Division of Academic Affairs

Testing Services

Assessment Update

August 16, 2019

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1. History and Context

The earliest document that was found mentioning our office was in 1947. In 1947, our office was referred to as Office of Tests and Measurements. Sometime between 1947 and 1961, the name was changed to the Office of Testing Services. Our office was placed in the Academic Affairs Division, under the Office of the Provost in July 1972. Back in 1947, we administered tests, scored exams, maintained files of tests, and prepared statistical data for the university. Much of what Testing Services did in 1947 is what we still do today, but our office processes have evolved with the times. For example, in many cases we have moved from paper to electronic formats. Beginning in 2016 our office began accepting and processing Blue on-line course evaluations. We will continue to process paper/pencil course evaluations as long as there is a need. In 2018, Testing Services began administering the English, Math, and Reading exams to all admitted CHANCE students attending Northern Illinois University as part of our new student testing program. We will continue to test newly admitted traditional students as well.

Currently, Testing Services provides essential, daily assistance to NIU in five major service categories: (1) the development, administration, and scoring of tests: (2) the reporting and use of test results; (3) exam score maintenance for exams including the Advanced Placement Program examinations, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations, DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations, NIU Proficiency examinations, American College Testing (ACT), and Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT); (4) paper-and-pencil and Blue on-line course evaluations; and (5) psychometric and statistical/research consulting.

We administer a variety of tests, most of which are for NIU students. Our placement exams accurately place students into classes where they can be successful. These exams and their resulting placements are essential for student success. Perhaps our most intense administration activity is the New Student Testing Program during which we administer placement and proficiency tests for new freshmen and transfer students. We also function as a test administration center for national or state testing programs including the ACT, GRE, LSAT, MPRE, and MAT.

Our scanning services provide fast and accurate exam results to evaluate student learning outcomes and provide timely feedback to instructors and their students. Without our services, instructors would need to hand-grade their exams. This slow and error-prone task could interfere with their teaching and research responsibilities. The speed at which we process exams allows instructors more time to develop lesson plans, address issues, engage students, and further their research. We also scan sheets for faculty and student research projects such as surveys and questionnaires. These results promote the research and tenure aspirations of NIU faculty, staff, and students.

Evaluations are used for college departments and faculty to review the experiences students have had in their classes. The data collected is used to enhance courses, improve student learning outcomes, and better prepare students for employment.

The research provided by the Director of Testing Services supports three primary areas; the Division of Academic Affairs, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and Tests, Measurements and Evaluation for college and departmental staff. This research often involves the collection and management of data from numerous university offices including Registration and Records, Institutional Research, Financial Aid, Admissions, Orientation, CHANCE, as well as queries of the National Student Clearinghouse. This research evaluates student recruitment, success, retention, academic equity, absence tracking, and predictive analytics for the Provost and Enrollment Management Services. The Director of Testing Services regularly consults

with Institutional Research, Registration and Records, as well as the Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation offices. Ultimately, our research helps the university make data-driven decisions that promote student persistence and graduation.

All of these activities conform with the mission of the university as reported in its Statement of Vision and Mission: to be the premier student-centered, research-focused public university in the Midwest, contributing to the advancement of knowledge for the benefit of the people in the region, the state, the nation, and the world.

2. Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission Statement:

The mission of Testing Services is fivefold; receive and process national exam scores for current and prospective undergraduates and graduates, administer undergraduate, graduate, and certification exams to NIU students and the surrounding community, scan and process classroom exams, scan, process, and manage paper-and-pencil and online course evaluations, and to provide timely, accurate reports for the students, colleges, departments, and individual faculty members to support the advancement of the Northern Illinois University community. Research completed by Testing Services supports various offices such as Admissions, Chance Program, Division of Enrollment Management Services, Financial Aid and Scholarship Office, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, Orientation and Family Connections, Registration and Records, as well as university colleges and departments. This research aids in making data-driven decisions for Northern Illinois University.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Testing Services will provide, accessible test administration services for the university community for placement and proficiency testing as well as national standardized exams.

>   **Objective 1.1.**   Testing Services' staff will work to provide a testing space that allows students to take required and optional exams.

Goal 2. Testing Services will assist faculty and instructors with assessing the learning outcomes in their classes, provide academic advisors with student assessment data for placement purposes, and support research projects of NIU faculty, staff, and students.

>   **Objective 2.1.**   Testing Services will provide accurate and efficient scanning services to faculty and instructors by providing necessary materials, ensuring each received examination is processed, and that faculty is provided with results including: item analyses, score distribution reports, student roster reports, and individual student reports.

Goal 3. Testing Services will support Undergraduate and Graduate Admission processes by receiving, cleaning, verifying, maintaining, and loading national exam scores to the appropriate location (Testing Database, and/or MyNIU).

>   **Objective 3.1.**   Testing Services will match as many national exam scores to current and prospective students to aid in undergraduate and graduate admissions decisions as well as credit-by-exam.

Goal 4. Testing Services will support colleges, departments, and individual faculty by processing all paper/pencil and Blue on-line course evaluations.

Objective 4.1.   Testing Services will receive, process, and manage data from paper/pencil and Blue on-line evaluations and communicate the results to the proper channels to help colleges, departments, and individual faculty with their student learning outcomes.

Goal 5. Testing Services will conduct research that supports divisions under the Provost, Vice Provost, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM), as well as several Deans, Department Chairs, and faculty members.

Objective 5.1.   Testing Services will initiate, organize, and coordinate the collection and analysis of data from numerous university offices such as Admissions, Chance Program, Financial Aid, Institutional Research, Orientation and Family Connections, Registration and Records, as well as university colleges and departments to help guide strategic goals and form initiatives for the Northern Illinois University community. The timing for such analysis will vary depending on the complexity of the data.

Objective 5.2.   Testing Services will work with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to help design, oversee and delegate data collection and research efforts to evaluate student recruitment, success, retention, academic equity, absence tracking, and predictive analytics for the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.

3. Assessment Methods

Explanation of Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation				
	Description	Assessment-Level Target [a]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	Goal Addressed
Cumulative in house exams administered	Document that tracks the number of placement, proficiency, core competency, correspondence, and exemption exams administered in our testing lab. Maintain accurate testing schedule to determine appropriate number of testing seats needed. This document also helps show that all exams processed are also loaded into our Testing Database.	Provide an adequate amount of testing times for current and new students	On test dates & Monthly	Clerk Chief, Test Specialist, Office Support Specialist, IT Support Associate	1.1
National exam contract schedule log	Log of test dates, testing program, building/room to be used for the exam, time frame the building/room is contracted for, testing time, administrator for the exam, and if the room is set or not	To make sure contracts with national testing companies are fulfilled	As needed throughout the year when test requests come in	Assistant Director, Test Specialist	1.1
Generation of Exam Reports	Add course names, and professor names, process exam results, review exam data to ensure information is correct, and send the appropriate reports by e-mail or campus mail	To ensure 100% of exams delivered to our office are scanned, processed, and delivered back to the professor	Daily during the semesters when classes are in session	IT Support Associate	2.1

3. Assessment Methods

Explanation of Assessment Methods

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	Description	Assessment-Level Target [a]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	Goal Addressed
Direct Consultation with Users of Scanning Services and Research Issues	Faculty often have specific issues or requests for customization related to their scanning needs. Faculty, departments/offices, contact us about statistical and psychometric questions or potential research issues.	To successfully work with faculty, departments/offices to meet their needs	Ongoing	Coordinator of Forms Processing, Director	2.1, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2
External data match up and reporting of records	Receive national exam scores for ACT, SAT, AP, CLEP, DSST, IB, Reading Accuplacer. Receive national exam scores for GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, ICTS, IELTS and match score for all exams with applicants and current students, for credit by exam we export matched scores to MyNIU for credit	To make sure all national exam scores are filed and reported to MyNIU accurately and 100% of the exam scores are archived into our testing database	Daily files	Associate Director, Coordinator of Forms Processing	3.1
Processing of mandated and non-mandated paper/pencil and Blue on-line course evaluations	Receive paper/pencil evaluations and Blue on-line evaluations and process them for each department.	To make sure evaluations are completed, processed and reported	At the end of Spring, Summer and Fall semesters	Coordinator of Forms Processing, Associate Director	4.1

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	Description	Assessment-Level Target [a]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	Goal Addressed
IE Data Request Client Satisfaction Survey	Institutional Effectiveness has a Client Satisfaction Survey that clients may choose to complete after they receive the research they requested	For surveys completed, 80% satisfied to completely satisfied	Optional survey for clients upon completion of a research project	Director	5.2

3. Assessment Methods

Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

Assessment Method	Goal				
	1. provide testing to the university student body	2. provide scanning services: fast and accurate examination results to faculty, placement results to academic advisors, and process research projects for faculty, staff, and students	3. receive, clean, verify, maintain, and load national exam scores	4. process paper/pencil and on-line course evaluations for departments	5. conduct research projects for the university
Cumulative in house exams administered	F, D	F, D			
National exam contract schedule log	F, D				
Generation of Exam Reports		F, D			
Direct Consultation with Users of Scanning Services and Research Issues		F, I		F, I	F, I
External data match up and reporting of records			F, D		
Processing of mandated and non-mandated paper/pencil and Blue on-line course evaluations				S, D	

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IE Data Request Client Satisfaction Survey					S, D
Note. F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment					