In addition, the College applied for an MBA program developed in conjunction with the College of Nursing, reflecting continued attention to interdisciplinary graduate education, leadership development, and workforce needs in healthcare and business environments.

College-Level Student Success and Academic Progress

College-level indicators (Table 37 and Table 38) show stable academic progress, while also identifying persistence and completion as continued areas for improvement. Most students remained in good academic standing in both Fall 2025 and Spring 2026, and median earned credit hours remained at 12 hours in both terms. The College's persistence rate remained below the University's rate, supporting continued attention to advising, early intervention, engagement, and degree-progress strategies.

Table 37
CoBT Performance Indicators, AC 2025-2026

Indicator	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Interpretation
Good academic standing	85.55%	83.75%	Most students remained in good academic standing; modest term-to-term decline warrants monitoring.
Average earned credit hours	11.71	11.28	Average progress remained close to a full-time course load.
Median earned credit hours	12	12	Median progress remained stable across both terms.
Within a three-hour margin of attempted hours	89.02%	83.44%	Most students completed coursework near attempted-hour levels; Spring decline suggests a need for continued support.

Table 38
Additional Performance Indicators, AC 2025-2026

Additional Indicator	Result	Assessment Use
Fall 2019 cohort graduation rate	40.68%	Support continued emphasis on persistence, progression, and completion.
AC 2025-2026 persistence	71.81% CoBT 75.93% NSU	CoBT remains below the University rate and should continue targeted retention strategies.
AC 2025-2026 graduates	151	Reflects degree completion and workforce transition across college programs.

Analysis

Academic progress remained stable during AC 2025-2026. The good-standing rates, earned-hour averages, median earned hours, and three-hour margin results indicate that most students continued to make meaningful progress toward degree completion. At the same time, the graduation and persistence

indicators demonstrate that student success work should continue to focus on proactive advising, early alert intervention, course completion, and program-level engagement.

Decision
The College will continue to strengthen advising systems, early alert interventions, tutoring support, faculty mentoring, and student engagement strategies. Additional emphasis should be placed on improving persistence and graduation outcomes while maintaining strong academic standards and continued workforce alignment.

Assessment, Accreditation, and Continuous Improvement

The College remains committed to academic excellence through assessment, accreditation, and continuous improvement. During AC 2025-2026, the School of Business continued to implement processes that support AACSB expectations, while Hospitality Management and Tourism maintained ACPHA accreditation activities. Program assessment reports demonstrate active use of direct and indirect measures, including written and oral projects, surveys, exams, capstone artifacts, student reflections, and discipline-specific assignments.

Across the School of Business, AC 2025-2026 represented the second year of the revised student learning outcomes introduced in AC 2024-2025. Faculty used assessment findings to refine rubrics, strengthen course consistency, improve communication expectations, expand applied learning, and adjust assignments in response to AI-generated work and changing workforce expectations.

Analysis
Assessment processes remain a strength of the College. The reports show active faculty engagement in closing the loop: evaluating results, identifying areas of weakness, implementing course-level adjustments, and tracking the impact of those adjustments in subsequent cycles.

Decision
The College will continue refining assessment processes, strengthening evidence collection, improving consistency of reporting, and aligning program-level improvements with accreditation priorities and workforce needs.

Business Administration Program Accomplishments

The Business Administration program demonstrated strong results in experiential learning, professional communication, applied analysis, entrepreneurship, professional engagement, and assessment-driven improvement. In MGT 4320 Advanced Management, students completed consulting-style experiential learning projects for organizations. Spring 2026 assessment results showed average scores of 98% on final reports and 99% on final presentations, with peer evaluation results averaging 95%, meeting the established targets.

Faculty also strengthened authentic assessment and responsible technology use. In FIN 3090 (Business Finance), the faculty introduced an activity-based assignment focused on the ethical use of artificial intelligence. The course also included an essay assignment requiring students to identify errors in information generated through ineffective AI prompts, encouraging students to evaluate AI output critically rather than accepting generated content without verification. These activities align with the College's emphasis on Digital Agility, AI literacy, ethical reasoning, and workforce readiness. The program identified additional meaningful opportunities for improvement. Faculty will continue using Microsoft Teams or similar collaboration tools, clearer rubrics, structured milestones, and additional presentation support. In FIN 4200, faculty responded to concerns about AI-generated written reports by shifting greater emphasis to spreadsheet analysis and presentations, allowing students to demonstrate financial interpretation, critical thinking, and oral explanation more authentically.

The department expanded student professional development through events and external partnerships. Accounting and Finance hosted Cookies and Banking with local bankers in conjunction with the Louisiana Bankers Association, creating an informal opportunity for students to interact with banking professionals and learn about career pathways in financial services. The College also continues to offer Continuing Legal Education events for Louisiana attorneys, further supporting professional engagement and community service.

Business Administration faculty and students also contributed to scholarly and professional conversations. **Dr. Aldredge** and **Dr. Miranda** developed a presentation with student **Haeven Durbin** titled "The Evolving Requirements and the Future of the Profession." In addition, the Dean of the College of Business served on a team that received a Best Paper award at the Federation of Business Disciplines conference. Faculty presented numerous professional and scholarly presentations throughout the academic year and incorporated a variety of guest speakers to connect students with current business practices.

Entrepreneurship and leadership development remained important strengths. BUAD faculty member **Dr. Weiwen Liao** chaired the Inferno Pitch competition in conjunction with the Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program. The department plans to continue supporting the competition to inspire future entrepreneurs and encourage students to develop innovative ideas, business communication skills, and professional confidence.

The department also supported career readiness through structured professional experiences and industry-recognized credentials. The Etiquette Series, offered as part of the J. Walter Porter Experience, helped students strengthen professional presence, communication, and workplace expectations. The College continued partnering with the Society for Human Resource Management to offer the SHRM Essentials course; upon completion, students earned the SHRM Basics Certificate, a credential valued in business and industry. The department continues to identify additional opportunities to incorporate industry-based credentials into the course curriculum.

Overall, Business Administration assessment results and supplemental accomplishments indicate strong student performance in professional communication, teamwork, presentations, applied business projects, and several core business areas. Continued attention is needed in selected core disciplines, assessment data completeness, and student accountability in team-based assignments.

Accounting Program Accomplishments

The Accounting program demonstrated strong student achievement and continued commitment to continuous improvement. Direct assessment results showed impressive performance in professional communication, advanced accounting analysis, ethics, and accounting knowledge. Students in BUAD 3270 achieved average scores of 95.5% on executive summaries and written components and 97% on final presentations. In ACCT 4020 Advanced Accounting, students achieved an average score of 92.7% on a comprehensive project, improving by more than five percentage points from the prior cycle. Students also improved in ethical practice, with AC 2025-2026 results reaching an 86% average after the previous cycle did not meet the benchmark.

The program also identified areas for continued improvement, particularly indirect measures related to communication and critical thinking. Planned actions include replacing ACCT 4300 with Data Analytics as a required course, adding real-world financial data projects, expanding financial analysis components, revising project instructions, and improving short instructional videos and learning resources.

Accounting students and organizations also earned external recognition. **Emily Waits**, a senior accounting major from Lena, received a $2,000 Society of Louisiana Certified Public Accountants scholarship for students intending to take the CPA exam. The scholarship was presented during the Xi Nu chapter of Beta Alpha Psi induction program, which also recognized new members and officers. In addition, the Xi Nu

Chapter earned Bronze mission-based status for FY26, reflecting continued engagement in scholastic, professional, service, outreach, and community-building activities.

Computer Information Systems Program Accomplishments

The BS in Computer Information Systems program continued emphasizing Digital Agility, cybersecurity, workforce readiness, applied problem solving, and experiential learning. Capstone-related assessment results showed impressive performance: CIS 3900 students averaged 88.1% on final project group reports, exceeding the 85% target; CIS 4600 students averaged 97.0% on final presentations, exceeding the 90% target; students averaged 94.5% on biweekly sprints; and project functionality averaged 91.5%, exceeding the program target.

The program also showed improvement in several areas that had previously required attention. Ethical scenario assignment results improved to a 95.0% average, exceeding the 90% target, and peer review scores in CIS 3900 met targets across timeliness, respectfulness, teamwork, responsiveness, and content knowledge. Graduating student survey results also met targets for communication, problem-solving, ethical and productive work, and professional readiness, although the survey response rate remained an area to monitor.

During AC 2025-2026, CIS benefited from external cybersecurity workforce development support. Faculty served as co-principal investigators on a Cybersecurity Education Management Council proposal for the Central Louisiana Cyber Security Talent Enhancement Program, submitted in Spring 2026 and funded at $40,000, including $10,000 in matching internship support from Natchitoches Regional Medical Center. The earlier GDIT/LED collaborative endeavor grant was completed. Grant-supported activity also included student research and applied cybersecurity engagement, including Research Day presentations by two students under the guidance of Dr. Perez-Mira.

CIS expanded student engagement and experiential learning in both fall and spring. Students helped Dr. Powell organize and set up the Sandbox Application Development Lab, which opened in Fall 2025 in Russell Hall as an open learning space for application development, networking, and cybersecurity exploration. CIS also sent its first team to the 2025 International Collegiate Programming Contest North America South Central Regional at LSU in Baton Rouge: **Justin Dysarz** and **Matthew Carlin** competed as the Cyber Demons under the coaching of **Dr. Jason Powell**.

Spring accomplishments included student and faculty participation in the panel discussion "Beyond the Hype: Student Voices on Artificial Intelligence in Education" at the 2026 Federation of Business Disciplines and Association of Business Information Systems conference in Richardson, Texas; participation by **Justin Dysarz** and **Seth Thurman** in the 2026 America's Innovate IT Collegiate Conference, where they received Honorable Mention in the Troubleshoot IT Challenge; attendance at Walmart's 2026 SparkCon Conference; and a cybersecurity demonstration to the Natchitoches Rotary Club as part of the Central Louisiana Cybersecurity Grant Demon's Engage project.

Students in CIS 3970, CIS 4000, CIS 5200, CIS 5300, and CIS 5600 also launched the first CIS open-source, multi-class, long-term project to develop a video game. The project included a two-day hackathon that brought students together for an intensive development push. The Cyber Demons Tech Club hosted numerous activities during the year, covering application development, networking, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and other CIS topics. Students **Justin Dysarz**, **Seth Thurman**, and **Brady Benoit**, with **Dr. Powell**, registered to attend DEF CON 34 in Las Vegas in August 2026.

Decision

The CIS program will continue strengthening communication and documentation skills, expanding formative feedback, reinforcing ethical reasoning and professional responsibility, supporting

cybersecurity workforce development, and growing student participation in competitions, clubs, applied projects, and employer-facing learning experiences.

MS in Computer Information Systems Program Accomplishments

The MS in Computer Information Systems program reflects graduate-level assessment activity during AC 2025-2026. The program prepares students for careers as information systems and technology professionals in public, private, and nonprofit sectors and for advancement into doctoral study. The program uses entrance and exit exams, CIS 5900 research assignments, CIS 5950 research project or thesis work, and other artifacts to assess discipline-specific content knowledge, analytical technique application, and research proficiency.

Graduate assessment results were mixed but useful for continuous improvement. Exit exam results did not meet all acceptable or ideal targets across discipline-specific content areas, particularly Data Analysis and Project Management; however, student performance improved from entrance to exit in several areas, suggesting learning gains across the program. Seven students completed the exit exam in AC 2025-2026, and acceptable targets were met in Programming, Software Applications, Networking, and Cyber Security, while ideal targets were met in Programming and Cyber Security.

The program showed stronger results in selected research and analytics assignments. In CIS 5900, four students completed the analytical assignment and all four earned 100%, meeting both the acceptable and ideal targets. Research proficiency and research-question assignments met acceptable targets but did not meet ideal targets, with continued opportunities to help students narrow research questions, distinguish quantitative and qualitative framing, and strengthen research alignment.

The program implemented several improvements in response to assessment findings. Faculty added statistical technique resources and videos, split complex analytical work across multiple weeks, expanded support for problem statements and research questions, and approved curriculum changes to add a research course effective 2026-2027. This curricular change will distribute research development across three courses, allowing more time for research design, analytical technique application, and completion of research projects, papers, or theses.

Decision

The MS in CIS program should continue refining CIS 5840, CIS 5900, and research-sequence resources; reviewing Project Management exit exam alignment; monitoring small-cohort results carefully; and assessing the impact of the new research-course structure as incoming students move through the revised curriculum.

Hospitality Management and Tourism Program Accomplishments

The Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT) program experienced a successful year marked by accreditation excellence, curriculum innovation, experiential learning, industry engagement, faculty leadership, and student success. The program maintained ACPHA accreditation earned in 2024 and remained the only four-year hospitality program in Louisiana to hold this distinction. Faculty continued implementing accreditation standards across the curriculum, faculty qualifications, and industry partnerships

Curriculum and program development remained active during AC 2025-2026. Faculty developed and integrated the Event Management concentration and minor with embedded national certifications; continued incorporating industry-recognized credentials such as ServSafe, Certified Hospitality Manager, and CVENT into coursework; and developed a 100% online hospitality degree that was approved through the NSU Curriculum Review Council on January 27, 2026.

Students benefited from extensive experiential learning opportunities. Faculty prepared students through a series of meetings and led an international study tour to Greece and the Mediterranean region in late May and

early June 2026. The program also continued operating hands-on learning environments, including Columns Cafe and Chef's Table. Field-based learning included an October 2025 Shreveport trip to Mae & Co., Visit Shreveport/Bossier, Sam's Town Casino, and Hilton Downtown, as well as a February 2026 Sabine Parish trip to Cypress Bend Resort and Conference Center and North Toledo Bend State Park. These visits connected students with industry partners, property tours, operations discussions, and career exploration.

The program maintained strong community and industry engagement. HMT partnered with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center by providing planning, logistics, and catering support for TappedTober in October 2025, THRIVE in December 2025, and The Great Gatsby Experience in April 2026. The department also sustained advisory board relationships, regional hospitality partnerships, and community engagement supporting rural Central Louisiana hospitality and tourism development, including TimberRidge in Natchitoches and service support through the NSU Foundation.

External funding, fundraising, and student support also advanced during the year. HMT continued work supported by the Louisiana Board of Regents Enhancement Grant, held the Holiday Meal Fundraiser and King Cake Fundraiser, supported Chef's Table and Columns Cafe activities, and secured a $3,000 donation from **Ralph Thiergart** of Dimension Hospitality to support student activities and programming connected to AAHOACON26. In April 2026, two HMT students participated in the AAHOACON26 Revenue Management Competition in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Faculty scholarly activity and professional service remained strong. Three HMT faculty members presented at the 14th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference in September 2025, and two faculty members prepared research presentations for the July 2026 International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education conference focused on experiential learning and career readiness. Faculty also contributed to Faculty Senate leadership, institutional committees, search committees, FBLA judging, Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society, and the ICHRIE Intern Advisory Committee.

Recruiting and retention efforts were extensive. HMT faculty and students participated in recruiting events across the state, including BPCC, NSU NSide View, Alexandria Senior High School, the NS Wellness Festival, Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning, Caddo Career and Technical Center, the Louisiana ProStart Competition, and other school and campus events. Faculty also held group advising events in November, February, March, and April, supplemented by individual advising appointments throughout Fall 2025 and Spring 2026.

Research, Scholarship, Community Engagement, and Societal Impact

Faculty and students contributed to scholarship, workforce development, economic development, and community engagement throughout AC 2025-2026. Programs across the College engaged students in service-learning activities, consulting projects, community partnerships, competitions, professional development, and experiential learning designed to create positive impact across Central Louisiana and beyond.
Examples include Business Administration consulting projects, Accounting service and professional development activities, CIS cybersecurity and programming competitions, grant-supported student research and community demonstrations, Hospitality community event support, and faculty presentations at professional and academic conferences. These activities support the College's mission and align with accreditation expectations related to engagement, innovation, impact, and societal contribution.

Strategic Transformation and Future Priorities

AC 2025-2026 positioned the College for continued strategic growth. Across programs, assessment findings point to the importance of applied learning, data-informed decision making, professional

communication, ethical reasoning, student accountability, and authentic assessment practices. Faculty also demonstrated responsiveness to emerging challenges, including AI-generated work, digital skill requirements, cybersecurity workforce needs, and the need for flexible delivery models.

Future priorities include:

- Strengthening advising, early alert systems, and persistence initiatives.
- Expanding workforce partnerships, internships, experiential projects, embedded certifications, and employer engagement.
- Continuing Digital Agility, cybersecurity, data analytics, and AI literacy integration.
- Improving assessment data completeness, consistency, and reporting timelines.
- Supporting authentic assessment strategies that reduce overreliance on AI-generated work.
- Expanding graduate-level CIS research support and monitoring the revised research sequence.
- Continuing to document measurable societal impact across programs.
- Obtaining a Master of Business Administration program to expand the student population.

Overall Assessment

The College of Business and Technology demonstrated significant accomplishments during AC 2025-2026. Students continued achieving strong learning outcomes in many direct measures; faculty remained engaged in assessment and improvement; and programs expanded workforce-aligned learning opportunities while maintaining accreditation expectations. The College also strengthened its evidence base through program-level assessment reports, student success metrics, external recognitions, grant activity, and documented experiential learning.

The revised assessment narrative shows a College that is making meaningful progress while maintaining an appropriately candid view of areas needing continued attention. Persistence, completion, selected indirect measures, assessment-data completeness, graduate exit exam performance, and some core knowledge areas remain priorities. Continued progress will require coordinated advising, targeted course-level interventions, authentic applied learning, faculty collaboration, and systematic follow-up on assessment findings.

Moving Forward

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026 completes the University's ninth iteration of the holistic assessment of Strategic Plan 2023-2028–Providing *Education of Enduring Value*. Organizationally, we have learned much about ourselves over the past year as we prepare for Assessment Cycle 2026-2027. The University can confidently move forward into AC 2026-2027, knowing its commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in the progress toward our vision.

Student learning assessments maximize the principles of honest evaluation and ensure the highest quality of coursework, whether through in-person classes, online delivery, or hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources are continuously updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

The annual assessment process is incomplete until the recommendations and proposed decisions are mediated and agreed upon, the final report is written, and the briefing is presented. While we have a transparent, standardized, and integrated process, we still need to convince faculty and students of the power of assessment.

Based on our analysis of assessment activities, we have identified five strategic goals/challenges for the next three years:

- Increase or improve **student services that aid regional, national, and international recruitment, retention, and student success**.
- Provide **effective, innovative instruction in the classroom and online** ensuring the **alignment of curricula to tomorrow's workforce demands** while **developing public-private partnerships.**
- Improve analysis of assessment results to **increase critical thinking**, **quantitative reasoning, and writing skills across** all degree and certificate programs regardless of discipline.
- **Expand External Stakeholders' participation and knowledge** of SLO assessment so they better understand the process and can offer more relevant and timely feedback. The initiative would require a mix of surveys and evaluation rubrics.
- **Collaborate between academic and student affairs** focusing on service/experiential learning to **Assess High-Impact Practices–Lessons Learned.** The QEP assessment results are critical in evaluating these co-curricular student experiences.

As a road map to the future, we have also identified immediate (3 x months), near-term (6 x months), and short-term (12 x months) activities to guide our efforts.

Immediate:

- Capture the 2025-2026 lessons learned and implement decisions.
- Update AC 2026-2027 Assessment Plans as necessary.
- Finalize AC 2025-2026 assessments–data collection at the degree and unit level.
- Continue to assess recommendations–build consensus and establish predictability.

Near Term:

- September/October–Receive the President's guidance on Strategic Plan 2026-2027
- December–Annual SACSCOC Conference

- Azimuth check on AC 2026-2027 assessment process (SFA/Program/Unit)
- Maintain continuity in data collection.

Short Term:

- October and beyond–thinking about the way forward–reevaluating and adjusting assessment plans.
- May 2027–Commencement ends the assessment cycle.
- June 18, 2027 Degree, Unit, Core Assessments complete and submitted to DIE.
- August/September Assessment Cycle AC 2026–2027 Report–*Leading the Way* published.
- September–Brief to the President

The University remains steadfast in its mission, core values, and strategic direction. Through the commitment of our entire University community, we will realize our vision of becoming the nation's premier regional university.

The 2026–2027 Assessment Cycle will serve as an intentional period of **reset, refinement, and realignment** as the University builds upon lessons learned through the eighth iteration of the holistic assessment of the Strategic Plan 2023–2028, *Providing Education of Enduring Value*. Following the recent submission of the SACSCOC Differentiated Review Report, the University is well positioned to thoughtfully examine its current objectives, refine or retire those that are no longer aligned with institutional priorities, and reimagine new objectives that establish higher standards for performance and continuous improvement. While data collection and assessment processes will continue as established, additional time will be devoted to planning, collaboration, and strategic alignment as the University restructures its Strategic Focus Areas to better reflect emerging institutional needs and opportunities. This intentional reset will strengthen the University's assessment framework, promote greater alignment across the institution, and position Northwestern State University for continued progress toward its vision and the delivery of an *Education of Enduring Value*.