MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN

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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHERN

COWAN HALL

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Montana State University-Northern (MSUN) in Havre, Montana is located in the north central part of the State and approximately 35 miles south of the Canadian border. The community of Havre has a population of approximately 9,310 people and is the eighth largest city in the State of Montana. The town-and-gown relationship is positive and there is strong community support for MSUN and its programs.

Montana State University-Northern had its beginnings in 1913 when the Thirteenth Legislative Assembly of Montana established Northern Montana Agricultural and Manual Training School to be located at Fort Assiniboine. The bill passed on March 8, 1913; however, no money was appropriated. Every legislative session between 1913 and 1927 saw bills introduced by local legislators to establish the college, and each year brought new objections and obstacles to prevent it.

The 1927 Legislature amended the original act of 1913 to allow certain academic subjects to be taught in the city of Havre during the summer, as a normal school. The passage of both acts was a monument to the work of State Representative Florian Carnal, Senators William Cowan of Box Elder and D.S. MacKenzie Sr., and E.C. Carruth of Havre, a longtime member of the State Board of Education. The school functioned again in the summer of 1928. Local business people funded the operation of the normal school for two summers which gave tangible proof of community support for the school.

Actual funds for the operation of the school were made available by the Legislative Assembly in 1929, and the college, known as Northern Montana College, opened its doors to 80 students on September 24th of that year (formal ceremonies opening the school were held on September 30th) The faculty consisted of five members including Dr. G.H. Vande Bogart who had been appointed president of the school.

The entire college was originally located in temporary quarters at Havre High School. Then in 1932 four departments were moved to East Hall (demolished in 1980), the first building on campus. Since its beginnings, MSUN has focused on service to the Hi-Line region with an emphasis on technical and professional disciplines that serve nearby communities and the State. Many of the current program offerings are a result of the continual emphasis on meeting the needs of Havre and its surrounding communities, as well as the State of Montana.

Currently, Montana State University-Northern offers two master's degree programs, a graduate level K-12 endorsement (in moratorium, which means students may not enter the program), twenty-five bachelor's degree programs, three associate's degree programs, fourteen associate of applied science's degree programs, and seven certificate programs. Also offered at Montana State University-Northern are twenty subject-area minors. In addition to degree programs offered on the Havre campus, MSUN offers courses in Great Falls and Lewistown. Additionally, MSUN delivers four online bachelor's degree programs (Community Leadership, Criminal Justice, Nursing,Trades Management, and Business), one master's degree program (Education; Instruction and Learning) and many individual online courses to meet the needs of students at a distance. Course work in the diesel program is delivered from

Wolf Point and televised back to the main campus while coursework in the education program is televised from Havre to Wolf Point. Lewistown has added this capability and Great Falls will add that technology fall 2016. Biodiesel research is taking place on campus which allows students additional learning opportunities.

Census Data (Appendix A) shows the fall 2015 student headcount was 1234, with a full-time equivalency of 1,026. The majority of students at Montana State University-Northern come from Montana (84%) and out-of-state students (14%) come from predominately the states of Washington, California, and Oregon. Additionally, Montana State University-Northern's student body represents 26 states including Montana. MSUN students' average age is 25.3 years with approximately 596 females and 638 males. Over 200 students live in campus housing. Due to declines in Montana high school graduates, MSUN will continue to seek ways to recruit students from out-of-state markets. International students come from Canada (18) and Serbia (1). The international student recruitment efforts will continue.

System and Campus Retention Data (Appendix B) show retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen returning for a second year in bachelor's degree programs for fall 2011 was 58%, fall 2012 was 63%, fall 2013 was 60% and fall 2014 cohort returning fall 2015 was 55%. Retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen returning for a second year in an associate's degree program for fall 2011 was 50%, fall 2012 was 56%, fall 2013 was 55% and fall 2014 cohort returning fall 2015 was 63%.

Montana State University-Northern has 57 full-time faculty members and 48 adjunct faculty instructors. Changes in faculty positions have occurred in Nursing and Diesel Technology programs due to a decrease in enrollment in Nursing and an increased enrollment for Diesel Technology. The diesel program has expanded so another diesel instructor was recently added to the faculty pool. Nursing faculty positions that were full-time Letters of Appointment (LOA) were changed into tenure-track positions once required degrees were earned. In addition, positions that were in Great Falls were moved back to the Havre campus and three faculty from Lewistown resigned, thus resulting in a decrease in the number of students admitted to the Lewistown program. A psychology tenure-track faculty position and an additional criminal justice tenure-track faculty position were added to address the significant increase in enrollment in the criminal justice program.

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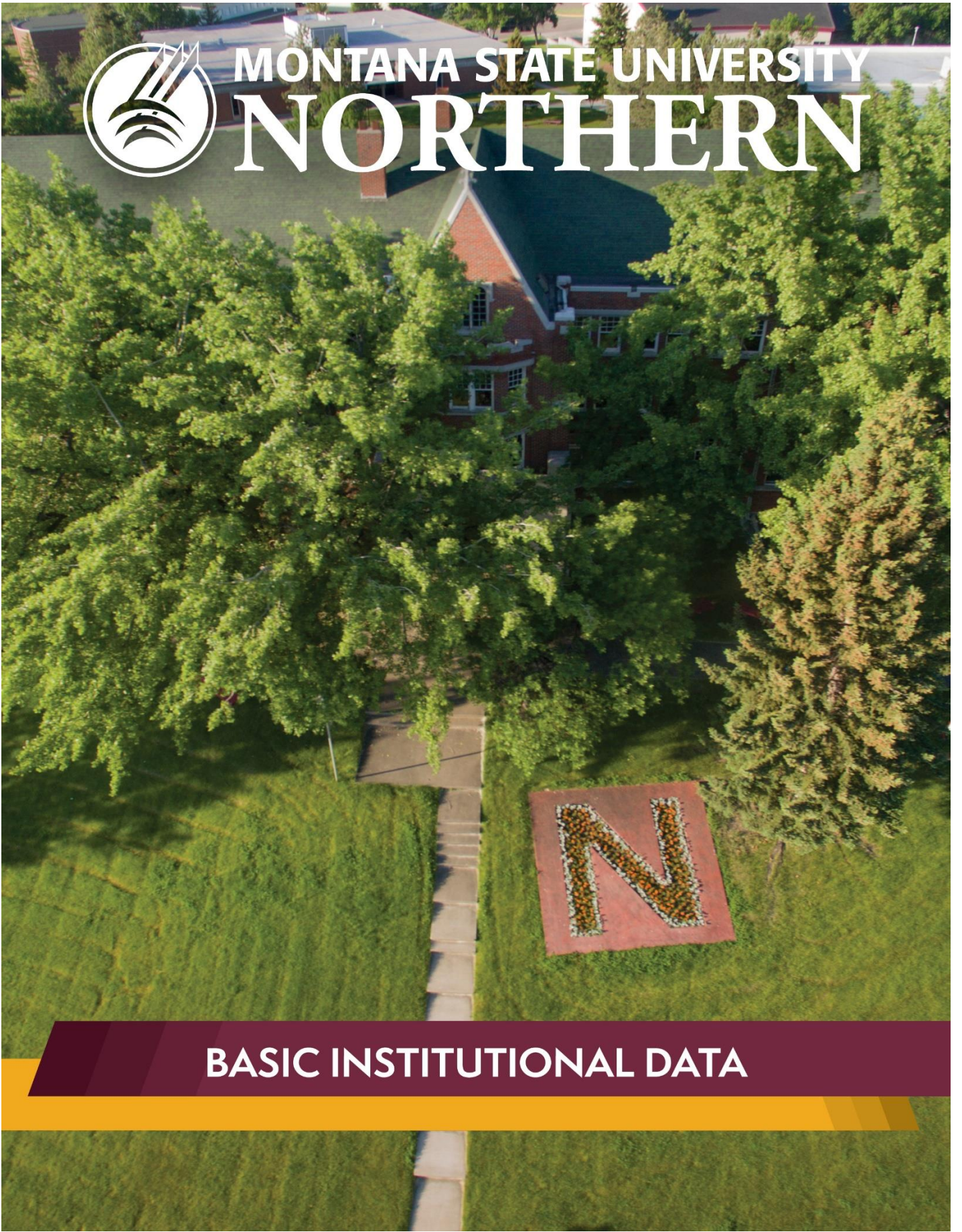
BASIC INSTITUTIONAL DATA

Basic Institutional Data Form

Information and data provided in the institutional self-evaluation are usually for the academic and fiscal year preceding the year of the evaluation committee visit. The purpose of this form is to provide Commissioners and evaluators with current data for the year of the visit. After the self-evaluation report has been finalized, complete this form to ensure the information is current for the time of the evaluation committee visit. Please provide a completed copy of this form with each copy of the self-evaluation report sent to the Commission office and to each evaluator.

To enable consistency of reporting, please refer to the glossary in the 2003 Accreditation Handbook for definitions of terms.

Institution: <u>Montana State University-Northern</u>
Address: <u>P.O. Box 7751; 300 13th St., West</u>

City, State, ZIP: <u>Havre, MT 59501-7751</u>

Degree Levels Offered: ☐ Doctorate ☒ Masters ☒ Baccalaureate ☒ Associate ☒ Other

 If part of a multi-institution system, name of system: <u>Montana University System</u>

Type of Institution: ☒ Comprehensive ☐ Specialized ☐ Health-centered ☐ Religious-based
☐ Native/Tribal ☐ Other (specify) _____

Institutional control: ☒ Public ☐ City ☐ County ☐ State ☐ Federal ☐ Tribal
☐ Private/Independent (☐ Non-profit ☐ For Profit)

Institutional calendar: ☐ Quarter ☒ Semester ☐ Trimester ☐ 4-1-4 ☐ Continuous Term
☐ Other (specify) _____

Specialized/Programmatic accreditation: List program or school, degree level(s) and date of last accreditation by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

Program or School	Degree Level(s)	Recognized Agency	Date
MSU-Northern Department of Nursing	Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN)	Montana State Board of Nursing (MTBON)	April 2016
MSU-Northern Department of Nursing	ASN and Bach. of Sci. in Nursing (BSN)	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN)	March 32016
Engineering Technology: Civil Engineering Tech.	Bachelor of Science	ABET Technology Accreditation Commission	January 2016
Professional Education Unit	BSEd, MSEd	Montana Office of Public Instruction	Feb. 2012
Professional Education Unit, Advanced Programs	MSEd	Montana Office of Public Instruction	Feb. 2013

Revised July 2016

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment (Formula used to compute FTE: UG: SCR/15 GR: SCR/12____)

Official Fall   2015   (most recent year) FTE Student Enrollments

Classification	Current Year Dates: Fall 2015	One Year Prior Dates: Fall 2014	Two Years Prior Dates: Fall 2013
Undergraduate	983.53	989.53	1033.47
Graduate	42.75	47.67	46.92
Professional	-	-	-
Unclassified	-	-	-
Total all levels	1026.28	1037.2	1080.39

Full-Time Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment. (Count students enrolled in credit courses only.)

Official Fall   2015   (most recent year) Student Headcount Enrollments

Classification	Current Year Dates: Fall 2015	One Year Prior Dates: Fall 2014	Two Years Prior Dates: Fall 2013
Undergraduate	1134	1127	1218
Graduate	100	118	116
Professional	-	-	-
Unclassified	-	-	-
Total all levels	1234	1245	1334

Numbers of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff and Numbers of Full-Time (only) Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff by Highest Degree Earned. Include only professional personnel who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

Total Number   Number of Full Time (only) Faculty and Staff by Highest Degree Earned

Rank	Full Tim	Part Tim	Less than Associate	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Specialist	Doctorate
Professor	15	0	0	0	0	6	0	9
Associate Professor	10	0	0	0	1	6	0	4
Assistant Professor	23	0	0	0	4	14		5
Instructor	9	0	2		5	2		3
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Research Staff and Research Assistant	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Undesignated Rank	0	48	0	0	0	0	0	0

Mean Salaries and Mean Years of Service of Full-Time Instructional and Research Faculty and Staff. Include only full-time personnel with professional status who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

Rank	Mean Salary	Mean Years of Service
Professor	$66,463	22.9
Associate Professor	$59,766	13.3
Assistant Professor	$50,036	7.2
Instructor	$44,289	2.8
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant	0	0
Research Staff and Research Assistant	$55,995	5
Undesignated Rank	$2,471	0

Financial Information. Complete each item in the report using zero where there is nothing to report. Enter figures to the nearest dollar. Auxiliary and service enterprises of the institution (housing, food service, book stores, athletics, etc.) should be included. The institution's audit materials should be an excellent reference for completing the report.

Fiscal year of the Institution: July 1st – June 30th

Reporting of income:	Accrual Basis ___X___	Accrual Basis ___X___
Reporting of expenses:	Accrual Basis ___X___	Accrual Basis ___X___

BALANCE SHEET DATA

ASSETS	Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/14 - 6/30/15	One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/13 - 6/30/14	Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/12 - 6/30/13
CURRENT FUNDS			
Unrestricted			
Cash	5,719,730	5,971,105	3,396,861
Investments			
Accounts receivable gross	725,444	759,323	848,320
Less allowance for bad debts	(10,479)	(10,923)	(9,752)
Inventories	291,450	290,405	254,984
Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	1,037,614	101,828	86,131
Other (identify)	340,000	340,000	340,000
Due from		5,000	1,200,000
Total Unrestricted	8,103,759	7,456,738	6,116,544
Restricted			
Cash	167,446	193,346	369,632
Investments			
Other (identify)AR, Inventories, Prepaid	47,857	4,597	32,713
Due from	350,542	151,130	1,133,330
Total Restricted	565,844	349,073	1,535,675
TOTAL CURRENT FUNDS	8,669,602	7,805,811	7,652,218
ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS			

	Last Completed FY	One Year Prior	Two Years Prior
Cash	63,141	63,562	64,268
Investments	100,911	100,538	100,538
Other (identify)AR	10	6	10
Due from			
TOTAL ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS	164,602	164,107	164,816

PLANT FUND			
Unexpended			
Cash	22,685	33,359	244,303
Investments			
Other (identify)AR, Due From	6,530	13,244	
Total unexpended	29,215	46,603	244,303
Investment in Plant			
Land	619,915	619,915	619,915
Land improvements	93,835	101,439	33,508
Buildings	4,192,444	4,381,805	4,563,803
Equipment	2,337,983	2,436,732	2,481,445
Library resources	474,287	445,651	434,419
Other (identify)CWIP, Bond Costs	11,225,149	11,544,606	11,689,212
Total investments in plant	18,943,612	19,530,149	19,822,302
Due from			
Other plant funds (identify)R&R	1,699,288	1,549,989	1,634,729
TOTAL PLANT FUNDS	20,672,115	21,126,741	21,701,334
OTHER ASSETS (IDENTIFY)	1,829,772	1,771,049	574,870
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS	1,829,772	1,771,049	574,870
TOTAL ASSETS	31,335,551	30,867,707	30,093,238

BALANCE SHEET DATA (continued)

LIABILITIES	Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/14-6/30/15	One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/13-6/30/14	Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/12- 6/30/13
CURRENT FUNDS			
Unrestricted			
Accounts payable	1,332,857	1,223,071	1,050,242
Accrued liabilities	370,877	376,078	327,904
Students' deposits			
Deferred credits	1,230,853	350,904	360,641
Other liabilities (identify)	9,207,399	4,258,535	4,532,878
Due to	340,000	415,000	490,000
Fund balance	(4,378,227)	833,149	(645,121)
Total Unrestricted	12,481,986	6,623,589	6,761,665
Restricted			
Accounts payable	348,534	149,666	153,337
Other (identify)	20,774	2,481	19,194
Due to		355	1,200,582
Fund balance	196,535	196,571	162,562
Total Restricted	369,308	152,502	1,373,113
TOTAL CURRENT FUNDS	12,851,294	6,776,091	8,134,778
ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS			
Restricted			

Quasi-endowed			
Due to			
Fund balance	164,062	164,107	164,816
TOTAL ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS			
PLANT FUND			
Unexpended			
Accounts payable		7,647	24,324
Notes payable			
Bonds payable			
Other liabilities (identify) Def. Rev.	4,101	5,507	5,720
Due to			
Fund balance	25,113	33,449	214,259
Total unexpended	4,101	13,154	30,044

Investment in Plant	0	0	0
Notes payable	1,085,169	1,305,169	1,440,169
Bonds payable		101,961	311,898
Mortgage payable			
Other liabilities (identify)AR			4,100
Due to	904,086	1,006,236	1,143,709
Other plant fund liabilities (identify)	10,172	13,964	17,608
TOTAL INVESTMENTS IN PLANT FUND	1,999,427	2,427,330	2,917,484
Other plant fund liabilities (identify) R&R	26,557	61,288	24,581
TOTAL PLANT FUNDS	2,030,085	2,501,772	2,972,109
OTHER LIABILITIES (IDENTIFY)	1,524,344	1,466,901	267,647
TOTAL OTHER LIABILITIES	1,524,344	1,466,901	267,647
TOTAL LIABILITIES	16,405,723	10,744,763	11,374,535
FUND BALANCE	14,929,828	20,122,944	18,718,704

CURRENT FUNDS, REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND OTHER CHANGES

REVENUES	Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/14-6/30/15	One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/13-6/30/14	Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates: 7/1/12-6/30/13
Tuition and fees	5,702,300	6,120,470	5,922,305
Federal appropriations			
State appropriations	10,462,946	10,166,240	9,100,500
Local appropriations			
Grants and contracts	3,009,260	2,001,482	3,430,464
Endowment income	373		
Auxiliary enterprises	2,016,551	2,012,547	1,890,242
Other (identify) Pell, Sales & Svc, Gifts, Invest Inc., Cap. Approp.	4,048,982	4,136,006	4,622,381
Total Revenue	25,240,412	24,436,745	24,965,892
EXPENDITURE & MANDATORY TRANSFERS			
Educational and General			
Instruction	8,766,990	8,170,946	8,402,765
Research	646,351	655,366	630,531
Public services	159,841	159,794	174,809
Academic support	1,918,176	1,722,690	1,710,044
Student services	4,382,131	4,165,343	4,272,231
Institutional support	2,139,365	1,850,697	1,666,928

	1,815,804	1,663,443	1,614,283
Operation and maintenance of plant	1,815,804	1,663,443	1,614,283
Scholarships and fellowships	1,652,188	1,605,184	1,664,178
Other (identify) Plant & Loan	738,517	737,712	584,872
Mandatory transfers for:			
Principal and interest			
Renewal and replacements			
Loan fund matching grants			
Other (identify)			
Total Educational and General	22,219,363	20,731,175	20,720,641
Auxiliary Enterprises			
Expenditures	3,132,419	2,628,212	2,700,056
Mandatory transfers for:			
Principal and interest	233,936	233,936	231,638
Renewals and replacements			
Total Auxiliary Enterprises	3,366,355	2,862,148	2,931,694
TOTAL EXPENDITURE & MANDATORY TRANSFERS	25,319,804	23,593,323	23,652,335
OTHER TRANSFERS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS (identify)			
EXCESS [deficiency of revenues over expenditures and mandatory transfers (net change in fund balances)]	(79,392)	843,422	1,313,558

INSTITUTIONAL INDEBTEDNESS

TOTAL DEBT TO OUTSIDE PARTIES	**Last Completed FY Dates:** **7/1/14-6/30/15**	**One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:** **7/1/13-6/30/13**	**Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:** **7/1/112-6/30/13**
For Capital Outlay	2,369,230	2,942,311	3,515,338
For Operations			

Domestic Off-Campus Degree Programs and Academic Credit Sites: Report information for off-campus sites within the United States where degree programs and academic coursework is offered. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

Degree Programs – list the names of degree programs that can be completed at the site.
Academic Credit Courses – report the total number of academic credit courses offered at the site.
Student Headcount – report the total number (unduplicated headcount) of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.
Faculty Headcount – report the total number (unduplicated headcount) of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT OFFERED AT OFF-CAMPUS SITES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Location of Site Name City, State, ZIP	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Headcount	Faculty Headcount
MSUN@Lewistown 733 Airport Rd Lewistown, MT 59457 MSUN@Great Falls 2100 16th Ave S. Great Falls, MT 59405	**No full degree programs are offered at the off-campus sites.**			

Programs and Academic Courses Offered at Sites Outside the United States. Report information for <u>sites outside the United States</u> where degree programs and academic credit courses are offered, including study abroad programs and educational operations on military bases. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

Degree Programs – list the <u>names</u> of degree programs that can be completed at the site.
Academic Credit Courses – report the <u>total number</u> of academic credit courses offered at the site.
Student Headcount – report the <u>total number (unduplicated headcount)</u> of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.
Faculty Headcount – report the <u>total number (unduplicated headcount)</u> of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT COURSES OFFERED AT SITES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Location of Site Name City, State, ZIP	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Headcount	Faculty Headcount
N/A				

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN

PREFACE

PREFACE

a.   Brief update on institutional changes since the institution's last report

Since the Year Three Self-Evaluation Report was submitted (September 16, 2013), Montana State University-Northern has seen a number of changes. Those changes are noted below, beginning with leadership changes and moving to institutional changes.

Changes in Leadership:

Chancellor
Greg Kegel was named Interim Chancellor in August, 2014 and became the 12th Chancellor of Montana State University-Northern in May, 2015.

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
 William Rugg was selected to become Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs on
 February, 2014.

College of Technical Sciences
Larry Strizich, D.E., was appointed Interim Dean of the College of Technical Sciences effective August 25, 2014 and then permanent Dean June 1, 2016.

College of Education, Arts and Sciences and Nursing
Carol A. Reifschneider, Ph.D. was appointed Interim Dean of the College of Education, Arts and Sciences and Nursing effective August 25, 2014.

Chief Information Officer
Marianne Hoppe was appointed Interim Chief Information Officer and began her tenure on July 1, 2014.

Dean of Students
The new Dean of Students, Dr. Steve Wise,   began his duties the middle of August, 2016.

Director of Nursing
Dr. Janice Starr was selected to be the director of the nursing program in September 2014. In June of 2016 Dr. Starr retired from her position, but is continuing to serve via long distance until a new Director is hired. A search is ongoing to fill this position as Director/Dean.

Director of Institutional Research
Matt Delong was appointed Interim Director of Institutional Research. He began his tenure in August, 2014.

Director of MSU-Northern Foundation
Jim Bennett was selected director of MSU-N's Foundation effective August 1, 2014.

Grants Manager
Samantha Clawson was selected to be the grants and sponsored programs manager in October 2014.

Institutional changes:

New Mission Statement

The start of the academic year 2015/16 opened with a discussion concerning updating the mission statement. The accreditation task force began the development of possible mission statements for review by the campus community. Eventually the accreditation task force developed three options. A series of discussions and on-line dialogues concerning the three options progressed through the fall and winter with input of the campus community. The academic senate approved the mission statement and it was forwarded to the Provost and Chancellor for approval. The mission statement was presented at the May 20, 2016 meeting of the Montana Board of Regents and approved. The following mission statement was selected to guide the future growth of Montana State University Northern:

MSUN Mission Statement as of May 20, 2016:

Montana State University-Northern provides higher education to students for professional and technical careers through an institution dedicated to teaching and the pursuit of knowledge.

The degree program prioritization that was conducted in 2012/2013 resulted in a number of degree programs identified for termination - with no students in the degree program, or to be placed into moratorium, with few students in the degree program, prior to being terminated. Those degree programs placed in moratorium have that status for at least three years in order to teach out the program for the students enrolled. Degree programs in moratorium do not allow new students to enroll into the program. The following changes have occurred to degree programs since the NWCCU Year 3 review:

For AY 2014-2015, the following programs were approved to be terminated:
- M.S. in Education, General Science – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. & minor in Communications – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education, Business Education 5-12 – BOR& NWCCU approved;
- A.A.S. in Graphic Design – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- A.A.S. in Railroad Maintenance and Operations – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Certificate in Agricultural Mechanics Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Certificate in Electrical Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Certificate in Land Survey Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Minor – Automotive Technology (Auto Body) – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Minor – Communications – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Minor – Engineering Technology: Civil Engineering – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Minor – Teacher Education in Computer Information Systems 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;

For AY 2014-2015, the following programs were approved to be placed into moratorium:
- B.S. in Computer Information Systems – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Design Drafting Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education in Health and Physical Education K-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education in Mathematics 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Industrial Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education Industrial Technology 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Mathematics – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education in English 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education in General Science 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education in Social Science Broadfield 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- A.A.S. in Carpentry Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- A.A.S. in Computer Information Systems – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- A.A.S. in Sustainable Energy Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- A.A.S. in Water Quality Technology: Environmental Health – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Certificate in Carpentry Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Certificate in Sustainable Energy Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Minor – Design Drafting Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Minor – Health and Physical Education K-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- Minor – English 5-12 (teaching) – BOR & NWCCU approved; and
- Principal Endorsement K-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved.

For AY 2014-2105 the following changes were approved:
- Certificate – C.A.S. Diesel Technology Tier I stackable credential (SWAMMEI) – BOR & NWCCU approved; and
- Upgrade of prerequisites for entrance requirements for the A.S. in Nursing – BOR & NWCCU approved.

With the encouragement of local school district Superintendents, MSU-Northern in 2014/15 reevaluated the status of the secondary education programs that, through the program prioritization, were placed in moratorium. The institution made the decision and completed the paperwork to request the removal of these programs from moratorium which was approved by the Montana Board of Regents.

For AY 2015-2016, the following programs were approved to be removed from moratorium:
- B.S. in Education in English 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education in General Science 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.S. in Education in Social Science Broadfield 5-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved; and
- B.S. in Education in Health and Physical Education K-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved.

For AY 2015-2016, the following program and areas of study were approved for distance delivery instructional modality:
- B.A in Community Leadership – BOR & NWCCU approved;

- B.A.S. in Business Technology – BOR & NWCCU approved;
- B.A.S. in Trades Management – BOR & NWCCU approved; and
- Minor in Traffic Education K-12 – BOR & NWCCU approved.

All letters of program approval from BOR and NWCCU are found in Appendix C.

On October 1, 2013, MSU-Northern was one of thirteen institutions to participate in the Strengthening Workforce Alignment in Montana's Manufacturing and Energy Industries (SWAMMEI) grant of $25 million, which when divided between the participating institutions, resulted in MSU-Northern receiving $1.7 million. The focus of this grant is to create cost-effective training programs that are accessible anywhere in Montana that link low-skilled workers with jobs that enhance the manufacturing and energy workforce and bolster the state's economic opportunities. The SWAMMEI grant was awarded through Round 3 of the US Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program.

On September 29, 2014, MSU-Northern was one of 15 institutions to participate in the MontanaHealthCARE (Creating Access to Rural Education) grant whose focus is to improve health care training opportunities in the state of Montana by helping higher education institutions be responsive to the needs of healthcare employers as well as job seekers looking for opportunities in their local communities. MSU-Northern's portion of the grant was $637,940. The MontanaHealthCARE grant was awarded through Round 4 of the U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program.

In 2015, MSU-Northern's Extended University received a 5-year $1.9 million grant through the Native American Serving Nontribal Institution (NASNTI) Program of the U.S. Department of Education. The grant is intended to improve the retention and completion rates of American Indian Students in Higher Education. As part of this grant, the Little River Institute was created to serve as a center of tutoring, mentoring, and support for American Indian students at MSUN as well as a source of culturally responsive professional development for MSUN faculty and staff. Ms. Erica McKeon-Hanson was appointed the director in December 2015.

Response to topics previously requested by the Commission (i.e., Addenda)

Introduction

The Commission requested, in a letter dated February 5, 2015 (Appendix D), that the institution provide an update on Recommendations 1 and 2 of the fall 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report. The next section will address the following standards: 1.A.1, 1.B.2, and 2.C.10. In the February 5, 2015 letter, the Commission also requested that the institution address Recommendation 3 concerning Standard 2.F.1 of the fall 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report. This recommendation will also be addressed in the following section.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: "While the University has identified core themes, objectives, and indicators of achievement, the evaluation committee found that levels of mission fulfillment have not been defined in a manner that encompasses all of the core themes. In other instances, the threshold level of mission fulfillment does not appear to lead to meaningful improvement and be sustainable. The evaluation committee recommends that indicators of achievement need to be better aligned with the clearly defined and meaningful levels of mission fulfillment (Standard 1.A.1, 1.B.2)."

RESPONSE:
The Response to NWCCU Letter Dated February 5, 2015 which was submitted on October 9, 2015 provided additional information to address the shortcomings identified in Recommendation 1, also referred to as Challenge 1 in the report (Appendix E). The report highlighted the efforts that the institution has undertaken to address the indicators of achievement and use them in evaluating the fulfillment of the institution's mission. In the letter from NWCCU, dated February 5, 2016, NWCCU accepted the Ad Hoc Report of Fall 2015 and determined that Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation report are now substantially in compliance with the Commission criteria for accreditation, but in need of improvement. The revisions found in the revised Standard One reflect the more specific outlining of the indicators of achievement in support of the institution's core themes (see page 2 of the October 9, 2015 document). The institution is committed to developing a framework of regular evaluation of the indicators of achievement and to present, on a regular yearly schedule, an analysis as to the achievement of the mission. The core leadership team and the assessment committee are charged with developing a report card or annual report that summarizes mission fulfillment. The administration will share the information developed with faculty, staff, students and stakeholders through open forums, inclusion in the Northern Network News, and posted on the MSUN webpage.

Recommendation 2: "Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that the assessment of general education learning outcomes are standardized across multiple sections of the same course. Assessment efforts should place less reliance on course-specific assessment and course grades, and a broader portfolio of assessment techniques should be developed and used (Standard 2.C.10)."

RESPONSE:
Montana State University-Northern continues to be committed to streamlining the assessment of learning in general education and in the academic majors. The general education core curriculum consists of classes that fall into seven different topic categories (Table 1) designed to provide baccalaureate students with a well-rounded background in preparation for life-long learning. The general education core curriculum is linked to Core Theme 1, Comprehensive Programs, and Core Theme 2, Student Success and provides the fundamental skills for students to be successful in their program areas. The importance of general education merits an academic senate sub-committee that oversees the general learning outcomes for each of the seven general education categories. The General Education Committee is responsible for assessing whether a proposed class meets at a minimum, 80% of the learning outcomes of the subject category such that it may be an included class in that category.

Table 1.
General Education Core Curriculum

Category Number	General Education Category	Minimum Required Credits
I	Communication	6
II	Mathematics	3
III	Natural Science(with Lab)	6
IV	Social Sciences/History	6
V	Cultural Diversity	3
VI	Humanities/Fine Arts	6
VII	Technology	3

The General Education Committee is also charged with reviewing the assessment of the general education to demonstrate that students graduating from the institution have met the learning outcomes for general education. Previously, the general education faculty were asked to fill in a data collection system developed by an in-house programmer and housed on an internal website. This assessment was totally based on learner outcomes established for each general education subject category. Problems with inputting data, availability of the data collection system and data entry with limited directions affected faculty's use of the system and thus the results were less than helpful. Alternatives methodologies were proposed and are being investigated. These included:

- Revised Collection of Assessment Data – develop a new system or purchase one,
- Education Testing Service (ETS) Proficiency Profile, and/or
- Specific Course Projects, such as portfolios.

In fall 2015, the general education committee chair took it upon himself to develop an alternative web-based assessment system for general education faculty use. The spring semester of 2016 was the first opportunity for faculty to utilize this system. The results will be evaluated in fall 2016. In addition, the ETS proficiency profile was used to evaluate the general education proficiency of seniors. Several capstone courses were asked to assign this exam as part of the course. Results can be found in Appendix F.

The general education committee does review the information collected and presents a summary general education report (Appendix G). In fall 2015 the Dean of the College of Education, Arts & Sciences and Nursing did meet with the general education committee to report out on the ETS results. The general education committee will continue to push faculty to improve the assessment of all general education courses and will review the methodology utilized to find the best combination of assessment tools to use.

Recommendation 3: "The University should continue to carefully monitor its financial situation and exercise appropriate diligence with the goal of moving the institution out of a negative balance in its unrestricted net asset position on the institution's balance sheet as soon as possible (Standard 2.F.1)."

MSUN considers risk management and contingency planning each year in the budget preparation process. Through conservative planning, MSUN has successfully set aside

funding to support anticipated retirement payouts, build multi-year savings for special projects and an overall increase in the net unrestricted position. An overwhelming contributor to MSUN's negative unrestricted balance is derived from the Montana University System's (MUS) Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability. This pay-as-you-go benefit for retirees that is not backed by University assets is an accounting issue that does not truly reflect MSUN's financial health or management. Even though MSUN makes no contribution to the health plan for retirees, from an accounting standpoint, their participation in the same risk pool with active employees constitutes an implicit rate subsidy. Despite this accounting situation, MSUN received an unqualified opinion to the FY 15 financial statements which specifically addressed this issue (http://www.montana.edu/opa/budget-finance/FY15financialsaudited.pdf).

STANDARD ONE:
MISSION, CORE THEMES AND EXPECTATIONS

Standard One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 1-3

Eligibility requirement 1: Operational Status
The institution has completed at least one year of its principal education programs and is operational with students actively pursuing its degree programs at the time of the Commission accepting an institution's Application for Consideration of Eligibility. The institution has graduated at least one class in its principal educational program(s) before the Commission's evaluation for initial accreditation.

Montana State University-Northern (MSUN) has been continuously accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) since 1932.

Eligibility Requirement 2: Authority
The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.

Montana State University is authorized by the Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (*Appendix H)* to grant degrees at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 9, pages 13-14 (*Appendix I)* authorizes the Board of Regents with powers and responsibilities to oversee the operation of the Montana University System, which includes Montana State University and its affiliated campuses of Montana State University-Billings, Montana State University-Northern, and Great Falls College-MSU.

Eligibility Requirement 3: Mission and Core Themes
The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined and adopted by its governing board(s) consistent with its legal authorization, and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interests of its students and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all, or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes.

The revised MSUN mission statement , core themes, and vision statement highlight the institution's commitment to providing a supportive, student-centered learning environment with a unique make-up of academic programs. MSUN is responsive to workforce needs locally and throughout the State of Montana and values giving students enhanced collaborative learning experiences inside and outside the classroom. The original MSUN mission statement and core themes were approved by the Montana Board of Regents (Appendix J) at their meeting in Billings, MT on September 22, 2011. The new mission statement for MSUN was initially approved at the Montana Board of Regents at their meeting in Havre, MT on May 20, 2016.

Section 1A: *Mission*

1.A.1 *The institution has a widely published mission statement – approved by its governing board – that articulated a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.*

The original mission statement for Montana State University-Northern was approved by the Montana Board of Regents in September 22, 2011 as follows:

MSUN, a teaching institution, serves a diverse student population by providing liberal arts, professional and technical education programs ranging from certificates through master's degrees. The university promotes a student centered and culturally enriched environment endorsing lifelong learning, personal growth and responsible citizenship. The university partners with a variety of community and external entities to enhance collaborative learning, provide applied research opportunities, stimulate economic development and expand student learning experiences.

After several years of self-reflection and input from a variety of collaborators, the administration came to understand that the mission statement was too broad. The Provost, the Chief Academic Officer, met with the assessment/accreditation committee and requested the committee begin the process of developing a more concise and measureable mission statement for the institution.

Given that charge, the committee proceeded to develop a series of mission statements that were then provided to the faculty and staff for their review and input. After analyzing the information, the committee selected three possible versions of the new mission statement. After discussion the committee made a recommendation for the desired version which was forwarded to the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate reviewed the recommendation, concurred with the selection, and forwarded the result to the Provost and Chancellor for final approval. The new mission statement was then reviewed and approved by the Provost and Chancellor before it was placed on the Montana Board of Regents agenda for the May, 2016 meeting, where it was approved. The new mission statement was sent to NWCCU and in a letter dated July 28, 2016 MSUN was notified that the new mission statement was approved.

MSUN's new Mission Statement as of May 20, 2016:

Montana State University-Northern provides higher education to students for professional and technical careers through an institution dedicated to teaching and the pursuit of knowledge.

The University widely publishes our mission statement in the catalog, academic guide, on the MSUN website, social media, the student handbook, and on the back of administration, faculty and staff business cards.

1.A.2 The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

Montana State University-Northern, a comprehensive 4 year open enrollment institution, defines its mission by:

- Providing viable academic programs that students value and that meet the workforce needs of the region;
- Creating opportunities for faculty to enhance their teaching;
- Providing a student centered environment conducive to success;
- Promoting a culturally enriched environment;

- Preparing students for careers in their chosen fields;
- Expanding students' opportunities for collaborative or external learning experiences; and
- Using external partnership input to develop or enhance programs or disciplines.

The University further defines its mission through the establishment of the core themes. The core themes are further divided into objectives for each theme and then further defined through the establishment of indicators of achievement. These indicators of achievement provide specific measureable outcomes so data concerning indicators can be collected, analyzed and evaluated for decision making purposes. In doing so, the institution demonstrates to the legislature, accrediting agencies, and other constituents that the institution is meeting its mission and has supporting evidence.

Over the years, the University has had difficulty in developing regular and consistent collection, analysis and evaluation of data for use in decision making processes. It was during the tenure of a previous administrator that saw the biggest push for collecting data, analyzing it and using the data to make decisions on programs. Unfortunately, in one or two cases the data analysis showed one thing and the decision made by the previous administrator was in direct opposition to the data. This result undermined the momentum amongst the faculty to provide evidence that the process was legitimate and not a vendetta. The institution has continued to work to reestablish the purpose and usefulness of this process by demonstrating that continuous improvement and mission fulfillment may be accomplished by the University.

Section 1B: Core Themes

1.B.1 *The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.*

1.B.2 *The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.*

Montana State University-Northern attempts to achieve its mission through the successful integration of its three core themes as part of the justification of everything the institution does.
Montana State University-Northern's Three Core Themes:

1. **Comprehensive Programs:** Provide liberal arts, professional and technical programs that serve a diverse student population.
2. **Student Success:** Promote student centered and culturally enriched environment which fosters student success.
3. **Inclusive Partnerships:** Partner with external entities to enhance and expand learning experiences.

CORE THEME 1: COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

The objectives of Core Theme 1, providing comprehensive programs, are to:
- Provide excellent programs, and
- Cultivate teaching and learning excellence.

The achievement indicators for MSU-Northern's comprehensive programs to be used to assess progress toward meeting the objectives for Core Theme 1 include:

- Retention and Graduation Rates
- Scores on State and National Exams
- Environments Conducive to Learning
- Accredited Programs
- Satisfaction Rates with Academic Areas, Support Services, and Resources

Retention and Graduation Rates

In the fall of 2013, then Chancellor Limbaugh and his advisory team determined MSU-Northern required assistance in addressing student recruitment and retention at the institution as the number one priority to address. To accomplish this task, Ruffalo Noel Levitz (Denver, CO; www.noellevitz.com), consultants in the field of higher education, were hired. The charge conveyed to Ruffalo personnel was twofold: an assessment of current resources in place at MSU-Northern, and; given these and anticipated resources, provide effectual recommendations for improvement. Appendix K provides detailed information from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz report (6 July 2013).

Positive student college outcomes that directly affect retention rate goals vary greatly among academic institutions. Additionally, these are known to be closely tied to entrance exam scores such as those generated by ACT or SAT exams (e.g., see Westrick et al. 2015, Alarcon and Edwards 2013, Bettinger et al. 2011). MSU-Northern is an open enrollment institution. From 2006 through 2015, average ACT scores for entering freshman at Montana State University (MSU) - Bozeman was 24.8 (average $n = 1928.38$). During this same ten year period, incoming MSU-Northern students had an overall average ACT score of 19.3 with students entering in fall 2007 having the lowest average ACT score (18.8; average $n = 200.13$). Retention of freshman students to their sophomore year at MSUN averaged 58.6% between 2006 and 2015, a rate that is below the national average for 2015 of 69.2% for traditional, four-year public institutions (ACT Institutional Data File, 2015) (Figure 1). This rate of first year persistence also is below the 64.2% national average for all four-year public institutions, including highly selective institutions. Additionally, MSU-Northern's average first year student retention is slightly above that of MSU-Bozeman's during this same period (73.8%), but slightly lower for persistence to sophomore year (MSU-Northern: 58.6%, MSU-Bozeman: 63.5%). Despite the evidence for correlation between entrance exam scores and persistence to degree, MSU-Northern's student retention rate falls well within expected percentages, but the institution continues to take steps to retain students to graduation.
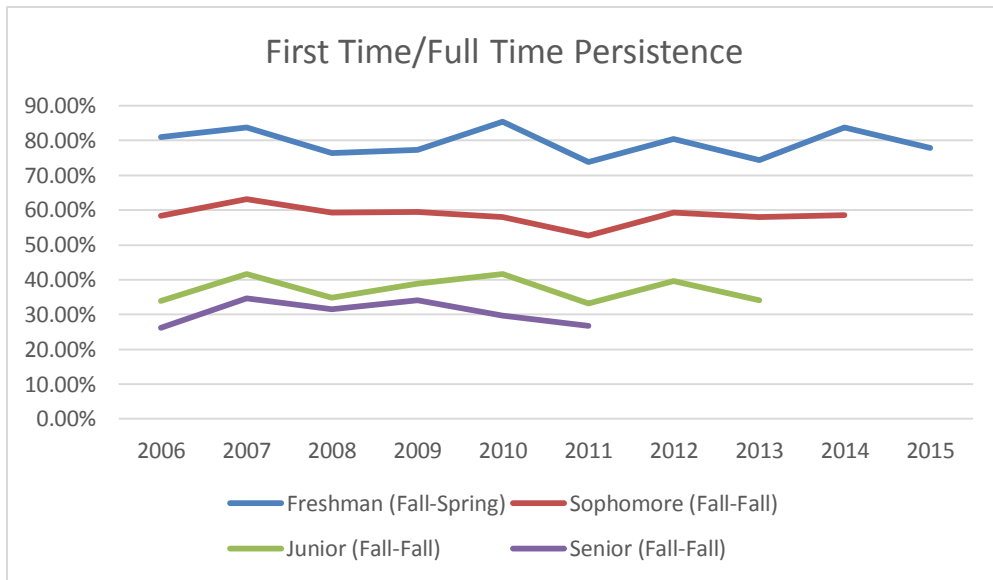
Figure 1. Student Retention Percentages Shown for 2006-2015. Overall means for each group are 79.1%, 58.6%, 37.3%, and 30.2% for respective data years (freshman through senior).

An examination of MSU-Northern's persistence-to-degree rates show overall mean persistence-to-degree rates for students graduating in four, five, or six years are 13.38%, 23.13%, and 26.5%, respectively (Figure 2). These rates are above national rates of 8.7%, 12.5% and 19.9% for four-year institutions with open enrollment but below rates calculated for all four-year public institutions in the United States (25.9%, 36.4%, and 40.2%) (ACT Institutional Data File, 2015). In addition, MSU-Northern's persistence-to-degree rates are lower than those recorded for MSU-Bozeman for students graduating in four, five, or six years (21%, 42.5%, and 49.3%, respectively), a possible reflection attributable to the lower ACT scores of MSU-Northern's incoming students.
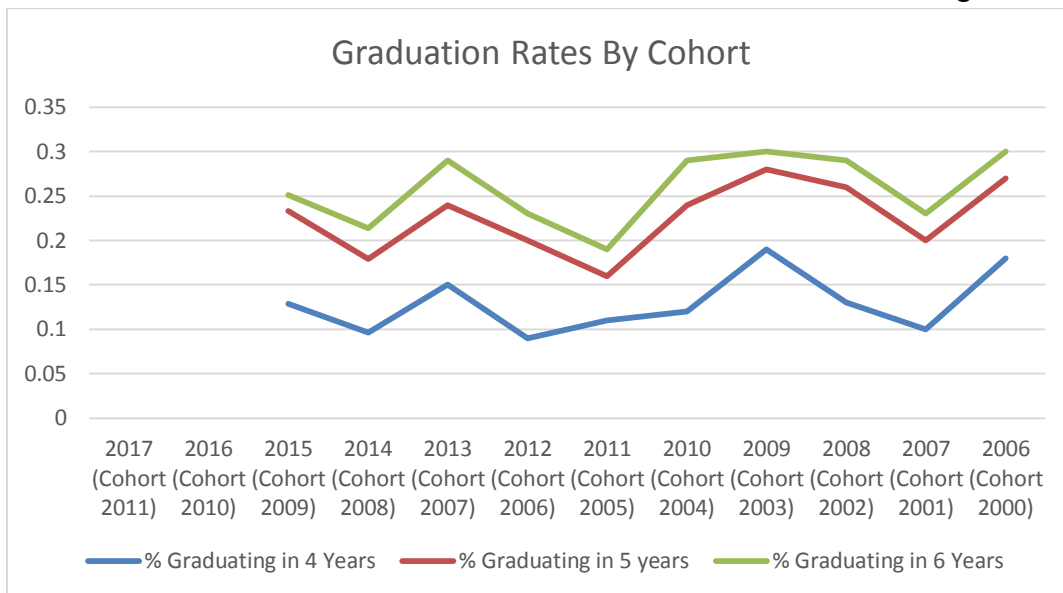
Figure 2. Persistence-to-degree rates for MSUN students from 2006 – 2015. Overall mean persistence-to-degree rates for students graduating in four, five, and six years are 13.38%, 23.13%, and 26.5%, respectively.

The final Ruffalo Noel Levitz report presented to MSU-Northern recommended five teams be developed on the campus, the purpose of which were to support and enhance student recruitment and retention. Each team was identified and assigned specific tasks. These teams were the 1) early alert, 2) enhance advising, 3) learning community, 4) service excellence, and 5) financial challenges teams.

Early Alert Team was tasked with presenting the Maxient EarlyAlert software to the campus community. Full installation of the software was completed in spring of 2015 and faculty orientation to its use was presented during the fall 2015 faculty orientation. In fall 2015, 32 professors reported 245 students with early alert issues (missing assignments, absent from class, etc.). Some of these students were reported from multiple courses; 108 students passed with C- or better in the class that was reported. The remaining students failed the class or withdrew out of the class. As this process is utilized additional, more specific analysis of the data will be undertaken.

Enhanced Advising, Learning Community, and *Service Excellence* team tasks, primarily, have been incorporated and addressed through the development and continued enrichment of a Learning Success Center. In 2015, advising workshops were held for faculty and staff to provide instruction on tools available for enhancing advising. One of these tools highlighted was a tutorial on Degreeworks which is the new transcript system that features the program coursework required for a specific degree program. Degreeworks also has a feature that allows students and faculty to examine "what-if" scenarios which shows what would happen if the student changed majors. Information on financial aid, general education, and other aspects were also included in the presentations. Additionally, some faculty members have elected to establish learning communities within specific courses as a means of supporting student success in the classroom.

The team formed to address *Financial Challenges* faced by MSU-Northern students addressed challenges with the development of the Financial Success Office located within MSU-Northern's Office of Financial Aid. The Financial Success Office employs staff that are available to meet face-to-face with students. Additionally, this office maintains an informative website for students. Periodic workshops are presented to students in which financial challenges they may encounter are addressed.

Student achievement is key in a student's decision to remain at an institution. MSU-Northern's *Student Support Services* provide students with computer access, individual or group study areas, and tutoring resources for qualifying students. Personnel in Student Support Services provide career guidance as well as personal counseling. These individuals guide students through the application process and answer questions on academic programs, pointing them to appropriate and helpful faculty when needed. MSU-Northern established the Learning Success Center in 2013 where tutors and faculty are available to work with students to facilitate learning.

SCORES ON STATE AND NATIONAL EXAMS

Several MSU-Northern degree programs encourage or require students take state and national standard exams as a means of assessing quality of student performance in addition to assessing the

quality of instruction of the program. The MSU-Northern degree programs that include acceptable execution of standardized exams are:

Civil Engineering Technology: Students in this program must execute the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam prior to or shortly after graduation. With qualifying scores, these students enter the engineering field as an Engineer in Training (EIT). After working five years in the engineering field, EIT students earn qualification to sit for the Professional Engineers (PE) exam. MSU-Northern's Civil Engineering Technology students continue to compare favorably with the national pass rates (Table 2).

Table 2. Testing data for 2014 MSUN graduates of the civil engineering program are shown. Although enrollment numbers are not high, students in the MSUN program performed above national averages (shown in parentheses) on the fundamentals of engineering civil exam.

Student Group/Exam Taken	No. Students Participating	No. Students Passing	Percentage of Student Success
Enrolled/FE Civil	2(162)	2(92)	100(57)
Graduates/FE Civil	3(117)	1(32)	33(27)
Graduates/FE Other Engineering Disciplines	1(27)	0(4)	0(15)
Graduates/PE Civil - Geotechnical	1(14)	0(5)	0(36)

Education: Prior to student teaching, education students must take the PRAXIS II Subject Assessment national standard exam in their major area and minor areas of study. Satisfactory performance on the exam is a component of a multifaceted procedure for teaching licensure in the state of Montana and obtaining the "Highly Qualified Teachers" status. Performance scores on the PRAXIS II exam, in conjunction with other tasks and activities, has produced 23 MSU-Northern educated teachers, in 2015-2016, that contribute to the education of K-12 students throughout our state and region. The 2015-2016 cohort had 22 of the 23 students that sought and received university recommendation for teacher licensure. One student did not seek licensure. Of those 22 students who completed the program requirements and took the Praxis II test in their respective content areas, 59.13% met or exceeded the Montana set score on their respective test. Of the 22 students who sought licensure, all 22 met the Highly Qualified Teacher status set by the Office of Public Instruction for Montana by the combination of measurements used for evaluation.

Nursing: Graduating students in the Associate of Science in Nursing Program must succeed on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) exam as part of their requirement for registered nurse licensure in the state of Montana. Students in the MSU-Northern program had passing rates of 70.49%, 89.83%, and 74.47% for the years of 2013 - 2015.

Business: Students enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree of Science in [Business Administration](#) program are required to participate in the national business exam as part of their capstone course assessments. The Business Competency Exam (Capsin COMP-XM™) examines MSU-Northern Business Program student performance relative to the national average for six functional domains that measure business knowledge. MSU-Northern 2016 scores reflected higher averages in the Marketing, Operations, and Human Resource domains (Table 3). For Accounting, Finance, and Strategy domains, MSU-Northern student scores were slightly lower than national averages.

Table 3. Students enrolled in the MSU-Northern Business Program are compared annually to those across the nation through their performance on the COMP-XM exam. Averaging across all domains, MSU-Northern students had an overall mean of 58.17%, slightly below the national overall mean of 59.33%.

Functional Domain	MSU-Northern 2016 Scores (%) ($n = 14$)	National Average (%)
Accounting	58	59
Finance	50	59
Strategy	57	60
Marketing	62	58
Operations	58	50
Human Resources	71	56

ENVIRONMENTS CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING

During the 2013/2014 academic year and continuing to the present, MSU-Northern committed considerable effort and resources to campus improvement. These include:

Installation of WIFI throughout Residence Halls and other campus buildings

The installation of WIFI throughout campus allows for students, especially those taking online courses, access to instruction, homework, and resources for completion of assignments for their classes. In addition, the MSUN Emergency Alert system is tied into email and phone systems which also utilize the WIFI network.

Renovation of 29 classrooms

In addition to general restoration, renovations included significant technology upgrades. For example, these classrooms now include instructor computer stations and projectors that facilitate presentation as well as student interaction, e.g., clicker technology. The ventilation system in the welding lab has been much improved. Newly developed PolyCom™ rooms on campus and on off-site locations, such as in Lewistown, significantly increase the communication between instructors and students participating in distance education. The PolyCom system broadcasts to Fort Peck and supports the partnership MSUN has with Fort Peck Tribal College to train elementary education

students where they are. The PolyCom system in Lewistown allows the nursing program instructors to send lectures to students from Havre to support the nursing program there.

Laboratory upgrades for Hagener Science Center

Upgrades in Hagener Science Center continue with the most recent of which being new ventilation hoods in three labs. Contemporary benches, sinks, and computers were installed in one chemistry classroom, new floors and storage cabinets were installed in another. Renovations have begun in a laboratory designated for molecular genetics and a registered (Index Herbariorum) ~~herbarium~~ with cabinets, database and bar coding capabilities has been established.

Installation of a greenhouse for science classes and biofuels utilization

Completion of a greenhouse shell was accomplished in December 2014 and efforts are now focused on acquiring ventilation, heating, watering, bench, and growth systems. It is anticipated that installation of these components will be accomplished by March 2017 with full use of the facility following. Primary use of the greenhouse is to enhance classes with the addition of another hands-on component, but use for biofuel research also will occur in the new facility.

Hiring of an online instructional designer

This individual has developed online learner seminars, weekly technology seminars, and videos to facilitate online learning. The online instructional designer has provided "Quality Matters" seminars for training of faculty to improve development and delivery of online courses. Weekly "Tech Talks" provide faculty an introduction to techniques to utilize with online courses to enhance the learning experience for students. These workshops also provide faculty with networking opportunities where they can share experiences and techniques that they have found successful.

Establishment of the Learning Success Center

To enhance the campus learning environment, Ruffalo Noel Levitz consultants recommended the establishment of the Learning Success Center. This center provides an area for students to study and meet with content area professors, especially instructors for math, business and writing courses. Spring 2015 further featured a writing tutor embedded into two different classes to help students on writing projects.

The Learning Success Center (LSC) opened during AY 2013-2014 and a Director was hired. Through her vision and budget, three self-enclosed study rooms were established and tables for tutoring added. During AY 2014-2015, the Director assumed the duties of Disability Coordinator as well.

Located in the heart of the MSU-Northern Library, the Learning Success Center is a gathering place that focuses on common-cause *customized* learning, support and success. The LSC is a gathering place where students find professors and tutors that are screened, qualified and paid. Many faculty across disciplines voluntarily hold Office Hours at the LSC. During AY 2013-2014

and AY 2014-2015, faculty in Education, History, Mathematics and Business had Office Hours at the LSC. Of these faculty, three teach general education core courses in Category II: Mathematics, Category IV: Social Sciences/History, and Category V: Cultural Diversity. Some faculty make themselves available in the evenings and/or weekends as well. This setting motivates students, faculty and staff to be more engaged and successful.

Student use of the LSC has increased since its inception (Figure 3) with an overall average of 8.67% of the student population taking advantage of these services. Of those students, an average of over 60% visit on two or more occasions, representing 5.55% of the student population experiencing the benefits of this student success tool.
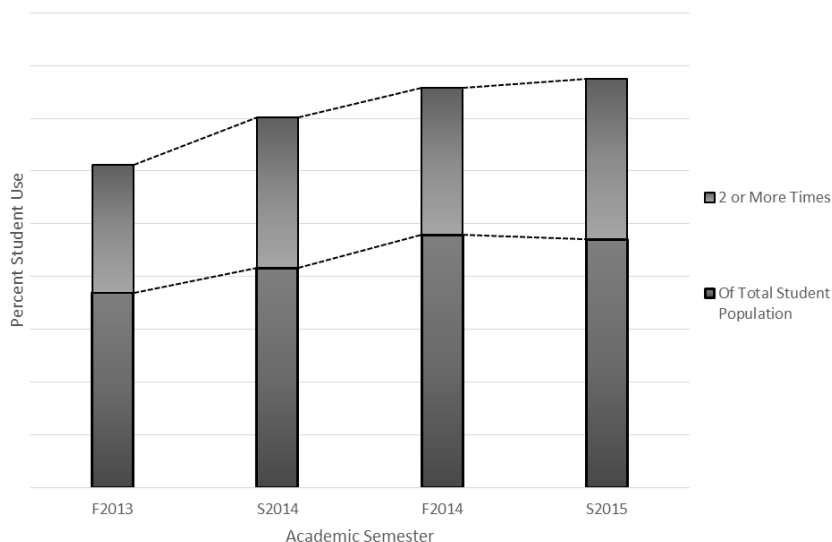
Figure 3. Student use of the Learning Success Center has grown since its inception in the fall 2013 semester with a slight decrease in the most recent semester (10%). In contrast, the percentage of students making multiple visits has grown from 59% to 64%.

Establishment of a Testing Center

A Testing Center was established during the 2014-2015 academic year to be used for placement tests and standardized testing such as the PRAXIS or Miller Anthology Test. During this time, a total of 244 tests were given including students taking the Praxis test for entry into the teaching program, Miller Analogies Test for graduate school admission (MAT), and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exam, as well as the Compass Math and Compass E-Write exams. MSU-Northern just recently received approval to offer the ASE and Pearson tests as well. The testing center is located in the computer lab rooms in the lower level of Vande Bogart Library and is managed by the Director of the Learning Success Center.

Financial Commitment

MSU-Northern is committed to the goal of increasing the proportion of its overall operating budget for instruction expenditures to 50% within the next five (5) years. As reported to the Montana

Board of Regents, this portion was 43% in FY10 and 46.2% in FY15 with an average of 46.3% (Appendix L).

MSU-Northern is committed to increasing the number of faculty members participating in professional development activities to enhance their teaching whether it is the traditional instruction modality, online or through the use of interactive telecommunication transmission through Poly-Com™. Professional development funding is available through the Provost's office and faculty and staff must submit proposals which are linked to the Core Theme the proposal supports. The investment in faculty and staff participation was $18,418 in academic year 2014 and $13,365 in academic year 2015.

SATISFACTION RATES WITHIN ACADEMIC AREA, SUPPORT SERVICES, AND RESOURCES

MSU-Northern uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to access student perception of success within several areas. The NSSE is available for first-year and senior students to take over a four (4) year period. Survey data are available to the public and posted on the MSU-Northern Provost web site (https://ia.msun.edu/SitePages/TheHome.aspx). Through a series of questions answered by respondents, NSSE calculates an overall percentage of student satisfaction in specific areas (Table 4). In addition, a comparative analysis of survey responses is performed. Previously, MSU-Northern has not selected specific institutions to be included in the comparison group used. The default group, Rocky Mountain Public, includes 13 academic institutions scattered throughout the Rocky Mountain Region, including major research universities (e.g., University of Montana, University of Utah, Metropolitan State University of Denver), significantly larger teaching institutions with Masters Programs (e.g., Colorado School of Mines, Utah Valley University, and Southern Utah University), but no institutions of similar enrollment or emphases as MSU-Northern. Currently, the Assessment Committee is developing a more representative comparison group that permits better evaluation of student perception in these areas.

Table 4. NSSE categories that indicate MSU-Northern student satisfaction with academic areas as well as available support services and resources. Values represent the percentage of respondents that answered "very much" or "quite a bit" to questions associated with each indicator.

NSSE INDICATORS		Provide support to succeed academically	Use of learning support services	Provide support for well-being	Providing help for non-academic responsibilities
2013 *n = 22* (10.6%)	**MSUN First Year**	**77**	**72**	**65**	**48**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*73*	*74*	*65*	*35*
2014 *n = 15* (10.7%)	**MSUN First Year**	**58**	**67**	**42**	**27**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*77*	*78*	*69*	*38*
2015 *n = 36* (26%)	**MSUN First Year**	**69**	**72**	**71**	**38**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*76*	*77*	*68*	*37*
2013 *n = 39* (13%)	**MSUN Seniors**	**52**	**51**	**43**	**14**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*68*	*62*	*56*	*24*
2014 *n = 53* (17.7%)	**MSUN Seniors**	**53**	**58**	**48**	**20**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*71*	*64*	*59*	*26*
2015 *n = 80* (29%)	**MSUN Seniors**	**68**	**69**	**52**	**37**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*69*	*64*	*60*	*26*

MSU-Northern, like many other institutions, struggles with low survey response rates for the NSSE (Table 2). Although sample sizes increased slightly for students completing their academic career at the University (seniors), the interpretation of statistical analyses remains weak at best (and inclusive at worst) with such small sample sizes. The Assessment Committee is considering several options to increase student response rates including paper administration of the survey in classrooms during the spring semester, incentive programs for completion (e.g., entry into a drawing for an iPad), and other types of encouragement. The NSSE has great potential to provide insights on student opinions of MSU-Northern's performance, but only if sample sizes grow.

MSU-Northern also recognizes the need to develop a definite schedule for evaluating results from the NSSE by all university administration, staff, and faculty. Although a cursory examination occurs annually, the institution is working on implementing a timetable that permits in-depth interpretation of survey results and spurs discussion on the potential steps that can be taken to address student perception of their MSU-Northern experiences. Equally important in this process is the design of a monitoring program that ensures realistic implementation of actions and ensures student academic success.

CORE THEME 2: STUDENT SUCCESS

The objectives of Core Theme 2 are:
- Prepare students for careers in their chosen field,
- Provide a student-centered environment conducive to success, and
- Promote a culturally enriched environment.

Achievement indicators of MSU-Northern's student success include:
- Rates of Student Engagement on Campus
- Graduate and Employer Surveys
- Quantity and Quality of Event Sponsorships
- Scores on State and National Exams

RATES OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN CAMPUS LIFE

The NSSE, in addition to recording data on student perception of academic areas, support services, and resources, also provides information on indicators related to student engagement (Table 5). As discussed above, response rates for the NSSE survey for the 2013 and 2014 were very low ranging from 11% to 18% for individual questions. Overall the campus environment was perceived as more supportive for first year students in 2013 than 2014 (2013: 33.7%; 2014: 27%) (Appendix V). In 2015, first year students perceived the campus to be more supportive than in 2013 (36.7%). Overall, students completing their academic training at MSU-Northern found the environment less supportive than first year students in 2013, slightly more supportive in 2014 and in 2015 (24.3%, 27.8%, and 29.8% respectively).

Table 5. NSSE categories that indicate MSU-Northern student satisfaction with the opportunities provided for student engagement. Values represent the percentage of respondents that answered "very much" or "quite a bit" to questions associated with each indicator.

NSSE INDICATORS		Encouraged contact among students of different backgrounds	Provided opportunities for social involvement	Emphasized attending campus activities & events	Emphasized attending events addressing importing issues
2013 *n* = 22 (10.6%)	**MSUN First Year**	**51**	**72**	**76**	**54**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*51*	*64*	*60*	*49*
2014 *n* = 15 (10.7%)	**MSUN First Year**	**58**	**58**	**42**	**25**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*54*	*67*	*64*	*50*
2015 *n* = 36 (26%)	**MSUN First Year**	**57**	**79**	**72**	**53**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*52*	*67*	*60*	*46*
2013 *n* = 39 (13%)	**MSUN Seniors**	**36**	**63**	**45**	**12**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*44*	*58*	*50*	*43*
2014 *n* = 53 (17.7%)	**MSUN Seniors**	**38**	**58**	**58**	**30**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*44*	*59*	*51*	*43*
2015 *n* = 80 (29%)	**MSUN Seniors**	**43**	**63**	**49**	**35**
	Rocky Mountain Public	*45*	*58*	*50*	*42*

GRADUATE AND EMPLOYER SURVEYS

MSU-Northern's Career Center is responsible for conducting graduate and employer surveys. Employer surveys are conducted, primarily, for students enrolled in cooperative education credits that fulfill program requirements or act as electives. Data reported by the Career Center shows that from the summer of 2012 through fall of 2014, 192 employers submitted evaluation surveys. Survey results indicated that employers found 39.6% of students were outstanding performers in their tasks, 43.8% rated very good in their positions and 16.7% were average in overall performance. Attempts to survey employers of MSU-Northern graduates at one and three year intervals after graduation have provided very limited due to extremely low survey return rates, a condition MSU-Northern shares with other academic institutions. Appendix N details survey statistics based on responses from 2013 MSU-Northern graduates.

QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF EVENT SPONSORSHIPS AND RATES OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

MSU-Northern has endeavored to enhance the area of multicultural diversity with its 2013 establishment of the Office of Diversity Awareness and Multicultural Programs. Through this office the Sweet Grass Society, International Friends and the Diversity Committee meet and operate with oversight by the Program Director. For example, the 2014-2015 academic year has seen an increase in the number and diversity of programs and events offered. These activities celebrate Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, Irish, and Gender diversity. As the number and breadth of events has increased, participation by students, staff and faculty has grown. For example, prior to July 2014 five events target multiculturalism. After July 2014 and with the

hiring a full-time director, the number of events increased to 27.

The institution continues its sponsorship of the MSUN Community Choir, Community Orchestra and the Chancellor's Lecture Series. The Community Choir and Community Orchestra allow students to participate for general education credit while interacting with interested members from the broader community. The Chancellor's Lecture Series engages speakers from outside the institution. Presenters represent a variety of interests and offer programs that are free of charge to students, staff, faculty and the larger community. Recent speakers have engaged their audiences on such diverse topics as Chinese immigrants to Montana, Rembrandt and Bach, poetry, and women's suffrage.

The institution also has developed campus wide "days" which focus on specific tasks. Most recently, for example, "Campus Clean-up Day" was held during the third week of April. It was a time when student clubs were encouraged to have their members identify campus areas in which trash and debris were removed. At the conclusion of Campus Clean-up Day, a free BBQ was held outside near the Student Union Building.

CORE THEME 3: INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The objectives of Core Theme 3 are to:

- Use external partnership input to develop or enhance programs or disciplines,
- Expand students' collaborative or external learning experiences, and
- Stimulate economic development of our region.

Achievement indicators for MSU-Northern's inclusive partnerships include a discussion of the following:

- Creation of Advisory Boards
- Collaborative or External Learning Experiences
- Meeting State and National Accreditation Standards
- Seek and Acquire External Research Projects and Funding

CREATION OF ADVISORY BOARDS

A key mechanism for feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of a program is through the establishment of an advisory board. The selection of individuals to serve on an advisory board looks for those individuals that can facilitate evaluation of program curriculum, as well as the skills program graduates have acquired, and provide incredibly valuable information as to trends occurring in that career field. The advisory board members can provide insights to faculty that address the needs of the career field without doing surveys.

It is the goal of MSUN to have all baccalaureate degree programs with established and active advisory boards within the next 5 years. Specific goals for the advisory boards are developed by the Assessment Committee and distributed to each board. The Assessment Committee then requests a summary report from each program area to be submitted at the end of the academic year. With the turn-over in administration and faculty in certain programs, reporting on advisory board activities has been rather poor for the last several years. With a stable administration and a plan put in place, routine advisory board reports will be developed. Programs that currently have advisory boards or are in the process of establishing an advisory board are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Advisory boards currently active, in place or in development at MSU-Northern are shown. Minutes from advisory board meetings are available for some programs whereas other programs are at various stages of development.

Program	College	Status	Activity	Minutes
Ag-technology	COTS	In place	Regular meetings	X
Automotive Technology	COTS	In place	Semi-annual meetings with good participation from members.	X
Business Technology	COTS	In development	Members identified	
Civil Engineering Technology	COTS	Active	Semi-annual meetings. Members participate in grading senior projects and advise on curriculum and development issues.	X
Community Leadership	CEASN	In place	Regular meetings with active input	
Computer Programming	COTS	In development	n/a	
Criminal Justice	CEASN	In development	Members identified	
Diesel Technology	COTS	In place	Semi-annual meetings with positive results & active involvement in the program.	X
Education	CEASN	In place	Regular meetings and active input.	X
Electrical Technology	COTS	Active	Annual meetings with good participation	X
Graduate Programs	CEASN	In place	Regular meetings with active input	
Nursing	CEASN	In place	Quarterly meetings; active participation; minutes taken and posted.	X
Plumbing Technology	COTS	Active	Regular meetings with active participation	
Welding	COTS	In development	Several interested community members identified and have expressed interest in participating.	

COLLABORATIVE EXTERNAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Faculty have established collaborations with a myriad of entities that provide opportunities for student and faculty development. Working with federal agencies and state-wide and local non-profit agencies (e.g., Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Montana Wilderness Society, and The Nature Conservancy), for example, biology faculty have developed relationships that allow students to learn field skills as well as network for competitive internships and seasonal employment positions. This hands-on application of academic skills is a critical component of partnerships that allow MSU-Northern's students to succeed upon their graduation.

In the College of Technical Sciences (COTS), opportunities for cooperative education or internship experiences have been well established in many degree programs and require between three and six semester credits of work with an external partner. Diesel Technology and Automotive Technology require this experience for students to complete their program. MSU-Northern's teacher education program requires student teaching experience as a portion of student curriculum and practicums of 45 hours per semester. Health Promotion and Criminal Justice all require a co-operative education experience as part of the degree program. Additionally, the Nursing Program requires the students complete clinical experiences that occur in cooperating hospitals. Other university programs accept these experiences as elective credits but do not require them as part of their curriculum.

MEETING STATE AND NATIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The objective at MSU-Northern is to investigate the feasibility of state and/or national accreditation for the programs offered at the University as well as those developed as funding allows. Currently, the MSU-Northern programs that have been accredited by state entities or have achieved national accreditation are listed in Table 7. The institution continues to commit to researching the enhancement of employment opportunities for students graduating from accredited programs.

Table 7. MSU-Northern degree programs are listed with their associated accrediting organization. Not all programs have organizations other than NWCCU that grant additional accreditation. As MSU-Northern develops new certification and degree programs (e.g., allied health fields such as Emergency Medical Training and Phlebotomy), the university anticipates seeking accreditation for these programs.

Degree Program	Accrediting Organization
Agriculture degrees (AAS, BS)	Not Applicable
Agricultural Mechanics (AAS)	No
Automotive Technology (AAS, BS)	National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation
Biology (BS)	Not Applicable
Business Administration	No
Civil Engineering Technology (AAS, BS)	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
Community Leadership (BA)	Not Applicable
Counselor Education	Montana Office of Public Instruction
Criminal Justice	Not Applicable
Diesel Technology (CAS, AAS, BS)	Associated Equipment Distributors (in progress)
Electrical Technology	Montana Department of Labor
Elementary Education, K-8	Montana Office of Public Instruction
General Science Education, 5-12	Montana Office of Public Instruction
Broadfield Social Science, 5-12	Montana Office of Public Instruction
English Education, 5-12	Montana Office of Public Instruction
General Education	Not Applicable
Graphic Design (AAS, BS)	Not Applicable
Health and Physical Education, K-12	Montana Office of Public Instruction
Health Promotion	No
Industrial Technology, 5-12	Montana Office of Public Instruction (Teaching Option)
Liberal Studies (BA)	Not Applicable
Native American Studies (Minor)	Not Applicable
Nursing (ASN, BSN)	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
Plumbing Technology	Montana Department of Labor
Welding Technology (CAS)	American Welding Society

SEEK AND ACQUIRE EXTERNAL RESEARCH PROJECTS AND FUNDING

The primary external and applied research project that is located at MSU-Northern is the Biofuels Center that investigates materials for generating biofuels as well as researches improving methodology to develop more efficient and economical ways of preparing fuel efficient biofuels. This research center utilizes the equipment and materials from the diesel technology program as well as providing students majoring in biology an opportunity to learn and synthesize biodiesel in

the research laboratory setting. This collaboration has provided students with an invaluable research opportunity.

The major external source of income to MSU-Northern is in the form of scholarships to support the academic activities of MSU-Northern students. Last year, FY 15, the total amount of student scholarship funds were $981,300, which included monies from the state of Montana, federal dollars from Tribal Higher Education and monies raised in support of student athletes.

Standard One Conclusion

Montana State University-Northern aspires to provide viable liberal arts, professional and technical education programs to a diverse student population that support the region where our students live. The success of mission fulfillment will be accomplished through the assessment of the indicators of achievement by programs and units to ensure that MSUN is moving forward and meeting the goals that each program and unit have set.

In order to guarantee it is fulfilling its mission, MSUN will monitor key indicators of achievement and develop a yearly cycle of assessment, analysis, improvement and reporting to all the stakeholders. The monitoring and assessment of these indicators will be documented in program reviews, institutional assessment reports, enrollment management plans, departmental self- reports, college self-reports and administrative unit reviews. All of these reports will ultimately be presented to the Executive Leadership team and the appropriate constituent groups. The NWCCU accreditation process provides Montana State University-Northern greater opportunity to assess and document progress in its three core themes:

- Provide Liberal Arts, Professional and Technical Education Programs;
- Promote A Student Centered and Culturally Enriched Environment Which Fosters Student Success; and
- Partner With External Entities to Enhance and Expand Learning Experiences.

The ongoing evaluation process will enable Montana State University-Northern to connect data-driven planning to budgeting activities. The University will continue to implement and invest in its core themes to continually improve and provide evidence that it is effectively moving

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN

STANDARD TWO:
RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

Standard TWO: RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

Section 1: Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 4 through 21

4. OPERATIONAL FOCUS AND INDEPENDENCE

The institution's programs and services are predominantly concerned with higher education. The institution has sufficient organizational and operational independence to be held accountable and responsible for meeting the Commission's standards and eligibility requirements.

Montana State University-Northern (MSUN) is a public, comprehensive university affiliated with Montana State University and offers certificates, associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. MSUN's programs and services focus on higher education.

Chancellor Greg Kegel leads MSUN with guidance from the President of Montana State University and the Montana Board of Regents (BOR). Chancellor's leadership responsibilities are delineated in BOR Policy 205.2.1- Chancellors; duties and responsibilities (Appendix O): "A chancellor is the chief executive officer responsible for the management of a four-year campus affiliated with a university. The chancellor shall provide leadership and coordination for all campus activities, including academic, fiscal, and student affairs." As the 12th CEO of MSUN, Chancellor Kegel is held accountable and responsible for meeting standards and eligibility requirements of Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. MSUN Policy 201 Chancellor (Appendix P) further emphasizes the Chancellor's role as CEO of Montana State University-Northern.

5. NON-DISCRIMINATION

The institution is governed and administered with respect for the individual in a nondiscriminatory manner while responding to the educational needs and legitimate claims of the constituencies it serves as determined by its charter, its mission, and its core themes.

Montana State University-Northern's mission statement and core themes reflect its value of being a University that promotes respect for all individuals. The mission statement notes the following phrases, "…serves a diverse student population…" and "The University promotes a student-centered and culturally enriched environment…" core themes 1 and 2 reiterates MSUN faculty's and staff's desire to serve a diverse student population, provide student-centered and culturally enriched learning environments, and ensure student success. Campus Policy 1001.7 Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking and Retaliation (Appendix Q) states, "Montana State University's campuses are committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based upon race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Such an environment is necessary to a healthy learning, working, and living atmosphere because discrimination and harassment undermine human dignity and the positive connection among all people at our University." Additionally, the Local 2235, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in Article 5

Nondiscrimination, 5.1 Mutual Obligation states, "The employer and the union agree that they will work cooperatively to assure that all employees have equal employment opportunities."

MSUN is an open-access, open-enrollment University. According to the fall 2013 Common Data Set (Appendix R), 435 students out of 1,282 were considered first-generation college students, a rate of 34%. The average incoming ACT score from the fall 2013 cohort was 19.05, with an average high school GPA of 2.85. Our rural location on Montana's Hi-Line region, near several Native American reservations, has contributed to a significant Native American student population of 10.56% (2013), many of whom transfer to MSUN after completing a two-year degree at one of seven tribal colleges— Aaniiih Nakoda College (formerly called Fort Belknap College), Stone Child College, Fort Peck Community College, etc. The University maintains a number of articulation agreements and partnerships with the tribal colleges in order to facilitate a seamless transfer for students. The MSUN Student Handbook, 2015-2016, Freedom from Discrimination policy, page 55 (Appendix S), outlines how students are protected from discrimination based on federal, state laws, and MSUN's Administrative Campus Policy 1001.7 Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking and Retaliation (Appendix Q) guides students on how to seek help if experiencing discrimination.

6. INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

The institution establishes and adheres to ethical standards in all of its operations and relationships.

MSUN follows ethical standards in all operations and relationships. All state employees in Montana adhere to Montana Code Annotated (MCA), Chapter 2. Standards of Conduct, Part 1. Code of Ethics. More specifically, 2- 2-101. (Appendix T) Statement of purpose notes, "The purpose of this part is to set forth a code of ethics prohibiting conflict between public duty and private interest as required by the constitution of Montana." State employees have an obligation to perform their responsibilities for the benefit of the state and to avoid actions that violate the public's trust. Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 2-2-101 through 2-2-304 includes specific prohibitions. Additionally, the faculty federation's collective bargaining agreement (CBA) addresses academic integrity in Article 5.1 , page 10 (Appendix U). It notes, "The parties acknowledge and encourage the continuation of an atmosphere of confidence and freedom while recognizing that academic freedom is accompanied by a corresponding responsibility of faculty to their colleagues, the University and its students to maintain the highest standard of academic integrity and scholarship."

There is an expectation for students to conduct themselves with integrity and exhibit ethical standards. The 2015-2016 Student Handbook (p. 44) states, "The faculty, administration, and students of Montana State University-Northern believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education. The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to assure the highest ethical and professional standards and behavior in the classroom," [Faculty CBA, Article 5.1 (Appendix U)]. Additionally, administrative policies set expectations for student conduct and protect students' rights, i.e., University Policy 601.3 Student Conduct (Appendix V) states, 'As a citizen of the larger society, the University student retains those rights, protections and responsibilities held by all citizens. It is the intent of the University community to resolve student conduct violations within the University."

7. GOVERNING BOARD

The institution has a functioning governing board responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for each unit within a multiple-unit institution to ensure that the institution's mission and core themes are being achieved. The governing board has at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual or employment relationship or personal financial interest with the institution.

According to the Board of Regents' website, Section 200 – Governance and Organization, Policy 201.7, Bylaws (Appendix W) the governance and administration of the Montana University System is vested with the Board of Regents [BOR], which has full power, responsibility, and authority to "supervise, coordinate, manage and control the Montana University System, and supervise and coordinate other public educational institutions assigned by law."

The Board (Appendix X) is comprised of seven members who are selected by the Governor, and verified by the Senate, to seven-year overlapping terms. One of the members of the board must be a student. "The Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Commissioner of Higher Education are ex-officio members of the Board."

The BOR is responsible for institutional integrity of all its higher education campuses, including MSUN, to ensure that all institutions are achieving their mission and core themes. The majority of the Board of Regents members have no contractual or employment relationship or personal financial interest in Montana State University-Northern. In the Code of Expectations (Appendix Y) for the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education, it notes, "Regents must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to the fiduciary responsibility."

8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The institution employs a chief executive officer who is appointed by the governing board and whose full-time responsibility is to the institution. Neither the chief executive officer nor an executive officer of the institution chairs the institution's governing board.

The selection of the Chancellor of MSUN is governed by BOR Policy 205.2.1 Chancellors; duties and responsibilities (Appendix O) of the Montana Board of Regents; more specifically, "Chancellors are appointed by the Board of Regents upon the advice and recommendation of the appropriate university president and the commissioner."

At the campus level, Mr. Greg Kegel serves as the 12th Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer appointed by Montana State University President Waded Cruzado on August 25, 2014 and confirmed by the BOR on May 21, 2015.

Chancellor's responsibilities are noted in BOR Policy 205.2.1-Chancellors; duties and responsibilities, (Appendix O) which states, "The chancellor shall provide leadership and coordination for all campus activities, including academic, fiscal, and student affairs." The Chancellor as CEO or other executive officers of MSUN do not chair the Board of Regents but hold voting rights.

9. ADMINISTRATION

In addition to a chief executive officer, the institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and achievement of its core themes.

The Executive Committee (p. 69) is the central management unit of the University and its role is to ensure the fulfillment of the Institution's mission and core themes. Committee membership includes the Chancellor, Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and Director of Human Resources.

Chancellor Kegel supervises the Executive Committee members (p. 69), as well as the Senior Director of Student Success, and Directors of University Relations, Human Resources, Athletics, and Multicultural Center. These individuals also play a key role in ensuring the fulfillment of the Institution's mission and core themes. The organizational chart (Appendix Z) provides a complete overview of administrative personnel.

10. FACULTY

Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution employs and regularly evaluates the performance of appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever offered and however delivered.

MSUN offers diverse programs for diverse students, as noted in the mission statement. This requires hiring a qualified group of faculty members who have expertise in many different academic fields. The University employs approximately 57 full-time faculty and 32 part-time faculty members. Within the 57 full-time faculty members, 81% are tenured or on tenure track and 19% are on renewable Letters Of Appointment (LOA). Typically, national searches are conducted on all tenure track faculty positions. MSUN expects each academic unit to recruit the most highly qualified faculty available. All faculty searches are conducted on the Havre campus, with faculty at a distance interviewing on both the main and distance campuses.

Annual evaluation of faculty is prescribed by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in Article 7.3 Evaluation Procedures, p. 31 (Appendix AA), which state, "Any faculty member seeking promotion, tenure, or continuation of probationary appointment must file an application with its supporting documentation in the office of the Provost by December 1. All probationary

faculty are reviewed annually. A performance evaluation includes five (5) levels of review by the college's faculty evaluation committee, chair, and dean/director (designee), university provost, and chancellor. The evaluation is based on effective teaching, service contributions, and scholarly development as delineated in Article 7.2 Professional Evaluation Criteria , page 30, (Appendix BB). This evaluative process produces professionally accomplished faculty who are committed to student success as noted in the core themes. Expectations for faculty on LOAs and adjunct faculty are outlined in appointment letters, i.e., "Provost, Chair, and/or faculty colleagues will evaluate each part-time faculty member during the semester." In addition, tenured faculty are reviewed every three years after tenure by the Chair and Provost to ensure continued high performance.

Faculty members in the academic colleges initiate curricular changes. These proposed changes go to the chair, dean, college for approval, before going to the Academic Senate for review. The Senate has oversight approval of all curricular changes—minor and major. Once curricular changes have been approved by the Senate and its Subcommittees, proposals are moved forward to the Provost and Chancellor. Faculty members have input into academic polices found in the electronic version of the *Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual.* Sections 400 Academic Affairs and 500 Faculty Affairs pertain to faculty members. To maintain the integrity and continuity of academic programs, both traditional, hybrid, and online, MSUN's programs have an annual review process called Student Learning Assessment Plan (SLAP). With the SLAP system, goals and objectives data is collected and compared to goals of the previous year and student learning outcomes (objectives) to see if progress has been made. This assessment system ensures that programming is kept vital and relevant.

11. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The institution provides one or more educational programs which include appropriate content and rigor consistent with its mission and core themes. The educational program(s) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes, and lead to collegiate-level degree(s) with degree designation consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

MSUN has a mission statement that guides the development of the programs it offers. With a fairly-new mission statement (BOR approved September 22, 2011) and a newly designed institutional assessment plan which includes Student Learning Assessment Plans (SLAPs) for each program, it showed a necessity to conduct a program-wide prioritization project. With implementing the SLAP (beginning in AY 2011-2012), every minor, certificate, and degree program has to have a set of student learning outcomes that are assessed annually, with program improvements made, if necessary. However, what was discovered was some of our programs were no longer vital or meeting the needs of students. In consultation with the Chancellor, at that time the Chancellor was Dr. James Limbaugh, it was determined a total program review was needed.

On September 10, 2012, Chancellor Limbaugh charged the newly formed Academic Council (p, 16) with creating and conducting a program prioritization review (Appendix CC) of MSUN's 74 minors, certificates, and degree programs. The five-level review process began with faculty members completing a self-study (Appendix DD) assessment of their programs based on seven criteria including centrality, productivity, internal and external demand, cost effectiveness,

quality and size. Program self-studies with recommendations moved on to college leadership (chairs and deans), Academic Senate, Academic Council, and Provost with recommendations that placed each program into one of four categories: grow, maintain, revise/integrate, or phase-out. These recommendations were submitted to Chancellor Limbaugh on April 15, 2013. Dr. Limbaugh announced the final decision (Appendix EE) in May 2013, with 19 programs identified for growth (25.6%), 26 programs being maintained (35.1%), four (4) programs determined to reduce or integrated (5.4%), and 25 programs going into moratorium or termination (32.4%). The end goal was to reallocate resources to allow for development of revitalized and new programming.

12. GENERAL EDUCATION AND RELATED INSTRUCTION

The institution's baccalaureate degree programs and/or academic or transfer associate degree programs require a substantial and coherent component of general education as a prerequisite to or an essential element of the programs offered. All other associate degree programs (e.g., applied, specialized, or technical) and programs of study of either 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more for which certificates are granted contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Bachelor and graduate degree programs also require a planned program of major specialization or concentration.

The general education core is the foundation for every degree program, developing areas of appreciation and skills not necessarily provided in the specialized areas of the major. Furthermore, the core provides a sense of the interrelationship between the various disciplines. Above all, the general education core instills the tools and knowledge necessary for lifelong learning noted in the mission statement and for active, literate participation in today's technological society. The courses selected for inclusion in the general education core emphasize communication and techniques of creative inquiry that are needed in all programs and ultimately in students' chosen career fields. Students must meet the program requirements as specified for either a baccalaureate, associate, or associate of applied science degree.

The general education core consists of seven academic categories; communication, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences/history, cultural diversity, fine arts/humanities and technology, for a total of 33 credits required. Each category offers options for students to choose from, in order to complete credit requirements for each of the categories. Each category also has a specific list of learning outcomes that students are expected to demonstrate upon successful completion of the required course(s). These identifiable learning outcomes have been in place at MSU-Northern since 2008. All courses listed in the general education program must fulfill 80% of the listed learning outcomes within each category.

All bachelor's and graduate degree programs offered at MSUN require a major concentration. For example, Elementary Education requires students to complete one K-12 licensure minor with a minimum of 20 credits, or two non-licensure areas of concentration with a minimum of 14 credits each.

13. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution maintains and/or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's programs and services wherever offered and however delivered.

The Vande Bogart Library supports MSU-Northern's core theme 2, to provide environments conducive to student learning and student success. The library provides access to information, reference, and instructional services for the University's students, faculty and staff. The library serves the needs of the on-campus as well as the distance student and faculty member. The mission of the library is "to enhance the quality of the academic experience at MSUN by supporting the teaching, learning and research activities of faculty and students".

The library is at the center of the MSUN campus. It is a modern 2-story, 33,440 square foot building with a seating capacity for more than 200 people. During fall and spring semesters, the library is open Sunday-Saturday, for a total of 74 hours per week. The library staff provides face-to-face, telephone or email services for on-campus and distance students, faculty and staff. Through the OCLC Resource Sharing program, members of the MSUN community, on campus or at a distance, have access to many resources. Additionally, for distant students and faculty, books are mailed and articles are scanned and sent electronically.

The library staff currently consists of 4 FTE permanent employees—1 librarian and 3 library technicians. These positions include a library director (librarian), a technical services/archives supervisor (technician), a circulation/interlibrary loan/coffee cart supervisor (technician), and a night circulation/government publications/serials supervisor (technician). The library also employs 12 work study students (approximate 4 FTE).

The library catalog includes more than 360,000 item records for print and electronic titles. The library provides access to more than 90 databases, 150,000 electronic books, and 331,000 electronic journals, magazines and newspapers. The library also has a juvenile collection of more than 7,600 titles that are highly used by Education students. MSUN's library is home to the University Archives and other archival and special collections; while serving as selective U.S. and Montana government depositories. The Native American images from the archive's photographic collections are included in the "Indian Peoples of the Northern Great Plains" digital collection.

MSUN online students currently have access to more than 90 databases. These databases include full text of basic and specialized reference materials, books on many topics, subject specific research articles, journal, magazine and newspaper articles and citations to additional materials. Access to these databases is granted to all faculty and currently enrolled students via proxy authentication. The person simply needs to type in his or her NetID and password to have access. For print books and articles, the Library staff will mail these items to distance students and faculty upon request. The Library staff will also request items from other libraries for student to use (via the InterLibrary Loan service). The Library staff provides assistance in using databases and library services via email and phone. Students in Great Falls do have the ability to use the GFC library. The MSUN Library does pay a fee every year to the GFC library to offset their cost

of providing service and resources to our students. Students on the Lewistown campus utilize the county library and there is a small donated library located in the building.

14. PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The institution provides the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to achieve its mission and core themes.

Physical Infrastructure
MSU-Northern provides a high-quality and safe physical campus for its students, faculty, staff, community members, and out-of-town guests. Facilities Services' role is a key element in providing a quality learning environment where students can succeed in their academic programs. MSUN is a 115 acre campus located in the heart of Montana's "Golden Triangle" that provides 595,745 square feet of learning and living space in a culturally rich and rural western landscape. MSU-Northern Facilities Services takes great pride in its ability to provide and improve physical facilities that support the University's [mission](), [core themes](), and programs using innovative planning and strategic use of limited resources. MSU-Northern's Facilities Services believes in placing the needs of its students first. An illustration is the recent completion of renovations to our Food Services dining hall into a fabulous Food Court providing students, faculty and staff with a positive, pleasant dining experience. Recent improvements in the Armory Gymnasium such as new bleachers and a new playing floor now offer the campus community and area residents a state of the art athletic venue in which to observe local sporting events. MSUN Facilities Services strives to provide and develop safe and accessible physical campus elements.

Technology Infrastructure
MSU-Northern provides a comprehensive technical infrastructure that supports the University's programs and services. The University employs industry standard network and server hardware sufficient in capacity to meet existing and near-term information systems' needs. The technical infrastructure of the institution is maintained and upgraded to keep up with changing technological needs and requirements. The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for MSU-Northern is Banner. Student, Financial Aid, Fiscal, and Human Resources systems are provided by MSU-Bozeman.

University operational technology systems, infrastructure and classroom systems are managed by [Information Technology Services]() (ITS). The ITS department consists of a Chief Information Officer, six full-time technical specialists, and one part-time installation assistant. Operational functions in ITS are supported by an array of 35 physical and virtual application, web and file servers, over 500 desktop and laptop computers and 170 printers. The physical network includes
3,850 network drops located throughout the MSUN campus and residence halls. Additionally, MSUN hosts nine specialty laboratories for student instruction and runs 75 software programs.

15. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. Faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic or educational community in general.

Academic freedom is a key component of faculty members' CBA, as noted in Article 5.1 Academic Freedom, page 10, (Appendix U), which states,

> The parties agree that academic freedom is important to the fulfillment of the purposes of Montana State University-Northern. The parties acknowledge and encourage the continuation of an atmosphere and confidence and freedom while recognizing that academic freedom is accompanied by a corresponding responsibility of faculty to their colleagues, the University and its students to maintain the highest standard of academic integrity and scholarship…

MSUN's mission and core themes support an environment in which the campus community, including students, is free to explore and develop intellectually. Core Theme 2, Student Success, reiterates the notion of academic freedom for students: "Promote student centered and culturally enriched environment which fosters student success."

16. ADMISSIONS

The institution publishes its student admission policy which specifies the characteristics and qualifications appropriate for its programs, and it adheres to that policy in its admissions procedures and practices.

Admission information of students is found in the MSUN Academic 2015-2016 Catalog (page 190). Applicants are responsible for submitting applications for admission, financial aid and housing, and must provide verification of immunizations. Students who do not meet all freshman admission requirements are still encouraged to apply for admissions and submit the necessary credentials. MSU-Northern is allowed a number of exemptions to the stated requirements and will examine each student's credentials on a case-by-case basis for admissibility.

Policies regarding continuation in and termination from Northern educational programs, as well as the appeals processes and readmissions are located in the 2015-2016 Academic Catalog. New students who do not achieve a good standing grade point average of 2.0 are placed on academic warning. Continuing students whose cumulative grade point average drops below a 2.0 are placed on academic probation. If a student is on academic probation and does not achieve a term or cumulative grade point average above a 2.0, then the student will be placed on academic suspension.

16. PUBLIC INFORMATION

The institution publishes in a catalog and/or on a website current and accurate information regarding: Its mission and core themes; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses; names, titles and academic

credentials of administrators and faculty; rules and regulations for student conduct; rights and responsibilities of students; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.

MSUN publishes in the 2015-2016 Academic Catalog (online only) information for students interested in undergraduate or graduate programs; academic calendar; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses; names and credentials of administrators and faculty; rules and procedures for student rights and responsibilities; tuition, fees, and other program costs; financial aid procedures and refund policies and procedures. Rules and regulations for student conduct are published in the Student Handbook [(pp.53-65) online and in print] and in MSUN Policy 601.3 Student Conduct (Appendix V).

17. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and, as appropriate, reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short- term solvency and long-term financial sustainability.

The Business Services department is an indispensable component of the University's student-centered learning environment that strives to partner with Academics and Administration to enable MSUN to achieve the goals specified in its mission statement. Business Services is accountable for overseeing all financial activity of the University and to provide the highest quality of service to our students, the University community, prospective students, and vendors.

MSUN is a component of the greater MSU system encompassing four Montana campuses. This relationship benefits MSUN financially in many regards. Through the pooling of the greater university system's assets ($645.3M, FYE 2012), MSUN is able to secure more favorable debt financing and contracted service rates than if only leveraging its total assets ($31.36M, FYE2012). Aggressive efforts toward fiscally responsibility are progressively improving MSUN's net financial position over the past five years at an average rate of 10.9 percent annually. Over the same period MSUN's cash position increased on average forty percent annually while slowing its long term debt increases to only five percent per year. As of June 30, 2015, the University is in a stable financial position.

18. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered in a timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and governing board.

As a component of the MUS system of schools, the University undergoes an annual external financial statement audit performed by the Legislative Audit Committee of the Montana State

Legislature. The internally prepared financial statements and notes to financial statements are available to auditors within a timely manner after fiscal year end. The financial report, including the independent auditor's opinion, is issued in a timely manner after completion of the audit.

When the audit is completed, the auditors meet again with the executive leadership and the Board of Regents to communicate the results of the audit, including any findings or management letter comments. MSUN has received an "unqualified" opinion on the financial statements. These reports are publicly available on MSU-Bozeman's website, under the [MSU 2015 Financial](#) [Statements](#).

19. DISCLOSURE

The institution accurately discloses to the Commission all information the Commission may require to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions.

MSUN accurately discloses to the Commission all information the Commission may require to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions. In the AY 2014-2015, MSUN worked with the Commission to approve the termination of one MS degree, 2 BS degrees, 2 AAS degrees, 3 Certificate programs and 5 minors. In addition, also during AY 2014-2015 the Commission approved 10 BS degree programs, 4 AAS programs, 2 Certificate programs, 3 minors and 1 endorsement to be moved into moratorium while 1 certificate program was added and nursing upgraded their prerequisites for entrance into the ASN degree program. In AY 2015-2016, MSUN worked with NWCCU to remove 4 BS degree programs in secondary education from moratorium and added online options for 1 BA degree program, 2 BAS degree programs and one minor. MSUN also notified NWCCU about the revision to the mission statement in May 2016.

20. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

The institution accepts the standards and related policies of the Commission and agrees to comply with these standards and policies as currently stated or as modified in accordance with Commission policy. Further, the institution agrees that the Commission may, at its discretion, make known the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding the institution's status with the Commission to any agency or members of the public requesting such information.

MSUN adheres to the NWCCU standards for Accreditation and related policies of the Commission. By doing so, a collaborative partnership is formed that ensures that programming at MSUN is of high quality, taught by qualified faculty and that students are well prepared and successful in their future careers, as emphasized in our [mission](#) and [core themes](#). MSUN understands that the Commission may, at its discretion, make known the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding MSUN's status with the Commission to any members of the public requesting such information. Faculty Federation's CBA is carefully compared to the NWCCU's standards and procedures to mitigate any potential conflicts. Academic external mandates are facilitated by the Provost and approved by the Chancellor, i.e., BOR mandate to develop a policy and procedure for awarding credit to veterans for military training. Legislative mandates are handled by the Chancellor who will communicate

with Provost to avoid any conflicts with NWCCU Standards. External and legislative mandates are compared and the Commission is consulted to answer questions or provide clarification.

Resources and Capacity

By documenting the adequacy of its resources and capacity, the institution demonstrates the potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered. Through its governance and decision-making structures, the institution establishes, reviews regularly, and revises, as necessary, policies and procedures that promote effective management and operation of the institution.

Section 2A: Governance

2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.

The governance structure of Montana State University-Northern includes five components:

- The Executive Committee, as the central management unit of the University;
- The Core Leadership Team, as the representative leadership unit of the University;
- The Strategic Advancement Team, as the advisory body for the Chancellor;
- The Academic Council, as the core academic leadership unit; and
- The University Advisory Council, as the central body for broad campus representation, discussion, and review.

The **Executive Committee** is the central management unit of the University. Membership includes the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Director of Human Resources. Its primary responsibility is the day-to-day management of the University.

The **Core Leadership Team (CLT)** includes those directors or managers who hold significant decision-making or recommending authority as administered and managed through five major
components of MSUN's structure: academic administration, finance, student affairs administration, and student engagement. The CLT has as its primary function the analysis of data, trends, and issues affecting the operations of the University as it relates to institutional ability to meet strategic goals. Additionally, the Team discusses educational theory and brainstorms ideas in pursuit of a common goal of institutional growth and excellence—ideas that can then be shared for further discussion with the Strategic Advancement Team and, as appropriate, the University Advisory Council.

Further, the Core Leadership Team maintains the following functions:

- Responsibility for the overall business of the University, including, but not limited to, operational issues (initial review of policies, procedures), resource allocation, discussion of institutional initiatives, concerns, problems, opportunities;
- Evaluation of performance vis-a-vis strategic plan and "institutional health" benchmarks;
- Initial review of recommendations from various standing committees;
- Adherence to mission/vision;
- Review of "institutional health" benchmarks;
- Final review and recommendations regarding strategic hiring decisions (except for faculty); and
- Adherence to institutional accreditation requirements.See

Table 8, Core Leadership TeamMembers below.

Table 8.
Core Leadership Team Members

Chancellor	Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
Dean of Students	Senior Director of Student Success	

The Strategic Advancement Team (formerly Chancellor's Council) is the chief advisory entity for strategic planning and implementation. As such, its scope of topics includes:

- Setting goals and measuring institutional progress towards fully realizing our mission, vision, and "institutional health" benchmarks;
- Feedback and discussion on the overall business of the University, including, but not limited to, operational issues (next-level review of policies, procedures) resource allocation, discussion of institutional initiatives, concerns, problems, and opportunities as they relate to the implementation of the University's strategic goals.
- Next-level review of recommendations from various standing committees; and
- Adherence to and understanding of institutional accreditation requirements.

There are 25 members of Strategic Advancement Team. See Table 9, Strategic Advancement Team Members below.

Table 9.
Strategic Advancement Team Members

Chancellor	Dean, College of Technical Sciences
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Dean, College of Education, Arts and Sciences, Nursing
Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration	Director, University Relations
Dean, Extended University	Director, Human Resources
President, Academic Senate or designee	Senior Director, Student Success
Director, Athletics	Director, Facilities

Director, Nursing	Director, Diversity Awareness & Multi-Cultural Programs
Chief Information Officer	Dean of Students
Faculty at-large representative as appointed by Academic Senate	Faculty at-large representative as appointed by Academic Senate
Executive Assistant to the Chancellor: responsible for minutes, follow-up on assigned tasks	Director, MSUN Foundation
Registrar	Grants Manager
Chair, College of Technical Sciences	Chair, College of Education, Arts, and Sciences
Chair, Nursing	

Academic Council is the core management unit responsible for all aspects of academic programs not specifically assigned to the faculty or to Academic Senate. The duties of Academic Council include:

- Ongoing evaluation of academic programs against specific benchmarks related to enrollment, cost, and relevancy to institutional mission and vision;
- Initial review of new program proposals;
- Recommendations to the Provost and Deans for filling of faculty positions, whether existing or new, after consultation with CFO (regarding fund availability) and Director of Human Resources (regarding hiring policies/procedures); and
- Adherence to institutional accreditation requirements specifically as they relate to academic programs.

See Table 10, Academic Council Members below.

Table 10.
Academic Council Members

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Dean, College of Technical Sciences
Dean, College of Education, Arts & Sciences, & Nursing	Director of Institutional Research
Chair, College of Technical Sciences	Chair, College of Education, Arts & Sciences, & Nursing
Dean, Extended University	Director, Nursing
President, Academic Senate, or designee	Faculty representative identified by Academic Senate

University Advisory Council has as its primary goal the facilitation of intra-campus communication, with a particular focus on review and approval of policies and general discussion of institutional issues, opportunities, and challenges. University Advisory Council has 25 members. See Table 11, University Advisory Council members below.

Table 11.
University Advisory Council Members

Chancellor	Director, MSUN Foundation	Director, Food Service
Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration	Director, Admissions	Union representative, Faculty
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Director, Financial Aid	Director, Institutional Research

Director, Advanced Fuels Center	President, Student Senate	Union representative, Staff
Director, Student Activities and Events	Director, Library	Student Success Advisor
Director, Career Center	Director, Learning Success Center	Director, Student Health Services
Faculty at Large	Controller	Staff at Large
Faculty at Large	Director, Bookstore	Staff at large
Executive Assistant to the Chancellor: responsible for minutes, follow-up on assigned tasks		

Members of Core Leadership Team, Academic Council, and Strategic Advancement Team other than the Executive Committee are ex officio members and can attend at any time.

Montana State University-Northern also has within its governance system two Senates: Academic Senate and the Associated Students of Montana State University-Northern (informally called Student Senate). In its Bylaws, Academic Senate notes that its multiple purposes are "to assure the orderly development of educational policies, to facilitate communications and cooperation among officers of the administration and the faculty of the University; to promote and defend academic freedom and the unfettered exchange of ideas; to promote the stable and continued educational programs at Montana State University-Northern." Membership is comprised of four faculty representing disciplines within the College of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Nursing; four faculty representing disciplines within the College of Technical Sciences; one at-large faculty representative; one faculty representative from graduate programs. The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs serves in an ex-officio capacity. The position of president and vice president is elected from the membership. The Academic Senate meets monthly.

The Associated Students of Montana State University-Northern, according to its constitution, holds as members any student who is currently registered for classes at MSUN and who has paid the student activity fee. These students are represented by an elected body comprised of three executive officers (President, Vice-President, and Business Manager), Administrative Assistant, Program Council Coordinator, Recreation/Intramural Council Coordinator, Sustainability Coordinator, nine Senators at Large, and two Freshman Senators. The stated purpose of the Associated students, as delineated in its constitution, is "to protect the rights and privileges and provide for the welfare of every student at Montana State University-Northern, to encourage constructive relationships among students, faculty, and administration, and to promote mutually advantageous relationships between the University and community." Meetings are held weekly during the academic year. Oversight for the ASMSUN is provided by two MSUN Advisors.

A governance challenge that must be addressed by Montana State University-Northern in the coming year is developing a clear connection between the functions and purpose of the Academic Senate and the Associated Students and the other governance entities (Chancellor's Council, etc.).

2.A.2 *In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.*

Montana State University-Northern is one of sixteen universities and colleges which comprise the Montana University System. Included within this system are three community colleges and five comprehensive two-year colleges. Seven tribal colleges and three private colleges are not part of the Montana University System. According to the Montana University System Board of Regents website, "The governance and administration of the Montana University System is vested with the Board of Regents, which has full power, responsibility, and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and control the Montana University System, and supervise and coordinate other public educational institutions assigned by law."

It is important to note two additional features of Montana higher education that affect Montana State University-Northern. First, the Board of Regents is constitutionally semi-autonomous, in that the Montana Constitution grants to the Board "full power, responsibility, and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and control the Montana University System" (Article X, Section 9.2.a). Additionally, the Montana State University System, for operational purposes, is divided into the University of Montana units and the Montana State University units. The President of Montana State University has direct responsibility for the affairs of the affiliated campuses within the Montana State University unit (i.e., Montana State University-Billings, Montana State University-Northern, and Great Falls College-Montana State University). Therefore, the Chancellor of Montana State University-Northern reports to the President of Montana State University, and is also governed by all the policies and procedures of the Board of Regents. Please see Board of Regents policies 205.1, 205.2, and 205.2.1 for documentation. Each chief executive officer on the Billings, Havre, and Great Falls campuses has authority to oversee the affairs of his or her campus. More specifically, BOR Policy 205.2.1- Chancellors; duties and responsibilities notes, "A chancellor is the chief executive officer responsible for the management of a four-year campus affiliated with a university. The chancellor shall provide leadership and coordination for all campus activities, including academic, fiscal, and student affairs." Division of authority between the Montana University System Board of Regents and individual campuses is clearly delineated through Board bylaws and operating policies and procedures.

2.A.3 *The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.*

MSUN adheres to the NWCCU standards for Accreditation and related policies of the Commission. By doing so, a collaborative partnership between MSUN and NWCCU is formed that ensures that programming at MSUN is of high quality, taught by qualified faculty and that students are well prepared and successful in their future careers, as emphasized in our mission and core themes.

Faculty Federation's collective bargaining agreement is carefully compared to the NWCCU's

standards and procedures to mitigate any potential conflicts. Academic external mandates are facilitated by the Provost and approved by the Chancellor; i.e., a BOR mandate to develop a policy and procedure for awarding credit to veterans for military training. Legislative mandates are handled by the Chancellor who will communicate with the Provost to avoid any conflicts with NWCCU Standards. External and legislative mandates are compared and the Commission is consulted by the Provost, as the Chief Accreditation Liaison, to answer questions or provide clarification.

Governing Board

2.A.4 *The institution has a functioning governing board consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.*

"The Board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor, and confirmed by the Senate, to seven year overlapping terms. One of the members of the board shall be a student appointed by the Governor who is registered full-time at a unit of higher education under jurisdiction of the board. The Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Commissioner of Higher Education are ex-officio members of the Board" (Montana University System Board of Regents). The Montana Board of Regents By-laws further state (Article III, Membership) that "not more than four may be from one congressional district and not more than four may be affiliated with the same political party." Additionally, the student member must be registered full-time, and this position is not governed by district or political party restraints. None of the Board members is an employee of any MUS institution or have financial interests in any MUS institution.

A roster of members is provided below; further information is available on the Board of Regents' website. No member of the Board of Regents members has a contractual or employment relationship or personal financial interest in Montana State University-Northern. In the Code of Expectations for the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education, it notes, "Regents must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to the fiduciary responsibility." See Table 12, Montana Board of Regents below.

Table 12.
Montana Board of Regents

Board Member	Profession	Term Expires…
Fran M. Albrecht (vice chair)	Executive Director/Provident MT Health Foundation	February 2019
Levi Birky	Student Regent	June 2017
William Johnstone	CEO/Davidson Companies	February 2017
Casey Lozar	Bureau Chief/Business Development Bureau, Department of Commerce	February 2018
Robert A. Nystuen	Market President/Glacier Bank	February 2022
Martha Sheehy	Attorney/Sheehy Law Firm	February 2021

| Paul Tuss (Chair) | Executive Director/Bear Paw Development Corp. | February 2020 |

Ex-officio membership is afforded the Office of the Governor and the Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction.

2.A.5 *The board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the board acts on behalf of the board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing board as a whole.*

The Montana University System Board of Regents meets no less than quarterly, with special meetings that may be called by the governor, the chair of the board, or on the request of four appointed members. The board acts as a committee of the whole, with four standing committees that report back to the assembled board for vote and action: Administrative, Budget, and Audit Oversight Committee; Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee; Staff and Compensation Committee; Two-Year and Community College Committee, BOR Policy 201.7- Bylaws, Article VII, Committees (Appendix W).

2.A.6 *The board establishes reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.*

The chief legal counsel of the Montana Board of Regents "has been assigned the responsibility for coordinating the development, issuance, and maintenance of board of regents' policies" (see Policy 103, Procedures for Maintenance of Policies). Additionally, the Chancellor of MSUN oversees and recommends for update specific administrative policies that provide guidance to the operation of the Havre campus.

2.A.7 *The board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer board-approved policies related to the operation of the institution.*

The selection of the Chancellor of Montana State University-Northern is governed by Policy 205.2.1– Chancellors; duties and responsibilities of the Montana Board of Regents; specifically, "Chancellors are appointed by the board of regents upon the advice and recommendation of the appropriate university president and the commissioner." This policy further states that the chancellor is "responsible for the management of a four-year campus affiliated with a university" and that he/she "shall provide leadership and coordination for all campus activities, including academic, fiscal, and student affairs."

Annual evaluations of the Chancellor of Montana State University-Northern are completed by the President of Montana State University each year. Additionally, a "360" evaluation of Chancellor Limbaugh was distributed and completed in February 2013 and can be distributed if and when an administrator requests one to be done. Numerical results are provided to the President for her use in the aforementioned evaluation.

2.A.8 *The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities*

are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.

In accordance with BOR Policy 705.1 – Commissioner and Board Performance Assessment and Compensation Procedure, the Board recognizes "having exceptional leadership throughout the Montana University System (MUS) and that each of us, our enterprise, and the people it serves benefit professionally and personally from constructive reviews of how we exercise our responsibilities…" Therefore, the BOR and Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) have adopted an annual review process of the commissioner. In the spring of each year, the BOR evaluates the Commissioner's performance on a set of mutually identified goals and sets goals for the coming year. The BOR conducts a self-study of its stewardship every three or four years, or as determined necessary by the BOR itself. The process "will be written assessments from all board members." The chair of the BOR and the commissioner are then responsible for "planning and reviewing with the full board the specific arrangements for the meeting where this self-study will be brought to completion." The board may choose to bring in an external facilitator.

Leadership and Management

2.A.9 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

Montana State University-Northern's system of leadership is outlined in detail in responses to Section 2.1.A of this report. The Executive Committee has been designated by the Chancellor as the primary leadership cohort. Relevant information regarding levels of responsibility and authority are outlined below.

Table 13
Executive Committee Credentials

Gregory Kegel – Chancellor
Credentials: M.S., Occupational Education, 1987, Central Washington University; **B.S.**, Secondary Education, 1976, Northern Montana College **Responsibility:** Leadership and management of Montana State University- Northern **Unit Supervised:** Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Student Engagement, Student Success, Athletics
Dr. William Rugg, – Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Credentials: Ph.D., Education, 1980, University of Mississippi **Responsibility:** Academic Affairs **Unit Supervised:** Institutional Research; Library; Registrar; Grants Manager; Dean, College of Technical Sciences; Dean, College of Education, Arts & Sciences, Nursing; Director of Nursing; Extended University; TRIO Grants; Learning Success Center

Mr. Brian Simonson – Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
Credentials: MBA, Financial Management, 2006, Naval Postgraduate; **B.S.**, Business Administration Management, 1996, Chapman University; Professional Certificates-Acquisition Professional Corps, 2010: US Navy Comptroller Designation 2008 **Responsibility:** Student Affairs **Unit Supervised:** Financial Services; Business Services; Facilities; Bookstore; Reprographics; Information Technology Services

Kathy Jaynes, SPHR – Human Resources Director
Credentials: M.A., Anthropology, 1981, Texas Tech University; **B.A.,** Anthropology, 1974, Texas Tech University; **Senior Professional in Human Resources,** certified 2010 **Unit Supervised:** Human Resources

2.A.10 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board, but may not serve as its chair.

In September 2014, Greg Kegel became the Chancellor at Montana State University-Northern. Prior to this appointment, he served for 12 years as the Dean of the College of Technical Sciences, where he oversaw construction of the Applied Technology Center and established the BioEnergy Innovation Testing Center (now known as the Advanced Fuels Center). He expanded Northern's technical programs to include associate programs in trades craft such as plumbing, carpentry, construction, electrical, wind and sustainable energy. Kegel strengthened the co-op student program for diesel and automotive students through summer internship programs with national and international businesses.

Prior to serving as Dean, Kegel was a professor at Montana State University-Northern and a training specialist for Autodesk, Inc. Kegel received a M.S. degree in Occupational Education from Central Washington University in 1987. His current contract expires on June 30, 2017 and a renewal will be presented at the Board of Regents' meeting in September 2017. His credentials, as presented during the search process, are appended to this report [Chancellor's Vita (Appendix FF)].

The position of Chancellor holds full-time responsibility to the University and to the Board of Regents through the President of Montana State University. The Chancellor does not serve in any capacity within the structure of the Board of Regents.

2.A.11 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational

functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

In order to address fully this standard, it is important to explain first the expectations of the Board of Regents regarding the balance of administrative expenditures vis-a-vis academic expenditures. Within the accounting system of the State of Montana and, by extension, the Montana University System Board of Regents, Montana State University-Northern receives its general-fund budget distributed in eight specific programs:
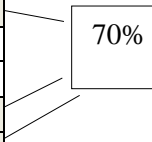
Program 01—Instruction (faculty salaries),
Program 02—Organized Research (no funding within this program for MSUN due to its mission),
Program 03—Public Service (no funding within this program for MSUN),
Program 04—Academic Support (library, graduate program support, accreditation, academic support services),
Program 05—Student Services (Career Center, registrar, multicultural programs, enrollment management, veterans' affairs, student success initiatives, learning center, athletics, advising center),
Program 06—Institutional Support (Chancellor, business functions, insurance, human resources, Foundation support, student loan administration, University relations),
Program 07—Operation and Maintenance of Plant, and
Program 08—Scholarships and Fellowships.

(This is the budget structure for general funds. Auxiliary services—bookstore, residence halls, food service—are not reflected in this schema.)

In expounding on its strategic plan goal "to deliver efficient and coordinated services," the Board of Regents states that "expenditures for Instruction, plus Academic Support, plus Student Services should account for at least 70% of total expenditures." Therefore, the following table illustrates Montana State University-Northern's current ratio in its FY16 budget. See Table 14, MSUN's Current Ratio in FY17 Budget below.

Table 14
Montana State University-Northern's Current Ratio in FY16 Budget

Program	Amount	% of Current Budget
01	$6,731,965	41%
02		-0-
03		-0-
04	$1,933,105	12%
05	$2,802,336	17%
06	$1,769,496	11%
07	$1,921,043	11%
08	$1,275,701	8%
Total		100%

(70% bracket spanning rows 01 through 05)

The current total percentage of Program 01 (Instruction), Program 04 (Academic Support), and Program 05 (Student Services) stands at 70% (as highlighted above) of Montana State University-Northern's general fund operating budget for the current fiscal year (through June

30, 2016). Therefore, Montana State University-Northern is in compliance with Board of Regents' expectations regarding "efficient and coordinated services"—a component of accreditation expectations that" the institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions."

Operationally, the University has 188 full-time employees, defined as any full-time employee (faculty or staff) who occupies a full-benefited position. Of these,

- 57(30%) are full-time faculty, either in tenured positions, tenure-track positions, or in annual contracts that carry benefits;
- 67 (36%) are considered administrators (i.e., non-faculty professional rank including such categories as admissions representative, assistant director, manager, director, dean, vice-chancellor, and chancellor); and
- 64 (34%) are considered support and service staff (e.g., housekeeper, administrative assistant, general laborer, food service worker).

When compared against Montana State University-Northern's fall 2015 headcount of 1,234, ratios are as follows:

- 4.62 faculty per one hundred students;
- 5.43 administrators per one hundred students; and
- 5.18 support and service staff per one hundred students.

Montana State University-Northern's most recent organization chart (Appendix Z) is appended to this report. All administrators have the appropriate degree for the position they hold and years of experience in the areas they are overseeing. Table 13 outlines their qualifications.

To reach mission fulfillment, collaboration is vital and is encouraged through the Chancellor's Executive Committee (p. 69). For example, student success and enrollment management initiatives require close collaboration between professionals in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Business Affairs.

The academic colleges have collaborative relationships and integrated programming and partner with Extended University to serve students at a distance.

Policies and Procedures

2.A.12 *Academic policies—including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation—are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.*

Academic policies and Faculty Affairs policies are posted to MSUN's website located on the Faculty & Staff link. Policies are updated every two years, with a notice from the Chancellor's

Office. Policy updates are completed by the [Academic Council], (p. 16) with Academic Senate review and input. These two committees ensure that faculty members are involved in the review, updating, and formation of academic and faculty affairs policy. Approval for policies go through four levels of input and/or approval. Once Academic Senate give input, the Strategic Advancement Team and University Advisory Council review and approve.

Procedures and expectations for faculty teaching, service, and scholarship/creative production is noted in the federation's [Collective Bargaining Agreement] (CBA) under Article 7. MSUN is a teaching institution; therefore an effective level of teaching is required. The CBA 7.2 states:

> "Since the primary mission of the University is instruction, effective teaching must be positively evaluated in every case. Each candidate for reappointment, promotion or tenure must also demonstrate contributions in either scholarship or service. Each evaluation must include indications of continuing professional activity and development since the previous evaluation."

2.A.13 Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources—regardless of format, location, and delivery method—are documented, published, and enforced.

The library's circulation policies, collection development policy, mission statement and goals can be found on the library's web pages and align to the University's mission by striving to "meet the current and changing information needs for the diverse University community …" Links to these pages are found on the "[About the Library]" page. Additional information can be found on the library's [home page], such as hours and days open, tutorials, web resources, etc.

2.A.14 The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.

As part of MSUN's [mission] to help students succeed, MSUN is devoted to making the transferability of course work easier for students. MUSN is an activate participant in the Common Course Numbering (CCN) process with other MUS institutions in the state. This project requires all institutions to have the same prefix and titles on the same courses. Faculty leaders were appointed for each campus and lead the merging of all similar courses into one system that could be used on all campuses. With the CCN project, students in the Montana University System (MUS) can transfer seamlessly among its institutions.

MSUN works closely with other institutions in the state, several neighboring states, and Canada to engage in articulation agreements. Articulation agreements allow the students to know which classes will transfer to MSUN and which classes they are expected to take while they are on campus. MSUN publishes the guidelines under the Transfer of Credits policy [Academic Catalog]. The Registrar's Office initiates the evaluation of course credit after the student is admitted to the University. The Registrar determines the acceptability of course work from other post-secondary institutions based on official transcripts received. Each student who transfers to MSUN receives a transfer letter outlining the credits the student took

and how they transfer to MSUN. This easy-to-read analysis provides the student with a stepping stone to meet with his or her advisor to go over the transfer work. The advisor then may submit substitutions including course descriptions and/or syllabi for review in the degree major or minor areas.

MSUN follows BOR Policy 301.5 Transfer of Credits; MUS and Community Colleges. This policy notes:

> All college level courses from regionally accredited institutions of higher education will be received and applied by all campuses of the Montana University System (MUS), and by the community colleges, towards the free elective requirements of the associate and baccalaureate degrees.

In awarding general education transfer work MSUN follows Board of Regents' Policy 301.10 General Education Transfer Policy; Montana University System. Outlined in this policy it states:

> An undergraduate student who has completed the lower division coursework in an approved general education program at one of the institutions noted above, and who transfers to another of those institutions, cannot be required to take additional general education coursework at the lower division level. The student may be required to take additional coursework at the upper division level that is part of an approved general education program at the new campus.

The approved general education program at each MUS campus can be found on the Montana University System website. General education review comes from the Registrar's Office; if a class that is not in the Montana Common Course Numbering (CCN) system and it is decided that it is very similar to our course, a staff member will submit an equivalency form for faculty review. If the faculty and dean agree the class meets the outcomes for that general education area, it will be approved and entered in the system so future students will have the class automatically count towards MSU-Northern's General Education core. These changes will also appear in our new Degree Audit software, Degreeworks, after the change has been made.

Students

2.A.15 *Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities—including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities— are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.*

Student's rights and responsibilities are set forth in the Board of Regents written policies and procedures. MSU-Northern maintains an Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual which governs all aspects of student conduct at MSU-Northern.

In MSUN Policy 601.2, Academic Misconduct (Appendix GG), academic misconduct and academic dishonesty are described and the sanctions which an instructor may impose are given. The students' right to appeal and the appeal process are explained. If the student is

charged with a violation of MSUN Policy 601.3 Student Conduct, (Appendix V) additional disciplinary sanctions may be taken.

For current students, MSU-Northern publishes a Student Handbook each fall. Academic, student services policies and student rights and responsibilities are located in the student handbook.
Additionally, these policies are also referenced in the academic catalog.

MSU-Northern is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students. Disability Services is listed on page 22 of the Student Handbook, providing a brief overview of Disability Services. The Disability Services website gives students more in depth instructions on how to obtain services, including the application for service, alternative textbook option, and contact information for the Director of Disability Services. Faculty members are required to include information on disability accommodations in each of their syllabi.

Information concerning accommodations for persons with disabilities is contained in MSUN Policy 1001.7 Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation of the policy manual and the Disability Services website maintained by MSU-Northern. The discrimination grievance procedure is contained in MSUN Policy 1001.7-1 Discrimination Grievance Procedure (Appendix HH) of the policy manual.

At MSUN, all policies and procedures regarding student rights and responsibilities are administered in a fair and consistent manner. The Admission and Standards Subcommittee of the Academic Senate meets once a week on Fridays to evaluate student records and make decisions concerning admissions, advanced standing, probation, and non-retention, and to hear student appeals for exceptions to academic policy. The Dean of Students reviews discipline cases to assess consistency, equity, and trends, with an annual report submitted to the Chancellor.

2.A.16 *The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding continuation in and*
termination from its educational programs—including its appeals process and readmission policy—are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.

Admission as an Undergraduate Student

Undergraduate students are defined as, first-time college students, or have attempted college level credits during high school and/or after graduating high school, or have not been awarded a bachelor's degree.

Applications are accepted from resident, non-resident, and international students. Eligible undergraduate students may attend full-time or part-time. MSU-Northern retains the right to establish requirements which will ensure successful scholastic performance.

General Admission Information

Students are responsible for submitting applications for admission, financial aid and housing, and must provide verification of immunizations. Students should be aware of the following:

1. Applicants are requested to voluntarily provide their social security number, which permits the school to distinguish between individuals with the same or similar names.
2. Students intending to apply for financial aid may obtain appropriate forms from their high school guidance office, on-line at the Federal Student Aid website, or by contacting Financial Aid, (800) 662-6132 x3787. MSU-Northern's FAFSA school code is 002533.
3. Students with less than 30 credits of college level coursework are required to live in the residence halls. Additional information about residence life and family housing should be referred to the Director of Housing, (800) 662-6132 x4113.
4. Students must submit proof of required immunizations prior to registration for classes. In order to be in compliance with Montana state law, students born on or after January 1, 1957 who are taking seven or more credits OR are enrolled in a degree program must either:
    A. Show proof of two vaccinations against measles and one against rubella. Immunizations must have been given after 1967 and after the student's first birthday and must have been administered at least thirty days apart. Current immunizations must have been administered in the form of the MMR vaccine. Immunizations must be documented by a physician, registered nurse or school official. **"OR"**
    B. Show documentation of having contracted measles and rubella. Documentation by a physician is required including dates of illness. **"OR"**
    C. File a medical or religious exemption.
    International students have additional immunization requirements. Please refer to the section entitled "INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS" for additional information.
5. Students with a health condition or a disability which should be brought to MSU-Northern's attention may submit a confidential letter of need to Disability Services. Questions about services for disabled students should be referred to Disability Services (800) 662-6132 x 4133.

Freshmen (First-time Undergraduates)

Freshmen students are those who have completed high school or its equivalent and have never attended a college or university. Students that have attempted less than 12 quarter or semester college-level credits at another regionally accredited college or university after high school graduation are considered an incoming freshman. Students who have earned college-level course credit, Advance Placement, or International Baccalaureate credits while still attending high school are also considered incoming freshmen.

Academic Eligibility

Students who do not meet all freshman admission requirements listed below are still encouraged to apply for admissions and submit the necessary credentials. MSU-Northern is allowed a number of exemptions to the stated requirements and will examine each student's credentials on a case-by-case basis for admissibility.

Students who are not eligible to enter a four-year program may pursue an associate degree or certificate program and change to a four-year program upon successful completion of MATH 121 or higher and/or WRIT 101.

The following categories of students are exempt from the admissions requirements above:

 1. Non-traditional students (students that graduated from high school at least three years prior to enrollment),
 2. Summer only students,
 3. Part-time students taking seven or fewer college or university level credits.

For the purpose of this section, "university level credits" means those courses that are applicable toward an associate of applied science, associate of science, bachelor of applied science, or baccalaureate degree at Montana State University-Northern. *Such courses shall not include remedial or developmental courses.*

In addition to University admissions requirements, the Nursing and Education program have competitive admission requirements for their programs to ensure that students are adequately prepared for the program. These are clearly stated in the academic catalog, online, in the Nursing Student Handbook and the Education Student Handbook.

Course prerequisites are determined by the faculty through the curriculum process. These are stated in the academic catalog and enforced through the Banner student information systems. In addition, to ensure that students are adequately prepared for upper division coursework, freshmen are not allowed enrolling in upper division courses without the instructor's permission.

Policies regarding continuation in and termination from MSUN's educational programs, as well as the appeals processes and readmissions, are located in the 2015-2016 Academic Catalog and the Student Handbook. New students who do not achieve a good standing grade point average of 2.0 are placed on academic warning, and their academic advisor is notified of their status. Students on academic warning are limited to registering for 12 credits during the next semester. Continuing students whose cumulative grade point average drops below a 2.0 are placed on academic probation, these students are limited to registering for 12 credits during the next semester. If a student is on academic probation and does not achieve a term or cumulative grade point average above a 2.0, then the student will be placed on academic suspension. A first suspension constitutes one semester of nonattendance, the second suspension requires that a student not attend for one calendar year, and the student must petition for readmission after a third suspension. At any point the student may petition to take additional credits beyond their limit based on their academic standing. Students have the option to petition the Admissions and Standards Sub-committee to override the credit limit

based on academic standing or the required nonattendance for suspension.

2.A.17 *The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.*

The Office of Student Activities considers the needs of students and other constituents when planning and publishing co-curricular activities and promotes diverse creative entertaining activities, providing quality entertainers and invigorating intramural and recreation activities while collaborating with organizations both on and off campus. The end goal is to enhance the educational experience for all MSUN students.

The Montana State University-Northern Student Handbook/Planner that is published every academic year lists sections on Clubs & Organization options, Intramurals & Recreation programs offered, University Radio Station (KNMC) for media coverage, music and educational programming and all Student Councils that provide co-curricular activities.

Along with the handbook information, there is a calendar for the academic year with current daily activities listed for student participation. The Associated Students of Montana State University-Northern (ASMSUN) plays an important role in planning and implementing campus projects, such as the recycle initiative. Located on the ASMSUN web page are ASMSUN Constitution and Bylaws that clearly publish the roles and responsibilities of each office on the Student Senate.

Student organizations are required to re-register every academic year. A list of Montana State University-Northern clubs and organizations is published on the Student Organizations and Clubs website. Registration forms are to be completed and turned in to the Student Union Information Desk before any club activities or fundraisers are held on campus. All clubs are required to elect an Inter Organizational Council (IOC) representative to attend weekly IOC meetings in the Student Union. Registered student organizations have access to funding support through the Associated Students of MSU-Northern, free meeting space and the use of a mailbox in the SUB!

In fall of 2013, the Northern Ambassadors student organization was resurrected, after several years' dormancy. Northern Ambassadors are involved with tele-counseling and sending postcards to prospective students, assisting with on campus recruiting events, attending functions at the Chancellor's home and Foundation functions as requested, coordinating Orientation, and
act as tour guides for all campus visitors. As published on their website, Northern Ambassadors note that they are committed to MSUN and its students.

Human Resources

2.A.18 *The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews them to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.*

[MSU-Northern's Policies and Procedures](#) are posted on the MSUN website. Additional information regarding human resources policies and procedures can be found on the [MSUN HR](#) [webpage](#). Policies are reviewed systematically either due to law, [collective bargaining agreements](#) or other policy changes, or on a scheduled three-to-five year review cycle. The Chancellor's Executive Committee is the first step in policy review followed by Strategic Advancement Team and then the University Advisory Council. The approved policy is then sent out to MSUN employees via e-mail and then posted on the MSUN policy and procedure webpage.

2.A.19 Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.

Upon hire, all regular employees (full and part-time) receive a general orientation which includes all new employee paperwork, job description, and access to the CBA for union employees. The CBAs for faculty and classified staff are located on the MSUN [website](#). New employees also receive department specific orientations by their supervisors. In addition, new employees attend the "New Employee Orientation" held in August of each year. The Office of Human Resources hosts the orientation and provides information regarding employment including review of employment conditions, policies, and processes. Department leaders from across campus attend the Orientation as a "meet and greet" and to provide information about their particular departments. Also, all regular employees as well as the new ones participate in the annual "Welcome Back" orientation also held in August of each year.

Annual evaluation of faculty is prescribed by the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in [Article 7.3](#) Evaluation Procedures (Appendix AA), which state, "Any faculty member seeking promotion, tenure, or continuation of probationary appointment must file an application with its supporting documentation in the office of the Provost by December 1. All probationary faculty are reviewed annually. A performance evaluation includes five (5) levels of review by the college's faculty evaluation committee, Chair, and Dean/Director (designee), University Provost, and Chancellor. The evaluation is based on effective teaching, service contributions, and scholarly development as delineated in [Article 7.2](#) Professional Evaluation Criteria (Appendix BB). This evaluative process produces professionally accomplished faculty who are committed to student success as noted in the core themes. Expectations for faculty on letters of appointment and adjunct faculty are outlined in appointment letters, i.e., "Provost, Chair, and/or faculty colleagues will evaluate each part-time faculty member during the semester." Tenured faculty are reviewed every three years after tenure as prescribed in the [CBA](#). Professional and Classified staff members are evaluated on annual bases by their supervisors. Professional staff members complete a self-evaluation and then meet with their supervisor to compare and develop a collective evaluation. Classified staff members meet with their supervisors 90 days after being hired to discuss their progress and any needed improvements. Classified staff are then evaluated at the 6 month mark (end of probation) and then on an annual basis thereafter. Necessary [forms](#) are located on the Human Resources website.

2.A.20 *The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.*

Both hardcopy personnel files and the electronic Banner Human Resources/Payroll system are secure with limited access. The Data Custodian for human resource data is the Director of Human Resources. Hardcopies of faculty and professional staff personnel files are located in a locked space (Chancellor's Office) with limited access. Classified and classified-exempt staff personnel files are located in the Human Resources office. Banner includes password protection that limits access to authorized personnel. These practices ensure that access to confidential records is secure.

Institutional Integrity

2.A.21 *The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.*

Montana State University-Northern represents itself clearly and accurately through a series of weekly communications and numerous publications. To facilitate ongoing communication with the campus and the broader community, the Office of University Relations distributes every Friday, during the academic year, an electronic newsletter known as the [Northern Network News](#) (NNN). This newsletter currently is being circulated to nearly 6,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni, daily and weekly newspapers, and community members who have asked/signed up to receive the newsletter. The information contained in the NNN is a collaborative effort of weekly contributors from the Chancellor's Office, the Library, the ITS Department, the Foundation, the Alumni Office and the Campus Events Office. Every effort is taken to ensure everything in the NNN is accurate. When errors get through the series of proof readers, a correction is promptly made in the next issue.

The University Relations office uses Constant Contact to distribute the NNN. This service allows them to track who is opening emails and which emails have bounced. This tracking system compares their responses against similar institutions that use their service. This service also allows people to opt-out of receiving the newsletter.

The University Relations office is also responsible to the production of all major graphic pieces, sports posters, advertising and news releases. Most of the promotional pieces are produced annually. Other pieces, like the campus visit brochure, are on a two-year rotating production schedule. The two-year schedule helps the content of the material to remain relevant while keeping the printing costs down.

It is during this production time that all publications are reviewed. The Admissions and Recruiting departments begin the process of evaluating the effectiveness of their past recruiting campaigns. They are continually evaluating the literature to ensure the information communicated to potential students is accurate and effective. Academic literature is also

reviewed by the Registrar's office for accuracy and consistency.

Academic intentions, programs, and services are communicated through the University's catalog, which is now solely on-line so that it can be updated annually. The academic information within all other graphic pieces is compared against the catalog for accuracy and consistency.

Since 2011 MSUN's catalog has been available online in a PDF format. This past year, 2015/16, MSUN has been in the process of working with a company called Course Leaf to create an interactive online catalog that is linked to Banner. The conversion of the catalog to this system took longer than originally projected but it is now connected to Banner and is easier to keep current. The online interactive catalog will be generated annually from the course and program information contained in the Banner System. This will help to ensure that the catalog is always current with information in the Banner System.

The four constituent institutions of the Montana State University have been working for the past three years with a company called Omni Update to convert our campus websites to a new Content Management System (CMS). This software has several advantages. Departments and programs now have the ability to update their own content. It also has the ability to automatically update the content throughout the entire website. We are in the early stages of training all the content managers how to update their portion of the website.

This past year, MSUN began to produce several in-house recruiting and highlight videos. These videos are new to MSUN's marketing efforts. The videos are hosted on the MSUN YouTube and Facebook accounts and distributed through the NNN, Facebook and the MSUN website. The feedback from viewers indicates that they have been very successful and popular among current and future students.

2.A.22 The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.

Montana State University-Northern, as a state-supported institution, is subject to all of the statutes regarding ethical conduct as stipulated ethical standards and practices of the state of Montana as outlined in the Montana Code Annotated. The University is further governed by the Board of Regents Policies and Procedures . Locally, the University has its own policies related to expectations of campus conduct by its employees as addressed in Policy 1001: General Campus Conduct (including but not limited to the additional policies referenced).

Beyond the expectations of the state and university policies, ethical conduct of faculty has been addressed historically in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Montana University System Board of Regents and the MSUN Federation of Teachers, Local 4045, re- negotiated every two fiscal years (July 1- June 30). In this document, the following sections apply specifically to the fair and equitable treatment of faculty:

- Article 3, Faculty Rights and Working Conditions;

- Article 5, Academic Freedom and Responsibility; and
- Article 12, Grievance Procedure and Arbitration.

Other non-faculty employees, except for professional staff, are afforded the protection of a Collective Bargaining Agreement between AFSCME Local 2235 and the Montana University System. Specific guidelines regarding fair and equitable treatment include:

- Article 14, Working Conditions; and
- Article 15, Grievance and Arbitration Procedure.

All Montana State University-Northern employees are also required to complete an annual course in Montana University System policies related to sexual harassment.

University policy regarding expectations for students' general conduct, as well as academic integrity, is communicated to students through three specific University policies all of which are found in the Student Handbook:

- Policy 601.2 Academic Misconduct (Appendix GG);
- Policy 601.3 Student Conduct, which includes information on the student judicial system (Appendix V e); and
- Policy 1001.7 Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking and Retaliation (Appendix Q).

The Dean of Students is the professional officer primarily responsible for student conduct.

Responses to allegations of unethical conduct occur at various levels within the University structure and are dealt with initially by the appropriate supervisor and are handled through the aforementioned policies and procedures. Employees wishing to file anonymous complaints regarding perceived violations of ethics will be able to do so with the newly-created Ethics Reporting Hotline, scheduled to be in place in mid-September.

2.A.23 *The institution adheres to a clearly defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.*

In the matter of Conflict Of Interest (COI), Montana State University-Northern is governed by three specific policies:

- The Montana Code of Ethics;
- The Montana University System Board of Regents, Policy 770-Conflict of Interest; and
- Montana State University-Northern, Policy 1003.6 Conflict of Interest.

Within the aforementioned faculty union contract, conflict of interest is addressed through section 3.12, which states that "Faculty shall not undertake any activity or take any action which violates the standards of conduct section of state law (Title 2, Chapter 2, MCA, *[as linked above]*). No faculty may offer or provide services in competition with the university system or any units thereof, or if full time, teach courses offered by other institutions during the contract period without written notification to the Provost."

Annually, all professional staff of the University completes a conflict of interest form. All professional faculty and staff must receive training on the COI policy and complete a COI form on an annual basis as per MSUN Policy 1003.6 Conflict of Interest (Appendix II).

2.A.24 *The institution maintains clearly defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.*

Montana State University-Northern is governed by four Montana University System Board of Regents policies as related to intellectual property:

- Policy 401 Research and Technology Transfer;
- Policy 401.2 Inventions and Patents;
- Policy 401.3 Copyrights;
- Policy 406 Ownership of Electronic Course Material; and
- Policy 407 University System Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation.

BOR Policies 401, 401.2, 401.3, 406, and 407 are located in Appendix JJ.

2.A.25 *The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms "Accreditation" and "Candidacy" (and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.*

MSUN maintains an internal accreditation website for institutional and disciplinary accreditation which contains documents pertaining to the current accreditation efforts. All documents are available for access by all faculty and staff of the University. Disciplinary accreditation documents are also stored on the departments' website and thus are accessible to all who visit the website.

2.A.26 *If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services—with clearly defined roles and responsibilities—is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation.*

Montana State University-Northern ensures consistency and compliance in contractual

agreements with external entities through a mandatory Business Office review process after Department level approval is secured in adherence to MSUN Policy 840.16, Agency Requisitions & Purchase Orders. (Appendix KK) This policy outlines Northern's purchase authority and procedures in compliance with State regulation, Title 18 Montana Code Annotated (MCA), Montana Procurement Act, Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM). MSUN is authorized to enter into contractual agreements up to $25,000. Contracts in excess of $25,000 are administered through MSU Bozeman's purchasing department. MSUN and the greater University system adhere to standard governmental and industry informal and formal solicitations and competitive bidding practices for all contractual agreements. Furthermore, all contracts for products and services are additionally vetted through legal counsel for review to ensure the integrity of the institution is safeguarded and consistent with MSUN's mission as approved by the Montana Board of Regents.

Academic Freedom

2.A.27 *The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.*

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Montana University System and Montana State University-Northern Federation of Teachers, Local 4045 (from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015) identifies the Academic Freedom provisions in Article 5.1 Academic Freedom:

> The parties agree that academic freedom is important to the fulfillment of the purposes of Montana State University-Northern. The parties acknowledge and encourage the continuation of an atmosphere and confidence and freedom while recognizing that academic freedom is accompanied by a corresponding responsibility of faculty to their colleagues, the University and its students to maintain the highest standard of academic integrity and scholarship. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but should present various scholarly views related to their subject, be accurate at all times, and avoid presenting controversial material which is unrelated to the subject. Faculty are entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties.

The CBA further notes that faculty are free from censorship as citizens but must realize that their position at the University imposes certain obligations; therefore, they should never speak as an agent or representative of MSUN, without authorization.

Additionally, faculty and/or students who conduct research have to utilize the institutional review process overseen by the Academic Senate, Subcommittee Instruction, Research, and Faculty Development. The Deans and Provost often review research proposals to provide feedback to students.

2.A.28 *Within the context of its mission, core themes, and values, the institution defines and*

actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.

MSUN's mission , core themes, and vision supports an environment where the campus community (faculty, staff, students and administrators) is encouraged to develop intellectually and explore disciplines and cultures from various perspectives. For example, the mission is carried out through promoting "a student centered and culturally enriched environment endorsing lifelong learning, personal growth and responsible citizenship." Board of Regents Policy 302-Academic Freedom (Appendix LL) governs the faculty at Montana State University-Northern. This policy emphasizes that faculty are members of our regional and campus communities as well as the larger academic community. No matter what personal, social, or religious philosophy, campus members are free to publish articles or editorials in regional newspapers, engage in scholarly research, and sit on various community and state councils, etc., without censure.

In terms of BOR Policy 1302-Privacy, Security, and Monitoring, (Appendix MM) the Board of Regents Policy describes the MUS ability to access information regarding employees' computer use and outlines the general rules governing MUS rights and responsibilities to monitor the use of the computers and networks it operates, and the balance between those rights and responsibilities and the expectation of a reasonable degree of privacy in the use of those facilities by users.

2.A.29 Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such.

Montana State University-Northern uses Policy 1140 Misconduct in Research and Creative Activity (Appendix NN) to guide faculty and staff. Its purpose is to require the highest ethical standards in the research/creative activity of its faculty and staff; to inquire into and, if necessary, investigate and resolve promptly and fairly all instances of alleged or apparent misconduct.
Misconduct in research or creative activity shall be considered a breach of contract between the employee and the University. This policy applies to any research/creative activity undertaken by faculty or professional staff.

Cases of research/academic misconduct involving students are subject to the disciplinary rules governing students, but may be reviewed, where appropriate, under this policy. In conducting any inquiry or investigation into allegations of misconduct, the University shall protect, to the maximum extent possible under the law, the privacy of individuals who, in good faith, report apparent misconduct.

MSUN Policy 1003.6 Conflict of Interest (Appendix II) enables faculty and staff doing

research and creative activity to recognize potential conflicting interests and, thus, to protect themselves and the Campus from such conflicting interests through disclosure, evaluation, and, if required, management or elimination of conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest may exist whenever an employee's work responsibilities, actions or decisions may be influenced by considerations of personal or financial gain through activities, contracts, or engagements undertaken by the employee with non-Campus entities.

The federation's CBA addresses faculty's possible conflicts resulting from research, grants and other creative activities. Article 3.12, Conflict of Interest specifically notes,

> Faculty shall not undertake any activity or take any action which violates the standards of conduct section of state law (Title 2, Chapter 2, MCA). No faculty may offer or provide services in competition with the university system or any units thereof, or if full time, teach courses offered by other institutions during the contract period without written notification to the Provost.

Additionally, the BOR values research, as stated in Policy 401-Research and Technology Transfer (Appendix JJ). It states:

> The Board of Regents recognizes the vital role of the campus research programs in providing an environment that promotes exploration, discovery and the dissemination of new knowledge for students. The board supports the integration of learning and discovery on the campuses and recognizes that The University of Montana-Missoula, Montana State University-Bozeman and Montana Tech of The University of Montana maintain significant research programs as an integral part of their academic environment.

Faculties disseminate knowledge gained through research in local, state and national publications and acknowledge the source of intellectual property, personal views and opinions.

Finance

2.A.30 The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.

The Montana University System's Board of Regents (BOR) sets policy for all public institutes of higher education including MSUN. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) in Montana is responsible for communicating and implementing BOR policies and directives using the Regents' statutory and constitutional authority. BOR governing policies are found at http://www.mus.edu/borpol/. Additionally MSUN maintains campus specific administrative policies which can be found at http://www.msun.edu/admin/policies/.

MSUN's Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration maintains overall accountability and oversight of all University financial resources. MSUN is additionally governed by the Montana State University flagship campus in Bozeman (MSU) who approves and reports collectively to OCHE for all its affiliated campuses. Through systematic reporting and monthly meetings with MSU, MSUN's is greatly assisted in all aspects of its financial administration. MSUN's operating budget is approved annually by the BOR with university leadership and OCHE involvement in the financial planning process. OCHE's Fiscal Affairs Division monitors and assists in the management of financial resources, including financial planning, monitoring operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management and transfers and borrowing between funds. The OCHE furthermore provides leadership to and promotes cooperation and collaboration among units of the Montana University System regarding finance and administrative policies and practices; oversees the development and presentation of the system's legislatively appropriated budgets, preparation of the Board of Regents approved operating budgets; makes recommendations on campus tuition and fee proposals; develops and implements the allocation model used to distribute the "lump sum" state support to the educational units; leads in the development of fiscal policy, including tuition and fees, auditing, investments and expenditures; and provides centralized oversight for the Montana University System facility planning and Long Range Building Program.

Section 2B: Human Resources

2.B.1 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.

As of the spring of 2016, MSU-Northern employed approximately 200 regular employees: 57 faculty, 140 professional and classified staff to serve the needs of the students and the University. Recruitment procedures specify the selection processes, and all advertisements are made public. Recruitment procedures are outlined in the MSU-Northern Policies and Procedures Manual 1001.10 Hiring and Recruiting of Faculty, Professional / Administrative, and Support Staff. MSU-Northern utilizes a secure system for applicants to submit their application materials. Application materials are currently received through the PeopleAdmin applicant tracking system.

Recruitment for all positions include a Notice of Vacancy (NOV) outlining the details of the position including title, benefits, job summary, required and preferred qualifications, and instructions for submitting application materials. The NOVs are prepared based upon information obtained from the job descriptions. Search committee members are appointed and given password access to a secured website which contains the list of search committee members, all applicant materials, and a toolkit which details specific instructions for conducting the search. Links to all toolkit materials are included in the "welcome to the search" email received by each new search committee member. In addition, the Director of Human Resources or designee attends the first meeting of each search committee to go over the ground rules of the search. Upon completion of the search process, the search committee chair makes a recommendation for hire to the hiring authority. Once employed, the new employee receives a general as well as department specific orientation.

2.B.2 *Administrators and staff are evaluated regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities.*

University policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements governing administrators and staff stipulate annual evaluations, which include written feedback. Evaluations are based upon performance expectations and specific duties and responsibilities defined for the assigned

positions. Performance expectations identify required and specific skills and behavior standards for positions. Annual evaluation forms for professional, administrative, and classified positions are located on the MSU-Northern website.

2.B.3 *The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.*

The Professional Development (PD) Committee was organized in 2011 and was charged with developing a system where faculty and staff could apply for funds to attend workshops, conferences and trainings. All regular full-time employees may apply for funds from the Professional Development Committee to enable them to attend job specific activities and events. Employees must complete the professional development application form outlining specific details of the event, reason for attending, and amount requested. The PD Committee reviews and approves applications based upon need, training relevance to the job, and available funding. One key to being successful is those funded are required to bring knowledge back to campus and present to an appropriate audience. In this way, MSUN is strategically using its limited resources to create a larger impact on the campus. Applications can be found on the Professional Development website.

2.B.4 *Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs, wherever offered and however delivered.*

MSUN employs approximately 60 fulltime and 32 part-time faculty members with 81% being on tenure track and 19% employed with Letters of Appointment. As noted in the mission statement, MSUN "serves a diverse student population" which creates a need for a large variety of programming that ranges from certificates to graduate degrees. Diverse students and programs require hiring a unique and highly qualified group of faculty members. See Table 33, Faculty and Staff by Number and Degree on next page. Programs in the technical fields encourage faculty to obtain a master's degree, and disciplines in the professional fields desire faculty members having a doctorate. Faculty members teaching without required degrees are encouraged to pursue them. The student to faculty ratio is 14 to 1.

Typically, national searches are conducted on all tenure track faculty positions. MSUN expects each academic unit to recruit the most highly qualified faculty available. All faculty searches are conducted on the Havre campus, with faculty at a distance interviewing on both the main

and distance campuses.

Table 15.
Faculty and Staff by Number and Degree

Number of Faculty and Staff by Highest Degree Earned								
Rank	**Full Tim**	**Part Time**	**Licensure**	**Associate**	**Bachelor**	**Masters**	**Specialist**	**Doctorate**
Professor	15	0	0	0	0	6	0	9
Associate Professor	10	0	0	0	1	6	0	4
Assistant Professor	23	0	0	0	4	14	0	5
Instructor	9	0	2	0	5	2	0	0
Research Staff	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
No Rank	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	59	32	2	0	10	28	0	20

Annual evaluation of faculty members is prescribed by the CBA in Article 7.3 Evaluation Procedures (Appendix AA), which state, "Any faculty member seeking promotion, tenure, or continuation of probationary appointment must file an application with its supporting documentation in the office of the Provost by December 1. All probationary faculty are reviewed annually. A performance evaluation includes five (5) levels of review by the college's faculty evaluation committee, chair, and dean/director (designee), university provost, and chancellor. The evaluation is based on effective teaching, service contributions, and scholarly development as delineated in Article 7.2 Professional Evaluation Criteria (Appendix BB). This evaluative process produces professionally accomplished faculty who are committed to student success as noted in the core themes. Expectations for faculty on letters of appointment and adjunct faculty are outlined in appointment letters, i.e., "Provost, chair, and/or faculty colleagues will evaluate each part-time faculty member during the semester." Tenured faculty are evaluated every three years after tenure to ensure high performance.

Faculty members through their Academic Senate oversee academic programs. Therefore, faculty members in the academic colleges initiate curricular changes. These proposed changes go to the chair, dean, college for approval, before going to the Academic Senate for review. The Senate has oversight approval of all curricular changes—minor and major. Once curricular changes have been approved by the Senate and its Subcommittees, proposals are moved forward to the Provost and Chancellor. Faculty members have input into academic polices found in the electronic version of the *Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual*. Sections 400 Academic Affairs and 500 Faculty Affairs pertain to faculty members.

To maintain the integrity and continuity of academic programs, both traditional, hybrid, and online, MSUN's programs have an annual review process called, Student Learning Assessment Plan (SLAP). With the SLAP system, goal and objective data is collected and compared to last year's goals and student learning outcomes (objectives) to see if progress has been made. This assessment system ensures that programming is kept vital and relevant.

On September 10, 2012, Chancellor Limbaugh charged the newly formed Academic Council

with creating and conducting a [program prioritization review](#) (Appendix CC) of MSUN's 74 minors, certificates, and degree programs. The five-level review process began with faculty members completing a self-study (Appendix DD) assessment of their programs based on seven criteria including centrality, productivity, internal and external demand, cost effectiveness, quality and size. Program self-studies with recommendations moved on to college leadership (chairs and deans), Academic Senate, Academic Council, and Provost with recommendations that placed each program into one of four categories: grow, maintain, revise/integrate, or phase-out. These recommendations were submitted to Chancellor Limbaugh on April 15, 2013. Dr. Limbaugh announced the [final decision](#) (Appendix EE) in May 2013, with 19 programs identified for growth (25.6%), 26 programs being maintained (35.1%), four (4) programs determined to reduce or integrated (5.4%), and 25 programs going into moratorium or termination (32.4%). The end goal was to reallocate resources to allow for development of revitalized and new programming.

2.B.5 Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution's expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation.

MSUN is a teaching institution, as noted in the [mission statement](#). Typically, faculty members are expected to instruct 12 credits per semester, for a total of 24 credits during the academic year. However, the [CBA, Article 3.10](#) (Appendix OO) makes allowances for faculty to teach above the 24 credit hour annual load when necessary but no more than 32 credit hours per academic year. Faculty members are on 10-month contracts, with optional teaching assignments during the summer term.

Faculty teaching loads are designed to allow faculty the ability to choose either Service or Scholarship but not both in their pursuit of tenure and promotion. Under the [CBA, Article 7.2](#) Professional Evaluation Criteria (Appendix BB): "Since the primary mission of the University is instruction, effective teaching must be positively evaluated in every case. Each candidate for reappointment, promotion or tenure must also demonstrate contributions in either scholarship or service. Each evaluation must include indications of continuing professional activity and development since the previous evaluation." MSUN takes teaching effectiveness seriously. Faculty members are expected to maintain their professional credentials, stay up to date in their fields, and maintain high quality instruction. To that end, the institution will not renew probationary tenure track faculty members' contracts if pedagogy skills are lacking.

Either scholarly development or service are required; however, many, if not most, faculty members do both. Expectations for scholarly development and contribution are outlined in the [CBA, Article 7.2.B](#) (Appendix BB). Scholarly activities are seen as both professional development and contributing to scholarship in one's field. Requirements for service are listed in the CBA, [Article 7.2.C](#) (Appendix BB). It is the responsibility of the faculty member being evaluated to show how his or her service relates to the [mission](#) and development of MSUN.

At times faculty members are provided with reassigned time from teaching to fulfill other duties for a college or the University. For example, the Chairs of Colleges are given six (6) credit hours of reassigned time per semester to complete the chair duties, as noted in the

CBA, Article 6.5. Additionally, the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation was a faculty member who was given six (6) credit hours of reassigned time to conduct the tasks associated with campus-wide assessment and accreditation. As noted in the CBA, Article 3.10, (Appendix OO) faculty member's release time from teaching must be figured in credit hours and count toward his or her teaching load.

2.B.6 *All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.*

In the CBA, Article 7.1 states:

> The quality of the faculty at Montana State University-Northern should be maintained through a program of continuing faculty evaluation and a supporting program of faculty development. Evaluation of teaching through peer, administrative and student assessment shall be included.

Faculty members at MSUN receive an evaluation annually, unless they have tenure. With tenure, faculty members are given a post-tenure performance evaluation every three years. Tenure track faculty members are considered probationary and can be dismissed without cause. During the first year, the faculty member is given a performance evaluation by the Provost or designee. The Provost has been appointing the Deans of the colleges to conduct the evaluations of first-year faculty members. Starting with the second year, faculty members follow the procedures listed in the CBA, Article 7. This evaluation process involves preparing a notebook or portfolio evidencing teaching effectiveness, service or scholarly activity. Three peer evaluations are required each evaluation year. Those that review faculty documentation and make a recommendation are the college committees, Chairs, Provost in consultation with Deans, with the final decision made by the Chancellor. The end goal of the evaluation process is for the faculty member to show through documentation how he or she has become a more effective teacher and made a contribution in way of service or scholarly activities.

As noted above, tenured faculty members are evaluated every three years. Expectations for the post-tenure review process are laid out in the CBA, Article 7.7. Three peer reviews must be conducted. Although the evidence does not have to be as extensive as the pre-tenure process, faculty members must provide documentation of effective teaching, scholarly activities or service, with a goal of showing professional growth and accomplishment during the past three years. The levels of review begin with the college chair meeting with the faculty member to discuss accomplishments and determining a set of objectives to be achieved prior to the next evaluation. The Chair's written evaluation and recommendation is submitted to the Provost who based on evidence makes a recommendation in writing to the

Chancellor.

Faculty members on letters of appointment have contracts renewed annually based on teaching effectiveness assessed by their chairs. Adjunct faculty members' teaching is evaluated by the college chairs or appointed peers. All faculty who have teaching assignments have students evaluating the courses they teach. When student evaluations of courses are not at an effective level, the provost meets with the deans and chairs to discuss possible solutions. In between regular evaluations, if concerns surface, they are handled on a case-by-case bases. For example, a recent faculty hire was not exhibiting the level of content and teaching required by his profession. A mentor (retired faculty) was hired to shadow and help the new faculty, without much success and following the process outlined in the CBA, the faculty member was not renewed.

Section 2C: Education Resources

2.C.1 *The institution provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.*

MSUN has a mission statement that guides the development of the programs it offers, (BOR approved September 22, 2011). During the spring semester (2011), the Assessment and Accreditation Committee began the development of a basic framework for a campus-wide assessment plan based on the work of Walvoord and Banta, in *Assessment Clear and Simple, 2010.* However, by spring semester 2012 and guided by the mission statement, the MSUN Assessment and Accreditation Committee switched gears and developed a campus-wide assessment plan, based on Peggy L. Maki's book, *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution* (2010), which examined 16 steps to a comprehensive assessment system and cycle.

The Assessment and Accreditation Committee members divided into two sub-committees: One focused on assessing programming and the other reviewing unit operations that served students. Sub-committees met every two weeks and the full Assessment and Accreditation Committee met once each month. As an end result, the institutional assessment plan culminated in the creation of the Student Learning Assessment Plans (SLAPs) for all certificate and degree programs and Unit Continuous Improvement Plans (UCIPs) for campus-wide departments providing support services to students. The institutional assessment system (SLAPs and UCIPs) was built electronically and housed on the Institutional Assessment intra-site. With the implementation of the SLAP (beginning in AY 2011-2012), every certificate and degree program had to have a set of student learning outcomes that are assessed annually, with program improvements made, if necessary. These learning outcomes are listed on course syllabi.

During the initial start-up year (2011-2012), 60 degree and certificate programs completed their SLAPs. In other words, programs created goals, developed expected learning outcomes, determined criteria to assess outcomes, established the level of expected performance, etc. At

the end of the academic year, faculties were to complete an assessment report which would tell them if their goals had been met. Faculty completed 30 assessment reports to end the annual evaluation cycle. The plans and assessment reports were rolled to the 2012-2013 AY.

With a newly designed and implemented institutional assessment plan which included Student Learning Assessment Plans (SLAPs) for each program, it was realized that some of our programs were no longer vital or meeting the needs of students. To remain consistent with MSUN's mission to "offer vital programs" it was determined, in consultation with the Chancellor, that a total program review was needed. So on September 10, 2012, Chancellor Limbaugh charged the newly formed Academic Council with creating and conducting a program prioritization review (Appendix CC) of MSUN's 74 minors, certificates, and degree programs. The five-level review process began with faculty members completing a self- study (Appendix DD) assessment of their programs based on seven criteria including centrality, productivity, internal and external demand, cost effectiveness, quality and size. Program self-studies with recommendations moved on to college leadership (chairs and deans), Academic Senate, Academic Council, and Provost with recommendations that placed each program into one of four categories: grow, maintain, revise/integrate, or phase-out. These recommendations were submitted to Chancellor Limbaugh on April 15, 2013. Dr. Limbaugh announced the final decision (Appendix EE) in May 2013, with 19 programs identified for growth (25.6%), 26 programs being maintained (35.1%), four (4) programs determined to reduce or integrated (5.4%), and 25 programs going into moratorium or termination (32.4%). This officially ended Phase I of a three-phase project, with Phase II placing programs into moratorium or termination and Phase III developing and implementing new programs. The end goal was to reallocate resources to allow for development of revitalized and new programming.

Programs that are offered at any of the off-site centers or online are monitored for consistency in meeting program outcomes by faculty, the college Chair and Dean through the evaluation of course syllabi and student performance. The main campus faculty work with adjuncts and off-site faculty through a collaborative effort toward program consistency.

2.C.2 *The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.*

For each certificate and degree program, wherever offered and however delivered, the faculty members teaching in those disciplines have identified student learning outcomes. Some departments have developed supplemental documents, and other programs have accrediting bodies mandated publication of learning outcomes, such as in education and nursing programs. The institutional assessment system made-up of Student Learning Assessment Plans (SLAP) and Unit Continuous Improvement Plans (UCIP) is built electronically and housed on the Institutional Assessment intra-site and these assessment plans are being transitioned to the new Task Stream assessment system. With implementation of the SLAP (beginning in AY 2011- 2012), every certificate and degree program had to have a set of student learning outcomes that are assessed annually, with program improvements made if necessary. Additionally, these learning outcomes are required to be listed on course syllabi. Program outcomes are presented in the academic catalog that is posted on the institution's

website. An example can be found in the catalog, under the [biology program](#) the tab for the bachelor's also provides the list of courses in the core program.

All learning outcomes for general education courses are listed in the [catalog](#) each year. See below an example of student learning outcomes from the general education core.

Category I – Communication
You (the student), upon successful completion of course(s) within this category, should be able to:
1. Write clear, accurate sentences and paragraphs in standard American English.
2. Write extended papers which effectively develop and support theses, tell stories, describe events, and/or express feelings, insights and personal values.
3. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in written form through the forms of writing most common in the student's chosen career area.
4. Identify and incorporate research materials into informative and analytical writing.
5. Demonstrate the ability to select, develop and deliver an effective oral presentation to a target audience for specific purposes.
6. Demonstrate an awareness of the oral communication process, including critical listening skills.

2.C.3 Credit and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.

MSUN Policy 407 Curriculum: Credit Hour Policy was developed in January 2013, reviewed and passed by the Academic Council, with input given by the Academic Senate in February 2013. Prior to Chancellor's Council reviewing and approving, it was placed on hold so one policy could be created for the four MSU campuses. The presidents of the four Faculty/Academic Senates were to meet to develop one policy to fit all four campuses. This project is still in progress. Therefore, MSUN took steps to approve a credit hour policy for its campus in August 2013. See [Policy 407 Curriculum: Credit Hour Policy](#) (Appendix JJ).

Policy 407 Credit Hour Policy was implemented in fall 2013 to ensure that credit hour assignments are accurate and reliable. However, prior to the policy, the Registrar monitored schedules each semester as courses were added. She would notify the Chair or Dean of the college to let them know of any discrepancies between the number of credits and the time the course was scheduled to meet. Below is the implementation plan used fall 2013.

- Registrar's Office will continue to monitor the credit hour assignments;
- Faculty will turn in course syllabi to their deans offices each semester;
- Academic deans will work with their chairs and directors to review course syllabi to ensure compliance with policy. Syllabi will need to reflect instructional time and out-of- class assignments meet the policy;
- Academic deans will meet with any faculty members who syllabi do not meet policy;

and
- Academic deans will submit a Credit Hour Report to provost by April 15th.

In the MSUN Catalog for undergraduate and graduate students, degrees are clearly defined in terms of requirements and number of hours required. In addition Program Sheets provide in a condensed format requirements for students. Program Sheets are required to be turned in when the student applies for graduation. The Registrar also accepts printouts of Degreeworks, signed and dated by the student's Advisor, attached to the graduation application. The student's Advisor and colleges' Deans are required to review documents and sign approval, if the student has completed the requirements. This is then turned into the Registrar's Office for official review. After the student has completed all the required courses the degree is award at the end of that academic semester.

MSUN's new degree audit software became available to students on March 14, 2013. Degreeworks is a web-based degree audit and tracking system helping students and academic advisors monitor progress toward degree completion. It also allows for advising notes and provides a place to create semester plans. Degreeworks provides a more accessible, convenient, and organized way for students to know where they are academically and how they can plan the rest of their college careers. New upgrades to the system provide planning for additional semesters' coursework.

2.C.4 *Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.*

Undergraduate and graduate degree requirements are found in the 2015-2016 academic catalog. In addition, Program Sheets are designed to give the student a sequenced format of courses to follow that builds upon prior learning. Program sheets are available for all degrees offered at MSU-Northern. They are updated in conjunction with the academic catalog. These forms are also required to be reviewed by the student, academic advisor, and College Chair prior to the student submitting his or her graduation application to the Registrar's Office.

Degreeworks, the web-based degree audit and tracking system, helps students and academic advisors monitor progress toward degree completion. It also allows for advising notes and provides a place to create semester plans. Degreeworks will help students to know where they are academically and how they can plan the rest of their college careers.

The College of Technical Sciences and College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing have advising sheets that are available for students and advisors. The advising sheets outline the courses students are required to take and the order in which they should take the classes. Advising sheets are available from the student's advisor.

Admissions requirements are published online on the Admissions website. Graduation requirements are listed in the catalog and Program Sheets used for graduation clearance for each certificate and degree programs can be located on the Registrar's website.

2.C.5 *Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.*

The development or revision of programming begins with faculty members working closely with their deans and chairs. Once a program is developed or revised, it is discussed and approved at a college-wide meeting and by the Dean and Chair. If the curricular change involves teacher education, it will also go to the Professional Education Unit for discussion and approval. Then the program proposal goes to the Academic Senate and its subcommittees for approval. Next, the proposal goes to the Provost and Chancellor for approval. The next level of approval comes from the BOR and NWCCU.

The Academic Senate's Bylaws (AppendixPP) states its purpose is "to assure the orderly development of educational policies, to facilitate communications and cooperation among officers of the administration and the faculty of the University; to promote and defend academic freedom and the unfettered exchange of ideas; to promote the stable and continued educational programs at Montana State University-Northern …" Two subcommittees of the Academic Senate—Curriculum and General Education—hold an important role in curricular revisions and development.

In the selection of new faculty members, existing faculty play a vital role. The CBA, Article 6.6 Hiring Procedure notes the right for faculty members to participate in the search process. The Provost requests from the federation president the names of three faculty members willing to serve on each search committee. Additionally, the chair of the college where the new faculty will reside is considered the chair of the search committee.

Within the Student Learning Assessment Plans (SLAPs), faculty members have listed student learning outcomes for each program. The SLAPs are currently housed on the Institutional Assessment intrasite. Deans and Chairs work with faculty members to make sure course syllabi have listed learning outcomes.

2.C.6 *Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.*

The library staff provides library instruction upon request of the faculty member for specific courses. These informative sessions are usually taught face-to-face in the library's lab or in the classroom. The library staff is working with interested faculty members to create instructional materials for use with Desire 2 Learn. Starting in 2012-2013, the librarians have been using the LibGuides software (from Springhare) to create instructional guides for use by students and faculty. These guides can be easily accessed from the library's home page or embedded into Desire 2 Learn course shells. The guides are designed to assist the student in determining appropriate (print or electronic) resources to use for research in that field.

To further integrate library and information resources into learning, MSUN opened in 2013 a Learning Success Center (LSC) in the library focusing on writing and math in addition to offering tutoring for identified high risk courses like Anatomy & Physiology. The Learning Success Center is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary effort whereby some College of Technical Sciences and College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing faculty are providing tutoring services and training tutors and course mentors or consultants. The Learning Success Center also provides testing services for students with disabilities. The LSC serves as a center for tests such as PRAXIS, Pearson, COMPASS, CLEP, MAT, and ASE. The LSC also proxies tests for students at other institutions.

2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.

The opportunity to earn college credit for what has been learned through life and work experiences is provided through the Learning Experience Assessment Program and administered according to MSUN administrative Policy 405 Learning Experience Assessment Program (Appendix QQ). While enrolled in the portfolio course (LEAP 289 for 1 credit), the student develops a formal, written document of professional quality following guidelines set forth in the *Portfolio Manual*. In LEAP 289, students are provided with guidance and advisement regarding how to provide documentation of their prior learning and how to compose the explanatory narrative accompanying the documentation. Using the provisions of the catalog in effect upon the student's entry into MSUN, the student may apply for credit by experience under the degree plan of the student's declared major. Credit will be limited to not more than 25% of the credits needed for a degree. No graduate credit can be obtained through the portfolio process.

Prior to submission of the portfolio document for assessment, the following are submitted to the appropriate MSUN office for evaluation: a) a declaration of major; b) relevant transcripts of all prior college work; c) certificate programs convertible to college credit; d) military or veteran credit evaluations and any other experience from which the student may receive college credit. This reduces difficulties associated with "double counting" credit, enhance student advising, and provide the portfolio assessment process with a more meaningful context for decision making and credit evaluation. Credit awarded by transfer or through other means will not be duplicated through the portfolio process.

After a student completes his or her LEAP portfolio, the College Chair /Dean send the documentation on to faculty in the discipline areas for which the student is requesting credit. Faculty members review the portfolio to assess the student's learning and breadth of knowledge as compared to their course learning outcomes and objectives. Faculty members

provide their responses to the College Dean or Chair. If the dean and chair are in agreement, the documentation must be approved by the provost. According to MSUN Policy 405 Learning Experience Assessment Program, (Appendix QQ) "Chairs/deans may approve assessors' recommendations or return the portfolio to them with a recommendation to alter the assessment." If students wish to appeal the assessors' or chair/dean's decision, the next step is the Admissions and Standards Committee (A&S). Students may appeal the decision of the A&S Committee to the provost, who has final decision.

2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.

MSU-Northern accepts all college and/or university courses from institutions accredited by regional association of schools and colleges as electives. Faculty members review their advisees' transfer work for equivalency. If the faculty member deems a class should be accepted in place of the MSU-Northern requirement, they are required to complete substitution/waiver form. In addition to the substitution/waiver form, the faculty member is required to attach a course syllabus, which is then reviewed by a member in the discipline of the class and dean/chair of the college. Once all signatures are completed, it is returned to the Registrar's Office for recording on the student's transcript.

If an institution was not accredited during the student's term of attendance, but accreditation has subsequently been granted by a regional association, the student may petition to have the credits accepted. If the institution was a candidate for accreditation at the time the transfer student took classes, credits will be granted after the student has successfully completed 20 semester credits at MSUN. Credits will be granted for college level continuing education, correspondence and extension courses successfully completed at regionally accredited institutions.

Approximately 150 students transfer to Montana State University-Northern each year. If students are transferring from the Montana University System, acceptance of the general education credit process is guided by BOR Policy 301.10 General Education Transfer Policy; Montana University System. Additionally, MSUN follows BOR Policy 301.5 Transfer of Credits; MUS and Community Colleges. This policy notes:

> All college level courses from regionally accredited institutions of higher education will be received and applied by all campuses of the Montana University System (MUS), and by the community colleges, towards the free elective requirements of the associate and baccalaureate degrees.

International coursework must be evaluated by a professional transcript-evaluating agent,

designated by the Office of Admissions, or by other means approved by University policy. Credits may be granted for military service and for completed military service schools based on the recommendations of ACE Guidelines and MSUN Policy 405 Learning Experience Assessment Program (Appendix QQ). Credits may be granted for education received from non- collegiate institutions on the basis of recommendations published by the American Council on Education.

Articulation agreements are prepared by faculty members in conjunction with schools that share MSU-Northern's vision for students to receive a bachelor's degree. Transfer work will be evaluated based on the transfer articulation agreement. All articulation agreements can be found on the Registrar's website. Examples of transfer articulation agreements are found in Appendix RR.

Over the past several years, the colleges and universities in Montana have engaged in a system- wide examination of coursework in order to facilitate a smoother transition for students. This project was named Common Course Numbering (CCN) and information is located on OCHE website. The following information is excerpted from that page:

In 2004, the Montana Legislature completed a Legislative Performance Audit of transferability among the campuses of the Montana University System (MUS). This audit identified patterns of problems experienced by students seeking to transfer credits from one campus to another and concluded that the MUS had failed to provide students with a reasonable level of "transparency and predictability" about transfer of courses and credits. Three years later, the 2007 Montana Legislature funded a request from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) to provide staff and operating resources to comprehensively review all undergraduate courses in order to identify courses that will transfer as equivalents.

The decision to change course labels—the "common-course numbering" project—represented OCHE's tactic to provide the kind of "transparency and predictability" that the Legislature had found lacking. Under common-course numbering, any course determined by faculty to be equivalent to any other course must have the same prefix, number, title and learning outcomes. This required institutions to adopt a new set of course labels and learning outcomes.

At this point, all undergraduate coursework, including general education, has gone through the CCN process. The Operational Guidelines for the CCN process can be located on the OCHE website. Typically, the OCHE CCN Manager sends out course descriptions to the campus liaison, who then distributes the course description to the appropriate administrators, who send notices to their faculty. The course is evaluated, with a report back to the liaison regarding whether the institution has an equivalent course. With the CCN project, students in the Montana University System (MUS) can transfer seamlessly among its institutions.

Students may utilize the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) any course in General Education and for which CLEP testing is available. At MSUN, students most commonly attempt to CLEP Math and English courses. Also, students may take the AP Exam in Math and English.

Students who wish to transfer to MSU-Northern may consult a main webpage off the Admissions website for admission requirements. The Registrar's Office website identifies all the institutions in Montana and the region in which we have articulation agreements. For specific information regarding course transfers and/equivalencies, students can use the MSU-Northern Online Transfer Course Equivalency Guide.

Undergraduate Programs

2.C.9 The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.

The general education core is the foundation for every degree program, developing areas of appreciation not necessarily provided in the specialized areas of the major. Furthermore, the core provides a sense of the interrelationship between the various disciplines. Above all, the general education core instills the tools and knowledge necessary for a productive life of work, personal growth and for active, literate participation in today's technological society. Students must meet the program requirements as specified for either a baccalaureate, associate, or associate of applied science degree (2015-16 Catalog).

The general education core consists of seven academic categories: communication, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences/history, cultural diversity, fine arts/humanities and technology. All students seeking an associate of arts, associate of science, or bachelor's degree at Montana State University-Northern are required to fulfill course work within each of the seven academic categories. Each category offers options for students to choose from, in order to complete the credit requirements for each of the categories. Each category also has a specific list of learning outcomes that students are expected to demonstrate upon successful completion of the required course(s) within each category. All associate, applied associate, or bachelor's degrees requires 33 semester hours of course work. See Table 36, Montana State University-Northern General Education Core below.

Table 16.
Montana State University – Northern General Education Core

Seven Categories of the General Education Core and Credits Required	
Discipline Area	Minimum Required
CAT I: Communication	6 credits
CAT II: Mathematics	3 credits
CAT III: Natural Science (with lab)	6 credits
CAT IV: Social Science/History	6 credits
CAT V: Cultural Diversity	3 credits
CAT VI: Humanities and Fine Arts	6 credits

| CAT VII: Technology | 3 credits |

2.C.10 The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.

Montana State University-Northern is required by the Northwest Commission on College and Universities to assess student learning in general education and in the academic majors. Effective teaching and learning are essential to meeting our long-held goal of producing responsible, well-prepared citizens and leaders in their professions. Our program of student outcome assessment has been implemented to ensure that we continually evaluate and improve the teaching and learning process for the programs supporting that process.

The purpose of general education core courses is to ensure a wide-ranging general education regardless of each student's major or area of study. As such, the general education core curriculum forms a significant part of every degree program. It develops areas of appreciation not necessarily provided for in specialized areas of a major, and provides a sense of interrelatedness between various disciplines. Above all, the general education core makes available to students the tools and awareness necessary for lifelong learning and for active, literate participation in today's technological society. The general education core allows students to reaffirm their common experiences, common goals and common problems.

General Education Core Curriculum is linked to MSU-Northern Core Theme 1 and Core Theme 2. To that end, MSU-Northern uses student outcomes assessment proactively as a means to keep teaching and learning vital, contemporary and grounded. A review of the learning outcomes and assessment activities currently in use, is occurring. A General Education Task Force was created in 2014-2015; this task force developed an action plan for addressing assessment as well as engaging core faculty and students in the assessment process. Evaluation of Performance Indicators occurs in various ways at the institutional level. General education courses and outcomes are evaluated by the General Education Committee, Academic Senate, faculty, administrators and student service personnel.

Our seven University-level General Education Categories and integrated learning outcomes, developed in 2005, broadly describe expected and desired effects of learning through general education courses. All students seeking an associate of arts, associate of science, or bachelor's degree at MSU-Northern are required to fulfill coursework within each of the seven General Education Categories as listed below (Table 7) and accessed electronically in the 2015-2016 Catalog.

Most recently, changes in the General Education core curriculum included new outcomes for the Humanities/Creative Arts category, a reduction in the number of courses offered through the curriculum, the development of an online evaluation system implemented through the Institutional Assessment Intranet, and the implementation of the ETS (Education Testing System) Proficiency Profile as a requirement for students enrolled in capstone courses from four program areas (Spring and Fall 2015).

Table 17.
Montana State University – Northern General Education Core

Seven Categories of the General Education Core and Credits Required	
Discipline Area	Minimum Required
CAT I: Communication	6 credits
CAT II: Mathematics	3 credits
CAT III: Natural Science (with lab)	6 credits
CAT IV: Social Science/History	6 credits
CAT V: Cultural Diversity	3 credits
CAT VI: Humanities and Fine Arts	6 credits
CAT VII: Technology	3 credits
Total General Education Core Credits	33 credits

Previous Assessment Tools

The general education assessment methodology that has been used previously centered on a data collection system housed on an internal website and based on learner outcomes identified for each general education subject category (Catalog). Faculty associated with core curricula were responsible for locating the website and inputting data. Clear directions and workshops to illustrate this process were not implemented and resulted in less than optimum participation. Some faculty did participate in the process and a brief assessment of this information occurred, but was not included in the previous report to NWCCU. Data from the intranet system are provided in Appendix SS with lower than acceptable response rates of 14% and 17% for the respective years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). In fall semester 2015 the chair of the general education system developed a web-based general education system that was implemented at the end of spring 2016 semester. Evaluation of this system will take place in fall 2015. In addition, the Task Stream assessment system that is being implemented has the capability of including general education assessments and these will be tried out. The evaluation of the web-based system and Task Stream will take place in AY 2016-2017.

Revised and Newly Implemented Assessment Tools
Disappointment in previous tools and their implementation has given rise to an improved assessment process for general education. In addition to designation of personnel and a firm schedule, three separate assessment tools are involved in MSU-Northern's new general education core assessment. These are:

Revised Collection of Assessment Data
Faculty complete a general education assessment based on learner outcomes for a category using the original general education assessment system tool until a new system can be developed. Currently, instruction information for the system is provided to faculty and those versed in the system are aiding others to complete assessments in a timely fashion. After development of a new system, the general education academic senate committee and general education faculty must agree to its use. The new faculty input tool must be easy to use and readily produce data used for evaluation. Faculty are involved in its development and implementation includes workshops and professional development opportunities.

Education Testing Service (ETS) Proficiency Profile
The use of this standard tool was implemented in capstone courses for each discipline initially. Data collection from these courses allow generation of a baseline from which objectives are developed. Results from this assessment tool has been shared with designated personnel and the general education committee for analysis, evaluation, reflection and assessment of future directions. In the spring 2015 semester, the first use of this tool was undertaken with fifteen students taking this exam in four different capstone courses. Overall, MSU-Northern students performed above national proficiency averages in Level 1 for the three dimensions tested (Reading, Writing and Math). MSU-Northern students scored 66.7, 73.3, and 80.0% at Level 1 compared to national rates of 58, 55, and 43% proficiency in the reading, writing and math dimensions. Additionally, MSU-Northern had fewer student scores rated as "not proficient" for all dimensions and at all levels. Please review all scores as well as descriptions of skills tests at each level in Appendix TT.

Specific Course Projects
The final tool is the development of a distinctive course project used as an assessment tool in a capstone course. This project also serves as a submission to a general education category faculty committee that evaluates the project using the rubric developed for that category. Each category-specific faculty committee analyzes the data they collect for submission and present it, along with a summary, to the larger general education committee.

Designated Personnel and Action Plans
The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Education, and Nursing oversees collection of general education assessment data. While some general education coursework is taught by faculty of the College of Technical Sciences, it is important to centralize responsibility for overseeing general education assessment to one university office.

In consultation with appropriate disciplinary faculty, the Dean is responsible for the completion of data analysis in addition to working with faculty to develop action plans for improvement of the program. Action plans may take many forms, including a:

- Recommendation to continue current practices,
- Call for additional assessment measures, and,
- Proposal for curricular change.

In fall 2015, the Dean of the College of Education, Arts and Sciences and Nursing reported the findings of the ETS testing to the General Education Committee. The chair of the General Education Committee wrote a summary report of the general education assessments that had been utilized. The committee reviewed it and approved it. It was then forwarded to the Academic Senate (Appendix G).

In some cases, e.g., curricular proposals, the path from recommendation to implementation is guided by existing University policies. However, because any plan for improvement is likely to impact all academic programs and require cross campus support for successful implementation, it is important that full faculty enjoy an opportunity to review and discuss any action plan

recommendation. The action plan is reported to the full faculty, forwarded to the General Education committee for its recommendation, and simultaneously forwarded to the Provost. To insure careful and timely consideration, a strict timetable for development and review of an action plan is important. For this reason, a one year cycle (beginning in the fall of consecutive years) results in an implementation report by the Provost during fall semester orientation in the following year.

STANDARDIZATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTIONS

Over the previous two years, efforts driven by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education have focused on the adoption of a common course numbering system. One result of these efforts has been the state-wide reassessment of learning outcomes for General Education courses. Concerted efforts at MSU-Northern to ensure reassessment of learning outcomes on published syllabi continue. Standardization across multiple sections of General Education courses is occurring through the utilization of standard course syllabi that include clearly presented specific learning objectives for each course. For example, in academic year 2014-2015, faculty teaching CAPP 120: Introduction to Computers implemented a Common Syllabus, Common Exams, and Common Grading Rubrics. In 2015-2016, faculty are changing the textbook to better align course content with the course description and General Education CAT VII: Technology.

The manner in which course content is delivered, evaluated and graded is, of course, a matter of individual academic freedom, but expectations of overall objectives have been established as part of the General Education categories established at the University.

REVISION OF EXISTING LEARNING OUTCOMES

MSU-Northern will revise no more than two of the seven categories in our general education program each year. Faculty teaching general education core courses in Category III (Natural Sciences) have already begun this process by evaluating and revising learning outcomes. New learning outcomes have been developed and are currently working their way through the approval process. As noted in the Natural Science General Education course assessment rubric, a broader range of tools are employed to evaluate student success and these scaffold across the four defined outcomes. Tools include oral presentations, expression of and implementation of the scientific method, and the presentation of formal lab reports or manuscripts. Additionally, course grades are not used for evaluation of Natural Science general education courses, but rather student development of an array of skills and knowledge as they progress across each course.

Assessment is also occurring outside General Education courses, using capstone or other final program experiences to quantify the success of students in these programs to demonstrate published learning outcomes. For example, an analysis of course papers in the Nursing Leadership and Management Course indicated that:

- 85% of students stated that learning statistics was helpful as an indicator to determine statistical significance,
- 81% of students stated that courses in technology are valuable for nurses,
- 88% of the students stated that cultural diversity enhanced public interactions in their

current practice, and

- 96% exhibited satisfactory writing skills as evidenced in the presentation of capstone papers.

ADDITIONAL STEPS TAKEN

Faculty in specific programs have undertaken steps to develop targeted general education assessment tools for use in identified classes. Faculty in business, for example, implemented adapted Living Room Conversations as part of the pedagogy to teach diversity in BGEN 360: International Business, a course within General Education CAT V: Culture Diversity. Assessment results of this method have been reported, and its use and evaluation continues. In addition, academic year 2014-2015 also saw faculty in the business program developing and implementing a Team Assessment Form in BGEN 110: Applied Business Leadership. Two team projects, each with a goal and presentation component, were integrated into the course design. Students are assessed on communication and creative thinking skills as well as participation and presentation skills. Similarly, science faculty are assessing manuscript writing and scientific presentation skills in BIOB 160: Principles of Living Systems as well as report writing in courses that target aspiring health professionals (e.g., Human Anatomy and Physiology).

Montana State University received a round 3 TAACCCT grant through the United States Government Department of Labor. Thirteen two-year colleges in Montana (SWAMMEI) received a $25 million grant and MSU-Northern's portion was $1.7 million. The grant runs for three years from its initial award date of October 1, 2013. The focus of this grant is to "initiate or enhance implementation of (the) Emporium math model or associated strategies of developmental math delivery." Through this funding a newly hired math tutor holds office hours and tutoring sessions in the Learning Success Center, was "embedded" in diesel courses to facilitate application of mathematics in class, and provided assistance to faculty members teaching math courses. An evaluation by math faculty on the effectiveness of extra tutoring contributes to general education assessment models. Recently, the Montana University System received a grant that focuses on making mathematics accessible to all and eliminating the "gate-keeper" status that failure of completing the general education mathematics class has on the successful completion of degrees.

A Writer's Café component was added in the Learning Success Center to build student writing skills. A writing consultant is now available to all Northern students several hours daily, plus the consultant is "embedded" in two classes as a pilot study. The embedded consultant provides brief lessons directly focused on class writing assignments and also met privately with students at the Café to guide progress. Additionally, the use of standardized templates for writing assignments has been implemented for some programs.

The Education program uses a number of requirements for admission into the program. One of those requirements is the taking of the Core Skills exam by ETS. This exam consists of reading, writing and math components. Students must score above a set score in order to meet this requirement for admission. The Education program faculty found that a portion of the students were having difficulty passing. To facilitate remediation of these students, the Education faculty developed courses that addressed the weaknesses of these students.

In review of previous practices, MSU-Northern has recognized that unacceptable delays in data gathering, unclear analysis plans, and weak development and implementation of an action plan has occurred. To remedy these problems, MSU-Northern has resolved to implement the following schedule:

- Collection of general education assessment data on a biannual schedule that represents the conclusion of each academic semester,
- Analysis of data completed by the end of each academic year,
- Compilation and reflection summarized prior to the beginning of the following academic year,
- Presentation of the previous year's summary by the provost to all faculty at the fall semester opening meeting, and,
- Posting of yearly summaries on the institutional website by the start of fall semester classes.

2.C.11 *The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas.*

All majors and certificates at Montana State University-Northern have identified student learning outcomes. The Montana University System (MUS) has the Common Course Numbering (CCN) system, where all existing courses no matter on what campus taught has to have the same prefix number, title, and student learning outcomes. Therefore all courses in the MUS Course Bank, including MSUN courses, have learning outcomes. The Provost acts as the CCN Liaison for MSUN, and all liaisons meet monthly to review any new proposed courses. Any courses deemed unique (meaning no other campus has it) is allowed to determine its number, title and learning outcomes. The unique course is then added to the CCN MUS data base. If a proposed course is similar to courses on other campuses, then faculty on those campuses have to meet and collectively determine a prefix, number, title, and learning outcomes.

The general education courses at MSUN are guided by the MUS Transfer Core system. The Montana University System Core (MUS Core), described in BOR Policy 301.10-General Education Transfer Policy; Montana University System, represents a transfer agreement among community, tribal, and publicly-funded colleges and universities in the State of Montana. It assures the transfer of up to 30 lower-division semester credits for those students enrolled in courses approved within each of the following six areas: Natural Science, 6 credits; Social Sciences/History, 6 credits; Mathematics, 3 credits; Communication, 6 credits; Humanities/Fine Arts, 6 credits; and Cultural Diversity, 3 credits for a 30 credit core.

Program courses are taught by qualified faculty or staff members who have education and experience in the discipline area they are teaching. See Table 18 Faculty and Staff by number and degree below.

Table 18.
Faculty and Staff by number and degree

Number of Faculty and Staff by Highest Degree Earned							
Rank	Full Time	Part Time	Licensure	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Specialist	Doctorate
Professor	15	0	0	0	0	6	0	9
Associate Professor	10	0	0	0	1	6	0	4
Assistant Professor	23	0	0	0	4	14	0	5
Instructor	9	0	2	0	5	2	0	0
Research Staff	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
No Rank	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	57	32	0	0	10	28	0	20

Graduate Programs

2.C.12 *Graduate programs are consistent with the institution's mission; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. They differ from undergraduate programs by requiring greater depth of study and increased demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.*

In keeping with the university mission as a teaching institution, MSUN has two graduate programs: Counselor Education and Instruction and Learning, which are housed in the College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing. The graduate programs, often referred to as "Advanced Programs," are regarded as separate from "Initial Programs," in that they require students to formulate their positions in relation to their research, and demonstrate a greater depth of understanding than normally required of undergraduate students.

According to Counselor Education, its mission statement is, "The Counselor Education Program prepares counselors who have developed sound practical skills through experiential learning; who have acquired a comprehensive theoretical knowledge base; who hold a strong counselor identity; and who possess the personal dispositions necessary to work in various professional settings with diverse clientele."

The Instruction and Learning mission statement emphasizes that the program "prepares candidates who are engaged in instruction to develop strong instructional skills to support the learning of all learners in a variety of learning environments. These candidates will have acquired a comprehensive theoretical knowledge base and hold a strong commitment to improving instruction for all learners. In addition, graduate candidates will possess the personal dispositions necessary to work in various professional learning settings to diverse learners."

Topics relating to curriculum, programming, etc., are initiated by faculty, then are presented to Graduate Council, and next to the Professional Education Unit, or PEU, for discussion and approval. The Graduate Council's function, according to University by-laws, is "to promote, review, and evaluate graduate programs including requests for new programs, deletions of programs and curricular changes in existing programs; to review and implement policies and procedures for graduate programs; to consider issues raised by graduate students relating to policies of a specific graduate program or their welfare; and to decide on other substantive matters relating to graduate programs and forward all decisions to the Academic Senate for consideration and approval." This committee is under the purview of the Academic Senate and is comprised of one representative from each graduate program selected by the faculty teaching in those programs, two at large representatives from each college (the College of Technical Sciences and the College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing) with an earned doctorate, the Chair of COTS, and the Chair of CEASN. The Provost and Deans of the College are *ex officio* members of the Council. The Council meets monthly.

The Professional Education Unit's "primary duty … is to establish excellence in professional education at the University subject to the *Policies of the Board of Regents* and the *Bylaws of the Academic Senate.*" The PEU Committee, among other duties, has the responsibility of "adopt[ing] resolutions on matters of concern," "recommend[ing] actions to appropriate institutional governance structures," "initiat[ing] proposals on matters relevant to professional education and … review[ing] and mak[ing] recommendations on such proposals that may be initiated by others." The Provost chairs this committee, which meets monthly, and is required to meet at least once every fall and spring semester. The membership of the PEU includes all initial program education faculty, advanced program education faculty, and content area faculty that instruct students in the secondary education content areas.

Both graduate programs have been developed to meet the public schools' needs in North Central Montana and the Hi-Line. For example, the Instruction and Learning program delivery method is unique—most work can be accomplished online, with four required weekend residencies every semester. This approach allows students to work full time while working on their degrees and aligns with the University's mission statement of educating a diverse student population.

2.C.13 Graduate admission and retention policies ensure that student qualifications and expectations are compatible with the institution's mission and the program's requirements. Transfer of credit is evaluated according to clearly defined policies by faculty with a major
commitment to graduate education or by a representative body of faculty responsible for the degree program at the receiving institution.

The first step for students applying to the Counselor Education program is to be admitted to MSUN through the Admission Office. Next, students need to successfully complete the program Admission Scorecard, which includes the following criteria:

- Students' undergraduate GPA of 3.00 or higher;
- MAT/GRE admission exam score of 380 required;

- Three letters of recommendation;
- Resume; and
- Background check.

At this point, students are regarded as unmatriculated graduate students. After they complete their first semester's courses with satisfactory grades and submit a personal reflection essay which is assessed according to an essay rubric, as well as successfully pass a Disposition Assessment conducted by faculty, students are admitted into the Counselor Education program.

The first step for students applying to the [Instruction and Learning](#) program is to be admitted to MSUN through the Admission Office. For the Instruction and Learning program, students are required to complete the Admission Scorecard, which assesses the following criteria:

- GPA in undergraduate degree or a 3.00 or cumulative master's work of 6 credits or more at a 3.00;
- MAT or GRE admission exam score of 380 required;
- Three recommendation letters or recommendation forms;
- A letter of interest;
- A complete resume; and
- A telephone interview.

Then, a second step allowing students to acquire matriculated status in the instruction and learning program includes the successful completion of EDUC 548, EDUC 523 (B or better), and a sufficient Disposition Assessment by faculty.

2.C.14 Graduate credit may be granted for internships, field experiences, and clinical practices that are an integral part of the graduate degree program. Credit toward graduate degrees may not be granted for experiential learning that occurred prior to matriculation into the graduate degree program. Unless the institution structures the graduate learning experience, monitors that learning, and assesses learning achievements, graduate credit is not granted for learning experiences external to the students' formal graduate programs.

The Counselor Education program requires the student to complete a sixty (60) semester hour program of study, including twelve (12) credits of Counseling Internship (CNSL 564-65 for school counseling and CNSL 566-67 for mental health counseling) for degree completion. Counselor education graduates pursuing licensure in the State of Montana as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) are required to apply to the state licensing board as a License-eligible Counselor and complete additional post-graduate supervised hours and pass the National Counseling Exam (NCE). School Counseling graduates are required to pass the PRAXIS II exam for school counselors and receive an institutional recommendation by the University's certifying officer for an educator's license as a school counselor (Class 6).

Graduate faculty members prepare students for their internships and approve their application to internship and placement at appropriate clinical sites. Program faculty supervise students' progress throughout the program, including formal mid-term and final evaluations. During

internship, program faculty meet weekly for 1.5 hours in group supervision meetings throughout the two semesters of internship.

2.C.15 *Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research, professional practice, scholarship, or artistic creation are characterized by a high level of expertise, originality, and critical analysis. Programs intended to prepare students for artistic creation are directed toward developing personal expressions of original concepts, interpretations, imagination, thoughts, or feelings. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research or scholarship are directed toward advancing the frontiers of knowledge by constructing and/or revising theories and creating or applying knowledge. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for professional practice are directed toward developing high levels of knowledge and performance skills directly related to effective practice within the profession.*

Montana State University-Northern, a teaching institution, has two graduate programs: Counselor Education (Master of Education) and Instruction & Learning (Master of Science). Both graduate programs have a focus on preparing students for professional practice. Therefore, courses and clinical field experiences (for Counselor Education students) are designed to give students the opportunity to develop high levels of performance skills and a strong knowledge base. Counselor Education graduate students completing master's degrees are prepared to obtain employment in the profession of counseling (schools or mental health) and possess the knowledge, skills and dispositions demonstrated in effective best practices. Most graduates from the Instruction and Learning master's degree are already employed and this degree allows them to apply for advancement or to be placed in a higher pay-scale bracket.

The Instruction & Learning program prepares candidates to improve instruction and therefore learning of others in a variety of professional education environments. The program is designed and aligned to five skill areas including theory/practice, assessment, critical thinking, diversity, and technology. The coursework culminates in a final action research project, whereby students engage in research conducted in the context of their professional educational environments.

Instruction and Learning students prepare their Action Research Proposals while taking their coursework. Once the proposal is completed, they are submitted to Institutional Review Board committee for review. This project must be approved by the candidate's academic advisor, district school administration, etc. The Action Research Project is evaluated by graduate faculty according to a pass/fail system in terms of how the project demonstrates the candidate's theoretical and practical knowledge and competence.

The Counselor Education program prepares reflective-practitioners who demonstrate the best practices of the field and provides graduates with the academic preparation to gain professional licenses in school counseling and mental health (community/agency) counseling. The program is designed to meet the academic requirements for the Montana Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and the Montana Office of Public Instruction School Counseling license. In addition to the content-based assessments and satisfactory completion of individual and group/team projects each semester, student progress is reviewed at four checkpoints: (1) full-admission to the program (end of 2nd semester), (2) at completion of the practicum semester and application for internship (7th semester)m (3) at mid-internship and

completion of internship; finally, (4) recommendation for graduation consists of successful presentation of exit portfolio and interview which includes a portfolio including an exit video demonstrating their counseling skills, a self-evaluation addressing their skills as Reflective Practitioners, and evaluations from site supervisors.

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

2.C.16 *Credit and non-credit continuing education programs and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals.*

Extended University supports the mission and core themes of MSU-Northern by collaborating with internal academic and support departments and external partners to provide flexible, accessible, and quality learning opportunities in liberal arts, professional and technical programs. Extended University strives to ensure that these opportunities are responsive to the lifelong learning needs of diverse populations and to the changing economic development needs of the communities MSU-Northern serves. Extended University utilizes a wide variety of traditional and technology-facilitated delivery systems to provide both credit and non-credit bearing courses both on and off campus in order to link the academic resources of the university to the needs of the individuals and communities MSU-Northern serves.

To achieve its mission, Extended University manages or facilitates the following:

Continuing Education

Each semester, Extended University offers a wide variety of credit-bearing continuing education workshops for K-12 teacher recertification. These workshops include both face-to-face and computer-based (Virtual Education Software, Inc.) courses. Extended University offers a variety of non-credit workshops for other vocations and professions as well, including customized training in automotive, diesel, agricultural mechanics, welding, and low pressure steam boilers. All of these continuing education programs serve to provide liberal arts, professional, and technical learning opportunities to diverse populations at their point of need throughout a large rural region of Montana. These programs foster numerous partnerships with external entities, including numerous school districts and two regional curriculum consortia (Golden Triangle Curriculum Consortium and Montana North Central Educational Service Region), the Montana Department of Transportation, and many other organizations. To ensure that continuing education courses are compatible with the institutional mission and core themes, course proposals are reviewed by the appropriate college's chair and dean, as well as the provost.

Online Learning

Extended University facilitates the delivery of nine online degree programs at the associate's (program of study in business, and program of study in general education), bachelor's (business administration, business technology, community leadership, criminal justice, trades management, and RN to BSN completion), and master's levels (instruction and learning), as well as a variety of supporting minors and broad general education coursework, primarily via the Desire2Learn platform. To ensure that online programs are

compatible with the institutional [mission](#) and core themes, they must be initiated by program faculty and reviewed and approved by the corresponding college, as well as the Academic Senate, provost, and chancellor, before being forwarded to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and Montana Board of Regents for final approval. Online learning programs serve to provide primarily professional learning opportunities to diverse populations, including non-traditional students with families and full-time jobs, throughout the state of Montana. The accessibility of online learning programs also fosters broader development of partnerships with external entities, including the many businesses, non-profit organizations, health care organizations, schools, and government agencies which currently employ and/or seek to hire MSU-Northern graduates.

Summer Session

Extended University coordinates and facilitates the delivery of MSU-Northern's summer session course offerings. Summer session coursework provides both professional and technical program opportunities, primarily focusing on education (undergraduate and graduate), nursing (baccalaureate), diesel, and business, with a variety of supporting liberal arts/general education coursework. For these programs, summer serves as a "third semester" which both enables students to complete their degrees more quickly and enables the institution to maximize its capacity to serve students in these high enrollment programs. Summer session also serves as an opportunity for in-service teachers to earn credits towards renewal of their licensure, and two popular education minors leading to specialized endorsements, reading specialist and traffic safety education, are offered entirely in the summer to serve these working professionals. To ensure that summer programs are compatible with the institutional [mission](#) and core themes, Extended University issues a call for course offerings to program faculty and works closely with college chairs to develop the course schedules. These schedules are also reviewed and approved by the corresponding college deans and the provost.

Traffic Safety Education

Since the traffic safety education minor is offered only during the summer, in order to serve the primary market of in-service teachers, this professional education program is coordinated by the Dean of Extended University in collaboration with chair and dean of the College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing. MSU-Northern is the only institution in Montana that offers the traffic safety education minor/endorsement, and works closely with the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Montana Traffic Education Association, and local education agencies regarding the curriculum and the endorsement of teachers. An agreement with the local school district has created a satellite traffic education program in the summer which enables MSU-Northern's students to complete field experiences with certified traffic educators using novice drivers from the region. In order to increase accessibility of this program throughout the state of Montana, this program was recently approved for and is being converted to primarily online delivery of coursework. A face-to-face behind-the-wheel skills development course is still required, and additional face-to-face elective courses focusing on advanced driving skills will also continue to be available.

Outreach Sites in Great Falls and Lewistown

In order to better serve the diverse populations of MSU-Northern's service region and make educational opportunities more accessible, Extended University facilitates the delivery of face-to-face coursework at branch campuses in Lewistown and Great Falls. The Lewistown campus offers professional and liberal arts education, primarily pre-nursing and nursing coursework, along with general education coursework which can also be applied towards the associate of arts degree with a program of study in general education. Program delivery at the Lewistown campus has fostered external partnerships with both the non-profit Educational Opportunities for Central Montana and the local school district. The Great Falls campus offers professional education, primarily elementary education and business coursework. Programs in Great Falls are offered in collaboration with Great Falls College MSU, which provides lower division coursework, and several regional school districts. Extended University provides technical support for both faculty and students at the outreach sites for the delivery of supplemental coursework, primarily liberal arts/general education courses, online and via interactive television.

Montana Environmental Training Center (METC)

The Montana Environmental Training Center (METC) provides technical learning opportunities in the fields of water and wastewater treatment to diverse populations at their point of need throughout the state of Montana. METC provides both initial certification training and renewal unit training for water and wastewater operators, managers, and other environmental and public health professionals. To ensure that METC training is consistent with the institutional mission and core themes, the center exists under a memorandum of agreement with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality which must be signed by the chancellor. METC is also managed by a steering committee which includes two MSU-Northern faculty teaching in the water quality degree program (along with two members from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and one elected at-large member, such as a water/wastewater training director, wastewater system operator, wastewater system superintendent, or rural utility management specialist). METC has fostered numerous partnerships with external entities, besides the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, American Backflow Prevention Association, Rural Community Assistance Corporation, Rural and Tribal Environmental Solutions, American Waterworks Association, Montana Water Environment Association, Montana Rural Water Systems, and many others. A diverse group representing small and large water and wastewater system operators, rural technical assistance programs, educational institutions, engineers, sanitarians, and the state water and wastewater certification program also make up an advisory committee which meets annually to review METC activities and offer recommendations for training, dates, and locations. METC is hosted at MSU-Northern because of the institution's past and pending water quality degree offerings and expert faculty. When the associate's and bachelor's degree programs in water quality at MSU-Northern were recently terminated due to low enrollment (the water and wastewater operator field has experienced stagnant wages, and as a result difficulty filling vacant positions and reduced educational requirements prior to employment), the steering and advisory committees supported the delivery of certificates in water treatment, water distribution, wastewater collection, and wastewater treatment.

These certificate proposals, which are currently pending Board of Regents approval, will be delivered in an innovative collaboration between METC, Extended University, and the College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing through a combination of online courses and onsite workshops. These certificates are designed to ensure high quality training continues to be available, and accessible, to Montana's water and wastewater operators.

Montana Motorcycle Rider Safety Program (MMRS)

The Montana Motorcycle Rider Safety (MMRS) program provides accessible technical learning opportunities, specifically motorcycle safety training, to a diverse population of students by offering three skill levels of courses, basic, experienced, and advanced, at nine training courses across the state of Montana. These courses are taught by rider coaches who are certified by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. To ensure that MMRS is consistent with the institutional mission and goals, the organization was established under the Montana Board of Regents via Montana Code Annotated 20-25-1004. The Montana Board of Regents in turn placed the program under the authority of MSU-Northern's Extended University via Item 103-2801-R0599. MMRS is specifically compatible with MSU-Northern's mission and core themes because it aligns with the institution's traffic safety education program, which is likewise coordinated by Extended University. MMRS has an advisory committee consisting of the program director and five members, including a peace officer appointed by the governor, one certified instructor appointed by the Board of Regents, two riders representing motorcycle riding groups such as the American Motorcycle Association (AMA) or American Bikers Aiming Toward Education (ABATE) nominated by these groups and appointed by the governor, and one representative of the Department of Justice appointed by the Attorney General. In addition, MMRS has fostered numerous partnerships with external entities, including State Motorcycle Safety Administrators, Montana Office of Public Instruction, Montana Department of Justice, Montana Department of Transportation, Motorcycle Safety Foundation, Malmstrom Air Force Base, nine training site hosts around the state (e.g., Expo Park, Flathead Valley Community College, Helena Airport, Rimrock Auto Repair, etc.), numerous motorcycle dealerships around the state (e.g., Tingley's Suzuki, Penco, Leland, Sports City, etc.), and regional chapters of numerous motorcycle riders clubs around the state (e.g., BMW Club, Harley Owners Group, Goldwing, etc.).

2.C.17 The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses. Continuing education and/or special learning activities, programs, or courses offered for academic credit
are approved by the appropriate institutional body, monitored through established procedures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and assessed with regard to student achievement. Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution's continuing education and special learning activities.

MSU-Northern maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses via the clearly defined

roles and responsibilities imposed by its governance structure, policies, and procedures. Extended University is a unit of Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Extended University reports to the Provost and is a member of the Deans' Council. All activities associated with Extended University are undertaken within this context. The Dean of Extended University works collaboratively with the Dean and Chair of the College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing, the Dean and Chair of the College of Technical Sciences, and the Provost in order to ensure the academic quality and integrity of all aspects of MSU-Northern's continuing education and special learning programs and courses. These programs and courses follow established MSU-Northern policies and procedures for academic oversight. Continuing education, credit programs are further governed by Montana Board of Regents Policy 304.1– Continuing Education; Credit Programs (Appendix VV).

The granting of credit for specialty program offerings is based upon MSU-Northern's general academic curriculum policies, which are consistently applied throughout the institution wherever courses are located and however delivered. Continuing education offerings through Extended University are primarily one-time special topics courses offered for university credit, typically by adjunct faculty. In addition to the Dean of Extended University, all continuing education courses must be reviewed and approved by the Chair and Dean of the appropriate college, corresponding faculty as they deem necessary and appropriate, and the Provost. Continuing education course proposals must include both the curriculum vitae of the potential instructor and a proposed syllabus outlining student learning outcomes and associated assessments of student achievement. Adjunct faculty credentials are reviewed and approved by the appropriate college Chair and Dean and Provost. Extended University openly invites faculty participation in planning and evaluation of continuing education courses via a blog summarizing all continuing education course proposals. Full course proposals and instructor credentials are available to faculty upon request. These procedures ensure that all continuing education and special learning programs and courses and instructors have the complete approval of the academic unit. In all cases, the standards and quality controls for content and instructor qualifications are under the purview of the appropriate college.

All credit bearing continuing education courses are evaluated using the same processes as all other existing, traditional courses within the MSU-Northern curriculum. Course and instructor evaluations, for example, are conducted each semester using the same form as for traditional course offerings and records are archived by Extended University. Course and instructor evaluations are regularly reviewed by the Dean of Extended University and shared with instructors. Results of course and instructor evaluations are used to monitor and when necessary improve the quality of courses and instruction, including content, materials, student learning outcomes, instruction, delivery method, etc.

All administration related to the academic and fiscal elements of continuing education courses are provided by the same offices that service traditional campus programs. Admission, registration, transcript of credit, grading and other components are handled through the main University student information system (Banner). These processes ensure the larger University community oversees all continuing education and alternate delivery offerings and holds Extended University to the same standards, policies, and procedures as traditional, on-campus offerings. Again, these processes ensure that the courses offered through the specialty

programs are of the same high caliber as all other MSU-Northern courses.

Apart from continuing education, all courses taught in non-traditional formats (online, summer, outreach sites, etc.) are derived from corresponding existing, traditional courses in the MSU-Northern curriculum which have already been approved and are part of a regular, on-going campus program. These courses must have equivalent syllabi with identical learning outcomes as their traditional counterparts and must be approved for delivery in an alternative format by the appropriate college Chair and Dean, as well as the Dean of Extended University. Equivalency is primarily overseen by the college to which a course belongs, in collaboration with an instructional designer from Extended University. Typically faculty teaching courses in non-traditional formats are the same faculty who teach the traditional face-to-face sections. Extended University provides facilitation and support for the development and delivery of the courses offered in a non-traditional manner, while the college and departments ensure that content and outcomes are equivalent and that instructor credentials are appropriate. Course and instructor selection for alternate delivery are collaboratively determined by the Dean of Extended University and the appropriate college chair and dean, with the latter maintaining final authority. Extended University provides administrative management of delivery systems, as well as related budgets and marketing. Evaluation of course and instructor are under the purview of the college Chair and Dean, with evaluation of delivery systems under the purview of the Dean of Extended University.

Administrative policy regarding non-credit instruction is also consistent with credit programs. When content is closely related to an academic field of study, courses and programs are reviewed and approved by the appropriate academic college and department. Faculty members are involved in planning, delivering and evaluating these offerings when they have an interest in the content or focus of the program. Some noncredit instruction is staffed by regular MSU-Northern faculty, and some is staffed by qualified and approved adjunct faculty. The vitae of approved adjunct faculty and a description of approved course offerings, including student learning outcomes and associated assessments of student achievement, are archived by Extended University. All non-credit bearing continuing education courses are evaluated using the same process as all other existing, traditional courses in the MSU-Northern curriculum. Student evaluations of the courses and instructors using the same form as for traditional course offerings are administered and archived by Extended University. Course and instructor evaluations are regularly reviewed by the Dean of Extended University and shared with instructors. Results of course and instructor evaluations are used to monitor and when necessary improve the quality of courses and instruction, including content, materials, student learning outcomes, instruction, delivery method, etc. This review process ensures that the non-credit courses are of the same high caliber as all other MSU-Northern courses. Two non-credit programs administered by Extended University, the Montana Motorcycle Riders Safety (MMRS) program and the Montana Environmental Training Center (METC) are of special note.

MMRS participants are trained by rider coaches using a curriculum developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF). Rider coaches must be specially trained and certified by MSF prior to teaching a course. MSF is a national organization devoted to providing the world's best safety training for motorcycle riders. Rider coaches are motorcycle enthusiasts

with advanced knowledge and a high level of patience and understanding to help students develop riding skill and confidence. In addition to their initial certification, rider coaches must also participate in a yearly professional development workshop. In order to pass a course, MMRS students must successfully complete both a standardized knowledge test and a skills test consisting of multiple exercises. The knowledge test and skills tests are based on standards developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. At the conclusion of each class, students evaluate the course and their rider coaches. Course evaluations are regularly reviewed by both the director of MMRS and the Dean of Extended University and shared with rider coaches. Rider coaches are also evaluated by either specially trained rider coach trainers or the program director. Student and rider coach trainer evaluations are archived by Extended University.

METC participants are trained by experts within the fields of water and wastewater treatment who have been selected and approved by both an advisory committee and a steering committee. The METC advisory committee represents a diverse group of small and large water and wastewater system operators, rural technical assistance programs, educational institutions, engineers, sanitarians, and the state water and wastewater certification program. The METC steering committee includes two MSU-Northern faculty teaching in the water quality degree program, along with two members from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and one elected at-large member (such as water/wastewater training directors, wastewater system operators, wastewater system superintendents, and rural utility management specialists). For METC, policies and procedures for the granting of CECs (continuing education credits) are set forth by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Operator Certification Approved Training Provider (ATP) Guidelines. CECs are available for some but not all METC courses, depending upon the content and intended audience. Success for non-CEC courses is measured by students passing or failing their operator exams. Success of CEC courses is measured by student completion of course evaluations at the end of each course. The exams administered are from the Association of Boards of Certification. Student evaluations of the courses and instructors are administered by the director of METC. Course and instructor evaluations are regularly reviewed by the Dean of Extended University and the director of METC and shared with instructors. Results of course and instructor evaluations are used to monitor and when necessary improve the quality of courses and instruction, including content, materials, student learning outcomes, instruction, delivery method, etc.

2.C.18 The granting of credit or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for continuing education courses and special learning activities is: a) guided by generally accepted norms; b) based on institutional mission and policy; c) consistent across the institution, wherever offered and however delivered; d) appropriate to the objectives of the course; and e) determined by student achievement of identified learning outcomes.

The granting of credit for continuing education courses and special learning activities is based upon institutional policy consistent throughout MSU-Northern and applied wherever located and however delivered. Continuing education, credit programs is further governed by Montana Board of Regents Policy 304.1 (Appendix VV). MSU-Northern's definition of "credit hour" is also consistent with that outlined in the Federal Register (75 FR 66832, p. 66946). The credit hour at MSU-Northern is a unit of instruction used to quantify intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. The credit hour is typically related to seat time, a

minimum of three coursework hours (typically 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction with an additional two hours of out-of-class student work) each week throughout a 15-week semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a condensed period of time (e.g., summer sessions). Credit may also be awarded for competency-based instruction as an amount of learning "equivalent" to learning in a seat-time-based course. Equivalency is documented by intended learning outcomes and verified by assessment of student achievement. For example, if a traditional course is converted to a competency-based course using an alternate mode of delivery (e.g., online delivery), the course must be designed such that student accomplishment of identical course learning outcomes is documented by direct assessments.

The granting of CEUs for specialty program offerings is likewise based upon institutional policy consistent throughout MSU-Northern and applied wherever located and however delivered. Continuing education, non-credit programs are further governed by Montana Board of Regents Policy 304.2 – Continuing Education; Non-credit Programs (Appendix WW) MSU-Northern does not grant continuing education units (CEUs) for non-credit courses, other than to water and wastewater operators through the Montana Environmental Training Center (METC). Otherwise, the institution has experienced no significant demand for the granting of CEUs.

For METC, policies and procedures for the granting of CECs (continuing education credits) is set forth by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Operator Certification Approved Training Provider (ATP) Guidelines. METC must follow the ATP guidelines when offering courses to water and wastewater operators for CECs. CECs are not available for METC's certification review courses, because these participants are not certified operators and therefore do not yet need CECs. CECs are also not available for METC's review courses, because these are considered basic knowledge for any operator. For all other courses, by Montana Department of Environmental Quality guidelines 10 contact hours of direct instruction is worth one CEC. This standard is also consistent with Montana Board of Regents Policy 304.2 – Continuing Education; Non-credit Programs (Appendix WW) relating to the granting of CEUs, which states that 10 contact hours of direct instruction is worth one CEU. Success for non-CEC courses is measured by students passing or failing their operator exams. Success of CEC courses is measured by student completion of course evaluations at the end of each course. The exams administered are from the Association of Boards of Certification. METC maintains records of all courses including the number of students in each course, the brochure for each course which gives a brief course description, and hour by hour agenda or daily agenda for each course listing topics to be covered, CECs to be offered and who can receive the CECs, course and exam fees if any, a course registration form and credentials for the instructor(s) of each course.

Whether offered for credit, CEUs, or simply enrichment, all continuing education courses and special learning activities must be in alignment with the institutional mission and policy, as outlined in Standards 2.C.16 and 2.C.17 above.

2.C.19 *The institution maintains records which describe the number of courses and nature of learning provided through non-credit instruction.*

Records of continuing education, non-credit course offerings through Extended University, including the Montana Motorcycle Rider Safety program and Montana Environmental Training Center course offerings, are maintained for a minimum of ten years. Archived information includes registration data (rosters, registration forms, assessment results, etc.), general course information (title, description, topics/agenda, dates and times, instructors and their credentials, course and exam fees, if any, etc.), and course and instructor evaluations. Course records are archived both within electronic databases and hard copy files in secure storage.

Section 2D: Student Support Resources

2.D.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.

Montana State University-Northern is an open enrollment university; according to the fall 2015 enrollment figures, 435 students out of 1,234 were considered first-generation college students, a rate of 34%. The average incoming ACT score from the fall 2015 cohort was 19.15, with an average high school GPA of 3.3. Our location on Montana's Hi-Line, near several Native American Indian reservations, has contributed to a significant Native American student population of 11.91%, many of whom transfer to MSUN after completing a two-year degree at one of the tribal colleges—Aaniiih Nakoda College, Stone Child College, etc. The University maintains a number of articulation agreements and partnerships with the tribal colleges in order to facilitate a seamless transfer for students.

Many MSUN students face academic challenges for which the institution provides a wide range of academic support. For example, in order to improve the retention rates of first year students and encourage the successful completion of developmental English and Math coursework, MSUN has opened a Learning Success Center (LSC) in the library focusing on writing, math, and reading skills in addition to offering tutoring for identified high risk courses like Anatomy and Physiology.

The Learning Success Center is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary effort whereby both COTS and EASN faculty are providing tutoring services and training tutors and course mentors or consultants. In addition to tutoring, the Learning Success Center provides a testing center and houses Disability Services. To further serve MSUN's students, the TRIO funded Student Support Services provides qualified students with tutoring, developmental course work, and counseling services. Through reorganization, Student Central was established in 2013. The one-stop shop area provides students with support including admissions, financial aid, veteran services, and advising. Student Central gets students started on the right path.

MSUN recognizes that learning occurs both in and out of the classroom. Therefore, we are intentional with the co-curricular programming offerings that reflect what is important to our University through our mission, core themes, and programs which promote student centeredness, culturally enrichment, lifelong learning, personal growth and responsible citizenship but most importantly, student success.

2.D.2 *The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.*

Montana State University-Northern adheres to Montana Board of Regents Board Policy 1009.1, "Campus Security and Safety," as outlined below.

The aforementioned Board policy states that "Each campus shall maintain campus safety and security policies consistent with the federal requirements under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. At a minimum, the policies will include statements regarding the safety of and access to campus facilities and security considerations for students. The policies will also include campus safety and security procedures." To this end, MSUN policies and procedures which address specifically issues of student safety include:

- Policy 601.3, Student Conduct, which outlines student responsibilities for conduct and delineates specific sanctions (Appendix V);
- Policy 1001.7, Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking and Retaliation, (Appendix Q) which outlines specific measures in place to report violations and enforce standards;
- The Silent Witness program, allowing a students, faculty, and staff to report anonymously on any suspicious or illegal activities.

The Board of Regents policy further states that "The campus policies should contain provisions for cooperation with local emergency services personnel and for efficient, effective coordination of efforts with such personnel." Because Montana State University-Northern does not have a campus police force, however, the University works with the Havre Police Department to provide police support with campus rounds and after-hours support, especially in the residence halls. The locking of exterior doors and checking of entrances are the responsibility of evening custodians or other individuals as designated by Facilities Services.

Security and safety measures are an integral part of resident assistant training, as the resident assistants, in partnership with resident directors, Residence Life Coordinator and the Dean of Students, are responsible for enforcing said measures. To this end, resident assistant training includes modules on the following safety-related topics:

- Use of master keys;
- Residence hall security (locking of doors, propped doors);
- Fire safety (including fire drill procedures);
- Enforcement of the student conduct code; and
- Management of firearms, as per MSUN Policy 1004.4 Firearms, Miscellaneous Weapons, Fireworks and Explosives.

By law, all employees, students and prospective students and prospective employees are

notified of the availability of campus crime statistics. The annual security report, as required by the Clery Act, documents three years of specific crime statistics (with information on 2015 being due October 1, 2016). This information is available on the university's crime statistics website.

In an effort to maintain high quality of life, MSU-Northern provides a variety of services and programs to students, faculty and staff. Preventing and reporting crime is everyone's responsibility. School personnel will assist the students in notifying the proper authorities if so requested. All students are expected to follow federal, state and local laws while on the MSU-Northern campus. Infractions of Policy 601.3, Student Conduct (Appendix V) are handled by the Campus Judicial Officer.

The Montana Department of Justice Sexual and Violent Offender Registry (SVOR) provides an up-to-date listing of sexual and violent offenders who are required to register their whereabouts. The SVOR website also provides additional information about preventing sexual assault, using the Registry, law offender types and more.

2.D.3. Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

MSUN primarily recruits and admits students seeking an active hands-on learning experience in a wide variety of academic offerings. The Common Data Set (Appendix R) (CDS) provides a picture of Northern's incoming students. For example, 89% of the student population is from Montana with MSUN having the highest percentage (11.91%) of Native American students' per- capita in the state. The average high school GPA of all degree-seeking, first-time, first-year students who submitted their GPA is 3.3 and the average age of a Northern student is 25. Nearly 90% of MSUN undergraduates receive financial assistance. Recruiting materials focus on job placement upon graduation, value of education, and quality of academic programs.

MSUN has recently made major revisions to how students are oriented. Over the course of the summer, all incoming students meet one-on-one, either in person or over the phone, with an advisor who discusses the chosen major or the major(s) the student is considering. The advisor then works with the student to enroll them in their first semester of courses at MSUN. In addition, the advisor gives each student general University information and requirements including information of financial aid, viewing and paying bills, and logging on to the campus computer system. The students are then signed up for New Student Orientation. Each semester the Orientation schedule is modified to meet the semester start dates and accommodate any major events that students are encouraged to attend. Fall 2016 orientation begins on Thursday, August 25th, with students checking into their residence hall rooms and getting settled. Orientation activities kick off on Friday, August 26th with sessions aimed at easing the transition into college. Saturday activities continue to encourage small group bonding and attendance at the first home football game. Sunday activities include optional success workshops and conclude with the "Sex Signals" presentation which is designed to bring awareness to sexual assault prevention.

Transfer and online students have the option of an online advising program (SOAR) that is used in conjunction with a telephone call with an advisor from the advising center. Once students have completed SOAR and have spoken with an advisor, they have the ability to register online for their courses. Transfer students receive the same communication plan as all prospective students. However, additional mailings will be sent to them (currently in development as part of communication plan; the importance of this was brought to our attention during the recent Ruffalo Noel- Levitz consultants' visit).

The Admissions Office works in conjunction with the Advising Center Coordinator to ensure transfer agreements are up to date; if travel to a transfer college shows interest in an agreement, that information, is forwarded to the Advising Center Coordinator. Transfer students will receive an email linking them to the transfer agreement portion of MSUN's website. Additionally, transfer students will receive an email linking them to the transfer equivalencies portion of the website.

2.D.4 *In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.*

The Montana Board of Regents (BOR) has a Level I process that institutions in the MUS must follow to ensure all students currently enrolled in a program that has been slotted for moratorium or termination can complete their degree requirements in a timely fashion. The Level I form is used for both the moratorium or termination processes. Once the BOR has approved, a program going into moratorium is placed on an enrollment hold for three years to allow faculty members time to revise the program or to teach out the program for the students that are currently enrolled in it prior to termination of the program. Once revised and passed through the curricular approval process, a request for removal from moratorium is submitted to the BOR. When approved by the BOR and NWCCU, students may once again enroll in the program. At the end of three years, if faculty members have not revised a program, a request for termination is submitted to the BOR for approval. Once approved, NWCCU is notified.

If an institution determines a program should be terminated, the BOR has a two-step process. The first step is to notify the BOR with a Level I form of the intent to terminate a program. The second step is to complete a Termination Checklist, which includes developing a plan for each student to complete program, notifying any impacted faculty members, informing the faculty federation, notifying the academic senate, and informing all constituents. The checklist is submitted along with another Level I form.

At the BOR meeting in September 18-19, 2013, MSUN presented 25 degree programs, certificates, and minors for moratoriums or terminations, as a result of the program prioritization review. Additionally, 7 programs that have been in moratorium since 2005 were requested to be terminated. An update on the status of these programs was presented in the preface of this report and as well as a summary of program activity since 2013-2014.

2.D.5 *The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes;*

> *a)   Institutional mission and core themes;*
> *b)   Entrance requirements and procedures;*
> *c)   Grading policy;*
> *d)   Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program*

completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings;

> *e)   Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators*

and full-time faculty;

> *f)   Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities;*
> *g)   Tuition, fees, and other program costs;*
> *h)   Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment;*
> *i)   Opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and;*
> *j)   Academic calendar.*

Montana State University-Northern publishes an online catalog annually, which is located on the Registrar' website. The 2015-2016 University Catalog provides all of the required information listed above. Additionally, the catalog embeds references to other needed information to ensure students will be able to access further help when needed. Students who may need to review a paper can come to the Registrar's Office located in Cowan Hall to review the office copy.

Information in the catalog includes, key policies, expectations, and guidelines:

   a) Mission statement and MSU-Northern's core themes are located in the 2015-2016 academic catalog mission statement.
   b) Entrance requirement and procedures are located in the 2015-2016 academic catalog in the menu below Admissions General Information.
   c) Grading policies are located in the 2015-2016 academic catalog on the Academic Information page.
   d)   Each degree including program requirements are listed in the 2015-2016 academic catalog. Additionally learning outcomes are listed for each discipline. For example, under Programs in Education   there are program objectives and outcomes for all education programs.
   e) Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for full-time faculty are located in the 2015-2016 academic catalog on the faculty list page.
   f) Student's rights and responsibilities are listed in the Student Handbook published each fall.
   g) Tuition, fees, and other program costs are located on the Business Services website under the heading of Tuition and Fees.
   h) Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment are located in the 2015-2016 academic catalog under fees.
   i) Opportunities and requirements for financial aid are located in the 2015-2016 academic catalog on the Financial Aid page.
   j) The Academic calendar is located in the 2015-2016 academic catalog.

2.D.6 *Publications describing educational programs include accurate information on:*

a) National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;

ABET: The [Civil Engineering Technology](#) (CET) program is accredited by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Council of Accrediting Board of Engineering Technology (ETAC/ABET). Graduates of this program can sit for the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam as the first step in qualifying to sit for the Professional Engineer (PE) exam. Students interested in securing more information related to [ABET](#) can access their web site at or go to http://www.msun.edu/provost/accreditation.aspx to gain more information regarding accredited programs.

ASN and BSN: The Department of Nursing at Montana State University-Northern provides prospective ASN and BSN students with information about the state licensing process and regulations as well as its national accreditation through the [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing](#) (ACEN). Program information can be found at the following three sites: [Department of Nursing website](#) and from that web page links to the [Montana State Board of Nursing](#) and the [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing](#). First year nursing student advising is conducted by the Director of Nursing at MSUN, and incoming students are required to attend orientation sessions provided by the nursing department in order to guarantee students receive the most accurate and comprehensive information about the state requirements for licensure.

Counseling: Graduate students seeking admission to the School Counseling program can first obtain information on MSUN's [Academics web site](#) and [graduate link](#). Students can locate additional information regarding the specific guidelines for licensure can be found on the [Office of Public Instruction](#) (OPI) web site under the [Licensure link](#), where OPI's certification and licensure process is described. Although MSUN's program is not CACREP accredited, faculty indicate in their materials that they have developed the curriculum and assessments based on the [CACREP standards](#).

Elementary Education: The [Elementary Education and Secondary Education](#) programs provide a comprehensive introduction to their programs, handbooks, portfolio guidelines, licensure requirements, Praxis I test dates, etc. on their webpage. From that home page, students can investigate the specific education program requirements. Elementary Education is the institution's largest education major. Additionally, faculty provide continually updated and current [information](#) regarding the Office of Public Instruction PEPP standards, accreditation status, and program mission and conceptual framework. Faculty are rigorous in their advising of education majors and carefully document student progress. A full time Director for Field Placement and Licensure/Certification arranges practicum experiences and student teaching assignments, in addition to providing advising.

Ford MLR: The [automotive program](#) is also aligned with the Ford Motor Company's Maintenance and Light Repair (MLR) program. Information related to the MLR program can

be found on their website. Students that are enrolled in MLR earn certifications that are accepted by the Ford Dealership network and are taught by Ford trained certified instructors. Instruction is delivered in electrical, brakes, suspension and steering, and chassis maintenance. Completion of Ford MLR certifications reduce the expense for dealerships to qualify technicians hired from the program by substituting college coursework for dealer training, making MSUN graduates a more attractive hire.

NATEF: The automotive program is accredited through the National Automotive Technology Education Foundation (NATEF). Information regarding the NATEF organization can be found on their website. NATEF's mission is to improve the quality of automotive technician training programs by examining the structure, resources and quality of training programs and evaluates them against standards established by the industry. These standards reflect the skills that students must master to be successful in the industry. Students in the Automotive Technology programs are encouraged to complete the Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification process. The ASE certifications are recognized throughout the automotive industry as a standard for service technician expertise. ASE certification tests are available for over 40 specific areas of technician training providing a credential recognized in virtually every automotive service and support location in the country. The exams were devised in partnership with the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), which provided the basic framework for the development of the MSU-Northern automotive curriculum.

Secondary Education Programs: Information on math, English, social sciences, HPE, IT, and general science secondary programs can be located on the Education web site. Montana State University-Northern's Bachelor of Science in Education programs are accredited by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The Accreditation Division of the Montana Office of Public Instruction assists, reviews, and monitors 859 K-12 schools and eight teacher education programs at Montana's postsecondary institutions for compliance with school accreditation standards and other rules. The division assists schools, districts, and teacher education programs to align standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development.

Trades: Both MSU-Northern's Plumbing Technology and Electrical Technology programs were developed in cooperation with the Montana Department of Labor, which recognizes training in MSU-Northern classes as counting toward the total number of training and practical hours toward completion of an apprenticeship in plumbing or electrical, reducing the amount of additional time needed to advance to Journeyman. Students earning either an Associate of Applied Science in Plumbing or Electrical may deduct 3115 hours of on-the-job-training (OJT) from the total 8500 that is required to sit and pass the Journeyman exam. In addition, the welding certificate program includes AWS welding certifications in a variety of processes demanded by industry.

b) Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession.

Automotive: The ASE certifications mentioned above are frequently a requirement for employment and are used by a number of automotive shops as a basis for advancement in the

company.

Education: The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides a detailed description of the unique requirements for employment in the profession as well as how certified teachers can progress and advance in the field. In order to be employed as a public school teacher in Montana, prospective employees must formally apply for licensure; pass a Department of Justice background check, and pass the appropriate Praxis I and II exams by hitting a benchmark score established by Educational Testing Services. As of 2010, candidates were required to hit Praxis performance benchmarks in order to be regarded as "Highly Qualified Teacher." On August 30, 2013, the 2013-2014 Montana Highly Qualified Teacher requirements were mailed to all school administrators in the State.

Nursing: Information about the Montana State Board of Nursing's professional regulations for licensure can be located on their website. LPNs may acquire their licensure either by "licensing by credential," if they currently hold an unencumbered license in another state, or if they are a recent nursing graduate must obtain licensure by examination using the NCLEX national exam. RN licensure is similar in terms of the two main routes to licensure. Because passing scores on the NCLEX exam are critical to MSUN maintaining its national accreditation with NLNAC, the curriculum, coursework, and midpoint assessments have been developed to prepare nursing candidates for the rigorous exam.

Trades: The apprenticeship trades programs (Plumbing Technology and Electrical Technology) are licensed trades in Montana – which requires that people hired into these careers enter the Department of Labor apprenticeship program. The MSU-Northern degrees provide a substantial portion of the training requirement for advancement in these trades. In addition MSUN provides ongoing training to complete the hours of OJT necessary to qualify for the Journeyman exam.

2.D.7 The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.

MSU-Northern follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines set by the Federal Government. FERPA guidelines are listed in the 2015-2016 Catalog on page 213. Straightforward FERPA policy information for parents is available on the Parents and Visitors website..

In addition, MSU-Northern is up to date on American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO) and Montana regulations regarding appropriate record retention. For example, BOR Policy 301.5.1, System of Controls (Appendix XX) protects students' records by maintaining records concerning transfer credits in a central and safe location.

Student hardcopy transcripts that are too old to scan and maintain in a document imaging system are kept in the fireproof vault located in the Business Services Office. Other transcripts and records are scanned and maintained on the electronic system. The system is backed-up on tape by Instructional Technology Services and tapes are stored at the local US Bank in a

security box. Banner is also used to back-up and secure student records.

2.D.8 *The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.*

The mission of the Financial Aid Office at MSU-Northern is to provide information to students to enable them to meet their educational objectives and long term goals. Financial assistance is available to eligible MSU-Northern students in the form of grants, scholarships, work study and or loans. Types of aid available, how to apply, and forms can be found on the Financial Aid website. A link to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid is also available at this website. Admission and recruitment pages reference opportunities regarding the WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange Program) which allows students in participating states to enroll at special, reduced tuition levels.

Information regarding new student scholarships is made available to students on the Financial Aid website under Scholarships. Continuing students are also able to apply for scholarships with an online application that becomes available every fall semester for scholarship awarding for the next academic year. Students are notified of the scholarship opportunities by the website and via e-mail/mail. The scholarship amounts that have been awarded for the past few years are as follows:

2013-2014	$ 192,812
2014-2015	$ 230,696
2015-2016	$ 223,880

As noted, the funds have fluctuated over the past few years which can be attributed to the volatility in the economy as some of these scholarships are endowments and earnings are based on market value.

The college work study program is an important funding source for additional office assistance and assists with retention efforts. Students are willing to work to help defray some of the costs of their education. Because the funds are limited, work study jobs come at a premium and there is consistently a waiting list for students wanting to work on campus and receive these funds.

2.D.9 *Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution's loan default rate.*

Students are notified of their financial aid eligibility in the form of an award letter. New students receive a paper copy in the mail and an Electronic Award Letter. A Financial Aid Information Sheet is included in the new student award letter packet. In addition, the *Dollars and Sense Workbook* is included in each new student award letter mailing to help increase financial literacy. MSU-Northern applied for and received grant funding through the Montana College Access Challenge Grant Program coordinated through the Office of Financial Services and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. This grant was awarded to develop and enhance coordinated campus-based financial literacy programs. The cost of producing and

mailing these additional workbooks is included in the grant. All students have access to a shopping sheet, along with their award letter, to provide additional information to assist in their college selection process. The Financial Aid Shopping Sheet is a consumer tool that is designed to simplify information that prospective students receive about costs and financial aid so that they can make informed decisions about which postsecondary institution to attend. Continuing students receive an electronic award letter that is available via their secured Banner Web - MyInfo account. The award letters also include the total loan debt that students have incurred to date.

Direct loan borrowers are required to complete loan entrance counseling and master promissory notes before any disbursement of loan funds. This online session helps students understand their rights and responsibilities as a student loan borrower. Students who are unfamiliar with this process may access MSUN Financial Aid website which includes detailed information on how to complete these counseling requirements. Perkins loan borrowers are required to sign a paper promissory note and a written Pre-Counseling form before funds are disbursed. In person loan exit counseling sessions are held for students who are graduating, completing a program, or leaving school for whatever reason. During these sessions, students are informed of loan repayment options, consequences of defaulting on a student loan and contact information regarding the lenders and servicers of the loan.

MSU-Northern's cohort default rates are listed below:

FY 2010 3 Year Cohort Default Rate	13.0%
FY 2011 2 Year Cohort Default Rate	12.7%
FY 2012 2 Year Cohort Default Rate	13.1%

A list of delinquent borrowers is forwarded monthly to Student Financial Services at the Montana University System who provide outreach to borrowers to help students avoid going into default. The Montana College Access Challenge Grant is also allowing MSU-Northern to engage in other opportunities to strengthen financial literacy programs in an effort to reduce student loan debt and reduce default rates. Even though this information is displayed on their award letters each year, additional letters are now being sent informing students of their current student loan debt along with a table showing estimated monthly payments for different levels of debt to make students more aware of their loan debt and be better able to plan for future repayment.

2.D.10 *The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.*

Currently, undergraduate advising is provided at two levels: New student advising and faculty advising. Face-to-face advising is enhanced by the implementation of Degreeworks, a degree auditing system accessible to faculty, staff and students.

All new students (freshmen and transfer) are advised at the Advising Center for their first semester at Northern. Advising Center staff are well versed on the requirements of all degree programs at MSUN as well as the courses needed to achieve Montana's General Education Core, which is transferrable to all Montana University System institutions. Face-to-face advising is accomplished in group or individual appointments. The advising session includes a short presentation on key aspects of degree planning and foundational information necessary for academic success. A phone advising session is scheduled for students for whom coming on campus is not possible.

After the first semester or upon declaration of a major, the student will transition to a faculty advisor from within their degree program. Faculty members focus on program completion and career opportunities when meeting with their advisees. MSUN is currently reviewing the training process for faculty advisors and will implement changes each fall term. Students who remain undeclared will continue to be advised through the Advising Center. These students will receive intrusive advising and will meet with an advisor a minimum of three times during each semester with the goal of guiding the student to a degree program that fulfills their educational goals.

Resources and tools to support informed and purposeful decision-making are key for students and advisors throughout the student's program of study. Degreeworks, degree auditing software, is one tool utilized by faculty and available to students. The system incorporates transfer equivalencies and all MSUN academic programs, including minors and certificates. There is also a feature that can be used to educate a student on what courses will be required if they decide to change their major. Students and advisors now have the ability to see exactly where the student is in completing their program of study.

2.D.11 *Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services and are governed appropriately.*

MSUN recognize that learning occurs both in and out of the classroom. We are intentional with the co-curricular programming offerings that reflect what is important to our University through our mission, core themes and programs which promote student centeredness, cultural enrichment, lifelong learning, personal growth and responsible citizenship.

At MSUN, the Office of Student Activities endeavors to consider the needs of its customers (current and prospective students and their families, staff, faculty and Havre community members), by promoting diverse creative entertaining activities, quality entertainers, and invigorating Intramural & Recreation activities, while collaborating with organizations both on and off campus, in order to enhance the educational experience.

Additionally, Outdoor Activities and Recreation (OAR) is a non-profit branch of the Recreational Council Program sponsored and funded by the Associated Students of Montana State University-Northern. OAR is designed to provide a variety of services relating to outdoor recreational pursuits of MSU-Northern students, faculty, staff and local residents. The major emphasis of the program is to provide learning situations and recreational programs to promote a strong respect for our wild land resources.

Another outdoor activity that students enjoy is the 20-hole Disc Golf (Folf) Course, and students may check out folf discs and maps with scorecards at the Student Union Information Desk with a current MSU-Northern ID.

When the weather turns cold, and throughout the year, the MSU-N fitness center is open for all MSU-Northern students, faculty & staff. It is located in the basement of the Student Union Building (SUB) and the facility is equipped with benches and weights, recumbent bikes, elliptical equipment, treadmills, yoga mats, resistance tubing, body bars and stability balls. Other indoor activities include the Pin-n-Cue Recreation Center, where students can bowl, play pool, shoot hoops, play air-hockey, and other activities.

2.D.12 If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution's mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.

MSUN operates dining services, a bookstore and student housing to better serve the students' academic, personal, social and community needs. These auxiliary services are guided by principles and practices that align with the mission and core themes of the University, which encourage student self-governance, exposure to alternative ideas and perspectives and interaction with students, faculty and staff who share common and disparate interests. An end goal is to create a well-rounded environment, where students can succeed academically and socially. These services are all self-supporting operations.

The mission of MSUN Dining Services is to provide high quality, reasonably priced, nutritious food to our students in a clean, comfortable, and friendly environment. Monthly food service committee meetings are held to access operations and review customer inputs received. Eating on campus offers a great value for fresh nutritious selections every day at every meal. All residents who reside in the residence halls must have a board plan and others living off campus can purchase meals with cash, credit card, debit card or a flex account. When a student checks into a residence hall, his or her name is immediately placed on the meal ticket list. MSUN's meal plan options are affordable and flexible. Computerized cash registers deduct the value of the individual food items from the student's account using their university North Card. Dining Services features made-to-order breakfast 7am-10:30 am M-F. Fresh grill, Mexican, salad and sandwich bars, daily homemade soups, lunch and dinner specials, and convenient grab and go items are available 10:30 am-7pm, M-F. A limited menu is available on weekends and designated holidays between the hours of 10 am and 5 pm.

The MSUN Cafeteria was transformed into the new Food Court three years ago with the help of faculty, staff, students, and community members doing most of the labor to conserve costs and make the best use of limited resources. Once again, the campus and local community came together to plan menus that would appeal to today's students. Small groups of individuals were invited to sample food offerings and vote on their preferred options.

MSUN's University Bookstore serves the needs of the students, faculty and staff. The primary goal of the bookstore is to ensure students are able to obtain the course materials required at reasonable prices. The bookstore is in compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act regarding transparent pricing, textbook requirement information, and a book buy-back program to improve affordability. The bookstore also provides many other items to support the student's academic career and promote school spirit. The bookstore is a fulltime, full-service operation that additionally offers general merchandise at most home athletic events. The bookstore has recently added a rental program for various course materials and now offers a variety of E-Books. A bookstore advisory committee is established and charged with providing input in decisions regarding the bookstore.

The Dean of Students' office is intentional with the co-curricular programming offerings that reflect what is important to the University through its mission, core themes and programs which promote student centeredness, cultural enrichment, lifelong learning, personal growth and responsible citizenship. If students live in the residence halls, they have the opportunity to provide input via their hall staff, Student Senate and conversations with the Dean of Students. Faculty, staff and administrators can offer input through the Dean of Students.

At MSUN, the Office of Student Activities endeavors to consider the needs of its customers (current and prospective students and their families, staff, faculty and Havre community members), by offering diverse entertaining activities, quality entertainers, and invigorating Intramural & Recreation activities, while collaborating with organizations both on and off campus.

Outdoor Activities and Recreation (OAR) is a non-profit branch of the Recreational Council Program sponsored and funded by the Associated Students of Montana State University-Northern. OAR is designed to provide a variety of services relating to outdoor recreational pursuits of MSU-Northern students, faculty, staff and local residents. The major emphasis of the program is to provide learning situations and recreational programs to promote a strong respect for our wild land resources.

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2.D.13 Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution's mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-

curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.

Montana State University-Northern is a member of NAIA and sponsors seven intercollegiate varsity programs: Football, Women's Volleyball, Men's Cross Country, Women's Cross Country, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Wrestling, Women's Golf, and Men's Golf. MSU-Northern also sponsors two club athletic programs: Men's Rodeo, and Women's Rodeo. These programs are under the direction and oversight of the Director of Athletics, who reports to the Chancellor.

MSU-Northern is committed to the education and academic eligibility requirements of all of its student athletes. The coaching staff communicates their schedules with faculty members, so arrangements can be made to proctor tests or assignments while on the road away from the campus. Coaches and/or Director of Athletics meet regularly with the Registrar to verify eligibility requirements of each player. Student-Athletes have assigned faculty advisors who monitor academic progress toward degree completion. When a student athlete has academic challenges, he or she can seek help from the Student-Athlete Success Advisor, Student Support Services or the Learning Success Center.

All Financial Aid is awarded through the Financial Aid Office, which follows all University and federal policies and procedures for financial aid disbursement to student-athletes and non-student-athletes. All financial operations are monitored by the Business Services Office and are directed by the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration who reports to the Chancellor of MSU-Northern. Admission requirements are monitored by the Admissions Office and follow all NAIA rules and regulations. All student-athletes are certified by "Play NAIA" and also by Admissions policies which follow the same requirements as non-student-athletes.

MSU-Northern students who participate in athletics are held to the same standard as all other MSU-Northern students. In the 2015-16 season, 73 MSU-Northern student athletes attained Academic All-Conference and 27 reached NAIA Academic All-American. MSU-Northern has been named a NAIA, 2015-2016 Champions of Character Five Star Institutions. To receive this honored award, MSUN athletes were rated on integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership, earning a score of 84 out of 100 points possible, which was the highest of any school in the Frontier Conference.

There is an expectation for students, including athletes to conduct themselves with integrity and exhibit ethical standards. The 2015-2016 Student Handbook states, "The faculty, administration, and students of Montana State University-Northern believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education. The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to assure the highest ethical and professional standards and behavior in the classroom," Article 5.1, (Appendix U). Additionally, administrative policies set expectations for student conduct and protect students' rights, i.e., University Policy 601.3 Student Conduct (Appendix V) states, 'As a citizen of the larger society, the University student retains those rights, protections and responsibilities held by all citizens. It is the intent of the University community to resolve student conduct violations within the University." Additionally, Policy 1001.7 Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation (Appendix Q) policy notes,

"Montana State University-Northern intends to provide a campus atmosphere free of violence and sexual misconduct for all students, faculty, staff and visitors."

2.D.14 *The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.*

MSU-Northern maintains an identity verification process for students enrolled in online courses to ensure that each student enrolled is the one whose work is being evaluated. Only students officially registered in online courses via MSU-Northern's Banner student information system are given access to courses in the Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system. The two systems are integrated such that D2L online courses are automatically created and populated based upon nightly extracts from the Banner system. D2L maintains a secure private cloud-based environment to prevent access by anyone not authorized and thereby protect student data and privacy. Each student is assigned unique user identification (NetID) for the D2L system which must be used every time he/she accesses/participates in online coursework. Each user must create a unique password for the D2L system by logging into a secure password reset page. In order to log into the password reset page and create a D2L password, a student's identity must be authenticated by providing his/her student ID number and PIN from the Banner system. Only the student is able to see and change his/her D2L password. Extended University support staff can walk students through the process, but they are unable to see or change student passwords. Other than the authentication to create a D2L password, Banner IDs and NetIDs are in no way associated in order to protect student privacy. Students may not log into D2L using their Banner/student ID, and NetIDs consist of a completely random string of letters and numbers.

Note that the [Instructional Technology Council](#) maintains that the intent of the "authentication" (identity verification) provision in the Higher Education Opportunity Act was limited to use of a unique username and password solution, which MSU-Northern has always implemented. While more advanced technologies based in biometrics and continuous AVI monitoring are currently available, they have not yet proven feasible for the mainstream either financially or in terms of support personnel requirements. As new technologies are developed and become feasible in terms of both support requirements and pricing, MSU-Northern will certainly explore adopting these. Extended University has, however, purchased both the Respondus Lockdown Browser and TurnItIn software to help ensure the integrity of online programs.

Faculty may require use of the Lockdown Browser as a condition of taking an exam. This secure web browser prevents students from accessing other webpages and opening other programs or files while taking an exam and also blocks such functions as copying, pasting, and printing while taking an exam. Respondus Monitor, which relies on webcam video technology during online exams, is also available on a limited basis. Alternatively, faculty may require proctored examinations as they see fit. Proctoring can be arranged at the Havre, Lewistown, and Great Falls campuses. For students who cannot access these services, faculty may make alternative arrangements for proctoring. Typically students are responsible for initially identifying potential

proctors, and faculty verify the identity and integrity of the proctors before approving them. Both instructors and Extended University support staff are also able to track and restrict student IP addresses through Desire2Learn for testing purposes. They can also set unique passwords that they can provide to proctors for each exam.

Faculty may also opt to use TurnItIn for any or all Desire2Learn dropbox assignments. TurnItIn is plagiarism detection software that will check student submissions against the TurnItIn database to generate an originality report. The originality report will record what percentage of the submission either matches or is highly similar to text from a wide variety of sources within the TurnItIn database. The originality report will also specifically identify which portions of the text are similar or identical to existing sources and provide links to those sources for comparison. The primary intent of adopting TurnItIn was to provide a positive instructional tool in terms of student learning related to information literacy, academic integrity, originality, creativity, and writing skills; however, instructors may also use TurnItIn to help determine whether material students quoted, paraphrased, summarized or used in any way was properly cited or plagiarized.

Online students at MSU-Northern are subject to the same Student Affairs Policies and Procedures as campus students, including Policy 601.2 Academic Misconduct (Appendix GG). By logging in to the institution's learning management system, Desire2Learn, they acknowledge that they are aware of and agree to abide by these policies and procedures, in addition to the institution's information technology Policy 1001.4, Unauthorized Copying & Use of Computer Software (Appendix ZZ) and Policy 1001.5, Passwords (Appendix AAA), Section 1300 - Information Technology of the BOR Policies and Procedures Manual, and Montana Code Annotated 45-6-311 Unlawful Use of a Computer (Appendix BBB).

No charges are specifically associated with the identity verification (username and password) process. Students are notified in writing at the time of enrollment that they will be charged an additional fee to enroll in online coursework in order to support the direct costs of the learning management system (Desire2Learn), associated software (Respondus, TurnItIn, ReadSpeaker, etc.), and support personnel, as well as other associated expenses of online delivery. Fee schedules are published in numerous locations, including the Business Services website, and fees are also itemized in each student's assessments in the student information system, Banner, when students confirm their registration and accept their charges.

Section 2E: Library and Information Resources

2.E.1 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The Vande Bogart Library supports MSU-Northern's core theme to "Promote a student centered and culturally enriched environment which fosters student success." The library provides access to information, reference, and instructional services for the University students, faculty and staff. The library serves the needs of the on-campus, as well as, distance students and faculty members.

The library is at the center of the MSUN campus. Built in 1981, the library is a modern 2-story, 33,440 square foot building with a seating capacity for more than 200 people. During fall and spring semesters, the library is open 7 days per week, for a total of 83 hours per week. The library staff provides face-to-face, telephone, or email services for on-campus and distance students, faculty, and staff.

The library staff currently consists of 4.5 FTE permanent employees—2 librarians, 1 library services manager and 1.5 library technicians. These positions include a library director (librarian), a reference and instructional services librarian (librarian), a library services manager (professional), a night circulation/technical services/coffee cart supervisor, and a half-time administrative assistant/student supervisor (technician). The library also employs 10 work study students (approximate 3 FTE).

The library catalog includes more than 360,000 item records for print and electronic titles and provides access to more than 90 databases, 150,000 electronic books, and 331,000 electronic journals, magazines and newspapers. The library serves as selective U.S. and Montana government depositories and also has a juvenile collection of more than 7,600 titles for the use of Elementary Education students.

The library is embarking on a new partnership with other academic libraries in the state. The libraries are in the process of replacing their existing integrated library systems with a shared unified resource management system. The project began in January 2016 and will be available for students and faculty use on December 16, 2016. This new system will provide students, faculty and staff with a more simplified way to find information—searching books and articles, print and electronic quickly and easily.

To maximize purchasing power, the library has participated in several consortia and has collaborative arrangements with other libraries, institutions and agencies. Some of these partnerships included the MSU Libraries (access to databases, electronic book and journal collections, and a shared ILLiad interlibrary loan service), OMNI/MSU (shared SIRSI integrated library system), Montana State Library (for OCLC services & statewide database subscriptions), and LYRASIS (database subscriptions and staff training opportunities). 2016 has brought some new opportunities. In August the Montana State Library (MSL) will cease funding the statewide database subscriptions. The library is joining the newly formed Montana academic library consortium (TRAILS) to find replacements for the databases lost when MSL cancels the statewide license. TRAILS will explore other database options.

The library provides all students, faculty, and staff with interlibrary loan services. When students, faculty or staff members need an item for research, the item will be borrowed from another library through the OCLC Resource Sharing program. Through this service, members of the MSUN community have access to many more resources than what is physically or electronically available through the library. The interlibrary loan service is also used to provide distance students and faculty with physical books from the library's collection. Books are mailed to the distance student. Articles are scanned and sent electronically to the student.

MSUN online and distant students have access to more than 90 databases. These databases include full text of basic and specialized reference materials, books on many topics, subject specific research articles, journal, magazine and newspaper articles and citations to additional materials. Access to these databases is granted to all faculty, staff and currently enrolled students via proxy authentication by using his/her NetID and password. The Library staff provides assistance in using databases and library services via email and phone. LibGuide aids assist all students with identifying appropriate resources and library services for their research in different fields of study.

MSUN students in Great Falls, Montana have the ability to use the Great Falls College-MSU library. The MSUN Library pays a fee every year to the GFC library to offset their cost of providing service and resources to MSUN students. For the Lewistown, Montana campus, students have access to the county library, as well as intercampus loan and databases.

The library houses the University Archives and other archival and special collections. The Native American images from the archive's photographic collections are included in the "Indian Peoples of the Northern Great Plains" digital collection. The library is also home to the Louis & Antoinette Hagener Museum of the Northern Montana Plains Indian. The museum, which opened in May 2014, displays a rotating collection of Native American artifacts.

2.E.2 *Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources faculty, staff, and administrators.*

The Vande Bogart Library is a unit within the Academic Affairs division of MSUN. The Director of the Library reports to the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The Director is an ex- officio member of the Library Committee, an Academic Senate Subcommittee with representation from each college. The Director is also a member of the University Advisory Council. In these capacities, the Director is an active participant in university planning and policy discussions.

To maximize purchasing power, the library participates in several consortia and has collaborative arrangements with other libraries, institutions and agencies.

Approximately 85% of collections funds are spent on core subscriptions and database licenses and 15% is spent on faculty and staff requests. Every attempt is made to purchase faculty requests to enhance their teaching.

2.E.3 *Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

Aligning with the MSUN mission and core themes which focus on student-centeredness and promoting student success, the library provides students with areas for group and individual study. The library has four study rooms, one equipped with a large screen monitor and computer

for group work. Both floors of the library have numerous study tables and individual study carrels. The Learning Success Center is on the main level, with tutors and students using many of the study tables located outside the center's offices.

Both floors also have areas with casual seating. On the main level, near the Campus Coffee Cart, is an area with café tables and chairs and casual seating for enjoying beverages and snacks from the coffee cart. This area also houses a display of new books, newspapers, and the latest issues of magazines and journals.

The library has computers on the main floor and a lab on the lower level that can be converted into 2 smaller labs. There are currently 19 computers on the main level and 26 computers in the lab on the lower level. The library also has Wi-Fi capabilities on both levels. The Learning Success Center has 20 laptop computers that can be checked out at the library's circulation desk. These laptops are configured so that students can access their network accounts and print on the library's student printers. In 2015, with funding from the Computer Fee Advisory Committee (CFAC), the library purchased a Knowledge Imaging Center (KIC) scanner for use by students, faculty and staff. The KIC allows for quick and efficient scanning/digitization of materials. Users can then upload files to Desire2Learn, print, or send via email.

The library staff provides library instruction upon request of the faculty member for specific courses. Between July 2014 and June 2015 the library staff presented 27 sessions to 509 students. These informative sessions are usually taught face-to-face in the library's lab or in the classroom. The library staff is working with interested faculty members to create instructional materials for use with Desire 2 Learn. Starting in FY13 the librarians have been using the LibGuide software (from Springhare) to create instructional guides for use by students and faculty. As of June 2016, there are 18 guides. These guides can be easily accessed from the library's home page or embedded into Desire 2 Learn course shells. The guides are designed to assist the student in determining appropriate (print or electronic) resources to use for research in that field. During the current fiscal year, the existing guides have been viewed more than 2,600 times.

2.E.4 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.

The library staff collects and reviews data pertaining to usage of the library building and print and electronic resources. This information is used to make decisions that best fits students' needs. The security gate at the entrance of the library has a people counter. This information is collected daily and provides the number of people entering and leaving the building each day.

On an annual basis, database usage statistics are reviewed. This information is used when making decisions as to the continuation of database subscriptions. Print periodical subscriptions are reviewed annually. Decisions are made as to the continuation of individual titles. Certain areas of the book collection are regularly reviewed. Two of these areas include the Reference collection and the Nursing collection. Out-of-date books in these areas are regularly removed and replaced with newer titles or editions.

Members of the MSUN faculty are encouraged to recommend books, journals, databases and DVDs for purchase. Faculty members are also encouraged to review the existing collections and make recommendations as to whether the items need to be withdrawn and/or updated.

MSUN students currently have access to more than 90 databases. These databases include full text of basic and specialized reference materials, books on many topics, subject specific research articles, journal, magazine and newspaper articles, and citations to additional materials. Access to these databases is granted to all faculty, staff, and currently enrolled students via proxy authentication. The library receives access to many of these databases through cooperative arrangements with other Montana State University Libraries. The library also has several subscriptions that meet the specific needs of students and faculty in MSU-Northern's unique academic programs.

Section 2F: Financial Resources

2.F.1 The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.

The Business Services department is an indispensable component of the University's student-centered learning environment that strives to partner with Academics and Administration to enable MSUN to achieve the goals specified in its mission statement. Business Services is responsible for overseeing all financial activity of the University and to provide the highest quality of service to our students, the University community, prospective students, and vendors.

As a component of the greater MSU system encompassing four Montana campuses. MSUN financially benefits from this relationship in many regards. Through the pooling of the greater system's assets ($703.7M, FYE 2015), MSUN is able to secure more favorable debt financing and contracted service rates than if only leveraging its total assets ($30.4M, FYE2015). As of June 30, 2015, the University is in a stable financial position and as of the most recent rating reports received in October, 2013, the University's bonds are rated Aa3 by Moody's Investor Services and A+ by Standard and Poor's.

The amortization of the University's OPEB liability, due to implementation of GASB Statement Number 68, continues to contribute to the decline in the University's net position. The OPED liability as of June 30, 2015 is $4,847,438 higher than at June 30, 2014. Even though the University makes no contribution to the health plan for retirees, from an accounting standpoint, their mere participation in the same risk pool with active employees constitutes an implicit rate subsidy. Despite the magnitude of this accounting change the University received an unqualified opinion to the FY15 financial statements which specifically called out this matter in detail. See Notes 1 and15 for more information on this issue

The University's planning process centers on realistic revenue projections supported by enrollment forecasts, State funding and BOR's authorized tuition and fee rates. In each biennial cycle, the planning includes two-year revenue projections, analysis of appropriate reserve levels, and consideration of current and future obligations of the University. This planning process ensures that MSUN operates within available resources. MSUN seriously considers risk management and contingency planning each year in the budget preparation process. Through conservative planning and subsequent achievement of enrollment estimates, MSUN has successfully set aside funding to support anticipated retirement payouts and protect against unanticipated budgetary shortfalls utilizing contingency reserves.

2.F.2 Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources.

MSUN's operating budget follows the State's legislative appropriations process on a biennial cycle. The State of Montana historically provides approximately sixty percent of the University's operating funds. The legislature also delegates authority for setting student tuition rates to the Board of Regents. MSUN collects tuition from the students and budgets the revenue locally. Other resources include student fees, auxiliary revenue, scholarships and dedicated grant funding.

Budget preparation at MSUN is both a local and externally conglomerated developmental process. MSU-Bozeman shepherds the larger process in accordance with the funding methodology that is approved by the Legislature and follows BOR's budgeting instructions and guidance. This is accomplished with the coordination of all university system components through a series of modeling evolutions and data calls. At the local level, the development and coordination of the University's detailed budget is produced by the Financial Services office and overseen by the Vice-Chancellor for Finance and Administration with inputs from the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) and departmental requirement submissions. The Admissions office works closely with Financial Services to generate realistic enrollment projections as student tuitions and fees are the primary local driver in setting revenue expectations and contingency reserve planning.

Financial Services, in partnership with departmental leaders, reviews budget requests and analyzes projected actual and proposed annual budgeted expenses to ensure the budget is developed using realistic assumptions that operate within conservative revenue projections. In addition to State and tuition revenue, the office additionally tracks grants, auxiliaries, investments, debt schedule and contract submissions, proposals and awards to provide a basis for reliable projections to include in budget planning. The University's annual budget is monitored from outside the organization through BOR institutional reporting and external auditing agencies for compliance and strength of internal controls.

2.F.3 The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes

for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies.

As a State institution and part of the larger MSU system, the University's policies, guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development are well established, largely prescribed and highly monitored by internal and external agencies. In light of a constrained economic environment and nominal enrollment numbers in recent history, MSUN's budgetary decisions are substantially narrow. At best, annual changes have been incrementally small to try and keep pace with inflation and essential operating expenses. Through a series of data calls and working with the BAC, Financial Services annually requests, assists and reviews with University components their projected requirements, challenges and desires for the upcoming academic year and beyond as they relate to financial planning. These inputs are worked into the projected budget and vetted through several stakeholder meetings including the BAC, Executive, Student Senate, Facility, and Auxiliary Committees in order to provide appropriate opportunities for participation and transparency.

2.F.4 *The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.*

All financial administration transactions including procurement, payables, receivables, and payroll are centralized at MSUN and fall under the purview of the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. The University uses an industry standard financial data system. Ellucian's Banner software is a structured accounting system following the generally accepted accounting principles for colleges and universities. Banner is designed for the accurate processing of transactions through the integration of the related modules that support the general ledger and analysis of the University's operations, assets and liabilities. Banner is used throughout the Montana University System and subsequently facilitates the standardization of financial reporting and compliance across the State. This synchronization also increases the effectiveness of MSUN's internal controls. As part of the four-campus MSU system of schools, MSUN benefits from the more robust capabilities of a larger internal auditing office that performs reviews of various activities on both a scheduled and unscheduled basis. This office and the standardization of internal controls, accounting software and policy development ensures more consistent and better managerial oversight, auditing and review of the business and financial functions at MSUN. In addition to University monitoring, the Montana Legislative Audit Division bi-annually audits the University specifically on internal controls.

2.F.5 *Capital budgets reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution's mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.*

MSUN's long range capital planning and investment are functions of the Montana University

System's Long Range Building Program (LRBP) process. Other routine equipment purchases are covered through designated fee revenue and by funding reserves at year end. Resources historically dedicated to education purposes are not a factor into the campus's facility planning. On a biennial basis the two MUS presidents and Commissioner of Higher Education, in conjunction with the State's Architecture and Engineering (A&E) Division, visit the University sites and rank the highest-priority needs. After review and debate, the Board of Regents produces a Consolidated Project Priority List for submission into the Governor's LRBP Plan. A component of the MSU campuses' LRBP prioritization is the development of the Facilities Condition Inventory (FCI) report. FCI is based on a national professional asset assessment model and quantifies deferred maintenance liability, utilizes nationally standardized cost data, categorizes deficiencies, and creates a historical record of deficiencies and physical asset values that are put into a categorized rating system and prioritized for future consideration. MSUN consistently fares well in the process and has annually gained assistance from State funding for major deferred maintenance projects. Additionally, University leadership and the State just broke ground this past May on a $10 million Diesel Technology Center that will replace and improve on some of the campuses worst infrastructure problems.

2.F.6 *The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.*

MSUN's auxiliary enterprises are all self-supporting activities. The auxiliaries are financially separate in the accounting system and undergo an additional and separate independent audit from the Universities educational and general operations. Auxiliary enterprises are required to maintain a balanced budget to cover all costs for items such as salaries and wages, physical plant operations and capital acquisitions. The University with approval and coordination with the MSU system issues revenue bonds with the debt service supported by student fees or revenues in the auxiliary units. The education and general budgets of the University do not rely on support from auxiliary enterprises. The general operations of the campus may charge the auxiliaries for services provided in support of auxiliary enterprises. An example of these charges are utilities and services performed for maintenance and repair of auxiliary facilities.

2.F.7 *For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered in a timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.*

As a component of the MSU system of schools, the University undergoes an annual external financial statement audit performed by the Legislative Audit Committee of the Montana State Legislature. The internally prepared financial statements and notes to financial statements are available to auditors within a timely manner after fiscal year end. The financial report, including the independent auditor's opinion is issued in a timely manner after completion of the audit. When the audit is completed, the auditors meet again with the executive leadership and the Board of Regents to communicate the results of the audit, including any findings or management letter comments. MSUN has received an "unqualified" opinion on the financial

statements. These reports are publicly available on the MSU-Bozeman's Business Service's website, http://www.montana.edu/ubs/index.html.

2.F.8 *All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.*

The fundraising efforts on behalf of the University are conducted by the MSU-Northern Alumni Foundation. The Foundation is a separately incorporated, nonprofit, tax exempt organization and is responsible for identifying and nurturing relationships with potential donors and other friends of the University, soliciting cash, securities, real property, and other private resources for the support of the University and acknowledging and stewarding such gifts in accordance with donor intent and its fiduciary responsibilities. The University has officially recognized the Foundation as its affiliated Foundation for the purposes and requirements as set forth in the BOR Policy 901.9 (Campus-Affiliated Foundations; Montana University System).

Foundation's Board of Trustees is responsible for the control and management of all assets of the Foundation. The Foundation, working with the University Chancellor, is responsible for planning and executing comprehensive fundraising and donor-acquisition programs in support of the institution's mission. This relationship and the parties' responsibilities are included in a formal memorandum of agreement that prescribes programs associated with annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, special projects and campaigns as appropriate.

The MSU-Northern Foundation is an affiliated foundation approved by the Montana Board of Regents to handle all fundraising activities for Montana State University-Northern. The purpose of the Foundation is to support the University through philanthropic efforts that meet the needs and goals of MSU-Northern. Annually the Foundation undergoes a separate independent audit that is reported to the BOR. The Foundation received an "unqualified" opinion on their 2015 fiscal year audit found here at, https://mus.edu/board/meetings/2015/Nov2015/AdminBudget/Audit%20Files/MSU%20Northern%20Foundation%20Audit.pdf .

The Foundation has adopted and follows the Association of Fundraising Professionals Donor Bill of Rights to ensure all fundraising is held to the highest professional and ethical standards. The donor bill of rights also ensures the maintaining of financial records to properly reflect the donor's wishes of where their donation is used and reporting of the use of gifts. In addition the Foundation remains in compliance by having an annual audit conducted by an external auditing firm. In order to comply with governmental requirements the Foundation continually reviews implements changes adopted at federal and/or state levels.

The Foundation and University have a clearly defined written agreement which is signed and reviewed bi-annually. The agreement is also presented to the Board of Regents for review and approval to maintain the affiliation between the two organizations found here at, https://mus.edu/board/meetings/2015/May2015/AdminBudget/167-2806-R0515_A1.pdf .

Section 2G: Physical and Technological Infrastructure

2.G.1 *Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.*

The 115-acre campus of Montana State University-Northern holds 595,745 square feet of learning and living space in twelve academic buildings, two single-sex residence halls, one family housing complex, six single-family housing units, and a student union/dining hall complex. The priority for the past several years has been to continue to improve MSU-Northern's facilities in order to create a supportive learning and living environment, as evidenced by the following roster of projects and improvements:

- MSU-Northern has dedicated resources to improve and maintain many of its existing campus historical artworks and landscape monument structures including recent renovations to the Kuhr Park Memorial and NMC Symbol Monument located at lower Cowan Drive. Several new site improvements such as the privately funded Jim Clark Memorial seating area located in the Courtyard between Cowan Hall and the Armory Gymnasium has provided students with a much needed place to gather and visit.

- Work was completed on MSU-Northern's Greenhouse structure which now provides a new modern outdoor laboratory and learning environment for supporting growth in our science and agriculture programs.

- Since the last NWCCU site visit, new flooring and carpet in several highly utilized student support areas for the student body has been completed. New carpet in the Student Success Center and the Cowan Hall Theatre to name a few.

- Continued dedicated site work improvements were made in replacing deteriorated or damaged sidewalks and repaving campus streets, including around the Student Union Building and Vande Bogart Library. MSU-Northern is currently working on plans for developing and constructing a Montana Motorcycle Rider Safety Program training range on our parking lots located directly south of the Armory Gymnasium which will improve access to the buildings in the south end of campus from 13th street west, one of Havre's busiest streets.

- MSU-Northern has moved forward with several ADA improvements including ADA curb access points on many main sidewalk paths, as well as ADA restroom improvements in Metals Technology and Cowan Hall's lower floor restroom facilities. Most importantly upgrades to the Cowan Hall Theatre

elevator increased public attendance to our theatre presentations and campus lectures in that space.

- Laboratory and classroom improvements in several campus facilities were completed the past couple of years, namely a state of the art smart room located in Cowan Hall room 314 which uses the latest technology. The Electronics Technology building is now home to a National Coalition of Certification Center (NC3) lab in ET room 102 and a NARS (National Academy of Railroad Sciences) training lab in ET room 103. Also, many classrooms in the Hagener Science Center and the Brockmann Center received new paint, new flooring and upgraded whiteboards to provide a better, more modern learning environment for our students. The University Facilities Planning Board has made renovations to our existing infrastructure the highest priority.

- As of March 2016, the Student Union Building's third floor is now the home of the Little River Institute (LRI). Funded by a U.S. Department of Education's Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) program grant, the LRI provides students with culturally responsive tutoring and mentoring services, as well as a gathering space where students can participate in the campus activities sponsored in cooperation with the campus Sweetgrass Society. MSU-Northern is now developing a project to install an elevator in the Student Union Building in order to provide ADA access to all floors in this facility.

- The most important upcoming capital construction project for MSU-Northern since construction of the Applied Technology Center in 2005 and the campus Courtyard in 2007 will the Diesel Technology Center, a $9.9 million state-of-the-art training facility which will support growth in one of the University's signature nationally recognized programs, diesel technology, as well as allow the University to expand its curriculum and offerings in other related training. After a highly successful two-year capital campaign which began in October 2014 to raise matching private funds to a state legislative appropriation, this high profile project is scheduled to begin construction in the fall of 2016 will provide MSU-Northern with the ability to grow those programs for an additional 500 students.

Moreover, the now- vacant Donaldson Hall (a former residence hall, constructed in the mid-1930's) has be stabilized for future use via a project that included re-pointing of the brick, repair of window sills, and upgrades to the foundation drainage system. The University now has plans to obtain private and/or federal grant funding to provide a home for a Veteran's Success Center. This proposal has the support of U.S. Senator Jon Tester and many others.

Additionally, numerous energy conservation projects have continued in various campus buildings to provide efficiency and reduce the campus's carbon footprint. Most notably, a large HVAC upgrade in our Student Union Building and Food Services began this past spring. This project will provide for greatly needed improvements which will offer much improved space comfort for our students and staff using or working these critical areas, as well as

significant energy savings for the university.

2.G.2 The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.

MSU-Northern consistently applies all campus and Montana state policies and procedures to its campus activities. Hazardous materials such as waste oil, antifreeze, and other automotive waste products are currently collected in three locations on campus and properly removed each semester. The MSUN Facilities Services department reviews and revises all of its Safety Data Sheets (SDS) information binders regularly and has begun implementing the use of environmentally "green products" in the custodial department whenever applicable. The Physical Plant also implements the practice of removing rather than encapsulating all asbestos containing materials prior to all campus building and classroom renovations using the state's best abatement contractors and consultants to ensure public safety and policy enforcement.

Most recently, MSU-Northern has completed a large hazardous materials (asbestos) remediation project in Morgan Hall's old north wing which has been vacant since 1987 in order to prepare for a proposed future renovation of that wing.

2.G.3 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.

In 2002, a Campus Master Plan was drafted consisting of a Strategic Plan and an Educational Master Plan. In 2003-2004 MSU-Northern's University Facilities Planning Board worked on a planning study with the Montana State Department of Administration's A/E Division to draft a conceptual content for the MSU-N Facilities Master Plan. In March 2005, MSUN began reviewing the progress of the strategic initiatives and revising the goals set forth by the Master Plan 2002.

In 2012, former Chancellor James Limbaugh, had stated publicly that a master facilities plan could not be constructed without first understanding the needs of academic programs. However, the University must first decide what academic programs will be its priorities. Therefore, the University embarked on aggressive and ambitious Two-Year Strategic Initiative focusing on student success, enrollment growth, innovation, and the MSUN community. In addition to the evaluation and refinement of recruitment and retention processes, the University embarked on an aggressive academic program prioritization process, in which all 74 program offerings were evaluated in a faculty-led process. As a result, the University had identified 25 of 74 programs that will be either put into moratorium or eliminated. This process of review is a necessary first step before a legitimate facilities master plan—one that correctly reflects the facilities needs of our academic programs—could be constructed. Academic leadership has been engaged in the process of evaluating future program needs in partnership with faculty. Then the formal process of facilities planning will begin.

In the fall of 2014, MSU-Northern's current Chancellor, Greg Kegel, immediately embarked on an aggressive mission to transform MSU-Northern's campus with a goal of completing the

fund-raising of the matching Authority Only private funds of $3,000,000 required to a state legislative Long Range Building Program appropriation of $4,900,000 from the 63rd Legislative session to build a new Diesel Technology Center on the eastside of campus. During the 64th Legislative session, Chancellor Kegel was successful in lobbying and obtaining an additional LRBP fund appropriation of $1,000,000 as well as an additional $1,000,000 in Authority Only private matching funds. The University expects the now $9.9 million dollar project to begin in the fall of 2016, and the University expects this new facility will transform the current successful diesel program from a nationally recognized program into a world leader in diesel training education, and the new site plan for the building's location will be implemented into the overall campus master plan with its unique innovative design and landscape features which will be carried into development of a more comprehensive campus master plan. Chancellor Kegel has called this project a "Game Changer" which he expects will bring MSU-Northern up to 500 students in the near future. This first-class facility will also have enhanced parking, walkways and landscaping which will improve access to the campus housing areas.

Chancellor Kegel also immediately reorganized the former Chancellor's Council, a campus advisory committee, into the "Strategic Advancement Team" which began immediately on developing innovative recruiting and retention goals and strategies. The committee members were divided into active "Charge Groups" to research and develop strategic plans for some of the most ambitious proposals that MSU-Northern has ever embarked on:

● Develop an Equine/ Horsemanship program with the help and support of the local ranching community. Many of the largest ranches in Montana are located within 50 miles of the University, and they have expressed the desperate need for well-trained work force to work their ranches. This program would greatly enhance the University's existing agriculture program, expand the rodeo team recruitment and partner with Montana State University's Northern Agricultural Research Center located at Montana's historic Fort Assinniboine.

● MSU-Northern is currently investigating the need for a Comprehensive Veteran's Success Center; moreover, the University is seeking federal and/or private funding with the assistance and support of United States Senator Jon Tester, U. S. Representative Ryan Zinke, and many other local and state officials in order to renovate Donaldson Hall (a former residence hall) into a state-of the-art facility to assist and provide our nation's veterans with housing, counseling services, tutoring, a fitness center, lounges, and various academic programs.

● In order to provide for growth in its athletic programs, the University is currently researching the possibility of building a new multi-purpose sports facility called the Lights Football Stadium. Development of conceptual marketing materials will offer the University the opportunity to aggressively seek funding for the project through a massive capital campaign. MSU-Northern has received incredible local public support for this proposal.

● Montana is home to 7 Indian reservations and the state-recognized Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and MSU-Northern has the highest percentage rate of Native American students of any university in the Montana University System at 12%. Chancellor Kegel stated in October 2015 that he would like to see that number grow to 20 %. The University also has

received a $1.9 million grant from the Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) program from the U.S. Department of Education which will fund program support and education assistance to our Native American students for five years. MSU-Northern is the only university in Montana's history to be awarded a NASNTI grant. This grant was used to fund the Little River Institute (LRI) located in the top floor of the Student Union Building which provides a place for students to study or receive tutoring, as well as a meeting place for the Sweetgrass Society and the Northern Native Alumni Association. This grant also provides the basis for MSU-Northern to propose moving forward with the development of a much larger Native American Cultural Center in the near future in order to recruit and retain Native American students to reach the University's target goal of a 20% Native student population; furthermore, offering Montana's Native Americans with the opportunity of a first class education that works. MSU-Northern's extensive Native American artifact collection located in its Louis and Antoinette Hagener Museum of the Northern Montana Plains Indian at the Vande Bogart Library would be incorporated into this revolutionary project in order to educate the world about Montana's rich and diverse history.

● Through the Montana State's Long Range Building Program (LRBP) which was initiated by the Montana Legislature in 1965 to provide funding for construction and maintenance of state buildings, MSU-Northern has presented its next most important project which is to renovate the Hagener Science Center built in 1968 to provide a state-of-the-art facility in order to expand the Allied Health programming and meet the growing needs of rural healthcare with our nursing program.

2.G.4 *Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution's mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.*

College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing

Nursing

The ASN and BSN programs provide innovative and advanced instruction via advanced technological and educational resources in the classroom and the most current and cutting edge health care equipment for experiential learning and labs. At the Havre Campus two classrooms are designated solely for nursing instruction; one as a SMART classroom and the other outfitted with computer, projector, DVD capability, etc. The Lewistown Campus hosts two classrooms dedicated for nursing students, and all the Great Falls classrooms have SMART technology. Nursing faculty can deliver lecture content using varied and sophisticated instructional approaches.

The Nursing Department excels in terms of its laboratory and clinical instruction. Two lab areas are designated for the Havre Campus and are fully equipped with Sim-Man, Sim-Mom, and a number of mannequins used for patient simulations; these lab areas are staged to mirror health clinics and/or hospitals. The Lewistown Campus boasts a fully-functioning simulated hospital with six to seven laboratory stations equipped with Sim-Man, Sim-Mom, and mannequins. The Great Falls campus is also equipped with laboratory stations in a simulated hospital setting.

Sim-Mom, Sim-Man, etc. and is currently in storage awaiting return to the Havre campus. Laboratory resources were purchased primarily through a Federal Perkins Pathways Grant. Recently, grant funding was used to purchase a Sim-Baby in order for students to have pediatric laboratory experiences.

As part of their National League for Nursing Accreditation self-study process, faculty and students were asked whether the "Physical resources (classrooms, laboratories, offices, etc.) are sufficient to ensure the achievement of the nursing education unit outcomes and meet the needs of faculty, staff, and students." Student surveys indicated that 85% of students agree that these resources are optimal for meeting educational outcomes, 85% of faculty agree on that same point, as well. Furthermore, 85% of the faculty maintain that "the fiscal, physical, technological, and learning resources are sufficient to meet the needs of faculty and students and ensure that students achieve learning outcomes."

Graphic Design

Graphic Design coursework is delivered in the MAC computer lab classroom on the first floor of Cowan Hall. This classroom has the advantage of SMART technology, in order for lecture material to be delivered using enhanced visual images, as well as sufficient Mac computers for students to work on their individual graphic design projects in a comfortable, supervised setting.

Biology

Biology and Chemistry classrooms, laboratories and faculty offices are housed in Hagener Science Center.

In terms of laboratory equipment, sufficient lab space and lab stations exist to deliver coursework. Lecture material is enhanced through the use of instructional technology. Because of our rural, agricultural-based location, student learning is enhanced by numerous biological artifacts generally donated by former faculty members, local ranchers and farmers, which are then preserved and maintained in the laboratory classrooms. Sufficient student laboratory fees are designated for the purchase of consumable classroom supplies.

Over the 2014-2015 and 2015 - 2016 academic years, MSUN's recently hired biology professor developed a herbarium in an unused classroom and repurposed an unused chemistry laboratory as a genetics laboratory. In addition, a botany teaching garden was installed outside of Hagener Science Center. A greenhouse was also installed and equipped. This process was funded through a combination of science laboratory fees and College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing support. The funding for the greenhouse was through grant money obtained by the Advance Fuels Group and contributions from the College of Technical Sciences.

Art

Fine Arts coursework and faculty offices are located in Pershing Hall, a historically significant building in the center of Montana State University—Northern's campus. Several classroom spaces provide ample instructional and project work areas for students.

College of Technical Sciences

The College of Technical Sciences houses a number of equipment intensive programs, with a variety of different equipment needs to support the MSUN mission, core theme objectives and achievement of goals.

Automotive, Diesel, and Ag Mechanics

The mechanical technology programs, including Automotive, Diesel, and Ag Mechanics, have a vast array of tools, instruments, and specialized equipment that is used to support their instruction. Areas of concentration include mining, construction, transportation, railroad, shipping, and agriculture. In general, this equipment meets program demands in quantity, is relativity new, and is in good operating condition. In addition to this equipment, the programs own and maintain a fleet of vehicles that include automobiles, light trucks, and on-highway semi-trucks and trailers. The equipment and vehicles are managed and maintained by a fulltime tool room and equipment manager. Supplemental equipment is loaned to the program by industry partners (e.g., T&E Catepillar, Torgerson's, Case-IH, and Modern Machinery) for student use in course labs.

Agriculture

The agriculture program in the COTS utilizes current technology in the form of hand-held GPS units, grain and soil testing equipment, GPS/GIS equipment attached to a Dodge pick-up and a spray trailer. Agriculture degree students have the advantage of using this technology within specific courses to enhance their learning experience and relating to the "real world". The equipment currently meets the needs of the program.

Welding, Plumbing, and Electrical

The trades programs include programs in Welding, Plumbing, and Electrical. The equipment in these programs meets the program demands and is in relatively new condition. Their lab space in each of these areas has recently been revamped and planning is currently underway for a new ventilation system for welding lab. Both plumbing and electrical benefit from industry support through donated equipment and supplies.

Civil Engineering and Design Drafting

The Civil Engineering and Design Drafting areas are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment in computers, software, peripherals, 3D printers, and survey instruments. Civil Engineering is currently renovating a lab space to meet the laboratory needs. The CAD/CAMM component is supported by CNC mills and lathes, industrial grade welding robots, and PlasmaCam cutting machines.

Business Programs

The Business department utilizes a new 40 seat computer lab and a new 20 seat computer lab with dedicated high tech delivery equipment. The addition of a new PolyCom interactive video laboratory will allow business, CET, and diesel to broadcast courses live to remote sites.

Technological Infrastructure

2.G.5 *Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

To help a diverse student population succeed (as noted in [the mission](#)and core themes), MSU- Northern provides a comprehensive technical infrastructure that supports the University's programs and services. The University employs industry standard network and server hardware sufficient in capacity to meet existing and near-term information systems' needs. The technical infrastructure of the institution is maintained and upgraded to keep up with changing technological needs and requirements.

The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for MSU-Northern is Banner. Student, Financial Aid, Fiscal, and Human Resources systems are provided by MSU-Bozeman.

University operational technology systems, infrastructure and classroom systems are centrally managed by Information Technology Services (ITS). The ITS department consists of a Chief Information Officer and six full-time technical specialists. Operational functions in ITS are supported by an array of over 40 physical and virtual application, web and file servers, over 600 desktop, laptop and tablet computers, and over 150 printers. The physical network includes over 3,870 network drops located throughout the MSUN campus and residence halls.

Computers are deployed in business operations centers, e.g., Admissions, Business Services, Registrar, etc., staff and faculty offices, technology enhanced classrooms, computer labs and in the library. Twenty-four classrooms of our classrooms provide instructors with a desktop or laptop computer and an overhead projector. Several of these classrooms have enhanced technology and also include document cameras, VCR/DVD players, powered projection screens and a sound system.

MSUN standardizes on Microsoft Windows and Apple operating systems. Dell hardware is the standard desktop and server platform used to deliver information services to students, faculty and staff. Network devices are standardized on Cisco devices and wireless systems are standardized on Aruba devices.

MSUN maintains a data and network operations center with backup power and an HVAC system separate from the main building HVAC service. A temperature, power and noise level monitoring system is configured to alert ITS staff of any problems. In addition to a backup generator, UPSs provide additional protection against power failures, brownouts and power spikes.

MSUN receives its primary Internet connection through the State of Montana ITSD. Since our last report we have increased our capabilities by purchasing additional bandwidth, increasing the primary Internet connection from 25MB to 40MB. Additional Internet connectivity for the residence halls, both wired and wireless networks, and for the campus guest wireless network, has also been secured and is delivered on a separate network by a local service provider, Triangle Communications.

Projects that have been recently completed or are in progress to enhance MSUN's ability to deliver appropriate technology systems to meet the expectations and needs of students and the University community are:

- Continuing upgrading of classroom technology to enhance the delivery of course content and interaction between instructors and students;
- Videoconferencing capabilities are now available in four classrooms - Brockmann 202, Cowan Hall 314 & 319, Lewistown 205 - and in the SUB Fireside Conference room. Video conferencing equipment is also available with two portable cart systems - one in Havre and one in Lewistown. This allows the University Faculty to deliver course work and programming to distance sites and enables connections with external partners to enhance learning opportunities for students, as noted in core theme three;
- Additional video conferencing and screen sharing capability is now available for faculty and staff via cloud based WebEx. WebEx will soon be available to students so they will also be able to present information, share applications and collaborate on projects all in real time whenever they want;
- Instructor podium upgrades continue and include a Kramer Scaler, document camera, PC, Sympodium, Extron Push-button Controller, projector, powered projection screen and sound system;
- Wireless coverage has been expanded to cover the residence halls. Wireless coverage in other campus areas has been enhanced by adding additional access points, and existing access points in many locations have been upgraded. MSUN now has over 170 access points across campus;
- A Websense appliance now provides additional protection for all campus desktop computers by blocking web threats which reduces malware infections. This helps decrease Help Desk trouble tickets and frees up valuable IT resources.
- Office 365 is now provided free of charge for all current employee and registered students' personal use.

2.G.6 The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.

The University provides resources for faculty, staff and students to support the effective use of technology and instructional systems. These resources include a centralized ITS Help Desk, instructional technology training, and in-office support. Students, staff and faculty may contact the ITS Help Desk by way of telephone, email, a website trouble ticket system, and our walk-in help desk service counter.

2.G.7 *Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services.*

MSU-Northern has a Technology Council whose purpose is to provide opportunity for members of the campus community to offer input and recommendations regarding campus information technology planning, purchases, and policies. The Technology Council membership consists of at least:
- one faculty representative from each college,
- one student,
- one classified staff,
- one classified exempt staff,
- one representative from each of the following offices:
  - Library,
  - Registrar,
  - Extended University,
  - Finance and Administration,
- Provost, and
- Chief Information Officer (CIO) (Chair, meeting convener).

Additionally, the University holds membership in the 1MSU Enterprise IT Governance Council, which is comprised of representatives from each of the four institutions within the Montana State University cohort of the Montana University System (Montana State University, Montana State University-Billings, Montana State University-Northern, and Great Falls College-Montana State University). This group operates with the concept that each of the universities within the cohort contributes to the overall management of IT with a focus on efficiency in information technology operations on a macro level in addition to meeting the needs of their respective campuses, stating that "IT Governance is responsible for enterprise-wide prioritization of information technology investments across all four campuses to assure alignment with strategic direction, to maximize value, minimize risk, and provide transparency to constituents. In its advisory role to the President, the Enterprise IT Governance Council represents information technology needs to enable the learning, discovery, and engagement mission of the Montana State University enterprise".

2.G.8 *The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.*

MSUN ITS supports the University mission by continually upgrading and improving the technological infrastructure to provide ongoing support for the operations, programs, and services offered by the institution. Funding sources available to ITS include general allocation, Computer Fee, Equipment Fee, Technology Fee and Infrastructure Fee monies. ITS has a technology asset inventory and tracking system that helps support a technology refresh plan which ensures equipment is replaced when it reaches end-of-life. The refresh plan calls for an

annual review of equipment and includes desktop, laptop and tablet computer systems, printers, smart classroom equipment, access points, servers, network switches and routers.

Standard Two Conclusion

Chapter Two of the Year Seven Self-Study Report provides evidence that MSUN has adequate resources and capacity to fulfill its mission, accomplish the core theme objectives, and achieve the goals of the University's programs and services. Within the preceding report, this capacity is demonstrated by its approach to governance, hiring personnel, supporting students, offering quality programs, handling finances, and overseeing its facilities. As a public institution and one that is an affiliated campus of the Montana State University (MSU) system, MSUN must implement its mission and vision within the parameters of the "One MSU" blueprint, legislatively authorized state support, tuition revenue, and state policy initiatives. MSUN considers its governance process to be strong and functioning well within the mission of the institution. The Montana State University-Northern community is expected to consider the mission when planning for the future success of the institution.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN
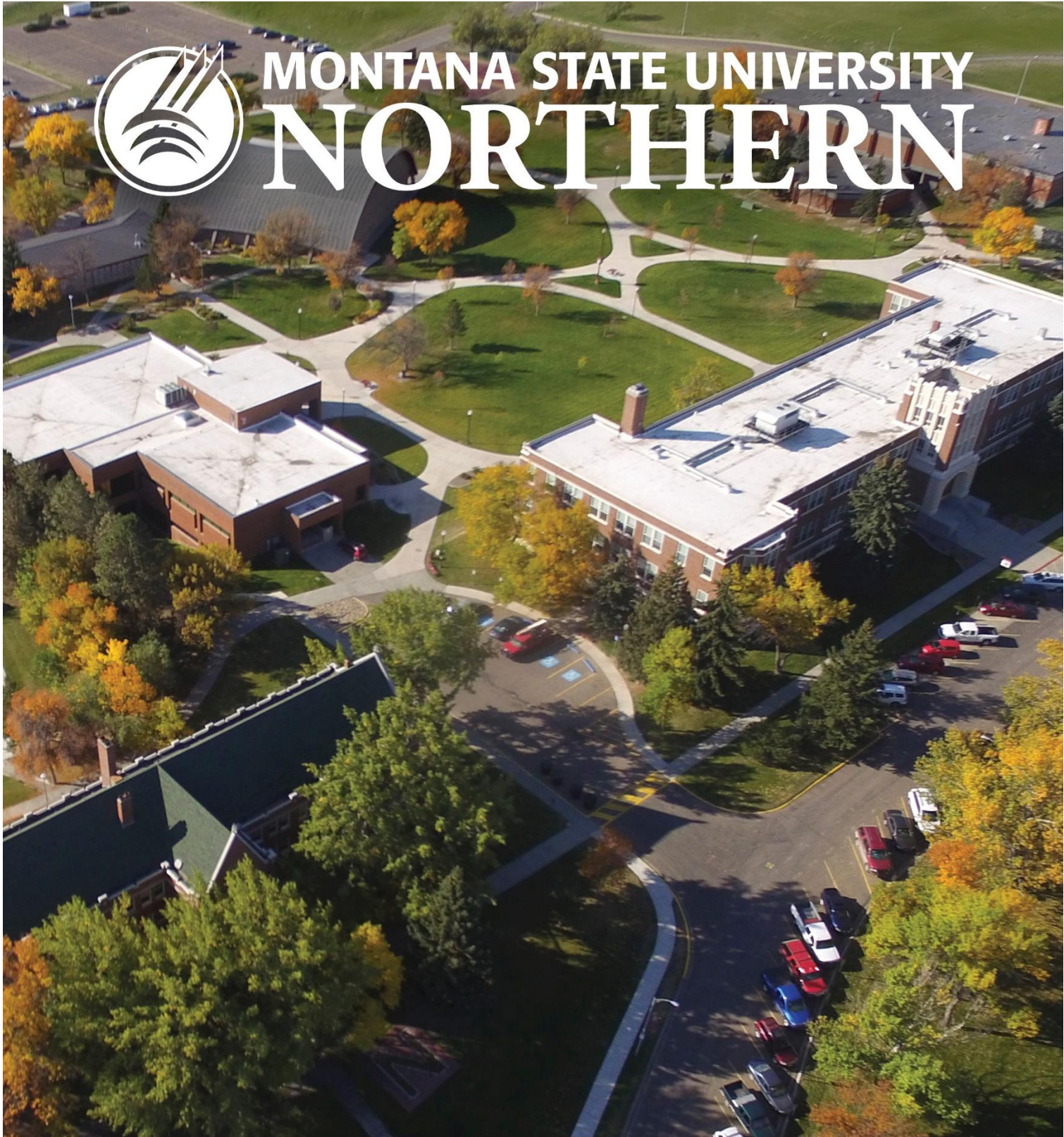
STANDARD THREE:
INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

Standard Three: Planning and Implementation

The institution engages in ongoing, participatory planning that provides direction for the institution and leads to the achievement of the intended outcomes of its programs and services, accomplishment of its core themes, and fulfillment of its mission. The resulting plans reflect the interdependent nature of the institution's operations, functions, and resources. The institution demonstrates that the plans are implemented and are evident in the relevant activities of its programs and services, the adequacy of its resource allocation, and the effective application of institutional capacity. In addition, the institution demonstrates that its planning and implementation processes are sufficiently flexible so that the institution is able to address unexpected circumstances that have the potential to impact the institution's ability to accomplish its core theme objectives and to fulfill its mission.

Section 3: Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirement 22

Eligibility Requirement 22. Student Achievement
The institution identifies and publishes the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. The institution engages in regular and ongoing assessment to validate student achievement of these learning outcomes.

All degree programs available at MSUN have expected learning outcomes and these are published in the institution's catalog. Each course within the program also has student learning outcomes and these are found on the course syllabus presented to the student at the beginning of each semester. The institution through the use of Student Learning Assessment Plans engages in regular and ongoing assessment to validate student achievement of the learning outcomes.

Section 3A: Institutional Planning

3.A.1. *The institution engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission. Its plans are implemented and made available to appropriate constituencies.*

Montana State University-Northern does participate in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated and comprehensive planning that leads to the fulfillment of our mission. The primary institutional planning group has been the Chancellor's Council and the University Advisory Committee. The arrival of Chancellor Limbaugh in 2012 signaled a revitalized initiative for institutional evaluation. Within the first six months of Chancellor Limbaugh's arrival, an Action Roster was developed which was the foundation for his Transitional Strategic Plan. The Transitional Strategic Plan involved four tenets:

- Examining and engaging the MSUN community;
- Becoming more innovative;
- Focusing on enrollment growth; and
- Ensuring student success.

The action roster prioritized campus wide projects based on surveys of students, faculty and staff. The initiatives that were identified for the Action Roster included:

- Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention;
- Faculty/Staff Salaries;
- Campus Safety and Disaster Management;
- Data Management;
- Grant Management;
- Academic Prioritization Process/New Academic Program;
- On-line Feasibility Study
- Planning;
- Facilities Use Review and Facilities Master Plan;
- Student Learning Assessment Plan and Unit Continuous Improvement Plans
- Academic Scheduling;
- Day Care Center;
- Morgan Wing Demolition;
- Native American Collection;
- Facilities Upgrades; and
- Budget Preparation.

By 2013/14 a number of the initiatives identified on the Action Roster had been addressed. The Campus Safety and Disaster Management initiative had resulted in the reestablishment of the Campus Safety and Disaster committee which has recommended the implementation of the Campus Alert System. They were instrumental in developing the relationship with the Havre Police Department. The committee has helped to develop active shooter training that resulted in an onsite workshop during Spring break 2016. Other initiatives addressed included the hiring of a grant manager, the development of the Museum of the Plains Indians to house the Native American Artifact Collection, and the establishment of the Budget Advisory Committee to address budget preparation transparency.

Another initiative addressed by the institution was the initiation of a Program Prioritization Review in the fall of 2012. This process was directed by the Academic Council under the direction of the Provost. Every program area was charged with evaluating the status of each and every degree or certificate program and making a recommendation to the Academic Council whether to "grow" the program, "maintain" the program or to "terminate". The evaluation of the programs was to key on support of the mission of the institution, vision statement and the fulfilling of the institutions core themes. The Academic Council made recommendations to the Provost who then made a recommendation to the Chancellor. The Chancellor made the final determination as to the status of the program (Appendix EE Chancellor's Program Prioritization Review). The Chancellor presented his final determination to the campus community in open forums, coverage in the local media, and to the Board of Regents. The result was the termination of 5 degree programs, 3 certificate programs, and 4 minors. In addition, 14 degree programs, 2 certificate programs, 3 minor programs and one endorsement area were all placed in moratorium.

Chancellor Limbaugh routinely communicated with the campus community by posting updates in the Northern Network News with links to supporting documents. An example of an action roster update can be found in Appendix DDD. He also routinely conducted open forums for faculty, staff and students.

Chancellor Limbaugh left the institution August 2014. Chancellor Kegel was appointed to his position in August 2014 as an interim. In May 2015 he was named permanent Chancellor. The Chancellor's Council morphed into the Strategic Advancement Team. The Strategic Advancement Team (SAT) currently functions as the chief advisory entity for the Chancellor on all matters pertaining to University policies, procedures, goals and actions. The Chancellor, in fall 2015, challenged the SAT to develop initiatives that would support his primary goals of recruitment and retention of students which support the institutions core themes #1, #2 and #3. The nine initiatives currently being investigated are:

- Adding a horsemanship minor,
- Scheduling enhancements,
- Industry Partnerships,
- Enhancing Student Life,
- Collaboration with Great Falls College and the Lewistown center,
- Building a football stadium and events center on campus,
- Building a Native American Cultural Center,
- Building a comprehensive Veterans Center, and
- Expanding fine arts offerings.

The SAT was divided into "charge" groups to develop information and data for support of these initiatives. Periodically the charge groups present the gathered data to the SAT. The Chancellor provides updates on the progress of these initiatives to the Student Senate, University Advisory Committee, Advisory Board, Associate of Foundation Board, Alumni Board, Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Regents.

The Budget Advisory Committee is another campus committee that in conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), also known as the Vice Chancellor for Finances, advises on and oversees the institutional budget as it is being constructed, thus influencing the allocation of resources to support the mission of the institution. The committee has representatives of the administration, classified staff, faculty and students and it is their responsibility to report to their constituents the activities of the committee. The CFO reports to the Chancellor the recommendations put forth by the Budget Advisory Committee.

The University Facilities Planning Committee under the direction of the CFO works to address the infrastructure needs of the campus. The committee is responsible for developing a priority list of projects that support the institution master plan and support the institution's mission. The projects that are undertaken support core theme 1 by providing instructors with the tools to cultivate teaching and learning excellence in environments that are conducive for student learning. In addition, the University Facilities Planning Committee makes recommendations to the Chancellor for projects to be submitted to the Montana University System Long Range

Building Program (LRBP).   The Montana University System prioritizes the projects on the LRBP and then submits the plan to the Montana Legislature for approval.

The institution measures mission achievement through the assessment of the multiple indicators of achievement which support the three core themes. These indicators include student satisfaction which is periodically measured in the NSSE surveys, student evaluations, student retention, and employer surveys. In addition, program advisory boards and outside accrediting bodies provide feed-back to program faculty.

3.A.2. *The institution's comprehensive planning process is broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies.*

At the start of the 2015/2016 academic year each institutional employee was challenged to provide one goal that they viewed as supporting the recruitment and retention of students. The Chancellor met on several occasions with each academic content area and each institutional department to hear of the progress of each individual being made towards achieving these goals.

Chancellor Kegel initiated in the fall of 2014 a series of small gatherings at the Chancellor's house for dinner and conversation. These gatherings, which have continued through 2015/2016, provide the Chancellor an opportunity to inform the stakeholders of the vision and plans the institution is working on. These gatherings also provide an opportunity for the Chancellor to solicit input and ideas from the stakeholders on the direction of the institution.

The program Advisory Boards are another source of input on program development and program curriculum. In addition, Advisory Boards also have the freedom to provide input to the program faculty on the direction and vision of the institution.

3.A.3. *The institution's comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate fulfillment of its mission.*

The evaluation of mission fulfillment is linked to the indicators of achievement that support the core themes:
- Core Theme 1: Comprehensive Programs;
    - Indicators of achievement include:
        - Student retention and graduation rates;
        - Student pass rates and scores on state and national exams;
        - Programs meet state and national accreditation of standards;
        - Providing environments conducive for learning; and
        - Rates of satisfaction with academic areas; academic support services; and institutional resources.
- Core Theme 2: Student Success;
    - Indicators of achievement include:
        - Graduate and Employer surveys;
        - Student pass rates and scores on state and national exams;
        - Rates of student engagement in campus life;

- Quantity and quality of event sponsorships and student, staff and faculty participation in multicultural activities, clubs, courses and projects; and
- Rates of student engagement.

Core Theme 3: Inclusive Partnerships;

Indicators of achievement include:
- Creation of advisory boards;
- Programs meet state and national accreditation standards;
- Programs or disciplines require collaborative/external learning experiences;
- Number of successful external and applied research projects; and
- Amount of external funding – grants, contracts, materials, equipment, and scholarship for MSUN.

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) was established in 2013 with a faculty member given release time to develop an assessment platform and data collections that could be used to evaluate the fulfillment of the institution's mission. In the summer of 2014, the faculty member went back to full-time instruction. The faculty member was responsible for developing and implementing the General Education Assessment system, the Student Learning Assessment Plan (SLAPs) and the Unit Continuous Improvement Plan (UCIPs) formats that were the basis for general education assessment, academic program assessment and institutional assessment, respectively. Unfortunately, when the faculty member left the research post, it became difficult for faculty and staff to gain access to the platforms to input data as well as maintain the programs. A programmer in the Registrar's office was then appointed the Interim Director of the Office of Institutional Research and took over the maintenance of these platforms and it continued to be difficult to work with them to input data. In the fall of 2015, the Assessment Committee determined that it was time to investigate acquiring a new system that could be easy for faculty and staff to input data as well as retrieve data collections for analysis. The assessment committee recommended to the Executive Committee the selection of Task Stream as the vendor to provide an assessment system to the institution. Fall 2016 the Task Stream system will be implemented. Once Task Stream has been implemented, the Education department will be looking to add on the Learner Management System (LMS) to expand the data collection and analysis capabilities for the assessment system used by the education program. By having the Task Stream assessment system in place with consultants to operate and maintain the programs will allow the faculty and staff the ability to focus on completing regular assessments and using the data to improve the programs and departments.

3.A.4. *The institution's comprehensive plan articulates priorities and guides decisions on resource allocation and application of institutional capacity.*

The institution's strategic plan developed by the Strategic Advancement Team consists of the five identified initiatives at this time. As the initiatives are studied and data is collected, evaluated and analyzed, they will be incorporated into the priority lists of key institution committees. As plans are developed for these initiatives, proposals will be presented to the Budget Advisory Committee and the University Facility Committee for discussion incorporation into the priority lists for projects. For large projects, proposals will be developed for inclusion in the Long Range Building Plans that go before the Board of Regents and the Legislature.

3.A.5. *The institution's planning includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupts normal institutional operations.*

Emergency planning at Montana State University-Northern is the responsibility of the Safety and Disaster Committee. The committee includes administrators, facilities personnel, staff and faculty with additional input from area emergency management authorities. A desktop emergency manual was developed and distributed to all faculty and staff and also was put on the MSUN website as part of the safety and disaster committee website. Evacuation maps were developed and distributed around campus.

Under the direction of the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, who oversees the physical facilities, the Safety and Disaster committee coordinates all aspects of developing policies, conducting drills, and providing direction during actual emergencies. The Safety and Disaster committee works with area emergency management authorities, Hill County Sheriff's department, Havre City Police and Fire Departments, in conducting drills. In 2015 Havre City Police provided "active shooter" training to key administrative personnel. In 2014 and 2015, MSU-Northern also participated in the Great Montana Shakeout event which simulated a statewide earthquake. The University publishes and has available online the annual campus Security and Fire Safety Report (Appendix DDD and online link). This report includes data and information on: Campus security and crime, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking prevention, and alcohol and substance abuse.

MSU-Northern in 2013/2014 developed the MSUN Alert emergency notification system which delivers critical information to MSU-Northern students, faculty and staff in the event of an emergency. The system delivers the emergency notifications through text messaging and emails. The MSUN Alert service is free to all enrolled students, faculty and staff that have registered their cellphones in the system.

The Information Technology Services (ITS) department has installed a back-up generator to keep the institutional servers operating in the case of a power outage. The institution accumulates an enormous amount of confidential information on students and employees. The campus student information system and employee information is located at the MSU campus in Bozeman, Montana in the Banner system in addition to hard copies of information securely stored on campus. MSUN's ITS department oversees incremental backup of the servers on campus. They perform a full back-up once a week. The first full backup of each month is taken offsite to a safety deposit box in a local bank. ITS weekly provides a full back-up of the email and SQ1 servers.

Extended University currently archives all the online courses back through 2009. They contract the Learning Management System (LMS) which is hosted through D2L/Brightspace which provides Tier 3 or greater hosting facilities. Tier 3 facilities are structured to include multiple system redundancies including power, networking, security, and environmental controls. Tier 3 facilities are also certified to maintain uptime of at least 99.982%. D2L maintains system and

data back-ups offsite to ensure that services can be restored quickly in the event of a disaster at their main hosting facility.

All faculty and staff are required to participate in training on blood borne pathogens, sexual harassment, and distracted driving. These training opportunities are provided every fall during campus orientation for faculty and staff. In the fall of 2015, MSU-Northern required students to receive training on alcohol use and sexual misconduct. MSU-Northern used two different computer tools for this purpose. The AlcoholEdu software was used to educate students about the risks involved with excessive alcohol consumption and the Haven software was used to provide students with information regarding Title IX compliance and student conduct as related to sexual issues.

Section 3.23: Eligibility Requirement 23. Institutional Effectiveness

The institution systematically applies clearly defined evaluation and planning procedures, assesses the extent to which it achieves its mission and core themes, uses the results of assessment to effect institutional improvement, and periodically publishes the results to its constituencies. Through these processes it regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact the institution and its ability to ensure its viability and sustainability.

MSUN instituted in 2011/2012 the assessment system for Student Learning Assessment Plans for the assessment of academic degree programs along with the University Continuous Improvement Plans for the assessment of the service/support programs. All of these assessment plans were developed based on supporting the institutional core themes. In 2012/2013 programs were pushed to complete their assessment plans, use the assessment plans to review the effectiveness of the programs and report out the results of the status of these assessments. Since that period, the evaluation process has been sporadic due to a multitude of issues and thus there has been limited progress.

Section 3B: Core Theme Planning

3.B.1. *Planning for each core theme is consistent with the institution's comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme's objectives.*

Any commitment of University resources for infrastructure, expanding programs, or personnel are inextricably linked to supporting the University mission and its core themes. Any new initiatives budgetary (re)allocations and personnel assignments are evaluated for potential success in advancing fulfillment of the mission and core themes. These initiatives are implemented based on resource availability.

3.B.2. *Planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of contributing components of those programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.*

All planning for academic programs or services that the University provides to students has as its foundation attainment of the mission of the University and supporting the core themes. Any development of new programs requires that faculty provide justification on how the program will enhance the mission of the University and the impact the new program will have on the financial commitment of the University. Any service that is proposed for development also must present in the proposal how the service meets the core themes and thus supports the mission of the institution. Any new service proposed must demonstrate where the funding will come from.

3.B.3. *Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for programs and services is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.*

The Office of Institutional Research is critical to providing key data sets to faculty, staff and administrators. The development of specific data sets, with specific timelines attached to them, are key in supporting the planning processes of the institution. The validity of the data is also a critical element.

The institution collects an enormous amount of data that is infrequently gathered, analyzed and evaluated except for the periodic uses associated with accreditation visits. Developing a routine of data analysis, evaluation and review is critical for MSU-Northern to be able to fulfill its mission for the students and the citizens of Montana.

STANDARD FOUR:
CORE THEME PLANNING, ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Standard Four – Effectiveness and Improvement

The institution regularly and systematically collects data related to clearly defined indicators of achievement, analyzes those data, and formulates evidence-based evaluations of the achievement of core theme objectives. It demonstrates clearly defined procedures for evaluating the integration and significance of institutional planning, the allocation of resources, and the application of capacity in its activities for achieving the intended outcomes of its programs and services and for achieving its core theme objectives. The institution disseminates assessment results to its constituencies and uses those results to effect improvement.

Section 4A: Assessment

4.A.1. *The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data – quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement – as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.*

At the start of implementation of the institution wide accreditation system, institutional goals were developed by the Executive Council. The goals were established to assess the successful implementation of the initiatives established in 2011/2012 by the action roster developed by Chancellor Limbaugh. MSU-Northern will reach the following institutional goals:

- Headcount enrollment goal
    - o 1,322 students in fall 2013
    - o 1,350 students in fall 2014
    - o 1,391 students in fall 2015

- Retention goal – 70% retention for all 2017 cohort
    - o 2013 cohort retention – 60%
    - o 2014 cohort retention – 63%
    - o 2015 cohort retention – 65%
    - o 2016 cohort retention – 67%
    - o 2017 cohort retention - 70%

During the spring semester of 2011, the Assessment and Accreditation Committee began the development of a basic framework for a campus-wide assessment plan based on the work of Walvoord and Banta, in *Assessment Clear and Simple, 2010.* However, by spring semester 2012, the MSUN Assessment and Accreditation Committee had switched gears and developed a campus-wide assessment plan, based on Peggy L. Maki's book, *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution* (2010), which examined 16 steps to a comprehensive assessment cycle.

The Assessment and Accreditation Committee members divided into two sub-committees: one focused on assessing programming and the other reviewing unit operations that served students, i.e., Business Services, Registrar's Office, Admissions, etc. The programming sub-

committee was chaired by a faculty member and the unit sub-committee was chaired by a staff member.

Sub-committees met every two weeks to develop a plan of action and then created the assessment plan for programming and the assessment plan for units. The full Assessment and Accreditation Committee met once each month to review the assessment plans as they were being developed. As an end result, the Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) culminated in the creation of the Student Learning Assessment Plans (SLAPs) for all minors, certificate and degree programs and Unit Continuous Improvement Plans (UCIPs) for campus-wide departments (units) providing support services to students. An example of the SLAP for Graphic Design can be found in Appendix FFF. An example of an UCIP for Academic Affairs can be found in Appendix GGG. The SLAP has 16 tasks (steps) for each goal within the program. See Table 19, The 16 Steps of the SLAP Process, below. The number of goals range from 1 to 8, with 57% of minors, certificates, and degree programs having 3 or 4 goals.

Table 19.
The 16 Steps of the SLAP Process

Student Learning Assessment Plan Steps
A. State Your Expected Learning Goal.
B. Identify Institutional Core Themes supported by this Student Learning Goal.
C. Identify Student Learning Outcomes that address the Learning Goal.
D. Identify where expected outcomes are addressed.
E. Determine methods and criteria to assess outcomes.
F. Establish your level of expected performance.
G. Identify Baseline information.
H. Determine who you will assess.
I. Establish a schedule for assessment.
J. Determine who will do this assessment.
K. Determine who will review and interpret results
L. Describe how results will inform teaching, learning and decision making
M. Determine how and with whom you will share results
N. Determine who will keep assessment records
O. Determine who will make decisions about courses, programs, etc. as a result of assessment
P. Decide how your program will document recommendations and follow up on actions taken

The UCIP has 16 tasks (steps) for each goal within the unit. See Table 20, the 16 Steps of the UCIP Process below. The number of goals developed by the various units range from 1 to 8, with 4% of units having 8 goals, 22% having 4 goals, 20% having 3 goals, 33% having 2 goals, and 20% having 1 goal.

Table 20.
The 16 Steps of the UCIP Process

Unit Continuous Improvement Plan Steps
A. State Your Expected Unit Goal.
B. Identify Institutional Core Themes supported by this Unit Goal.
C. Identify Objectives that address the Unit Goal.
D. Identify where expected objectives are addressed.
E. Determine methods and criteria to assess objectives.
F. Establish your level of expected performance.
G. Identify Baseline information.
H. Determine what/who you will assess.
I. Establish a schedule for assessment.
J. Determine who will do this assessment.

K. Determine who will review and interpret results.	
L. Describe how results will inform decision making.	
M. Determine how and with whom you will share results.	
N. Determine who will keep assessment records.	
O. Determine who will make decisions about the unit as a result of assessment.	
P. Decide how your unit will document recommendations and follow up on actions taken.	

The Institutional Assessment system (SLAPs and UCIPs) was built electronically and housed on the Institutional Assessment intranet-site. The process and organization of the SLAP/UCIP database and policies consists of a continuous assessment process with specific check-in deadlines.

The Student Learning Assessment process consists of the program faculty establishing Student Learning Goals and Student Learning Outcomes with objective measurements to assess the learning outcomes. Faculty members are to enter goals/objectives/outcomes/measurements into the SLAP database by October 15th for the upcoming (current) academic year. Faculty then have the fall/spring (and summer session) semesters to collect assessment data. During the fall semester of the following academic year, by September 30th, faculty enter assessment results, their comments on the individual goals, objectives, outcomes, and their decisions concerning their goals and outcomes for the upcoming year. At this time, the plans are closed. By October 15th, faculty members update plans for the new academic year to include any changes that were decided upon from their analysis. A summary of the schedule is presented below in Table 21.

Table 21. Schedule Timeline for Faculty Input into the SLAP

Target Date	Action	Responsible Party
October 15th	Goals, objectives, outcomes, measurements, and any changes to the plan are entered	Faculty
fall/spring/summer semesters	Collection of data	Faculty
By September 30th of the following academic year	Assessment data is entered into the assessment plan and plan closed	Faculty
October 15th of the following academic year	Assessment plans updated	Faculty

The SLAP database has an option for the Assessment and Accreditation Committee to review assessment plans and enter comments for faculty review. The final deadline for plan adjustments is October 30th at which time the plan is locked.

The Unit Continuous Improvement Plan process consists of the unit personnel establishing unit goals and unit objectives with measurements to assess the objectives. Personnel enter goals/objectives/measurements into the UCIP database by October 15th for the upcoming (current) academic year. Units then have the fiscal year to collect assessment data. During July of the following fiscal year, personnel enter assessment results, their comments on the individual goals and objectives, and their decisions concerning their goals and objectives for the upcoming year. At this time, the plans are closed. By August 15th, personnel update plans for the new fiscal year to include any changes that were decided upon from their analysis. A summary of the schedule is presented below in Table 22.

Table 22. Schedule Timeline for the UCIP

Target Date	Action	Responsible Party
October 15th	Goals, objectives, outcomes, measurements and any changes to the plan are entered	Unit Personnel
July 31st of the following year	Up to this time, personnel enter assessment results for goals and objectives	Unit Personnel
August 15th of the following year	Update plans based on assessment results	Unit Personnel

The UCIP database has an option for the Assessment and Accreditation Committee to review unit plans and enter comments for personnel review. The final deadline for plan adjustments is August 30th, at which time the plan is locked.

The Assessment Committee was given the responsibility of going through all the SLAPs and UCIPs, reviewing them and determining if the plans were acceptable or unacceptable. No other comments were included in the summary reports. Upon the completion of the review, progress came to a halt by a series of events; which included the removal of the assessment committee chairman and a serious complaint filed against an administrator, which proceeded to disrupt the institution for over two years ultimately resulting in the resignation of the Provost and subsequently the Chancellor.

In addition to the above mentioned difficulties, the campus-based assessment system software became very difficult to utilize by faculty, staff and administrators. As a result of the ongoing failures in the campus-based software in terms of reliability and support, the Assessment Committee (AC) determined in the fall of 2015, that an alternative computer solution was required. After obtaining tentative agreement from the Core Leadership Council (CLC), members of the Assessment Committee researched and examined currently available commercial products to support institutional assessment and data collection. The result of this examination revealed a variety of products that would meet the needs of assessment at Northern. Formal bids were solicited and based on function and cost, a recommendation from the AC to license 'Task Stream AMS' for use by the faculty and staff of Northern was made to the CLC. In spring semester 2016 this recommendation was approved and contracts with the provider were executed. Training for the implementation team was started in June 2016, with implementation and roll-out to the campus community scheduled for fall 2016. Existing data will be entered into the new system to allow longitudinal examination of performance, but the full usefulness of the information for data-driven decision making will begin spring 2017.

The Task stream System will provide data analysis reporting for assessments of Student Learning Assessment Plans (SLAP), and for Unit Continuous Improvement Plans (UCIP) that

both directly and indirectly provide assessment of the Indicators of Achievement of our Core Themes 1 and 2 – in the assessment and improvement of Academic Programs (SLAP) and for providing a student centered environment (UCIP).

MSUN utilizes the Ellucian Banner database to collect, maintain and report student academic, employee and financial data. Data may be accessed through Banner by authorized personnel, especially the institutional researcher. The establishment of the institutional research position identifies a specific person to develop the critical data to be used for assessment. As this position is relatively new, the specific reports needed is still be determined. The next step is to also develop a timeline when the reports are required.

Institutional data is also available on the institution's website for access by all faculty, staff and administration. These data include the Facts and Figures, Common Data Sets, and Official Enrollment Census Reports. More in-depth information must be requested from the Institutional Researcher. Any budgetary information must be requested from the Vice Chancellor of Finance.

4.A.2. *The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.*

All program offerings, whether traditional face-to-face programs offered on campus, fully online programs offered using D2L, face-to-face programs offered at other campuses authorized for MSUN program delivery or some combination of these, are assessed using program learning objectives and measures as set by the program faculty. These can be anything from specific assessments identified in core courses or can be an evaluation of a portfolio as part of a capstone class. For some programs, the program goals and outcomes are established as part of the specific program accreditation process. This is particularly true for all Education programs and Nursing. All program learning outcomes are attached to degree programs on the institution's website.

Support units develop their goals and outcomes based on the service they provide the students, faculty, staff and community. The units evaluate their success at achieving goals regularly.

The Montana Board of Regents has a policy that academic programs must be reviewed every seven years and report to the Board the results of this review. Faculty in the programs to be reviewed examine the enrollment and graduation numbers for the program and then make a recommendation to the Board to keep the program, keep and modify the program, or place into moratorium. In addition to this, a comprehensive program prioritization was undertaken in 2013. Faculty used their SLAPs to assess their programs and made their recommendations for growing the program, maintaining the program, placing the program in moratorium or terminating the program. Next, all programs were evaluated and a report was developed by the Academic Council summarizing their recommendations to the Chancellor (at that time, Dr. James Limbaugh). The Chancellor then made his decision on all the programs, presented his findings to the campus (Appendix EE) and then to the Board of Regents.

4.A.3. *The institution documents, through an effective, regular and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.*

The institution has an ongoing assessment effort which focused on a 'home-grown' Assessment Management System. The computer software was initially implemented in 2011/12 academic year, and performed reasonably well during the first two years. The software began showing signs of failure in that when beginning a new academic year, it became unstable and caused users to re-enter information from previous years manually. After a considerable time and much frustration from users, both faculty and staff offices, a determination was made during the 2015/2016 academic year to seek a commercially available, stable system to aid in our assessment efforts. The commercial product 'Task Stream AMS' was selected and the campus is in the process of implementing the software installation, training and conversion of existing data into this new system.

In addition to the software problems, the institution suffered from some instability in the position of chief academic officer (who also served as the leader of the Assessment and Accreditation committee), as well as the Chancellor/CEO. A new Provost was selected and brought in during the 2014/2015 academic year and a longtime faculty member/Dean was selected Chancellor, Mr. Greg Kegel. This change in administration has had a significant calming effect on the campus and good progress has been made in restoring the routine functions of the academic and non-academic offices of the campus. However, during the period of flux, routine gathering of the institution's progress toward goal accomplishment was interrupted. With stabilized leadership and clearly identified timelines, the regular reporting of assessment findings can go forward.

4.A.4. *The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.*

Each academic program and support function has identified a Student Learning Assessment Plan (SLAP) or University Continuous Improvement Plan (UCIP) that, by design, supports some or all of the Core Theme Objectives. This information is documented in the MSUN Institutional Assessment (IA) web site and is currently being transitioned to the Task Stream system. The information is updated regularly and evaluated by program faculty and university staff to measure progress toward the identified goals and to determine changes, if necessary, indicated by the outcomes. The Task Stream program will incorporate each of these SLAP or UCIP plans.

Academic programs routinely provide results of assessment activities and conclusions to the Industry Advisory Boards during the regular meetings of those groups. These groups provide feedback regarding the relevance of the identified learning outcomes and progress toward meeting the identified goals. In addition, the academic programs will report out to their college during a regular college meeting.

The University has recognized a weakness in the review of assessment activities by faculty, staff and administration and is recommending a change regarding the presentation of results of

assessments and progress toward accomplishing goals. This policy recommendation requires the annual presentation of the previous year's results to the University Advisory Committee (UAC). The UAC provides a written evaluation of progress with recommendations, which is then presented to the University Executive Committee. The Executive Committee then provides feedback to provide to programs and University offices for improvement. Feedback, or lack thereof, to the programs on their assessment reports has been a major weakness that will also need to be addressed.

4.A.5. *The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correction and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

MSU-Northern, through the self-reflection process that is a key component of developing an institutional self-study, recognizes that the institution is woefully weak following through in the implementation of the assessment framework and reporting system that the institution has developed. In addition, the institution recognizes that assessment and reporting on the institution's mission fulfillment has been delayed with the tumult of the leadership change being a convenient excuse. The institution is dedicated to fully utilizing and assessing the system of program and unit assessments that are developed. It is imperative for the institution to test the system using the data that has been collected but not evaluated or analyzed to reflect on the system and whether modifications need to be made. This is especially the case when utilizing the indicators of achievement to validate the core themes. The institution recognizes that the indicators of achievement have to be evaluated to validate the usefulness of the data associated with them. Again, by going through this reflective process, the results of assessments may then be used to drive decision making from the executive level through the department level regarding resources allocation and priorities for implementation. MSUN has over the many years typically made decisions without specific reference to assessment results or other data, and are abysmally weak in tying decisions to measured outcomes or subsequently to evaluate the effect of resource allocation decisions toward meeting the three core themes. Through the stabilizing of the data collection systems, fully utilizing the assessment systems that have been developed, and instituting the reporting systems, MSUN will be at the point where all the pieces are identified and put in place for thorough assessment of mission fulfillment.

4.A.6. *The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.*

Individual assessment plans or continuous improvement plans are evaluated annually to ensure that program objectives, measures, and goals continue to be relevant and are able to shape the future activities of the programs and offices. Attention to strengthening this review/feedback process will continue to be a focus of improving our assessment system.

Section 4B: Improvement

4.B.1. *Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for*

improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

The institution needs to proceed with the current assessment system that is transitioning, but that will be implemented this fall. The reporting system timeline must be finalized and the holistic evaluation of the achievement indicators to evaluate the core themes needs to be implemented. A lot of data is collected and looked at, however, the evaluation portion is still very weak. The indicators of achievement that support the core themes and the source of data for the indicators are identified in Table 23.

Table 23. Core Themes/Indicators of Achievement

Core Theme 1	Achievement Indicators	How Evaluated	
	Retention Rate	IR Reports	
	Graduation Rate	IR Reports	
	Scores on State and National Exams	Program reports	
	Environments Conducive to Learning	NSSE	
	Accredited Programs	Program reports	
	Satisfaction Rates with Academic Areas Support Services Resources	NSSE	
Core Theme 2			
	Rates of Student Engagement	NSSE	
	Graduate Surveys	Placement Office	
	Employer Surveys	Placement Office	
	Quantity & Quality of Events Sponsored	NSSE	
	Scores on State & National Exams	Program Reports	
	Accredited Programs	Program Reports	
Core Theme 3			
	Creation of Advisory Board	Program reports	
	Activities of Advisory Boards	Board Minutes	
	Collaborative or External Learning Exp.	Placement Office	
	Meeting State and National Accreditation Standards	Provost Office	
	External Research Projects & Funding	Grants office	

The results of these evaluations are consolidated into a summary report by the Institutional Research Office, with final analysis and commentary provided by the Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee will make a presentation to faculty and staff and the report will be made available on the institution's website. The presentation schedule is to be developed as part of the reporting system and will be posted on the Assessment webpage under the Provost's Office.

4.B.2. *The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning*

achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

Student learning is assessed starting at the program level, where a majority of curricular decisions are made. Faculty develop the learning outcomes/goals for the program and the assessments utilized. The faculty then are to report to the colleges with the timeline to be developed as an integral part of the reporting system. The Colleges will then review the assessment reports made by faculty programs, and make recommendations to the Academic Council and Provost for resource allocation and coordination. MSUN has been very weak in collecting data, analyzing the data, interpreting the data and ultimately using the data for course/program improvements. It is the goal of the Assessment Committee with oversight of the Academic Council to work through the implementation of the new assessment system, and develop the culture of reflecting on the accomplishments of the courses/programs and utilizing data developed through the assessment system to continuously improve the courses/programs that are offered.

Conclusion:

 MSU-Northern has a framework in place to assess all academic programs and all units that support the institution. The full implementation and evaluation of the established assessment system that includes the reporting of findings to all the stakeholders has yet to be fully implement but will be in the academic year 2016/2017.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHERN

STANDARD FIVE:
MISSION FULFILLMENT, ADAPTATION, SUSTAINABILITY

Standard Five – Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

Based on its definition of mission fulfillment and informed by the results of its analysis of accomplishment of its core theme objectives, the institution develops and publishes evidence-based evaluations regarding the extent to which it is fulfilling its mission. The institution regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact its mission and its ability to fulfill that mission. It demonstrates that it is capable of adapting, when necessary, its mission, core themes, programs, and services to accommodate changing and emerging needs, trends, and influences to ensure enduring institutional relevancy, productivity, viability, and sustainability.

Section 5: Eligibility Requirement 24:
The institution demonstrates that its operational scale (e.g., enrollment, human and financial resources and institutional infrastructure) is sufficient to fulfill its mission and achieve its core themes in the present and will be sufficient to do so in the foreseeable future.

MSUN regularly performs on-going evaluation of its resources and works to ensure that the resources available are used in support of the institution's core themes. The Budget Advisory Committee is presented the financial commitments of the institution and input is requested to redirect funds for pressing needs.

Section 5A: Mission Fulfillment

5.A.1. *The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.*

MSU-Northern's accomplishments range from individual to campus-wide, building a sense of pride and community both across campus and within individual programs and units. The institution utilizes its core themes to assess and reflect on these accomplishments in order to ensure alignment with our mission. This analysis happens across campus in a myriad of ways. At the administrative level, the Chancellor provides an address to the campus during fall orientation to the entire staff and faculty. He may also provide a "State of the University" presentation in the early spring. These presentations include a snapshot of current enrollment, retention, and graduation numbers and an analysis of how those figures compare to the institution's goals and benchmarks. The Chancellor also reflects on the successes from the previous year, including student achievements, "above and beyond" contributions by staff and faculty, significant fundraising events, and progress towards implementing the institution's strategic initiatives.

The Chancellor also meets monthly with the Strategic Advancement Team and conducts a round table meeting. Each member of the team provides a 2-5 minute update on key happenings in his/her area. This process ensures that the leadership on campus is aware of successes that are happening in other departments and provides an opportunity to re-direct energies away from goals that may not be in the institution's best interests. It also provides an opportunity for

departments that may not be naturally linked to collaborate on similar goals.

In weekly meetings, the Executive Committee and Core Leadership team regularly review the following for alignment with the institution's mission and core themes:
- Weekly enrollment/retention data from the Director of Institutional Research;
- Budget forecasts and adjustments;
- Academic items and faculty productivity;
- Position vacancies and postings;
- Auxiliary performance;
- Facility repairs and upgrades

As "good news" that aligns with the institution's mission is generated around campus, it is then disseminated via University Relations to the media, the surrounding community, and the institution's alumni. The institution primarily communicates via a weekly email (Northern Network News), the local newspaper, and the local radio conglomerate. The Chancellor utilizes the information gathered for the Northern Network News to compile a monthly report to the University Council (the leadership of each campus in the Montana State University system) as well as a quarterly report to the Montana Board of Regents.

5.A.2. *Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, the institution uses assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicates its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public.*

Northern's mission is achieved through the fulfillment of three core themes. Each theme is broken down into specific objectives with measurable indicators of achievement as indicated in Table 24 below:

Table 24 Core Themes, Objectives, and Indicators of Achievement

Core Theme	Objectives	Indicators of Achievement
Comprehensive Programs: Provide liberal arts, professional and technical programs that serve a diverse student population	1. Provide excellent academic programs 2. Cultivate teaching and learning excellence	• Student retention and graduation rates • Student pass rates and scores on state & national exams • Environments conducive to learning • Rates of satisfaction with academic areas, academic support services, and institutional resources (NSSE, FSSE, SSI)

Student Success: Promote student centered and culturally enriched environment which fosters student success	1. Prepare students for careers in their chosen field 2. Provide a student centered environment conducive to success 3. Promote a culturally enriched environment	• Graduate and Employer surveys • Rates of student engagement in campus life (NSSE, FSSE) • Quantity and quality of event sponsorships and student, staff, faculty participation in multicultural— activities, clubs, courses, and projects • Rates of student engagement (NSSE, FSSE)
Inclusive Partnerships: Partner with external entities to enhance and expand learning experiences	1. Use external partnership input to develop or enhance programs or disciplines 2. Expand students' collaborative/external learning experiences 3. Through partnerships stimulate economic development of our region	• Creation of advisory boards • Programs meet state and national accreditation standards • Programs or disciplines require collaborative/external learning experiences • Number of successful external and applied research projects • Amount of external funding—grants, contracts, materials, equipment and scholarship for MSUN

Over the last seven year accreditation period, Northern has made great strides in further refining its process of mission achievement based on assessment recommendations as well as recommendations from a consultation with Ruffalo Noel Levitz.

Refined mission statement
The mission statement for Montana State University-Northern was approved by the Montana Board of Regents in September 22, 2011 was as follows:

> *MSUN, a teaching institution, serves a diverse student population by providing liberal arts, professional and technical education programs ranging from certificates through master's degrees. The university promotes a student centered and culturally enriched environment endorsing lifelong learning, personal growth and responsible citizenship. The university partners with a variety of community and external entities to enhance collaborative learning, provide applied research opportunities, stimulate economic development and expand student learning experiences.*

After several years of self-reflection and input from a variety of collaborators, the administration came to understand that the mission statement was a too broad. The chief academic officer met with the assessment/accreditation committee and requested the committee begin the process of developing a more concise and measureable mission statement for the institution. Given that charge, the committee proceeded and developed a series of mission statements that were then provided to the faculty and staff for their review and input. After analyzing the information, the committee selected three. Eventually after discussion the committee made a recommendation and forwarded it to the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate reviewed the recommendation and concurred with the selection. The new mission statement was then reviewed and approved by the Provost and Chancellor before it was placed on the Montana Board of Regents agenda for the May, 2016 meeting, where it was approved. MSUN Mission Statement as of May 20, 2016:

> *Montana State University-Northern provides higher education to students for professional and technical careers through an institution dedicated to teaching and the pursuit of knowledge.*

New accreditation reporting tool: Task Stream
Based on recommendations to the institution's 2011 Year 1 report, MSU-Northern developed the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) in 2013 and developed an assessment platform and data collections that could be used to evaluate the fulfillment of the institution's mission. The institution developed and implemented the General Education Assessment system, the Student Learning Assessment Plan (SLAPs) and the Unit Continuous Improvement Plan (UCIPs) that were the basis for general education assessment, academic program assessment and institutional assessment, respectively. Unfortunately, the platform proved difficult for faculty and staff to access and maintain.

In the fall of 2015, the Assessment Committee determined that it was time to investigate acquiring a new system that would make it easier for faculty and staff to input data as well as retrieve data collections for analysis. The assessment committee recommended to the Executive Committee the selection of Task Stream as the vendor to provide an assessment system to the

institution. In the fall of 2016, the Task Stream system will be implemented. The Education department will then look to add on the Learner Management System (LMS) to expand the data collection and analysis capabilities for the education program. The Task Stream assessment system should allow the institution's faculty and staff to gather and assess data in meaningful ways in order to improve their respective programs and departments.

Learning Success Center and Little River Institute
To enhance the campus learning environment, Ruffalo-Noel Levitz consultants recommended the establishment of the Learning Success Center. This center was established in fall of 2103 and provides an area for students to study and meet with content area professors, especially instructors for math, business and writing courses. Spring 2015 further featured a writing tutor embedded into two different classes to help students on writing projects. While the Learning Success Center is a strong addition to the campus, Northern also recognized a long-standing need to provide more focused and culturally sensitive support to our Native American students. Native American students have the lowest retention and graduation rates of any demographic nationwide, and this holds true on Northern's campus as well. Northern's student body is 11.91% Native American, the highest percentage of Native American students of any non-tribal campus in Montana. In 2015, Montana State University-Northern's Extended University was awarded a five-year, $1.9 million grant through the Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) Program of the U.S. Department of Education. The grant is intended to improve the retention and completion rates of American Indian students in higher education.

As part of this grant, the Little River Institute was created to serve as a center of tutoring, mentoring, and support for American Indian students at MSU-Northern, as well as a source of culturally responsive professional development for MSU-Northern faculty and staff.

Indicators of achievement benchmarks
While preparing this report, Northern's assessment committee recognized that the institution needs to clarify its process for reviewing assessments and making data-driven decisions. In addition, the institution must ensure that programs and units are measuring not just completion of a task, but progress toward a goal or benchmark. The committee additionally recognizes that implementing the new Task Stream system will only enable faculty and staff to improve their programs and units if benchmarks of success are articulated as clear and achievable goals. Thus, in addition to training the institution's faculty and staff to utilize Task Stream, the assessment committee will also work with all the academic programs and units to ensure they have developed meaningful goals that align with the institution's mission, and determine how best to collect data that will indicate progress toward those goals. For example: the Chancellor has implemented nine strategic initiatives that are currently being researched by charge groups, which are led by members of the Strategic Advancement Team. Before any of the initiatives can be implemented, each charge group must collect data that can be input into Task Stream and generated as an assessment report. The data will then be evaluated by the Strategic Advancement Team to ensure that the initiative is aligned with the institution's mission, vision, and that it is (directly or indirectly) enabling the institution to achieve mission fulfillment through the furthering of the institution's core themes.

The Strategic Advancement Team will be the appropriate venue for additional assessment reporting from individual programs and units, and serve as a sounding board in determining how to make strategic changes and improvements. These recommendations will then be communicated to the University Advisory Council for additional feedback, ensuring the campus community is kept both informed and involved in mission fulfillment.

Section 5B: Adaptation and Sustainability

5.B.1 *Within the context of its mission and characteristics, the institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core them objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its program and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

The institution's Executive Committee and Core Leadership team meet on alternate weeks in order to continually evaluate the institution's resource allocation, capacity, and effectiveness of operations. Each member of the team reports on a different key aspect of the institution, those under their specific purview, in order to provide the Chancellor with a complete picture of the institution's current status, which he can then use to gauge the institution's progress toward mission fulfillment, core theme objective accomplishment, and any stated goals or intended outcomes of the programs and services that the institution offers.

Academic Affairs – Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs (VCAA)

The VCAA provides the Chancellor with pertinent academic information, including faculty load, turnover rates, and overall program health. The VCAA also meets regularly with the various department heads who report to him and relays any pertinent information to the Executive committee and Core Leadership team during weekly meetings. That information may include the following:

Table 25 Areas of Responsibility for VCAA

Institutional Research	Enrollment, retention, and graduation rates
Library	Statewide system migration updates
Registrar	Course need projections
Grants Manager	Grant opportunities, deliverables
Dean, College of Technical Sciences	Committee reports, productivity reports
Extended University	Summer school projections, actuals
TRIO Programs	Success stories, constituent statistics
Director/Dean of Nursing	Progress report on statewide curriculum implementation
Dean, College of Education, Arts & Sciences, Nursing	Committee reports, productivity reports
Learning Success Center	Student usage reports

Business Operations – Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration (VCFA)

The VCFA provides the Chancellor with regular "snapshots" of the present financial health of

the institution, as well as future projections. The VCFA also meets regularly with the various department heads who report to him and relays any pertinent information to the Executive committee and Core Leadership team during weekly meetings. That information may include the following:

Table 26 Areas of Responsibility for VCFA

Financial/Business Services	Purchase card regulations
Facilities Services	Long-range building planning priorities
Bookstore	Revenues/expenses
Reprographics	Equipment purchases
Information Technology Services	Computer upgrades/fee expenditures

Student Life – Dean of Students

The Dean of Students provides the Chancellor with the "pulse" of the campus, indicating levels of student satisfaction with all areas of student life on campus. The Dean seeks input from students in regards to strategic decisions being considered (including facility upgrades, policy changes, etc.) and advocates for them in bi-monthly Core Leadership meetings.

   The Dean also meets regularly with the various department heads who report to him and relays any pertinent information to the Core Leadership team. That information may include the following:

Table 27 Areas of Responsibility for Dean of Students

Student Activities/Events	Student programming suggestions, participation rates
Student Health Services/Employee Wellness	Utilization rates
Student Union Building	Repair and upgrade reports
Residence Life	Occupancy rates, repair and upgrade reports
Food Services	Financial health, student satisfaction
Diversity Awareness & Multi-cultural Programs	Grant awards, student participation rates

Student Success – Senior Director of Student Success (SDSS)

The SDSS provides the Chancellor with information regarding the institution's success in recruiting and retaining students. The SDSS also meets regularly with the various department heads who report to her and relays any pertinent information to the Core Leadership team. That information may include the following:

Table 28 Areas of Responsibility for SDSS

Career Center	Career fair attendance (companies, students)
Advising	Demographics of at-risk students
Financial Aid	Changes in funding levels/requirements
Admissions	Recruiting strategy and schedule
Veterans Affairs	Grant opportunities, on-campus ceremonies

5.B.2 *The institution documents and evaluates regularly its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to ensure their adequacy, alignment, and effectiveness. It uses the results of its evaluation to make changes, as necessary for improvement.*

MSUN documents the regular cycle of academic planning, resource allocation, facility utilization and institutional planning activities with minutes and presentation documentation, such as power points and articles in the weekly electronic newsletter. The collection and timely posting of the documentation has been a weakness along with periodic review of past activities.

Budget reports are sent to the colleges and units on a monthly basis through by Business services. Enrollment information is distributed weekly prior to the start of each semester. Additionally, once a semester begins, enrollment information continues through the official reporting period.

The reporting of graduation rates has not been adequately developed nor has a cycle been established. This information, aside from being an indicator of achievement, has become important for the institution's budget due to the newly established performance-based funding model that the Montana University System has adopted. Careful planning using enrollment and graduation information and meeting the needs of regional employers will ensure the institution's sustainability.

The Task Stream assessment system was purchased with assessment reporting in mind. The institution realizes that the regular cycle of evaluation and report needs to be initiated and maintained. The development of a specific, published assessment cycle timeline is critical with the implementation even more critical.

The development of a system of surveying graduates and employers is another critical source of important information that the University has not adequately addressed. The graduate surveys used at this time primarily ask about whether the graduate has a job and whether the job is in the field of study they have just completed. Another item surveyed is whether the job is in Montana and along with the salary range. Some departments have attempted to develop graduate surveys for their graduates but have had very limited success. The information from the employers is an important need to complete the assessment of academic programs.

Careful planning using enrollment and graduation information, and academic assessments provide the institution with important data for thoughtful decision making and will ensure the institution's sustainability.

5.B.3 *The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it uses those findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, core themes, core theme objectives, goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement.*

The institution monitors trends at the local, regional, state and national level when determining

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the future direction and making strategic decisions. Currently, the institution is focusing on three key areas: demographic shifts, regional needs, and diversity.

Demographic shifts

Over the past several decades, northern Montana has seen a decline in population, particularly in young families with children. Schools across the Hi-Line have consolidated, and high school graduating classes are significantly smaller than they were 20 years ago. As a result, student recruitment has proved increasingly challenging. In 2013, the institution made significant shifts in our recruitment strategy that has resulted in larger incoming classes every year for the past three years. We continue to work aggressively to make the institution the University of choice for students living in northern Montana, while also intentionally expanding our recruiting efforts to reach out to students in surrounding states, Canada, and beyond. The institution's quality programs and affordability make it an attractive option for these students.

Regional needs

In a recent statewide needs assessment reported to the [Board of Regents](#) in which the institution's Nursing Department participated, the institution determined that the need for an educated workforce in our region is greater than ever. While the younger demographic from which to pull a student base has been shrinking, the population of older residents has remained steady or even grown. This is due to an influx of older residents who are moving into communities in order to have better access to services. Clinics and hospitals are in dire need of nurses and allied health professionals. Additionally, school district superintendents across the Hi-Line recently reported to the [Board of Regents](#) that finding qualified teachers has become a huge challenge for public school administrators. While they don't need as many teachers as they once did, turnover in small rural schools is extremely high. Finally, industry across the nation is facing an enormous workforce shortage as the baby boomer generation retires. Northern is gearing up to face all of these challenges by investing in our nursing, education, and technical programs.

Nursing
The nursing faculty and staff of the institution have been actively participating in a TAACCCT IV grant that will increase the ability of the institution to provide access to training for various allied health professions, including emergency services, phlebotomy, and informatics. The administration has been actively working on a plan to create a third college called the "College of Health Sciences" and renovate the current science center to house these new programs, and to enable the institution to continue to expand its offerings to meet the growing need. A proposal was submitted to the [Board of Regents](#) which indicated the intent to plan for the establishment of the College of Health Science. Education
The institution's Chancellor has been actively engaged with the Superintendents of public schools in the region discussing the shortfalls and determining how best to incentivize more students to both enter the Education program and teach on the Hi-Line. The problem is multi-faceted and the conversation is ongoing. However, it is clear that the institution's education program is pivotal to finding a solution to the crisis.

<u>Workforce Development</u>
For the last ten years, the institution has been working on plans for a new Diesel Technology Center in order to expand its highest-enrolled program. In August of 2016, the building plans went out to bid, and the institution hopes to have this new building available within the next two years. The facility will enable the institution to enroll significantly more students in the program every year, as well as increase the number of corporate partnerships and training opportunities that the institution can offer, including the National Academy of Railroad Sciences (NARS) curriculum.

Diversity and Inclusion
- *Prioritize diversity in campus recruiting at all levels: staff, faculty, students*
- *Provide support for minority and 1st gen students (SSS, Little River, Learning Center)*
- *Develop a welcoming atmosphere (artwork, cultural center)*

By adequately addressing diversity and inclusion of underrepresented populations at the University, MSUN addresses core theme 2 in creating an environment that supports student learning and student success. Fostering an atmosphere of interest and wonder for and of all peoples demonstrates the basic principles that support all the institutions core themes and objectives.

Standard Five: Conclusion

Montana State University-Northern has weathered some challenges over the past several years and will surely have more challenges to face in the future. Through the dedication and commitment of the faculty, staff and administrators, who strive to make MSUN the best University possible, the institution has stabilized. The institution does realize that it has enormous work to do to fully meet the standards set by NWCCU and will work very hard to demonstrate that MSUN can fully meet the standards, fulfill the institution's mission, and serve the citizens of Montana. Montana State University-Northern has in place all the elements necessary to fully meet the standards but realizes that the institution needs to establish the regular and consistent implementation of these elements with full, transparent, and timely reporting to all constituents. The administration, faculty, and staff are committed to this challenge.
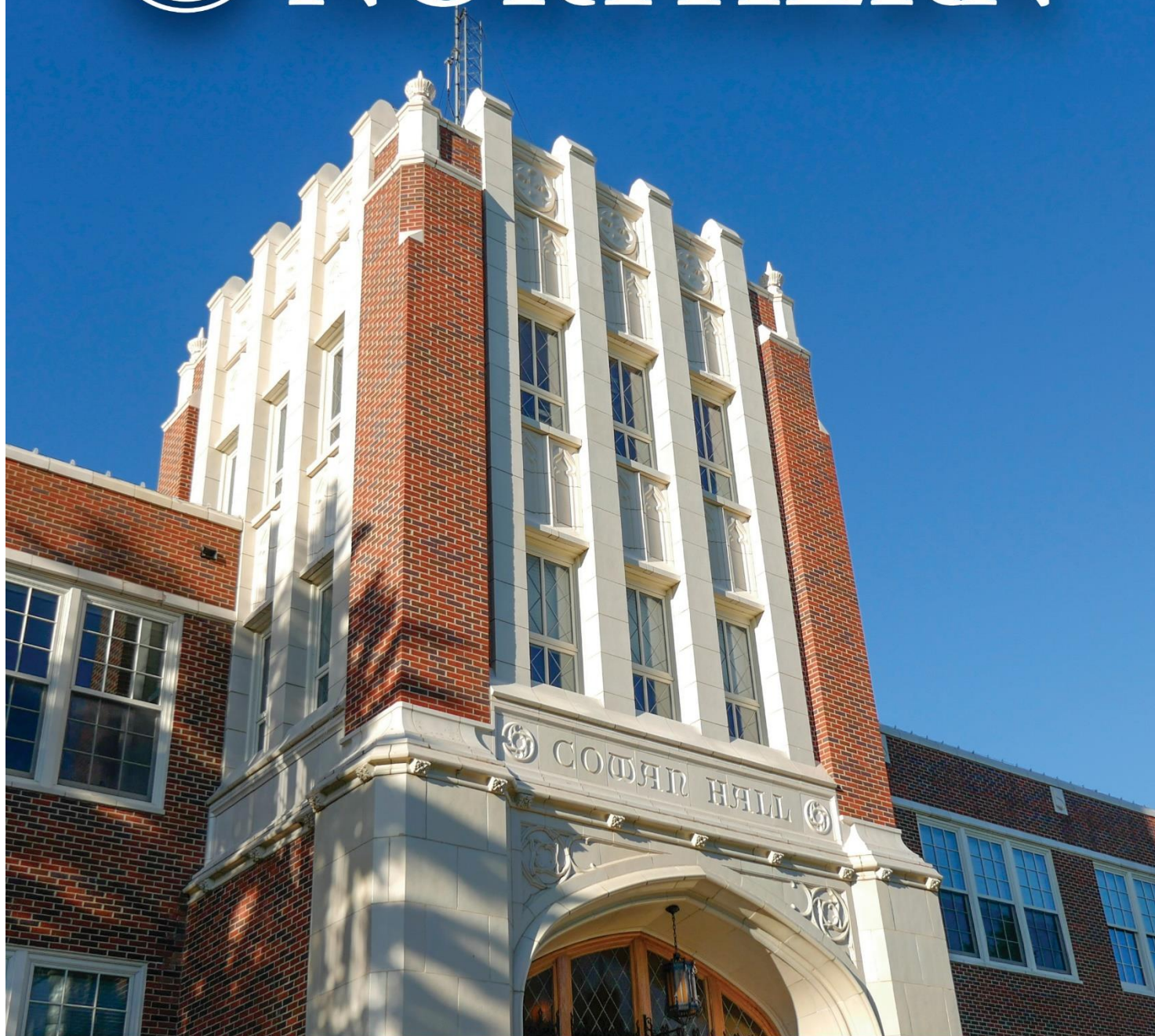
CONCLUSION

Self-Study: CONCLUSION

The process of self-study that is integral to the accreditation process has encouraged the leadership of MSU-Northern to realize the short-coming on the institution's progress for assessment and evaluation. As has been noted in the NWCCU self-study, the leadership at MSU-Northern recognizes that there are process and procedural weaknesses in the campus-wide assessment plan and more importantly the implementation and utilization of the assessment plans. Of particular concern is in the areas of 'closing the loop', that is in reviewing the assessment data and devising improvements based on the data and reporting the findings and improvements.   In an effort to institutionalize the process the leadership has developed an action plan to be implemented.

The Leadership recommends the following actions:

1. The campus Assessment Committee (AC) will be re-established with a limited membership of supervisory members of the campus departments. It is recommended that the following be included;
   a. Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs;
   b. Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration;
   c. Dean of the College of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing;
   d. Director of Nursing;
   e. Dean of the College of Technical Sciences;
   f. Dean of Extended University;
   g. Chair of the General Education Committee;
   h. Executive Assistant to the Chancellor;
   i. Senior Director of Student Success;
   j. Representative from VC for Finance and Administration; and
   k. Director of Institutional Assessment (new position).
2. The AC will draft and forward for approval a policy guiding the campus-wide institutional assessment plan.
3. The Institutional Assessment Policy will include;
   a. The requirement for campus areas to develop and routinely update a student learning assessment plan (SLAP) or unit continuous improvement plan (UCIP);
   b. The SLAP or UCIP plans will be evaluated by the AC based on a previously developed rubric to assure viable, meaningful assessment efforts by all areas of campus;
   c. A requirement to draft an annual report to the Chancellor and/or the campus community detailing the progress toward goals of the assessment or improvement plans with recommendations for improving progress or modifying the plans to improve the assessment process;
   d. All campus-wide training sessions, orientation meetings, and meetings of committees will develop an assessment strategy to ascertain the quality of the

training event. These assessments will be reported as a part of the units assessment update on at least an annual basis;

4. A series of training sessions will be developed and offered to faculty and staff to acquaint or familiarize faculty and staff with standard assessment practices and the development of meaningful goals and measures and the method by which progress may be assessed; and

5. A similar routine training will be offered to faculty and staff on the use of the Task Stream AMS to maintain the documentation of the assessment progress.
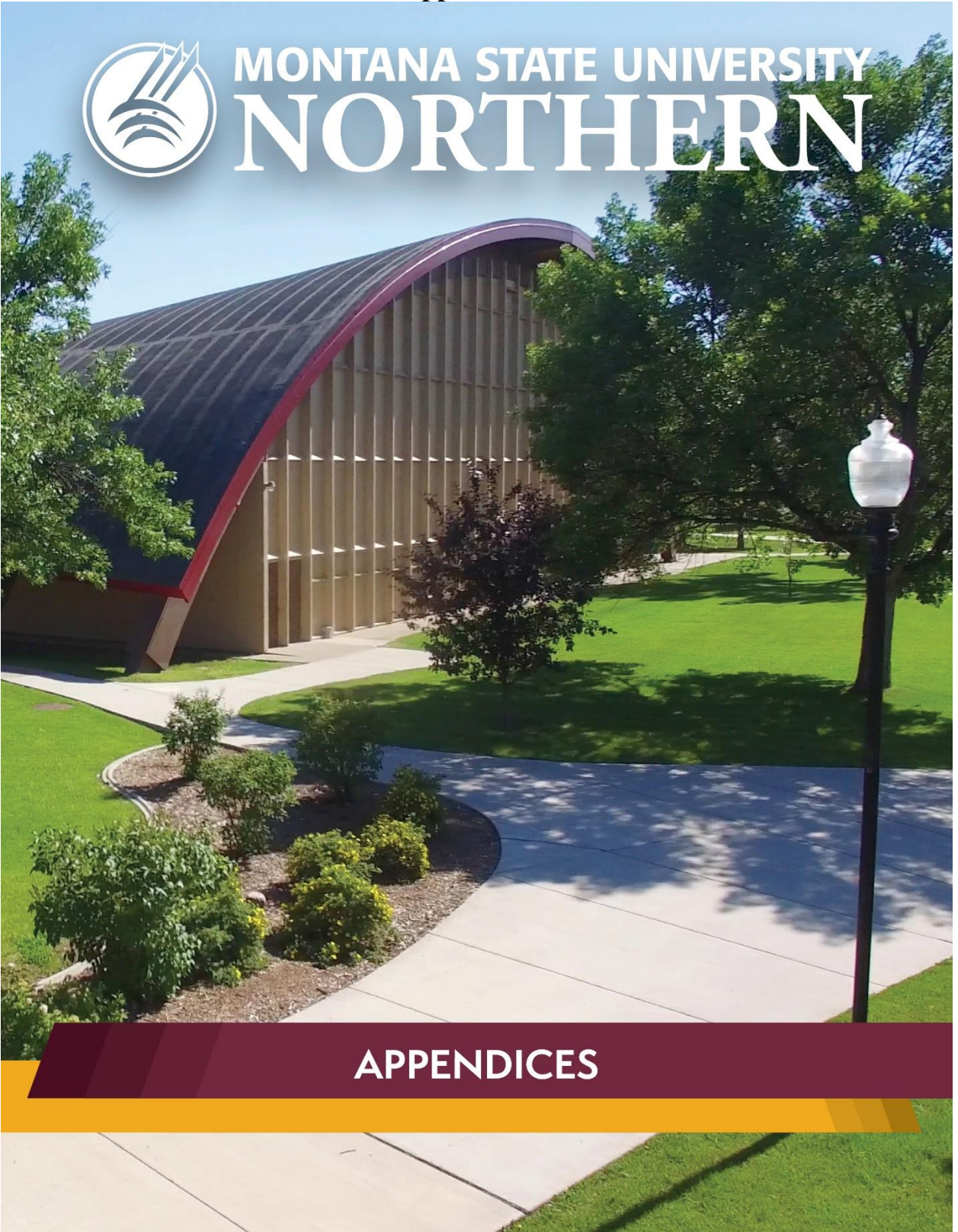
In addition to the implementation of the action plan, the leadership will post on the Assessment webpage a timeline, with specific dates identified, for the reporting of the data from the assessment plans. The Assessment Committee will facilitate the development of the assessment reports. The academic assessment reports will be presented to the college from which they originate. The unit assessment reports along with overviews of the academic assessment reports will be presented to the Strategic Advancement Team. Once the action plan and reporting schedule has been implemented, an assessment of the process will be reviewed and improvements identified.

MSU-Northern is committed to the fulfillment of it's mission and to meeting the high standards that NWCCU has established.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN

APPENDICES