EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Experience Working Group understood that the time students spend outside of the classroom is an important part of their overall NIU experience. To that end, the group was charged with benchmarking the current out-of-class student experience. After early discussions with committee members, five subgroups were identified to examine those experiences: (1) intercollegiate athletics, (2) career services, (3) on-campus living, (4) recreation services, (5) and student activities. (Though technology was initially considered to be a critical part of the working group’s goals, it was dropped due to the Facilities and Environment Working Group’s consideration of technology.)

Each of the five subgroups was specifically advised to work on inspirational and aspirational goals. The inspirational goals were those that could be accomplished by optimizing and utilizing human, fiscal, and intellectual resources at the current funding level. The aspirational goals were those that could be accomplished in the future through investments, resource allocations, and a change of priorities. The group was advised to ascertain, to the best of their ability, the realistic aspect of the proposed goals. The group also felt that some of the proposed objectives would have to be assessed within the context of sustainability at NIU.

Members of the Student Experience Working Group believe there is room for improvement within NIU’s current context. Yet the report reflects a prevailing sense of optimism in the findings of all the subgroups, as well as future aspirations for the student experience at NIU. The subgroups had a high sense of ownership and pride for NIU. They felt that people working at NIU were giving the best of their services and capabilities, and were willing to go an extra step to improve what NIU already offers.

Specific benchmark goals were established as follows:

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

The critical benchmarks related to athletics are student attendance at athletic events and marketing dollars per student. Most important, the goal should be to increase student attendance and continue to promote school pride and tradition through various events/activities.
The subgroup identified three ways that NIU can meet this goal and increase benchmark numbers:

- Create and implement a needs and satisfaction survey related to the fan/spectator experience at NIU athletic events.
- Leverage current technologies and implement new technology as a means of more effectively communicating with students.
- Encourage and elevate collaboration among campus departments for the overall student experience. School pride is not simply limited to athletics, but can be propelled by the university as a whole.

CAREER SERVICES

The benchmarks identified for career services are the number of relationships with external partners, the number of alumni/career placement events, and the percentage of seniors utilizing the Career Services Center. In particular, the subcommittee determined that NIU needs to be more thorough in tracking internships, job satisfaction, alumni interactions, and relationships with external partners university-wide. This data can be used to improve overall, career-related student services.

The subgroup identified four ways that NIU can meet this goal and increase benchmark numbers:

- Create and implement a cross-institutional database/clearinghouse to track data on interactions relating to number of students using career services, internships, job placement, placement events, and satisfaction with services offered; this should include a student input/feedback system.
- Form a stronger, more strategic partnership with the NIU Alumni Association.
- Consider cross-training employees to further the career service message.
- Highlight more academic programs and strengthen services related to programs that are seemingly “under the radar.”

ON-CAMPUS LIVING

The goal for on-campus living is to score in the top 20% of our comparison schools on the following factors: variety of vegetarian menu choices in residential dining units; satisfaction with room/floor environment; and enhancing the social influence of peers.

The subgroup identified nine ways that NIU can meet this goal and increase benchmark numbers, five of these are highlighted:
• Continue to build upon the current residential renaissance by collaborating with Finance and Facilities to develop and implement a long-range facility maintenance and renovation plans for each residential unit.

• Expansion of dining offerings, with an emphasis on specialty food outlets with vegetarian options and allergy-free menu offerings (marketed to residential and commuter students).

• Implement marketing plans with an emphasis on social networking tools to promote student learning, program awareness, and community traditions.

• Collaborate with academic partners to develop five- and ten-year strategic plans for each of the Living-Learning Communities.

• Develop a collaborative resource center that would offer services related to academic advising, financial aid, ombudsman, tutoring, writing, substance abuse assessment, mediation, and personal/group counseling.

RECREATION SERVICES

The indicators established by the recreation services subgroup relate to the amount of indoor recreation spaces per student capita, the number of recreation facility users annually per student capita, and the student rating of needs being met by recreation services. In all cases, the goal is to increase overall space, usage, and satisfaction.

The subgroup identified three ways that NIU can meet this goal and increase benchmark numbers:

• Open a new facility with increased space and added features; seriously consider developing a Wellness Center – incorporating Recreation Services, Health Services, Health Enhancement, and Counseling and Student Development to support a holistic approach to health, recreation, and wellness.

• Consider satellite sites to accommodate residence hall residents and commuter population.

• Consider renovating current Student Recreation Center to accommodate Intramural Sports and Sport Clubs.
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

This subgroup benchmarked student involvement in fraternities and sororities, student government, and residence hall government. Additionally, the number of service and volunteer activities performed by students was benchmarked.

In terms of student and residence hall government, NIU appears to be a leader and the goal was to maintain the current involvement. However, the subgroup believed that increased student involvement in fraternities and sororities and volunteer/service opportunities would be beneficial to both the university and its students. In particular, the subgroup recommended the development of and use for a cross-institutional database/clearinghouse to track student involvement and engagement at NIU.

MEMBERSHIP

- Brandi Hephner LaBanc, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Co-Chair
- Promod Vohra, Dean, College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, Co-Chair
- Amanda Benzine, Director of Marketing, Intercollegiate Athletics
- Sandi Carlisle, Director, Recreation Services
- Angela Dreessen, Director, Student Involvement and Leadership Development
- Melissa Folowell-Vargas, Office Manager, Student Involvement and Leadership Development
- Darren Howard, student
- Randall House, student
- Chris Jones, Chair, Political Science
- Bob Marshall, NIU Alumni Association
- Joe Matty, Executive Director, NIU Alumni Association
- Mike Stang, Executive Director, Housing and Dining
- David Wiley, student
ISSUE

Intercollegiate athletics

INDICATOR

- Student attendance at football and men’s basketball
- Dollars per student spent on marketing of athletic events
- Promotional tools used to target students for athletic events

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS

STUDENT ATTENDANCE: See Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Football Attendance</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Men’s Basketball Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIU</td>
<td>4,106</td>
<td>Temple</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>3,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent State</td>
<td>3,457</td>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>2,586</td>
<td>Kent State</td>
<td>787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>2,559</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Illinois – Chicago</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>2,332*</td>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>322*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>1,939</td>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>1,846</td>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>313*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>1,828</td>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>230</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2009 statistics

Table 5.1

Data related to student attendance was not available for Central Michigan, Miami (OH), Ohio, Toledo, and Western Michigan. Illinois – Chicago does not have a football team.

MARKETING BUDGET

See Table 5.2. Budget information was difficult to obtain because each institution tracks its budget differently. In an effort to “equalize” the numbers (so every school tracked is measured the same way), the amount that each school spends was divided by that school’s enrollment to estimate how much is spent per student on marketing athletic events.
Both promotional tools and athletics marketing budget take all sports into consideration, not just football and men’s basketball.

GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET:

- Average 5,466 students per game for football.
- Average 306 students per game for men’s basketball.
- Increase student attendance at all home athletic events by 10%.
- Have the capability to allow students to print their own tickets for all home Huskie athletic events.
- Have one athletic marketing staff member dedicated solely to social media and technology.
- Partner with departments across campus to offer at least two events each semester to all NIU students—including transfers and those at satellite campuses—that promote school pride and support (e.g., Huskie Bash, away game road trips, etc.).
- Create a survey to rate student experience at athletic events in order to measure success beyond attendance. Although attendance allows us to see how many students attend the events, it does not tell us why they come (or do not come) and what they want to see. For example, students could rate giveaways, band vs. canned music, Red Riot, school pride initiatives, and overall experience at athletic events. From this survey, goals can be created for the following year. This survey should be given to students at the end of each semester.
5-YEAR TARGET:

- Average 371 students per game for men’s basketball.
- Continue to increase student attendance at all NIU athletic events by 10% each year.
- Work with Convocation Center to utilize ticketing technology that will give students various options for obtaining their game tickets (e.g., print at home, smart phones, and ticket kiosks both on campus in DeKalb and at satellite campuses).
- Continue to employ a marketing staff member who is dedicated to social media, keeping NIU on the forefront of new trends in communication.

BY 2020:

- Average 543 students per men’s basketball game, filling the student section in the Convocation Center.
- NIU Athletics will be on the forefront of social media (in comparison to competitors) and new technology that is used for communication.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

The best student experience at athletic events comes when students can share it with each other. Therefore it is so important that NIU continues to increase the student attendance at events. Achieving this goal will not only provide a better experience for the students attending, but will increase school pride and benefit the student-athletes competing by creating an overall better atmosphere.

One of the most important issues when it comes to communicating with students is the use of technology. In our research, every campus was using social media to communicate with student fans. Due to this trend, NIU needs to employ a staff member who dedicates their time to this issue. Technology and social media change daily, and employing such a staff member will allow NIU to stay on the forefront of communicating with our students.

The goal of making it easy for students to obtain game tickets is important to getting students to events. If NIU offers print-at-home tickets, along with kiosks around campus that allow students to get their tickets 24/7, this will help improve attendance at NIU events.

Continuing to work with other departments across campus on school pride initiatives is also a key component, not only to attendance at athletic events, but the overall student experience at NIU. As a campus, we need to continue to collaborate on events that stress support of each other and being proud to be a Huskie.
The student survey will provide key information regarding what can be improved to make the student experience better.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

- Create a student survey to determine what is important to enhance the student experience at athletic events.
- Commit to staying abreast of changing technology in order to more effectively communicate with students.
- Encourage collaboration between on-campus departments for the overall student experience. School pride is not simply an outcropping of athletics, but an extension of the university as a whole.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

Addition of a staff member dedicated to athletic social media and technological outreach

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

To meet these goals, a larger portion of the overall athletics marketing budget needs to be allocated toward promoting NIU events to students. Additional dollars would be needed to be able to promote events on the front end, along with making events fun once fans arrive.

Most of the successful schools spend around $1 per student on marketing, whereas NIU currently spends around $.61. It is important to increase that amount in order to raise our student attendance numbers. Current students become the alumni who are targeted to purchase tickets and donate once they graduate. If we engage them in fun athletic events, and they have a good experience, these students will be more likely to donate in the future.

A staff member dedicated to social media and using the emerging technology to communicate with students is critical. Likewise, the creation and implementation of a student survey and the necessary components for implementation must be taken into consideration.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

N/A
GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

The Athletics Department is responsible for implementing the goals, but they cannot be met without the help of other departments across campus, including Housing and Dining, Student Involvement and Leadership Development, the Convocation Center, the NIU Alumni Association, and others.
ISSUE
Career services

INDICATOR
- Number of relationships with external partners
- Number of alumni/career placement events
- Percentage of seniors utilizing Career Services Center

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
The following comparisons (Table 5.3) are based on the data collected, but it is important to note that many of the competitors do not track or did not report the information we are requesting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>External Partners</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Placement Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Western Michigan</td>
<td>20–30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>10–15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>NIU</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>428</strong></td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent State</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Michigan</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kent State</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3
The data regarding senior usage of career services is sparse. Besides NIU, the working group was able to collect data from only three other schools. This data was not reported in a comparable format. However, based on what the working group can tell from the data, it appears that NIU ranks third, behind Toledo and Ball State and ahead of Western Michigan.

GOAL
3-YEAR TARGET: To have created and be using a cross-institutional database/clearinghouse to track data on interactions relating to number of students using career services.
services, internships, job placement, placement events, and satisfaction with services offered.

5-YEAR TARGET: Improve tracking processes, and use the data we have gathered to increase student usage of Career Services by 20% over the 3-year usage total.

BY 2020: Improve tracking processes, and use the data we have gathered to increase student usage of Career Services by 30% of the 3-year usage total.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
Without tracking the data university-wide, we will be unable to adequately assess where our resources can be most effectively allocated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL
• Form a strong partnership with the NIU Alumni Association. Assets include: meeting areas for events held in Chicago and DeKalb; members currently able to offer insight into multiple careers; potential internships from alumni; general networking opportunities.
• Highlight diversity of graduates and skills.
• Develop a continuous feedback system from students to improve processes.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED
Required usage of a cross-institutional database or clearinghouse; possibly implement co-curricular transcripts.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS
Budgetary concerns would be minimal, with the exception of creating the cross-institutional database. Initially, the committee would recommend assessing current resources (both fiscal and human) to identify any inefficiencies that could be positively leveraged to achieve these goals.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE
• Student Affairs Strategic Plan
• Enrollment Management Strategic Plan

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL
• Career Services
• Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
• Academic Affairs
ISSUE
On-campus living

INDICATOR
- Variety of vegetarian menu choices in residential dining units
- Satisfaction with room/floor environment (study, sleep, privacy, noise)
- Social influence of peers

Housing and Dining routinely participates in a number of national benchmarking initiatives related to student satisfaction and participation. Two of these surveys (Educational Benchmarking Inc. for housing, and National Association of College and University Food Services for dining) provide results that include a priority matrix and factor analyses of the characteristics that most significantly influence student satisfaction. Interestingly, top predictors of overall program effectiveness include variety of vegetarian menu choices in residential dining units and satisfaction with room/floor environment (study, sleep, privacy, noise).

In addition, a recent national benchmarking instrument focusing on Living-Learning Communities identified social influence of peers as having a significant impact on Living-Learning Community program participation at NIU.

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
See Table 5.4 on the next page for the benchmarking results.

GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 10% increase in reported score on indicators noted above.
5-YEAR TARGET: 20% increase in reported score on indicators noted above.
BY 2020: To score in the top 20% of our comparison schools on the indicators noted above.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
Increasing the scores on these top predictors will result in higher overall student satisfaction and participation in Northern Illinois University on-campus housing and dining options, which could lead to higher recruitment and retention rates.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL
- Build upon current plans for a new residence hall and renovation of existing residence halls by collaborating with Finance and Facilities to develop and implement long-range facility maintenance and renovation plans for each residential unit. Specific attention should be paid to
increasing the number of single rooms to enhance student privacy, decreasing the average community advisor to resident ratio, and offering new dining options for students.

- New dining options should include addition of specialty food outlets with a focus on vegetarian options and allergy-free menu offerings. Options should be marketed to both resident and commuter students.
• Implement marketing plans with an emphasis on social networking tools to promote student learning, program awareness, and community traditions.

• Empower students to more actively participate in departmental decision-making and enforcing community standards, including the introduction of student advisory boards.

• Review and revise community advisor staff training to focus on consistent enforcement of quiet hours and to integrate with living-learning community staff.

• In collaboration with Information Technology Services, continue to expand wireless availability in the residence halls by adding one additional residential complex each year until all facilities offer ubiquitous coverage by FY15.

• Study and propose salary increments for live-in/on staff members in order to achieve salary equity with other institutions within the state.

• In collaboration with academic partners, develop five- and ten-year strategic plans for each of the Living-Learning Communities that include effectiveness assessments and participation targets.

• In collaboration with partners from across campus, develop a collaborative resource center that would offer services related to academic advising, financial aid, ombudsman, tutoring, writing, substance abuse assessment, mediation, and personal/group counseling. The case management approach to providing student assistance would be facilitated through this type of resource center.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED
As recommended in a recent external review, introduce student advisory boards to departmental decision-making process.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDING FOR RESIDENCE HALL MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATIONS
The scope of work will be determined following an audit and the development of a residence hall redevelopment master plan. Complete renovation similar to the work that is currently being performed in Grant Towers would cost approximately $185–$200 per square foot. Existing residence halls contain approximately 825,000 square feet of unrenovated space (255,381 sq. ft. in Douglas, 252,320 sq. ft. in Lincoln, and 319,979 sq. ft. in Neptune).
PROFESSIONAL RESIDENTIAL LIFE STAFF PAYROLL

Salary survey data indicates NIU’s salaries for live-in residence hall directors (5 positions) are the lowest of Illinois public institutions ($28,000). A 10% increase in annual salary would place NIU just above the FY11 state average ($30,717). A similar discrepancy is found in salaries for complex coordinators (5 positions) where NIU starting salaries were the lowest in the state ($32,000). Requests have been submitted to fill current vacancies (3 positions) at a higher level ($35,000), but an additional 10% increase is necessary to achieve the FY11 state average ($38,868).

FUNDING FOR WIRELESS EXPANSION

A Request for Capital Improvement (RCI) to install wireless access points throughout the residence halls (Project #2057) has been submitted in order to continue the campus-wide installation process in FY13 with an anticipated total funding level of $160,000. Information Technology Services estimates nearly 500 access points (installed for $300/ea) would be required to provide ubiquitous access in all halls including Grant D Tower, Stevenson Towers, Lincoln Hall, Douglas Hall, Neptune Halls, and Northern View Community. The RCI includes a $10,000 contingency.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

- New residence hall construction and residence hall renovation documents
- Housing and Dining external review
- Benchmarking assessment tools (EBI, NACUFS, and NSLLP)
- Student Affairs Strategic Plan

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- Housing and Dining
- Finance and Facilities
- Information Technology Services
- Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- Academic Affairs
ISSUE
Recreation services

INDICATOR
Student rating of recreation needs being met based on the National Intramural Recreational Sports (NIRSA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Campus Recreation Impact Study

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
See Table 5.9 for the benchmarking results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Satisfaction Rating*</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Madison (2005)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>18,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee – Knoxville</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>27,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron (2008)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>27,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota State</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>14,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina – Greensboro</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>18,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon State</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>19,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>14,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clemson</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>19,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Kentucky</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>19,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina – Chapel Hill</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>17,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
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<td><strong>24,424</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>47,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola – Chicago</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>15,951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>26,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>20,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 to 5 with 5 being the highest score possible

Table 5.9
Note: These data were obtained from the NIRSA and NASPA Campus Recreation Impact Study. This student survey has been conducted on various campuses each year for the past five years. Not all campuses conduct this survey every year. Therefore, only the schools listed above conducted the survey in spring 2010 and were grouped as large four-year institutions, primarily residential.
GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 4.14
5-YEAR TARGET: 4.30
BY 2020: 4.40

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

By converting two racquetball courts to a boxing area and a personal training area, Recreation Services can improve recreation need ratings. Also, by increasing the number of programs and expanding the type of programs, Recreation Services can better meet students’ recreation needs. With the intentional renovation of the existing facility, or construction of a new facility, student needs could better be met through the addition of the following: indoor climbing wall, increased square footage of cardio and strength training area, aquatics area, and fitness studios.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

• Convert racquetball court to a boxing area.
• Convert a racquetball court to a personal training area.
• Renovate existing facility or open a new facility with added features: indoor climbing wall, more cardio and strength training space, aquatics area, and fitness studios, and increased meeting and hang-out spaces.
• Increase the number of intramural, fitness and wellness, outdoor adventure, and aquatic programs by 10% each year.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

N/A

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Capital project/capital equipment requests to convert two racquetball courts into a boxing area and a personal training room.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

N/A

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

• Recreation Services
• Finance and Facilities
• Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
ISSUE
Student recreation

INDICATOR
Number of recreation facility users annually, per student capita

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
See Tables 5.7 and 5.8 below for benchmarking results.

### Table 5.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Uses Per Student</th>
<th>Annual Users</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>52.99</td>
<td>788,000</td>
<td>14,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>30.41</td>
<td>671,468</td>
<td>22,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>23.49</td>
<td>426,185</td>
<td>18,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Chicago</td>
<td>23.49</td>
<td>653,832</td>
<td>27,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent State</td>
<td>19.68</td>
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<td>38,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>18.23</td>
<td>499,451</td>
<td>27,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td>437,424</td>
<td>27,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.64</strong></td>
<td><strong>372,919</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,850</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Michigan</td>
<td>14.49</td>
<td>363,002</td>
<td>25,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>271,245</td>
<td>23,579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Uses Per Student</th>
<th>Annual Users</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina State</td>
<td>36.51</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>32,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington State</td>
<td>31.49</td>
<td>798,360</td>
<td>25,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State</td>
<td>29.36</td>
<td>842,000</td>
<td>28,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison</td>
<td>26.29</td>
<td>511,000</td>
<td>19,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>25.72</td>
<td>1,079,031</td>
<td>41,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>1,235,841</td>
<td>56,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas State</td>
<td>18.62</td>
<td>541,968</td>
<td>29,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma State</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>429,595</td>
<td>23,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.64</strong></td>
<td><strong>372,919</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,850</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Florida</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>764,340</td>
<td>49,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 18 uses per student
5-YEAR TARGET: 30 uses per student
BY 2020: 35 uses per student

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

At a 4% annual increase in student usage for the next three years, NIU could achieve the three-year benchmark. Most institutions that have opened new recreation facilities have experienced double to triple the amount of users annually.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

• Incorporate a major Welcome Days event in the SRC to increase awareness of the facilities and programs.
• Users have consistently asked for a boxing area. Convert a racquetball court to a boxing area.
• The growth of the personal training program has been limited by space. Convert a racquetball court to provide adequate space for personal training.
• Open a new facility with added features: indoor climbing wall, more cardio and strength training space, aquatics area, fitness studios, increased meeting and hang-out spaces, etc.
• Increase the number of intramural, fitness and wellness, outdoor adventure, aquatic and sport club programs by 10% each year.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

N/A

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Capital project/capital equipment requests to convert two racquetball courts into a boxing area and a personal training room.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

N/A

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

• Recreation Services
• Finance and Facilities
• Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
ISSUE
Recreation services

INDICATOR
Amount of indoor recreation space per student capita

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
NIU’s amount of indoor recreation space per student capita compared to peer institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Sq. Ft. Per Student</th>
<th>Sq. Ft.</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>35.32</td>
<td>780,000</td>
<td>22,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>17.45</td>
<td>312,000</td>
<td>17,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>16.14</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>14,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>213,474</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Michigan</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>25,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>168,000</td>
<td>20,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td>189,000</td>
<td>23,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>144,000</td>
<td>18,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Chicago</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>216,000</td>
<td>27,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>203,000</td>
<td>27,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>158,228</td>
<td>27,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.24</strong></td>
<td><strong>125,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,850</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>103,000</td>
<td>20,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent State</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>156,386</td>
<td>38,196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5
NIU’s amount of indoor recreation space per student capita compared to aspiring institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Sq. Ft. Per Student</th>
<th>Sq. Ft.</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska – Lincoln</td>
<td>15.57</td>
<td>367,000</td>
<td>23,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Institute of Technology</td>
<td>15.03</td>
<td>289,000</td>
<td>19,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>14.36</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>20,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>440,000</td>
<td>34,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State</td>
<td>11.92</td>
<td>342,000</td>
<td>28,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State</td>
<td>11.71</td>
<td>656,459</td>
<td>56,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>11.70</td>
<td>491,000</td>
<td>41,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon State</td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>222,000</td>
<td>19,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina State</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>345,329</td>
<td>32,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma State</td>
<td>10.21</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>23,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas – Austin</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>479,300</td>
<td>51,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California – Davis</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>32,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri – Columbia</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>32,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>28,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State – Chico</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>15,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington State</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>189,105</td>
<td>25,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas A&amp;M</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>355,000</td>
<td>49,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>19,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas State</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>193,000</td>
<td>29,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas – Arlington</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>194,700</td>
<td>32,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIU</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>23,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Florida</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>49,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6

GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: No change

5-YEAR TARGET: 18 sq. ft. per student

BY 2020: 18 sq. ft. per student

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

Increasing 5.24 sq. ft. per student of dedicated recreation space to 18.00 would
place NIU second among peer institutions, only if other institutions do not increase or expand their facilities. The amount of recreation space offered per student at a university influences the opportunity for students to engage in recreation activities. Insufficient space often results in overcrowded spaces (especially during prime time when students prefer exercising and taking recreation) and student dissatisfaction. A recent study found that all four years after institutions opened a new recreation center, enrollment increased. Overall enrollment changes ranged from 2% to 13%.

From the NIU Spring 2010 Student Survey, 51% of respondents indicated that NIU facilities were too crowded. Also, when combining all facility-related barriers identified from the survey, 79% of respondents reported that these factors impede their participation: facilities too crowded; parking a problem; facilities too spread out around campus; facilities are too outdated; lack of quality of facilities; and facilities do not have the right equipment.

Consistent with the NIU Spring 2010 Student Survey, the NIU Recreation Services Fall 2010 Open Recreation Survey found that 75% of students reported that cardio machines were not available when they wanted to use them; 56% of students indicated there was not enough space in the cardio machine area; and 72% of students reported there was not enough space in the free weight area to complete their workouts. Consistent with these two assessment findings, the Living Well Survey indicated: 70% of students felt that it was important or very important that equipment was available when they wanted to use it and it does influence their participation in recreation. Students reported they would likely increase their recreation participation if the cardio equipment area (52% of students), the weight selector area (47% of students), and the free weight area (49% of students) were expanded.

Recreation Center location(s) on campus can have an impact on student engagement. When comparing NIU to 17 institutions who achieved the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Outstanding Sports Facilities award in the past five years, NIU ranked 17th out of 18th with 0.38 square feet of cardio/weight room space. When comparing NIU to facilities with these institutions, NIU needs 1.4 to 3.4 times more cardio/weight room space to be competitive.

Expansions of campuses in the past 20 years have influenced accessibility to recreation centers. To address these issues, comprehensive recreation/activity centers and satellite centers are being established. Often the satellite centers are a “mini version” of the type of activities offered in the larger center. Fitness centers are being included in renovated and newly constructed residence halls, as well.
Parking garages are being constructed next to main centers, and appropriate patron parking is being identified. Also, best practice universities are incorporating health and wellness suites into the recreation centers to create a more holistic approach for students.

From the NIU Spring 2010 Student Survey, students were asked what would be important to them if they were improving/expanding recreational facilities. Cardio equipment/area, an indoor climbing wall, strength equipment, and an indoor aquatics area were among the top six student preferences. Consistent with these findings, the Living Well Survey revealed that 41% of students would likely increase their recreation participation if an indoor climbing area was added at the Student Recreation Center (SRC). Also, 46% of students reported they would likely increase their recreation participation if an indoor aquatics area was at the SRC.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

- Open a new facility with added features: indoor climbing wall, more cardio and strength training space, aquatics area, fitness studios, increased meeting and hang-out spaces, and suspended track.
- Consider the feasibility of incorporating Health Services, Health Enhancement, and Counseling and Student Development Center to create a more holistic approach to health, recreation, and wellness.
- Consider satellite sites to accommodate residence hall residents and commuter population.
- Consider renovating current SRC to accommodate Intramural Sports and Sport Clubs.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

N/A

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Any of these improvements would require new monies. Based on the current funding model, the current SRC student fee would need to be revised to accommodate new facilities. Also, fees appropriate for programming would need to reflect expanded programs. Current total of funds dedicated to recreation programming is $6.90 per student, per semester. The current total of funds dedicated to SRC is $64.20 per student, per semester. Funds needed for facility and program expansion can range from $95 per semester to $250 per semester.
PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE
N/A

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL
- Recreation Services
- Finance and Facilities
- Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A NOTE ON THE DATA

The recommendations within this report are limited to focusing on specific activities and populations within the student body; these were chosen because of the influence and scope of involvement, as well as the availability of data both from NIU and from comparable institutions. This data was critical in determining appropriate goals and measurement points. That being said, student engagement can be determined only in part by membership levels.

At this point, a comprehensive study of student engagement does not exist at NIU. The scope of all the activities available to students is not known, nor is the extent to which students participate in them as a planner, member, or as a part of the audience. For example, the College of Visual and Performing Arts offers, on average, over 600 art-related program opportunities in an academic year. These events could be examined for the level of student participation, as well as students who participate as members of the audience. Another example is among the 432 student organizations. Comprehensive data on membership from year to year does not exist for all organizations, nor is there a comprehensive list of activities and programs offered by student organizations. Tracking this type of data would be an incredible task that would require implementation of systems of reporting and collecting this data, nonetheless, this a critical step at accurately measuring the student experience.

Obtaining information that may provide a wider perspective for the range of opportunities and scope of involvement may, in turn, be beneficial when considering student engagement. Even then, the full picture would not be captured. Coupling this with a survey asking students in which activities they have participated, as well as how those activities have impacted their college experience, would give a much more comprehensive picture of student engagement at NIU. Student engagement could also be documented and tracked via a co-curricular transcript.

Assessing the student experience, specifically with student activities, could go in any number of directions. Recommendations include the creation of a campus-wide committee or task force to determine the institutional interest and commitment to a comprehensive data collection and assessment process.
ISSUE
Fraternity and sorority life

INDICATOR
• Number of chapters
• Total number of fraternity and sorority members
• Percentage of the student body who belongs to a fraternity or sorority.

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
See Table 5.10 for benchmarking results. The approximate number of students in fraternities and sororities ranges from 230 to 4,200, and the percentage of students involved ranges from 2% to 33%. Out of the 14 institutions that were examined, NIU ranks fourth in terms of the number of fraternity and sorority members and sixth in terms of percentage of the student body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Greek Life Students</th>
<th>Greek Life %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>17,267</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>33%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>10%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>20,243</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>8%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>38,479</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>8%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,313</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>15,551</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>4.6%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Michigan</td>
<td>19,718</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Chicago</td>
<td>16,790</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>19,201</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>11,289</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>22,032</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* of undergraduates

Table 5.10

GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: Percentage of total student body participation up to 7%
5-YEAR TARGET: Percentage of total student body participation up to 8%
BY 2020: Percentage of the student body participating in fraternities and sororities will be up to 11%, which will mean more than 2,800 students in fraternities and sororities, hence doubling the overall membership.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

Nationally, undergraduate fraternity and sorority members have higher graduation rates when compared to their non-member counterparts. Further, fraternity and sorority alumni/ae donate to their home institutions at higher rates and in higher amounts than their non-member alumni counterparts. Forty-three percent of fraternity and sorority alumni/ae gave to NIU. The average lifetime giving of fraternity and sorority alumni/ae was $1,303. This is in comparison to the non-member alumni/ae, of whom only 28% gave back to the institution and the average lifetime giving was $607. (Note: These figures exclude the substantial Barsema and Yordon gifts from the calculations as they skew the average gift numbers; however, both are fraternity members.)

Fraternity and sorority students have a pattern of being involved in all areas of campus. The past eight consecutive student body presidents have been members of a fraternity or sorority. Fraternity and sorority students provide the foundation to the institution’s volunteer and service record for students. Focusing on this population will have a positive impact for all students when considering engagement and involvement outside of the classroom.

This goal will represent doubling our current fraternity and sorority population over the course of nine years. These numbers would put NIU second (to Miami of Ohio) in the region, assuming the other institutions do not make an intentional effort to increase their fraternity and sorority populations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

Support expansion of multicultural fraternities and sororities, specifically Latin-based organizations. This will likely include adding another governing council in order to specifically support Latin-based fraternities and sororities. A national Latin-based umbrella council is in the process of being developed, and this will have an impact nationally to develop campus-based councils accordingly. Developing an additional council to provide specific support for Latin-based organizations will also provide additional support for the other multicultural fraternities and sororities by allowing the current multicultural council to focus on the non-Latin organizations. Ultimately, expansion will provide a stronger support base for all of the organizations.
As personal finances continue to be a concern for our students, there will be a need to develop membership scholarships to allow our students, who could not otherwise afford to join a fraternity or sorority, a better opportunity for access. This development could occur both within the organizations (with management occurring at the chapter level), as well as more centrally (within the institution with management occurring within Student Involvement and Leadership Development).

Multicultural-based fraternities and sororities tend to be smaller in terms of the number of members, and alumni structures are different than their historically white counterparts. These differences often make owning housing out of reach. In order to support these smaller chapters, we need to explore options of university-owned fraternity- or sorority-specific housing to support chapter expansion efforts. Conversations are currently taking place between Student Involvement and Leadership Development and Housing and Dining to explore the possibility of offering organization-based housing within the current university residential living options.

Finally, the fraternity and sorority community needs more institutional support to promote the advantages of membership at orientation, open houses, at other admission activities, and on the NIU website. Currently, Student Involvement and Leadership Development participates in tabling events during Orientation and Admissions activities. The fraternity and sorority community can and should be prominent in the literature and in the talking points with both students and parents throughout the recruitment and orientation processes. Pride events that highlight fraternity and sorority membership among faculty, staff, and students should be planned and participation encouraged. Consideration of a task force or committee exploring and promoting the fraternity and sorority community (or student engagement generally) may be another venue to provide on-going support, assessment, feedback, and programmatic recommendations.

**ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED**

No specific organizational or policy changes are necessary to meet the goal, but significant changes in the practice of how the fraternity and sorority community is viewed, embraced, and promoted would need to happen in order for this goal to be successful.

**BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS**

As the growth in the community happens, it would become necessary to add another full-time staff member to work with this community. By 2013, Student Involvement and Leadership Development would need additional funding to add the appropriate staff in terms of level and experience.
PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

Student Affairs Strategic Plan

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- Student Involvement and Leadership Development
- Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- Other key campus partners
ISSUE
Student government

INDICATOR
Number of students involved in student government

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
See Table 5.11 for benchmarking results. (Note: All institutions reported less than 1% of their student body being involved in Student Government.)

GOAL
In terms of structure and involvement levels, NIU is a leader when compared to similar institutions. As a result, the recommended goal is to maintain the level of participation. In future studies, it may be worthwhile to compare the amount of resources and responsibility among student governments, as well as examine the demographic make-up of student leaders involved in student government. Exploring the participation of the student body in student government elections may be worth consideration.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
The student government at NIU seems to be on par for similar institutions. At NIU, the organization exists with a significant amount of autonomy, and it may be viewed negatively for administration to impose specific goals upon them without their engagement. Given that there are no significant shortages, it is the recommendation to focus energy in other areas (like fraternity and sorority life) where more gain and impact may be experienced.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL
Student Involvement and Leadership Development should continue to work with the student government leadership to engage in some assessment activities and
explore options of involving more students who are not a part of the official structure. Student government may want to consider an apprentice/training program similar to Texas A&M’s “Fish Camp.” Student government may also want to consider exploring online voting options in order to engage more students in the elections process.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED
No specific organizational or policy changes are necessary to meet the goal.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS
There are no budgetary considerations needed to meet this goal.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE
N/A

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL:
• Student Involvement and Leadership Development
• Student Association
ISSUE
Residence hall government

INDICATOR
- Number of students involved in residence hall government
- Percentage of student population living in the halls that is involved

NIU’s Benchmark and Comparison to Competitors
See Table 5.12 for benchmarking results. With the exception of NIU, all institutions reported less than 2% of their on-campus student population being involved in hall government. NIU ranks first, compared to competitors, in this area with 6.5% of residence hall students participating.

GOAL
With respect to residence hall government, NIU is the best practice institution when compared to benchmark institutions. The recommendation is for the level of involvement to be maintained.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
Given that NIU can show significantly higher levels of involvement in the residence hall government structure than their benchmark counterparts, continuing to support the current level of involvement would maintain the engagement status in the future.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL
Housing and Dining should continue to support the residence hall government and challenge the student leadership to actively engage residents and grow their programs. In the future it may be worth exploring beyond the region and consider other nationally ranked programs for additional consideration related to furthering the engagement in hall government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIU</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Michigan</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Eastern Michigan, Miami (OH), Southern Illinois, and Illinois – Chicago data unavailable

Table 5.12
ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED
No specific organizational or policy changes are necessary to meet the goal.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS
There are no budgetary considerations needed to meet this goal.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE
N/A

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL
• Housing and Dining
• Residence Hall Association
ISSUE
Service or volunteer activities

INDICATOR
Number of students involved in service or volunteer activities annually

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
See Table 5.13 for benchmarking results. (Note: Ohio reported an estimated number as only certain types of service are tracked. Akron, Bowling Green, Buffalo, Eastern Michigan, Central Michigan, Toledo, and Western Michigan either do not keep track of service hours or did not provide information.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>More than 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIU</td>
<td>Approx. 8,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>More than 2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Chicago</td>
<td>More than 2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13

GOAL
With respect to volunteer and service activities, NIU is among the best practice institutions in the region. The recommendation is to continue to improve the method of tracking and reporting volunteer and service activities. Tracking and reporting these types of activities seems to be a common challenge in the region.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
Currently there are multiple venues for participation in volunteer and service activities. Student Involvement and Leadership Development continues to try to capture reporting of these activities in order to provide an accurate report of activities for the institution; however, at this point this is not a centralized process. Over the last 24 months, Student Involvement and Leadership Development has worked with the Provost’s Office to develop a more centralized method of reporting activities that engage students such as service learning activities and volunteer activities.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL
Student Involvement and Leadership Development should continue to work with the Provost’s Office on more efficient and centralized methods of reporting and collecting data related to service and volunteer activities. External partner
organizations, as well as student organizations which focus on service, also need to be engaged in reporting and documenting service and volunteer activities of NIU students.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

Once the system is established, support from the administration in requesting all members of the university community to utilize the future centralized reporting system may be necessary to ensure success in capturing all of the activities in which students are engaged.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Possible needs for technical support for future database/online system.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

N/A

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- Student Involvement and Leadership Development
- Provost’s Office
- Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- Key collaborative partners