



# 2012 Self-Study Conclusion



**NORTHEASTERN**  
STATE UNIVERSITY



## NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

### NSU is a Future-Oriented Organization

NSU established a record of successfully planning for and responding to the learning needs of students and community constituencies. This track record is validated by the comprehensive and continuing strategic planning processes that most recently culminated in the current strategic plan, [Charting the Second Century: 2009-2014](#). This strategic plan seeks to address the needs of our constituencies. It reflects the dynamics of new and emerging technology, heightened mobility of students, and increasing competition created by an active global economy. NSU's track record is further validated by the:

- » Stability of the university's mission to empower students through a culture of learning and discovery, the same mission as when NSU began in 1846
- » Commitment of faculty, staff, students, and community constituencies to achieve the university's mission statement, values, and strategic goals
- » Shared governance and public dissemination of information by the administration
- » NSU's strong commitment to diversity, which enhances knowledge, lifelong learning, and service
- » High number nationally accredited academic programs
- » Quality assessment tools and processes leading to new academic programs and class offerings over the past 10 years
- » Strength of the financial reserve during an economic downturn and reduced state funding
- » Dedication of faculty, staff, and students to service and outreach on local, regional, state, national, and international levels

NSU's core program offerings are responsive to the societal and economic trends of northeastern Oklahoma and surrounding areas. The university provides the skills and knowledge necessary for successful placement and advancement in today's highly competitive workplace. NSU offers bachelor's degrees in arts, arts and education, business administration, general studies, music education, science, education, nursing, science education, social work, and technology. The university also offers masters degrees in business administration, criminal justice, education, nursing, occupational therapy, and natural science, and a Doctor of Optometry. These offerings are time-tested, responsive to constituent needs, and honor NSU's [focused mission](#), "We empower students to be socially responsible global citizens by creating and sustaining a culture of learning and discovery."

To cultivate such culture, NSU made substantial investments in infrastructure and technology. In 2005, NSU contracted with Sempra/Honeywell to implement a \$7.7 million energy management program to upgrade heating/cooling, plumbing, and lighting systems. During the past 10 years, NSU invested more than \$40 million in capital improvements for educational renovations and new construction projects. Community constituents also provided funds for construction projects. Some examples include:

- » A partnership with the City of Tahlequah provided \$2.1 million from a city sales tax for renovation and expansion of Gable Field and Doc Wadley Stadium.
- » The Tulsa County sales tax initiative, Vision 2025, provided \$26 million for three additional buildings on the Broken Arrow campus.



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- » The 2005 State Higher Education Capital Bond issue provided almost \$24 million for much needed renovations to the existing science building, a “one stop” site for enrollment and student support services, and completion of the Broken Arrow Phase I construction project.

While state resources declined, NSU successfully used funding from program revenues, cost recovery operations, community partnerships, and extramural grants to operate smoothly. The NSU Foundation assisted with funding for physical infrastructure needs, events, and student scholarships. In the past decade, the number of individual donors to the foundation more than doubled (215 percent increase), while the increase in total foundation assets experienced similar growth.

NSU placed academic achievement, assessment, and continuous improvement among its highest priorities. In tandem with current strategic plan, NSU was admitted to the four-year Higher Learning Commission Academy on Student Learning Outcomes in 2010. Consequently, NSU is focused on general education assessment measures, learning outcomes, and comparisons with national standards of assessment.

Although NSU’s basic mission has not changed in the past 100 years, the university has made significant improvement in assessment plans and tools, measurable goals, and modifications of program and course offerings necessary to meet the demands of newly emerging technologies and the competitive demands placed on students by the 21st century. The university has:

- » Developed assessment tools that more accurately gauge student learning outcomes

- » Improved qualitative and quantitative surveys to guide and direct future changes
- » Compiled assessment data to prioritize academic offerings, and new program and course offerings
- » Completed multiple revisions of program assessment forms to emphasize student learning outcomes and internalization of knowledge

In essence, creation of the strategic plan, [Charting the Second Century: 2009-2014](#), and admission to the four-year Higher Learning Commission Academy on Student Learning Outcomes positioned NSU as a future-oriented organization that listens to and fulfills the needs of students and community constituencies located throughout the world.

### **NSU is a Learning-Focused Organization**

The fundamental mission of NSU is to provide the university’s diverse communities a broad array of lifelong learning opportunities. NSU is committed to sustaining quality teaching, research, scholarship, and service to local and professional communities. The university accomplishes these goals by supporting dedicated and qualified faculty and staff, providing a friendly in-person and online learning environment, and preparing students to be socially responsible and capable of competing in a competitive global society. As evidenced by the dynamic strategic plan, ongoing academic prioritization process, and continual assessment and accreditation efforts, NSU is achieving its mission. The assessments and nationally recognized accreditations documented in this Self-Study Report attest to NSU’s creation of a lifelong learning process in the academic arenas.



*Seventy-three percent undergraduate classes have fewer than 30 students.*

The foundation of academic accomplishments is a solid general education program. The general education requirements provide basic skills and knowledge necessary for students' successful completion of upper division and graduate level classes. NSU's general education and upper division classes provide students with a well-rounded liberal arts education that fosters a passion for lifelong learning and prepares them for the challenges in today's global workforce. Graduates master critical thinking, logic, and communication skills while developing appreciation for and better understanding of science, mathematics, the fine arts, and human behavior.

NSU promotes and financially supports the pursuit of lifelong learning through faculty research grants, faculty development funds, service grants, learning grants, and support of extramural grant applications. Similarly, NSU promotes student participation in student government, clubs and organizations, honor societies, and seminars and conferences that develop their skills and understanding related to leadership, communication, critical thinking, and overall integration of knowledge.

NSU further demonstrates its commitment to excellence in instruction, adhering to the [Boyer's Model](#) for retention, tenure, promotion, and merit considerations for faculty. Faculty excellence is reflected by the fact that nearly [74 percent of the faculty have earned doctorates or other terminal degrees](#). NSU further recognizes that class size is an important factor in creating an efficient learning environment. Currently, [73 percent undergraduate classes have fewer than 30 students](#). In addition, NSU plans for and carefully allocates financial resources to support effective teaching and student learning.

### **Conclusion**

Consistent with our strategic plan, NSU engages in ongoing collaboration, partnerships, and assessment. Through assessment, the university identifies and fulfills the evolving needs of students and community constituencies, whether local, regional, national, or international in nature. Through assessment plans, goal articulation, and partnerships with community members and other higher learning institutions, NSU is prepared to meet the academic needs of our region, state, and wider world community.

### **NSU is a Distinctive Organization**

NSU has a clear mission published and supported by the faculty, staff, student, and community. NSU is recognized as a university that "leads the way" for academic excellence. The university leads the way not only in academic, but also economic and social pursuits. NSU provides community service, entertainment, and a myriad of athletic, musical, theatrical, and artistic experiences. Graduates enter fields as optometrists, teachers, nurses, law enforcement professionals, health care providers, musicians, artists, actors, and numerous other professions that contribute to the educational, economic, and cultural improvement of their respective communities and command respect for NSU as a lifelong learning institution.

We not only serve as the educational, cultural, and economic development resource for our community, but we also provide outreach to diverse cultures and customs ranging from our Native American partners to providing a home away from home for our international student population. In turn, we also provide a strong and diverse



study abroad program for faculty and students with contributes to our unique, distinctive culture.

### NSU is a Connected Organization

NSU is committed to collaboration and creation of partnerships that serve many constituencies. Through these connections, NSU offers services to the community and students. For example, through service learning components, students volunteer hours to community service and learning projects. In turn, businesses provide internships and future employment opportunities for students. NSU is committed to “Making Place Matter” by preparing the community for future economic challenges through creation of local and regional alliances.

Through online, blended, and in-person course offerings, NSU stays educationally connected to both traditional and non-traditional students who might not otherwise pursue a bachelor’s or master’s degree. Through SmartChoice, the College of Extended Learning, and other educational partnerships, NSU shares resources and provides convenient educational offerings to the community, both regional and international.

NSU stays connected to students and the community through university publications such as [The Northeastern](#), [RiverHawks Daily](#), and [Academic Times](#). In addition, colleges and alumni supplement with similar publications, and press releases. These press releases often highlight outstanding faculty and student accomplishments and are provided to community local, state, and national media.

The university fulfills its mission by continually listening to and assessing the needs of the broad, diverse, and dynamic student body and community constituency. By

fine-tuning the strategic plan and continually improving assessment tools, NSU is able to provide the educational platform for students to succeed in the 21st century.

### Summary

NSU is a future-oriented, learning-focused, connected and distinctive organization. The university is committed to the community and achieving its mission. Consequently, the university is:

- » Firmly rooted in a proud heritage of learning
- » Committed to listening to constituencies
- » Prepared for the future with an understanding of the past
- » Committed to providing quality student learning and effective teaching
- » Dedicated to promotion of life-long learning for all members of the NSU family

In essence, NSU provides the power of learning to change lives and, thereby, change the world.