**Northern Michigan University**

**OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN/REPORT FORM**

**Administrative or Educational Support Unit**

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| Name of Department or Unit | Financial Aid Office |
| This document is the | \_ PLAN or X REPORT for July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 | Date Submitted: | November 1, 2012 |
| Submitted by (Unit Representative) | Michael Rotundo, Director of Financial Aid |

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| **Department or Unit Mission Statement: Was this mission statement revised this year? Yes \_\_ No** |
| The Financial Aid Office will ensure appropriate financial aid funding for students eligible to receive aid and advise students of available financial aid sources. The office will fulfill its fiduciary obligation to be good stewards of federal, state, private, and institutional funds. |

**Functions within the University:**

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| In addition to being part of NMU’s continuous improvement process, outcomes assessment plays a direct role with the AQIP Systems Portfolio (100-page document submitted every four years). To increase awareness and help gather Portfolio information, **please type “X” for all AQIP categories directly related to your unit’s core mission**. Some functions appear in more than one category. This is a first round collection of this information so do the best you can with the selection; if you want help, ask S. Poindexter. (Note: this section of the form is short-term; it will be deleted once functions have been mapped between units and the Systems Portfolio.) **🞎** AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn documents the curricular and co-curricular processes and student learning support.**X** AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives documents the key non-curricular functions by which NMU serves the region, e.g. community engagement initiatives of students and employees, and department outreach.**X** AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs documents how NMU builds relationships with students, alumni and employers and identifies, targets and meets their needs.**X** AQIP Category 4: Valuing People documents NMU personnel recruitment, training, satisfaction, services and programs. **🞎** AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating documents processes that guide NMU in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and communicating decisions and actions. **X** AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations documents student and administrative support services, safety, and facilities.**🞎** AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness documents IT systems and institutional research NMU employs to collect, analyze, and distribute, and how departments use them to manage improvement, e.g. use of charts, “cubes,” dashboards.**🞎** AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement documents NMU’s strategic and administrative planning processes.**🞎** AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships documents how NMU works with external organizations from which we receive students (school systems) or goods and services (vendors and utilities), send our graduates (schools and employers), and support or regulate our programs (agencies).(A full description of the Portfolio’s categories and its detailed topics are available at [www.nmu.edu/aqip](http://www.nmu.edu/aqip) under the Current Document tab.) |

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|  **Administrative Objective #1** *(State an ongoing goal by which the unit gauges its overall performance in a key role year after year, i.e. your “bottom line” measure.)* |  | **Means/Evidence of Assessment for Objective** *(Describe the statistic or criteria that measures success in achieving this goal. What is the desired and/or minimum target you expect*? *What method is used to collect the data for the statistic*?) |
| Ensure timeliness in processing verification files.Verification is a federal requirement where schools are required to verify [audit] the accuracy of the information used by families to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid [FAFSA] application. This process ensures that students are correctly completing the application.This is one of the primary gauges for this office to monitor office efficiencies as we continue to prioritize the timeliness of financial aid eligibility determination for new and continuing students. |  | 1a. Ensure that 96% of verification files are processed within 14 days and 87% within 10 days.1b. Comparison of this year versus previous year will be made in May 2012.Workflow of verification process: Beginning in March [then on a rolling basis every 2-3 weeks] the Financial Aid Office begins to bring electronic FAFSA files into the BANNER system from the Department of Educations Central Processing System [CPS]. 30% of all FAFSA filers will be selected at the CPU for the process called Verification. NMU’s Financial Aid Office [FAO] will notify students if they have been selected for this process, either through an NMU email notice to continuing students, or through a hard copy letter to new incoming students. The FAO will request signed federal tax return transcripts for both the student and the parents, along with a verification worksheet. Verification items include five essential pieces, verification of tax return Adjusted Gross Income [AGI]; US taxes paid; certain types of untaxed income [ex: child support received IRA deductions, etc]; household size; and number of family members in college. Documents are received either through the mail, fax or in person. Once received the documents are scanned and linked to the students electronic financial aid file. Once linked an FAO staff member will review for accuracy of FAFSA information. If incorrect, then a correction is made to the FAFSA by NMU and sent into the CPS for an update. |
| **Summary of Data Collected** *(Provide trend data and summarize)* |  | **Describe how results were used to improve services** |
| 1a. Of the 2,251 students that the Financial Aid Office verified for 2011/2012 academic year, 91.7% were completed within 14 days 83.% were completed within 10 days. The assessment was completed during May after the completion of the academic year. 1b. Historical comparison:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Total files  | completed | completed |
|  | reviewed | 10 days | 14 days |
| 2011/12 | 2251 | 83.1% | 91.7% |
| 2010/11 | 2749 | 86.1% | 95.1% |
| 2009/10 | 2695 | 81.0% | 93.8% |
| 2008/09 | 2008 | 85.9% | 91.8% |
| 2007/08 | 1716 | 83.2% | 90.2% |
| 2006/07 | 1783 | 75.0% | 82.0% |
| 2005/06 | 1735 | 75.0% | 81.0% |

 |  | The 2011/12 review year experienced the first decline in production since this review has been conducted. This decline can be partially attributed to the loss of three experienced verification processors. Candy Ingalls retired, Scott Thum took a Director position at another University, and Director Mike Rotundo stepped away from the verification process to assist in the student loan process due to the loss of Thum.Though we lost three contributors, I feel confident that as their replacements gain experience with the verification process and the Financial Aid Office revises job functions we will again see these percentages return to annual improvements.This review has been part of the annual Outcomes Assessment reviews for the past six years, so despite the fall-off I believe that this office manages verifications efficiently. Though we will continue to monitor annually, we will not include as part of this report for the next couple years as part of this process. |
| **Administrative Objective #2** *(State a 1-2 year objective intended to improve a unit process, service, or output.)* |  | **Means/Evidence of Assessment for Objective**  |

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| *Objective* :Construct and implement a new online platform for annual Foundation scholarship applications in collaboration with the Foundation Office, AdIT, Communications and Marketing. *Rationale (Why you are setting this objective; mark with “X”)*: Effectiveness/quality action **X** Efficiency/cost action  Compliance issue Satisfaction measure Create baseline  Other (explain): *Does this objective relate to a Road Map goal? (Refer to last page for the Road Map goals). If yes, type the related Road Map codes here*: **ML-3****This objective is meant for improved access through a secure online application process where students will submit Foundation scholarship applications through an electronic application. The new process will help identify a student’s preliminary eligibility for the scholarships, therefore providing upfront quality control. This will improve staff time as we are currently recording and individually processing each scholarship application [many students submit 20+ individual scholarship applications].**  |  | *Describe timetable plans to achieve objective*.Construction for this objective is currently underway based on meetings throughout the Winter 2011 semester.a. October 15, 2011 – meet with core group to test online process b. December 1, 2011 – final testing c. Implementation of new process available January 1, 2012*Beyond completing the above steps, how will you judge whether the objective was a success?[[1]](#endnote-1) Examples: If the rationale was Efficiency/cost, what is the desired and/or minimum target criteria for savings in time or cost? If the rationale was Satisfaction, what is the measure and what increase is desired*?The expected result is a streamlined process to reduce the manual processing of 5,000+ applications for 200+ scholarships. Processing hours for Financial Aid staff will reduce from 176 manual hours to 5 hours annually for this project.  |
| **Summary of Data Collected** (*Summarize the evidence)* |  | **Use of Results to Improve Unit Services** |
| 1. Core group of Felecia Flack, Brian Larson, Cindy Paavola, Gerri Daniels and Mike Rotundo met on November 17, 2011 to test the online process and view the demo of the new process.
2. Final testing was completed on February 7, 2012.
3. Implementation of the new process was completed on February 9, 2012 with applications accepted through March 12, 2012.

Excerpts from the Models of Efficiency award application appropriately address this Summary of Data Collected section: In 2012, after implementing the new automated process, a 36% increase in the number of applications submitted (from 5,378 in 2011 to 8,443 in 2012) and a 19% increase in the number of students submitting (from 673 in 2011 to 837 in 2012) one or more applications was realized. |  | The efforts of producing this online process have already been externally acknowledged as this process has been awarded the University Business - Models of Efficiency award. This award is for colleges and universities that are making every effort to save resources on administrative functions, which help keep costs down for students, while at the same time providing better service. <http://www.universitybusiness.com/moe> Excerpts from the Models of Efficiency award application appropriately address the Use of Results:The original Foundation Scholarship application and selection process was inefficient and labor intensive. Students reviewed scholarship eligibility requirements posted on the web, and then submitted paper applications and supporting documentation for each scholarship for which they wanted to apply. Financial Aid staff collected, tracked and sorted all applications that were then distributed to department selection committees for review and selection. Nominee’s names were returned to Financial Aid for verification of credentials against scholarship criteria. The entire process took nearly five months from application to final award notification.The new online application system is accessed through the campus web portal. After logging in, students are presented three levels of scholarship matches: those that exactly match the student’s attributes, those that are a close match and those that do not match.The new scholarship process greatly improves service to students by reducing data entry, reducing the amount of paper used in this process, increasing data accuracy, providing more information to selection committees, and reducing the timeframe of the whole process. Additionally, students can track the status of their application (submitted, under review, awarded, etc.) Labor costs within the Foundation, Financial Aid Office, and other departments are realized because the automated process replaces the manual data verification required by the old process.We will continue to work with AdIT and the Foundation Office to fine tune the process going forward. |
| **Administrative Objective #3** *(State a 1-2 year objective intended to improve a unit process, service, or output.)* |  | **Means/Evidence of Assessment for Objective** |
| *Objective*:Year 1 - Complete a review of federally required consumer information disclosures that a school must provide to students; the US Department of Education and others to be sure that NMU has met all compliance requirements.Year 2 - Upon completion of review, create a centralized website for all federally required consumer information for stakeholder use.*Rationale (Why you are setting this objective? Mark with “X”)*: Effectiveness/quality action Efficiency/cost action **X** Compliance issue Satisfaction measure Create baseline  Other (explain): *Does this objective relate to a Road Map goal? (Refer to last page for the Road Map goals). If yes, type the related Road Map codes here*:  |  | Describe timetable plans to achieve objective.a. Select a review committee from the NMU Financial Aid Office staff by September 15, 2011.b. Review committee will compare current practices with those outlined by the Federal Student Aid guidelines as identified at the following website: <http://ifap.ed.gov/fsahandbook/attachments/1011FSAHbkVol2Ch6.pdf>c. Based on team delegation assignments, provide findings to review committee by December 1, 2011.d. Final recommendations by review committee will be presented to the Director of Financial Aid by June 15, 2012.e. Create centralized website with information and direct links to all relevant by May 15, 2013.f. Convene stakeholder test groups by May 15, 2013*Beyond completing the above steps, how will you judge whether the objective was a success*?1 Convene stakeholder test groups to determine ease of use and accuracy of content. 75% of stakeholder test group will rate quality of website as a 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale. |
| **Summary of Data Collected (**Summarize the evidence) |  | **Use of Results to Improve Unit Services** |
| 1. Scott Thum, JoDee Larsh, and Haley Rhoades were selected prior to September 15, 2011 as the committee to meet this objective.  These staff members were selected based on the relevance of their position to the committee’s objective.
2. The review committee compared current practices with those outlined in the FSA guidelines.  They utilized resources from various campus websites pertaining to the consumer information disclosures.
3. The delegated committee met weekly during the fall 2011 semester to identify areas that needed further review.  When deficiencies were found, departments responsible for relevant disclosures were contacted.
4. Final recommendations were presented in a report to the Director of Financial Aid on May 7, 2012.
5. To be completed in year two.
6. To be completed in year two.
 |  | Year one goals have been met.  The compliance review will be used to assess the consumer information reporting.  All information collected will be available in one website for ease of use.Year two will be a single point webpage used by all stakeholders. The template for the webpage is attached to the bottom of this report. |

1. **Northern Michigan University**

**Consumer Information**

	1. **AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION**

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| General Disclosures | Annual Security and Fire Safety Report | Clery Act |
| FERPA Policy | Report of Athletic Program Participation and Financial Support Data | Equity in Athletics Data |

	1. **GENERAL DISCLOSURES FOR ENROLLED OR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Financial Assistance Available to Students | NMU’s academic programs, costs, facilities, and policies | Retention, placement, and post-graduate study |
|  | Disseminating, completion, graduation, and transfer-out rates (student right-to-know) |  |

	1. **DISSEMINATING CAMPUS CRIME & SAFETY INFORMATION**

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| Annual Security Report and Fire Safety Report (paper) | Fire Log | Clery Act |

	1. **EQUITY IN ATHLETICS (EADA) REPORT & COMPLETION/GRADUATION RATES FOR****ATHLETES**

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| EADA – Equity in Athletics Data through Wildcat Athletics | Athletic program participation rates and financial support data | Providing completion & graduation rates for student-athletes |

	1. **TEXTBOOK INFORMATION**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Textbook Search by Course | NMU Bookstore Website | Textbook Agreement |

	1. **LOAN COUNSELING**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Entrance Counseling | Providing Borrower Information at Separation | Exit Counseling Follow Up |
| TEACH Exit Counseling |  | Counseling for Correspondence or Study Abroad |

	1. **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE PREVENTION INFORMATION**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Information to be Included in Drug Prevention Materials for Students | Distribution of Materials and Students and Employees |  |

	1. **MISREPRESENTATION**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Institutional Research Internal Sources Common Data Set |  |  |

	1. **REQUIRED INFORMATION ABOUT PRIVATE EDUCATION LOANS**

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| Disclosures required for private education loans | Use of Institution and Lender Name | Preferred Lender List |
| Private Student Loan Transparency Statement | Preferred lender disclosures |  |

 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)