

Standard Four

Faculty

INTRODUCTION



The heart of the University — its most valuable asset — remains its faculty. The dedication, expertise, and productivity of the award-winning faculty at MSU Billings are among the clearest strengths of which this institution can boast. This Standard 4 Report of the Institutional Self-Study will present a snapshot of the University faculty across the five degree-producing colleges (Allied Health Professions, Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, and Technology), highlighting both the particular strengths and the challenges that face the institution's faculty in the 21st century.

As with the University, the MSU Billings faculty benefit significantly from broad support and encouragement from the Billings community. *People, Pride & Promise: The Campaign for Excellence at Montana State University Billings* began as a \$21 million fund-raising effort in January 2002 and reached its conclusion on Dec. 31, 2006, having generated \$30 million for scholarships, capital projects, and university excellence funds. Some of those University excellence funds will be used for faculty-driven projects and support of academic programs. Local business and industry leaders have also financially supported equipment purchases, internships and research projects that benefit faculty and their students.

MSU Billings has an extremely well-qualified faculty dedicated to student learning and responding to the University's mission of *Access and Excellence* in a myriad of ways. Among the most impressive strengths of the faculty at MSU Billings is its dedication to teaching and outreach to students. Of the 155 full-time instructional faculty at MSU Billings, 90% hold the highest degree in their field. The University is dedicated to maintaining quality and engaging classroom environments that provide the optimal faculty/student engagement. The student-per-faculty ration is 21-to-1 and 81% of the undergraduate classes have fewer than 30 students. (See Voluntary System of Accountability data, 2008)

Some of the University's full-time and part-time faculty also serve as instructors for continued education and special learning activities (for credit and non-credit) offered through the College of Professional Studies and Lifelong Learning. Instructors who are hired to provide credit-bearing courses have credentials reviewed by the department chair and dean of the appropriate academic college. In addition, the department chair will seek input from other faculty members when appropriate.

Among the most impressive strengths of the faculty at MSU Billings is its dedication to the student body. There are several measures of this dedication. For one, the faculty is long-serving. In fact, nearly 40% of the faculty recognized annually from 1999-2007 for years of service have served on MSU Billings' faculty for 20 or more years (92 of 240 honorees).

Another measure of faculty dedication to students is the extremely high

percentage of faculty who rate “Interaction with Students” or “Teaching Satisfaction” as the most important factors in their professional work life. More than 96% of our faculty rate student interaction as having a positive or very positive impact on their professional life. Nearly 93% rate teaching as having similar influence on their job satisfaction. (See “Faculty Morale at MSU Billings, 2007,” Table 2, p. 3.)

One of the particular challenges for faculty at MSU Billings is its bifurcation between the faculty on the East Campus, who work under one collective bargaining agreement, and the faculty on the West Campus, who have their own bargaining agreement. Faculty rights, responsibilities, and compensation, as well as mechanisms for measuring student outcomes and teaching effectiveness, are established in the East Campus’s *Collective Bargaining Agreement* (CBA), while the faculty at the West Campus have similar protections and responsibilities as spelled out in their own contract, the Vocational Technical Educators of Montana (VTEM) contract, negotiated in collaboration with three other colleges of technology around the state. There is a great deal of cooperation between the two campuses, especially clear in online registration and an increasingly seamless collaboration in terms of fiscal affairs, student services, financial aid, and advising. But the linkages between the two campuses face some strain by the evolving nature of the West Campus into a community college. By its nature as providing two-year education, the West Campus priorities are focused more on workforce development, professional training, community partnerships, and a growing emphasis on two-plus-two pathways between graduates of associate degrees seeking four-year degree options on the East Campus. In an effort to bridge the differences between the two collective bargaining agreements, the Chancellor agreed to join the West Campus Union Management Committee in 2006 and the Academic Vice Chancellor joined the committee in 2007. The addition of the Chancellor and Academic Vice Chancellor to the West Campus VTEM Union Management Committee has resulted in the development of several key priorities and goals which should help address some of the differences between the two labor contracts.

The bifurcated nature of this self-study report is a result of the “two families under one roof” phenomenon between the East and West Campuses. The result is a report that first points to factors common to all faculty members, but indicates particularities of each campus separately, when necessary.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA/VTEM contracts

Faculty Selection

As an institution, the faculty hiring process begins in academic departments. When a department determines that new faculty or line replacements are necessary for the development and maintenance of curricula, the proposed position is forwarded to the deans and thence to the Provost Council. At the Provost Council, the University’s deans and the provost make choices that are reflective of the needs of the campus balanced with budgetary realities. The procedures for carrying out the hires are detailed in the Provost’s Procedures for Recruiting

STANDARD 4.A

FACULTY SELECTION,
EVALUATION, ROLES,
WELFARE AND
DEVELOPMENT

and Hiring Faculty guidebook. External searches are required for half-time and full FTE positions that are fixed-term or continuing to assure attracting the best possible candidates.

Welfare

The CBA and VTEM contracts are collective bargaining agreements developed through a process of collaborative negotiations. The process and discussion emphasizes issues to be solved, rather than positions to be defended. The contracts assure safe, healthy and respectful working environments for the faculty while recognizing the management rights of the administration.

Development

Faculty from both East and West Campuses are eligible for Research and Creative Endeavor (RACE) internal grants. Faculty submit applications in response to a request-for-proposals (RFP) to the RACE committee. Proposals that meet the RFP criteria are rated and approved according to the availability of funds. Faculty on the West Campus have additional professional development support through the Carl Perkins Professional Development fund.

In addition, faculty have received several forms of technical development during the past 10 years. These items include:

- Issued notebook computers to support faculty online teaching efforts, approximately 40 notebooks were issued in the early years. Today all faculty receive a notebook computer every 4 years unless they request a desktop.
- Regular training by eCollege professionals in new eCollege versions, pedagogical methods, and advanced Learning Management System operations. This included annual training by eCollege and supplemental training by the online staff in the College of Professional Studies and Lifelong Learning. This year this responsibility has moved to the eLearning Hub.
- Optional training on computer software such as Office XP, Office 2003, Office 2007, and other supporting software for their instructional use. When new versions of common software are implemented the Office of Information Technology conducts Technology Thursday's where faculty can opt in for additional training. Additionally, our IT Helpdesk and Desktop Support personnel provide one-on-one support and training for faculty. An additional technology resource room (CoE 158) was created in 2005 to provide hands-on development and training for both faculty and students. This room contains computers, scanning equipment, video equipment, and audio equipment. Student employees of the Office of Information Technology are available to assist and train the faculty on the use of this equipment.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (§ 7.300)/VTEM (§ 9.5) (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

STANDARD 4.A.1
FACULTY
QUALIFICATION

MSU Billings is proud of its highly-qualified faculty. In 2006-2007, the University employed 155 full-time faculty, of whom most held appropriate terminal degrees: 110 (71%) hold doctorates and 28 (18%) hold master's degrees.

MSU Billings East Campus full-time faculty taught 80% of the courses offered spring 2007 (937 of 1,175 courses offered). Part-time instructors taught 28% of online courses and 100% of developmental courses.

During Academic Year 2008, the West Campus included 15 tenured faculty, 11 tenure-track faculty, and 3 renewable non-tenure track (RNTTA) faculty. Since the Chancellor joined the VTEM Union Management Committee in 2006, the West Campus has decreased the number of temporary faculty, increased tenure track faculty lines, and added a new renewable non-tenure track (RNTTA) faculty classification. The East Campus CBA specifies types of faculty appointments and associated rank. In addition to tenure-track faculty, the East Campus employs faculty who hold special appointments — lecturers, adjunct faculty, fixed-term faculty and professional staff serving under letters of appointment (LOAs). The West Campus employs tenure-track, renewable non-tenure track, and temporary faculty.

CHART 4.1

| INSTITUTIONAL FACULTY PROFILE / EAST CAMPUS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|----|---|--------------|---------------|--------------------|--------|--------|------------------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|--|-----|-----|
| Rank or Class | Number | | Full-Time Faculty | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Number of Terminal Degrees | | | | | Salary, 9 Months * | | | Years of Experience at Institution | | | Total Years of Teaching Experience*** | | | Previous Fall Term Credit Hour Load **** | | |
| | Full Time | Part Time | Dr | M | B | Prof License | Less than Bac | Min | Med | Max | Min | Med | Max | Min | Med | Max | Min | Avg | Max |
| Professor | 45 | 1 | 42 | 4 | 0 | 3** | 0 | 33,179 | 60,716 | 82,601 | 4 | 23 | 45 | 4 | 29 | 51 | 6 | 10 | 18 |
| Associate Professor | 27 | 0 | 25 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43,978 | 49,205 | 80,000 | 2 | 11 | 40 | 2 | 21 | 29 | 5 | 11 | 16 |
| Assistant Professor | 28 | 1 | 25 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 34,554 | 42,139 | 85,000 | 2 | 3 | 38 | 2 | 8 | 24 | 6 | 11 | 16 |
| Instructor | 14 | 9 | 7 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 31,342 | 33,386 | 43,788 | 1 | 6 | 15 | 1 | 8 | 13 | 5 | 11 | 15 |

* Data as of September 26, 2007, full time/equivalent only
 ** Certificate holders with higher degrees also counted in appropriate columns.
 *** Total years of teaching experience are self-reported via faculty survey, Fall 2007.
 **** Fall 2007 Credit hour load

CHART 4.2

| INSTITUTIONAL FACULTY PROFILE / WEST CAMPUS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|--|---|---|--------------|---------------|--------------------|-----|-----|------------------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|--|-----|-----|
| Class | Number | | Full-Time Faculty /College of Technology INSTRUCTORS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Number of Terminal Degrees | | | | | Salary, 9 Months * | | | Years of Experience at Institution | | | Total Years of Teaching Experience*** | | | Previous Fall Term Credit Hour Load **** | | |
| | Full Time | Part Time | Dr | M | B | Prof License | Less than Bac | Min | Med | Max | Min | Med | Max | Min | Med | Max | Min | Avg | Max |
| Level IV | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45,791 | | | 1 | 8 | 22 | 12 | 5 | 22 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Level III | 9 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 6** | 0 | 40,708 | | | 6 | 11 | 20 | 6 | 10 | 21 | 8 | 11 | 18 |
| Level II | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 6** | 1 | 35,614 | | | 1 | 11 | 22 | 1 | 10 | 28 | 8 | 14 | 16 |
| Level I | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | | 31,800 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 16 | 17 |
| Part-time | | 56 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | n/a | n/a | n/a |

*data as of September 26, 2006, full time/equivalent only
 **Certificate holders with higher degrees counted in appropriate column.
 *** Total years of teaching experience are self-reported via faculty survey, Fall 2007.
 **** Fall 2007 credit hour load

CHART 4.3

FACULTY CREDENTIALS

| Colleges | Terminal Degree | Master's Degree | Other |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| Arts & Sciences | 71 | 14 | 3 |
| Allied Health Professions | 13 | 1 | 2 |
| Business | 15 | 2 | 3 |
| Education | 22 | 7 | |

CHART 4.4

FACULTY BY RANK

| Colleges | Full Professor | Associate Professor | Assistant Professor | University Lecturer | Instructor | Other |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|-------|
| Arts & Sciences | 33 | 14 | 25 | 14 | 1 | 3 |
| Allied Health Professions | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Business | 8 | 3 | 6 | | 4 | |
| Education | 10 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 1 | |
| Technology | | | | | 35 | 1 |

Tenure-Track Faculty

Faculty who hold terminal degrees in their fields and are fully qualified in the area to be taught are hired as tenure-track faculty. This appointment can earn tenure in the seventh year of the appointment and be promoted to the next rank in the eighth year. Tenure-track faculty hold the rank of assistant, associate or full professor on the East Campus.

Under the VTEM contract, faculty are identified as being either tenure track, probationary, or part time. Ranks as designated in the East Campus CBA are not applicable for faculty on the West Campus. West Campus faculty are identified by levels — Level I, Level II, Level III, and Level IV. Level designation is determined either by the academic degree held by the faculty members or by years of occupational experience in their field, or a combination of both.

Faculty on the West Campus are selected based on qualifications as established in the Montana Board of Regents Policy 730.6, “Minimum Qualifications of Faculty; Montana Technical System.” In short, the Montana Board of Regents policy establishes basic criteria, chief among which is the need to have verifiable professional technical expertise.

Those faculty teaching in certificate or licensure programs must hold those certificates or licenses; those teaching in Academic Foundations courses must possess at least a master's degree in their subject area.

Lecturers

Lecturers carry a full teaching load (24 AY credits if full time; 12 semester credits if half-time), and are expected to contribute to departmental and college committee efforts. Lecturers are not required to carry out advanced academic research but may engage in scholarly contribution according to their personal

interest and discretion. Reflecting the University’s commitment to its mission as a Masters level University in the region, the CBA limits the ratio of lecturers to tenure-track faculty to 1:6, or no more than 15% of the full-time equivalent faculty University-wide. All lecturers hold the rank of instructor. The position of lecturer does not apply to the West Campus faculty.

Fixed Term

Fixed-term faculty are hired for a maximum of three years. Fixed-term faculty can be hired at any rank — instructor, assistant, associate or full—as appropriate for their credentials and experience. The position of fixed-term does not apply to the West Campus faculty.

Renewable Non-Tenure Track Appointment (RNTTA). The West Campus through negotiations with the VTEM Union Management Committee and approval of the Chancellor has created a RNTTA position with the goal of reducing the number of one-year temporary faculty appointments. This is a pilot program which has been outlined in a VTEM Supplemental Agreement and it will be evaluated after three years.

This position classification was created in order to increase the College’s flexibility to respond to short term and intermediate term workforce needs.

Adjunct Faculty. In addition to lecturers, the University has begun hiring adjunct faculty to broaden the scope of its faculty expertise. This is a pilot position and is not defined according to the usual understanding of the term “adjunct.” The pilot adjunct position works within the scope of a flexible Position Description. The adjunct can be hired at any rank that is appropriate, but cannot advance in rank or earn tenure. Adjuncts hold year-to-year appointments sculpted to meet the needs — teaching, research, and/or service — of a program. The position of adjunct faculty does not apply to the West Campus faculty.

Letters of Appointment. Some professional staff employed to fulfill faculty roles do so with a Letter of Appointment (LOA). “Learning Specialists” is a term sometimes used for these professionals. These specialists create curriculum, write syllabi, and teach classes but do not hold rank and are not eligible for tenure. LOA faculty are not currently eligible to belong to either East or West Faculty Association.

Part-Time Faculty. Part-time faculty may be hired for less than an entire contract period or may be hired to perform certain specified assignments. Selection of faculty who teach less than half time is left to the academic department. Once funding is authorized by the administration, departments carry out local searches for part-time faculty. The rights, responsibilities and available support services for part-time faculty are defined in the *Part-time Faculty Handbook*.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA/VTEM Contracts (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>), 4.9 *Part-time Faculty Handbook*

STANDARD 4.A.2

ACADEMIC PLANNING

The faculty at MSU Billings have primary responsibility for the overall planning and revision of their departmental curricula. The Academic Senate has remained vigilant in the recent past to carefully protect this curricular responsibility. The Academic Senate maintains a website with current Senate information (<http://www.msubillings.edu/senate/Forms/formshome.htm>).

The Academic Senate is the ultimate academic policy-forming body of faculty at MSU Billings. Its members, who come from and represent faculty from across five of the University's six colleges (the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Education, Business, Allied Health Professions, and Technology), assume responsibility for the academic side of institutional governance. The CPSLL employs a mix of part-time and fixed-term educators for extension and outreach programs, but those faculty are not a part of the Academic Senate.

As the culmination of academic planning, academic advising remains one of the most important responsibilities of MSU Billings faculty. With primary oversight of their academic programs, it is the faculty who assume this effort once students declare a major in the University. Prior to declaring a major, academic advising remains the responsibility of the Academic Advising Center, where staff advisors guide students through Academic Foundations.

Curriculum Development and Review

The ongoing regular development and review of departments' curricula are the responsibility of the faculty within those departments. Key among these efforts is a rededication on the part of the faculty as a whole to identifying learning objectives and outcomes for each course at MSU Billings, and aligning those course objectives with the University mission statement. Beginning in the spring of 2007, Academic Foundations/General Education course outcomes are analyzed through the internally developed Academic Foundations Assessment System. Fall 2007, all courses were linked to the system if it allowed for an appropriate form of assessment. Programs maintain the option of determining their own alternative form of assessment in order to meet specified program outcome needs. Faculty are primarily responsible for the success of this initiative.

The University takes an integrated approach to curricular development. Curricular proposals begin at the departmental level, and proceed through the College level, where College Curriculum Committees coordinate curricular development across the disciplines and make recommendations to the deans. Curricular proposals are then reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee. Finally, the Academic Senate makes recommendations to the provost and, ultimately, to the chancellor for approval.

On the West Campus, faculty are assisted with and advised on ongoing curricular review by program advisory committees, composed of faculty and community representatives of their industrial professional development programs. For example, the Auto Body Repair and Automotive Mechanics Program Advisory Committees include faculty from those programs working in conjunction with local auto body repair specialists and automotive mechanics. The off-campus representatives assure that the West Campus offers relevant curricula resulting in student competencies and skills needed by business and industry.

Academic Advising

Student advising at MSU Billings becomes the faculty members' responsibility once the students declare a major. Prior to that point, advising is primarily carried out in the Advising Center. Once students declare a major, their file is sent to the corresponding department, where individual faculty advisors are assigned. An increasing number of academic departments are moving toward a mandatory advising/registration PIN system, assuring that students maintain regular contact with their academic advisors throughout their college careers.

The West Campus implemented mandatory advising for all students and for all programs of study during AY 2006-2007.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (§10.120.C) (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

Institutional Governance

Efficient institutional governance is based on effective communication between and among the university's various constituencies. The administration has, in the recent past, spearheaded several initiatives to improve this sort of communication. Among the most effective were a number of retreats (the "Perfect Place" University strategy session in 2004 and the Provost Council retreat in 2007 both included faculty representatives) designed to incorporate faculty voices in the University's planning processes. As stated in Standard 6D, faculty involvement in issues such as budgeting is currently an item of increased discussion. While faculty have a voice in the budgeting process through their deans, faculty overall desire a more direct influence on the process. Indeed, faculty input into University budgeting decisions, or the lack thereof, remains the single most negative impact on faculty morale, according to the 2007 Faculty Morale Survey (see "Faculty Morale at MSU Billings, 2007," Table 11, p. 9.). Revitalization of the Academic Senate Budget Committee with increased membership and revised bylaws was a response to this faculty concern.

Faculty from both East and West Campuses are integral to institutional governance. Faculty have responsibility for planning, implementing and assessing the curricula. They are part of the hiring and continual evaluation processes for faculty, staff and administration. Through their respective contracts, faculty on both East and West Campuses participate in decisions regarding their working environments. Faculty collaborate with other constituencies — staff, students, administration — on the four ad hoc Partners for Change task forces — Recruitment, Retention, Advising, and eLearning — that are a response to the 2006 Noel/Levitz student satisfaction surveys. Also, the chair of the Academic Senate, which represents faculty from both campuses, has a permanent place at the table on the Provost Council, the Cabinet, and the Executive Budget Committee, with full voting membership rights in each of these bodies. (See <http://www.msubillings.edu/COI/activities.htm> for Partners for Change task force progress reports.)

East Campus faculty members are constituents of the Faculty-Administration Collaborative Committee (FACC). This committee comprises the Administrative Leadership Team (Chancellor, Provost, Administrative Vice Chancellor) and the Faculty Association Executive Committee (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer) and meets periodically throughout the year to address interpretation of



the CBA between formal collaborative negotiation sessions. FACC workgroups are currently investigating four topics of ongoing concern: Position Descriptions, the Student Rating Instrument, Student Learning/Outcomes Assessment and Student Advising, and Faculty Evaluation Process and Procedures.

West Campus faculty are constituents of the Union/Management Committee. Joint union-management committees are at each of Montana's Colleges of Technology for the purpose of discussing any matters of mutual concern and to improve communications between the employer and members of the bargaining unit. The committees consist of not more than three members appointed by the Union and three members appointed by the University.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (\$6.200 FACC)/VTEM (\$4.10 Union-Management Committee) (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>), Partners for Change progress reports

STANDARD 4.A.3

FACULTY WORKLOAD

East Campus faculty workloads for full-time faculty are distributed between the primary responsibility of teaching, and secondary responsibilities of scholarly development/contribution and service to the University/public. Academic-year teaching load responsibilities for tenure-track faculty are 21 credits, with three credits reassigned time for scholarship and service. Full-time lecturers teach a full load of 24 credits per year. Department chairs receive reassigned time of three credits or more per semester, negotiated with the College dean, for administrative responsibilities.

Faculty workloads at MSU Billings are consistent with the Carnegie designation as a public Masters' University. The number of tenured and tenure-track faculty has been enhanced with lecturer lines on the East Campus. The 1998 MSU Billings Institutional Report listed 144 tenure-track faculty and three lecturers; the current IR lists 126 tenured/tenure-track faculty and 29 lecturers. The increase in lecturer lines increases teaching time because lecturers teach a full load without reassigned time for research. Lecturers also add to the number of faculty available for student advising and service to the University community. Lecturers are not required to engage in research but do have service expectations delineated in their Position Descriptions.

Opportunities for service to the University and to the public abound. The challenge is balancing service with scholarly responsibilities. Junior faculty working toward tenure are often advised to limit their service in order to develop their scholarly record. Lack of service responsibilities on the part of newer faculty can result in their not establishing an identity with the University. Similarly, service responsibilities of senior faculty can negatively impact their continued scholarly development.

Under the West Campus VTEM contract, workloads are higher. Annual instructional workload for full-time faculty is 30 credits, depending upon the program's curriculum lab, clinical, shop or internship requirements. In 2007, The West Campus VTEM Union Management Committee negotiated a pilot three-year supplemental contract agreement to maximize West Campus faculty workload at 30 credits per year. This supplemental contract agreement was the result of both union and management's mutual desire to ensure faculty have

time to participate in shared governance, scholarly endeavors, research, and new curriculum development.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA/VTEM (Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding, Faculty Workload) (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

Professional Development

Faculty development is supported through the Research and Creative Endeavors (RACE) program. This competitive internal grant program enables faculty in the colleges across the University to finance the pursuit of high-level research allowing them to remain at the forefront of their disciplinary fields. RACE proposals are peer reviewed by members of the RACE Committee to assure that proposed research projects demonstrate sufficient rigor and are in keeping with the University's strategic plan. This grant program has been historically funded at approximately \$10,000. In AY 2004-2005 and AY 2005-2006, in support of faculty scholarly activity, the grant fund increased four-fold. More than \$50,000 was awarded to fund 19 research projects in AY 2005-2006. The University administration has demonstrated its commitment to faculty development through a continuing increase in available RACE funding.

Carl Perkins professional development funds include providing support for an average of 12 West Campus faculty to participate in conferences and professional training in addition to providing funds for mini-grants to support curricular innovation and experimental or intuitive research into technical processes appropriate to West Campus programs.

Sabbatical Leave

The University's Collaborative Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and VTEM contract outline specific criteria for the awarding of sabbaticals to faculty. The detailed criteria for qualification, application process, and selection protocol are identified in the CBA and VTEM contracts.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (§11.000 Sabbaticals and Professional Travel)/VTEM (§4.13 Sabbatical Assignments) (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

Compensation rates for faculty duties at MSU Billings are the result of a complex system of negotiations among such state-wide stakeholders as the State educational unions (Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers), the State legislature, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and the Montana University System. Locally, once State budgetary decisions are established, the University Faculty Association and the administration settle on a salary formula in the CBA (CBA §14.000 Compensation). This formula provides a rank/step system to determine academic salary. The CBA establishes a salary floor that allows for market adjustment and FACC deliberation to increase salary offers as appropriate for high-demand fields such as business or math. Over the 2008-2009 biennium, salaries will increase by between three percent and three and one-half percent each year as approved by the Montana Legislature.

Salary compression is a shared concern on university campuses across the

STANDARD 4.A.4

FACULTY COMPENSATION

nation. A committee of faculty and administration, under the auspices of the FACC, is currently investigating methods for alleviating salary compression in the years to come. Compensation for West Campus faculty is determined by the VTEM contract (VTEM §10 Compensation). The schedule provides a structure for placing newly hired faculty at an appropriate level and specifies the amount and frequency of salary increases.

STANDARD 4.A.5

FACULTY CONTRACTS AND REVIEW

Both the CBA and the VTEM contract are revised as needed, and both have experienced changes recently. In the CBA, some recent changes include the inclusion of Position Descriptions (see CBA § 9.600 and Appendix C), the Adjunct faculty appointment (see CBA Appendix B, and abbreviated reviews (see CBA § 9.635). In the VTEM contract, evaluation procedures and the establishment of the Renewable Non-tenure Track Appointments are significant changes (see VTEM Supplemental Agreement, April 9, 2007).

The CBA and VTEM contracts delineate the faculty evaluation process. The CBA specifies a peer-review process for faculty with administrative involvement. The peer review process provides faculty the opportunity to display their accomplishments in a professional portfolio that is reviewed by a departmental committee (Department Rank and Tenure Committee—DRTC), the College dean, a campus-wide committee (the University Rank and Tenure Committee—URTC), the Provost and the Chancellor. The process allows for professional performance review with safeguards against arbitrary and capricious performance evaluation.

The VTEM review of faculty is performed through supervisory review. Individual evaluation begins with cooperative agreement on position responsibilities between the faculty member and supervisor. Application for tenure occurs in the fifth year of employment with the opportunity to display accomplishments in a professional portfolio which is reviewed by the COT Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee, the COT Union Management Committee, the College dean, the Provost, and the Chancellor.

The West Campus VTEM Union Management Committee began a review of the West Campus faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure review process in the spring of 2007 and approved the creation of an ad hoc committee comprised of COT faculty and the College's Associate Dean to review the current evaluation, promotion, and tenure review processes and make recommendations for improvement. As of spring 2008, the ad hoc committee has recommended a new student course evaluation instrument and a new faculty annual self-evaluation instrument.

Both instruments have been approved by the VTEM Union Management Committee and subsequently ratified by a vote of the VTEM faculty. The VTEM Union Management has set as a goal for AY 2009 a complete review and possible modification of the COT annual faculty evaluation process, tenure review process, and post-tenure review process.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA/VTEM (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

Recruitment of new faculty follows a set of guidelines. To initiate the process, the requesting department completes a Recruitment Authorization Form (RAF) identifying the nature of the position. Attached to the RAF are a position description, criteria for making final selections for the position, an advertisement for the position to be sent to the Human Resources Office (HR) indicating where to advertise, a list of the search and screening committee members and a letter to the appropriate dean to request a lifting of the hiring freeze in order to advertise. This packet is sent to the dean's office to begin the hiring request.

At the application close date, HR posts the applications and all required material online for the search committee to review and provides instructions for conducting phone interviews. Once the search committee has decided on a final candidate, HR conducts a background check through a professional firm. The results of this check are confidential, with results forwarded only to the Provost and HR director. If no irregularities are discovered, the candidate is invited to campus for an interview. Upon a successful interview, a letter is forwarded to the dean's office to request the hire of the new employee. If the candidate for a position does not successfully complete the interview at the University, a second finalist is selected from the list of preferred candidates, and a new background check is initiated. When hiring is complete, the search committee submits final paperwork to HR for formal closure of the search.

Upon acceptance of the position by the candidate, the department completes an Employee Transaction Form (ETF) to activate the new employee. While time consuming, the hiring process insures fairness on the part of the search committee and verifies the credentials of candidates. Due to budgetary constraints, the University maintains a "one-on-campus" interview policy, although this policy is not universally applied. Candidates are prioritized and invited sequentially. Only if the first-choice candidate is not successfully interviewed is the second invited for an interview. While being able to interview only one person at a time may slow the hiring process and may limit the search committee's ability to recruit the best candidate for a position, this requirement allows search committees to make the most efficient use of valuable fiscal resources.

STANDARD 4.A.6**FACULTY
RECRUITMENT**

The protection of academic freedom for faculty at MSU Billings is a priority. Both CBA and VTEM contracts afford protection to faculty of academic freedom. The free exchange of ideas is paramount in the higher education classroom, and the rights and responsibilities of faculty in facilitating that exchange are contractually delineated.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA(\$ 3.200)/VTEM(\$4.15) (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

STANDARD 4.A.7**ACADEMIC FREEDOM
POLICY**

MSU Billings faculty carefully screen and select part-time faculty, chiefly from among professionals in the Billings area. They bring to the classroom valuable real-world professional experience to share with students. As course instructors, part-

STANDARD 4.A.8**SCREENING AND
SELECTION OF PART-
TIME FACULTY**

time faculty share responsibilities of University full-time faculty for developing a course syllabus, advising students with regard to the syllabus, meeting the class as scheduled, providing students with contact information, and making appropriate accommodations for students with special needs. Part-time faculty are subject to the Student Assessment of Faculty Teaching evaluation as outlined in the CBA or the Student Rating of Instruction as outlined in the VTEM contract. Part-time faculty who do not acculturate to higher education, do not follow program curricular standards, or are not well accepted by students are not re-hired.

STANDARD 4.A.9

INVOLVEMENT OF PART-TIME FACULTY

Part-time faculty are invited to orientations at the beginning of each semester. They rotate through several preparation modules addressing such aspects of their roles as use of technology, HR rules and regulations, and differentiating instruction for adult learners. Experienced part-time instructors are encouraged to share their perceptions and experiences as mentors for newer part-timers. The *Part-time Faculty Handbook* outlines the University expectations for teaching, office hours, and syllabus preparation. It also includes a list of contacts for various offices on campus. Appendices include instructional resources. The *Handbook* is updated each academic year.

Evidence: 4.9 *Part-time Faculty Handbook*

STANDARD 4.A.10

INVOLVEMENT OF PART-TIME FACULTY

As with the hiring of part-time faculty, performance reviews of these faculty are the purview of the academic departments. Within each department, part-time faculty are mentored by senior faculty, undergo peer reviews, and their performance is evaluated by the department chair. At the end of the 2006-2007 academic year, the Academic Senate began a review of the percentage and use of part-time instructors. The initial results indicated that dependence on part-time instructors varies from department to department and even within one department as lines are opened and/or replaced.

Evidence: 6.9 Academic Senate Minutes

STANDARD 4.B.1

SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH AND ARTISTIC CREATION

Cutting-edge scholarship is very important to this University, and is supported by the University to the highest degree possible. The University encourages all full-time faculty to actively engage in scholarship. The University embraces the proposition that scholars who delve deeply into their disciplines are more effective in the classroom, and teaching is the primary responsibility of faculty at MSU Billings. In the CBA, the University and the faculty exhibit mutual recognition of the vitality of professional research.

While all faculty are encouraged to carry on research, only tenure-track faculty are evaluated for their scholarly production during performance reviews. Lecturers and part-time faculty are not required to conduct original research in their fields, although they may do so at their discretion. Fixed-term and adjunct

faculty are accountable for scholarly development and contribution to the extent that their individual Position Descriptions indicate.

Throughout the institution, faculty scholarly development and contribution are consistent with the mission of MSU Billings and appropriate for the specific field of study. East Campus science faculty regularly secure grant funding for basic research. CAS faculty conduct research and create works in their areas of expertise. Faculty in business and education engage in applied research with the potential for positive impact on the respective professional field. CAHP faculty have secured grants and conducted research related to health issues such as substance abuse. West Campus faculty engage in project research that has direct application to their technical area of expertise. In many cases, research done by faculty throughout the University receives notice throughout the community and state and leads to expanded relationships. In 2007, faculty in biological sciences filed for the University's first patent.

Evidence: 4.6 Examples of Faculty Scholarly Development and Contribution exhibits, performance and basic/applied research

Research integrity is primarily the purview of the Research and Creative Endeavors (RACE) Committee and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Office of Research Compliance. The RACE Committee's members are appointed by the Academic Senate's Committee on Committees from among faculty in the Colleges of Allied Health Professions, Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, Technology, and ex-officio representatives of the administration and the Office of Grants & Sponsored Programs.

The IRB includes the following members: one faculty member from each of the Colleges Arts and Sciences, Education, Business, Technology, and Allied Health Professions, at least one member whose primary concerns are in scientific areas, and at least one member whose primary concerns are in nonscientific areas. In addition, the IRB includes one member who is not otherwise affiliated with the institution, and is not part of the immediate family of a person who is affiliated with the institution and the Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs.

Evidence: 4.11 Institutional Review Board Policies and Record of Decisions; 2.23 RACE Committee Decisions

The RACE Committee reports directly to the Academic Senate. All proposals are peer reviewed by the RACE Committee to assure that proposed research projects demonstrate sufficient rigor and are in keeping with the University's strategic plan.

The IRB supports the ethical conduct of research that involves human participants in ways that improve the quality of research, increases awareness of ethical research, supports obtaining external support for research, promotes the University's responsibilities for education, service, and leadership, and conforms to appropriate federal guidelines. The IRB reviewed 63 protocols in 2004-2005, 83 and 71 in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 respectively, and 128 in 2007-2008. The significant

STANDARD 4.B.2

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

STANDARD 4.B.3

RESEARCH POLICIES AND SHARED GOVERNANCE

CHART 4.5

RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ENDEAVORS FUNDS / 1999-SPRING 2008 FUNDING

Faculty Development Funding by College

| | CAS | CAHP | COB | COE | COT |
|-----------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|
| 1999-2000 | \$8395 | | -- | \$1605 | -- |
| 2000-2001 | \$5750 | | \$1250 | \$2500 | \$1000 |
| 2001-2002 | \$2650 | | -- | \$1200 | \$1200 |
| 2002-2003 | \$6500 | | \$2000 | \$2000 | -- |
| 2003-2004 | \$4545 | | \$1500 | \$1500 | \$1500 |
| 2004-2005 | \$20750 | \$2400 | -- | \$1850 | -- |
| 2005-2006 | \$30541 | \$4000 | \$10180 | \$5905 | -- |
| 2006-2007 | \$29836 | \$8000 | -- | -- | \$2650 |
| 2007-2008 | \$43683.50 | -- | \$3222.50 | -- | -- |

increase is a result of efforts to inform all faculty members and their students about the requirements for human subjects research compliance.

Evidence: 2.23 RACE Committee Decisions

STANDARD 4.B.4**FACULTY
DEVELOPMENT AND
TRAVEL**

Professional travel is essential for affording faculty the opportunities they need to remain at the cutting edge of scholarship in their fields. To facilitate these professional opportunities, the College Travel Committees have established clearly identified criteria and an application process for all full-time faculty, whether tenured, tenure-track, or other type of appointment. Of continual concern for faculty is balancing the allocation of travel funds to allow junior faculty the opportunity to present their work at national conferences as they move toward tenure with allocation for senior faculty to insure that they have the opportunity to continue their scholarly agendas. The faculty recognize that adequate funds are necessary to support the development of the faculty in particular and the maintenance and expansion of academic programs in general.

Although faculty travel money is available and RACE funding has been increased, the 2007 employee surveys indicated faculty perceptions that more would be preferable.

Evidence: 4.13 Individual College Travel Committee Criteria; 2.23 RACE Committee Decisions

STANDARD 4.B.5**SCHOLARLY
RESPONSIBILITIES**

East Campus faculty, through their Departmental Rank and Tenure Committee (DRTC) guidelines approved by the University Rank and Tenure Committee, determine the types of scholarly development and contribution recognized by the department. These guidelines are used by review committees throughout the faculty review process — DRTC, dean, URTC, provost, chancellor — to evaluate an individual in this area of responsibility. There is considerable variety across departments and colleges in the types of scholarship and contribution (e.g., exhibit, performance, basic/applied

CHART 4.6
FACULTY
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
WINNERS

2001

Mathew Benacquista (CAS)

Farzad Farsio (COB)**Russell Lord** (COE/CAHP)**2002****Walter Gulick** (CAS)**Tony Hecimovic** (COE)**Tasneem Khaleel** (CAS)**2003****Alan Davis** (COE)**Matthew Redinger** (CAS)

Craig Wilson (CAS)

2004**Keith Edgerton** (CAS)**Sharon Hobbs** (COE)**Kathy Kelker** (COE)**2005****Sue Barfield** (COE)

David Butler (CAS)

Patricia Vettel-Becker (CAS)**2006**

Dan Gretch (CAS)

David Karnos (CAS)**Matt McMullen** (CAS)**2007**

Farzad Farsio (COB)

Sue Hart (CAS)

St. John Robinson (CAS)

2008

Tami Haaland (CAS)

Rachel Schaffer (CAS)

Stuart Snyder (CAS)

Barbara Wheeling (COB)

* Names in **bold** are members
of the Graduate Faculty

research, presentation, publication, grant procurement), but this variety is controlled by faculty at the program level.

West Campus faculty develop projects applicable to their technological fields. These projects have direct applicability to industry (e.g., construction, bio-diesel fuel development, auto body repair).

Performance Reward. On both campuses, faculty are recognized for their scholarly development and contribution through annual performance reviews of untenured faculty and post-tenure reviews of tenured faculty. Until the fall of 2007, post-tenure reviews occurred every three years, but this review schedule was pushed out to five years beginning in 2008. Faculty hired under a Position Description work collaboratively with their faculty mentor, department chair, DRTC chair and dean to delineate a research agenda. In post-tenure reviews, faculty who have consistently demonstrated excellence in the three areas of evaluation (teaching, scholarship, and service) receive recognition for meritorious effort by way of monetary awards. Continued faculty excellence will be facilitated through the successful *People, Pride & Promise* capital campaign.

Opportunities. Faculty have opportunities for a professional travel allowance, financial assistance with research, achievement recognition through the MSU Billings Foundation, annual awards for meritorious performance and semester/AY sabbaticals. The 2007 Employee Survey indicated lack of faculty satisfaction with monetary amounts associated with each of these individual

opportunities for professional development support.

Evidence: 4.13 Travel Committee Criteria; 2.3 RACE Committee Decisions 4.4 DRTC/URTC research criteria; 4.4 CBA(\$11,000)/VTEM (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

STANDARD 4.B.6*SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY
REVIEW*

Sponsored research and programs funded by grants, contracts, and gifts are consistent with the institution's mission and goals. (Please see 4.B.3, Research Policies and Shared Governance above.)

Evidence: 2.3 RACE Committee Decisions; 4.6 Examples of Faculty Scholarly Development and Contribution exhibits, performance and basic/applied research

STANDARD 4.B.7*ACADEMIC FREEDOM*

Faculty are accorded academic freedom to pursue scholarship, research, and artistic creation consistent with the institution's mission and goals.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (§3.200) Academic Freedom; (VTEM § 4.15) (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

Policy 4.1*Faculty Evaluation*

MSU Billings recognizes the value placed on regular, thorough, and transformative evaluation of its faculty to assure the effectiveness and quality of the institution's educational programs. The University clearly articulates its faculty evaluation processes and procedures in its CBA §9.000 Professional Evaluation of Faculty and VTEM contract §7.1 Faculty Member Evaluations.

a. and b.

Evaluation of East Campus faculty begins in the disciplinary departments, each of which is guided by its collaboratively developed Department Rank and Tenure Committee (DRTC) Guidelines. These criteria are produced by those who know the expectations of the discipline. DRTCs comprise the department chair, tenured faculty members of the department, a representative of another academic discipline and a student representative. In departments/programs with few faculty numbers, faculty who have not yet achieved tenure or full professor rank may serve on the committee. All members have full voting rights.

Beyond the DRTC, faculty evaluation is carried on by the University Rank and Tenure Committee (comprising tenured full professors from each college and one at-large member). The URTC sends its recommendations to the Academic Vice Chancellor/Provost. The CBA requires the administration to provide for full due process in all decisions concerning reappointment, rank advancement and/or tenure.

The West Campus faculty review process is less formally outlined in the VTEM contract and is currently being reexamined by the VTEM Union Management Committee through the appointment of an ad hoc committee to review faculty evaluation, promotion and tenure review. Evaluation is a cooperative effort between the faculty member and immediate supervisor which includes a self-evaluation focusing on teaching, service, and scholarship, review of all syllabi, student evaluations, goals and the establishment of future goals. Tenured faculty are evaluated every three years, tenure track faculty are evaluated annually. RNTTA faculty are evaluated annually, and temporary one-year appointment faculty are evaluated at the end of their contract year. VTEM Union Management Committee involvement occurs

only for changes in the evaluation instruments or processes.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA/VTEM (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>)

c.

The DRTCs, URTC, and administration on the East Campus use multiple indices in the evaluation of faculty performance. The multiple indices are described as General Criteria in the CBA. The General Criteria are meant to reflect the University mission in Teaching, Scholarly Development and Contribution and Service to the University and to the Public. The DRTC Guidelines indicate how faculty from a specific department or program within a department are expected to address the institutional mission. Individual faculty Position Descriptions are, according to the CBA, collaboratively developed between the individual faculty member, the department chair, and the dean. They are intended to add specificity to expectations so that the path to tenure progresses as seamlessly as possible. While administration does have a management right to suggest ways in which a faculty member can improve performance in any of the three areas, these are suggestions only and may be included in a revised Position Description at the discretion of the department in collaboration with the faculty member.

The CBA outlines a regular schedule of evaluation for faculty. Probationary faculty (tenure-track faculty on their way to tenure), adjunct faculty, fixed-term faculty and University lecturers are evaluated annually. A combination of abbreviated (years one, three, and four) and extended reviews (years two, five, and six) are used for probationary faculty. For university lecturers and adjunct faculty, the schedule for reviews is adjusted, based on the nature of annual reviews. Following five successive positive annual reviews, the review cycle in subsequent reappointments takes place every three years. Negative reviews of performance by lecturers or adjuncts prompt a return to annual reviews.

Evaluation of West Campus faculty for promotion and tenure are guided by the VTEM contract. As the West Campus evolves its mission from a technical college primarily focused on vocational education to a one with the greater breadth found in a comprehensive community college the recent work of the VTEM Union Management Committee will become even more important. The Union Management Committee's efforts are underscored by the commitment of the Chancellor and Academic Vice Chancellor to participate. In addition to the current efforts of the Committee to revise the COTs faculty evaluation, promotion and tenure review processes, the Committee will likely be exploring the possibilities for eventual merger of the two contracts. Faculty are experiencing the COT's transition from a stand-alone vocational-technical institution to a part of the MSU University System.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (§9.310; §9.500 to § 9.636/VTEM (§10.1.I.11 and §10.1.J.12)

d.

In instances where the standard evaluation process identifies some perceived shortcoming in a particular faculty member's performance, the CBA outlines specific steps the University, the URTC, the deans, and the DRTC must use to bring the faculty member's performance up to standard. The key element of this remediation process is a plan-of-improvement as outlined in a Position



Description (CBA § 9.710.G).

In the case of an unsatisfactory evaluation or at the request of a faculty member, on the West Campus the VTEM Contract calls for a conference between the faculty member, the dean and the evaluator to discuss evaluation issues. Supervisors assist faculty with development and provide suggestions for improvement in areas of need. Faculty may request review by the next level of supervision if they feel their evaluation contains inaccurate or misleading information.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA/VTEM Contracts; 4.14 DRTC Guidelines

STANDARD FOUR

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

MSU Billings has tremendous assets with which to address challenges in higher education today: it is a strong cadre of tenured, long-serving faculty and one that remains committed to teaching, performing cutting-edge research, and serving the University and the community. These assets will be very important in dealing with the most important issues currently facing the University: communication throughout the university, an evolving relationship between the separate campuses of the University, changing student demographics and uncertainties in state funding. The state of the faculty at MSU Billings, therefore, is highly reflective of the state of the University as a whole. As the University faces serious budgetary and demographic realities, the faculty are on the front lines, dealing with larger classes and reduced curricular opportunities. But since the last NWCCU evaluation, the faculty have risen above these challenges and retained their scholarly productivity as well as their commitment to student and community engagement.

Strengths

- MSU Billings maintains a vibrant faculty who are highly qualified for their positions, engage in scholarly development and contributions in their areas of expertise and provide untold hours of service to the University and to the community.
- MSU Billings faculty have a long tradition of student-centered learning, serving not only as classroom leaders and scholars, but also as mentors to exceptional student scholars, tutors and community liaisons for special events.
- MSU Billings has evaluation processes and procedures in place, and faculty rise to meet high expectations of teaching and creative endeavors. Faculty excellence in teaching is continually demonstrated through positive student evaluations and celebrated annually with Faculty Excellence awards.
- MSU Billings faculty benefit from a broad base of community support and encouragement. Financial support generated through a \$30 million *People, Pride & Promise* capital campaign completed in 2006 will be used to support faculty endeavors and scholarships in a variety of ways. Billings-area business and industry also offer opportunities for faculty partnerships and student internships.
- MSU Billings consistently supports and emphasizes academic freedom in teaching and scholarship.

Challenges

- MSU Billings faculty, through the Employee Survey, has expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of monetary support for professional travel and for support of their individual research agendas. This is a topic for continuing discussion among all constituencies of the University community.
- Current collaborative negotiations face significant challenges in the near future, as faculty and administration stakeholders address issues such as salary inversion and compression, and the continued use of Position Descriptions, particularly their place in post-tenure evaluations.
- MSU Billings faculty — and the University as a whole — need to continue to make gains in improved communications at all levels. Current efforts for improving communication, such as including the Academic Senate in budgetary decisions, will surely bear fruit.
- As with other units of the Montana University System, salary compression issues will be a challenge for MSU Billings.
- Different labor agreements between the University and faculties at different campuses create administrative challenges. While efforts are under way to mitigate these differences, such as the addition of the Chancellor and Academic Vice Chancellor to the membership of the VTEM Union Management Committee, these efforts must be redoubled in the future to insure a unified faculty identity across the University.
- MSU Billings needs to actively engage and include faculty in the intended transition of the College of Technology into to a full-fledged community college. This goal was highlighted in the summer 2007 expanded Provost Council Retreat, which resulted in the creation of an internal Community College Planning and Communication Committee. Faculty issues involved in this effort include hiring and departmental oversight, general education curricular review and contract clarification.
- The future direction of two-year education in Montana is largely in the hands of the Board of Regents, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and Montana Legislature. The recent appointment of a Deputy Commissioner for Two Year Education at OCHE and continued policy discussions about two-year education will have implications for MSU Billings East and West Campuses, programs and faculty. Collaborative solutions to those implications will need to be developed by MSU Billings administration and faculty.