

Northern Illinois University
Division of Student Affairs
Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services
Assessment Plan
January 25, 2008

1. History

Established in August of 2005, the Department of Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services was formed in order to serve the needs of commuter and non-traditional students. Commuters are students who live off campus. Non-Traditional students are undergraduates who are 24 years old or older, or any NIU student who has a dependant. The life of commuter, and/or non-traditional students can be very different from that of the typical college student. These types of students have many additional responsibilities outside their role as a student. Many commuter and non-traditional students work and have families and other obligations that they must balance. These student populations have unique challenges. The Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services department exists to help make their college career a little smoother.

2. Mission, Goals, and Objectives

MISSION: To provide a supportive and inclusive environment for commuter and non-traditional students. Through programming and services, the office reaches out to these student populations to better connect them to campus. The office promotes social and academic growth and development through programs and services that foster lifelong learning.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (ASSESSMENT TARGETS)

[NOTE: Current Student Affairs Annual Departmental Priorities for the Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services department (developed during Spring Semester prior to the start of the current fiscal year) are listed after applicable goals. Each Priority's corresponding assessment target(s) are also included. Given the current Student Affairs planning processes, priorities for one year are provided, along with some proposed priorities that will be considered. Additional priorities in subsequent years will address those goals listed below for which no annual priority/assessment targets are listed.]

- a. Goal A: Collaborate with other offices within and outside of the Division of Student Affairs to reach out to the commuter and non-traditional student populations.
Proposed FY09 Annual Priority A1: Establish intentional efforts to document collaborative partners, as well as the efficacy of those partnerships in meeting the needs of commuter and non-traditional students. (Assessment targets to be determined by March 2008.)

Proposed assessment target A.1.1: Thru document review, department will establish baseline number of Student Affairs, student organizational, university, and off-campus collaboration partners.

- b. Goal B: Provide quality resources and services for these two student populations,
 - i. FY08 Annual Priority B1: Create and implement the Commuter Student Leader (CSL) program.
 - 1. Assessment target B.1.1: Through focus groups, students will provide feedback regarding their knowledge of, and programming for commuter students offered by department.
 - 2. Assessment Target B.1.2: Through focus groups, students will suggest possible CSL program elements that may persuade them to participate in the CSL program.
 - ii. FY08 Annual Priority B2: Develop and execute marketing campaign to establish a new identity for the office of Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services.
 - 1. Assessment target B.2.1: Through student survey, department will establish baseline data pertaining to commuter student ability to identify the commuter and non-traditional student services office and the services and resources provided.
 - 2. Assessment target B.2.2: Through student survey, 60% of students will be able to identify the three programs/services that the office provides.
 - 3. Assessment target B.2.3: Through student survey, 70% of students will be able to identify the location of the office/lounge in the Holmes Student Center.
 - 4. Assessment target B.2.4: Through student survey, 50% of the students will be able to recall the main Web site for the office.
 - 5. Assessment target B.2.5: Through focus groups, students will provide feedback regarding departmental marketing methods and messages.
- c. Goal C: Partner with Commuter Student Association (CSA) and Students Who Are Non-Traditional (SWAN) to provide support in their endeavors.
 - i. FY08 Annual Priority C1: Firmly re-establish student organizations of the office of Commuter/Non-Traditional Student Services.
 - 1. Assessment target C.1.1: Through interviews, 60% of selected student leaders will be satisfied with their leadership experience through their student organization.
 - 2. Assessment target C.1.2: Through interviews, student members of CSA and SWAN will report how specific meetings or programs offered during the past year were personally relevant to them.

3. Methods

DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE TABLE

Method	Description	Timeline	Person Responsible	Goal/ Objective Addressed
Document Review	<u>Collaboration Document Review:</u> Calendar will be reviewed for number and type of meeting and tabulated by type of collaboration partner.	FY09 (proposed)	Director, Graduate Assistant	A
Focus Groups	<u>Focus Groups:</u> Administered during spring semester to solicit feedback from commuter and non-traditional students regarding departmental programmatic and marketing efforts	Spring 2008	Director, Graduate Assistant	B
Survey	<u>Student Survey:</u> Administered during spring semester to solicit feedback from commuter and non-traditional students regarding departmental marketing methods and messages	Spring 2008	Director, Graduate Assistant	B
Interviews	<u>Student Organization Interviews:</u> Students will be interviewed to solicit feedback regarding their experiences with two specific student organizations.	Spring 2008	Director, Intern	B, C
Internal/ External Review	Per the Student Affairs Assessment Strategy Grid, an Internal/External Review will be conducted using elements of the CAS (Council for the Advancement of Standards) Standards during fall semester. An external review team will be identified to visit campus during spring semester.	Every 5 years beginning 2009/2010	Director; Internal Review: NIU Colleagues; External Review: External Consultant	A, B
Benchmarking	Per the Student Affairs Assessment Strategy Grid, a Benchmarking study will be conducted during FY2012, topic TBD.	Every 5 years beginning 2022/2012	Director, Graduate Assistant	B

OUTCOMES/GOALS BY METHODS MATRIX

	DOCUMENT REVIEW	FOCUS GROUPS	SURVEY	INTERVIEWS	INTERNAL/ EXTERNAL REVIEW	BENCH-MARKING
a. Collaborate with other offices	X				X	
b. Provide quality service		X	X	X	X	X
c. Partner with student organizations				X		

4. Further Information Needed, Timeline, and Request for Resources

Given that the Commuter/Non-Traditional Student Services department is currently in the early stages of development, additional information related to the impact of the department on student success needs to be collected. Consequently, assistance in developing further assessment tools and strategies would be beneficial to the department at this time. Initially, the department needs to conduct two focus groups with commuter and non-traditional students.

Proposed Focus Group Budget

Planning, recruitment, and implementation: In-Kind

Refreshments (two focus groups, estimated 10 participants/group): \$40 per group X 2 = \$80

Incentives for participants (20 participants X \$10/participant): \$200

Qualitative Analysis and Report (\$8/hour Graduate student time X 20 hours): \$160

TOTAL: \$440