

Introduction and Background Information

The Montana University System (MUS) mission is to serve students through the delivery of high quality, accessible postsecondary educational opportunities, while actively participating in the preservation and advancement of Montana's economy and society. The [MUS Strategic Plan](#) can be viewed at our website. The MUS's three overarching goals are:

1. Access & Affordability
2. Workforce & Economic Development
3. Efficiency & Effectiveness

Links to Campus Missions

- [MSU - Northern – MSU](#)

Risk Assessment Activities

Risk assessment activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Executive staff's assessment of existing risks
- Risk interviews with staff and management at campuses
- Discussions with the Risk and Compliance Leadership Council
- Past internal and external audit experience
- Risk questionnaires
- Leveraging peer-sourced risk registers
- Discussion with external experts

MSU - Northern

Enterprise Risk Management Report

February 2023

| Threats to Strategic Goals | Risk Area | Risk Description | Risk Response | Risk Owner | Progress |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------|----------|
| 1. Hiring and Retaining Quality Faculty/Staff | Operational Financial Strategic Compliance Information Technology | <p>Organizationally MSU – Northern is flat with little depth in personnel or overlap in departments.</p> <p>Furthermore, Havre can be a challenging city to recruit qualified faculty and staff, especially for specialty positions. A lack of new construction in the area has also contributed to workforce housing shortages.</p> <p>There may be system-level opportunities to consider including more flexibility in work schedules and wages, telework, hiring processes, and system-level leadership in partnering with community groups/industry to boost housing production.</p> | <p>-MUS remote work policy approval, need to implement campus policy (have a current process)</p> <p>-HR has identified and utilized new mediums to advertise positions in different markets</p> <p>-Willingness to explore further flexibility for individual employee needs and desires</p> <p>-Using staff professional development funds to provide cross-training and advancement opportunities</p> | Human Resources Office | Ongoing |

MSU - Northern

Enterprise Risk Management Report

February 2023

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| 2. Succession Planning | Operational Strategic Compliance | MSU – Northern has a small staff with limited cross training opportunities (i.e., departments of one person). | -Directed departmental leaders to identify cross-training opportunities and contingency staffing plans -New practice to create overlap in hiring and exiting to provide continuity of service and stronger training -Using staff professional development funds to provide cross-training and advancement opportunities | Human Resources Office | Ongoing |
| 3. Declining Student Enrollment | Financial Strategic | MSU – Northern is not alone in experiencing enrollment declines and Havre’s geographical location creates recruiting challenges. Additionally, competition with other campuses limits academic programming opportunities that could increase student enrollment. There may be system-level opportunities to improve strategies to increase access to programming across the MUS. MSU – Northern also sees a need to explore funding opportunities for non-Pell eligible students who still require financial assistance. | -Implemented new and directed recruitment outreach -Partnered with industry for recruitment and retention initiatives -Participated in the One Montana App -Implemented the Merit Scholarship Program -Implementing campus-wide retention efforts -Identifying new academic, athletic, and student engagement opportunities | Enrollment Management Academic Affairs Athletics Student Affairs | Ongoing |

MSU - Northern

Enterprise Risk Management Report

February 2023

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| 4. Reliance on State Support/FTE Funding Allocation Model | Operational Financial Strategic | Sixty-seven percent of MSU – Northern’s budget comes from state appropriations. Additionally, nearly forty-three percent of Northern’s tuition revenue is reduced by athletic and mandatory waivers. MSU – Northern sees an opportunity to explore additional funding mechanisms that reward qualitative education attributes/outcomes. | -Increased percentage of faculty grants have been submitted -Corporate sponsorship opportunities -Enhanced communication and collaboration with the MSUN Foundation -Exploring industry partnerships -Researching grant opportunities | Administration & Finance Athletics MSUN Foundation Enrollment Management Academic Affairs | Ongoing |
| 5. Student Academic Preparedness | Financial Strategic Operational | Thirty-five percent of the student population at Northern are first generation students. Corequisite support currently offered to students is not sufficient, and MSU – Northern does not have the capacity in academic advising to support student needs in this area. | -Implemented “Tutoring Central” -Renewed SSS and NASNTI grants -Dean of CASE is participating in state-wide corequisite support conversations -Building administrative structures to support advisor training | Academic Affairs Enrollment Management Faculty Student Affairs | Ongoing |

MSU - Northern
Enterprise Risk Management Report
February 2023

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| 6. Student Mental Health | Reputational Strategic Compliance | <p>Student mental health is an issue of increasing concern across the MUS. In the absence of more funding for student mental health, there needs to be an MUS structure in place to support student mental health. There are opportunities to partner with community providers, as well as system-level opportunities to increase awareness of existing resources and provide training dedicated to student mental health. MSU – Northern is also exploring how to increase student mental health support with other resources like graduate students in counseling programs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implemented Kognito, You@College and other web or app-based resources -Secured contracted support services with Ascend Behavioral for substance abuse and misuse counseling -Reviewed and restructured CARE and BIT scope and membership -Implemented mental health trainings for key student and professional staff -Student Affairs staff participation in Suicide Prevention Task Force (OCHE) -Planning implementation of Health Minds Study -Developing partnership with Counselor Education (M.Ed.) to provide additional access to counseling services | <p>Student Affairs Academic Affairs Athletics Human Resources</p> | Ongoing |
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MSU - Northern

Enterprise Risk Management Report

February 2023

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| 7. Campus Safety | Operational Reputational Compliance | MSU – Northern does not have campus security personnel and, therefore, does not have twenty-four-hour campus coverage or for events. Lacking fire suppression systems in most aging facilities, most notably in residence halls. As a result, the campus relies on staff and student employees for response. | -Contract with Havre Police Department (HPD) for general campus safety response and support. -Contract with HPD, EMS, or other security for campus events -Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Residence Life lives on-campus to provide a professional presence on campus after hours, particularly for residence life communities -Follow protocols for handling of hazardous and biological waste -Fire safety equipment is tested annually -Annual trainings for fire and life safety per campus policy -Work closely with local and MSU fire and life safety entities to ensure that we are following procedures when issues arise -Committees in place to review and recommend updates to current campus policies and procedures | Student Affairs Facilities Athletics Human Resources Safety & Disaster Committee Academic Affairs | Ongoing |
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MSU - Northern

Enterprise Risk Management Report

February 2023

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| 8. Brand Identity | Reputational Strategic | MSU - Northern has done a good job advertising its niche programs in technical and professional education. However, MSU-Northern is a four-year institution that provides a full college experience in addition to professional and technical programming. Northern plans to develop branding and marketing goals as part of its strategic planning process. | -Utilizing strategic planning process to identify a campus-wide brand identity -Increased marketing efforts, particularly through digital and media means -Identify institutional value proposition -Reshaping community and regional narrative about higher ed and Northern's programs | University Relations Academic Leadership Executive Team Strategic Planning Committee Accreditation Committee | Ongoing |
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MSU - Northern
Enterprise Risk Management Report
February 2023

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| 9. Deferred Maintenance | Operational Financial Compliance Reputational | MSU - Northern has not been able to fund and perform routine maintenance and repairs in a timely manner resulting in deferred maintenance. In order to be more effective at communicating its deferred maintenance needs and securing funding, Northern would like a better understanding of the Long Range Building Program process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Working to better understand the inner workings of and how to leverage the Long-Range Building Program process -Reinstituted University Facilities Planning Board Committee -Reprioritizing institutional facility needs based on committee, student, and community feedback -Utilize all forms of available funding to address projects of all sizes as we are able -Attempting to build stronger reserves -Hiring more staff to increase capacity for preventative maintenance | Facilities Finance & Administration Auxiliaries | Ongoing |
| 10. Cyber Security | Operational Compliance Reputational Information Technology | Ever changing ransomware and other malware attack vectors pose a significant threat to MSU-Northern. Technology-based security solutions often fail because of human error - the most common entry point for ransomware is people clicking malicious links, visiting insecure websites, and engaging with phishing emails. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Campus wide training -Working on implementing campus policy -Monitoring campus internet usage -Monitoring industry threats and responses -Regular technology and software updates | ITS Campus Users | Ongoing |