

Academic Support Unit Assessment
Status Report with Original Assessment Plan

Division of Academic Affairs

Office of Undergraduate Studies - EngagePLUS

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Prepared by:

Michaela Holtz, Director OSEEL

Anthony Guzzaldo, Assistant Director OSEEL, Engage PLUS Coordinator

Support provided by Brandon Lagana

1. Introduction

Preface

This assessment status report is the first and the last for EngagePLUS, as this initiative, not intended as a program, will be reported on future assessment reports of the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL) starting FY20. This assessment plan represents what was in place for the program; thus, readers will find this a blended report with the results immediately following the assessment methods section. Because EngagePLUS components likely will be folded into a unit's preview in future years, feedback would be useful to inform future goals, objectives and methods for whatever unit takes on elements from this initiative. Please note that mission, goals, and objectives discussed in this report are those established at the time EngagePLUS was launched and will change along with planned revisions.

Background

EngagePLUS was launched in the fall of 2016 as a part of the NIUPLUS umbrella that also includes AcademicsPLUS and JobsPLUS. Engage PLUS simply outlines the process that facilitates the awarding of transcript notations to students who have completed immersive and extensive hands-on learning experiences, programs, and projects that have met qualifying criteria. As part of this initiative, an EngagePLUS Advisory Board was established prior to the launch to advise on issues including policy and marketing, and also serve as the review panel for programs that have been designated as EngagePLUS Approved.

The EngagePLUS system and processes are facilitated through the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL), which reports to the Associate Vice Provost for Student Engagement and Success. An overview chart shows the organizational position of EngagePLUS in context with the other NIUPLUS components, and reporting lines.

Vice Provost, Undergraduate Studies		
Associate Vice Provost, Undergraduate Curriculum	Associate Vice Provost for Student Engagement and Success	
AcademicsPLUS (General Education Program)	Director, OSEEL	Director, JobsPLUS
	EngagePLUS	JobsPLUS
	Assistant Director, OSEEL and Coordinator for EngagePLUS	

Currently, 247 students received transcript notation since 2016. Engaged PLUS currently offers [22 specific preapproved programs with limited capacity.](#)

EngagePLUS transcript notations are available in six possible categories:

- Artistry
- Career Related Work Experience
- Experiential Learning
- Leadership
- Service-Learning
- Undergraduate Research

Qualifying experiences:

- Do not result in academic credit
- Involve 80 or more hours of active engagement, depending on the category
- Are overseen by a qualified mentor or supervisor
- Involve direct application of classroom knowledge to “real world” activities or problems
- Include critical reflection embedded in the experience
- Meet the additional criteria that are specific to each of the six categories

Application Process

Students complete all the necessary application forms in the EngagePLUS system follow by all processing conducted online. EngagePLUS applications consist of two main components: a Proposal that is submitted before or during the experience and a Summary that is submitted upon completion of the experience.

Upon approval of the Proposal, a milestone will appear in the student’s degree audit report as in-progress. When the Summary has been approved, the milestone will appear as complete in the student’s degree audit report and the notation will appear on the student’s official transcript.

EngagePLUS Approved Programs

The EngagePLUS Advisory Board has approved select programs to be designated as EngagePLUS Approved, which means they have demonstrated they satisfy the necessary criteria for their categories and are listed on the EngagePLUS website as such. These programs are also selectable in the EngagePLUS application system.

Students who are involved in programs that have not been EngagePLUS Approved are still encouraged to apply, but will have to provide more detailed information about the experience.

The EngagePLUS Approved program feature of EngagePLUS went into effect in August 2018. Thus far twenty-two programs have been designated as EngagePLUS Approved in five of the six categories:

Artistry	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No preapproved programs available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate Global • Honors House Leaders • METAS Peer Mentoring Program • University Honors Program Honors Fellows
Career Related Work Experience	Service-learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVID Tutor Field Experience Model • On-Campus Internship Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate U.S. – Rural Experience • Huskie Alternative Break • Huskie Food Pantry Leadership Team • Huskie Service Scholars • McKearn Fellows Alternative Spring Break Service Trip • Music and Memory
Experiential Learning	Undergraduate Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate U.S. – Urban Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors Scholars

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- Forensics
 - Model Illinois Government
 - Model United Nations
 - University Honors and Alumni Association Externship
 - Research Rookies
 - Student Engagement Fund
 - Summer Research Opportunities Program (*discontinued in spring 2020 due to budgetary reductions*)
 - Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research (*merged with Student Engagement Fund in 2019*)
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2. Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission Statement

The purpose of the EngagePLUS initiative is to provide students with formal documentation of their co-curricular learning experiences and create an incentive for students who may not otherwise pursue co-curricular learning experiences to seek them out. Additionally, EngagePLUS is intended to help distinguish NIU as an institution that prioritizes co-curricular learning and provides students with a competitive edge, while also providing the university with data on student engagement.

Unit Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. EngagePLUS will provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to pursue formal documentation of their co-curricular learning experiences and an incentive to seek them out.

Objective 1.1. The total number of students who apply for and are awarded transcript notations will increase over time.

Objective 1.2. The demographic makeup of EngagePLUS notation recipients will be representative of NIU's undergraduate population.

Goal 2. EngagePLUS will serve as a boon to recruitment and will help NIU cultivate a reputation as an institution that prioritizes engaged learning and provides students with a competitive edge when seeking employment or pursuing graduate school.

Objective 2.1. EngagePLUS will incentivize freshmen and transfer students to attend NIU.

Objective 2.2. EngagePLUS notations will provide students with credentials and/or attributes that employers and graduate schools find desirable in prospective candidates.

Goal 3. EngagePLUS will serve as a warehouse of student engagement data and will provide the university with a deeper understanding of engagement at NIU.

Objective 3.1. EngagePLUS reports will be distributed on an annual basis to stakeholders and on demand.

3. Assessment Methods

EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS TABLE

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target ^a	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
Tracking EngagePLUS application system	The EngagePLUS application system stores application data that can be used to track the number of applicants and number of transcript notations awarded by EngagePLUS category.	The number of applicants and notations awarded will increase over time capturing all incoming University Honors students as EngagePLUS is (was) a requirement.	This information is continuously updated throughout the academic year as students apply. The data is analyzed after the conclusion of the academic year, generally in September.	OSEEL Assistant Director
Data analysis of demographic representation MyNIU queries	Registration and Records staff created a number of queries that include demographics data on EngagePLUS applicants and notation recipients.	EngagePLUS ethnicity and gender will be representative of that of NIU's undergraduate population.	Queries will be accessed and data analyzed after the conclusion of the academic year, generally in September.	OSEEL Assistant Director
UNIV101 survey	UNIV101 students will be surveyed and include questions about EngagePLUS notations, whether students were aware of them, and whether knowing about them influenced their decision to attend NIU.	75% of students will report being aware of EngagePLUS and 75% will indicate EngagePLUS incentivized their choosing NIU.	Surveys will be administered every fall and the data analyzed in January of each academic year.	OSEEL Assistant Director in collaboration with the director of FSYE.
One-time Employer Survey	Gather employers feedback regarding value of transcript notation and for marketing purposes.	75% of employers will indicate transcript notations are desirable in the hiring process.	August 2016	OSEEL Assistant Director in collaboration with Career Services.

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target ^a	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
Data analysis and tracking EngagePLUS Reports	EngagePLUS will produce an annual report on student participation and demographics.	One annual report per year.	The annual report will be produced annually.	OSEEL Assistant Director
<i>Note.</i> ^a Assessment-level target is the level of performance the unit hopes to see on the assessment (e.g., 85% percent of participants demonstrate X, Y, and Z).				

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

Assessment Method	Goal		
	Goal 1. Co-curricular learning documentation	Goal 2. NIU marketing and notation value	Goal 3. Student engagement data warehouse
EngagePLUS application system	S, D		
MyNIU queries	S, D		
UNIV101 survey		S, I	
Employer Survey		S, I	
EngagePLUS Reports			S, D
<i>Note.</i> F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment			