

Northern Illinois University
Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Assessment Summary Report for FY08 – FY12
January 2013

1. Executive Summary

a. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has seen its assessment efforts influenced by several themes that have spanned the FY08 – FY12 period: the move to the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, changing demographics of prospective students, a challenging fiscal environment throughout the state of Illinois, and the need to balance transfer recruitment with freshman admissions.

b. Overview of Goals

- i. **Goal 1:** Create an admissions office market plan, establish priorities, procedures, and activities consistent with admission policies to reach enrollment goals, and assess program outcomes to evaluate success. Notable assessment results include surpassing goals for admission of priority student segments; use of these results includes professional development for staff members and cooperation with diversity resource centers in the area of campus visits.
- ii. **Goal 2:** Communicate and interact with all university departments, committees, offices and individuals that influence student recruitment and retention. Notable assessment results include sharing enrollment goals with valued on-campus partners and increasing the diversity of the freshman class during FY2008. Collaborations informed selection of admissions staff as well as student representatives (Northern Ambassadors).
- iii. **Goal 3:** Maximize the effectiveness of our recruitment programs: open houses, on-campus and off-campus admissions programming, and other department events. Notable assessment results include a record number of attendees at open houses during 2009, despite the university tragedy the year prior.
- iv. **Goal 4:** Utilize technology to efficiently further NIU's enrollment objectives. Notable use of results includes the purchase of a new registration software system for event management, and converting admissions materials into Spanish.

c. Departmental Assessment Status

Having undergone several major changes within the past five years, such as the move to a different division and the retirements of several associate directors, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions is poised to renew its commitment to departmental assessment. The 2012 – 2016 Enrollment Management Strategic Plan identifies several core areas of improvement, which will pervade future assessment efforts: recruitment, retention, institutional facilities and capacities management, marketing and branding, and strategic enrollment target and budget forecasting.

d. Select Recommendations

Recommendations for moving into the next five-year period center on the need for a holistic yet adaptable approach to departmental assessment. The University expects to see further challenges as the population of high school seniors in Illinois enters a predicted drop and Illinois families face a challenging economy. The department must rise to the challenge of the Vision 2020 initiative while maximizing current resources for both recruitment and retention. As a result, following the retirement of the Associate Director for Campus Visits, an Assistant Director for Visitation & Assessment position was created in order to coordinate departmental assessment in a large, multifaceted unit. In addition to the more intentional coordination of

assessment, the department recommends further professional development for staff members who work closely with recruitment events and territory management.

2. Departmental History

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions strives to meet enrollment objectives and market the University in a manner consistent with the vision, mission, and core values of the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. As an outreach unit for new freshmen and transfer students, the office aims to market NIU to priority student segments and enroll the most highly-qualified students possible to the University.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has responded effectively to changing student needs over its many decades in existence. The modern era of rapid demographic shifts began right after the Second World War, as returning service members helped NIU's enrollment more than double in subsequent years. Under various incarnations, the Division provided Admissions with overarching goals still significant today: determining and serving the enrollment needs of the University, as well as helping students successfully navigate a large, complex state institution.

The final decade of the twentieth century saw Admissions combine past traditions with a practical view towards the future. Currently, unit staff members recruit new students and provide student-centered educational outreach. Staff members also guide students through the entire admission process; provide information about NIU to prospective students and families, as well as to high school and college transfer counselors; and create connections for new students with current students, faculty, and staff.

3. Mission, Goals, and Objectives

Mission Statement:

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions markets the University in an effort to meet NIU's enrollment objectives. Staff members identify, recruit, and admit prospective students with the goal of enrolling new freshmen and transfer students. The department engages students, family members, and high school and college transfer counselors, as well as others within and outside of the NIU community.

Department Program Goals:

Goals:

1. Create an admissions office marketing plan; establish priorities, procedures, and activities consistent with admission policies to reach enrollment goals; and assess program outcomes to evaluate success.
2. Communicate and interact with all university departments, committees, offices, and individuals that influence student recruitment and retention.
3. Maximize the effectiveness of our recruitment programs: open houses, on-campus and off-campus admissions programming, and other department events.
4. Utilize technology to efficiently further NIU's enrollment objectives.

4. Methods (due 9/7/12)

DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE TABLE

Method	Description of Method	Timeline (Frequency)	Person Responsible	Goal/ Objective Addressed
Surveys	<u>Daily Visit Satisfaction Survey:</u> Administered to all attendees (both students and families) of daily presentations/tours (Appendix A).	Daily	Assistant Director, Northern Ambassadors	1, 3, 4
	<u>Transfer Center Survey:</u> Voluntary option for prospective students who have visited Transfer Center (Appendix B).	Ongoing (optional online survey)	Assistant Director	1, 3, 4
	<u>Event Satisfaction Survey:</u> 15-question phone survey conducted by grad. assistant fall semester to solicit student feedback about leadership event (Appendix C).	Following every large recruitment event (Open Houses, etc.)	Associate Director, Marketing & Communications	1, 2
Enrollment/Yield	<u>Enrollment and Yield Rates:</u> Track number of students admitted and number of admitted students who confirm, as well as number of students who enroll in classes.	Every semester	Associate Director, Director	1
Standardized Test Data	<u>New Freshman ACT/Rank Profile:</u> Freshman profile of average ACT, class rank for new freshmen and priority student segments.	Annual	Director, Directors of IR and Testing Services	1, 2, 3
	<u>ACT EIS Services:</u> ACT score report data used to determine market penetration and potential of qualified prospects.	Periodic, Annual	Director	1
Status Reports	Reports detailing counselor activity, outreach, and confirmations (Appendix E).	Weekly, monthly, annual	Executive Director	1, 2, 3

Participation Rates	Attendance tracking conducted on all events, tours/presentations, and in-office visits.	Following each event (in-office visits tracked daily)	Office Support Specialist, Associate Director	3,4
---------------------	---	---	---	-----

OUTCOMES BY METHODS MATRIX

Admissions	Surveys	Enrollment/Yield	Standardized Test Data	Status Reports	Participation Rates
Marketing Plan	X	X	X	X	
Communication and Partnerships	X		X	X	
Maximize Effectiveness	X		X	X	X
Efficient/Quality Operations	X				X

5. Results by Goal (See Below)

6. Use of Results by Goal (and Other)

DEPARTMENT PROGRAM GOAL 1: Create an admissions office marketing plan; establish priorities, procedures, and activities consistent with admission policies to reach enrollment goals; and assess program outcomes to evaluate success.

See: Appendix E, F

FY2008

Annual Priority: Incorporate high school students' grade point average more fully into admissions process in response to elimination of class rank by area high schools.

Target: Maintain stability in undergraduate enrollment (avoid major slowdowns and delays in admissions processing, avoid significant shifts in numbers, etc.).

Results: Wait lists were in effect in the fall 2008 freshman application cycle, indicating stability in freshman undergraduate enrollment.

Use of Results: In fall 2008, 300 new freshmen enrolled with a high school GPA of 3.75 or higher.

FY2010

Annual Priority: Focus the Admissions office marketing plan on recruitment of priority student segments, particularly Latino students.

Target: Increase applications and admits for Latino students at NIU.

Results: As of May 2010, Admissions surpassed its goal of applications and admits for Latino students: 115% and 105%, respectively.

Use of Results: Professional development took place during FY2010, as a facilitator worked with Admissions staff to establish relationship-building recruitment techniques with priority student segments and all prospective undergraduates.

FY2011

Annual Priority: Develop yield plan for comprehensive telephone outreach.

Target: Convert more admitted students into enrolled students.

Results: A yield plan was developed to target appropriate students for telephone outreach by staff and currently enrolled students, in a more intentional effort to convert admitted students to enrolled students. In addition, the department performed an extensive review of on-campus visitation programs.

Use of Results: The review uncovered a need for more specific admissions events, and 3 new types of events took place: On-the-Spot Decision Days, Junior Preview Day, and Transfers Get Information Fridays (TGIF). The Transfer Center and freshman admissions both saw restructuring of their recruitment territories.

FY2012

Annual Priority: Create an Admissions office yield plan to gauge how effectively select recruitment efforts are converting prospective students into admitted/enrolled students.

Target: Determine percentage of students who confirm their admission at, or following, Admitted Student Days and Open Houses.

Results: 82% of students attending Admitted Student Days in FY12 confirmed their admission to NIU. 39% of students attending Open Houses confirmed their admission to NIU during the same period.

Use of Results: Results are used for tailoring FY13 Open Houses towards confirmation of Admitted Students (on events for admitted students only), and a combination of encouraging application/confirmation for those who attend Open Houses.

DEPARTMENT PROGRAM GOAL 2: Communicate and interact with all university departments, committees, offices and individuals that influence student recruitment and retention.

See: Appendix G, H, I

FY2008

Annual Priority: Draw on recruitment potential of CHANCE program and diversity resource centers to more fully include priority student segments in admitted and enrolled numbers.

Target: Increase the diversity of the fall 2008 freshman class, including higher percentages of priority student segments (particularly African American and Latino students).

Results: The entering freshman class for fall 2008 was comprised of 39% African American, Latino, Asian, or Native American undergraduates, meeting the department's diversity goals and reflecting partnerships with the CHANCE unit and diversity resource centers.

Use of Results: Collaborations with CHANCE and diversity resource centers showed need for additional partnerships with other campus units. Admissions also partnered with the University Honors Program this year, increasing the visibility of the Centennial Scholarship via targeted emails and student ambassador telethons.

FY2010

Annual Priority: Integrate separate units of Admissions into a more cohesive, combined recruitment and application processing unit.

Target: Combine units that contribute directly to admission enrollment goals.

Results: FY2010 saw an integration of application processing and the call center with Admissions, bringing together the units that most directly handle the day-to-day admissions process. Over 19,000 applications were processed this year, with over 15,000 for freshmen and over 14,800 for transfer students.

Use of Results: Admissions also continued to feature academic departments and student life representatives at most on-campus recruitment events; a total of 12 major on-campus recruitment events took place, with all benefitting from cooperation with other SAEM units and academic departments.

FY2011

Annual Priority: Draw on current NIU students' experiences to forge connections with prospective students.

Target: Incorporate more elements of campus life into telephone outreach with prospective and admitted students

Results: During FY2011, Admissions utilized student callers from across the university to more fully connect with prospective and admitted students. Callers moved away from process-only information to sharing experiences and insights and calling prospective students to action throughout the college search process. Callers addressed more comprehensive aspects of university life, from academics to residential life to their own experiences with NIU.

Use of Results: Hobsons telecenter module was purchased to support comprehensive calling efforts. A 2011 – 2012 reorganizational framework for Hobsons was developed for the following fiscal year.

FY2012

Annual Priority: Include two of Admissions' most valued partners, Housing & Dining and Financial Aid, in select on-campus recruitment events.

Target: *No specified target for this priority.

Results: Admissions featured booths and representatives from both partners at TGIF events, and on-the-spot decision days throughout FY12.

Use of Results: Including Housing & Dining and Financial Aid at select on-the-spot decision days allowed students to move quickly from confirming their admission to gathering more information on residential life and financing their education. Admissions will continue to incorporate these two units in future on-campus recruitment events as much as possible.

DEPARTMENT PROGRAM GOAL 3: Maximize the effectiveness of our recruitment programs: open houses, on-campus and off-campus admissions programming, and other departmental events.

See: Appendix A, B, D, I

FY2008

Annual Priority: Reach out to community groups for input in creating more inclusive recruitment events.

Target: Increase numbers of students who attend NIU recruitment events and activities.

Results: The Senior Assistant Director for Campus Tours scheduled over 150 special group tours in 2007 – 2008 and provided tours for over 4100 students, in addition to admissions counselor visits (4730 students) and Open House (2651 students). The Director of Admissions has worked with the Chicago Public School Higher Education Advisory Taskforce (CPS HEAT) committee, which assists CPS students in accessing college.

Use of Results: Attendance numbers for events were used for planning of future events and reaching out to students who attended during FY2008.

FY2009

Annual Priority: Strengthen the spring semester as a time for recruiting both transfer students and freshman students.

Target: Increase attendance at spring open houses.

Results: February 2009 saw NIU hold its largest attendance of open houses during that month, with nearly 2,800 students and guests attending.

Use of Results: Attendance numbers for events were used for planning of future events and reaching out to students who attended during FY2009.

FY2010

Annual Priority: On-Campus receptions for admitted seniors, alumni receptions for admitted students, open houses.

Target: Cultivate inquiring students (pre-application, admitted students, and those who confirmed their enrollment with NIU), encourage admitted students to enroll at NIU by illustrating NIU-related success and relationships with NIU alumni.

Results: Attendance from all four open houses resulted in 4,271 students and 5,102 family members. This represents a 10% increase in students and 3% increase in families from last year. Open house attendance for FY2010 was the highest student, family, and overall attendance in 16 years.

Use of Results: Survey results identified the “Northern Exposure” and “Next Steps” programs in need of improvement. Both presentations were redeveloped for FY2011. The February Open House was redesigned as an Admitted Student Day program, focusing on enrolling those already accepted. The April 2010 open house was redesigned as a “just for juniors” format, to begin recruiting rising high school seniors. Three unique programs were hosted during fall 2010 and spring 2011, including a Diversity Reception, an Honors Reception, and an Admitted Student Day. Priority student segments were targeted during the Diversity Reception, and the department hosted 150 students on campus for that event.

FY2011

Annual Priority: Admitted student open house.

Target: Convert admitted students to confirmed/enrolled students, creating a baseline of number/yield percent of confirmations on the day of event, as well as of confirmations of those who attended the event and enrolled in the fall of 2011. We hoped to obtain an overall event score on student surveys equal to the average score from 2009/2010 open houses of a 4.26.

Results: On February 21, 375 admitted students attended; of those, 21 confirmed at the event, 242 confirmed prior to the event, and 111 confirmed after the event. On March 7, 395 admitted students attended; 32 confirmed at the event, 248 confirmed prior to the event, and 121 confirmed after the event.

Use of Results: The committee utilized the evaluation from February 21 to make enhancements to the second event held on March 7. Event evaluations from each event were used in the planning for 2011/2012 programs and helped to create a baseline of student/guest attendance and confirmations for future comparison.

FY2012

Annual Priority: Offer on-campus recruitment events geared specifically towards prospective transfer students.

Target: Create two different types of events for prospective transfers to choose from: one a weekly presentation/tour, and the other a series of scaled-down events similar to open houses.

Results: Admissions began offering Transfers Get Information Fridays and Transfer Tuesdays to prospective transfers. Two TGIF events were held during the spring semester, and survey results indicated the need for a larger space in which to hold the event (most open-ended responses were positive.) In addition, nearly 25% of students who attended applied for admission at the program, while 68% were accepted to NIU prior to attending. Transfer Tuesdays saw over 125 prospective students attend, although the program was not held throughout the entire FY12 (most Transfer Tuesdays took place in the spring semester).

Use of Results: Admissions will continue offering TGIF events during spring 2013, but will reconsider adding Transfer Tuesdays to the Spring 2013 semester.

DEPARTMENT PROGRAM GOAL 4: Utilize technology to efficiently further NIU's enrollment objectives.

See: Appendix C, H,

FY2008

Annual Priority: Make event information more accessible on NIU website.

Target: Make Open House schedule options available to students prior to event.

Results: As a result of Open House evaluation conclusions, additional schedule information has been put on the NIU website for students and parents to help plan their day before they attend.

Use of Results: Admissions also continued to review existing online transfer center surveys to offer students a quick, easy way to process their experience in the Transfer Center.

FY2010

Annual Priority: Personal outreach to students (phone, chats, and social media).

Target: Positively affect application completion, confirmation of enrollment, and retention of confirmed students (by being proactive in outreach—answering questions, eliminating barriers, building loyalty to NIU, and providing clear next steps).

Results: Outreach to students, through personally communicating newly awarded scholarship dollars, resulted in 116 confirmed students.

Use of Results: Considering social media (Facebook in particular), additional investigation continued into effective uses of technology. Calling initiatives continued, as the effort made showed strong positive relationships in cultivating enrollment confirmations and providing an avenue for addressing student needs proactively. During FY2010, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions became a formal part of the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management. The call center and application processing unit became organized under Admissions. The department also began conducting online chats for prospective students, and enhanced the Admissions website for easier navigation through the admissions process.

FY2011

Annual Priority: Making NIU's recruitment marketing materials and website more accessible to priority student segments.

Target: Have segments of the NIU Admissions website accessible to Spanish-speaking prospects and their families.

Results: Efforts began to convert some of NIU's admissions materials into Spanish, and several pages of the NIU Admissions website have been translated.

Use of Results: The call center also began utilizing Hobsons Telecenter module to more efficiently reach out to prospective students and track phone and email communications with select student groups.

FY2012

Annual Priority: Review online registration process for students who sign up for open houses, daily visits, and other events such as Transfer Tuesdays.

Target: Determine a new registration system that would speed up the collection of student information by Admissions—lessening the time student workers spend on data entry and allowing the department to quickly compile reports on who has attended, what major they are interested in, if they have already applied, and other key indicators.

Results: Admissions settled on Ungerboeck Event Management Software, a comprehensive registration system that classifies prospective students' demographic data, interests, preferences, and contact information.

Use of Results: Ungerboeck has been purchased and instituted as the primary form of online registration for all of Admissions' on-campus recruiting events. The system allows for less manual input of prospect information, allowing student workers to devote time to other tasks, and allowing the Northern Ambassadors (student tour guides) to request "real-time" updates on numbers for specific tours and events.

7. Further Information Needed & Timeline

It should be noted that in 2009, the department began the move to the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, having previously operated under the Office of the Provost. In 2009, the department also saw the retirement of the longtime Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and in 2010 a new director was hired. In July of 2011, another new Director of Undergraduate Admissions was hired, and two new associate directors also joined the department in the spring of 2012. As a result, the department's leadership has had to traverse an imposing learning curve in assessment over the past several years. Moving forward into the next five-year period, Admissions will stabilize its assessment by taking advantage of professional development opportunities for staff, as well as by integrating assessment into everyday practice.

Findings indicate the need for further assessment in transfer recruitment, as well as incorporation of Annual Planning processes into yearly departmental initiatives. Admissions has begun familiarizing staff with the monthly unit report process, and will include more staff members in Annual Planning training for FY14. However, the department can still enhance ongoing assessment by working more closely with Planning & Assessment throughout the calendar year, in order to best appropriate resources for transfer assessment and embedded assessment. Admissions will follow the standard timelines for the Annual Planning process for FY14, giving select staff a "close-up" view of the cycle from start to finish. The Assistant Director for Visitations and Assessment has already attended the first Annual Planning workshop for the next fiscal year. Admissions will submit the Annual Planning worksheet drafts in March 2013, following up with the final versions of the worksheets later that month. The execution of the FY14 departmental annual plan will begin in July of 2014.

8. Appendix: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I

Appendix A: Daily Tour/Campus Visit Evaluation Form

Appendix B: Transfer Center Survey Form

Appendix C: Open House/Large Event Survey Form

Appendix D: TGIF/Mid-size Event Survey

Appendix E: Admissions Counselor Monthly Territory Report

Appendix F: 2012 Strategy Yield Report

Appendix G: Reorganization Framework – Transfer Center

Appendix H: Reorganization Framework – Hobsons

Appendix I: Open House and Admitted Student Day Conversion Percentages as of 8-12-2012