

# Standard Nine

## Institutional Integrity

### INTRODUCTION



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MSU Billings indicates integrity as first among its Core Values.

#### **Core Values**

##### Integrity

MSU Billings' actions are ethical & principled to assure dignity & equity for all.

##### Educational Excellence

MSU Billings provides distinctive programs & challenging educational experiences for a diverse University community.

##### Student Achievement

MSU Billings provides academic support & administrative services to foster academic & professional achievement of the University community.

##### Community of Learners

MSU Billings respects & nurtures variety in intellectual contribution & scholarship enriching both the University & its extended community.

##### Meaningful Engagement

MSU Billings supports all members of the University community in their individual growth toward confidence, individual sense of purpose & acceptance of civic responsibilities.

##### Responsiveness

MSU Billings meets the changing needs of our learners with informed action & innovation based on current standards of educational & technical excellence.

Without integrity, nothing that the institution does or plans to do has meaning.

### STANDARD 9.A.1

#### INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

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MSU Billings maintains high standards in its business practices, employment procedures, granting of academic credit, and research efforts. The Montana State University (MSU in Bozeman, MSU Billings, MSU Northern in Havre and the MSU Great Falls College of Technology) segment of the Montana University System (MUS) implemented Business Process Redesign (BPR) to assure an efficient and effective infrastructure for institutional administrative services.

The University community is committed to nondiscriminatory employment practices and to equal opportunity in athletic programs. Granting of academic credit

to students is the responsibility of faculty and is governed by the CBA. MSU Billings' administration, faculty and staff are diligent in complying with the standards of the Institutional Review Board for protecting human subjects in research.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (§ 10.120)/VTEM (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>); 9.1 HR Policies; 9.3 Business Process Redesign, 4.11 IRB Policies; 6.4 BOR *Policies and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

Institutional policies, procedures, and publications are reviewed and revised as necessary biennially. MSU Billings works with the Montana University System/Board of Regents in regular review and revision of policies, procedures, and publications of that body. The University complies with the state *Business Office Procedures Guide*, the Purchasing Authority Agreement and Human Resources Policies and Procedures/Affirmative Action Plan.

Evidence: 2.11 *General Bulletin*; 2.5 *Graduate Catalog*; 4.4 CBA/VTEM (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>); 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

In an age of increasing electronic communication, MSU Billings disseminates University information in both print and electronic formats. Catalogs are available in both forms and are revised biennially. The University webpage underwent significant revision during AY 2005-2006 and AY 2006-2007. *Campus Connections*, a publication of the University Relations office, and *The Retort*, the student publication dormant for AY 2007-2008 but scheduled to resume publication AY 2008-2009, abide by standards of journalistic ethics. Individual colleges may also disseminate newsletters to campus and alumni/ae constituencies. Through US Postal Service or e-mail, the MSU Billings Foundation mails information to donors regarding Foundation gifts received and upcoming events. All individuals/units responsible for publications strive for accuracy.

All institutional publications are subject to review by the Office of University Relations, and all must comply with University format and logo specifications.

Evidence: 2.11 *General Bulletin*; 2.5 *Graduate Catalog*; 9.2 University Print and Electronic Materials.

The MSU Billings administration — Chancellor, Vice-Chancellors, Deans and Directors — adhere to the MUS system policies on conflict of interest. Compliance with the policies includes reporting paid and unpaid board participation each academic year. Similarly, faculty annually report paid and unpaid consulting to the Office of the Provost. The BOR adopted its conflict-of-interest policy from the Montana state *Code of Ethics: Standards of Conduct for State Employees*.

The Montana Board of Regents reviewed Policy 770 — Conflicts of Interest — and approved revisions in May 2007. Under the new policy, all Montana University System employees will receive conflict-of-interest training and sign a form indicating

#### STANDARD 9.A.2

##### INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### STANDARD 9.A.3

##### INSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATIONS

#### STANDARD 9.A.4

##### CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICIES

their understanding and compliance with the policy.

Evidence: 6.4 Montana University System/Board of Regents *Policy and Procedures Manual* (§ 700 administrators) (§ 401.1 faculty) (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

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## STANDARD 9.A.5

### ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic freedom including both rights and responsibilities is assured through the MSU Billings/Montana University System Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the Vocational Technical Educators of Montana (VTEM) contracts. These contractual agreements are reviewed and re-negotiated every two years concomitantly with the biennial convening of the Montana Legislature. During the 2008 Montana Legislature session, there was an attempt by a conservative legislator to limit academic freedom in Montana's institutions of higher education by specifying what could/could not be taught in specified subject areas, particularly science. The proposed law was not passed partly due to efforts by the academic community.

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

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## POLICY 9.1

### *Institutional Integrity*

MSU Billings is committed to truth — in representation of the institution to the public, in advertising programs, in course content, in daily management operations and in recruitment, retention and performance review of employees.

MSU Billings has long been a regional comprehensive institution. Being all things to all constituencies has taxed institutional resources, however. In an effort to reassess identity, purpose and audience, MSU Billings' first step was review and compaction of the University mission statement. While the mission has not changed substantively to date, the statement of that mission was revised to be more concise. Ongoing struggle with state funding allocations, student FTE generation, growing numbers of older adults with decreasing numbers of high school graduates in Montana have combined to alert the institution that ongoing self-assessment, visioning and future goal setting are essential for growth, if not for survival itself.

MSU Billings is a public, state-supported institution of higher education. As such, the University strives to abide by the Constitutional mandate for separation of church and state as it continues to be morally responsible to its constituencies and ethical in its daily work.

Academic freedom — the balancing act between personal convictions and objective portrayal of facts in any area of study — remains the hallmark of institutional excellence, as well as academic integrity. Faculty at MSU Billings maintain awareness of the importance of this balance. They strive to engage students in exploration of the facts so that students can analyze and evaluate for themselves.

The Montana Board of Regents holds the serious responsibility of guiding the Montana University System according to state law, public educational needs, funding challenges for K through 16 education, personal convictions and approved individual institutional missions. Integrity across the system from the most recent student admitted through the Commissioner of Higher Education ensures the health and continuation of higher education in Montana.

Strengths

- The MSU Billings community prides itself on its integrity. The University holds high expectations of each of its constituencies — students, faculty, staff and administration.
- MSU Billings complies with Montana Board of Regents policies regarding academic freedom, conflict of interest, and intellectual property rights.
- MSU Billings has policies to hold employees to high standards through the various employee contracts — CBA, VTEM and staff.
- The MSU Billings *Student Handbook* informs students of their responsibilities regarding appropriate behavior and academic honesty.
- MSU Billings has reviewed/revised its Core Purpose, Mission, Core Values, Vision and Strategic Initiatives. Each division of the University Community has aligned its Master Plan with that of the University and annually reviews both alignment and progress on goals to determine continuing direction for the future.

Challenges

- Originally established to provide teacher education, MSU Billings is now a comprehensive university. The University must continue dialogue internally and externally to determine how it can maintain its strong foundational programs while changing to meet current educational demands of the state and region.
- In the area of academic freedom, MSU Billings needs to address how it will respond to increasing demands regarding curricular limitations proposed by outside entities.
- MSU Billings must be vigilant to ensure programs maintain high levels of integrity and quality regardless of the method of delivery.

## STANDARD NINE

## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

*“Academic freedom — the balancing act between personal convictions and objective portrayal of facts in any area of study — remains the hallmark of institutional excellence, as well as academic integrity.”*