Quality Enhancement Plan

NORTHWESTERN STATE
University of Louisiana

Academic and Career Engagement

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# Table of Contents

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Institutional Overview ................................................................. 1
The QEP: Context and Purpose .................................................. 2
Defining Student Learning Appropriate to the Focus of the QEP .......... 5

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE REGARDING BEST PRACTICES IN ACADEMIC AND CAREER ENGAGEMENT

Models of Advising ................................................................. 7
Faculty-based ................................................................. 7
Engagement ................................................................. 7
Total intake ................................................................. 7
Developmental ................................................................. 8
Counseling-liaison ............................................................... 8
Peer-delivered ............................................................... 8

## THE ACE INITIATIVE—A NARRATIVE

University Characteristics ......................................................... 11
Identification of Specific Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes
Leading to Measurable Results ................................................ 14
Learning outcomes, strategies, and actions .................................... 15

## THE QEP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: LEADERSHIP, TIMELINE, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, AND ASSESSMENT

Leadership ................................................................. 17
Timeline ................................................................. 17
Resource Allocation ............................................................... 19
Assessment ................................................................. 20
Outcomes Assessment ............................................................ 20
Evaluation of the Plan .............................................................. 20

## REFERENCES

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: University Programs and their Accrediting Agencies .................. 25
Appendix B: Freshmen Admission Standards ......................................................... 27
Appendix C: Documentation of Evidence of Institutional Context Best Practices ........................................... 28
Appendix D: Division of Academic Affairs Organization Chart Following
Implementation of Ace Initiative .................................................................................................................. 35
Appendix E: Proposed Organizational Chart for Ace Initiative Showing
Integration of Divisions of Student and Academic Affairs ..................................................................... 36
Appendix F: Job Descriptions for Ace Personnel .......................................................................................... 37
Appendix G: Proposed Floor Plan for Ace Initiative ..................................................................................... 41
Appendix H: Undergraduate Curriculum of Study Form for
Department of Engineering Technology (BS in IET) ............................................................................. 42
Appendix I: Questions from a Faculty Advising Survey used by Siena College* ....................................... 44
List of Tables

TABLE 1: Student Enrollment in Fall 2006 ................................................................. 11
TABLE 2: Student Enrollment by Cohort ..................................................................... 11
TABLE 3: Retention Rates by Cohort ........................................................................... 12
TABLE 4: Expected Learning Outcomes, Strategies, and Actions .............................. 15
TABLE 5: QEP Implementation Timeline .................................................................... 17
TABLE 6: QEP Budget .................................................................................................. 19
Northwestern State University (NSU) has identified academic and career goal selection as the topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan for the University. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) team has formulated a plan labeled Academic and Career Engagement (ACE). The team selected this initiative after careful analysis of the University’s data regarding student retention and student need for expanded support as they progress through their academic careers and into the world of work. The University will require all first-time freshmen on the Natchitoches campus to complete a career portfolio as part of their Orientation 1010 class. Instructors and University Career Counseling personnel will construct modules which will support this career portfolio assignment; further, they will work with orientation instructors to assist them with specific issues related to career planning and placement. Students will be encouraged to attend advanced career counseling sessions through small group or individual sessions. Additionally, well trained academic advisors will assist students in exploring field-specific career information, identifying academic challenges, and using resources that are available. Academic counselors will work with all students to identify an appropriate undergraduate curriculum of study and to monitor the progress of the students throughout their academic careers.

Currently, the University employs only one 10-month career counselor, who is supported by faculty members who serve as academic advisors and by the academic advisors who are housed in the University College Academic Advising Center. Traditionally, the University College advisors have primarily served those students pursuing the general studies degrees. In most academic departments, faculty advisors have had little or no training in regard to career counseling. Often, advising sessions focus upon course selection, progress of the student in the chosen curriculum, and registration. The following narrative describes the proposed QEP which represents a significant change for the University.

The goal of the ACE initiative is to provide all first-time freshmen with the opportunity to receive high quality career and academic counseling as a continuing part of their collegiate experience. ACE will enable Northwestern to:

- effectively achieve the University’s goals;
- augment and expand the learning experience for students;
- strengthen partnerships between administration, academic affairs, and student affairs; and
- provide students with the most current information regarding career planning and placement so that they can make informed, responsible choices about their academic and career choices.

The implementation of the QEP will provide students with the information they need to make informed decisions about their career path and to efficiently and expeditiously progress through their academic program. University administration and faculty believe that one key to retention is high quality academic and career counseling.
Introduction

Institutional Overview

Established as a state normal school in 1884, Northwestern State University has undergone several transitions to reach its current status as a four-year selective admissions university accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS-COC) to award associate, baccalaureate, master, and specialist degrees. Northwestern is also a member in good standing of the Association of American Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Northwestern's 916-acre main campus is located in Natchitoches, LA, an historic city of 25,000. The campus, located in the northwestern region of Louisiana, is situated about 50 miles northwest of Alexandria and 75 miles southeast of Shreveport. Northwestern's Nursing Education Center is located in Shreveport and is a residential campus for both undergraduate and graduate nursing studies. Flourishing satellite campuses are maintained in both Alexandria and Leesville/Fort Polk and add to the geographical range of NSU and extend its outreach to a diverse range of students. Northwestern was the first institution in Louisiana to have 100% accreditation of eligible programs (see Appendix A for a listing of University programs and their accrediting agencies).

Northwestern offers a broad range of associate, baccalaureate and graduate degrees, as well as non-traditional routes to teacher certification, industry-based certifications, and adult and continuing education. Graduate programs at the master and specialist levels are offered; the specialist degree is offered through the College of Education. Northwestern is proud of its Louisiana Scholars' College, the State's designated honors college that serves the needs of highly qualified undergraduate students.

Further, the University is committed to state leadership by developing and implementing innovative academic programs that are supported through professional development of faculty in technology use and instructional design. Three component strategies identified to achieve this objective include (1) developing academic programs that are learner centered; (2) implementing user-friendly, Web-based academic services for delivery through a University portal; and (3) implementing instructional development and training for faculty members to deliver academic programs in manners which best suit the needs of students. As a result of these efforts, the University has been recognized as a leader in distance education, offering more on-line programs and courses than other Louisiana institutions of higher learning.

Because of the nature of the service region of the University, which includes 12 rural parishes, students who come to Northwestern often have many risk factors which are obstacles to student success—poverty, geographic isolation, underserved and disadvantaged youth, low taxation capacity, few industries beyond lumber and agriculture, and a lack of public transportation and modern communications. The 2000 U.S. Census data reflect that within this service region poverty levels reach as high as 26% (compared to 9.2% nationally), and the median household income languishes at $26,437 (compared to $41,994 nationally). Census data for this service area also show as many as 38% of adults 25 years old or older have not completed high school and as many as 91% have not completed a bachelor’s degree. Thus, access to educational programs and programs targeted to low-income and non-traditional students in
the workforce are critical for the majority of the area's residents because of economic necessity, social tradition, and the responsibilities of jobs and families.

In fall 2005, the University implemented a selective admissions policy. The admission standards, set by the University’s governing board, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System, include consideration of an entering freshman applicant's American College Test (ACT) score, high school GPA, and completion of a specified curriculum while in high school. The University also established admission standards for transfer students. A chart detailing the freshmen admission standards is included in Appendix B. The standards will continue to change both the number and quality of students entering the University. University administrators and faculty members have considered the impact of the new admission standards and their effects on student success and demands in the development and implementation of the QEP.

The fall 2005 enrollment at Northwestern was 9,847, with graduate students representing 1,059 of that number. This number represents an increase of 4.4% over the preceding five-year period but constitutes a drop in enrollment when compared to fall 2004 (10,505). The mean ACT score of entering freshmen in fall 2005 was 20.0, a 4.9% increase over the previous year. The number of first-time freshmen attending Northwestern who earned the Louisiana Tuition Opportunity Program for Students scholarship (TOPS) increased from 576 in fall 2004 to 588 in fall 2005. This raw increase in TOPS recipients represented a percentage increase from 32.1% in 2004 to 41.5% in 2005 of the entering freshmen (full-time and degree-seeking) cohort.

The QEP: Context and Purpose

That which sparked Northwestern from its first days—a commitment to teaching and learning—continues to fire its mission, vision, values, and goals. University faculty members recognize the worth of all individuals, value diversity, and foster reciprocal dignity and respect among themselves, students, and staff. By providing students with opportunities and an academic climate that promotes individual success, the University seeks to retain and graduate students not merely satisfied with their education but also motivated and enriched by it. To that end, the University adopted the following mission statement as published in the 2005-2006 University Catalog (p. 8) and on the home page of its Web site (www.nsula.edu).

Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University will prepare its students to become productive members of society and will promote economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

The NSU mission statement sets an agenda for the institution which is grounded in its traditional strengths of teaching and learning and which is adept at innovating and transforming programs and services to meet changing student and societal demands and trends. The University, through its mission and vision statements, illustrates its commitment to attracting and developing outstanding faculty and students; to enriching the student experience through academic, cultural, social, athletic, and other
extracurricular activities; and to implementing innovative technology so that students are prepared to enter the world of work or to pursue graduate study (2005-2006 University Catalog, p. 9).

Northwestern State University strives for educational quality through excellence in teaching and research, innovative use of technology, and exceptional service to students and other constituencies.

The University seeks to attract and develop outstanding students and faculty and to provide them with the resources needed to promote optimal learning and service.

By maintaining a student-oriented environment, Northwestern will offer challenging and rewarding academic experiences augmented and enriched with opportunities for cultural, social, athletic, and other extracurricular activities. The essence of this student-oriented environment will be the University’s commitment to create a cooperative atmosphere in which faculty, staff, and students treat each other with dignity and respect and recognize the value and worth of all individuals.

Electronic learning and distance education will be an integral part of Northwestern’s role in delivering degree programs and effective services on campus and throughout Louisiana, the nation, and the world.

Northwestern will be responsive to changing views and trends as it works to provide a highly-qualified workforce to promote economic development and to meet the needs that higher education can provide to students, state government, private enterprise, and society.

During the most recent planning cycle Northwestern adopted four goals to support its current mission and vision.

**Goal 1:** Northwestern State University will endeavor to create and maintain a responsive, student-oriented environment.

**Goal 2:** Northwestern State University will provide programs, services, and operations throughout the University of high quality and effectiveness.

**Goal 3:** Northwestern State University will strive to enhance institutional viability through effective enrollment management.

**Goal 4:** Northwestern State University will promote economic development, community service, and an improved quality of life in the region.

The commitment of the University to these goals is realized by the development and implementation of the QEP. Northwestern’s first action toward the development of a QEP occurred in December 2004, when President Webb named a QEP Steering Committee. This Committee initially met in March 2005. As a result of this meeting, student, faculty, and staff groups across campus learned of the QEP and its importance in the SACS reaffirmation process through newsletters, e-mails, the annual Faculty Institute, and other methods.
QEP Steering Committee members examined data and information from the following: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) Executive Summary, ACT Student Opinion Survey, Graduating Student Survey, Noel-Levitz advising profile, and Noel-Levitz recruiting strategies. Data from these sources grounded the initial assessment of the current strategic plan as well as the development of a five-year enhancement plan. Through its work, the Committee also determined other methods of obtaining information as detailed below.

Contributions to the development of the QEP have been extensive and diverse. The membership of the QEP Steering Committee reflects the composition of the University.

Dr. Larry Monk..................................QEP chair; Director, NSU-Leesville/Fort Polk campus
Ms. Jennifer Kelly..............................................Director of Auxiliary Services
Dr. Thomas Hall ...........................................Department Head, Engineering Technology
Mr. Terry Isbell....................................................Instructor, Department of Psychology
Ms. Peggy Lodridge .................................................Staff, NSU-CENLA campus
Dr. Patrice Moulton ..................................Acting Vice President for Student Affairs
Ms. Veronica Ramirez .................................Director, University Planning & Assessment
Dr. Scott Roach ..............................................Associate Professor, College of Business
Mr. Claudio Saldana ...........................................Undergraduate, College of Business
Dr. Mark Thompson ......................................Professor, School of Creative & Performing Arts

From the outset, the Steering Committee worked to define its role and charge and to fashion a QEP relevant to the needs and resources of Northwestern State University. All of the members of the Committee participated fully in all discussions and decisions, and each brought a unique perspective to the Committee. In addition to regular meetings of the full committee, additional meetings were held in order to gain input from a wide variety of constituents of the Northwestern community. Committee meeting dates and minutes were placed on the University’s Web site for public viewing.

Additionally, at the annual Faculty Institute in August 2005, members of the QEP Committee introduced the QEP and its relationship with SACS-COC to faculty members. Further, the QEP Committee met with academic deans and other members of the Academic Affairs Council. While campus administrators and faculty received information about the QEP, the Committee also held Town Talks, which were informal discussions held to elicit input from all University constituents. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students were invited to participate in these sessions. A record of Town Talks is currently housed in the Office of University Planning and Assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 19, 2005</td>
<td>Faculty members, held on Natchitoches campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21, 2005</td>
<td>Faculty and staff members, held on Leesville campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17, 2005</td>
<td>Two Town Talks, one for faculty/staff and one for students, both held on Shreveport campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 7, 2005</td>
<td>Staff members, held on Natchitoches campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 9, 2005</td>
<td>Students, held on Natchitoches campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16, 2005</td>
<td>Students, held on Natchitoches campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meeting notes document a summary of feedback from these constituencies. The Steering Committee met regularly in order to hone and define the role of the QEP.
The QEP Steering Committee chair and other members of that committee met regularly with the SACS Leadership Team to exchange information. The chair and other Committee members also attended the annual SACS-COC meeting in Atlanta in December 2005 to seek guidance and information.

Throughout the development of the QEP, the committee received input from external consultation and benefited from this information. Dr. Terry McConathy, Executive Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School at Louisiana Tech University, visited Northwestern on several occasions and met with the QEP Steering Committee, the SACS Leadership Team, and representatives of the University community.

The QEP Steering Committee submitted possible topics to the University’s administration and the SACS Leadership Team. After reviewing the alternatives, the University chose as its topic, the enhancement of academic and career goal selection. Dr. Rudy Jackson, SACS-COC Vice President, met with the QEP Steering Committee and SACS Leadership Team on April 21, 2006, to review an outline of a tentative QEP proposal and provide feedback and guidance. After Dr. Jackson’s visit, the President appointed the QEP Conceptual Framework Committee, whose charge was to develop the QEP. They selected Academic and Career Engagement (ACE) as a brief title.

The QEP Conceptual Framework Committee consisted of the following members:

- Dr. Thomas Hanson ………. QEP Chair; Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Patrice Moulton ………………………………………… Vice President for Student Affairs
- Dr. Steve Horton…………………….. Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and Associate Provost
- Dr. Larry Monk …………………………. Executive Director of NSU-Leesville/Ft. Polk campus
- Veronica Ramirez …………………………….. Director of University Planning, Assessment and EEO
- Jennifer Videtto……………………………………………. Director of Institutional Research

On Wednesday, July 12, 2006, the QEP Conceptual Framework Committee sponsored a QEP workshop that focused on academic advising, career development, and academic support. Dr. Saundra McGuire, Director, Center for Academic Success; Tim Fields, Counselor; and Dr. Mary D. Feduccia, Director, Career Services (all from Louisiana State University) addressed representatives from all facets of the Northwestern community. Also attending were Jimmy Long, Chair, Board of Supervisors of the University of Louisiana System, and Wayne McCullen, Mayor of Natchitoches.

**Defining Student Learning Appropriate to the Focus of the QEP**

For the purposes of this QEP, the University defines learning as the act or process of gaining knowledge or skills through academic endeavors, both in and out of the classroom. This definition is appropriate to the focus of the QEP at Northwestern. Students will have the opportunity to gain knowledge about career options and to gain the skills needed to identify, select, and execute an undergraduate curriculum of study. In addition, students will obtain support from the University in order to complete degree or certification requirements and to enter careers based on research and experience in the chosen field of work.
Review of the Literature Regarding Best Practices in Academic and Career Engagement

This review of literature focuses on articles that define best practices in the fields of academic advising and career counseling. These two components constitute the foundations of the University’s QEP.

Academic advising has been defined as “. . . the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience” (Light, 2001, p. B11). Sayles and Shelton (2005) observe that “advising is an essential element of student success” (p. 99). According to Hunter and White (2004) “. . . effective academic advising is now more important and relevant than ever” (p. 21).

Academic advising can no longer be defined as simply registering a student for classes. The contemporary university is defined by a multitude of faces—faces that represent traditional and non-traditional students, diverse cultures, students with disabilities, on-line and distance-learning students. The needs of these students go beyond the simple registration process and call for more effective and efficient methods of academic advising (Hunter & White, 2004).

In a 1979 study, Grites proposed that developmental advising was a necessary component of a sound learning environment. Grites predicted lower attrition rates and fewer instances of depression in college students who received academic advising, social and psychological counseling. In this study, Grites also stresses the importance of utilizing all resources on a college campus in an effort to provide a supportive learning and social environment for the student. Advisors who have familiarized themselves with their advisees and have cultivated trusting relationships are in a position to recommend campus services of use to their advisees as those occasions arise (i.e. career development, psychological counseling, and health services).

Today, a significant number of all college freshmen drop out before Thanksgiving break and more than half of traditional college students never earn a degree (Whitbourne, 2002). According to the American College Testing Program (as cited in McArthur, 2005), college students named “inadequate academic advising as the strongest negative factor” (¶5) in their college experience. By contrast, those students who remained enrolled identified positive experiences with their advisors as essential to their development. McArthur further stated “. . . active, involved, ongoing relationships between students and faculty advisors . . . can be an important ingredient in the retention process” (¶5).

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) outlined and detailed a statement of six core values of academic advising:

1. Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise.
2. Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.
3. Advisors are responsible to their institution.
4. Advisors are responsible to higher education.
5. Advisors are responsible to their educational community.
6. Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and themselves personally (NACADA, 2004).
Effective and efficient academic advising is critical in today’s American universities if students are to succeed. The challenge, according to Hunter and White (2004), is to “create an academic advising system that students, faculty, staff, and administrators view as essential . . . to the educational experience” (p. 21). Productive academic advising will meet the needs of the students and provide support for students as they move toward completion of their degrees.

Development and delivery of an effective and efficient advising system should be based on specific needs and requirements of the institution and its student population. Characteristics of the institution (i.e. public or private, admission selectivity, degree offerings, space, faculty, finances) and student population (i.e. first or second generation, traditional or non-traditional, socioeconomic and/or ethnic diversity, highly motivated or undecided) play a critical role when selecting and implementing an advising model (King, 1993).

**Models of Advising**

Some of the most common models include faculty-based, engagement, total intake, developmental, counseling-liaison, and peer-delivered. Each model presents its own positive and negative aspects.

**Faculty-based.** Faculty-based advising is only effective when the administration places a high value on advising (King, 1993). According to Marques and Luna (2005), most undergraduate faculty members regard advising as a job requirement that is beneath their teacher status. An advising system which places the advising burden on overworked or unenthusiastic faculty will benefit neither the institution nor the students. However, an advising system that has been carefully implemented, provides training for advisors, utilizes the expertise of faculty in their given discipline, allows for established advising hours, and provides incentives or compensation for exceptional advising practices will benefit both the institution and students (King, 1993; McArthur, 2005).

**Engagement.** The engagement model, though similar to faculty-based, operates on the premise that advising is an “. . . ongoing process that assesses and compares the thoughts, feelings, and goals of the student and the instructor/adviser” (Yarbrough, 2002, p. 61). The overall goal of the engagement model is to create an atmosphere in which students learn from an experienced mentor with both knowledge and expertise in a shared academic field. In the engagement model, students are paired with the same mentor throughout their college experience. A personality conflict that cannot be overcome, a student-advisee who displays more of a consumer attitude than a learner attitude, or a professor-advisor not sufficiently familiar with university course requirements, updates and changes to catalogs, and common curricular difficulties for students in a particular degree plan may place limitations on the overall effectiveness of the engagement model advising (Yarbrough).

**Total intake.** Total intake advising begins in a central advising office. All students meet with advisors in the advising center until core curriculum and/or other institutional requirements such as grade point average or candidacy have been achieved. Upon completion of established curriculum or requirements, students are assigned to a faculty advisor in their discipline. According to Portland State Student Advising Action Council (2001), total intake, when combined with developmental advising, provides for the ideal advising model; however, total intake advising alone may not be sufficient for students whose needs would best be met by one-on-one advising with the same advisor throughout the college experience.
**Developmental.** Developmental advising considers the entire student experience as vital to overall success (Grites, 1979; Habley, 1983; King, 1993; Portland State, 2001). Raushi (as cited in Kadar, 2001) defined developmental advising as “... goal centered and student-ownership based” (p 174). Developmental advising comprises the following stages (Habley, 1983; Portland State, 2001):

- Stage 1. Exploration of life goals
- Stage 2. Exploration of career/educational goals
- Stage 3. Selection of a major or program of study
- Stage 4. Selection of courses
- Stage 5. Scheduling of courses

According to Habley (1983), not all students will require advising at every stage. A highly motivated, career-oriented student may not need career advisement. A second- or third-generation college student may have a better grasp on selection of courses than a first-generation student. The developmental model may be best implemented as a triangular model in conjunction with career and counseling services.

**Counseling-liaison.** For today’s college students, academic, career, and personal issues are intrinsically linked to each other. The counseling-liaison model is unique in that counselors are assigned to academic departments, not the counseling center per se. The de-centralized system allows for working relationships to form between and among counselors, faculty, staff, and students in each academic department. Collaboration may lead to more consistent, well-established relationships wherein students know they are cared about and that their success is important. Kadar (2001) recommended the following implementation guidelines:

- Counselors introduce themselves in freshman classrooms at the beginning of the semester.
- Counselor-liaisons are included in faculty meetings to establish a working relationship with faculty.
- Counselor-liaisons take additional steps to identify and reach at-risk students.
- Counselor-liaisons teach freshmen orientation courses geared toward the academic discipline to create a rapport with students (p. 175).

King (1993) cautioned that counselor advisors might be more interested in psychological counseling than academic advising. Counselors need to be well-versed in the value of academic advising.

**Peer-delivered.** Peer advisors are those students in their senior year of college or graduate students who take on the role of providing advising to undergraduates. According to King (1993), peer advisors are highly rated by undergraduate students for their accessibility. King noted peer advisors also provide an immediate sense of security and familiarity to new students. Although King’s research supported the fact that peer advisers offered positive experiences to undergraduates, King also cautioned that peer advisers may be biased in teacher and class selection and are by virtue of their experiences not as knowledgeable as faculty in academic disciplines. Additionally, peer advisors may lack the ability to discern when a fellow student needs more professional advice or counseling.
Best practices in advising, whether academic or career, focus on providing a smooth transition from high school or home to college life by equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in their academic pursuits, and assisting them as they develop self-awareness and a sense of autonomy (Neils-Strunjas, Kikuta, Miller, Prendeville, & Whalen, 2005). Marques and Luna (2005) stated, “part of a great college education depends upon human relationships” (p. 5). According to Lowe and Toney’s (2000) longitudinal study, (as cited in Marques and Luna, 2005) students who were systematically advised throughout their college years registered a 90 percent retention rate. Additionally, Lowe and Toney found that adequate advisement of nontraditional students was paramount to meeting their special needs.

At a 2005 National Academic Advising Association workshop, Marques (2005) and colleagues presented a list of best practices for advising a core component of nontraditional or adult students. They related that advisors should be aware of each advisee’s degree plan and classification. Marques noted the importance of keeping updated and accurate records on each advisee, including course rotation notations and prerequisites. Second, Marques stressed that advisors should know their advisees well enough to recommend particular instructors that most closely match the advisee’s temperament and needs. This suggestion was of particular importance to students with special needs or documented learning deficits. Third, Marques asserted that advisors must be available to their advisees. Availability need not be limited to office visits. Both e-mail and telephone are adequate means of communication. In fact, Marques recommended that students be allowed to fax a signed request for adding or dropping a class directly to their advisor in lieu of a face-to-face meeting. Fourth, advisors should be honest and forthright with their advisees. If an advisee is not progressing satisfactorily, it is the advisor’s responsibility to discuss the issue openly and honestly in order to guide the student. Finally, advisors should be approachable and friendly. The advisor should not be an intimidating force but instead an inviting individual who will be respectful, provide guidance, and recommend paths to success.

Traditionally, academic advisors have focused upon issues involving a student’s selected curriculum. A new trend in advising is to expand the role of academic advising to include career advising. While career counselors play a critical role in student advising, their academic advisors, too, need to be aware of issues relating to career planning and placement. When academic-career advisors and career counselors work toward the common goal of producing well-rounded, highly educated, career-ready graduates, both the students and the University are beneficiaries.

As already stated, academic advising is an essential element to student success. Career advising complements academic advising by giving students a clearer understanding of how their “academic and personal interests, abilities, and values might relate to the career fields they are considering and how to form their academic and career goals accordingly” (Gordon, 2005, ¶ 2).

Researchers (Gordon, 2005; Green, 1992; Nelson, 2006) agreed that integrating academic and career advising was vital to the success of today’s college students. Gordon (n.d.) acknowledged that most academic advisors do not currently view career advising as their responsibility; however, Gordon suggested that when academic advisors envision their students in the workforce, they must do so with the understanding that today’s workforce is a rapidly changing technological world where students must be adequately prepared to meet the complex challenges. Students must grasp both theoretical and abstract knowledge and its practical applications. Prospective employees must demonstrate personal and social skills and the ability to perform job-related tasks.
In this spirit, according to Green (1992), adaptability from college major to career choice is an essential element that many graduating seniors lack. Green defined the difference between major and career as the difference between an area of scholarship and a functional occupation. Prospective teachers are taught the differences between formal and hidden curricula and the importance of both on student behavior and success. Likewise, Green compared academic pursuits of college students to a formal curriculum that must be learned, and non-academic pursuits, such as club and university activities, community service, mentoring, and leadership experience, to hidden curriculum where real-life skills are acquired and developed.

Gardner (1995) asserted that academic and career advising, when appropriately administered, increases the likelihood that undergraduates set career goals earlier in their college experience and graduating seniors have a clearer plan for successful employment upon graduation. According to Nelson (2006), “Three out of four students entering the university for the first time have no clear career/occupational goals, and only 8% of declared students have an understanding of their majors” (¶ 1). Nelson maintained that advising is a form of teaching, and just as with effective teaching, effective advising seeks positive student outcomes. Positive student outcomes begin with goal setting, and goal setting begins with an understanding of student options and opportunities.

A successful and effective academic-career advisor serves as a mentor to students, assisting them in planning for present academic goals and future career goals. Chickering and Reisser (as cited in Nelson, 2006) advocated a developmental model for both academic and career advising that included the following:

- Development of physical, emotional, social, and intellectual competence;
- Assessment of interests and awareness of options;
- Identification and clarification of work values; and
- Development of a clear sense of self in a vocational context (¶ 5)

Chickering and Reisser asserted that academic-career advisors must share the load of career exploration and development with university career counselors whose expertise in the area of career guidance is paramount to overall student success.

Nelson (2006) wrote, “Comprehensive advising is to educate and graduate qualified individuals with the skills needed to enter suitable employment and contribute to the economic development of surrounding communities and beyond” (¶ 9). Before advisors can successfully integrate academic and career advising, they must perceive their vocation and duties as significant to themselves and essential to the success of their students.

The above review illustrated a number of models for best practices in academic and career counseling. Upon completion of the review, the Committee determined that the developmental model of advising, which combines career and academic advising components, to be the preferred model to serve as the theoretical foundation for the University’s QEP.
The ACE Initiative—a Narrative

Enhancing academic and career goal selection is the topic that Northwestern has chosen for the Quality Enhancement Plan - Academic and Career Engagement (ACE). The committee has chosen this topic based upon the data regarding student and employer needs.

University Characteristics

As detailed in the Institutional Profile, Northwestern is a public, four-year institution that offers post-secondary opportunities to the 400,000 citizens of rural central Louisiana. Besides its 916-acre main campus in Natchitoches, the University has a Nursing Education Center in Shreveport and a nursing education satellite campus in Alexandria. Also in Alexandria, the University offers foundation (core) courses leading to advanced degrees. These courses are offered at the Rapides Parish Learning Center, located at the former England Air Base. The Northwestern Center at Leesville/Fort Polk is midway between Leesville and the main gate of Fort Polk and occupies 160 acres deeded to the University by the U.S. Army.

Student enrollment in fall 2006 was 9,431 students and can be demographically outlined as follows:

<p>| TABLE 1 |
| Student Enrollment in Fall 2006 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
<th>% of Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td>8248</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>1183</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2848</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6583</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students who compose the target groups for the QEP are the fall semester, first-time, full-time freshmen who take the majority of their classes on the Natchitoches campus. The table below shows the number of students in this cohort group for recent years.

<p>| TABLE 2 |
| Student Enrollment by Cohort |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Year</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree Seeking</th>
<th>Associate Degree Seeking</th>
<th>Total Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
<td>1059</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>1577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2005*</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Prior to the implementation of the new admission requirements, students who did not meet the requirements were allowed to attend Northwestern but were placed in an associate program. Once they demonstrated a satisfactory level of academic success, they could matriculate into a baccalaureate program. This change accounts for the large drop in the associate cohort between fall 2004 and fall 2005.
The retention rates for recent target groups are listed below.

### TABLE 3
**Retention Rates by Cohort**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Cohort Size</th>
<th>Number Retained the Following Fall</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1592</td>
<td>1015</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1577</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1249</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Northwestern is located in a rural, economically depressed area of Louisiana. Many incoming freshmen are first-generation students who hail from low socio-economic backgrounds. In fact, 51.6% of fall 2005 incoming freshmen were Pell grant recipients. The fact that Northwestern is a [Student Support Services TRIO grant](http://www.student-support-services.org) recipient is evidence of the University’s student demographic detail. Many of these students have not been afforded opportunities to explore career options.

Currently, the University employs one 10-month career counselor housed in the Office of Counseling and Career Services. The University’s Academic Advising Center, housed in the University College, primarily serves those students pursuing general studies degrees. In many cases, departmental advisors focus upon course selection, student registration, and curriculum selection. All academic units provide access to academic advisers; however, because of financial constraints and a shortage of faculty and staff positions in some departments, the University has been unable to provide sustained professional development in advising; hence, faculty advisors often feel that they are not adequately prepared to deliver advising assistance. The following narrative describes the proposed QEP which represents a new commitment for the University.

At the end of the spring 2008 semester, a search committee will commence the process of selecting a director for the ACE program who will be employed before the fall 2008 semester begins. At this time, the director will assist in the hiring process for an Assistant Director and an Administrative Assistant.

During fall 2008, the Director will begin the process of planning the program. This will include tasks such as: overseeing renovation of the physical facility, selecting furnishings for the identified space, developing an advising manual, collecting degree program materials, and participating in professional development.

The Assistant Director, during this same period of time, will determine appropriate on-line career assessment tools. S/he also will assist in the development of a career counseling section of the advising manual. The Assistant Director also will benefit from professional development. The content of the professional development will include, but will not be limited to, roles and expectations of advisors, use of referrals, and appropriate communication methods among all stakeholders.

Throughout the fall and early spring, the Director and Assistant Director will engage in directed professional development to strengthen the knowledge and skills already possessed. The Director will
become actively involved in the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) if s/he is not already a member, as will the Assistant Director in the National Career Development Association (NCDA). In addition to conference attendance, they will research best practices in developmental advising and career counseling, arrange to meet with their counterparts in other institutions, and subscribe to advising and career counseling list serves.

In spring 2009, the Director, in conjunction with the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), will reorganize the advising process for undergraduate students on the main campus. Examples of decisions which must be made include: the assignment of student advisors, how to handle changes of major, the timing of advisor-student sessions, the advisor response to the early warning system and class non-attendance, referral system, and advising communication to both students and parents. S/he will collaborate with the Assistant Director and the VPAA to determine the optimum number and assignment of advisors, and to select approximately 25 key faculty advisors for the ACE program. After the advisors are selected, the Director and Assistant Director will conduct multiple small group training sessions for advisors throughout the spring semester to educate them regarding best practices to be used in the modified advising process. This training will clearly delineate the roles of academic advisors and career counselors (see Appendix F), will detail the referral process, and will demonstrate the communication plan between the advisor and counselor regarding student progress.

In order to allow the selected faculty to dedicate sufficient time to developmental advising, a course load reduction will be implemented. This reduction will be covered by reallocation of existing teaching loads and the use of additional adjunct faculty as needed. The line item in the proposed budget noted as “Course Releases for Faculty Advisors” is intended to cover the course load reductions. Funds also have been allocated to cover one full-time advisor. It is expected that this advisor will work primarily with the ACE program students who are majoring in nursing. Currently, the nursing program has only two full-time faculty members on the Natchitoches campus and would not be able to carry the advising load created by approximately 200 first-time freshmen nursing majors. At the present time, University College advises all general studies majors and would continue to do so after the implementation of the ACE program. The remaining students would be assigned to the selected ACE advising faculty, who would each carry an advising load of 30 to 45 freshmen depending on the academic mix of the incoming freshmen.

Concurrently, the Assistant Director, with the Director of Counseling and Career Services and the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA), will initiate the selection and hiring of two additional counselors for the ACE project. Initially, counselors will compile and assemble appropriate materials for students to use for career exploration. As students progress in their degree programs, academic advisors will have the option of referring students back to the counselors for additional assistance as needed.

If a referral is made based on academic difficulty, the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) will be utilized as a screening tool. LASSI identifies areas in which students may need additional academic assistance. Based on the results of this self-report instrument, the counselor and student will work together to educate the student on the resources needed to continue academic progress. Examples include the appropriate use of learning skills and strategies such as note taking, test taking, and time and stress management. Further, students will have the opportunity to explore their attitudes and beliefs and enhance their knowledge and skills. If the referral is made based on non-academic barriers to student success, the counselors will assess the student and identify appropriate resources such as mental health counseling and career counseling.
Through the implementation of ACE, Orientation 1010 will be restructured to provide students an opportunity to explore personal characteristics and expectations, preferences, and life goals during their earliest experiences on campus. While enrolled in Orientation 1010, students will complete a career assessment portfolio (LA ePortal). Students will then review the career assessment portfolio materials with a career counselor. Students will also have an opportunity (based on need and desire) to explore career options in greater depth and to select an initial career objective. Once they have chosen an initial career objective, students will meet with an academic advisor in the appropriate discipline, who will be trained in best practices of academic advising. Students will pick an appropriate undergraduate curriculum of study that supports their career choice. The student will work collaboratively with the advisor to monitor academic progress. As part of this collaboration, personal strengths, weaknesses, and possible barriers to success will be identified, and advisors will assist students in identifying resources for success.

This QEP is an initiative that represents a fundamental change for Northwestern. Currently, career counseling is virtually non-existent in the formal processes of the University, and academic advising is an activity that has been identified as an area for improvement by faculty, staff, administration, students, and external constituents. The QEP will allow Northwestern to:

- achieve the University’s goals;
- provide a significant learning experience for students;
- strengthen partnerships among administration, academic affairs, and student affairs to optimize available resources; and
- equip students with the knowledge to make informed, responsible choices about their academic and career choices.

The model that serves as a foundation for the QEP is the developmental model of advising, as identified in the previous review of literature.

Identification of Specific Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes Leading to Measurable Results

The University’s goal is to have all first-time freshmen receive career and academic counseling as part of their collegiate experience. Though students in Louisiana now begin to utilize the new LA ePortal career assessment portfolio as early as the eighth grade, the University’s intent is to have all Northwestern first-time freshmen on the Natchitoches campus complete and/or update the portfolio as part of their Orientation 1010 class. Career counseling modules will be designed to accompany this assignment. Students will have an opportunity for advanced career counseling through small group or individual sessions. Students will be assigned to trained academic counselors to explore field-specific career information, academics and challenges, and resources that are available. Academic counselors will work with all students to identify appropriate undergraduate programs of study and to continually monitor progress.

Through the functions of this proposed QEP, students will have an opportunity to learn about career possibilities while also exploring and learning about their abilities, interests, and values. The University administration and faculty believe that students who are provided these types of learning experiences will become successful and productive graduates.
Learning outcomes, strategies, and actions. The following tables identify the expected learning outcomes, the strategies to obtain the outcomes, and the actions necessary to implement the strategies.

### TABLE 4

*Expected Learning Outcomes, Strategies, and Actions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will exhibit utilization of career knowledge in setting career goals (Knowledge)</td>
<td>1.1 University personnel will develop resources and methods to assist students in career exploration</td>
<td>1.1.1 Career counselors will develop career option resource materials for student use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.2 University personnel will train orientation instructors in use of new career assessment tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.3 University personnel will integrate career awareness component into each academic unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Students will self-evaluate by completing career assessments</td>
<td>1.1.4 University personnel will enhance academic unit support of career development via Web site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will identify, select, and execute an undergraduate curriculum of study that supports their initial career goals (Skill and Behavior)</td>
<td>2.1 University personnel will develop resources and methods to assist students in degree exploration and selection</td>
<td>2.1.1 Each academic unit will identify key advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.2 University personnel will train the identified advisors in the best practices of discipline-specific career advising and academic advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.3 Establish appropriate career maps and additional discipline-specific career materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.4 Establish undergraduate curricula of study forms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.1 Use of Technology

#### 2.1.5
- Enhance academic unit support of career development via Web site and inclusion in Freshman Interest Group (FIG) courses

#### 2.1.6
- Identify and/or create materials used for advising process

#### 2.1.7
- Assigned advisors will routinely review student progress through curriculum of study

### 2.2 Student Engagement

#### 2.2.1
- Students will meet with advisors within the discipline where they selected their initial career goal to obtain information about their occupational alternatives

#### 2.2.2
- Students will work collaboratively with advisors to determine and select a curriculum of study

#### 2.2.3
- Students will periodically meet with advisors to review progress through curriculum of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will demonstrate academic progress (Behavior)</td>
<td>3.1 Advisors will monitor the progression of their advisees</td>
<td>3.1.1 University personnel will train advisors regarding implementation of learning strategies and utilization of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.2 Advisors will meet with students at various academic milestones (beginning of semester, midterm, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.3 Advisors will meet with students to identify personal strengths, weaknesses, and possible barriers to success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.4 Advisors will identify resources available to students and make referrals as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Students will exhibit behaviors which lead to academic progress</td>
<td>3.2.1 Students will meet regularly with their assigned advisor</td>
<td>3.2.2 Students will partner with their advisor to identify potential barriers to success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.3 Students will utilize resources made available to them in order to enhance academic progress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The QEP Implementation Plan: Leadership, Timeline, Resource Allocation, and Assessment

Leadership

To execute and implement this plan, a new unit, ACE, will be created under the direct supervision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. This entity, however, will offer a variety of services that will involve units in both the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Appendix D delineates the new unit’s position in Academic Affairs; Appendix E captures ACE’s position in the University’s organizational structure. As can be noted from the organizational charts located in the Appendix, the ACE initiative will be developed as a new unit under the current reporting structure for the University.

The QEP Implementation Committee, an advisory committee that reports to the President and his Cabinet through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, will have direct responsibility for the execution, evaluation, and monitoring of ACE. Monthly meetings of the Implementation Committee will ensure that all tasks are accomplished according to the stated timelines and that challenges encountered are identified and corrected.

The services offered by ACE will bridge typical University alignments and will intersect the divisions of Academic and Student Affairs. Staff in the ACE organization will include a Director, Assistant Director, and an administrative assistant. In addition to the overall management of ACE, the Director will be responsible for ensuring that the academic components of the plan are successfully implemented. The Assistant Director will have primary responsibility for ensuring that the career counseling components of the plan. In addition to the individuals indicated above, two career counselors will be added to the Office of Counseling and Career Services. Job descriptions for these individuals are located in Appendix F.

Timeline

The tables on the following pages provide a timeline for the implementation of the ACE initiative. They include the timeframe, the activities that will be performed during that time, and the individuals responsible for the execution of the activities.

**TABLE 5**

*QEP Implementation Timeline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
<td>1. Hiring of Personnel</td>
<td>Provost/VPAA, Associate Provost, VPSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME FRAME</td>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Fall 2008  | 1. Development of materials (career maps, career assessment portfolio, orientation packets)  
2. Campus communication  
3. Office renovations, as necessary  
4. Designate control group for baseline statistics | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director, Provost/VPAA, Associate Provost, VPSA |
| Spring 2009| 1. Faculty/staff training in best practices in advising and career counseling  
2. Interview and select key advisors  
3. Campus communication | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director, Provost/VPAA, Associate Provost, VPSA |
| Summer 2009| 1. Submission of annual report | ACE Director |
| Fall 2009  | 1. Designate target group for Year 1  
2. Implementation of Year 1 ACE  
3. Continued faculty/staff development  
4. Campus communication | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director |
| Spring 2010| 1. Continue implementation of ACE  
2. Campus communication  
3. Assessment of ACE  
4. Modifications to ACE | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director |
| Summer 2010| 1. Submission of annual report – Year 1 | ACE Director |
| Fall 2010  | 1. Designate target group for Year 2  
2. Implementation of Year 2 ACE  
3. Continued faculty/staff development  
4. Campus communication | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director, Provost/VPAA, Associate Provost, VPSA |
| Spring 2011| 1. Continue implementation of ACE  
2. Campus communication  
3. Assessment of ACE  
4. Modifications to ACE | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director |
| Summer 2011| 1. Submission of annual report – Year 2  
2. Submission of QEP Interim Report to SACS-COC | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director, Provost/VPAA, Associate Provost, VPSA |
| Fall 2011  | 1. Designate target group for Year 3  
2. Implementation of Year 3 ACE  
3. Continued faculty/staff development  
4. Campus communication | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director |
| Spring 2012| 1. Continue implementation of ACE  
2. Campus communication  
3. Assessment of ACE  
4. Modifications to ACE | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director |
| Summer 2012| 1. Submission of annual report – Year 3 | ACE Director |
| Spring 2013| 1. Continue implementation of ACE  
2. Campus communication  
3. Assessment of ACE  
4. Modifications to ACE | ACE Director, ACE Assistant Director |
| Summer 2012| 1. Submission of annual report – Year 4 | ACE Director |
Resource Allocation

This Unit will be housed in Roy Hall, a 24,332 square feet building built in 1964 as an administration building. Currently, the facility houses the University Registrar and Admissions Office; the Office of Student Financial Aid; the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research; the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs; the Office of Institutional Research; the Office of Planning, Assessment, and EEO; and the Office of Information Systems. By fall 2008, all offices excluding the Office of Information Systems and the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will move to West Caspari Hall. The proposed ACE office will assume approximately 6,700 square feet of the total building space on the first floor. Appendix G provides a proposed floor plan for the facility.

The table below presents the budget committed to the ACE initiative. Currently the University has planned for allocating approximately $2.1 million over the next five years to support QEP processes and initiatives. The continuing budget will be approximately $450,000 per year.

**TABLE 6**

**QEP Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>2008-2009</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>GRAND TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE Director</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
<td>$71,400</td>
<td>$72,828</td>
<td>$74,285</td>
<td>$75,770</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE Assistant Director</td>
<td>$41,625*</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$56,100</td>
<td>$57,222</td>
<td>$58,366</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 1</td>
<td>$22,500*</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$45,900</td>
<td>$46,818</td>
<td>$47,754</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 2</td>
<td>$22,500*</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$45,900</td>
<td>$46,818</td>
<td>$47,754</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant (II)</td>
<td>$17,250</td>
<td>$17,595</td>
<td>$17,947</td>
<td>$18,306</td>
<td>$18,672</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Renovations</td>
<td>$57,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnishings</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Releases for Faculty Advisors</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials Development</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Tools</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS hardware/software/maintenance/infrastructure</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/Consultants</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation Revision</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$750</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<td>$4,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Communication Plan</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Services</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits (18%)</td>
<td>$32,648</td>
<td>$47,519</td>
<td>$48,469</td>
<td>$49,439</td>
<td>$50,428</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>$36,602</td>
<td>$23,026</td>
<td>$22,400</td>
<td>$22,605</td>
<td>$22,829</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$392,890</td>
<td>$446,370</td>
<td>$432,481</td>
<td>$436,033</td>
<td>$439,965</td>
<td>$2,147,738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All salaries were increased by 2% each year.

*Partial year salary
Assessment

There are two components of assessment that need to be addressed. One is the assessment of each of the stated outcomes of the plan, and the other is the evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan itself. The success of the ACE initiative will be measured by outcomes-based quantitative assessment strategies.

Outcomes Assessment

- **Outcome 1:** Students will exhibit utilization of career knowledge in setting career goals (Knowledge)
  - Career Assessment Portfolio
    - The Louisiana ePortal (LA ePortal) system is being developed specifically for Louisiana to assist in the process of career exploration. This system is scheduled to be operational prior to the implementation of the QEP. The career assessment component of LA ePortal will be utilized as the University’s career assessment portfolio. Career counselors will coordinate with orientation instructors to assist in completion of the portfolio. Career knowledge will be evidenced as the student selects three potential career areas. Navigation of the portal’s Web site is limited to Louisiana education and workforce development programs and services.

- **Outcome 2:** Students will identify, select, and execute an undergraduate curriculum of study that supports their initial career goals (Skill and Behavior)
  - Undergraduate Curriculum of Study form
    - Students will declare a proposed undergraduate curriculum of study, and faculty advisors and students will utilize an Undergraduate Curriculum of Study form which identifies course requirements for the chosen area. Additionally, the University’s electronic degree audit system, available to both advisors and students as a real-time system, provides the same information. Appendix H provides a sample from the Department of Engineering Technology (B.S. in IET).
  - Survey of Advising Process
    - Using the NACADA Academic Advising Inventory and ACT Survey of Academic Advising as models, the Academic Advising Council will develop a local instrument for evaluation of the advising process. This instrument will be administered annually in the spring. In addition, the ACT Survey of Academic Advising will be administered every three years to random group of participants.
  - Advisor’s Satisfaction Survey
    - The Academic Advising Council, along with selected academic advisors, will develop and implement an instrument to measure the advisors’ satisfaction with the advising process. An example of the types of information to be collected from faculty advisors is provided by Siena College, a non-public, undergraduate liberal arts institution located near Albany, NY (see Appendix I).
- **Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate academic progress (Behavior)**
  - **Persistence**
    - Freshmen to sophomore retention rate
    - Sophomore to junior retention rate
  - **Academic Standing (good standing, probation, suspension)**
    - Freshmen
    - Sophomores
  - **Number of hours earned in the academic year**
    - Freshmen
    - Sophomores
  - **Cumulative GPA**
    - Freshmen
    - Sophomores
  - **AdvisorTrac**
    - AdvisorTrac is a software system that the University College currently utilizes to schedule and monitor student/advisor interactions. The system also includes a documentation source for including necessary notations. AdvisorTrac will provide an actual count of such interactions for the freshman and sophomore classes.
  - **Referrals**
    - Advisors will complete referrals to appropriate resources when necessary and/or appropriate. For example, a faculty advisor may refer a student for tutoring services because of low performance in a particular class. Such referrals would be documented and monitored in AdvisorTrac.

**Evaluation of the Plan**

- The QEP Implementation Committee will have direct responsibility for the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the progress of ACE. The monthly meetings of the Implementation Committee will ensure all tasks are accomplished according to the stated timelines and that challenges encountered are identified and corrected. Assessment data analysis will allow for informed recommendations and continuous improvement. The Committee will utilize results of the assessment plan to create an Annual Report, which will be submitted to the President and the Cabinet. Upon approval, the Annual Report will be disseminated to faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders.

Northwestern State University will rely on this structure and the incorporation of the University’s existing evaluation and assessment processes, enhanced by additional qualitative feedback and reflection from all stakeholders, to incorporate evaluation findings into the ongoing enhancement of the QEP. Campus leaders will regularly monitor progress, review alignment of this activity with strategic planning efforts, and ensure that resources are allocated for successful implementation. Northwestern State University is committed to the opportunities that come with the implementation of this project.
References


APPENDICES
Appendix A

University Programs and their Accrediting Agencies

Associate

Business Administration (AD) – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
Office Administration (AD) – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
Electronics Technology (AS) – Accrediting Board for Engineering & Technology
Veterinary Technology (AD) – American Veterinary Medical Association
Nursing (ASN) - National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission

Baccalaureate

English Education (BA) – National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
Social Studies Education (BA) – NCATE
Biology Education (BS) – NCATE
Business Education (BS) – NCATE
Chemistry Education (BS) – NCATE
Elementary Education (BS) – NCATE
Family & Consumer Sciences Education (BS) – NCATE
Middle School Education (BS) – NCATE
Physics Education (BS) – NCATE
Early Childhood Education – NCATE
Health and Physical Education (BS) – NCATE, National Association for Sport and Physical Education
Instrumental Music Education (BMEd) – NCATE
Vocal Music Education (BMEd) – NCATE
Vocal & Instrumental Music Education (BMEd) – NCATE
Journalism (BA) – Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism & Mass Communication
Fine and Graphic Arts (BFA) – National Association of Schools of Art & Design
Music (BM) – National Association of Schools of Music
Theater (BS) – National Association of Schools of Theater
Business Administration – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
Accounting – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
Computer Information Systems – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
Electronic Engineering Technology – Accrediting Board for Engineering & Technology
Industrial Engineering Technology – Accrediting Board for Engineering & Technology
Family and Consumer Sciences – American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences
Hospitality Management and Tourism – American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences
Radiologic Technology (BS) – Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology
Nursing (BSN) – Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
Social Work (BSW) – Council on Social Work Education
Masters

Adult Education (MA) – NCATE
Early Childhood Education (MAT) – NCATE
Elementary Education (MAT) – NCATE
Middle School Education (MAT) – NCATE
Secondary Education (MAT) – NCATE
Special Education (MAT) – NCATE
Curriculum & Instruction (MEd) – NCATE
Early Childhood Education (MEd) – NCATE
Education (MEd) – NCATE
Educational Leadership (MEd) – NCATE
Educational Technology Leadership (MEd) – NCATE
Educational Leadership & Instruction (EdS) – NCATE
Educational Specialist – NCATE
Educational Leadership and Instruction – NCATE
Student Personnel Services (MA) – Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Education Programs
Art (MA) – National Association of Schools of Art & Design
Music (MM) – National Association of Schools of Music
Clinical Psychology (MS) – Masters in Psychology Accreditation Council
Nursing (MSN) – Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
# Appendix B

## Freshmen Admission Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Louisiana High School Graduates (under 21)</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Requires one of the below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Regents’ core curriculum</td>
<td>Need no more than 1 developmental course</td>
<td>Minimum cumulative High School GPA of 2.0 OR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum ACT composite score of 20 (SAT 940) from a single test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum High School rank of 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Resident or Home School Programs (under 21)</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion #1 – same as Louisiana High School Graduates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion #2</td>
<td>Minimum ACT composite score of 20 (SAT 940) from a single test</td>
<td>Need no more than 1 developmental course</td>
<td>Minimum cumulative High School GPA of 2.0 AND Minimum High School rank of 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion #3</td>
<td>Minimum ACT composite score of 23 (SAT 1060) from a single test</td>
<td>Need no more than 1 developmental course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering freshmen age 21 – 24</td>
<td>Meet all requirements for incoming students under 21 OR</td>
<td>Enter as a non-matriculating student OR</td>
<td>Enroll as a matriculating part-time student (6 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering freshmen age 25 and older</td>
<td>Furnish official high school transcript or G.E.D., and official test scores (i.e. ACT, SAT or COMPASS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Documentation of Evidence of Institutional Context Best Practices

In March 2005, the QEP Steering Committee began the process of reviewing data and other pieces of information necessary to develop a plan focused on student learning. Since the QEP was intended to be an integral part of the University's strategic plan, and not an add-on component, the Committee decided to utilize various components of the University Assessment Cycle to assist in determining student needs.

As the committee reviewed results from the spring 2004 Senior Exit Interview, the Spring 2004 administration of the ACT Student Opinion Survey (SOS), and the Spring 2004 Graduating Student Survey (GSS), the following items of interest were noted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Exit Interview</td>
<td>Question #2 – List three things you would like to change about NSU.</td>
<td>Parking, Offer More Courses, Improve Facilities, Improve Residence Halls, and Improve Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT SOS</td>
<td>Section III – College Environment (focus on Academic component)</td>
<td>Means/Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Testing/Grading System</td>
<td>1. 3.89/0.70*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Course Content in Major Field</td>
<td>2. 3.84/0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Instruction in Major Field</td>
<td>3. 3.90/0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Out-of-Class Availability of Instructors</td>
<td>4. 3.72/0.87*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Attitude of Faculty Towards Students</td>
<td>5. 3.77/0.92*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Variety of Courses Offered</td>
<td>6. 3.48/1.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Class Size Relative to Type of Course</td>
<td>7. 3.90/0.83*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Flexibility to Design Own Program of Study</td>
<td>8. 3.60/.097**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Availability of Advisor</td>
<td>9. 3.60/1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Value of Information Provided by Advisor</td>
<td>10. 3.66/1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Preparation Receiving for Future Occupation</td>
<td>11. 3.70/0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Likert-type scale ranging from one (1), very unsatisfied, to five (5), very dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSS</td>
<td>67. Courses in your major</td>
<td>67. 4.10/0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68. Quality of instruction in your major</td>
<td>68. 4.11/0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69. Accessibility of instructors in major</td>
<td>69. 4.07/0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70. Helpfulness of instructors in major</td>
<td>70. 4.15/0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71. Faculty academic advising</td>
<td>71. 3.86/1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72. Attitude of faculty toward students</td>
<td>72. 3.99/0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Same scale as ACT SOS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at .001 level; **Significant at .05 level
Regarding results from the Senior Exit Interview, the Committee wanted to focus on the response “Improve Faculty.” Parking and improvements to University facilities already were being addressed. The students made the following comments regarding this item:

- **Teaching Methods**
  - “should fully explain the concept and not rush through the topic”
  - “make sure everyone understands before moving on”
  - “have teachers actually teach their class”
  - “teach not read from the book or slides”

- **Instructors’ Attitude**
  - “show more of a concern for student’s progress”
  - “respect students more”
  - “interact with students and not pretend they are not there”

- **Instructors’ Classroom Management Skills**
  - “be better organized when teaching class”
  - “show authority in the classroom”
  - “control students who are disrupting class by talking, using cell phones, and coming in late”

- **Instructors’ Content Knowledge**
  - “make sure teachers who do on-line courses know how to teach the class”
  - “teachers are not able to answer questions because they don’t understand what they are teaching”

- **In General**
  - “more collaboration between faculty”
  - “more consistency between what I (sic) learning in a class and what my friend learns in the same class taught by a different instructor”
  - “more diverse faculty – minorities”

The focus of the ACT SOS was on the academic section of the instrument, as two areas of statistical significance were apparent when compared to national norms. The final three items in that section were of interest as well because they pertained to advising. A topic discussed frequently in Noel-Levitz consultant recommendations. Also, the standard deviation for these items was greater than 1.0, indicating variability in responses. Random selection was used in obtaining the student sample for administration.

When reviewing the results of the GSS, the Committee looked for questions that mirrored those in the academic section of the ACT SOS. The GSS is administered to those students graduating with an undergraduate degree; graduate students are excluded from this survey. After reviewing the academic type items, the Committee also evaluated the following:

- 38. Increasing Knowledge in Chosen Academic Field (3.49/.73)
- 39. Completing Job or Career Requirements (3.16/.78)
- 40. Completing Degree or Certification Requirements (3.46/.70)
The scale for this set of items ranges from one (gave no help) to four (gave very much help).

Along with survey results, consultant reports were examined. The Report of Northwestern (Louisiana) State University Institutional Review (January 2005) by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems was key. The team observed the following: “5. The issues of enrollment management and identification of the appropriate student mix for the institution remain major—and unresolved—issues.” The report identified several factors (pp. 7-11) that have “combined to create conditions in which Northwestern has enrolled many students who are poorly prepared for college success.” Six-year graduation rates were used as an example of this issue (pp. 77-78).

The Committee also read the Noel-Levitz Report (March 2005) regarding enrollment management. The following recommendations appeared worthy of further discussion:

- Recommendation #1 - Appoint a permanent enrollment management committee with two standing sub-committees on the quality of student life and learning (QSLL) and marketing/recruitment
- Recommendation #2 - Revise, prioritize, and use the existing retention plan
- Recommendation #3 - Develop and implement a more aggressive transfer recruitment plan
- Recommendation #7 - Strengthen your recruit-back program by focusing on recent stop-outs
- Recommendation #8 - Start to consider sophomore-to-junior strategies in your next plan
- Recommendation #9 - Obtain faculty buy-in for retention
- Recommendation #11 - Modify the current strategic plan for the university

As the Committee continued their work, it was decided that surveys would be administered to students and faculty members concerning the areas of orientation, advising, internet students, non-traditional students, and the University in general. The two tables below represent a selection of responses provided by both students and faculty members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Survey Items</th>
<th>Faculty Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important is an orientation course in helping students succeed?</td>
<td>4.1 on a five-point scale ranging from one, Unimportant, to five, Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective is NSU's orientation course in student success as it is currently taught?</td>
<td>2.6 on a five-point scale ranging from one, Ineffective, to five, Very Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were to re-design NSU’s orientation class, what three things would you consider the most important to include?</td>
<td>Academic advising, Study skills, Importance of advising, College success tips, Library skills, Faculty orientation, Critical thinking skills, Time to meet faculty &amp; advisor, Seminars regarding learning styles, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the three best pieces of advice for success in college that you can give an entering student?</td>
<td>Ask questions, Get involved, Visit advisor, Build relationship with advisor, Relationship with faculty, Visit teachers often, Build relations with advisor &amp; faculty, Organize time, Prioritize, Management skills, Get to know your professors, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality Enhancement Plan

What should academic advisors do for students that they currently do not do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should academic advisors do for students that they currently do not do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure, Keep office hours, Be available and follow student through academic career, See on regular basis, Mentor, Meet needs of students not just schedule, Advise them – have plan, Get to know student, Build relationship with student, Spend time with student, Listen, Assign advisors, Help make informed decisions by discussing options with them, Referrals for students’ strengths &amp; weaknesses, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe a non-traditional college student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe a non-traditional college student.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More mature, Adult student with family, Did not enroll in college right out of high school, Motivated &amp; hard-working, Serious, In workforce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe a typical internet college student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe a typical internet college student.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinks Internet will be easier, Two types – Slacker and Mother, Full-time job or lives in rural area, Mature with many responsibilities, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What three things does NSU do or offer that other colleges do not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What three things does NSU do or offer that other colleges do not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little faculty training, Faculty relations good, Good student-faculty interactions, Faculty care about student success, Smaller classes, Responsive faculty, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tell me three things that NSU could do that would make the University both special and better.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tell me three things that NSU could do that would make the University both special and better.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assigned advisees, Increase faculty numbers so they can spend more time with students, Encourage faculty development &amp; research, Better promote NSU outside of Natchitoches, Decrease load on faculty so there is time to assist students, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirty-three faculty members responded representing Nursing, Mathematics, Family and Consumer Sciences, Social Work, Biology, Business, Language and Communication, Chemistry/Physics, Scholars’ College, Journalism, Creative and Performing Arts, and Health and Human Performance. On average, this group had 15.6 years of college teaching experience and had been at Northwestern for 9.7 years. Each faculty member teaches, on average, 119.2 students per semester and advises 43.9.

### Student Survey Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Survey Items</th>
<th>Student Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you attended an orientation class at NSU?</td>
<td>150 of the 171 (87.7%) respondents indicated they attended Orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me three things taught in NSU’s orientation class.</td>
<td>NSU history, Campus tour, Financial Aid, Advising, Scheduling,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational skills, Study skills, Test-taking skills, Natchitoches history,</td>
<td>Tutoring, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is taught in NSU’s orientation class that you consider to be a waste of time?</td>
<td>School history, Demon fight song, Natchitoches history, Campus tour,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scavenger hunt, Autobiographies, Guest speakers, Don’t remember, Everything, Nothing,</td>
<td>etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were to re-design NSU’s orientation class, what three things would you consider the most important to include?</td>
<td>Class scheduling, Knowledge about major, Time management, Personality test,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration process, Professors, Multiple teaching styles, Career requirements,</td>
<td>Degree information, Classes for degree, Career opportunities for degrees, Help freshman better understand their major, Advising, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of college, Degree information, Classes for degree, Career opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for degrees, Help freshmen better understand their major, Advising, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the best advice for success in college that you have received, and who gave you that advice?</td>
<td>Go to class, Build relationship with professor, Time management,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with advisor, Never give up, Ask questions, Study, Have back-up plans,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family, Professors, Staff, Friends, Greek organizations, Advisor, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What should academic advisors do for students that they currently do not do?</td>
<td>Check on Freshmen students, Follow-up with students, More involved with students,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with understanding choices, Build relationship with students, Stay in touch</td>
<td>More involved with students, Help with understanding choices, Build relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students, Seek out failing students, Send emails, Help in decision-making,</td>
<td>with students, Stay in touch students, Seek out failing students, Send emails,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic mandatory update meetings, More office hours,</td>
<td>Help in decision-making, Periodic mandatory update meetings, More office hours,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations about career choices, More interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is your academic advisor?</td>
<td>Various responses representing the University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many times have you been to see your academic advisor?

Responses included never, too often, once or twice per semester, etc.

Describe a non-traditional college student

Older person returning to school or just beginning, Has family, Married, Commuter, Full-time working, etc.

Describe a typical internet college student.

Wants to stay home, Demanding work schedule, Older with job, Busy or lazy,

What three things does NSU do or offer that other colleges do not?

Aviation, Theatre & dance, Small classes, Available professors, Good teacher-student relations, etc.

Tell me three things that NSU could do that would make it both special and better.

Selective admissions, Diversity, More classes, Lower student activities fees, Better events, Week-end activities, Consideration from advisors,

What attracted you to NSU?

Location, Degree programs, Campus size, Nice campus, Reasonable cost, etc.

To assist the Committee in topic selection, “Town Talks” were held with students, faculty, and staff. These meetings were conducted as focus groups with a facilitator from the QEP Committee. A total of eight groups were hosted between August and November of 2005. Highlights from each of the constituent groups are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Groups (N=75)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Advising**          | • Offer training session for first-time faculty – don’t know how to plan for long-term  
  • Older professors should also go through training session  
  • Faculty should gather more information from the student before scheduling classes  
  • Faculty should offer students more options  – don’t just place them somewhere  
  • Work with students to lay out four-year plan  
  • Talk with transfer students – most of the time transfer students are not contacted about their advisors or other University processes  
  • Extended hours for advisors  
  • Make sure advisors are available to advise  
  • Advisor Evaluations – similar to Student Evaluation of Instruction  
  • Let student choose own advisor  
  • Have a checklist of what is required for each major and hand out during Freshmen Connection  
  • Offer seminar courses stressing advising each year for every classification  
  • Have seminar for majors where students could be educated  
  • Have orientation for transfers  
  • Information about career opportunities  
  • Things you can do with major  
  • Consistent across the University  
  • Be assigned one faculty advisor throughout their college career  
  • Better dissemination of advising materials |
### Non-Traditional Students
- More evening classes
- More 8-week courses
- More internet course with involved teachers, because there is a wide range in the quality of internet courses
- University offices such as fee-payment, financial aid, and Registrar need to be available after 5:00 p.m.
- Provide day care services

### Electronic Learning
- Older, non-traditional students might need a workshop before taking e-courses to test their competency
- Provide a more modern system – too many problems with BlackBoard
- Audio files to listen to instructor – would help for different modes of learning
- Video links
- No teacher feedback
- Inconsistent instruction
- Inconsistent communication from instructors
- Not allowing freshman to register for internet courses

### Miscellaneous
- More student involved in decision-making
- More resources
- Extended lab hours
- Larger computer labs in dorms
- Maintenance for labs is much needed

### Faculty Groups (N=36)
#### Advising
- Compulsory
- Advisor should be introduced during orientation
- Find out what kind of student you are dealing with and go from there
- Talk with them about career path
- Discuss major specific information that is not found in the catalog
- Flag on system or email when students fail classes
- Centralized Advising Center for each college
- Separate advising from registration; advising should be handled by faculty and registration by a professional
- Not all faculty are good advisors
- Faculty should understand this is part of their job and counts during their evaluation

#### Non-Traditional Students
- Less problems than traditional students
- Motivated, but trying to juggle work, family, etc.
- Get them together to meet one another
- Open labs with student workers to baby-sit – make available to everyone
- To help defray the amount of time and money they spend on traveling and child care, offer more one-day, three-hour courses
- Rotate courses to offer more night classes
- Offer Saturday classes

#### Electronic Learning
- They need BlackBoard training before they enroll for classes
- Quality control for appropriate delivery!
- Fine for some students, but not all are good on-line learners
- More time consuming – if done properly, takes many hours
- Open first to those really need on-line
- Policy for teachers to respond within 24 hours
- Must have virtual office hours – live chat
- Greater faculty training
- Students don’t have the computers to support new technology
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Groups (N=20)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>▪ Train advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Annual workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Make it compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Advisor should be introduced during orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Traditional Students</td>
<td>▪ Offer childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Look at flexible scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Learning</td>
<td>▪ Harder to advise students involved in internet courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Lack of interaction between the teacher and student and among students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Division of Academic Affairs Organization Chart Following Implementation of ACE Initiative

University of Louisiana Board of Supervisors

President
Randall J. Webb

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Thomas Hanson

College of Business
TBD

Leesville Center
Larry Monk

College of Nursing
Norann Planchock

Alexandria Center
Marsha Zulick

College of Education
Vickie Gentry

Registrar
Lillie Bell

College of Liberal Arts
Donald Hatley

Library
Fleming Thomas

College of Science and Technology
Austin Temple

Electronic and Continuing Education
Darlene Williams

Louisiana Scholars’ College
Davina McClain

Information Systems
Jim McCrory

University College
Sue Weaver

Graduate Studies and Research and Associate Provost
Steve Horton

Academic and Career Enhancement
To Be Employed
Appendix E

Proposed Organizational Chart for ACE Initiative Showing Integration of Divisions of Student and Academic Affairs

Items in blue are new ACE positions
Appendix F

Job Descriptions for ACE Personnel

Northwestern State University
Duties and Responsibilities

DIRECTOR
Academic and Career Engagement Project (ACE)

FUNCTION OF WORK: To implement and supervise the functions of the academic and career components of the ACE project

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: Direct over all Academic and Career Engagement (ACE) program staff

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
• Demonstrate knowledge of or experience in career services, academic advising, counseling, and learning support
• Implement all aspects of the ACE project
• Coordinate all aspects of the ACE project
• Collaborate with appropriate university personnel to develop resources and methods regarding student degree and career exploration and selection
• Oversee all personnel training involving the ACE project
• Conduct annual assessment of the ACE project
• Participate in all university-related functions related to the ACE project
• Participate in scholarly activities appropriate to the discipline
• Exercise control over budgetary and outside fundraising functions related to the ACE program
• Maintain collegial relationship with colleagues and peers throughout the university
• Articulate and disseminate the vision and needs of the ACE project to constituents
• Maintain timeline of the ACE project as outlined in its strategic plan
• Coordinate with ACE advisory board as needed/appropriate
• Train and supervise all faculty, staff, and employees involved with the ACE project
Duties and Responsibilities

**FUNCTION OF WORK:** To coordinate the functions of the academic and career components of the ACE project

**SUPERVISION RECEIVED:** Director of the Academic and Career Engagement Project (ACE)

**SUPERVISION EXERCISED:** Classified/non-classified employees, student workers, and graduate assistants

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- Demonstrate knowledge of or experience in career services, counseling, and learning strategies
- Work with Director to determine goals, objectives, and functions of ACE
- Act as a liaison to the university community regarding the services of the ACE project
- Provide periodic reports to the ACE Director regarding progress in meeting strategic plan
- Establish an annual calendar of events
- Develop and implement any appropriate workshops or special activities related to program goals
- Provide educational outreach services to residence halls, student organizations, and classes
- Develop, implement, and evaluate career guidance classes
- Administer and interpret assessment instruments for personal career exploration
- Represent the University in appropriate professional organizations and in the community
- Maintain, if appropriate, licensure and membership in professional organizations
- Serve on university committees as appropriate
- Support activities of Career Counseling Center as agreed upon by the ACE Director and Director of Career & Counseling Services
- Provide career and academic counseling to students
Northwestern State University
Duties and Responsibilities

COUNSELOR
Academic and Career Engagement Project (ACE)

FUNCTION OF WORK: Assist students with all aspects related to academic success and career selection

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Assistant Director of the Academic and Career Engagement Project (ACE)

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: Student workers and graduate assistants

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
• Assist Director and Assistant Director of the ACE project
• Provide career and academic counseling to students
• Assist with planning and implementation of special events such as career days, job fairs, and test preparation programs
• Conduct presentations regarding career development topics
• Assist students with issues related to job searches
• Assist students in the development of their academic and career portfolios
• Utilize and train in the use of appropriate academic and career software
• Participate in appropriate in-services
• Maintain licensure and membership in appropriate professional organizations
• Support activities of Career Counseling Center as agreed upon by the ACE Director and Director of Career & Counseling Services
Northwestern State University
Duties and Responsibilities

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT II
Academic and Career Engagement Project (ACE)

FUNCTION OF WORK: To provide secretarial support for the ACE project office

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Director of the Academic and Career Engagement Project (ACE) & Assistant Director of the ACE Project

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: Student Workers

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
• Handle incoming telephone calls to ensure “customers” are provided with appropriate assistance
• Greet office visitors and refer to appropriate staff
• Maintain calendar for ACE Director and Assistant Director
• Schedule meetings related to ACE program
• Prepare meeting materials
• Sort and distribute incoming mail
• Compose and type office correspondence
• Arrange and settle travel for ACE Director and Assistant Director
• Perform all clerical and administrative functions associated with successful operation of the office
• Other duties as requested by ACE Director
Appendix G

Proposed Floor Plan for ACE Initiative
# Appendix H

**Undergraduate Curriculum of Study Form • Department of Engineering Technology (BS in IET)**

## Typical Semester-by-semester Progression

**Industrial Engineering Technology (145), Ay 2006-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st YEAR</th>
<th>2nd YEAR</th>
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1. Typically offered during the fall semester only
2. Typically offered during the spring semester only
3. Typically offered during the fall and summer semesters only
4. Typically offered during the spring and summer semesters only
5. Must meet University core requirements
6. Usually SCI 1020 (requires CHEM 1030) or BIOL 1010+1011 (4 semester hours)
7. Electives may be selected from any 2000, 3000, or 4000 level Industrial Engineering Technology or Electronics Engineering Technology courses. Electives may include a maximum of three hours of occupational field experience.

**IMPORTANT NOTES**

1. Prerequisites and co-requisites for each course are listed in the General Catalog.
2. Pay close attention to footnotes 1-4 and the sequence of courses. Many courses are not offered every semester.
3. EET 4940 and IET 4960, Project Design I and II must be taken during the last two semesters before graduation.
# DEGREE PROGRESS SHEET

## Industrial Engineering Technology (145)

Catalog 2006-2007

<table>
<thead>
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<th>CWID#____________________</th>
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### Core Hours Subtotal 57

### Major Hours Subtotal 68

1 Must meet University core requirements
2 Electives may be selected from any 2000, 3000, or 4000 level Industrial Engineering Technology or Electronics Engineering Technology courses. Electives may include a maximum of three hours of occupational field experience.

**TOTAL HOURS FOR DEGREE - 125**
Appendix I

Questions from a Faculty Advising Survey used by Siena College*

1) On average, did more students come to see you about advising this semester than in previous semesters?
   □ Yes □ No

2) Did you arrange to have a group meeting with some of your advisees?
   □ Yes □ No

3) Students who came to see you also talked about career goals or interests?
   □ Yes □ No

4) Students who came to see you also talked about academic difficulties they were experiencing?
   □ Yes □ No

5) Students who came to see you also talked about their overall academic program?
   □ Yes □ No

6) Students who came to see you were prepared to talk about their course selection for next semester?
   □ Yes □ No

7) Students who came to see you asked questions regarding the Core that you could not answer?
   □ Agree □ Strongly Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

8) There was enough time between the distributing of the Alt Pins and registration for you to meet with students?
   □ Agree □ Strongly Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

9) If you had a question or problem with the Pins or the process, there was someone to turn to for answers/guidance?
   □ Agree □ Strongly Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

*http://www.siena.edu/advising/Survey/FacultyAdvisingSurveyWebFormsPresentationSpr05.pdf