



# YEAR SEVEN REPORT

Submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
on August 15, 2018





# **2018**

## **Year Seven Report**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Institutional Overview .....	<a href="#">3</a>
Basic Institutional Data Form .....	<a href="#">7</a>
Preface: Update on Institutional Changes Since Last Report.....	<a href="#">21</a>
<b>Standard One: Mission and Core Themes</b> .....	<a href="#">27</a>
Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3 .....	<a href="#">29</a>
Standard 1.A – Mission .....	<a href="#">29</a>
Standard 1.B – Core Themes .....	<a href="#">30</a>
<b>Standard Two: Resources and Capacity</b> .....	<a href="#">41</a>
Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 4 through 21 .....	<a href="#">43</a>
Standard 2A – Governance .....	<a href="#">44</a>
Standard 2B – Human Resources .....	<a href="#">59</a>
Standard 2C – Education Resources.....	<a href="#">64</a>
Standard 2D – Student Support .....	<a href="#">76</a>
Standard 2E – Library and Information Resources .....	<a href="#">89</a>
Standard 2F – Financial Resources.....	<a href="#">94</a>
Standard 2G – Physical and Technological Infrastructure .....	<a href="#">101</a>
<b>Standard Three: Planning and Implementation</b> .....	<a href="#">109</a>
Standard 3.A—Institutional Planning .....	<a href="#">111</a>
<b>Standards 3B, 4A, and 4B</b> .....	<a href="#">123</a>
Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement .....	<a href="#">125</a>
Executive Summary .....	<a href="#">127</a>
Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence .....	<a href="#">129</a>
Core Theme 2: Providing an Environment for Learning.....	<a href="#">142</a>
Core Theme 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility.....	<a href="#">157</a>
Core Theme 4: Enhancing the Community.....	<a href="#">164</a>
Core Theme 5: Essentials for Success.....	<a href="#">173</a>
<b>Standard Four: Effectiveness and Improvement</b> .....	<a href="#">181</a>
Standard 4.A – Assessment.....	<a href="#">183</a>
Accredited Academic Programs.....	<a href="#">184</a>
Non-Accredited Programs.....	<a href="#">197</a>
General Education Assessment Report .....	<a href="#">200</a>
<b>Standard Five: Mission Fulfillment</b> .....	<a href="#">223</a>
Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirement 24 .....	<a href="#">225</a>
Standard 5.A – Mission Fulfillment .....	<a href="#">225</a>
Standard 5.B – Adaptation and Sustainability .....	<a href="#">234</a>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<a href="#">236</a>







## **Institutional Overview**

The story of Montana State University Billings is one of community. It is a community of learners, a community of educators, and an institution that is integrated into the thriving, supportive host community of Billings, Montana. Likewise, the culture of MSU Billings continues to be one of engagement. The University remains a dynamic, engaging, and evolving student-centered institution that works to assure Access and Excellence across all levels.

MSU Billings is a public Masters University (Carnegie classification, 2006) dedicated to serving the educational and workforce needs of Montanans by providing high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts and sciences, business, education, health, human services and technology. In response to a plea from citizens for an institution of higher education in Central or Eastern Montana, Eastern Montana State Normal School was established in 1927, the fifth unit at the time of the Montana University System. The institution evolved into Eastern Montana College of Education in 1949 and into Eastern Montana College in 1965. Then, in 1994, the Montana University System restructured, and the institution was incorporated into the Montana State family of campuses and changed its name to Montana State University Billings in 1995.

MSU Billings is the third largest unit of the Montana University System, which is governed through the state constitution by a seven-member Board of Regents appointed by the Governor. In 1994, the Board of Regents merged the eleven state institutions into a single system, the Montana University System (MUS). That system has two families of campuses, with Montana State University Bozeman and the University of Montana Missoula serving as the flagships for each half of the MUS. Units of the Montana State University family of campuses are located in Bozeman, Billings, Havre and Great Falls.

MSU Billings is an institution embedded in Montana's largest city, which enables the University to serve an important niche in the region, state and in the Montana State University family. Located in a culturally, ethnically and educationally diverse metropolitan area, MSU Billings has evolved into a regional comprehensive University serving the eastern third of Montana. The campus mirrors the diverse and evolving nature of the city, both in student demographics and in reciprocal relationships and partnerships throughout the community and region.

MSU Billings is organized into five colleges: College of Allied Health Professions, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, and City College, which serves the two-year community college purpose as an embedded part of the University. The University offers seventy degree options through the five colleges, including short-term work-force training, certificates, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. Three of the colleges (Allied Health Professions, Arts and Sciences, and Education) offer master's degree programs.

### **Strategic Planning**

The University's mission, core themes, and objectives that manifest those themes are the foundational elements of the University's identity and purpose. Each of these levels of identity underwent a thorough revision and redefinition through the University's strategic planning process referred to in this report as the "FutureU" process. This yearlong process began in 2012 with a leadership team representative of the entire University constituency, from students to chancellor to community members. The team combined intensive research and public perspectives to forge a new strategic plan for the University. The group identified institutional assumptions, challenges and opportunities, and developed a timeline for the strategic planning process. The planning committee completed an "overarching" 2013-2018 university plan, and then each major unit in academic, student, or administrative divisions constructed or revised their plans to integrate the university plan and clarify their prospective roles. With his appointment as the new chancellor in 2018, Dr. Dan Edelman is preparing to launch a new strategic planning process replace the expired FutureU plan. This planning began in July 2018 and will continue throughout the Fall 2018 semester.

### **Accreditation**

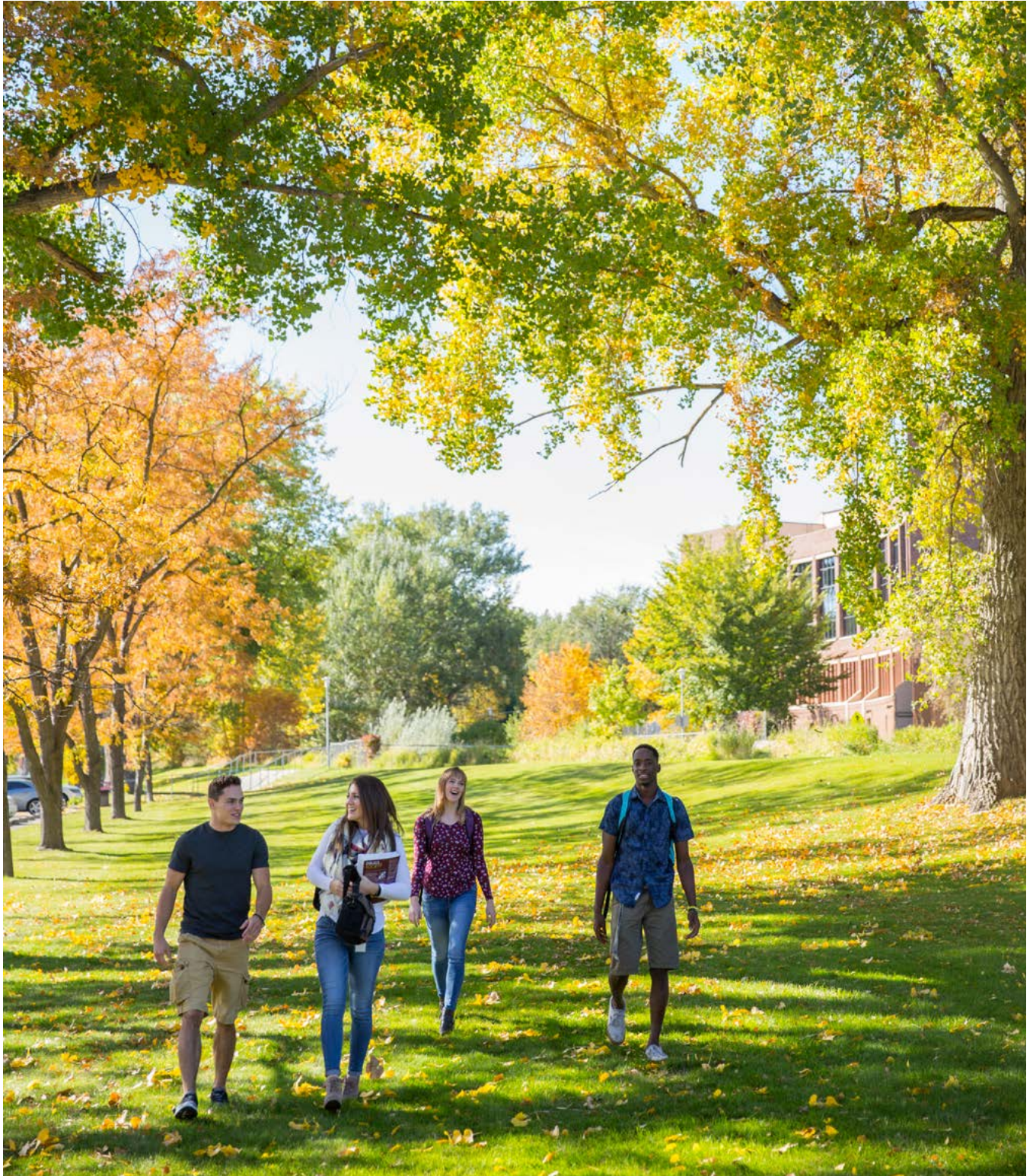
In conjunction with the FutureU process, the University refocused its efforts in terms of accreditation by positioning the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs as the Accreditation Liaison Officer, who chairs/coordinates the work of the Assessment and Accreditation Council (AAC) as well as overseeing the fulfillment of the strategic plan. The AAC implemented a campus-wide dialogue to work with the FutureU team to develop core themes, objectives and indicators. The [AAC](#) is composed of diverse membership representing a cross section of the University community.

### **Program Prioritization**

In conjunction with the development of the University strategic plan, MSU Billings engaged in a program prioritization process in 2013-2014. An oversight team of faculty representing the five colleges at MSU Billings designed and implemented an intentional method of analyzing program strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of determining programs to strengthen, maintain or discontinue. This process was incorporated into the strategic plan itself as the institution focused program analysis toward fulfillment of the mission. The larger outcomes of the process (discussed in more detail in Standard 5, page [223](#)) included developing an approach for fostering faculty participation in larger institutional initiatives, creating change in resource allocation processes, and aligning institutional goals with system-wide initiatives. As state revenues decline and permanent institutional budget reductions become necessary, program prioritization becomes critical for strategic reinvestment of funds.



Using program prioritization as a part of strategic planning, resource allocation, and engagement of the entire University marks a change for MSU Billings. Key roles are played by the Chancellor's Cabinet, the Provost's Council, Administrative Services directors, Student Affairs directors, deans, department chairs, Academic Senate, Staff Senate, the two faculty unions, budget committees and advisory boards. Any substantive changes occur in conjunction with accrediting agencies, MSU Billings' parent campus MSU Bozeman and the strategic goals of the Montana University System and its Board of Regents.







## NWCCU REPORTS | 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. This form should be inserted into the appendix of the self-evaluation report (see the guidelines).

### Institutional Information

#### Name of Institution: Montana State University Billings

Mailing Address: 1500 University Drive  
 Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: Billings  
 State/Province: MT  
 Zip/Postal Code: 59101  
 Main Phone Number: 406-657-2011  
 Country: USA

#### Chief Executive Officer

Title (Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.): Dr.  
 First Name: Daniel  
 Last Name: Edelman  
 Position (President, etc.): Chancellor  
 Phone: 406-657-2300  
 Fax: 406-657-2299  
 Email: dedelman@msubillings.edu

#### Accreditation Liaison Officer

Title (Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.): Dr.  
 First Name: Susan  
 Last Name: Balter-Reitz  
 Position (President, etc.): Interim VPAA  
 Phone: 406-657-2214  
 Fax: 406-657-2299  
 Email: susan.balterreitz@msubillings.edu

#### Chief Financial Officer

Title (Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.): Ms.  
 First Name: Trudy  
 Last Name: Collins  
 Position (President, etc.): VCAF  
 Phone: 406-657-2155  
 Fax: 406-657-2299  
 Email: tcollins@msubillings.edu

## Institutional Demographics

### Institutional Type *(Choose all that apply)*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious-Based        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized              | <input type="checkbox"/> Native/Tribal          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health-Centered          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____ |

### Degree Levels *(Choose all that apply)*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associate  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Baccalaureate  | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If part of a multi-institution system,<br>name of system: <u>Montana University System</u> |  |

### Calendar Plan *(Choose one that applies)*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Semester | <input type="checkbox"/> Trimester              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quarter             | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-1-4               |   |

### Institutional Control

- |   |                                 |   |                                  |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City               | <input type="checkbox"/> County | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Public     | OR                              | <input type="radio"/> Private/Independent |                                  |                                 |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Non-Profit | OR                              | <input type="radio"/> For-Profit          |                                  |                                 |

**Students** (all locations)**Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment** (Formula used to compute FTE: IPEDS)**Official Fall:** 2017 (most recent year) FTE Student Enrollments

Classification	Current Year: 2017-18	One Year Prior: 2016-17	Two Years Prior: 2015-16
Undergraduate	3114	3186	3384
Graduate	262	261	256
Professional			
Unclassified			
Total all levels	3376	3447	3640

**Full-Time *Unduplicated* Headcount Enrollment.** (Count students enrolled in credit courses only.)**Official Fall:** 2017 (most recent year) Student Headcount Enrollments

Classification	Current Year: 2017	One Year Prior: 2016	Two Years Prior: 2015
Undergraduate	2400	2500	2701
Graduate	163	169	173
Professional			
Unclassified			
Total all levels	2563	2669	2874

**Faculty** (all locations)

- Numbers of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff
- 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:** 152 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Full-Time (only) Faculty and Staff by Highest Degree Earned

Rank	Full-Time	Part-Time	Less than Associate	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Specialist	Doctorate
Professor	35	2				2		33
Associate Professor	15							15
Assistant Professor	54	1				14		40
Instructor	7	2		4		2		1
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant	41	2		1	7	27		6
Research Staff and Research Assistant	0	0						
Undesignated Rank	0	150						



**Faculty** (all locations)

**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	78,273	20.7
Associate Professor	69,041	14.1
Assistant Professor	54,251	5.6
Instructor	39,384	3.0
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant	51,179	8.7
Research Staff and Research Assistant		
Undesignated Rank		

**Institutional Finances**

**Financial Information.** Please provide the requested information for each of the most recent completed fiscal year and the two prior completed fiscal years (three years total).

Please attach the following as separate documents submitted with the Basic Institutional Data Form

- Statement of Cash Flows
  - FY17 MSU Consolidated Financial Statements  
<http://www.montana.edu/ubs/documents/MSU%20Audited%20Financial%20Statements%202017.pdf>
    - MSUB specific on page 77
  - FY16 MSU Consolidated Financial Statements  
<http://www.montana.edu/ubs/documents/2016%20MSU%20Consolidated%20Financials%20-%20Final.pdf>
    - MSUB specific on page 79
- Balance Sheet – collapsed to show main accounts only; no details
  - FY17 MSU Consolidated Financial Statements  
<http://www.montana.edu/ubs/documents/MSU%20Audited%20Financial%20Statements%202017.pdf>
    - MSUB specific on pages 75 and 76
  - FY16 MSU Consolidated Financial Statements  
<http://www.montana.edu/ubs/documents/2016%20MSU%20Consolidated%20Financials%20-%20Final.pdf>
    - MSUB specific on pages 77 and 78
  - FY15 MSU Consolidated Financial Statements <http://www.montana.edu/ubs/documents/MSU%202015%20Audited%20Consolidated%20Financial%20Statements.pdf>
    - MSUB specific on pages 73 and 74
- Operating Budget
  - FY17 Operating budgets <https://msubillings.box.com/s/9kfck3xko5m4dcyw0j10t8f2erj2epm8>
  - FY16 Operating budgets <https://msubillings.box.com/s/0uhp5zhok2pih4q4oh09xyq8exftbzre>
  - FY15 Operating budgets <https://msubillings.box.com/s/s8kznvzbxn8loc5l5vcme4rwa8p7rchi>
- Capital Budget
  - The capital budgets are on the following pages of the Operating budgets:
    - FY17 Page 23
    - FY16 Page 23
    - FY15 Page 23
- Projections of Non-Tuition Revenue

**Montana State University Billings**  
**Selected Statements of Cash Flows Data**  
**As of and For the year ended June 30**

	2017	2016	2015
<b>Cash flows from operating activities:</b>			
Cash received for revenues			
Tuition and fees	19,166,231	20,292,023	21,554,379
Federal grants and contracts	3,058,162	2,991,830	3,005,275
State grants and contracts	225,955	311,324	618,221
Private grants and contracts	98,836	296,393	360,555
Grant and contract indirect cost recoveries	373,197	349,272	333,075
Educational, public service and outreach revenues	1,163,239	1,296,745	1,181,700
Sales and services of auxiliary enterprises	5,670,963	6,332,444	6,673,754
Interest on loans receivable	16,638	49,539	81,630
Other operating receipts	189,785	191,430	171,926
Cash paid for expenses	-	-	-
Compensation and benefits	(37,456,186)	(36,537,141)	(38,799,253)
Operating expenses	(17,864,941)	(19,175,247)	(20,917,964)
Scholarships and fellowships	(4,416,088)	(4,610,698)	(4,995,350)
Loans made to students	(524,632)	(661,408)	(538,389)
Loan payments received	536,159	498,095	500,741
Intercampus payables/receivables	(19,251)	28,644	(32,692)
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	<b>(29,781,933)</b>	<b>(28,346,755)</b>	<b>(30,802,392)</b>
<b>Cash flows from noncapital financing activities:</b>			
Receipts (disbursements) of funds held in trust for others	(7,746)	20,752	18,210
Direct lending proceeds	15,829,749	16,215,676	16,654,424
Direct lending disbursements	(15,829,749)	(16,215,676)	(16,654,424)
State and local appropriations	22,422,099	23,064,756	21,847,507
State contribution to retirement plans	-	-	-
Federal pell grant funds received	5,112,393	5,513,380	6,229,323
Gifts and contributions (expendable)	2,286,405	2,453,136	2,260,240
Land grant income	451,545	296,805	615,159
Repayment of long-term advance from primary government	-	-	-
Additions to permanent endowments	-	-	-
Transfers between campuses and agencies	(16,575)	(16,575)	(15,000)
<b>Net cash flows from noncapital financing activities</b>	<b>30,248,121</b>	<b>31,332,254</b>	<b>30,955,439</b>
<b>Cash flows from capital financing activities:</b>			
Purchase of capital assets	(1,104,171)	(1,817,664)	(1,877,140)
Proceeds from sale of capital assets	424,279	21,699	13,555
Gifts -restricted for capital purchase	-	-	-
Other capital financing activities	-	-	-
Proceeds from borrowings	183,040	-	-
Debt principal paid	(860,463)	(765,000)	(621,081)
Payment of capitalized debt issue costs	-	-	-
Advances from primary government	-	352,092	860,154
Repayment of advances from primary government	(414,980)	(348,453)	(281,501)
Interest paid	(335,864)	(342,867)	(482,682)
<b>Net cash change from capital financing activities</b>	<b>(2,108,159)</b>	<b>(2,900,193)</b>	<b>(2,388,695)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>			
Purchase of investments	(162,195)	-	-
Proceeds from sale of investments	162,195	164,480	62,338
Investment income	274,556	158,264	43,696
<b>Net cash change from investing activities</b>	<b>274,556</b>	<b>322,744</b>	<b>106,034</b>
<b>Net change in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(1,367,415)</b>	<b>408,050</b>	<b>(2,129,614)</b>
<b>Balances at beginning of year</b>	<b>35,863,906</b>	<b>35,455,856</b>	<b>37,585,470</b>
<b>Balances at end of year</b>	<b>34,496,491</b>	<b>35,863,906</b>	<b>35,455,856</b>

**Montana State University Billings**  
**Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position**  
**As of and For the Year Ended June 30**

	2017	2016	2015
<b>Operating revenues:</b>			
Tuition and fees	19,471,570	20,363,908	21,754,355
Federal grants and contracts	2,997,016	3,002,864	3,034,760
State grants and contracts	259,526	362,405	622,197
Non-governmental grants and contracts	316,937	261,842	199,982
Grant and contract facilities and administrative cost recoveries	373,197	349,272	333,075
Educational, public service and outreach revenues	1,215,413	1,212,275	1,272,134
Auxiliary - housing	1,682,504	1,791,669	1,791,525
Auxiliary - food service	1,031,604	1,150,317	1,138,254
Auxiliary - other auxiliary sales and services	2,989,264	3,421,520	3,740,492
Interest earned on loans	686	3,239	81,630
Other operating revenues	189,785	191,430	171,926
<b>Total operating revenues</b>	<b>30,527,502</b>	<b>32,110,741</b>	<b>34,140,330</b>
<b>Operating expenses:</b>			
Compensation and benefits, including pensions	36,901,428	35,873,936	36,733,357
OPEB expense	786,745	792,157	2,000,505
Operating expenses:	18,820,567	19,603,541	20,129,786
Scholarships and fellowships	4,416,088	4,610,698	4,995,350
Depreciation and amortization	4,021,030	4,123,628	3,962,242
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>64,945,858</b>	<b>65,003,960</b>	<b>67,821,240</b>
<b>Operating loss</b>	<b>(34,418,356)</b>	<b>(32,893,219)</b>	<b>(33,680,910)</b>
<b>Nonoperating revenues (expenses):</b>			
State and local appropriations	22,969,965	23,072,666	22,197,045
Pell Grants	5,112,393	5,513,380	6,229,323
Land grant and timber sales income	451,545	296,805	615,160
Gifts	2,286,406	2,453,136	2,260,240
Investment Income	449,243	88,086	45,343
Interest expense	(418,354)	(429,583)	(479,118)
<b>Net nonoperating revenues (expenses)</b>	<b>30,851,198</b>	<b>30,994,490</b>	<b>30,867,993</b>
<b>Income before other revenues, expenses, gains and losses</b>	<b>(3,567,158)</b>	<b>(1,898,729)</b>	<b>(2,812,917)</b>
Transfers in (out)	(16,575)	(16,575)	(15,001)
Gain or loss on disposal of capital assets	249,639	(124,043)	(301,484)
Additions to permanent endowments	-	-	-
Gifts, capital grants and contributions	494,405	190,842	84,774
Capital Appropriations	-	-	-
<b>Change in net position</b>	<b>(2,839,689)</b>	<b>(1,848,505)</b>	<b>(3,044,628)</b>
<b>Net position, beginning of year</b>	<b>42,881,185</b>	<b>44,729,690</b>	<b>47,774,318</b>
<b>Net position, end of year</b>	<b>40,041,496</b>	<b>42,881,185</b>	<b>44,729,690</b>

**Montana State University Billings**  
**Statements of Net Position**  
**As of June 30**

	2017	2016	2015
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets:</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	34,484,091	35,851,506	35,443,456
Short term investments	-	-	-
Securities lending collateral	-	71,854	44,290
Accounts and grants receivable, net	1,220,018	1,117,545	1,288,626
Amounts receivable from Federal government	16,673	79,600	38,279
Amounts receivable from primary government	35,194	17,943	12,143
Amounts receivable from Montana component units	49,546	56,902	-
Amounts receivable from MSU campuses	23,299	4,048	32,692
Loans receivable, net	454,997	607,531	597,739
Inventories	649,369	758,621	761,869
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	242,564	137,943	129,384
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>37,175,751</b>	<b>38,703,493</b>	<b>38,348,478</b>
<b>Noncurrent assets:</b>			
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	12,400	12,400	12,400
Restricted investments	-	-	-
Loans receivable, net	2,392,025	2,416,052	2,474,547
Investments	1,754,999	1,592,804	1,837,255
Capital assets	44,081,179	46,678,273	48,939,138
Other noncurrent assets	-	-	-
<b>Total noncurrent assets</b>	<b>48,240,603</b>	<b>50,699,529</b>	<b>53,263,340</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>85,416,354</b>	<b>89,403,022</b>	<b>91,611,818</b>
<b>DEFERRED OUTFLOWS</b>	<b>4,129,482</b>	<b>2,912,148</b>	<b>3,239,583</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities:</b>			
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4,799,906	3,993,304	3,485,741
Amounts payable to primary government	447,607	430,786	358,938
Amounts payable to Montana component units	-	-	-
Amounts payable to MSU campuses	-	-	-
Securities Lending Liability	-	71,854	44,290
Property held in trust for others	120,082	127,828	107,076
Deferred revenues	1,156,909	1,714,572	1,375,226
Compensated absences	2,049,994	2,031,315	2,163,489
Current portion debt and capital lease obligations	795,000	785,000	765,000
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>9,369,498</b>	<b>9,154,659</b>	<b>8,299,760</b>
<b>Noncurrent liabilities:</b>			
Advances from primary government	2,817,710	3,242,665	3,305,553
Debt and capital lease obligations	7,322,977	8,009,889	8,794,378
Compensated absences	1,691,002	1,721,367	1,692,291
OPEB and Pension liability	24,685,067	23,081,615	21,817,072
Due to federal government	2,750,578	2,899,659	3,065,375
Derivative instrument - swap liability	-	-	-
<b>Total noncurrent liabilities</b>	<b>39,267,334</b>	<b>38,955,195</b>	<b>38,674,669</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>48,636,832</b>	<b>48,109,854</b>	<b>46,974,429</b>
<b>DEFERRED INFLOWS</b>	<b>867,508</b>	<b>1,324,131</b>	<b>3,147,282</b>
<b>NET POSITION</b>			
Net investment in capital assets	33,082,923	34,738,447	36,326,757
Restricted - nonexpendable	734,564	759,981	788,188
Restricted - expendable	2,618,739	2,457,135	2,596,158
Unrestricted	3,605,270	4,925,622	5,018,587
<b>Total net position</b>	<b>40,041,496</b>	<b>42,881,185</b>	<b>44,729,690</b>

## New Degree / Certificate Programs

### Substantive Changes

Substantive changes including degree or certificate programs planned for \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ (YYYY-YYYY) approved by the institution's governing body. If NONE, so indicate. *Please feel free to create the list using the headings we have specified and submit it as an Excel spreadsheet.*

*\* This listing does not substitute for a formal substantive change submission to NWCCU*

Substantive Change	Certificate/Degree Level	Program Name	Discipline or Program Area
NONE			



### Domestic Off-Campus Degree Programs and Academic Credit Sites

Report information for off-campus sites within the United States where degree programs and academic credit 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

Name of Site	Physical Address	City, State, Zip	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Headcount	Faculty Headcount
NONE						

**Distance Education**

Degree and Certificate Programs of 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more where at least 50% or more of the curriculum is offered by Distance Education, including ITV, online, and competency-based education. Adjust entries to category listings below as appropriate.

***If your list is longer than ten entries, please create a list using the heading we have specified and upload it in the box provided as an Excel spreadsheet.***

*\* This listing does not substitute for a formal substantive change submission to NWCCU*

Name of Site	Physical Address	Degree/ Certificate Name/Level	Program Name	Student Enrollment (Unduplicated Headcount)	On-Site Staff (Yes or No)	Co-Sponsoring Organization (if applicable)
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	CERT	Accounting Assistant	6	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	AAS	Accounting Technology	37	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BAS	Bachelor of Applied Science	73	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BSLS	Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies	99	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	AS	Business Administration	97	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BSBA	Business Administration-Accounting Option	263	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BSBA	Business Administration-General Business Option	149	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BSBA	Business Administration-Marketing Option	115	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BA	Communication - Mass	32	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BA	Communication - Organizational	31	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	AA/AS	General Studies	137	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BSHA	Health Administration	85	Yes	NA

**Distance Education** *(continued)*

*\* This listing does not substitute for a formal substantive change submission to NWCCU*

Name of Site	Physical Address	Degree/ Certificate Name/Level	Program Name	Student Enrollment (Unduplicated Headcount)	On-Site Staff (Yes or No)	Co-Sponsoring Organization (if applicable)
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	MHA	Health Administration	33	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	AS	HR Management-Business Articulated Emphasis	18	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	AS	HR Management-General Applied Emphasis	15	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	CERT	Human Resource Management	5	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	CERT	Long-Term Care Management	0	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	CERT	Medical Coding & Insurance Billings	41	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	MEd	Online Instructional Technologies	3	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	BS	Public Relations	37	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	MSPR	Public Relations	24	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	MS	Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling	61	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	MS	Special Education Advanced	36	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	MS	Special Education Generalist	15	Yes	NA
Montana State University Billings	1500 University Drive Billings, MT 59101	CERT	Teaching and Learning Online	0	Yes	NA

### Programs and Academic Courses Offered at Sites Outside the United States

Report information for sites outside the United States where degree programs and academic credit coursework is offered, including study abroad programs and educational operations on military bases. (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 Sites outside the United States

Name of Site	Physical Address	City, State, Zip	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Headcount	Faculty Headcount
NONE						



## **Preface**

Montana State University Billings (MSU Billings) presents this Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). This report provides an updated statement of MSU Billings' mission and core themes, a response to the peer report recommendations from the Year Three Report, as well as a thorough examination of the University's mission and core themes, resources and capacities for carrying out that mission and associated themes, and an analysis the campus practices in planning, assessment, and the fulfillment of the University mission.

## **Institutional Changes**

The last full report submitted by Montana State University Billings to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities was the institution's Year Three Self-Study, September, 2013. Since that time, the institution has undergone a number of changes:

### **Administrative Changes**

- **Chancellor**—In May, 2014, Chancellor Rolf Groseth retired and was replaced on an interim basis by Montana Commissioner of Higher Education Emerita Dr. Sheila Sterns. Following a national search, Dr. Mark Nook was selected to serve as the third chancellor of Montana State University Billings. In January 2017, Dr. Nook left the University for another institution and was replaced by Interim Chancellor Dr. Ron Larsen. Following a national search, Dr. Daniel Edelman was chosen in February 2018 by the Montana State University President Waded Cruzado to serve as chancellor of Montana State University Billings.

### **Academic Affairs**

- **Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs**—In March 2015, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Mark Pagano left the institution and was replaced by Interim Provost Dr. William Shields. Following a national search, Dr. Robert Hoar, former Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse assumed the position of Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in July, 2015. Dr. Hoar left the institution in August, 2018, and was replaced by Dr. Mary Susan Fishbaugh, who continues as Dean of the College of Education and

Director of Graduate studies, on an interim basis pending a search.

- Vice Provost for Academic Affairs—In June, 2018, Dr. Matthew Redinger, vice provost for Academic Affairs, left the institution. Provost Robert Hoar appointed Dr. Susan Balter-Reitz, Director of e-Learning, as interim vice provost. Dr. Balter-Reitz started in her new role July 2, 2018. She will continue as Director of e-Learning.
- Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions— Dr. Diane Duin served as the interim dean of the College of Allied Health Professions from February 2009 until she was named permanent dean in July 2010. In June 2018, she left the institution and in July 2018, Dr. John Dorr was named interim dean. Dr. Dorr is serving on a part time basis and receives support from the Provost as well as an Associate Dean.
- Dean of City College— Dr. Marsha Riley served as dean of City College from September 2011 until May 2014. After Dr. Riley left the institution, Rita Kratky stepped in to serve as interim dean. In July, 2015, Dr. Clifford Coppersmith, assumed the position of Dean of City College. In May 2018, Dr. Coppersmith left the institution and shortly thereafter, Ms. Elizabeth Fullon was appointed Interim Dean of City College. A nationwide search is currently underway to recruit and hire a permanent replacement for Dr. Coppersmith.
- Dean of the College of Business— Dean of the College of Business Dr. Barbara Wheeling left the University in June, 2017, and was replaced by Dr. Diane Duin, Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions, who continued to serve as the Dean of that college while assuming responsibility for leading the College of Business on an interim basis until she left the institution in June, 2018. Currently Ed Garding, is serving as interim dean on a part time basis and receives support from the Provost as well as an Associate Dean.
- Associate Dean of City College—In February 2014, Dr. Florence Garcia was named as the Associate Dean of City College, to replace Tammi Watson, who served in that position on an interim basis.
- Director of Graduate Studies—Dr. Diane Duin, Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions served concurrently as the Director of Graduate Studies until she assumed the responsibilities as Interim Dean of the College of Business in June 2017. Provost Robert Hoar selected Dr. Mary Susan Fishbaugh, Dean of the College of Education, to serve as the Director of Graduate Studies to replace Dr. Duin.
- Director of e-Learning—Dr. Susan Balter-Reitz, Professor in the Department of Communication & Theater, served in this position on an interim basis, until a national search resulted in her selection as the permanent Director of e-Learning in May, 2014.
- Director of Academic Support Center—In January 2016, Ben Barkholtz left the University and, following a national search, was replaced by Dr. John Gillette. Dr. Gillette left the University in July 2017, and was replaced on an interim basis by Ms. Rebekah Reger, formerly the Associate Director of the Academic Support Center.
- Director of the Library—Brent Roberts served as Director of the Library until September, 2016. He was replaced on an interim basis by Megan Thomas until April, 2017, when Darlene Hert was selected the new Director following a national search.
- Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs—Dr. David McGinnis retired, and was replaced on an interim basis by Cindy Bell, who was selected as the permanent Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs in October 2016.
- Director of Institutional Research—In July, 2014, Linda Wham retired as Director of Institutional Research, and was replaced by Joann Stryker following a national search.

## **Student Affairs**

- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs—Dr. Stacy Klippenstein left the University in December 2013. Chancellor Rolf Groseth oversaw Student Affairs temporarily. In August, 2014, Dr. Joe Oravec was hired as the new Vice Chancellor for Student



Affairs at the conclusion of a nation-wide search, and he served in that position until May, 2018, when he left the institution. This position was filled by David Buckingham, an appointment from The Registry, until a full search can take place.

- Director of Advising and Career Services— After the retirement of Pat Reuss, the Director of Career Services, in June 2014, the office of Career Services was reorganized and Becky Lyons, Director of the Advising Center, was named Director of Advising and Career Services in June 2014
- Director of Jackets & Co. (Campus Store) In August 2016, Director Chad Schreier left the University, and the Bookstore was overseen by Interim Dean of Students Kathy Kotecki. In June, 2017, Ed Brown was named as the new Director of Jackets & Co.
- Director of Financial Aid—In April, 2014, Director Leslie Weldon retired, and following a national search, was replaced by Emily Williamson as the new Director of Financial Aid.
- Director of Student Services at City College—In June 2015, Director of Student Services at City College Rita Kratky left the University to assume a position at Miles Community College, and was replaced by Stephanie Cowen.
- Director of Student Life and Auxiliaries—In July 2015, Jeannie McIsaac left the University and the position was reorganized, and Kathy Kotecki was named Interim Dean of Students; she was named permanent Dean of Student Engagement in August, 2017.
- Student Affairs Budget Manager—in November 2015, Budget Manager Shelly Zimmerman retired, and was replaced by David Powell as Student Affairs Budget Manager.
- General Manager of Sodexo—In June 2017, Jeremy Noel, General Director of the Sodexo food service, resigned, and Randy Fowler was named Interim General Manager.
- Director of the William Lowe Childcare Center—In September 2016, the position of Director of the Childcare Center was eliminated when the William Lowe Childcare Center was shuttered following Director Ashley Chilton's resignation.

### **Administrative Services**

- Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services—Following a 33-year career at MSU Billings, Vice Chancellor Terrie Iverson retired in December 2017, and was replaced by Ms. Trudy Sipe Collins, formerly (and currently serving as) University Budget Director, to serve as the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance.
- President and Chief Executive Officer of the MSU Billings Foundation—In January 2016, Chuck Wendt resigned as President and CEO of the MSU Billings Foundation, and was replaced by Foundation Board member David Warne until a national search resulted in William Kennedy assuming the position in August 2016.
- Director of University Relations—In January 2017, Aaron Clingsmith resigned as Director of University Relations and was replaced on an interim basis by Sarah Brockel, concurrently Director of Alumni Relations. In September 2017, as a result of a national search, Ms. Brockel was replaced by Shannon Lampe Wilcox, who assumed the responsibilities of Director of University Relations.
- Manager, Yellowstone Public Radio—In June, 2017, Kurt Wilson assumed responsibilities as Manager of Yellowstone Public Radio, replacing Aaron Clingsmith, former Director of University Relations, who also served as Interim Manager.
- Director of the Montana Center for Inclusive Education (MCIE)—In June 2017, Marsha Sampson retired and, following a nationwide search, was replaced by Dr. Tom Manthey, who assumed the Directorship.
- Chief of the University Police Department— In May, 2017, longtime Chief of the MSU

Billings Police Force, Scott Forshee, retired and was replaced by Assistant Chief of Police Adam Davis on an interim basis. Officer Davis left the university in June 2018, Officer Brandon Gatlin stepped in to serve as Chief of Police on an interim basis while a search is being conducted.

- Director of Business Services—in April 2014, Director of Business Services Jim Neilsen retired as was replaced by Purchasing Manager Barb Shafer.
- Director of Financial Services—In December 2017, Ms. LeAnn Anderson retired and was replaced by Ms. Heather Hanna following a national search.

### **Response to Topics Raised by the Commission**

In the December 2013 Year Three Peer Evaluation Report from the Commission evaluators, MSU Billings received the following two recommendations:

**Recommendation 1: While noting that MSUB has a widely-published mission statement and that work is progressing on the core theme indicators, evaluators did not find evidence that targets have been consistently identified for the core theme indicators. The evaluation committee recommends that MSUB continue to refine targets for the indicators of performance for the core themes as it evaluates the accomplishment of its core theme objectives, achievement of its strategic plan, and mission fulfillment (Standards 1.A.2 and 1.B.2).**

Upon receiving this recommendation from the visiting committee, the MSU Billings community set to work to re-examine the core indicators of the Strategic Plan, and to redefine the targets by which the campus could identify its success in fulfilling the goals of the plan. This work was compromised, however, from 2014-2016 when Chancellor Mark Nook deemed the strategic plan inadequate, and, particularly later in this period, campus attentions were focused on planning and constructing a new strategic plan. Therefore, progress on updating the plan and the indicators by which the campus would measure its success in fulfilling the plan was inadequate. With the resignation of Chancellor Nook in January 2017, the campus was able to refocus itself back on the original 2013-2018 strategic plan. This renewed focus brought the indicators and the targets that the campus set for itself to the fore, and the energy with which the campus approached the strategic plan with renewed purpose has been gratifying.

These indicators arise straight out of the core themes that lie at the heart of the strategic plan, which is itself grounded firmly in the University's mission statement. Thus, indicators are intended to measure performance on activities that respond directly to the most important elements of the University's identity. The targets for these indicators were intentionally identified by the Cabinet to provide a healthy mix of stretch goals where appropriate, and more attainable goals where progress is just beginning. Each core theme has three to seven indicators to help gauge the progress on that theme. The metrics associated with each theme, and their associated targets, are as follows

MSUB FutureU Strategic Plan Indicator Assessment Rubric				
	Metrics	Baseline (1)	Target	Metric (current FY)
	<b>Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence</b>			
1	Professional Development Funds Awarded to Faculty (2)	\$613	+2%/yr	\$680
2	E-Learning Professional Development Funds Awarded (2)	\$137	+2%/yr	\$171
3	Professional Development Funds Awarded to Staff	\$14,666	maint.	\$8,000
4	Total Restricted Grant and Sponsored Program Funds Received for Research per Contact Faculty	\$2,391	+5%/yr	\$1,938
	<b>Core Theme 2: Providing an Environment for Learning</b>			
5	Six-Year Graduation Rate - University Campus	25%	+1%/yr (4)	24%
6	Three-Year Graduation Rate- City College Campus	24%*	+1%/yr (4)	23%
7	First-Year Retention Rate (First Time - FT, Fall to Fall)	54%*	60%	56%
8	Dual Credit Students Served	245	+10%	354
9	General Fund Scholarships and Waivers Awarded as % of Total Tuition	12.3%	+1%/yr	14.2%
10	Private Aid Through the MSUB Foundation as % of Total Tuition	8.2%	+1%/yr	10.0%
11	Student Credit Hours in Internships as a % of total SCH	0.78%	+5%/yr	0.89%
	<b>Core Theme 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility</b>			
12	Courses that include Service Learning Activities	26	+2%/yr	32
13	Campus-wide Hours Volunteering in the Community and Region	5474	+3%/yr	13200
14	Annual Student Enrollment in Study Abroad Programs (as a percentage of total Bachelor and Associate Degrees Conferred)	2.81%	5.00%	2.13% (2016)
	<b>Core Theme 4: Enhancing the Community</b>			
15	Clients Served through MSUB Extended Campus	4318 (5)	+3%	1913
16	MSUB Community Partnerships	49 (5)	+5%	52
17	Number of MSUB Community Events	55	50	59
	<b>Essentials for Success</b>			
18	Expenditure Ratio: Instruction/Total	48%	50% (4)	50%
19	Expenditure Ratio: (Inst. + Acad. Sup. + Stu. Ser.)/Total	68%	70% (4)	71%
20	Construction \$'s Expended	\$2,109,997		\$1,862,351

(1) Rolling average of previous three years, unless otherwise noted, current metrics: 2014-2016

(2) Expressed as funds per contract faculty member

(3) Previous year's average

(4) Reflective of Performance Based Funding criteria

(5) 2016-2017

\* Baseline calculated on FY 15-16

**Recommendation 2: While the evaluation team found that MSUB has defined policies and procedures for human resources, there are inconsistencies in the application of practices and the use of assessment information to assure sufficient staffing, clarity of job duties and responsibilities, and regular evaluation of administrators. The evaluation committee recommends that MSUB fully and consistently implement human resources procedures to assure that the resources and capacity are consistent with the MSUB mission, programs and services, and the strategic plan (Standards 2.B.1, 2.B.2).**

MSU Billings works hard to align resources—human, financial, and physical—and capacities with human resource procedures in order to fulfill the University mission and carry out the strategic plan. An example of this alignment is the adoption of the Executive Intelligence Survey administered by FutureSYNC, International, as a tool for evaluating administrators. This evaluation tool assesses leadership effectiveness that is essential to guiding MSU Billings toward fulfill its core purpose of assuring “that all members of the university community reach their individual potential.”

A second element of the University’s efforts to use human resource procedures to assure that resources and capacities are appropriately mobilized to fulfill the mission statement is the adoption of a standard set of analytical metrics by which academic programs across the institution can annually assess themselves. This data set includes such metrics as student credit hour production, cost per completion, time to completion, retention rates, and DFWI rates. This data is essential to the Program Health reports produced by each department and are used to make decisions about staffing.





## **Standard One: Mission and Core Themes**







## Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3

### Authority

MSU Billings is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the Montana Board of Regents (ER 2).

### Mission and Core Themes

Consistent with Montana Board of Regents policy and legal authorization, MSU Billings submitted its mission review document to the Board of Regents, which they reviewed and approved on September 23, 2010. The University then submitted the institution's core themes based on this mission, which the Board of Regents approved on January 8, 2013. The University is funded by the State of Montana, through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, based primarily on fulfillment of its mission and core themes, which lie at the heart of its strategic plan, and which guide spending priorities (ER 3).

### Standard One – Mission and Core Themes

The institution articulates its purpose in a mission statement and identifies core themes that comprise essential elements of that mission. In an examination of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations, the institution defines the parameters for mission fulfillment. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

#### 1.A Mission

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

MSU Billings' mission provided an excellent point from which the Assessment and Accreditation Council (AAC) undertook a campus- wide process to gather feedback and suggestions regarding core themes. This process included AAC members contacting college constituents via focus groups, department meetings and/or electronic campus-wide communication to finalize the four core themes, objectives and indicators. The five core themes, approved by the MSU Billings Chancellor's Cabinet and the Board of Regents, are:

#### Cultivating Teaching Excellence

- Providing an Environment for Learning
- Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility
- Enhancing the Community
- Providing the Essentials for Success

MSU Billings understands the importance of its mission and core themes as the University continues to serve over 4000 students. The AAC is currently overseeing the accreditation compliance process at MSU Billings, however the University built compliance and assurance processes into the institution's operating procedures through the [FutureU - Charting Our Course Strategic Plan](#) thereby assuring continual assessment and improvement.

### MSU Billings Core Purpose, Mission, Vision & Core Values

Core Purpose: To assure all members of the University community reach their individual potential.

Mission: Montana State University Billings provides a University experience characterized by:

- Excellent Teaching

- Support for Individual Learning
- Engagement in Civic Responsibility
- Intellectual, Cultural, Social and Economic Community Enhancement

Vision: Montana State University Billings will be recognized as a regional leader for:

- Teaching and Learning
- Translating Knowledge into Practice
- Researching for the Future
- Accepting Leadership for Intellectual, Cultural, Social and Economic Development Beyond University Boundaries

#### Core Values

- Integrity: MSU Billings' actions are ethical and principled to assure dignity and equity for all.
- Educational Excellence: MSU Billings provides distinctive programs and challenging educational experiences for a diverse University community.
- Student Achievement: MSU Billings provides academic support and administrative services to foster academic and professional achievement of the University community.
- Community of Learners: MSU Billings respects and nurtures variety in intellectual contribution and scholarship enriching both the University and its extended community.
- Meaningful Engagement: MSU Billings supports all members of the University community in their individual growth toward confidence, individual sense of purpose and acceptance of civic responsibilities.
- Responsiveness: MSU Billings meets the changing needs of its learners with informed action and innovation based on current standards of educational and technical excellence.

#### **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.**

MSU Billings embodies this mission and these core values. Members of the university refer to this mission and these core values often in group settings and now base all of the campus decisions on the strategic plan that guides the university's work. The institution believes that now that it has a strategic plan based squarely on the approved mission and themes, the University is definitely on a path to fulfill its mission. As the plan opportunities are achieved one-by-one, MSU Billings moves closer to its goal.

#### **Articulation of Mission Fulfillment**

The completion of the various tasks and opportunities as identified in the strategic plan are the clearest expression of the fulfillment of the University's mission since the core themes that overlie these opportunities and tasks derive directly from that mission. These core themes, affirmed by the Montana University System Board of Regents at their [January 2013](#) meeting, are based on the mission as approved by the Board of Regents at their September 2010 meeting. Assessment of the progress toward fulfillment of the University's mission is guided by the rubric included in the Appendix of this report.

#### **1.B 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.**

**Core Theme One: Cultivating Teaching Excellence**

Our strong commitment to teaching excellence stretches back to the founding of the university in 1927. That commitment is evidenced by close connections between students and faculty in classroom and online learning environments; experiential teaching and learning opportunities in the community; and a learning environment that encourages leadership and involvement. The university has opportunities to further cultivate teaching excellence by enhancing support systems for instructors and students in traditional, blended, and fully online courses and activities. Other opportunities outlined below focus on maintaining a university learning environment that appreciates, stimulates, and supports faculty and student research and creative endeavors. We realize that quality teaching requires financial investment. Therefore, there will be a need to be good stewards of our resources and to pursue new external funding sources to improve teaching and enhance learning via new technologies, lab equipment and endowed professorships.

A. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance excellence in traditional, online, and online/blended pedagogies.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Identify evidence-based strategies for developing best practices in teaching and learning.
2. Provide seed grants to incentivize faculty to explore, implement, and assess strategies that enhance their effectiveness at improving learning.
3. In conjunction with the faculty, develop expectations and/or other guidelines for courses/teaching.
4. In conjunction with faculty, adopt a standard schedule for course materials; all materials and course information provided equal access to all students.
5. Increase nominations for MSU Billings faculty to receive external teaching awards.
6. Develop a plan to evaluate and enhance the integrity and credibility of the practices in, and delivery of, our e-Learning programs.
7. Develop methods to assess online courses/programs including a study to assess the success of student learning.
8. Develop, implement, and budget for a master plan for instructional equipment.

B. Opportunity to Achieve: Develop a culture that maintains and supports rigorous academic achievement as well as creative and inquisitive scholarly endeavors.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Continue development and implementation of the University Honors Program including infrastructure, funding and robust programming.
2. Identify and formalize appropriate leadership and processes for facilitating and supporting faculty and staff research, grants, and other creative endeavors at all stages.
3. Develop clearer ties with Montana University System research campuses.
4. Formalize an undergraduate research program.
5. Increase access to digital resources to enhance learning and research.

C. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance compensation for faculty and staff.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Analyze CUPA/CCAS/AAUP national salary data to determine MSUB's gaps.
2. Explore and develop merit pay options for staff and enhance merit pay options for faculty.
3. Develop and implement a plan to address compression and inversion for faculty and staff compensation.
4. Develop and implement a set of university criteria for reassigned activities for faculty.
5. Balance full time and part time faculty ratios with respect to each department or unit's needs ensuring results are sustainable and scalable.

D. Opportunity to Achieve: Facilitate additional professional development opportunities and resources for faculty and staff.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Institutionalize and augment the "one-time funded" professional development pool allocated for faculty each fall.
2. Formalize a recurring professional development line for e-Learning instruction.
3. Establish similar competitively-allocated professional development pools for staff.
4. Establish a clearing house that catalogs all of the professional development opportunities available in e-Learning.
5. Create a comprehensive university calendar of existing pertinent dates, deadlines, etc. for all professional development resources for two-year, four-year and graduate education.
6. Involve faculty in the internationalizing the university.

E. Opportunity to Achieve: Identify and procure increased external funding through grants, contracts, and foundations.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Seek sponsorship for laboratories and other appropriate campus facilities.
2. Develop processes to promote additional research and grant activities and to incentivize interdisciplinary projects and partnerships.
3. Seek sponsored (endowed) personnel lines and/or positions.
4. Develop increased coordination between the MSUB Foundation and the Grants and Sponsored Programs Office.

F. Opportunity to Achieve: Implement an Online Learning Office to facilitate e-Learning leadership on a college and university level.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Develop a position description, formalize responsibilities and establish expectations for college-level and campus-level e-Learning leadership and staff a University-wide leadership position in e-Learning.
2. Formalize responsibilities and expectations for the college-level e-Learning coordinators and prepare existing coordinators or recruit new individuals to serve.
3. Conduct a needs assessment at two-year, four-year and graduate levels to determine appropriate priorities and resource needs for faculty and support staff.
4. Develop and evaluate processes to fully communicate new technology to all constituents.
5. Develop a master plan related to the use of mobile devices in teaching and learning environments.
6. Review opportunities for beginner and advanced online teaching credentials as appropriate.
7. Implement and fund online teaching professional development.

8. Scale up and roll out an MSU Billings version of the MUS online learning criteria.
9. Develop a university-wide system to proctor online exams.

### **Indicators**

- Professional Development Funds Awarded to Faculty
- E-Learning Professional Development Funds Awarded
- Professional Development Funds Awarded to Staff
- Total Restricted Grant and Sponsored Program Funds Received for Research per Contract Faculty

### **Rationale for Indicators**

These indicators provide broad metrics of the success of Core Theme One: Cultivating Teaching Excellence. The university strives to assure excellence in teaching through a number of policies and procedures, including facilitating professional development for all faculty—adjunct, probationary, and tenured. Professional development funds, whether for faculty or staff, are awarded in a competitive process that fosters excellence in the classroom. Finally, the total number of grant dollars received by the MSU Billings faculty—particularly federally and regionally competitive grants—is a clear and meaningful measure of faculty excellence at the University.

### **Core Theme Two: Providing an Environment for Learning**

MSU Billings values individual learning at all levels – in the classroom, in cooperative education experiences and in leadership opportunities. We have identified several opportunities that bolster our commitment to an inclusive student learning environment. They include offering high-quality academic programs; further establishing MSU Billings’ reputation as a high-value, affordable institution; building capacity for programs that are in high demand; enhancing student retention and graduation rates; building capacity to meet enrollment projections; increasing graduate program opportunities; and solidifying MSU Billings’ reputation as the frontrunner for online learning in Montana.

A. Opportunity to Achieve: Establish MSUB’s reputation as: Enhanced Affordability and Excellence.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Secure additional private funding for scholarships and programs in the colleges at the two-year, four-year and graduate levels.
2. Secure additional grant and/or foundation funding to assist students in underrepresented populations and/or in targeted discipline areas.
3. Design and implement local strategies to carry out Board of Regents initiatives that will reduce student debt.
4. Increase work study, internships, and other employment opportunities for all MSU Billings students.

B. Opportunity to Achieve: Implement recommendations from the recent MSUB Enrollment Management Initiative. Fully communicate the initiatives to all faculty and staff.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Develop an information strategy that results in broad knowledge and use of recruitment/retention tools known as the FutureU Recruitment and Retention Initiatives.
2. Develop and implement strategies that deliver effective services, programs and activities to support accessibility, recruitment, and retention efforts of all diverse student populations by meeting their apparent and more subtle needs.

3. As a part of task 2 above, set overall recruitment and retention goals for each student demographic group.
4. Create and implement strategies to achieve annual university-level enrollment and retention goals within each of these targeted areas.
5. Implement college-level and administrative-level plans to address FutureU Recruitment and Retention Initiative needs.

C. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance programs that have room to grow and potential to expand.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Identify programs that are in highest demand and have room for growth.
2. Work to create a culture that is flexible and quick to respond to necessary changes.
3. Develop a strategy to identify and manage “phase out” programs as necessary and appropriate.
4. Act on the results of the 2015 Athletics assessment report to enhance competitiveness in core athletic programs and to achieve the appropriate mix of programs and optimal number of student athletes at MSU Billings.

D. Opportunity to Achieve: Expand Graduate Program Opportunities.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Establish clear university-level leadership for Graduate Studies.
2. Begin the next appropriate steps to establish new graduate programs that reflect and are responsive to community demand.
3. Perform a market analysis for these and other potential new graduate programs.
4. Explore appropriate graduate-degree program opportunities for City College faculty, Tribal College faculty and faculty at other two-year institutions seeking advanced degrees.

E. Opportunity to Achieve: Continue to strengthen the university initiative to expand outreach and recruitment of international students.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Identify the desired characteristics and credentials and then recruit and hire permanent leadership for International Studies and Outreach (ISO).
2. Design and implement an appropriate organizational structure for ISO including streamlining international admissions into the overall university admission processes.
3. Locate a long-term home for ISO that best suits the needs of staff and students.
4. Design and implement an appropriate business model for ISO that best meets the needs of all university units that support the initiative.
5. Collaborate with academic and student affairs areas to increase opportunities for MSUB students to be exposed to and gain awareness of a variety of diverse global cultures.

F. Opportunity to Achieve: Maintain the MSUB edge as frontrunner for online education in Montana

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Identify appropriate new program opportunities and the potential markets for those programs.
2. Formulate a development and implementation strategy for each program that is chosen to move forward.
3. Develop and communicate concrete ideas about what it means for MSUB to be the e-Learning frontrunner in Montana.



4. Support online programs by expanding Library access to digital resources.

G. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance student learning through cutting edge teaching and learning techniques that utilize technology, experiential learning, inter-disciplinary approaches, and a well assessed and analyzed general education philosophy.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Provide seed grants and/or incentives for faculty to prepare proposals for external grants to develop new course models that exemplify these various approaches.
2. Conduct a formal review of the MSUB general education core in light of the MUS requirements.

H. Opportunity to Achieve: Embrace the new mission of two-year education in Montana, and provide students from the City College service region with access to comprehensive, full service two-year attributes of a comprehensive community college mission.

Specific Tasks to undertake this opportunity:

1. In conjunction with the University campus, provide affordable, open access transfer opportunities through associate's degree education.
2. In conjunction with the University campus, identify and provide workforce education opportunities relevant to the service region.
3. In conjunction with the University campus, identify and provide developmental, adult basic education, and other lifelong learning opportunities relevant in the service region.
4. Implement a comprehensive general education program at the City College campus.

### **Indicators**

- Six-Year Graduation Rate - University Campus
- Three-Year Graduation Rate- City College Campus
- First-Year Retention Rate (First Time - FT, Fall to Fall)
- Dual Credit Students Served
- General Fund Scholarships and Waivers Awarded as % of Total Tuition
- Private Aid Awarded Through MSUB Foundation as % of Total Tuition
- Student Credit Hours in Internships as a % of Total Student Credit Hours

### **Rationale for Indicators**

These indicators provide assessable and meaningful metrics of the success of Core Theme Two: Providing an Environment for Learning because they measure not only the completion rates of the student body, but also the degree of success the institution achieves in moving students through their academic careers. The University partnered with the John M. Gardner Institute to mobilize resources for improvement of retention and persistence. Following a multi-year analysis by Noel- Levitz, the University has committed to an extensive "MSUB Enrollment Management Initiative," which mobilized resources in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to focus primarily on retention and persistence. Retention rates and graduation rates are clear and assessable indicators of the effects of that initiative. In addition, the University recognizes the correlation between the amount of aid in the form of scholarships and grants awarded to its students and providing an environment for learning for those students who receive this aid. As the institution strives to provide a nurturing and secure learning environment for all of its student populations, student enrollment will grow. As resources become available from that growth, they can then be deployed to further enhance the learning environment for students, as well as for faculty and staff. Finally, as the campus continues its efforts to prepare students for success after graduation, internships become a more important metric of that preparation.

### ***Core Theme Three: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility***

Civic and public engagement are hallmarks of MSU Billings and we seek to encourage engagement in local, regional and global arenas. Active involvement in our communities not only ensures we fulfill our role as part of the MSU Land Grant University family, but it also demonstrates our desire to be a regional asset with global aspirations. MSU Billings will strive to be a civic-minded institution that encourages students to embrace civic responsibility, diversity and a determination to make a difference.

### Overall

A. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings' reputation as a locally, regionally, and globally engaged Institution.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Clearly define local, regional, and global civic engagement opportunities and establish a baseline for what is already being done in each of these three areas.
2. Identify internal and external engagement champions for each of these areas.
3. Determine appropriate expectations and a compensation model for a university-level business plan for faculty and staff engagement activities.
4. Develop public recognition for faculty and staff who actively participate.
5. Determine for each department/unit which activities are relevant for their disciplines and students and then begin to infuse these activities into the curriculum.
6. Develop additional funding sources for community engagement including revenue streams from self-supporting engagement activities.

### Local

B. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings as a well-recognized, locally-engaged institution.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Strengthen the civic engagement component of First Year Seminar.
2. Collaborate across the curriculum to increase civic engagement in courses so that a civic engagement component will be required for all academic programs.

### Regional/National

C. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings as a well-recognized, regionally-engaged Institution.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Conduct a needs analysis of the workforce training and other education requirements of Eastern and Central Montana communities impacted by the current energy boom.
2. Formalize partnerships with regional academic institutions, community and government groups, and/or private foundations to better serve our surrounding region.

### Global

D. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings as a well-recognized, globally-engaged Institution.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Explore opportunities for international alumni participation in MSU Billings activities.
2. Link and build study-abroad opportunities for students with a goal of adding opportunities that have a civic engagement component.
3. Link and build faculty and student exchange programs abroad.
4. Increase program articulation agreements, joint degree programs, and other

university/community collaborations with international university partners.

### **Indicators**

- Courses that include Service Learning Activities
- Campus-wide Hours Volunteering in the Community and Region
- Annual Student Enrollment in Study Abroad Programs as a % of Bachelor and Associate Degrees Conferred

### **Rationale for Indicators**

MSU Billings is confident that these indicators provide assessable and meaningful metrics of the success of Core Theme Three: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility. Service learning and other forms of civic engagement are a campus-wide commitment, and departments across the curriculum are mobilizing to adopt service learning components in most major programs. Beyond the curricular component, students, faculty and staff are encouraged to volunteer in the community. These hours are gathered at the campus level, and reflect the University's commitment to civic engagement. Finally, as the campus works to internationalize its outreach, a measure of the number of students who study abroad is a clear and measurable indication of the University's progress in terms of international engagement.

### **Core Theme Four: Enhancing the Community**

Because MSU Billings is a university that is deeply connected to the Billings community, it is important for us to contribute to the intellectual, cultural, social and economic advancement of the city. Faculty, as experts in their fields of study, and staff, who are passionate about cultural engagement, will have leadership opportunities in this theme. Students will be encouraged to follow their passions as far as possible in this effort. As such, it is imperative that the university establish the infrastructure necessary to sustain those efforts.

A. Opportunity to Achieve: Develop and launch an MSUB Extended Campus initiative.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Establish clear university leadership for the MSUB Extended Campus organization.
2. Review the Continuing Education Task Force Report and begin an implementation plan.
3. Investigate, procure, and implement an electronic registration system for non-credit offerings.
4. Better connect academic programs with outreach initiatives.

B. Opportunity to Achieve: Engage the community through a wide range of activities and events.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Perform a review and record an inventory of current activities and events hosted or sponsored at MSUB.
2. Perform a review and record an inventory of external community/state events and initiatives in which MSUB participates.
3. Analyze data gathered through those reviews, to prioritize the events and programs that should continue along with developing a list of new partnerships and programs with mutually beneficial outcomes.
4. Explore opportunities for new engagement activities with or by MSUB alumni.

C. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance partnerships with two-year and tribal colleges.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Update existing and develop appropriate new articulation agreements with two-year campuses both within and outside of the Montana University System.
2. Develop a relationship protocol for outreach development with tribal colleges to enhance existing relationships and initiate new partnerships.

D. Opportunity to Achieve: Better utilize faculty, staff and program expertise for community outreach.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Create an “expert’s guide” with associated “talking points” to promote the University.
2. Provide a mechanism to coordinate internal and external opportunities for speakers and programs.
3. Develop an infrastructure that supports and facilitates launching outreach initiatives that are responsive to business, industry, and community needs to seamlessly connect with faculty, staff and students.

E. Opportunity to Achieve: Implement the MUS College!Now initiative.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Continue to monitor the rebranding initiative of the former College of Technology as City College at MSU Billings and analyze progress made toward its new comprehensive two-year mission.
2. Implement a plan to fully embrace the comprehensive mission philosophy within the embedded structure and the strong shared governance commitment of our University.

## **Indicators**

Clients Served through MSUB Extended Campus

- Community Partnerships
- Number of MSUB Community Events

## **Rationale for Indicators**

These indicators provide assessable and meaningful metrics of the success of Core Theme Four: Enhancing the Community because they measure the degree to which the University succeeds in reaching out to and fostering the development of the community. As the University brings community members to campus events through continuing education, professional development, and conference programming, the University will be able to assess the breadth and impact of that programming through the numbers of community clients who participate in those programs. As the largest institution of higher education in the community, MSU Billings sponsors numerous community events. Tracking the number of these events is an indicator of community enhancement.

## **Core Theme Five: Essentials for Success**

Everyone associated with MSU Billings – faculty, staff, students, alumni and community supporters – has a role to play in forming the foundation that will make this plan successful. Through enhanced attention to our resources, facilities, operations, procedures, and communication across all levels of the university, opportunities will arise to improve the university’s standing as an institution of access, excellence, service and value. With a continuing focus on efficiency, aggressive implementation of best practices in the technological, educational and service areas, and continuous engagement with students, MSU Billings will set itself apart.

A. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance efficiency, awareness, and operations across campus.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Document appropriate policies and procedures, make them easily available and commonly known by MSUB employees, and provide awareness and training when necessary.
2. Develop a comprehensive program to sustain a safe, fun, and mutually supportive working and learning environment for faculty, staff and students.
3. Provide impeccable service by embracing an espoused set of university-wide customer service expectations through awareness and training.
4. Enhance cultural/global awareness of all faculty, staff, and students through communication and training plans.
5. Empower the “Student Success Committee” to assure integration of divisions, resources, support, funding, and institutional efforts to assure our students are successful in reaching their personal, educational, and career goals.

B. Opportunity to Achieve: Evaluate and reassign personnel and financial resources to match strategic plan priorities.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Evaluate and when necessary, revise unit organizational structures as academic, student affairs and administrative divisions examine their effectiveness in light of university strategic priorities.
2. Incorporate plans for faculty and staff attrition with appropriate succession planning.
3. Use established budget planning to achieve the Montana University System’s goal of an instruction allocation of 50% and a combined percentage allocated to instruction, academic support, and student services to be a minimum of 70%.
4. Develop a tool to review current budget allocations.
5. Review current programs and services for potential budget reallocation or investments.
6. Reallocate budget savings to the prioritized opportunities for enrollment growth and university enhancement.
7. Work with the MSU Billings Foundation to determine how future development campaigns can be aligned to help execute this plan.

C. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance communication concerning our relevant image across all stakeholders.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Review and catalog current internal and external communication tools and materials.
2. Develop, consistent with Montana University System goals, a common message with appropriate internal and external strategies to promote the “*MSUB Advantage*” of value, engagement, access and excellence.
3. Implement an aggressive promotional plan for e-Learning courses and programs.
4. Implement a comprehensive communication plan for the Community Engagement/ Extended Campus initiative.
5. Develop a marketing and communication plan supporting a comprehensive MSUB Web-based university calendar tool that is used both internally and externally.

D. Opportunity to Achieve: Update university facility plans to integrate with FutureU.

Specific tasks to undertake to realize this opportunity:

1. Continue to advocate for approval of, and then prepare for, detailed design, construction, occupation and utilization of Yellowstone Science and Allied Health Building.
2. Continue to advocate for approval of, and then prepare for, detailed design,

- construction, occupation and utilization of the Residence Hall Building Project.
3. Continue to advocate for approval of, and then prepare for, detailed design, construction, occupation and utilization of the Conference Center Complex Building Project.
  4. Continue to advocate for approval of, and then prepare for, detailed design, construction, and then occupation and utilization of each component in the Athletic Facilities Master Plan.
  5. Perform annual reviews of all university building/facility plans consistent with FutureU.
  6. Implement the Space Use Committee Concept and use it to create a more collaborative University space expansion and utilization culture.

**Indicators**

- Expenditure Ratio: Instruction/Total
- Expenditure Ratio: (Instruction + Academic Support + Student Services)/Total
- Construction Dollars Expended

**Rationale for Indicators**

These indicators provide assessable and meaningful metrics of the success of Essentials for Success because they focus on the infrastructure necessary for the University to achieve the various elements of this strategic plan including each opportunity in the previous four core theme areas listed above. Indicators that focus on budget expenditure ratios are valuable measures of the degree to which the University can focus its resources on its prime directive, which is providing a quality education to the University's students. Finally, an essential auxiliary to the student experience is the University's ability to provide services to the student body that is possible through infrastructural development financed through Auxiliaries and Gifts.

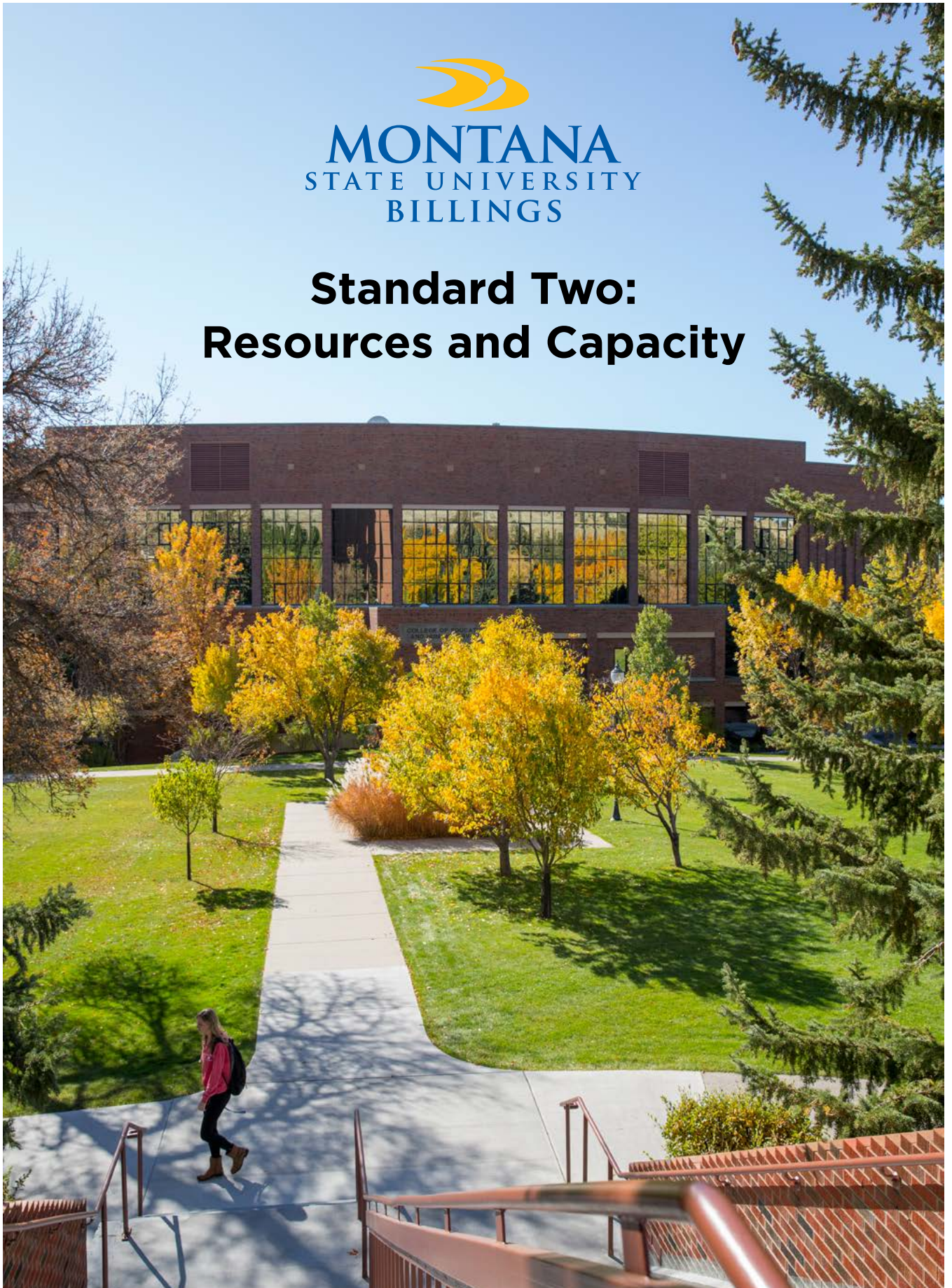
**A Note on the Indicators**

When the FutureU – Charting Our Course MSUB Strategic Plan was launched in 2013, the broadly-representative committee that finalized the plan also wrote a series of indicators of success with which the University could track its progress on completion of the elements of the core themes within the strategic plan. Work on tracking those indicators proved challenging as the campus community began to take ownership of the FutureU plan. Instability in the highest levels of campus leadership, with the potential that a new chancellor might upend the entire process in favor of a new plan, compromised a full-steam-ahead approach to fulfilling the FutureU plan. Through these changes, the Assessment and Accreditation Council (AAC) continued to view the strategic plan as a living, organic document, and began a deep look into the indicators with an eye toward revision of several indicators that were inappropriate or unmeasurable metrics of University success. The AAC has worked to hone the indicators to a manageable, measurable list that measures success.





## **Standard Two: Resources and Capacity**





## **Standard Two: Resources and Capacity**

### **Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 4-21, with references to specific eligibility requirements.**

Montana State University Billings is dedicated to providing a quality higher education experience through its commitment to excellence in teaching and support for individual learning. While being an affiliated institution in the broader Montana State University family, it is an autonomous institution of the Montana University System accountable for meeting its own Northwest accreditation responsibilities (ER 4). It is guided by its mission, core values and core themes, to insure equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in all University activities. Responsibility for assuring equal treatment while meeting the students' educational and student service needs is shared by to all University administrators, faculty, and staff (ER 5). This responsibility is founded upon institutional integrity assumed by of all members of the University community to uphold the public trust by embracing ethical standards (ER 6).

#### **Governance**

The institution is governed by the Board of Regents (BOR), which oversees the institution's fulfillment of its mission and core themes. The BOR is comprised of seven members, including one student regent, who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Montana Senate, to seven year overlapping terms. The Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Commissioner of Higher Education serve as ex-officio members of the Board. None of the members of the Board of Regents have contractual or employment relationships with MSU Billings (ER 7). At the campus level, Chancellor Daniel Edelman serves as the chief executive officer appointed by Montana State University President Waded Cruzado and confirmed by the BOR. No executive officers of the institution chair the Board of Regents (ER 8). The Chancellor supervises Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administrative Services, and a Chief Information Officer to ensure the fulfillment of the institution's mission and core themes (ER 9).

#### **Academic Affairs**

The core of the University is its dedicated, highly qualified faculty who are evaluated at a variety of levels under schedules outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association (MTYCFA) contracts between the respective faculty association and the Montana Board of Regents (ER 10). The University faculty maintains authority over the integrity, rigor, and propriety of the collegiate degree and certificate- granting programs through the Academic Senate (ERs 10, 11). MSU Billings remains deeply committed to the principle of academic freedom for both faculty and students, which is protected by the CBA and the MTCYCA contracts, and the Student Handbook (ER 15).

The educational program of the University is assessed through regular review and revision of student learning outcomes at the course and program levels (ER 11). This includes the General Education and related instruction programs, as appropriate for the various types of degrees and certificates. The associate and baccalaureate programs have been based on a thirty-one credit General Education core, overseen by the University General Education Committee, which is consistent with the MUS approved core. The learning outcomes of the constituent courses and categories in the program are regularly reviewed by the General Education Committee (ER 12). Associate of Applied Science programs have a twelve credit "related instruction" core, including courses in computation, communication, human relations, and technology (ER 12). Graduate programs at MSU Billings, are administered by the individual colleges and faculty and are supported University Graduate Studies



Committee, Graduate programs also require specifically planned programs of specialization and concentration (ER 12).

## **Infrastructure**

The staff and support structures of Montana State University Billings remain deeply committed to the institution's mission and core values and provide and maintain appropriate essential infrastructure to allow for their fulfillment. Among these essential support structures are the MSU Billings Library, Student Affairs, Information Technology (ERs 13 and 14) reports, and Administrative Services, which includes Facilities Services (ER 14), (ER 18). Each of these entities is dedicated to providing resources, facilities, and financial stewardship necessary for the institution's successful pursuit of its mission and attainment of its core themes.

## **Policies and Procedures**

As a public institution, Montana State University Billings recognizes the necessity of accountability to its state constituencies. Accountability to the institution's students requires clear policies and procedures for students that guide issues such as admission, graduation, costs, calendars, and financial aid, typically publicized online as well as through the General Bulletin (Undergraduate Catalog) and the Graduate Catalog (ERs 16 and 17). Students are informed of their rights and responsibilities, and institutional expectations of student conduct standards in the Student Handbook (ER 17). These catalogs and guidelines are regularly updated on the University website.

Accountability to the taxpayers of the State of Montana includes assurance that the institution is a careful steward of the financial investment by that citizenry. The assurance takes the form of financial oversight by external agencies. This audit follows generally accepted auditing standards and takes place annually through the Montana State Legislative Audit Division. Independent audits are also performed annually for Revenue Bonds, KEMC-Yellowstone Public Radio, and the MSU Billings Foundation. Finally, the NCAA athletic programs are audited every three years by an independent auditor (ER 19).

## **MSU Billings and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

Montana State University Billings pledges itself to full disclosure to the Commission, and to providing any and all information necessary to facilitate the Commission's evaluation and accreditation work (ER 20). The University also accepts the standards and agrees to comply with these standards and policies as currently stated or as modified in accordance with Commission policy (ER 21). Finally, the University acknowledges the Commission's right to publicize its findings and other results of its deliberations (ER 21).

### **2.A 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.**

MSU Billings' governance is shared by faculty, administration, staff and students through several venues. The faculty Academic Senate (AS) constitutes the highest-level academic recommending body in the University, and therefore, reviews all curricular changes throughout the University. The AS has impact throughout Academic Affairs through its subcommittees:

- Academic Standards and Scholastic Standing Committee
- Creative and Research Endeavors (CARE) Committee

- Library Committee
- Graduate Committee
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- General Education Committee

The MSU Billings University Campus Faculty Association, aided by representation from the Montana Education Foundation/Montana Federation of Teachers, conducts formal negotiations addressing working conditions with the Administration every two years in synchronization with the Montana legislative sessions. Collaborative negotiations result in the [Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\)](#). In the two years between formal negotiations, representatives of the association and administration meet as the Faculty Administration Collaborative Committee (FACC) to interpret contractual issues that arise. The University also maintains close contact with staff and leaders at the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and Montana State University Bozeman (MSU) in these processes. Their expertise is used for labor relations and personnel relations at various levels.

City College Campus faculty negotiate the [Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association \(MTYCFA\)](#) contract. Between formal negotiation years, City College faculty members meet with administration as the Union Management Committee, which brings contract faculty and administration together to discuss contractual issues as they arise during non-bargaining years.

Staff members participate in University governance through the [Staff Senate](#). The contract between the Montana Public Employees Association and the Montana University System affords staff representation when larger governance input is necessary. Through the Associated Students of Montana State University Billings (ASMSUB), students meet as the [Student Senate](#) to deliberate and take positions on campus issues. In addition, student representatives serve on the Academic Senate and its subcommittees, the Provost Council, the Assessment and Accreditation Council, faculty search committees and faculty review committees.

A review of BOR meeting minutes demonstrates the process of MUS budgeting and shows that ultimate decisions are often not made at the University level, whether on overall budgets or on issues such as employee compensation. The process involves the Governor's Office, the Montana Legislature, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the BOR and the individual units of the MUS.

**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 Billings is part of the Montana State University (MSU) structure of the MUS. Under the Montana Constitution, the governance and control of the MUS are vested exclusively in the Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR). The BOR possesses full authority and responsibility for supervision, coordination and management of state public higher education. The BOR sets policy for the MUS, with administrative oversight the responsibility of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).

The BOR [Policy and Procedures Manual](#) furnishes rules of operation that are public and readily available. The manual contains detailed information in the following sections: (200) Governance and Organization; (300) Academic Affairs; (400) Research and Public Service; (500) Student Affairs; (600) Planning; (700) Personnel; (800) Compensation; (900) Financial Affairs; (1000) Physical Plant; (1200) Athletics; (1300) Information Technology;

(1900) Miscellaneous. The BOR meets on a different campus bimonthly with advance public notice. MSU Billings typically supports four or five members of the University community, including the Academic Senate Chair, the Staff Senate Chair, and the ASMSUB president to attend these meetings.

**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.**

Responsibility for monitoring of University compliance with Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities standards and other policies rests with the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Within this office, the Provost is the Chief Accreditation Officer, assisted by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, who, as the Accreditation Liaison Officer, is primarily responsible for preparing accreditation reports. The Provost participates in collective bargaining with the Faculty Association on the University Campus and the MTYCFA union on the City College Campus. The Provost’s office is also apprised of legislative action during the biennial Montana Legislative Session by the Office of University Relations through the Chancellor’s Cabinet as well as tracking external mandates.

**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 Montana University System is governed by the Board of Regents (BOR), which approves academic proposals and is the primary policy-setting body for the system. The responsibility for administrative oversight lies with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The BOR consists of seven members, including the Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education, who serve in an ex-officio capacity. All geographic regions of Montana are represented on the Board. One regent is a student within the Montana University System. The Montana Board of Regents is appointed by the governor according to the BOR [Policy 201.7--By-laws](#):

**ARTICLE III. Membership**

*The board consists of seven members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. Not more than four may be from one congressional district and not more than four may be affiliated with the same political party. 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 length of the term of the student member shall be not less than one year and not more than four years. The student membership shall not be subject to the congressional district nor the political party constraint mentioned above. Appointed members’ terms are seven years.*

*Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the unfilled term.*

**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 BOR acts as a committee of the whole. According to BOR [Policy 203.2.2—Board of Regents Meeting Notice](#), the BOR meetings are open to the public, and as such are subject to public scrutiny. University faculty, staff and students have multiple opportunities each year to engage Regents in conversation and participate in those meetings. Such public



forums make inappropriate proceedings difficult, if not impossible.

**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.**

All major academic program changes are routed first through MSUB, and forwarded to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Montana State University Bozeman. Upon that office's approval of proposed programs or changes, they are routed then through OCHE. The Commissioner formulates a recommendation to the BOR for final approval. BOR approval is also required for substantive changes in institutional mission, policies and programs. Academic degree programs are reviewed by each department as part of the BOR-mandated periodic program review process. The Commissioner coordinates such reviews and reports findings to the BOR. The [Board of Regents meeting dates and agendas](#) are published on its website.

**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.**

Upon the resignation of Chancellor Mark Nook, the BOR, upon the advice and consent of the MSU Bozeman President Waded Cruzado, and in accordance with BOR [Policy 205.2.1 – Chancellors; duties and responsibilities](#), appointed Dr. Ronald Larsen to serve as interim chancellor of MSU Billings in 2017, and he served until May 2018. Dr. Dan Edelman began his tenure with the University on April 30, 2018. Dr. Edelman serves as the chief executive officer responsible for the management of the MSU Billings University Campus, the City College Campus and MSU Billings Extended Campus locations. Chancellor Edelman provides executive leadership and coordination for all campus activities, including academic, fiscal, and student affairs. The MSUB chancellor undergoes a Professional Employee Evaluation conducted by the president at MSU Bozeman that examines performance in terms of fiscal, managerial, organizational, and leadership abilities, knowledge of the position, and ability to work with others and within the MSU family of campuses.

**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](#), and in recognition of the essential nature of self-evaluation to insure for the Montana University System the best leadership possible, the BOR and OCHE have adopted an annual review process. In the spring of each year, the BOR evaluates the Commissioner's performance on a set of mutually identified goals and the state of the MUS as a whole, 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.

**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.**

Administration

Montana State University Billing has an effective system of leadership (see the [Campus Organizational Chart](#)), organized to support the institution's mission and strategic plan. The chief recommending body to the Chancellor is the Chancellor's Cabinet, which meets bi-weekly and consists of:

- Chancellor
- Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
- Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Director of University Relations
- President/Chief Executive Officer of the MSU Billings Foundation

The Chancellor has created the Chancellor's Community Advisory Council, which will commence work in fall 2018.

#### Academic Affairs

The University's Academic program is overseen by the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who oversees the monthly Provost Council, with the following members:

- Dean, City College
- Dean, College of Allied Health Professions
- Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
- Dean, College of Business
- Dean, College of Education
- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Chief Information Officer
- Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs
- Director of MSU Billings Extended Campus
- Director of the Library
- Director of the Academic Support Center
- Director of e-Learning
- Executive Director of International Studies
- President of the Faculty Association
- Director of American Indian Outreach
- Director of Graduate Studies
- Director of the University Honors Program
- Representative of the Staff Senate
- Representative of the Associated Students of MSU Billings (ASMSUB)

#### Administrative Services

The Administrative Services team, which meets twice a month, includes:

- Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
- Director of Financial Services
- Director of Business Services
- Director of Human Resources
- University Budget Officer
- University Police Chief
- Director of Facilities Services
- City College Administrative Services Officer

#### Student Affairs

The Student Affairs division includes the following student service units (and sub-units):

- Enrollment Management
  - New Student Services (Recruitment)
  - Office of Financial Aid
  - Advising & Career Services which includes:

- Orientation
  - First Year Seminar
  - Internships, job fairs
- o Admissions & Records
- o Registrar
- o Veterans Benefits
- o Campus ID/UCARD
- Student Life and Auxiliaries
  - o Community Involvement (includes Service Learning)
  - o Housing & Residence Life
  - o Student Health Services (includes Counseling Services, Sexual Assault Prevention, Wellness Initiatives)
  - o Student Union, Activities, and Events
  - o Diversity Center
  - o Dining Services (Sodexo)
  - o Campus Store (Bookstore)
  - o Student Conduct
  - o Dean of Students (includes Leadership Development)
- Disability Support Services
- TRiO Programs
  - o Educational Talent Search
  - o Upward Bound
  - o Student Support Services
- City College Student Services and Retention
  - o Recruitment
  - o Advising & Career Services

Each of these divisions within the University oversees its own strategic planning processes, management, and assessment activities.

**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.**

MSU Billings [Chancellor Daniel Edelman](#) is a full-time employee of the institution. Any outside responsibilities and/or consulting activity must be in accordance with the state [Code of Ethics](#) and BOR [Policy 770—Conflicts of Interest](#). Such outside activity is reported to the Office of the Commissioner annually.

**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.**

The University's administrative organization, as outlined above, encourages and depends upon collaboration for success. In particular, the [Chancellor's Cabinet](#), the Provost's Council, the Student Affairs Council, and the Assessment and Accreditation Council (comprised of the College Deans, the Director of the Library, various staff representatives, faculty assessment/accreditation coordinators of the five colleges, and representatives from the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, the General Education Committee, and student government) are typical of the collaborative, broadly-representative bodies that oversee the efforts to fulfill the institution's mission, core

themes, and strategic plan.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Academics**

#### **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.**

MSU Billings views teaching, scholarship, service, and artistic creation as central. Indeed, throughout the institution, faculty scholarly development and contribution are consistent with the mission of MSU Billings and appropriate for the specific field of study. Academic policies dealing with these vital issues are made available to the various constituencies of the University through the two collective bargaining contracts that cover the two faculty groups on campus: the [Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\)](#) for the University Campus faculty, and the [Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association \(MTYCFA\)](#) contract for those on the City College Campus. Specifically, teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation are included in Department Rank and Tenure Committee criteria, and as such are integral to the faculty evaluation process. The labor agreements are available on the [Human Resources Office](#) website.

The Vice Chancellor for Student Services makes students aware of academic policies across campus through orientation sessions, through the student government, and through the [Student Policies & Procedures Handbook](#).

#### **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.**

“Access,” as one of the dual elements of the University motto, is a central element of the way business is accomplished at MSU Billings. The Library has led the way in this regard, as demonstrated in the Library’s [Mission Statement](#). Policies governing access to Library resources are available on the [On Campus Library Access website](#) and [Off-Campus Access](#) site. As outlined in these policies, on-campus access is enforced by a schedule of overdue fines and replacement fees. Off-campus access to library resources is available by authentication where students, faculty, and staff are required to enter University credentials. In addition to these access points, the Library has forged contacts with other institutions to make research materials available through Interlibrary Loan. These policies are available through the Library’s [Interlibrary Loan](#) site.

#### **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 the Montana University System, MSU Billings abides by the transfer policies mandated by the Board of Regents under BOR [Policy 301.5 - Transfer of Credits; MUS and Community Colleges](#) on Transfer of Credits. This includes transfer of courses in the general education program taken by students at other campuses of the Montana University System. MSU Billings, as a member of the Montana University System, is a full participant in the Common Course Numbering system, a network of campus liaisons coordinating with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to oversee the implementation of these Board of Regents policies. Other campus-specific transfer policies are articulated in the General Bulletin under the Admissions Office policy of [Transfer of College-Level Credits](#).

A key element of insuring efficiency in student mobility and completion of academic programs is the University’s adoption of the DegreeWorks course audit and advising system.

This system enables faculty and staff academic advisors to track students' progress in real time, with ease of identification of available options for facilitating completion of students' educational programs. MSU Billings embraces a culture of total University partnership in ensuring mobility and completion. The offices of Admissions and Records/Registrar and the Academic Advising Center are central to transfer credit evaluation and consistency, tracking processes, working with faculty and department chairs, and compliance with Board of Regents policies via use of student information system (Banner).

## 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.**

Students' rights and responsibilities are well defined in the [Student Policies and Procedures Handbook](#), specifically in the "Code of Student Conduct" section. Students' rights in the student conduct process (due process) are identified and appropriate updates have been made to all sections related to Title IX and sexual harassment/violence. They involve formal dispositions, appeal processes, and student grievance policies and procedures. The code of conduct addresses both socially acceptable behavior and academic behavior; verbal and physical violence and harassment are clearly addressed in order to promote a safe living and learning environment for all students. Academic misconduct is also clearly identified in the "Code of Student Conduct" and covers four distinct conduct areas: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and misrepresentation.

Student Policies and Procedures Handbook policies, including the "Code of Student Conduct," are reviewed annually. The Chancellor's Cabinet, Student Consultation Team, and ASMSUB review and approve changes. Printed copies of the Student Policies and Procedures Handbook are available to all students at the beginning of each semester via Higher Education Opportunity Act notification guidelines, Campus Store, Summer Orientation programs and various locations on campus.

Students living in the residence halls are given the [Housing and Residential Life Student Handbook and Planner](#) at the beginning of each semester as part of their check-in process and on an annual basis if they are returning students (we do not give them a new handbook if they are returning in the Spring from Fall). This handbook clearly states all policies and procedures regarding conduct, contractual agreements and available residence hall and campus resources.

Within the Division of Student Affairs, specific individuals are trained as conduct hearing officers. Professional staff serve as primary conduct hearing officers and can find students in violation of the Residence Hall Policies and Procedure Handbook or the "Code of Student Conduct." They are also authorized to assess appropriate sanctions. Here, when a student has allegedly violated the student code of conduct, they receive a letter outlining the potential violation along with due process rights (cited from Policies and Procedures handbook). After a meeting, another letter is sent to the student, which will also reference the policies and procedures within the handbook. Additionally, when students meet with a conduct hearing officer, they are provided with the Student Policies and Procedures Handbook and specific information regarding their due process rights as a student. In cases involving sexual harassment/violence, the Title IX Coordinator is informed and existing hearing procedures are pursued.

The Student Consultation Team includes the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Associate Dean of Students, Assistant Director of Housing, University Police Sergeant, Health Services Director, Student Support Services/TRIO Director, Advising



and Career Services Director, Jacket Student Central Student Services Director, Academic Support Center Director, Disability Support Services Director, Athletics Compliance Officer, and the University Chief of Police. This team meets on a regular basis to discuss incidents or students of concern and ensures proper follow-up is occurring with students from members of the team.

**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.**

The University's [general admission policy](#) is established by the Montana Board of Regents and was revised in January, 2014, with addenda, revised in November, 2016 specifically directed towards admission to [four-year programs](#). Under BOR [Policy 301.3](#), policies regarding admission for graduate students are established [locally](#). In accordance with policy, specific criteria are used to admit students to University Campus and City College Campus programs. Admission criteria vary, depending upon when students graduated from high school; and for which campus/program they seek admission.

The General Bulletin defines [admission policies](#) for Transfer and Re-Admission applicants as well as for non-high school graduates (who must submit a GED), current high school students, non-degree applicants, and international students. All that said, MSU Billings is an open enrollment institution for undergraduate studies and students who do not meet admission criteria for the University Campus are admitted provisionally. As a result of our open admission standards, we do not report admission via the IPEDS system.

Undergraduate admission to the University includes the following processes:

Mandatory Advising – All first-time freshman students entering either campus are required to see an academic advisor before registering for classes. During the initial advising session, students receive information regarding General Education requirements and worksheets for major and minor academic programs. All incoming students in fall semester are encouraged to attend New Student Orientation, where the student takes placement tests, receives a campus tour, meets with an academic advisor to discuss educational goals and formulate a course schedule, and takes care of “new student” details while on campus. Students who begin in spring semester are required to attend a “New Student Day” that includes all of the testing and advising necessary to ease students into the life of the University.

Placement Testing – All first time entering students and transfer students on both campuses who have not completed their general education requirements in English or mathematics must take the electronic Accuplacer placement test during Student Orientation.

[SSS TRiO](#) provides mentoring and academic advising to students enrolled in the program ([SSS/TRiO policies and procedures manual](#) is reviewed and updated annually).

[Upward Bound](#) and [Educational Talent Search](#)(UB/ETS) provide course selection to high school students enrolling in University Connections and to seniors transitioning to the University as first-time freshmen. Upward Bound also provides guidance to students enrolling in the Summer Bridge Program (UB/ETS policies and procedures manual is reviewed and updated annually).

**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 Publications Board, as directed by the Associated Students of Montana State University Billings (ASMSUB, the student government) bylaws (see [Article 6, page 85](#)), serves as an advising body for the MSU Billings student newspaper, *The Retort*. The Publications Board consists of a Chair, the ASMSUB Vice President, who serves as the Chair or the Board, the *Retort* Editor-in-Chief, and a minimum of four students, maximum of seven at large. The Board assists the Editor-in-Chief of the paper in producing a publication reflecting established journalistic guidelines, quality and ethics.

The Board complies with BOR policy (BOR [Policy 506.2 – Associated Student Organizations and Officers](#), Item #5), to ensure that student media operate free from censorship with protection under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and codifies those policies in the [Student Policies and Procedures Handbook](#), Section F.

### **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.**

Policies followed in the hiring process, appointments to positions, employee probationary periods, performance reviews and termination procedures are outlined through the following:

[HR policies and procedures](#)

Staff contracts:

Classified

[Montana Public Employees Association](#)

[Montana District Council of Laborers](#)

[City College Operating Engineers](#)

Craft

[International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#)

[Maintenance Painters Union](#)

[Pacific Northwest District Council of Carpenters](#)

[The United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters](#)

Faculty Contracts:

[University Campus Faculty CBA](#)

[City College Campus Faculty MTYCFA contract](#)

Administrative Contracts:

[Montana Board of Regents Employment Contracts MUS Professional](#)

**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.**

At the time of hiring, all employees go through an orientation process with the Human Resources Office. The nature of this meeting varies depending upon the type of position

the new employee occupies. Meetings with classified staff cover insurance options and other benefits, evaluation processes and criteria, and any appropriate contacts or collective bargaining agreements, which cover conditions of continued employment, employee rights and responsibilities, and policies dealing with retention, promotion and termination (please refer to classified and craft contracts in 2.A.18 above). Human Resources staff meet with new full-time faculty members to review insurance and benefits options, the collective bargaining agreement appropriate for their position, which covers policies dealing with conditions of work, evaluation, promotion, and termination (please refer to the [University Campus Faculty CBA](#) and the [City College Campus Faculty MTYCFA contract](#) in 2.A.18 above). Further orientation for new employees occurs during the first two weeks of fall semester during the New Faculty Orientation workshop. Individual departments orient new faculty to departmental policies and procedures. In many departments, new faculty members are assigned a mentor to support them during their first year. Mentors may remain in supporting roles for tenure track faculty throughout their six-year tenure pursuit.

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

The institution abides by all appropriate human resource guidelines, including all policies specifically dealing with security and confidentiality, as identified in state policy in the [Code of Ethics: Standards of Conduct for State Employees](#).

**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.**

MSU Billings strives at all times to represent itself accurately and appropriately to all of its students, the community, and itself. The primary methods of communicating information concerning academic programs and their completion are the [University General Bulletin](#) (undergraduate catalog), the [City College Catalog](#), [Graduate Catalog](#), and the [University Webpage](#). These publications are updated regularly—the General Bulletin and the Graduate Catalog on a two-year cycle, and the University Webpage on an ongoing basis.

The University consistently communicates the most pertinent statistical data publicly through the [Office of Institutional Research webpage](#). Data such as fees, operating budgets, degrees awarded and employment statistics are publicly available through this office. The Director of Financial aid is charged with and coordinates the [consumer information webpage](#) updates to meet federal requirements on information disclosure.

The University communicates with the wider public primarily through the [Office of University Relations](#), which coordinates the University's messaging through the public news media and state government.

**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.**

MSU Billings expects all members of the University community, administrators, faculty, staff, and students, will strive to embrace the highest standards of ethics and integrity in their work in and through the University. Faculty conduct is governed through the [CBA](#) and the [MTYCFA](#) contracts, in addition to the general requirement that all members of the University

community abide by Montana State standards of ethics and conduct as described in the [Employee's Guide to Standards of Conduct in Montana State Government](#), published by the Montana State Department of Administration.

Student conduct is regulated through the [Student Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) and is enforced through the [Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs](#).

Complaints and grievances are addressed and resolved through established policies. Faculty and staff are provided grievance procedures through their respective [negotiated agreements](#). Student grievances are conducted through the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, following established protocols as published in the Student Handbook (see, in particular, [Part IV: Student Complaint Procedures](#)).

**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.**

The MSU Billings administration—Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, Vice Provost, 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 through the [Conflict of Interest form](#). 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 has periodically reviewed and approved [Policy 770 — Conflicts of Interest](#). Under the new policy, all Montana University System employees will receive conflict-of-interest training and sign a form indicating their understanding and compliance with the policy.

Finally, faculty specifically involved in sponsored research projects are required to sign the [Conflict of Interest Research Disclosure Statement](#).

**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.**

The University has clearly adopted policies concerning intellectual property rights. The MSU Billings Information Technology [Computer Services Policy](#) covers, among other issues, user responsibility, authorized use, and intellectual property rights:

## **7. Intellectual Property Rights**

Intellectual property stored on an MSU Billings or remote computer (including word processing documents, databases, spreadsheets, source code and/or object code, and any other files or information stored on an MSU Billings computer) which has been written or created by a user shall have its ownership determined by applicable law. One is prohibited from using (either for commercial purposes or for non-profit academic publication) any program or file created by a student or faculty member without that person's permission in writing; one may also be required to get further permission from others so that one has the clear legal right to use the information.

The MSU Billings e-Learning office was instrumental in helping the BOR to adopt a statewide university system intellectual property rights policy. This statewide policy is BOR

[Policy 406 - Ownership of Electronic Course Material](#). The MSUB e-Learning webpage includes links to this policy. Other BOR policies related to intellectual property rights to which we adhere and refer are BOR [Policy 401.2 - Inventions and Patents](#), and BOR [Policy 401.3 - Copyright](#).

**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.**

MSU Billings indicates on its website and in its publications its [regional accreditation status](#). Many individual programs are accredited by the appropriate professional accrediting agency. These programs indicate their accreditation status on the website and in published materials. Review of both website and publications demonstrates that accreditations are stated accurately and objectively.

**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.**

Institutional integrity is paramount whenever the University enters into negotiations with external partners. All agreements with domestic entities are approved by the Office of the Chancellor upon consultation with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, which ensures the [contracts](#) are written to be in compliance with all laws, policies and procedures of the State of Montana, Montana University System, and Montana State University Billings. Agreements with international entities also involve consultation with appropriate offices above and the Office of International Studies and Outreach (ISO). The ISO insures that all international agreements involve the relevant academic officials identified above, as well as the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to ensure that student rights and interests are protected.

## **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 principle of academic freedom is central to the pursuit of the life of knowledge in the University setting. MSU Billings remains deeply committed to this principle. Academic freedom including both rights and responsibilities is assured through the Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Montana State University Billings Faculty Association and the Montana University System (“CBA,” [§3.200](#)) and the Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association ([MTYCFA, §4.15](#)) contracts. Additionally, the University abides by the [Montana Board of Regent’s Statement on Academic Freedom](#).

**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.

MSU Billings has firmly established the value of an engaged, independent faculty, dedicated staff and administrators, and committed students who are free to pursue knowledge in a supportive, encouraging atmosphere within the context of the University's core themes, as identified in the Year One Report. In the report, Core Theme 1 outlines the University's commitment to independence in the dissemination of knowledge by a faculty that enjoys academic freedom as explained in 2.A.27 above. Moreover, this freedom is reinforced in the University's strategic plan in Core Theme One: Cultivating Teaching Excellence in Opportunity to Achieve B, in which the University community commits to continuing to develop "a culture that maintains and supports rigorous academic achievement as well as creative and inquisitive scholarly endeavors." The [MSU Billings Student Policies & Procedures Handbook](#) also includes language that explicitly protects diversity and the freedom of expression.

**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.**

In the classroom, faculty, as public employees are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics, as identified in the Montana Code Annotated, 2011, Government Structure and Administration, Standards of Conduct, Part 1. Code of Ethics, statement concerning [public trust and public duty](#).

Moreover, the mission of MSU Billings' Office of Research Compliance is "to support 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, and promotes the University's responsibilities for education, service, and leadership." (See [Office of Research Compliance](#) website.) Research integrity is primarily the purview of the Creative and Research and Endeavors (CARE) Committee and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Office of Research Compliance. The Academic Senate's Committee on Committees appoints the CARE Committee's members from among faculty in the Colleges of Allied Health Professions, Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, City College, and ex-officio representatives of the administration and the Office of Grants & Sponsored Programs.

The IRB, which is guided by a set of by-laws includes the following members: one faculty member from each of the Colleges: Arts and Sciences, Education, Business, Allied Health Professions, and City College, 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.

The contractual assurance of academic freedom discussed above in 2.A.27, should be understood as conveying a concomitant obligation on the part of faculty members to acknowledge the responsibilities this freedom implies. Both bargaining agreements include language such as this from the CBA: "As persons of learning and educational officers, faculty should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence faculty should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not institutional spokespersons." (See [CBA, §3.200](#))

## **Finance**

**2.A.30 The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by its governing board,**

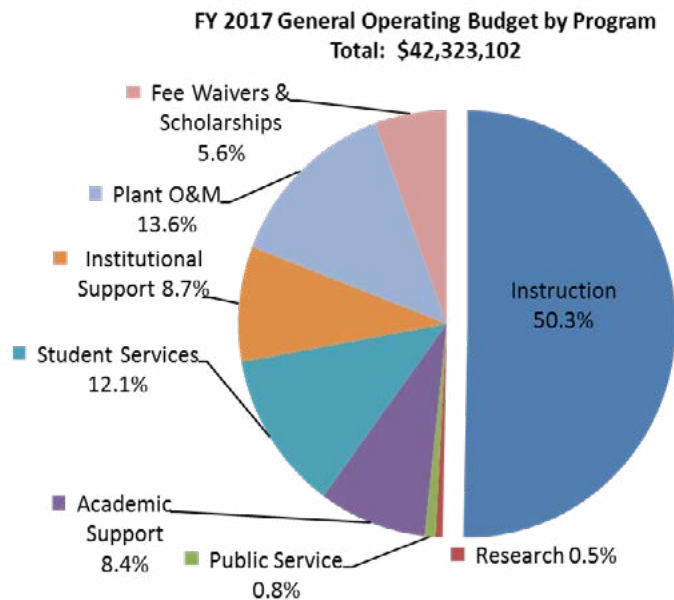


**regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.**

The Board of Regents has clearly defined policies addressing [oversight and management of financial resources](#) (see #4 in particular). The University follows generally accepted accounting principles and pronouncements, and National Association of College and University Business Officers ([NACUBO](#)) guidelines. The University also follows Federal and OMB guidelines for federal programs, including the [Federal Uniform Guidance](#) rules. University policies can be found on the [University website](#).

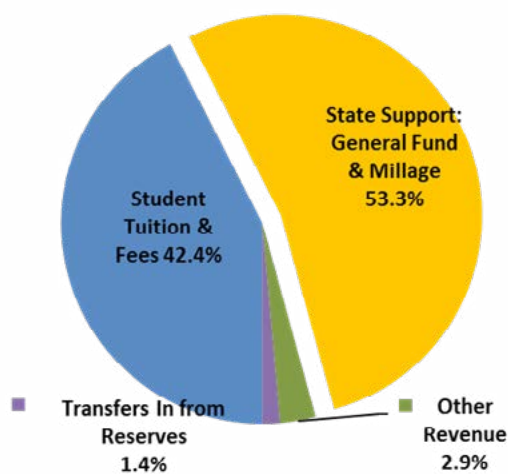
The Board of Regents annually approves University [operating budgets, including various reserve, transfers, debt, inter-entity borrowing and cash management reports](#)) However, the Long Range Building Plans (LRBP) for the University are biennially reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents.

Current operating budget expenditures are distributed as follows:



The following estimated revenue sources support the current operating budget:

**FY 2017 General Operating Budgeted Revenues**  
Total: \$42,323,102



## 2.B 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 Fall 2017, MSU Billings employed 159 benefitted faculty members, 158 part time instructors, 194 classified staff members, 102 professional staff members and 11 administrators serve the needs of the students and University. (Of note, the MSU Billings Human Resources Office considers employees contracted at .5FTE and higher as “permanent” benefitted employees.) Established [recruitment and selection guidelines](#), provided by the Office of Human Resources, specify the selection processes and protocols. The University posts all hiring criteria, required and preferred qualifications, and search procedures in the job announcements. All positions are advertised in outlets appropriate to the nature of the position. All position announcements, which include duties and responsibilities, are posted to the university website. In addition, administration and full-time faculty searches are generally advertised nationally in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and/or professional publications and listservs. Classified staff positions, part-time faculty openings, and hourly positions are generally advertised locally. Screening committees or managers complete the balance of the screening process and provide information and feedback to Human Resources. The Office of Human Resources conducts background security checks once the search committees agree to lists of finalists and before finalists are brought to campus for an interview. Once Human Resources receives verification of a candidate’s employability, the appropriate University officer makes a formal job offer to the successful candidate.

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

Both University administration and staff are evaluated regularly according to established policies and existing bargaining agreements. These evaluation processes include both written and verbal evaluations. These evaluations are based on performance expectations and specific duties and responsibilities defined for the assigned positions.

- Administrators, including vice chancellors, vice provosts, deans, associate deans and directors, are evaluated according to the [Administrative Evaluation Process](#). The process establishes a rotating schedule overseen by the Chancellor's Cabinet. Each administrator is evaluated once every three years based upon a schedule designed to ensure that an approximately equal number of administrators will be evaluated each year. New administrators serve for at least three full years before being evaluated by this process.
- Staff members' evaluation are annual. These annual evaluations are conducted by each employee's supervisor and uses a standardized [evaluation form](#).

**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.**

**Professional Development**

Faculty development is supported through five initiatives: 1) the Creative and Research and Endeavors (CARE) program, 2) the Faculty Professional Development program, 3) the e-Learning Faculty Development Grant program, and 4) the Carl Perkins Grant Program.

[CARE](#): This program, administered by the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs, is a competitive internal grant program that enables faculty in the colleges across the University to finance initial research that has potential for developing into nationally competitive projects. CARE proposals are peer reviewed by members of the CARE Committee (comprised of faculty representatives from each of the colleges) to assure that proposed research projects demonstrate sufficient rigor and are in keeping with the University's strategic plan. This grant program had been historically funded at approximately \$10,000 per year. Beginning in AY 2011-2012, the grant fund increased dramatically:

YEAR	Funded Amount	No. of Projects
2013-2014	\$38,373	10
2014-2015	\$51,564	15
2015-2016	\$47,900	12
2016-2017	\$34,474	6
2017-2018*	\$73,450	13

\*For FY 17, CARE grants became available for proposal development grants, allowing for a large increase in the amount funded

**Faculty Professional Development:** The Office of the Provost and Academic Vice Chancellor administers the Faculty Professional Development fund, which finances faculty travel and other professional development opportunities. To access these professional development funds, eligible contract faculty (.5 FTE and above) generally have two opportunities—fall and spring—to submit proposals. Proposals are funded based on recommendations from a selection committee organized by the provost's office specifically for this purpose.

YEAR	Funded Amount	No. of Projects
2013-2014	\$86,632	50
2014-2015	\$90,335	53
2015-2016	\$66,455	52
*2016-2017	\$82,272	43
2017-2018	\$73,910	43

\*In 2016-2017, Curricular Redesign proposals were folded into the large Faculty Development Fund

**e-Learning:** Faculty members who teach online have access to faculty development funds to enhance their online pedagogy. Since the 2012-2013 academic year, Information Technology professional development funds totaling nearly \$96,000 have financed fifty-eight faculty and staff members' e-Learning and online education development projects.

YEAR	Funded Amount	No. of Projects
2012-2013	26,500	17 projects
2013-2014	21,000	12 projects
2014-2015	20,500	12 projects
2015-2016	22,000	10 projects
2016-2017	13,000	7 projects
2017-2018	20,000	14 projects

**Carl Perkins:** Carl Perkins professional development funds provide support for approximately ten City College faculty members to participate in conferences and professional training. In addition, funds may also support curricular innovation or developing online curriculum in appropriate career and technical education programs.

YEAR	Funded Amount	No. of Projects
2013-2014	\$106,440	5
2014-2015	\$108,175	12
2015-2016	\$110,403	9
2016-2017	\$124,095	9
2017-2018	\$131,159	5

**Sabbatical Leave:** The University's CBA and MTYCFA contracts 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 MTYCFA contracts. See Section 11.000 "SABBATICALS AND PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL" of the [CBA](#) and Section 4.13 "SABBATICAL ASSIGNMENTS" of the [MTYCFA](#) contract.

**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.**

MSU Billings is proud of its highly-qualified faculty. As of fall 2017, the University employed 159 .5 FTE or full-time faculty members, of whom most held appropriate terminal degrees: ninety-one (57%) hold doctorates and seventy (43%) hold master's degrees.

The City College Campus MTYCFA contract specifies types of faculty appointments and associated rank. In addition to tenured and tenure-track faculty, the City College Campus employs faculty who hold special appointments—lecturers, adjunct faculty, fixed-term faculty and professional staff serving under letters of appointment (LOAs)—as well as part-time faculty members. The University Campus employs tenured and tenure-track, renewable non-tenure track, and temporary faculty, in addition to part-time faculty members.

The integrity and continuity of MSU Billings' academic programs lie in the strengths of the faculty. Within the departments, hiring decisions provide safeguards to the integrity of programs. Tenure-track and fixed-term faculty members are normally hired through national searches, while part-time and adjunct, faculty members may be hired through local searches. Faculty members undergo an evaluation process that includes peer reviews and student evaluations, and follow evaluation protocols spelled out in the appropriate collective bargaining agreements; see Section 9.310 "GENERAL CRITERIA" of the [CBA](#) and Section 7.1 "FACULTY MEMBER EVALUATIONS" of the MTYCFA contract.

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

University 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 traditionally understood to be twenty-four credits, three credits of which are reassigned for scholarship and service. By [CBA contract](#), full-time lecturers teach a minimum load of twenty-four credits per year. Department chairs receive up to 0.5 reassigned time for their role. This is negotiated between chair and dean for chair responsibilities as outlined in the CBA.

Under the City College MTYCFA contract, workloads are higher. As a result of a supplemental agreement in 2007, annual instructional workload for full-time faculty is thirty to thirty-two credits, depending upon the program's curriculum, lab, clinical, shop or internship requirements. 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 (see [Appendix C of the MTYCFA contract](#)).

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 University Campus. In the 2017-2018 academic year, the University listed 116 tenured/tenure-track faculty and thirty-three lecturers and other full-time instructors. Lecturers teach a full load of 24 credits without reassigned time for research, and they also



add to the number of faculty available for student advising and service to the University community.

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, though a lack of service responsibilities on the part of newer faculty can result in their not establishing an identity with the University. Similarly, senior faculty must balance their service responsibilities with their continued scholarly development.

**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.**

MSU Billings recognizes the value placed on regular, thorough 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 [MTYCFA contract §7.1 Faculty Member Evaluations](#).

Evaluation of University Campus faculty begins in their assigned 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 typically include 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 members who have not yet achieved tenure or full professor rank may serve on the committee. All members have full voting rights.

Beyond the academic departments and programs, faculty evaluation is carried on by the University Rank and Tenure Committee (URTC)—tenured full professors from each college and one at-large member. The URTC sends its recommendations to the Provost and Academic Vice Chancellor. The CBA requires the administration to provide for full due process in all decisions concerning reappointment, rank advancement and/or tenure. Faculty members under review are granted, by the CBA, the right to ask for a review of negative recommendations made by a reviewing authority

Faculty evaluation on the City College campus is a cooperative effort between the faculty member and immediate supervisor. The evaluation process 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](#) (Renewable, Non-Tenure Track Appointment) faculty members are evaluated annually, and temporary one-year appointment faculty are evaluated at the end of their contract year. MTCFA Union Management Committee involvement occurs only for changes in the evaluation instruments or processes.

The DRTCs, URTC, and administration on the University Campus use multiple indices in the evaluation of faculty performance, as identified in [CBA § 9.310 GENERAL CRITERIA](#). 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 members from a specific department or program within a department are expected to address the institutional mission and align with the CBA.

The CBA outlines a regular schedule of evaluation for faculty, including requirements for peer review. Under terms spelled out in the CBA, faculty members are expected to participate in the peer evaluation process to aid in reappointment, tenure, and rank advancement processes (See [CBA § 9.100](#) and [10.120](#)). Probationary faculty, faculty with special appointments and University lecturers are evaluated annually. For University lecturers and faculty holding special appointments, the schedule for reviews is adjusted, based on the nature of annual reviews. Following five successive positive annual reviews, the review takes place every three years. Part-time faculty members are reviewed annually as a regular part of the department chair responsibilities (See [CBA § 8.200](#)).

If the process results in determination that a faculty member is not meeting the expectations as specified in the CBA, the URTC, dean, and DRTC with the faculty member outline a plan-of-improvement in support of the faculty member's efforts toward continuing professional development. The plan focuses on areas of concern and provides for, if required, the development of a timeline for the faculty to address concerns that have been identified by the reviewing authorities (see [CBA § 9.710.G](#)).

Evaluation of City College Campus faculty for promotion and tenure are guided by the MTYCFA contract. As City College 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, work of the MTYCFA Union Management Committee becomes even more important. The Chancellor and Academic Vice Chancellor participate in the MTYCFA Union Management Committee's work.

MTYFCA Faculty are reviewed and evaluated for both Tenure and Promotion by a series of committee reviews consisting of faculty reviews and administrative reviews. Once submitted, the faculty member's materials are initially reviewed by a group of peer faculty from the department of which the faculty member is assigned. The result of this review is conveyed to the faculty member, and is transitioned to the Dean of the College for the next review. Once the Dean completes the second step of the review, the recommendation and comments from that review are distributed to the previous evaluating committee, the faculty member, and the next committee to evaluate the materials. The third review occurs from a peer group of faculty from the college, consisting of one (Tenured if possible) member from each department at the college. Once the College review committee completes the third step of the review, the recommendation and comments from that review are distributed to the Dean, the faculty member, and the Provost. The Provost completes the fourth step in the review process. After the Provost has completed the review of materials, that recommendation and comments are distributed to the faculty member, the college review committee, and the Chancellor. The Chancellor performs the final review of materials for promotion or tenure at the campus. The Chancellor's recommendation will be shared with each of the evaluating groups, the faculty member, and forwarded to the Board of Regents (if a positive recommendation).

## **2.C 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.**

## Program Review

Montana State University Billings provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, that articulate clearly with the University mission, core themes, and strategic plan. The University offers programs from five colleges: City College (the two-year technical and community college), the College of Allied Health Professions, the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Business, and the College of Education. Program proposals are reviewed at several levels, and at each step of the review process, program goals and outcomes are measured by the standards established in the mission and strategic plan for alignment. Program proposals begin at the departmental level with the chair and departmental curriculum committees. From the departments, the program proposals go to the college curriculum councils, the college dean, the Graduate Studies Committee or the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (depending on the level of the program), then to the Academic Senate, followed by the University Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Once the proposed program is approved at these levels, it is forwarded to MSU Bozeman. Approval by MSU allows it to move forward to the Montana University System Board of Regents (BOR) for final approval. Whether programs are submitted for approval or for information to the Board of Regents or to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) is outlined in OCHE's [Academic Affairs Procedural Guidebook](#). Ongoing review of all major academic program changes, including degrees, certificates and diplomas, is conducted through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. The Commissioner formulates a recommendation to the BOR for final approval. BOR approval is also required for substantive changes in institutional mission, policies and programs.

Academic degree programs are reviewed by each college for the BOR at a minimum of every seven years. The Commissioner coordinates such reviews and reports findings to the BOR. Programs accredited by professional associations/agencies are reviewed according to the accrediting agency's schedule.

## Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

MSU Billings has made significant progress in terms of program assessment. Prior to the 2008 NWCCU Accreditation Self-Study, assessment, in a formal sense, was a relatively new concept to most faculty and staff. Faculty had been assessing their students and courses, but formal assessment of programs based on identified and focused student learning outcomes occurred only in colleges having programs with professional accreditation standards. Currently, the campus as a whole has accepted a culture of assessment. Assessment in the vast majority of programs at MSU Billings has become formalized to include multiple measures of student performance, thorough analysis of the assessment data collected by faculty, and use of the analyses to inform necessary program changes.

Assessment of University programs overall takes place under the auspices of the Assessment and Accreditation Council (AAC). The AAC replaced the CQI Steering Committee following the 2008 NWCCU Self-Study. The AAC includes representatives of constituencies across the campus community, assuring that accreditation and assessment are ongoing group processes. This council is charged with overseeing the assessment and accreditation activities of University programs, and reports to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The AAC serves as a clearing house for sharing information regarding assessment and accreditation processes and procedures across colleges and programs. Through this information sharing, individual programs have the benefit of comparisons between the program processes/procedures and those used by other programs. Assessment at the program level takes place within the program or department, overseen by the department chair and/or the faculty, who are responsible for reviewing outcomes and assuring assessment for their specific disciplines.

Colleges and/or programs with special accreditations (the AACSB accredited program in the College of Business, the NCATE/CAEP accredited programs in the College of Education, the NASAD accredited programs in the Art Department, and the NASM accredited programs in the Music Department, and the NATEF accredited Automotive and Diesel programs, for example) maintain rigorous assessment standards as required by their accrediting agencies.

### Program Culmination

The result of this multi-faceted program review and culture of assessment is that programs on the MSU Billings campus culminate in degree designators consistent with recognized fields of study.

### **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.**

Programs of study at MSU Billings that lead to a certificate, Associate, Baccalaureate or Master's degree in a specific area have student competencies and learning outcomes identified. Programs publish objectives/student learning outcomes in the General Bulletin (see core learning outcomes for the [Art Department](#) for instance on page 123 of the 2018/19 catalog), the [Accounting Technology AAS](#) in the City College Catalog (see page 556, for example) or the Graduate Catalog (see page 54 for the [Master of Health Administration](#) program learning outcomes, for example), as appropriate. Many program outcomes are reviewed through annual reports to the dean's office. Changes in programs result from review of objectives as they relate to student achievement, program/faculty/student data and state/national specialty area standards. Necessary programmatic changes go through the University shared governance process—department, college, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Senate, Provost, Chancellor, and Board of Regents. Printed and online versions of the General Bulletin and Graduate Catalog are in effect for two years. Students can choose to remain with the catalog under which they enrolled or align their plans of study with a revised catalog as that occurs while they are students in the program.

### **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.**

Certificate of Applied Science programs are designed to prepare students for immediate employment. This is a condensed program of study (thirty to forty-one total credits) with the expectation that the certificate can be completed in as little as one calendar year. For example, see the Certificate of Applied Science program in [Diesel Technology](#) in the City College catalog, page 89.

Bachelor degrees comprise 120 to 128 credits. Degree-specific four-year plans-of-study are outlined for all majors in the General Bulletin (See the plan-of-study for the [Bachelor of Arts Degree in History](#), for example, on page 182 of the General Bulletin), although MSU Billings students typically take five to six years to complete an undergraduate degree.

Graduate programs vary in number of credits required, and range from thirty credits to sixty, depending upon the program and licensure opportunities. All graduate programs, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog require cohesive [plans-of-study](#), which ensure the curricular breadth and depth required by each graduate program and professional standards applicable to the program students are pursuing.

### **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.**

Planning and administration of degree programs begins in the academic departments. Disciplinary experts in the faculty design, or revise as appropriate, the degree and certificate programs through departmental or program curriculum committees. Proposed degree programs then go through established processes that require college curriculum council, University Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate, and administrative approval. Following campus approval, program proposals are approved through Montana State University Bozeman and then by the Montana Board of Regents (BOR). See 2.C.5 below for more detail on the involvement of the various levels of oversight in the program proposal process.

MSU Billings submits notification to NWCCU when new programs are approved by the BOR. This level of review helps to ensure that degree and certificate programs have a coherent structure with the necessary course breadth, depth, sequencing, and appropriate synthesis of learning. Program review is mandated by the BOR at least once every seven years, and individual departments may conduct a review on a more frequent basis.

Undergraduate admission requirements, including [application instructions](#) and admission requirements (pgs. 16 ff) or First Time Students, including [City College admission requirements](#) (pgs. 16ff) are clearly delineated in the General Bulletin and online. Graduate program admissions policies are covered in Standard 2.C.13 below. Graduation requirements are widely published in the General Bulletin and [online](#).

Implemented spring 2013, an electronic degree audit system (DegreeWorks) is available for all students, faculty, and academic advisors to assist in completion of degree requirements and viewing of progress toward degree conveniently available online.

**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.**

Design, approval, and implementation of the curriculum are vested in the faculty through departments, colleges, and the Academic Senate. The [Academic Senate](#) is the recommending body for [curricular change](#). Procedures for new programs, programmatic changes and other modifications are as follow:

- All changes start at the departmental level. Any curricular proposals involving more than one department must be approved by faculty in all impacted programs.
- When the faculty and department chair have approved the initial proposal, it is forwarded to the Curriculum Committee of the college.
- Following approval by the College Curriculum Committee, the proposal moves forward to either the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (for undergraduate courses) or the Graduate Studies Committee (for graduate level courses). Any course proposed for the General Education program is reviewed by the General Education Committee. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the General Education Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee are standing subcommittees of the Academic Senate.
- When the proposed curricular modification has passed the General Education Committee or Undergraduate Curriculum Committee/Graduate Studies Committee of the Academic Senate, it proceeds to the full Senate for approval.
- From the Academic Senate, proposals with any changes from previous review committees return to the originating department for review. When approved, proposals are forwarded to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and



from that office to the Chancellor.

- Once signed by the Chancellor, the proposed program or change is forwarded to the President of MSU Bozeman, and then to the Board of Regents for final approval.
- Faculty also play an active role in the selection of new faculty members. Faculty are responsible for serving on search committees, writing the position announcements, reviewing application files, screening applicants, and conducting phone and live interviews. Finally, faculty members participate in open forums and presentations, and make recommendations for hires of new faculty colleagues.

Ultimate responsibility for assessment through clearly identified student learning outcomes lies with the faculty delivering the programs. These are the same faculty who assume primary responsibility for formulation of, and implementation of the student learning outcomes that establish the basis for program assessment.

**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.**

Effective integration of library resources and practices is advanced by representation of librarians on the Provost Council, General Education Committee, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate. Librarians have liaison responsibilities with each college. Library resources available on both University Campus and City College Campus are key when new programs and courses are proposed. Faculty work with the Director of Library Services and library staff to identify and provide access to needed materials. Faculty and library personnel have pursued grants to supplement areas of the collection that need strengthening and to support electronic linkages in the formation of library consortia. Recent proposals have added materials in a variety of fields. Examples include [Mango Languages](#); the [Psychology and Education Test Collection](#); and the history of Modern Europe through the [Churchill Archive](#).

**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.**

At MSU Billings, students may earn credit for prior learning through a variety of methods including work experience and challenge tests. The University works with the student to determine which type of experience can be translated into credit. Several options are as follows:

1. Challenge tests, such as AP, IB, CLEP and DANTES, allow the student to study for and test out of equivalent college-level courses. Study guides are available in Career Services or the City College Library and Testing Center to assist students in preparation for these tests. Tests can be scheduled at City College.
2. Students may have already earned credit through work-site training, government-sponsored workshops or military experience. If students have certificates or documentation, stating that the American Council on Education (ACE) or the National Collegiate Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) assesses that training, credit may be available for coursework for which there are equivalencies in MSU

Billings' curriculum. Military credit is assessed from the DD214, DD295, or military transcript.

3. In addition to the methods listed above, the University offers students the opportunity to earn credit through [Prior Learning Assessment](#). This assessment takes into account work experience or other learning experiences, that do not fall into the categories described above, but that can be assessed through the development of a portfolio. Up to fifteen credits can be earned through Prior Learning Assessment, and this type of credit is graded with "P" if credit is earned. The University offers individual instruction for students throughout the process of preparing this portfolio.

MSU Billings' General Bulletin and the City College Catalog list specific requirements and restrictions related to earning credit through experience—see the General Bulletin, p. 29 [Prior Learning Assessment Policies and Procedures](#), and the City College Bulletin's [Prior Learning Assessment Policies and Procedures](#) (pp. 26-7).

**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.**

At the direction of the Montana Legislature, the Montana University System Board of Regents and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education developed a Transferability Initiative. Through this initiative, clear procedures and policies regarding the transfer of credits among the various units of the system guided Faculty Learning Outcomes Councils, drawn from specific disciplines at institutions throughout the state, to examine individual transferable courses and reach consensus about appropriate learning outcomes for each. This process continues at present, and is guided by a committee of Common Course Numbering Liaisons at public institutions of higher education throughout Montana. These liaisons coordinate institutions' compliance with Board of Regents policy [301.5 Transfer of Credits](#).

Policies for the transfer and acceptance of credit are included in the [General Bulletin](#). The transfer policies are in compliance with Board of Regents policies and are designed to ensure that the credits accepted are comparable to courses offered at MSU Billings. Course equivalency guides from many colleges are noted on both the [University website](#) and [General Bulletin](#). Articulation agreements are handled through equivalency guides rather than contracts.

In cases where students wish to transfer credits that are not part of either the Montana CCN database or in the transfer equivalency guides, department chairs in the relevant disciplines are tasked with reviewing courses and make recommendations on the appropriate transfer credit to be awarded.

## **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 undergraduate program at MSU Billings is designed with General Education, major, minor and elective components intended to cover not just the students' chosen areas of specialization but also foundational knowledge to broaden their perspectives and result in well-informed, well-educated citizens. Current and past MSU Billings General Bulletins present suggested plans of study for each major and minor offered. The Montana University System Core Curriculum (MUS Core) described in the [Board of Regents Policy 301.10](#) assures the transfer of up to thirty semester credits for those students enrolled in courses prescribed within each of six areas at a participating host institution.

All AA, AS, BA, BAS and BS degree programs contain a General Education component of thirty-one credits from [five categories](#) (see pp. 70-76). Thus, General Education comprises approximately thirty percent of the total credits required for a Bachelor's degree. For AA and AS degrees, this thirty-one-credit General Education requirement comprise approximately sixty percent of the sixty-nine (on average) credits required. The Associate of Applied Science and Certificate of Applied Science programs require a less robust General Education background. Students are required to take one course each in computation, communication, and human relations. City College has included a technology component as well. Students pursuing this option are required to take twelve credits of General Education.

A Montana State General Education Council established in December 2005 oversees the provisions of [Policy 301.10](#), including the MUS Core. With the assistance of the Council, each campus of the Montana University System has developed a list of courses that satisfy the MUS Core. The MUS General Education Council believes that the purpose of general education, and its importance in undergraduate education, is best articulated by the ["Essential Learning Outcomes"](#) statement developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The Council formally adopted that statement in February 2008 as the rationale for the MUS General Education Core.

**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.**

The [General Education Learning Outcomes](#) are listed in the General Bulletin (p. 72). The General Education Committee works with the disciplines represented in the General Education Core to establish and revise, as necessary, student learning outcomes for each category, and consistent efforts are being made to assess the success of General Education courses in meeting program goals. The General Education Committee worked closely with Information Technology to construct and maintain a General Education Assessment database into which faculty teaching General Education courses could enter assessment data based on the identified learning outcomes for each respective category.

Participation in this system was relatively sparse, which is the result of a loss of faculty confidence that the system would result in meaningful assessment data. This was a valid assessment of the database. Therefore, the General Education Committee, with the financial support of the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, invested in a more reliable assessment protocol for the General Education core. Following years of research and analysis, the General Education Committee decided to purchase the ETS Proficiency Profile exam to assess the General Education core. Beginning with a pilot in spring 2013,

the exam was administered to nearly 100 senior students taken from a representative sample of students who completed their General Education core. Beginning in the spring of 2017, the General Education Committee worked with the [Academic Senate](#) to establish the Proficiency Profile as a graduation requirement. The Senate balked at that sweeping approach, and instead decided to pilot a voluntary approach with an added incentive of refunding the students' \$50 graduation fee. That approach attracted more student exam-takers, but not the critical mass needed for statistical validity. That pilot continued in the 2017-2018 academic year, and results are forthcoming. For more on the assessment of General Education, please see Standard 4 below.

The General Education Committee hopes that with normed and reliable data at its disposal made available by a broad participation in the exam effort, the important and meaningful assessment data for the General Education program will result in a broad review of the program. General Education is a topic of central importance to MSU Billings, as reflected in the University's effort to improve its assessment and relevance through the [FutureU Strategic Plan, Core Theme 2.G and H](#). In the 2012-2013 academic year, the General Education Committee, guided by an assessment of the reporting system and in an effort to align with the Montana Board of Regents' transferability core, worked in conjunction with the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to reduce the General Education Core from 37 to 31 credits, thereby completing the task outlined in the FutureU plan's Core Theme 2.G.2.

**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.**

#### Outcome Performance Expectations for Applied Certificate and Associate Degree Candidates

City College offers 35 academic programs including 18 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, 10 Applied Certificates, 4 Associate of Science (AS) transfer degrees, and one Associate of Nursing (ASN) degree. The academic programs are organized by disciplines into four divisions, including general education and learner support; industry and computer technology; transportation and business; and nursing, health and safety.

Sixteen academic programs are either certified or accredited by national and regional organizations. Please refer to the [City College Catalog](#).

Since 2007, student learning outcomes have been developed at the programmatic and course level for all programs offered at the City College campus. In addition, academic programs regularly undergo review and redefinition in response to changing needs, changing resources, and continuous assessment. Fourteen industry program advisory councils (PACs) meet either annually or biannually (depending on the program) to review curricula, employment data, resource issues, and program goals. The advisory councils provide recommendations to program faculty and College administration.

Program specific outcome performances/assessment benchmarks differ. In Nursing there are lists of specific student outcomes required by the State Board of Nursing for accreditation, which range from student demonstration of commitment to professional development through student demonstration of ability to insert an IV or give an injection. In the construction program, specific skills outlined in the curriculum are tested through construction of a house that is then inspected and marketed to the public. Meeting the inspection provides each student cohort with a validation of the skills learned, and individual

competencies in multiple areas are demonstrated one-by-one to the instructor and scored as the project proceeds. All individual program outcomes may be found in the [City College Catalog](#) (pg. 63ff) Outcomes of the general education courses required in any given program (not all programs – certificate programs, for example – require completion of the general education core) are the same as those required in the four-year University Campus General Education courses.

## **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.**

MSU Billings has a set of Core Values that flow from the University mission. Colleges within the University have mission statements and strategic plans that derive from the University mission, and align with the FutureU Strategic Plan. Graduate programs are guided by college mission statements. The University's Mission, Vision, and Core Values emphasize the importance of being responsive to the changing needs of learners and their communities. Growing from two Masters programs in one college (1958-1992) to [eight degree-granting programs and four graduate certificate programs across three colleges](#), colleges offering these programs have evidenced a commitment to helping students across the state and beyond develop new knowledge, expertise, leadership, and civic responsibility.

Primary responsibility for administrative oversight of graduate program lies within individual colleges with the Graduate Committee serving as a University-wide coordinating body (see p. 33 of the [MSU Billings 2018-19 Graduate Catalog](#)). The Graduate Committee is responsible for serving as a curriculum review body for graduate programs, for developing policies related to graduate programs, for recommending membership on the graduate faculty, for acting on post-baccalaureate student petitions for deviations from policies, and for making recommendations to the Academic Senate. Responsibility for administration of graduate programs resides in the Director of Graduate Studies through the [Office of Graduate Studies](#). This office works with the college deans to determine the administration of graduate programs. As graduate education has grown at MSU Billings, the Director of Graduate Studies has undergone several iterations—half-time faculty/half-time director, half-time dean/half time graduate director, co-chairs of the Graduate Studies Committee serving as graduate director, interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs with graduate director responsibilities. None of these options proved optimal for the necessary coordination and growth of graduate education, so the Provost appointed the Dean the College of Allied Health as Director of Graduate Studies in 2015 and in 2017 the Dean of the College of Education took over as the Director of Graduate Studies.

Outcomes assessment is crucial to the ongoing success of graduate programs. Graduate faculty need reliable indicators that graduate students possess the requisite content knowledge, research skills, and professional competencies appropriate to each graduate program. The nature of graduate education at MSU Billings includes attention to the values of the discipline, research methodology, major questions in the discipline, professional competencies and current literature in the field. Graduate students are expected to demonstrate a deep understanding of the disciplinary literature, as well as to formulate their position relative to that literature/research/praxis. This level of sophistication is not widely expected of undergraduate students.



Infusing graduate programs with programmatic outcomes and multiple measures of those outcomes has required rethinking the basic structure of most programs. All graduate programs have identified specific and measurable outcomes that are indicated in the graduate catalog (see, for example, the College of Education Initial and Advanced Outcomes on pp. 87-88 of the [Graduate Catalog](#), and pp. 69-74 for the [Master of Science in Public Relations](#)).

**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 Admission criteria for each graduate program are listed in the Graduate Catalog. In addition to [general admission requirements](#), each department admits candidates based on its own particular published criteria. Files containing admission materials with admission or rejection decisions are kept in the Office of Graduate Studies. A Pre-Condition Checklist is kept in each file listing the requirements for admission and the date each one was completed.

Application files are sent to individual departments. The department faculty and/or admission committees make the admission decision and notify the Office of Graduate Studies. The office sends admission or rejection letters to applicants.

Student files may, depending on the program, contain the following:

- Graduate application
- Official transcripts from every college or University attended
- Standardized graduate test score reports
- Letters of reference
- Letters of application
- Plans of Study
- Acceptance letters from the University and from the Office of Graduate Studies

Credits can be transferred into a graduate program if they are approved by the program director or advisor. Each graduate program has limits on the number and type of transfer credits accepted. Transfer credits must be equivalent to courses in the student's graduate program at MSU Billings, as determined by the program into which the student desires to transfer credits. The College of Allied Health Professions, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Education each maintain separate policies on transferring graduate credit, all of which are published in the Graduate Catalog.

**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.**

MSU Billings does not offer graduate credit for prior experience. The University does offer credit for independent study, internships and clinics within a degree program. There is a clear policy in place for governing graduate independent coursework. A maximum of six credits of independent study may be used on an approved plan of study. A [Graduate Student Independent Study Agreement](#) must be approved by the course instructor, advisor, department chair, and dean of the college.

Many graduate degree programs require completion of a practicum or supervised field experience. Students must have an approved plan of study and meet all other departmental requirements before an application for a field experience will be accepted. Prior approval from the advisor and department chair is required before registration is allowed. Students are required to spend a minimum of 45 hours onsite for every semester credit earned. Hours vary by program and may be subject to professional association accreditation and/or state licensure requirements. Supervision of the experience may take a variety of forms—on-site mentor supervision, visits from University faculty, online supervision through real-time webcam observation, and/or regular activity reports with time logs, or contracting with part-time University supervisors. Supervision of the experience is planned and agreed to by all parties and meets standards/expectations of the specific program area.

**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.**

Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) are fully developed and published for each graduate program responsible for preparing students for professional practice. The PLOs focus on the higher level of knowledge and performance of skills specific to the professional discipline. The development and measurement of the program goals and objectives are overseen by faculty within individual programs. In programs at MSU Billings accredited by an outside agency, the PLOs have been established as part of the criteria for accreditation, and include the knowledge and skills necessary for licensure in the particular field. For example, please see the [Master of Science in Athletic Training](#) program PLOs as an example. For a list of graduate programs that prepare students for research, professional practice, or scholarship, please see the [Graduate Studies webpage](#).

### **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.**

### **Off-Campus Other Special Programs Providing Academic Credit**

The [core purpose](#) of MSU Billings is “to assure that all members of the University community reach their individual potential.” The University’s [Extended Campus](#) is the outreach arm of the campus and serves to broaden the definition of the “University community” to include the larger Billings community. The mission of Extended Campus is to support the University’s mission by engaging our community and our region with innovative services, programs and activities delivered in alternative formats and locations.

All programs offered through Extended Campus address the University’s mission of providing students with academic excellence and exposure to an intellectual community of learners. The Extended Campus, in partnership with other colleges and administrative divisions, offers programs designed, approved, administered, and evaluated according to approved institutional policies and procedures.

To achieve Extended Campus’s broad mission statement, Extended Campus continually looks for ways to meet the needs of its constituents. The Extended Campus identifies

opportunities, explores niche markets in which the University has traditionally not engaged and creates programming to extend University resources into the community. This is accomplished, in part, by unit members serving on community boards and committees and forming program advisory groups comprised of community members from nonprofit, education, business and member association constituents.

**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.**

#### **Academic Courses:**

[Extended Campus policy](#) requires compliance with campus and MUS system policies for all credit offerings. Credit bearing courses, academic certificate or degree programs may be offered through EC after all approvals are obtained (campus, BOR, NWCCU) as outlined in the MSUB Academic Senate Manual for the Preparation of Curricular Materials. The University retains responsibility for curricular oversight, and evaluation of student achievement. Established academic policies and procedures for program and course approval are managed by the faculty, department heads and deans of the respective colleges. Most of the courses offered through the Extended Campus are taught by MSU Billings faculty on a self-support basis for extra-compensation.

Extended Campus serves as the designated administrative manager but individual departments are responsible for the academic oversight of courses and programs. As part of the overall strategic planning process, the Extended Campus's goals and initiatives align with the University's Mission to ensure that ongoing as well as new program initiatives further the mission and goals of the campus. Contractual arrangements are vetted by the MSUB Business Services Office to ensure they abide by the State of Montana Operations Manual and/or the State of Montana Code (annotated).

The creation of academic programs is a process involving full-time faculty of the appropriate disciplines and fields. In accord with University policy, no unit other than an academic department is authorized to approve awarding of credit. Therefore, the Extended Campus works closely with the faculty, department chairs and deans of the accrediting college to ensure credit-awarding programs go through a review from program proposal and design through program evaluations. A [Program MOU](#) describes the specifics of the programs and delineates the roles and responsibilities of the academic units and Extended Campus.

#### **Review Procedures:**

All credit-bearing courses and program offerings are approved in advance by the appropriate University department. Each continuing education course for K-12 educators is reviewed each time it is offered for academic rigor, student outcomes assessment, and instructor qualifications by the department faculty, chair and dean of the College of Education.

#### **Non-credit Courses:**

As defined by the [Extended Campus Operations Policy](#), non-credit offerings should align with the university mission and academic portfolio. Offerings are generally a collaboration between Extended Campus and an academic sponsor (department or college) but may

be developed solely by Extended Campus. For Continuing Education Units (CEUs), the appropriate academic chair and college dean must approve. For other non-credit courses and programs, faculty are encouraged to assist in development and/or review.

**Organization:**

MSU Billings extension programs are administered through the Extended Campus. Extended Campus's educational programs are not only compatible with the University's mission but extend the University's mission by making education available to all who seek it by providing access to training and continuing education opportunities for the region and state via the following:

- Certificate Programs (credit and non-credit)
- Community programs (enrichment programs)
- Continuing Education Programs for K-12 Educators
- Professional Development (career skill and knowledge development)
- Youth Programs

Extended Campus staffing consists of four full time equivalents who, under the direction of the Extended Campus Director, coordinate the different programs, courses and outreach efforts. A number of program advisory committees keep the unit closely attuned to the educational needs of the University's communities and constituents, and ensures that program content is relevant and of high quality.

**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 all continuing education courses is based on [MSUB Credit Hour Policy](#) and meets the Carnegie unit standards. The initial course proposal used to create courses is approved through academic channels. Each approval includes a course syllabus outlining course outcomes, schedule and student requirements. The University expects course instructors to maintain these standards.

For Continuing Education Units (CEUs) Extended Campus follows established practices in higher education awarding 1.0 CUE per 10 contact hours of experience in a structured continuing education experience (class, seminar, retreat, practicum, self-study, etc.) Proposed learning experiences are submitted for review via a [CEU Proposal Form](#) and must include the number of CEUs (down to the appropriate tenth), instructor qualifications, facilities and materials needed, a course description and learning outcomes tied to assessment activities. The appropriate chair and dean approve the proposal before it is forwarded to the Extended Campus director for approval.

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

For each course or offering Extended Campus maintains a record of the syllabus or schedule, location, instructor or presenter, number CEUs or credits, contact information for each student, and other relevant information. All certificates of completion issued are signed by the Extended Campus Director. Records are maintained in hard copy and electronically on the EC registration system for seven years.

**2.D 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.**

MSU Billings offers learning environments that are engaging and exploratory through multiple service learning, internship and work study opportunities. Additionally, there are support services offered through the [Academic Support Center](#) that are NADE certified. Among these resources are:

- Three learning labs conveniently located at City College, the MSU Billings Student Union, and the College of Business
- Online tutoring for writing
- College Reading and Learning Association certified program
- Sixty hours of face-to-face tutoring per week, including weekends
- Computer lab availability with calculators available for checkout

Student Support Services (SSS), Upward Bound, and Educational Talent Search provide resources to address a variety of students' needs, including:

- [academic tutoring](#) by SSS
- other SSS [services](#) that promote student success and learning including mentoring, academic and financial advising, and checking out equipment for class use
- Upward Bound's six week academic [summer program](#) and other [services](#)
- Educational Talent Search's [services](#) and [activities](#)

**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.**

The [University Police Department](#) provides law enforcement services to the University for the safety of students, faculty, staff and guests. Six sworn police officers, certified by the State of Montana, handle police and criminal matters on all MSU Billings property and provide other Public Safety services including parking, emergency management, and building safety.

All officers have successfully completed training at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy and enforce all federal, state, city laws and ordinances, and University policies, applying proactive patrol techniques to monitor University property during business and non-business hours. On the University Campus, officers are on duty 24/7; on the City College Campus, an officer remains on duty from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and patrol cars frequent City College Campus to provide security during evening classes. Officers conduct monthly inspections of each building to check for safety hazards, suspicious activity, security concerns, or building mechanical malfunctions.

Officers respond to any report of criminal behavior, safety, emergency, or security concerns. They also respond to service-related requests such as escorting students to their campus destinations, transferring University money, addressing parking issues, and granting building access during non-business hours. Officers monitor the campus by vehicle, on foot, or on bicycle. They maintain communication with dispatchers and with night watch staff in residence halls during non-business hours.

University police are active members of the University Safety Committee, comprising a variety of campus representatives. The Police Chief is a member of the University Emergency Crisis Communications Committee (see "[Emergency Preparedness](#)"). As an example of the responsiveness to emergent safety issues, following the spring 2007 Virginia Tech campus shooting, the University Safety Committee changed the [disaster recovery plan](#).

To assist with addressing potential threats from a student in a classroom or addressing



behavior deemed inappropriate, the VCSA has developed the [Classroom Behavior and Suspicion of Threat](#) procedure, a [Student Behavior Report Form](#), a [Distressed Students Guide](#), and the [See Something Say Something](#) site to aid parents, students, faculty, and staff in getting help for distressed students.

The University Police department clearly articulates its policies concerning [Community policing](#), its [mission statement](#) and [services](#). The department complies with federal law by posting the [Clery Act report](#) required disclosure of campus security policy and campus crime statistics, the county sex and violent offenders' registry, the state sex and violent offenders' registry, and links to a website for information relating to identity theft. Handouts for these sites are available at the University Police Department office.

The [Clery Act website](#) is included on each copy of the parking regulations brochure, given to anyone who drives a vehicle to campus. This website is also listed on new employee application forms and posted on many campus bulletin boards.

**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.**

[Orientation](#) and the [First Year Experience](#) provide an effective on-boarding experience for new MSU Billings students. New Student Services is responsible for domestic undergraduate recruitment. New Student Specialists for both the University and City College campuses specialize in student recruitment.

Additional recruitment services come from [Jacket Student Ambassadors](#), a group of approximately 5-10 student volunteers who assist the Office of New Student Services. Ambassadors must complete a selection process and required training once per semester. Training includes the following: representing MSU Billings in a professional and positive manner, knowledge of University resources, assisting with campus visits and events and office procedures. New Student Services also employs paid student tour guides to welcome new families to campus and show families the student experience. Professional staff provide annual training, updated information, and continued mentoring.

Advising and Career Services oversees academic advising, career services, and the first-year seminar. As aligned with the University Strategic Plan (Core Theme Two: Provide an Environment for Learning), annual recruitment and retention plans are shared in the Council on Enrollment Management to review enrollment goals for students who are matched to MSU Billings programs. The University currently uses a CRM (Client Relationship Management System), managed by New Student Services. This software allows students to receive timely information about the institution and its programs. New Student Specialists communicate directly with students from prospects through matriculation. Once freshman students register for orientation, staff and trained orientation peer leaders in Advising and Career Services will begin communicating with students to provide additional information about the students' academic options as well as assisting students with any questions they may have about beginning as a student at MSU Billings.

Beginning in fall 2012, MSU Billings ramped up programming to assist first-year students with their transition into the college environment. This programming includes several essential components. First-time, full-time freshman are highly encouraged to enroll in a First-Year Seminar course (A&SC 111), the aim of which is providing resources, strategies, and learning environments that actively engage students in meeting their educational goals while increasing their knowledge of community, civic engagement, and service learning.

First-year students are assigned to an Advising & Career Specialist during their first year. The specialists maintain communication via e-mail, phone calls, and face-to-face interactions to assist in providing information and guidance throughout the first year. Furthermore, an Academic Recovery program is provided to assist students who are on academic probation after their first semester. The main emphasis of this program is success coaching and developing an academic success contract with students. Through Academic Recovery, students work to earn an acceptable GPA during spring semester. The program involves several follow-up one-on-one appointments to discuss students' individual needs during their second semester.

In the spring of 2015, Student Affairs re-organized the areas of Advising, Career Services, and Retention into one office known as Advising & Career Services. Advising & Career Services assists students in understanding academic requirements, enabling them to complete their program requirements as efficiently as possible. Through one-on-one meetings and First Year Seminar courses, they help students develop the skills necessary to be successful. They provide career exploration and help students access part-time jobs, internships, and work-study opportunities while students are in school, and help them secure full-time employment upon graduation. When a student declares a major, typically between their first and second year, the responsibility for advising that student transfers to the appropriate academic department. Generally, students are assigned a departmental advisor, who picks up where Advising & Career Services leaves off, and advises the student through graduation. As a result of the re-organization of services in Advising & Career Services, students maintain a relationship with a specialist in the centralized services office so that they may continue to have a contact for assistance with internships, job exploration, and career preparation. Advisors in Advising & Career Services and faculty advisors within the departments also advise students intending to transfer to another institution. For students interested in transferring to another Montana public institution, this process has been greatly facilitated by the Common Course Numbering system, whereby faculty committees across the state assign all courses common rubrics, numbers, names, and student learning outcomes.

### **Student Orientation Programs**

Orientation programs are offered in the summer for all new freshman and incoming transfer students. Specialized orientation experiences are offered for the different populations MSU Billings serves in order to customize content and respond to differing needs (see, in particular, orientation agendas for [Adult Learners and Transfer Students](#)). For spring semester, students work with advisors individually to register for classes. New Student Services offers campus tours for new students the day before classes and hosts an information table for students who need assistance. The day prior to classes starting, both campuses offer tours of campuses, workshops to assist students in getting started and navigating the college process.

**University Campus.** Summer orientation programs were re-vamped in 2010, and a two-day overnight orientation experience is offered 4 times throughout the summer for traditional-aged college freshman. Family programs run simultaneously for the parents and other supporters of students. A one-day orientation is offered for both transfer students and for adult learners. All students are enrolled in a section of the Virtual Hive, a companion to the face-to-face orientation, run in the Learning Management System. Fully online students have their own section of the Virtual Hive, which is overseen by the Advising and Career Services staff member who has the most interaction with these students.

**City College.** In the summer of 2013, City College transitioned their orientation format to merge with the University Campus. All traditional-aged incoming freshmen are encouraged to attend an overnight orientation session, in order to better connect students to services

and student life offered at the University Campus. Adult first year students are encouraged to attend a half day group registration session (offered on a weekly basis) while transfer students have individual one-on-one appointments. During the month prior to college starting, the City College campus offers two one-day transfer and adult orientations to assist in orientating these students to the services, tools and resources available to them via both campuses and virtually through the Learning Management System.

**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.**

**Program Modification Policies and Procedures:**

Procedures to eliminate or change program requirements are processed through the same set of committee approvals as are program additions. A document is prepared proposing the change or elimination, including figures on program enrollment and resources, a five-year plan for program phase-out, and a two-year staffing plan. The plan to eliminate the program must be presented two to three years prior to its elimination from the General Bulletin. In addition to these internal policies, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) has published a separate document on program modifications, terminations, and new programs. Modifications, additions, and terminations go through all of the above-described steps, including approval by the Chancellor. Following this protocol, the University submits a letter of intent to the President of MSU Bozeman, who forwards it to the Board of Regents. Any concerns expressed by MSU Bozeman are addressed before submitting a full proposal to the BOR for review. Through [Policy 303.4—Academic Program Moratorium and Termination](#), the Board of Regents has established a two-step process by which program terminations are discussed at two separate meetings before BOR approval.

**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 ([General Bulletin](#), pp. 50-51, and [City College Catalog](#), pp. 46-47;
- 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 ([General Bulletin](#), pp. 81-270, and [City College Catalog](#), pp. 63-139, [Graduate Catalog](#) pp.53-108 );
- e) Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty ([General Bulletin](#), pp. 457-467, and [City College Catalog](#), pp. 195-198);
- 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 ([General Bulletin](#), pp. 34-35, and [City College Catalog](#), pp. 30-31);
- i) [Opportunities and requirements for financial aid](#); and
- j) [Academic calendar](#).

The MSU Billings General Bulletin is readily available for view or download to the public through the MSU Billings [Catalogs webpage](#). All of the material requested is available at the

links provided above. The institution is currently working on electronic catalogs.

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

The curriculum at MSU Billings is intentional in its design, and dedicated to helping students achieve measurable outcomes during their educational experience. The curriculum aims to provide the knowledge, skills, and foundation necessary for success in life beyond the university. Each MSU Billings program that leads to licensure or which has unique requirements for employment is clearly described in appropriate programs' webpages and in the university catalogs. For examples, see the College of Education [Special Education Endorsement Project](#), and the College of Allied Health Professions [Master of Science in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program](#) on the MSU Billings website. For examples as they appear in university catalogs, see the College of Business [Accounting Option](#), the [College of Education](#) licensure information, and the College of Arts & Science's [Medical Laboratory Science Option](#) from the General Bulletin, and City College's Nursing licensure eligibility requirements in the City College [Nursing Handbook](#). Catalogs are reviewed semi-annually by program faculty and college deans to ensure accuracy.

**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.**

Access to all campus data conforms to the MSU four-campus [Enterprise Data Stewardship Policy](#). MSUB has a data standards [document](#), which is a subcomponent of this MSU policy.

The Office of Admissions/Records/Registrar initiates, maintains and approves access to all student records in compliance with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers' policies on retention of records. Student identifiable records are shredded when the office files are purged. Release of information is conducted in accordance with FERPA regulations and University policy as published in the [published on the Registration and Records Website](#). There are three types of student record storage systems on the MSU Billings campus. Current student data since 1999 are stored in the multi-campus Enterprise Information System (EIS), student records from the older campus VAX system are stored in the campus data warehouse, and student data from the pre-computer era are stored in secure office files. Each system and disaster recovery system is described below.

Current electronic student records are maintained by the MSU system's four institution, Banner system, which resides in Bozeman. Permissions are granted to employees by the supervisor completing the [Banner Account Request Form](#); this is approved by the employee's supervisor, MSU Billings Registrar, and the MSU Student Module Team Leader. Once this documentation is complete, employees are granted access to the appropriate student tables for MSU Billings. They also receive training on Banner navigation and security concerns before accessing student information. The EIS resides at MSU in Bozeman and has a daily, weekly, and monthly backup cycle; tapes are stored on the Bozeman campus. There is a Disaster Preparedness Plan detailing backup for the live EIS database for all four campuses on the MSU Billings site which has been funded since FY 2009.

- The Office of Admissions/Records/Registrar retains office files and email that relate to students' official records. The electronic student files that were part of the legacy

VAX system are stored in an MSU Billings campus data warehouse which runs on Microsoft SQL Server. Access and permission to the transcripts follow the same process as the campus portion of the EIS. All electronic files include the original copy, a mirrored duplicate, and a tape backup. The electronic files are in a secure machine room and are backed up to tape daily, weekly, and monthly. The tapes are stored both on-site in McMullen Hall and off-site at the City College Campus. Older non-electronic transcripts (pre-1980) are secured in fireproof files and stored in the McMullen Hall basement.

- Students applying to the TRiO programs must complete an application. Data from the application is entered into a database system that is backed-up to the University server. Students, and their parents if the student is underage, must sign a Consent of Release for academic records. Applications are retained in locked file cabinets.

**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 [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) makes a wide variety of types of financial aid available to students at MSU Billings. The University [General Bulletin](#) (pp. 38 ff.) and [website](#) include detailed information on financial aid, including eligibility requirements, application procedures, cost calculators, deadlines, and other financial resources. Other offices that cater to specific populations on campus also provide assistance. The [Student Support Services Office](#), [Upward Bound](#), and [Educational Talent Search](#) offer financial aid advising to students and their parents, assist students in accessing financial aid and scholarship information, provide assistance with FAFSA completion, and offer workshops on financial literacy and loan repayment.

**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 borrowing money through either the Perkins loan program or the Direct Loan program are informed of their repayment obligations prior to the disbursement of any loan funds. Students are required to complete entrance counseling and a master promissory note. The loan programs are regularly monitored through state reporting to Student Financial Services.

The MSU Billings Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships encourages students and families to learn more about the money they borrow and the money they spend. Financial Literacy is a collaborative effort, exhibited on the ["Be Money Smart"](#) page, at MSU Billings to not only reach students and parents, but to provide training to faculty and staff so the entire University can help provide information about the importance of managing money. From orientation, to academic advising to first-year seminar classes, students find financial literacy a component of their experience at MSU Billings. Investing in college is an important decision and MSU Billings is committed to educating students so they have solid financial habits in school and beyond.

Key elements of the institutional commitment to see that students and their families become more financially literate include Financial Aid staff presentations at FAFSA presentations night, College Goal Montana, high school workshops, mentorship and Resident Hall Advisor training, and other venues to share information regarding loans and other types of financial aid. The goal is to have an informed community.

**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.**

### **Advising**

Mandatory academic advising is provided to all new admit, readmit and transfer undergraduate students, at both the University and City College campuses, through the [Office of Advising & Career Services](#). Advising & Career Services also offers mandatory and centralized academic and career advising for students who have not yet declared major, international students and students on Satisfactory Academic Progress warning with Financial Aid. Students are assigned to [advising and career specialists](#) by academic program areas.

On the University Campus, with the exception of some pre-professional majors, students who have declared a major are transferred to faculty advisors in their major department shortly after declaring a major which typically occurs during their first year, however may occur earlier. This allows for decentralized advising at the sophomore level and above, tailored to the students' need by major or by discipline. On the City College campus, due to length of study in certificate and two-year associate degree programs, students are transferred to a faculty advisor during their first semester. The exceptions to this general rule are students completing prerequisites in health programs with a competitive entrance, such as the Associate of Science in Nursing, Radiologic Technology, and Paramedic programs. These students remain with advisors in Jacket Student Central until they are accepted into the competitive entrance programs or declare a different major/program. Some students will stay longer with Jacket Student Central advisors, based on the ability of the faculty advisors to take on additional advisees or if there is a change/lack of a faculty advisor.

Centralized Advising offices on each campus may retain a student longer if the student is on academic probation. Though a student is assigned to a faculty advisor, that student may continue to use the Advising & Career Services (either campus) for assistance with adding, dropping, withdrawing, answering registration and degree questions, internship assistance, career exploration and obtaining other resource materials.

Regular and frequent interface between the Advising & Career Services and academic departments allows both professional advisors and faculty advisors to remain current in degree program requirements. Interfaces may include daily correspondence with faculty or department chairs, department meetings or larger College governance group for discussions, and clarification regarding ongoing program revisions and immediate advising issues.

During the process of transferring from professional advisor to faculty advisor, students receive an email from Advising & Career Services about their assignment to a faculty advisor. Simultaneously, Advising & Career Services forwards the student's file to the faculty advisor so students get consistent and seamless service. This process is enhanced by the current DegreeWorks software package added to the Banner system as it allows electronic records to be accessible to the student, faculty advisors and professional advisors.

Advising services at MSU Billings and City College use the full intake, split model, whereby students are provided a central location to begin their advising experience while more specialized knowledge and mentorship come from faculty advisors after leaving Advising & Career Services. This model allows students one place to discuss the various majors and minors and gather information about campus resources and policies, where students can easily access services as they begin their enrollment. The Advising Centers at both

campuses work closely with other Student Services through meetings and/or referrals. At the City College campus, the advisors are part of a one-stop-services area known as Jacket Student Central. Within this one area, students can receive assistance in advising, career services, financial aid and retention. Jacket Student Central staff are cross-trained on the general knowledge of each area and are able to set-up appointments for specialists as needed.

Advising & Career Services advisors/specialists assist students in the following specific areas:

- Developing plans of study
- Assisting with placement into appropriate math and English courses based on ACT, SAT, and Accuplacer or transfer course equivalency
- Selecting and registering for courses.
- Evaluating transcripts for Advanced Placement credit, military credit, and credit from previous post-secondary institutions attended.
- Providing information about General Education, major(s), minor(s), and elective requirements. This information is delivered to students via a paper Advising Worksheet and electronically via DegreeWorks.
- Collaborating with other departments throughout the semester to connect with students about advising and registration (i.e. presents advising information to First Year Seminar courses, sets up a registration information table in Athletics and Student Health Services during Advising Week, provides advising in the Residence Halls twice a semester for students in the halls.)
- Providing information and referral to campus resources and other Student Affairs offices as appropriate
- Withdrawing from, dropping and adding courses
- Assisting in follow-up with students who are not in good academic standing
- Assisting with visits or calls to community and Tribal Colleges to meet transfer students
- Advising potential new students when they are on campus for a tour.
- Advising students during Orientation and University Connection events.
- Offering additional support to students not accepted into competitive programs through career advising and exploration of alternate majors
- Exploring career paths
- Preparing for a job: resume editing, interview skills, applying to a job
- Searching for part-time jobs, work-study jobs, internships, and professional careers
- Internship registration process

Student Affairs completed an intensive three year consulting process with Noel Levitz on Retention, Recruiting and Financial Aid practices that ran from February 2010 through February 2013. This process included campus-wide working committees comprised of representatives from both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs who reviewed, modified and assessed services related to retention, recruiting and Financial Aid. Additionally, student enrollment planning committees and campus-wide committees such as the Enrollment Management Team and the Council on Enrollment Management were developed.

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

The [Student Union and Activities Office](#) provides the support and leadership for the registration, operation, and function of all student clubs and organizations. The Student Union and Activities Office develops an annual cycle of events for student organizations that includes registration and training, event planning, and recognition. Student organization classifications include: leadership, academic, religious, social, and recreational.

The [LEAD@MSUB Program](#) coordinates a two-year leadership program for City College students and a four- year leadership program for University Campus Students that provide students with an opportunity to engage in meaningful leadership opportunities and includes academic classes that support the education and mission of the Leadership program. A team of professional staff provides the support and leadership for the Student Leadership Program.

The [Office for Community Involvement](#) (OCI) focuses on connecting service and community engagement into all aspects of student clubs and organizations and activities. The University's core theme of civic engagement is connected to student organizations through opportunities to be involved in civic engagement as a part of the student leadership experience. Additionally, the OCI has close ties with the First-Year Experience program, as well as academic programs that emphasize service learning opportunities.

The [Student Life Office](#) oversees more than fifty student organizations. Students are encouraged to join at least one club during their college careers. Student organizations are consistent with the institution's mission, and facilitate student involvement in academic, departmental, cultural, religious, performing arts, student government, literary, honorary, and service activities on campus and in the larger Billings community.

**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.**

The areas of auxiliary services and Student Life work closely as a team to provide services and programs that enhance the student experience and allow the students to be successful in the classroom. A long range [Auxiliary Master Plan](#) was developed in 2011 and is being implemented in phases to help guide facilities and program plans to provide for growth and development of auxiliary services. The MSU Billings Strategic Plan calls for reviewing this plan on an annual basis to help keep it current with campus developments.

**Student Life and Auxiliary Services includes the following operations:**

#### **Housing and Residence Life**

The [Housing and Residential Life](#) program on campus provides residence housing for approximately 500 students and ten families. The program coordinates all basic housing services and it also includes a strong educational component. Programming and support services include health and wellness programming, academic support and intervention, and paraprofessional and professional staff serving as a resource for students. The Housing and Residential Life Office seeks input and guidance through annual surveys from constituents and makes recommendations for change based on survey results. A committee on Housing and Dining meets as needed to review programs, make recommendations, to review potential changes or updates, and to serve as a feedback and advisory committee.

#### **Student Union & Activities/University Events**

The [Student Union and Activities Office](#) provides the following functions: event management across the University Campus and City College; student life and student activities; operations of the Student Union Building; and student leadership positions.

Students are involved and engaged through various services in the Union including Student Government, Student Activities Board, student organizations, and student building manager positions. The Student Union Advisory Board includes students, faculty, staff and makes recommendations on policy and space usage.

## Dining Services

Sodexo [Dining Services](#) offers residential and retail dining locations at the Rimrock Café, Stingers Bistro, SUB Connection, Jazzman's, and City College. Several dining options are available year-round and at various times throughout the day. The students, faculty, and staff are surveyed annually regarding the dining services operations, Regular meetings with Sodexo management, and the Housing and Dining Committee routinely analyze the quality of services.

## Campus Store

The [Campus Store](#) offers services at the University Campus Student Union location and inside the remodeled Academic Support Center at City College. The store provides the following services: course materials sales (on-line), insignia clothing and gifts, school supplies, general gifts and outdoor equipment, technology products, convenience store items, and concessions for athletics and campus events. The store engages students on several levels, including a nationally-recognized student employment program featuring student management opportunities. Student employees are encouraged to participate in the insignia buying process as well as assisting with general store operations. In addition, the Campus Store is supported through an advisory board that is comprised of students, faculty and staff

## Student Health Services

Student Health Services (SHS) partners with St. Vincent's Hospital to provide medical services at the University and the City College locations. The services offered include: basic health care services through advanced practice professionals, outreach and educational programming, mental health counseling, and student sexual assault advocacy services.

The [Student Health Center](#) provides opportunity for student input and guidance through participation in national surveys ,local campus surveys, a Department Advisory Board and student volunteer and internship opportunities. The Director of SHS, works closely with the Residence Hall Staff and Student Government to ensure the services and programs offered are meeting the needs of the students.

**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.**

MSU Billings subscribes to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA's) important Principle of Institutional Control (PIC), which states, "It is the responsibility of each member institution to control its intercollegiate athletics program in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Association." The MSU Billings Director of Intercollegiate Athletics reports directly to the Chancellor. According to the PIC, it is "the institution's president or chancellor who is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the athletics program, including approval of the budget and audit of all expenditures." To facilitate the Chancellor's oversight of the intercollegiate athletics program, the MSU Billings Director of Intercollegiate Athletics meets regularly with the Chancellor to review components of the intercollegiate athletics program, including but not limited to budgeting, staffing, academic achievement, gender equity, scholarships/financial aid, strategic planning, policy making, sponsorships, and NCAA compliance.

The University's intercollegiate athletics program's mission reads as follows:

"The mission of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Montana State University Billings is to facilitate positive, competitive, and successful academic

and athletic experiences for each student-athlete within the framework of NCAA and conference rules; state, university and departmental policies and procedures; and fiscal integrity.”

The Athletics program completed a comprehensive sports review and [Strategic Plan](#) in October, 2016. This plan is structured to help MSUB reach its strategic goals outlined in the university’s FUTUREU strategic plan. The core themes and objectives in the plan are also consistent with the mission, vision and core values of the Great Northwest Athletic Conference, the NCAA Division II conference of which MSUB is a member.

As an active member of NCAA Division II since 1979, the intercollegiate athletics program conducts a comprehensive self-study as required by the NCAA every five years using the NCAA’s Institutional Self Study Guide to Enhance Integrity in Intercollegiate Athletics (ISSG). The most recent review occurred in 2017.

### **Intercollegiate Athletics Goals and Objectives**

Goals, objectives, employee expectations, policies, and procedures are clearly written and reviewed at least annually, by each member of the intercollegiate athletics program. Each employee in intercollegiate athletics receives a written copy of the department’s policies and procedures. These are reviewed by the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics with each employee. As policies and procedures are revised and updated and as new policies and procedures are added, each employee receives a revised written copy.

Annual employee evaluations are based upon written expectations as stated in each employee’s annual written letter of appointment. The employee evaluation process begins in April with each employee preparing and submitting a self-report/self-evaluation based upon his or her written position description. This process is similar to that used by faculty as each faculty member prepares and submits a narrative and supporting documentation related to expectations of faculty. The review materials are forwarded to the Chancellor with written narratives accompanying the review packets at each step.

For example, an assistant coach submits his or her written self-report to the respective head coach. These materials and the head coach’s comments are forwarded to the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. The Director prepares a narrative to be included with the evaluation packet and forwards the materials to the Chancellor. The duties and authority of the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR position is required by the NCAA), and the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA position is required by the NCAA) are clearly articulated and implemented in the course of each person’s daily responsibilities and activities.

The fourth person in the NCAA’s overall plan for institutional control is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO); at MSU Billings, this is the Chancellor. The Chancellor is very closely involved in the oversight of every aspect of the intercollegiate athletics program, including but not limited to budget management, hiring and evaluating employees, policy development and implementation, strategic planning, and oversight of gender equity.

### **Intercollegiate Athletics Admissions, Collaborations, Academic Success and Graduation**

Student-athletes at MSU Billings must meet all of the published admissions criteria required of all students entering the University. In addition, freshmen student-athletes must meet specific academic requirements in at least sixteen core areas as set by the NCAA and are evaluated independently by the NCAA Eligibility Center in Indianapolis, IN. Although it is possible for students at City College to be eligible to compete in intercollegiate athletics at MSU Billings, those students must meet the admissions criteria as required on the University Campus.

All athletic aid offered by the intercollegiate athletics program is administered by and



overseen by the University's Office of Financial Aid. The intercollegiate athletics program works closely with the Director of Financial Aid, who signs each written offer of athletic aid to prospective student-athletes as part of the written scholarship offer made by the intercollegiate athletics program. All athletic aid is given within strict compliance of NCAA rules and regulations.

Each student-athlete's transcript is evaluated at the end of each semester by the [Director of NCAA Compliance Coordinator](#)/Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) and one of the university's Advising and Career Specialists to ensure satisfactory progress toward degree completion and minimum NCAA academic standards. Student-athletes maintain close communication with their head coaches and their academic advisor in either the advising office or academic department. The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics works closely with Student Affairs staff. Regular communication exists between Athletics and the housing, admissions, and financial aid offices.

The Director of Compliance and athletic coaches work closely with the admissions staff when recruiting student-athletes. The admissions staff helps sending application materials to these prospective students and assists with the registration process. Once enrolled, student-athletes and their coaches work closely with the advising staff so student-athletes register for the proper classes. Coaches frequently monitor the academic progress of student-athletes through grade checks. Here student athletes ask faculty members to report their grade and that information is relayed to the respective coach.

If a student-athlete is involved in a student conduct issue in the residence halls or elsewhere on campus, Athletics works with Student Affairs to address concerns. Each student-athlete is a student first, and is encouraged to take full advantage of each and every service and office on campus that will enhance the overall student experience while at MSU Billings.

### **Academic Achievement**

The Yellowjacket Athletics program at MSU Billings values high academic achievement. In addition to providing athletic scholarships to academically qualified student-athletes, several endowed scholarships exist in the MSU Billings Foundation to reward high academic achievement for student-athletes on a competitive application basis. Many student-athletes at the University have gone on to graduate programs, both masters and doctoral, as well as to medical schools.

MSU Billings coaches are expected to mentor their student-athletes to achieve excellent grade point averages. MSU Billings Intercollegiate Athletics' commitment to high academic achievement is demonstrated by student-athletes consistently maintaining an overall department-wide cumulative GPA above 3.00.

Coaches monitor mandatory class attendance of their student-athletes, and conduct academic progress reports across the course of each semester. Study periods are common among teams, both at home and on the road. Student-athletes communicate their travel dates to faculty early each semester and make plans to make up work they will miss. NCAA Division II prides itself on both athletic and academic excellence and the balance between the two. The University does likewise.

### **Graduation Rates**

Each year, MSU Billings reports its official [student-athlete graduation rates](#) (commonly known as the federal rate since the definition and method of calculation are defined by the federal government). More recently, a new NCAA calculation known as the Academic Success Rate (ASR), a calculation that includes the six-year graduation rate of all student-athletes, including transfer students and those who did not receive athletic aid is also reported.

The most recent graduation rates report and academic success rates report, tracking the 2008-2011 cohorts, indicate the following:

- The MSU Billings overall, general student graduation rate, using the federal government definition, of 25% with a student-athlete graduation rate of 46% and an academic success rate of 65%.

**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.**

Student and employee accounts are generated in the application and hiring process, respectively. Each has a set of criteria to identify the student or employee that meet the appropriate standards. Once the person has been entered into Banner, a Generated ID (GID) and a Third-Party ID [firstname.lastname (one up number)] is assigned. The person must use these identifications to conduct business with the institution.

The online system takes a feed from the Banner to create the person and attached course information. The campus also takes a feed from the Banner to create a user account using the Third-Party ID in an [LDAP](#). The LDAP is used to identify the student for any access to the online system and must match that used in the EIS. There are no additional charges to students for identity verification.

Accounts are generated automatically in the learning management system (LMS) as authorized by the Banner system for current or upcoming terms. Additional access to accounts must be authorized by the requesting party, department chair, dean, provost, and CIO and is for a specified time to perform related duties such as access for teaching assistants, peer review, disability services, and other academic processes. Account usernames and passwords are tied electronically with those used for paying bills, registering for courses, and accessing other personal information. Passwords must be changed every 180 days.

The LMS has features that allow faculty to create multiple choice exams with similar but different questions for sets of students. Training and support is provided by the e-Learning staff. Plagiarism may be monitored by faculty using TurnItIn. The e-Learning staff members provide training and support to faculty for using this resource.

Faculty members are increasingly using a proctoring system to further assist in certifying student identification. Many faculty members require their students to take a proctored exam on campus or go to a proctoring center at their own cost if not on campus.

## **2.E - 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.**

Since the institution's founding, the library has been a core part of the curriculum at MSU Billings, providing for the informational and educational resource needs of MSU Billings students, faculty, and staff, as well as members of the larger Billings community (see the [About the Library](#) page). Originally housed in the main campus building (now McMullen Hall), a separate library building was built in 1969. The facility, which has undergone many renovations, consists of three floors for a total of approximately 58,000 square feet. The

library also has a branch at City College that offers a computer lab, a testing center, and a community library in partnership with Billings Public Library.

The library has been a selective depository library (currently, approximately 44%) in the Federal Depository Library Program since 1958. The entire government documents collection is discoverable through the library catalog. Print and microfilm holdings have been reduced, and whenever possible, electronic formats are selected. The library uses MARCIVE to incorporate catalog records that enhance electronic access to government documents. Criteria for weeding in government documents center on relevance to MSU Billings' curriculum, and to the local, state, and regional communities (see the Library's [Collection Development Policy](#)). The library works closely with the Regional Depository Library at University of Montana in Missoula to follow appropriate weeding processes and requirements.

The MSU Billings print collection consists of approximately 190,000 items (see the updated [Association of College and Research Libraries Statistical Report 2017](#) and the [National Center for Library Statistics Academic Library Survey, 2017](#)). The library uses GOBI LIBRARY SOLUTIONS FROM EBSCO as a book vendor, and receives slips for review through an approval plan based on a profile on file with YBP. The GOBI profile plan is reviewed when there are changes to the curriculum, such as when new programs are added. The profile was most recently adjusted in October 2017. A Collection Development team comprised of library staff meets weekly to review these slips and consider requests from students and faculty. In addition to GOBI, the library subscribes to Amazon Prime in order to facilitate more timely purchases of requested materials. The library also subscribes to McNaughton Books for popular book titles. The library will add 10 percent of these books to the permanent collection. As online resources continue to grow, the library strives to stay up-to-date. The library's online collection of videos, e-books and online journals is over one million items.

Each librarian is assigned to academic colleges or departments as [liaisons](#). Through ongoing relationships with departmental faculty, librarians solicit recommendations for purchases. Librarians also remain current with campus curricular needs by participating in committees such as the General Education, Graduate Studies, and e-Learning committees. The Director learns of new curricular offerings at Provost Council.

To support the international students at MSU Billings, the library collaborated with the Office of International Studies and Outreach to create a special [international collection](#). Located in its own room on the third floor, this collection houses books in the seven first languages of current international students, as well as ESL resources divided by reading level.

The library has a robust [media collection](#). DVDs have been purchased through shared funding with the Associated Students of MSU Billings (ASMSUB). These videos are primarily recreational in nature but are popular among students so the library is committed to providing this service. The library also purchases educational DVDs at the request of faculty. If a title is available and the faculty member wishes to do so, the library tries to purchase online streaming videos for courses. A small collection of audiobooks, primarily award winners and items specifically requested in audio format by faculty, is also available.

In the face of steadily rising subscription costs, the library reviews journal subscriptions annually and makes retention decisions based on in-house and interlibrary loan [usage](#), as well as full text availability online. At the same time, every effort is made to expand ejournal offerings. Through membership in the Treasure State Academic Information & Library Services Consortium (TRAILS) consisting of 24 academic libraries in Montana, the library has been able to affordably subscribe to online resources such as Mango Languages, ProQuest Central, EBSCO Core, and Science (AAAS).

The [Special Collections and Archives](#) focus on the history of MSU Billings and the local area. Noteworthy collections within the Archives include University Archives, the Barstow Ledger Art Collection, the Artists' Book Collection, the Terry C. Johnston Collection, a small collection of Andy Warhol drawings, and the Dudley White Collection.

**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.**

Decisions about collections are driven by usage data and faculty input. First-line decisions are made according to [print usage statistics](#) and [electronic usage statistics](#), typically focusing on older materials that have not circulated in many years. Since MSU Billings is not a comprehensive research institution, the library's resources constitute a working collection, which must be current in order to be useful to students. With their subject knowledge, faculty members identify materials that are seminal works in their field.

In recent years, staff members have been weeding extensively after a prolonged period when weeding did not occur regularly. Education, Science, Psychology, Business, English, Sociology, and Nursing are completed at this time. To ensure that capture of all appropriate faculty input, weeding projects are discussed with the [Library committee](#) of the Academic Senate. The committee is comprised of representatives from each college. With broad representation, the committee is able to identify additional cognate areas with interest in a specialized area in order to assure appropriate collection items are kept or discarded.

The library makes every effort to acquire books, journals, and electronic resources recommended by faculty. [Liaison librarians](#) regularly call for suggestions in college and department meetings, and faculty representatives on the Library Committee are also asked to recommend additions to the print and electronic collections. In making these acquisition decisions, the number of majors in the field is considered.

In terms of budget considerations, the library has the support of the University administration. While never adequate to purchase or subscribe to all the desired resources, the library budget allows for continued access to current resources and the possibility of any new additions to the collection. For FY2018, the [materials budget](#) (primarily for purchases/subscriptions of books, periodicals, and DVDs), was \$68,198. The library is also able to use funds supplied by the student Equipment Fee occasionally. Each student pays a Library/Assessment Fee each semester. In FY2017, this fee totaled \$42.80 per student (\$22.80 for the library, \$20.00 for the Provost Office for program assessment and accreditation). The library fee is generally used for electronic resources. Finally, an endowment built in the 1990s supplements activities that enhance the library's mission.

The City College Library also has a [set budget](#), separate from the University campus. All databases are shared across both campuses. Every effort is made by the Director and the City College liaison librarian to solicit requests for both print and electronic materials from City College faculty.

**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.**

The library has an extensive instruction program, consisting of traditional bibliographic instruction, one-on-one consultations, other workshops, online tutorials, online research guides and a library presence in Desire2Learn (D2L).

The library offers traditional instruction sessions in two rooms equipped with SMART

Boards at the University Campus library. Liaison librarians reach out to assigned colleges/ departments and offer to provide instruction. Staff members frequently deliver [face-to-face instruction](#) in classrooms on both campuses. The constant message to faculty is that library instruction works best when working with a class on a specific assignment.

An integral part of the instruction program is the offering of LSCI 125, Research in the Information Age, a three-credit course that satisfies the General Education Global Academic Skills Information Literacy and Communication category (see the Global Academic Skills [category description](#) on page 71 and a [course description](#) on page 396). Offered since 2007, this class is taught by librarians and is offered both face-to-face and online. It covers basic aspects of information literacy and introduces students to library resources (see course evaluations and syllabi for [LSCI 125 Research in the Information Age](#)).

The library has created web-based tutorials using Camtasia in most common subject areas that address the most frequently asked questions. The tutorials uploaded to YouTube in order to allow access for all devices. The tutorials are also easily post-able in social media outlets such as Facebook (see examples of library tutorials and other instructional resources at the [How Do I...?](#) page). The library often publishes tutorials to social media as another way to connect with students.

The library has developed a wide variety of research guides, intended to be “one-stop shops” for specific student research. These online guides are developed with faculty based on specific classes, specific assignments, or specific programs of study. The guides include books, databases, and links to helpful websites (see [list of research guides](#) and [example](#)).

The library has always maintained a strong presence in online learning, with librarians serving on e-Learning committees and initiatives over the years. The library has strived to increase its presence in D2L, the campus course management system. A [general library widget](#) containing contact information and links to basic resources is available for all faculty to include in their D2L shell. Librarians have developed subject-specific widgets, with widgets live in History, Communication, Business, Allied Health, and Education. These enhance the library’s presence and also provide a face of the library for distance students. The library’s presence in online learning has increased further with the addition of the [Distance Learning Librarian](#) position. This position supports both faculty and staff who utilize library resources at a distance.

One of the largest and most highly-used computer labs, the Information Commons, is located on the library’s first floor. Scanners, copiers, and printers are available. At City College, the library contains a large computer lab as well. Because of its excellent working relationship with the IT Department, the library is often the testing ground for new technologies.

Professional development funding is available for librarians to attend conferences in order to improve instruction and other skills. Library staff members (both librarians and classified staff) regularly attend state, regional, and national conferences.

#### **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 is very much a part of the campus culture of assessment and accountability, focusing on data-driven decisions. The library has an Assessment Librarian who is tasked with collecting and examining data about the library’s services and collections. Data are collected for IPEDS, coordinated by the National Center for Educational Statistics and for the Association of College and Research Libraries ([ACRL](#)). The library subscribes to a library assessment system designed to collect statistics on various data points, such as study



room usage, programming, reference interactions, etc. The Director and the Assessment Librarian are a part of the larger assessment discussion as members of the Assessment and Accreditation Council.

In addition to these statistical reports, the library also conducts surveys of patrons. In Spring 2012, with assistance from the faculty Library Committee, a [survey of faculty](#) was conducted. In Spring of 2013, the library also conducted a [survey of students](#). In response to comments made on the survey, the library has subsequently marketed ebooks and DVDs to faculty and increased cultural outreach/programming. The number of online tutorials for library resources has also been increased.

The University Campus library staff consists of [twelve FTE](#), including five professional librarians, four classified technicians, one administrative associate, and one director, while the City College library is staffed by two 0.5 FTE administrative associates. For an institution of MSU Billings' size, the library is well staffed. This allows librarians to specialize their services, including assignments over collection development, instruction, technical services, assessment, archives, and distance learning (see [Position Descriptions](#) on the library's website).

The library has a strong working relationship with other departments on campus. The Director meets regularly in Provost Council, where information is exchanged and plans are made with deans, directors, and Student Affairs. The Director is also involved on the University Executive Council, Council on Enrollment Management, and the University Budget Committee. The Director was recently voted in as an ex-officio member of the Academic Senate. With a large computer lab housed in the library, the relationship with Information Technology (IT) is very important. IT and Facilities Services have been responsive to changing library needs. Further, as personnel needs change, Human Resources has been helpful in adjusting position descriptions and updating organizational reporting structures.

Sections of the library's three-credit General Education course, LSCI 125 Research in the Information Age, are assessed in several ways. Each semester, instructors collect student evaluations, instructor peer evaluations, sample assignments, and a self-evaluation (see self-evaluation forms and syllabi [here](#)). These materials are reviewed by the Director in regular meetings with teaching librarians.

Professional development funds are available for both professional and classified staff to attend conferences in order to stay current in their areas of responsibility. Many staff members attend and present programs at the Montana Library Association annual conference, as well as the Pacific Northwest Library Association, Mountain Plains Library Association, and ACRL conferences. Beyond attending, many library staff have served on various boards associated with these groups. Librarians with specific responsibilities also attend more focused conferences, including the Association of Research Libraries Assessment Conference and the Online Learning Consortium's conference on distance education. Personnel attending conferences report on their experiences and the library has implemented various ideas that have originated with conference programs.

The library has been closely involved in the development of the University Strategic Plan. The Director and some librarians participated in retreats in summer and fall 2012 as the plan was developed, submitted to the Board of Regents, and ultimately approved. The library has maintained a set of [strategic goals](#) aligned with the University's [core themes](#).

Usage of facilities is closely monitored. The library consists of three floors, with a total of approximately 58,000 square feet. Parts of the collection are housed on each floor. The first floor also includes a large computer lab called the Information Commons. Group study areas are available on each floor. There are also two classrooms in the library, one of which is associated with the Advanced Technology Lab. The library recently added three new rooms

on the third floor, a conference room, a seminar room, and a video recording studio for students. The library consistently tries to improve the space with furniture and technology upgrades, such as new collaborative spaces where students can connect devices to large T.V. screens for easier group cooperation. There are two entrances to the library, one on the first floor and one on the second. Thermal counter units are installed at the library's entrances in order to better count the [number of persons](#) visiting the facility daily.

## **2.F – 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.**

MSU Billings has a long-standing reputation for stability and excellence in financial management. It consistently operates within annual budgets. Annual audits have found no irregularities, and the few recommendations made by auditors have been appropriately addressed. Just as notable, the administrative leadership and staff have expertise that is used across the University—from budgeting for academic planning to enrollment management forecasting. That expertise and commitment to *Access and Excellence* at all levels significantly contributes to delivery of a unique student learning experience and demonstrates responsible stewardship of resources.

Adequate resources are allocated to ensure both the success of the strategic initiatives and the maintenance of current obligations. As an institution, MSU Billings balances its budget annually; the University has not and is currently not operating in a financial deficit. The adequacy of financial resources is demonstrated in published financial reports, including financial statements, budgets and audits. Academic programs requiring extra funding in addition to departmental operating budgets, requests, and if approved, charge a BOR-approved fee to the students enrolled in specific programs or courses.

MSU Billings financial statements show a history of financial stability. [Audited financial statements](#) are consolidated for all units of Montana State University. [Basic Institutional Data Tables](#) and the information found in the unaudited supplemental section of the financial statements for MSU Billings also provide evidence of financial stability. No deficits and clean audit opinions indicate financial stability. State law does not allow deficits in the general operating funds. Any deficits in other fund types are immediately addressed and corrective action is taken either through other funding sources or through inter-entity loans. Negative cash balances in subfunds are not allowed for a period longer than seven days per state law.

Fiscal Officers and the Executive Budget Committee monitor all funds continuously to ensure funds are allocated and accounted for properly and within budget guidelines, and that funds are available for payment of short and long-term debt and liabilities. Reserves are held in the General Operating Budget to assure coverage of unexpected changes in revenue or expenses. A reserve for renewal and replacement of facilities funded by bond funds is required in the indenture and is held in investments by the bond trustee.

The State Legislature and the Board of Regents give the units the autonomy to allocate their resources according to campus strategic plans with an appropriate level of BOR overview. MSU Billings has complete autonomy in financial planning and budgeting for non-appropriated funds, e.g. fees, grants, contracts, etc. The internal allocation of funds is at the discretion of the MSU Billings administration (as spelled out in BOR [Policy 205.2.1 – Chancellors; Duties and Responsibilities](#).) and allocated in accordance with priorities outlined in the strategic plan as well as recommendations from University constituents. Budget allocations are made in a series of budget meetings during which proponents of

various budget items explain how their proposals address the strategic plan of the unit. The Board of Regents has final approval of the annual individual MUS campus budgets.

As with any educational institution, much of the MSU Billings budget is expended for salary and wages. Salary and wage rates for faculty, classified staff, and trades people are determined by collaborative negotiations but normally remain within the state approved cap. Salaries for administrators and professional staff are set by the administration with approval by MSU Bozeman, the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and the BOR, depending upon type of position.

The University has a variety of revenue sources, including the following:

- General [tuition and student fees](#) support the education and general operations of the University.
- [State Appropriations](#) (administered according to BOR [Policy 970.1 – Biennial Allocation of State Funding to Montana University System campuses](#)) and a six-mill levy support the education and general operations of the University. General fund money is provided to support Montana resident students. Non-residents pay 379% of resident tuition. WICHE and WUE students pay 150% of resident tuition.
- Mandatory [fees](#) are charged to all students to support information technology, instructional equipment, the Academic Support Center, recreational activities, student activities, academic and auxiliary buildings, the library, athletics, and health services.
- Course [fees](#) are charged for specific courses to cover the cost of consumable supplies used in the course
- Program fees are charged for specific programs having extraordinary expenses.
- Grants and contracts operations focus primarily on research, training and workforce/economic development. The [Facilities and Administrative Costs Policy](#) sets the guidelines for allocating indirect cost revenues from grants and contracts as follows: a) a central pool for institutional support (60%), b) the Principal Investigator (20%), c) the College of the Principal Investigator (10%), and d) the Department of the Principal Investigator (10%).
- Sales and service fees fund auxiliary enterprises.
- Land grant revenue, including timber sales from these lands provides income.
- Invested funds earn return-on investment interest.
- Federal and state financial aid programs help eligible students pay for their educational expenses.
- The Perkins Loan Fund and the McDonald loan fund are available for students.
- The MSU Billings Foundation secures, holds and manages endowed funds for the benefit of the University and assists in fundraising for various purposes.

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

There are two levels of financial planning and budgeting. One is on the Montana University System level, the other on the MUS campus level.

Budgeting for the MUS begins approximately a year before a biennial legislative session and involves regular discussions between the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Governor's Office and Montana legislators. The Board of Regents (BOR) Budget Committee and the Fiscal Officers of the MUS follow an established [Budget Cycle Calendar](#) to guide discussions of MUS strategic initiatives to be addressed during the next biennium: new costs, inflationary adjustments, etc. Once MUS officers have developed draft budgets for each campus of the University System, the budgets are aggregated to form an MUS budget request and work with the Legislative Fiscal Division and the Governor's Budget

Office begins. The current funding model is based on base level funding plus inflationary factors.

At the MUS level, the Governor recommends a combined higher education/K-12 education budget to the Legislature. The Legislature considers the budgets and makes changes before approval of a lump sum appropriation for the MUS. The Board of Regents previously allocated the approved lump sum appropriation to each of the campuses; however, starting with FY2014, the Board allocates state appropriations to Montana State University in Bozeman and the University of Montana in Missoula based on three-year average resident FTE enrollment. MSU and UM allocate the state funding to each campus based on biennial budgets presented by the MUS Fiscal Officers, enrollment, and other strategic considerations. Biennial budget planning for FY2018 and FY2019 as described above is in process. The current methodology for allocating MUS appropriations is subject to change by the Board of Regents and is on the March 2017 BOR agenda for review and revision.

In May 2013, the Montana University System (MUS) adopted a performance funding model to augment the university system's allocation methodology for distributing state appropriations to campuses. This first version of the MUS performance funding model allocated \$7.5 million in state dollars in fiscal year 2015, approximately 5% of total state appropriations. The model utilized two basic metrics for all campuses, freshmen to sophomore retention of first-time, full-time students and the annual number of undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded.

Following the approval of the initial performance funding model, a Performance Funding Taskforce comprised of MUS administrators and faculty leaders, designed a more detailed model. The Montana Board of Regents approved the model in May 2015 for allocation of funds in fiscal years 2016, 2017 and beyond. This current version of the performance funding model allocated approximately \$15 Million per fiscal year, approximately 8% of the total state appropriation to the MUS educational units. Further information on MUS Performance Based Funding can be found on the [OCHE website](#).

The centralized process has system-wide advantages, but limits the options financial planners have at the campus level. Campus-level financial planning and budgeting remains continuous. Annually, directors, deans and department chairs meet with their division/college faculty and staff to determine budget needs to achieve strategic goals. These needs are forwarded to the Vice Chancellors. The Executive Budget Committee (EBC) meets regularly to develop annual, biennial, and future budgets and to review the status of the current year budget. Enrollment reports are reviewed frequently throughout the year to monitor enrollment trends and to plan for potential funding changes. The [University Budget Committee](#), comprised of representatives from every Division and College, reviews the annual budget investments and reallocations proposed by University divisions—Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Students Affairs, Academic Affairs, Athletics—and makes recommendations to EBC and the Chancellor. Final budgetary decisions are the responsibility of the Chancellor.

Planning and development of other University funds, including restricted, loan, auxiliary and plant funds is ongoing and monitored on a regular basis by Fiscal Officers and management. The University submits long-term plans for building needs to the Montana Legislature every biennium according to needs indicated in the University Master Plan. The five-year budget and capital-improvement plans reflect the University's Strategic Initiatives.

**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.**

The Executive Budget Council, in collaboration with the [University Budget Committee](#),

serves as the top-level planning and budget-development infrastructure of the University. The University Budget Office maintains a website that lists [Budget Policies and Procedures](#), [University Budget Documents](#) and a [Budget Planning Calendar](#) to track and manage various planning activities throughout the biennium. [Budget briefings](#) are held periodically or are posted to the Budget Office website to communicate current budget activity and issues. [Administrative Services training](#) on fiscal and budget management is held throughout the year.

Shared governance across all constituencies is a high priority for the University. As noted previously, the University Budget Committee has representation from all constituencies and plays a significant role in the budget development process. The Chancellor's Executive Budget Committee continually reviews this process to make improvements.

After the annual operating budget is approved by the BOR, the operating budgets are distributed to all fund controllers at the beginning of each fiscal year. Detailed instructions are included with the operating budget. All budget adjustments are processed, entered in the Banner Finance/Budget system, and available for review online. The Fund Controller, Dean, Vice Chancellor, University Budget Officer, and the Chancellor (depending upon the amount and nature of the adjustment) approve all budget adjustments. As noted above in 2.A.30, the annual operating budgets and reports are approved by the BOR and are widely available online. Reports for general operating revenue and expense, expenditures by program, scholarships, other fund type budgets and various metrics and other reports are easily accessible.

**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.**

University accounting records are processed through the Banner accounting system. The system has been designed to make it possible to present financial statements in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) as well as Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements. The University maintains its accounting system and prepares its financial statements in accordance with the guidelines established by College and University Business Administration, as published by the National Association of College and University Business Officers. Adjustments are made to comply with GAAP. The accounting system is audited by the Legislative Auditor's Office. Banner accounting records are interfaced with the State's accounting system and are reconciled monthly.

The administration of MSU Billings demands accountability and fiscal responsibility. All personnel are subject to the same rules. Internal controls are an integral part of the financial and business processes designed to safeguard University assets, ensure compliance, check accuracy and reliability of data, segregate duties, and review authorizations and transactions. Internal Control roadmap documents are available from Financial Services Office.

All University revenues and expenditures are subject to the consistent laws, policies and procedures. Revenues and expenditures are controlled through a process of fund controller approval, supervisory review, budgetary and internal controls, and adherence to federal, state, local, Board of Regents, University laws, policies, and procedures. The University Budget Director on an as-needed basis conducts internal reviews. The Internal Audit Office of Montana State University Bozeman also performs periodic internal audits at the University. The [Administrative Services Division website](#) includes links to policies and procedures that are updated regularly to provide guidance to financial managers regarding the proper accounting and expenditure of funds.

University financial statements are prepared annually. A consolidated report is issued



combining financial data for all of Montana State University. Individual campus information can be found in the Supplemental Information at the back of the report. Financial statements for the University pledged revenue bonds and the KEMC Public Radio station are also prepared and audited annually by independent audit firms. Agreed upon procedures for Athletic programs are done every three years with the next one due for FY17. All University funds and accounting systems are subject to audit by the [Legislative Auditor's Office](#). An independent CPA firm audits the MSU Billings Foundation annually.

**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.**

Long range capital plans are addressed utilizing a combination of master planning and the MT State Long Range Building Program (LRBP). The University uses the master planning process to create a five-year-to-twenty-year vision of renovation, construction, and expansion needs. Determination of needs is based on demand-based surveys, financial data, trends in higher education, enrollment data, deficiencies within existing infrastructure, and the collective needs of all divisions. This living document is updated continuously to adjust the long-range goals and future plans for the University. The current [Campus Master Plan](#) is the document from which the University derives the projects that will be carried forward into the Long-Range Building Program (LRBP). The LRBP process is a biennial review of projects requesting legislative approval for all Montana state agencies. Within each University, individual priorities are established which then are compiled into a list of projects that collectively represent the needs of the Montana University System (MUS). This list is then merged with the needs of all other state agencies and sent to the governor for consideration in his proposed budget. Once the list of LRBP projects are incorporated into the budget, the list is then sent to the Montana Legislature's Appropriations committee for approval. The MT State Department of Administration administers all projects approved by the Legislature unless a delegation of authority is requested by the state agency.

Capital funds are received through the Legislature or through the issuance of bonds or other debt instruments. The funds are for specific purposes contained in the MUS unit long-range building plan or the campus master plan and are specified at the time of the request to the Legislature or time of the debt issuance. Prior to issuance of bonds, debt service requirements including pledged revenues and debt payments are scheduled for the life of the bonds.

The Administrative Vice Chancellor and the Financial Services Director review and approve all debt financing. Financing plans and repayment sources are reviewed in detail to ensure adequate resources are available to pay short- and long-term debt. Since 1994, revenue bond issuances for all units of Montana State University are consolidated and cross-pledged, resulting in more favorable interest rates and credit ratings. A memorandum of agreement states that each campus will continue to service its own share of debt requirements.

The University submits an annual [Outstanding Indebtedness Report](#) to the Board of Regents detailing all outstanding debt for the institution. Debt service payments for revenue bonds are made from net pledged revenue sources derived from auxiliary operations and student fees. As a result, there is no depletion of resources available for educational purposes due to debt payments. An independent audit firm audits bond indebtedness every year. Debt service coverage ratios for revenue bonds for FY2015 and FY2016 were 1.76 and 1.48, respectively. Debt service schedules for bond payments are provided in the indenture and are maintained in the Financial Services Office for the lifetime of the debt. Annual debt

service requirements are published in the footnotes of the financial statements.

**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.**

In keeping with generally accepted accounting standards, the financial relationship among education and general operations and the auxiliary enterprises must be independent, and every effort has been taken to guarantee this independence. Auxiliary enterprises have, as a matter of course, not been used to supplement education and general operations. In specific instances, however, where personnel and certain programmatic needs have arisen, education and general funds have been used to assist with these expenses. In these instances, a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) is drafted and executed at the beginning of each fiscal year which outlines the terms and conditions of the particular situation. There are also certain positions within the University that liaise between auxiliary operations and the general University fund. A portion of the salaries of individuals, such as the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, whose responsibilities include work in both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, is provided by both general funds and auxiliary funds. Similarly, certain specific programs and special events are funded through both general funds and auxiliary funds.

Administrative costs incurred in education and general funds to support auxiliary enterprises are recovered through a recharge system. The recharge amounts are determined based on the use of the service by auxiliaries and the reasonable cost of that service. These services and costs are outlined at the beginning of each fiscal year in a Memorandum of Understanding which is then executed by the appropriate parties.

In 2010, Montana State University Billings completed an Athletics and Auxiliaries Master Plan utilizing the services of professional consultants. The focus of the plan was to determine the demand and financial feasibility for improvements to athletics, housing, the Student Union Building ("SUB"), food service, health services, and childcare. In 2012, the Student Union Building was renovated to enhance student services and move the Academic Support Services office to an area more often frequented by students. The former Academic Support Center has been demolished and is being rehabilitated into campus green space and to provide future opportunities for growth in auxiliary services. Both of these projects, along with additional key projects, have worked towards eliminating significant deferred maintenance throughout auxiliary operations.

**2.F.7 For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The audit is to be completed no later than nine months after the end of the fiscal year. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered annually in an appropriate and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.**

The annual [Financial Audit Report](#) of all University funds is done by the State of Montana Legislative Audit Division (LAD) in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The [Compliance Audit Report](#) for all campuses is done every two years, the most recent of which was for FY16 and FY17. Any findings or recommendations from the compliance audit are included in the State's [Single Audit Report](#).

In addition to the LAD audits, independent audits are performed annually for revenue bonds, Yellowstone Public Radio, and the MSU Billings Foundation. An agreed upon

procedures report is done for the NCAA athletic programs every three years. There may also be smaller independent audits or financial reviews of grant or financial aid programs as deemed necessary by the sponsoring agency or government.

Results from the audits are reviewed by management both during the audit period and in the audit exit interviews. Management prepares a response to any findings or recommendations that is incorporated in to the LAD audit report. Audit reports are presented to University management, the Legislative Audit Committee, and to the Board of Regents. A plan of corrective action is developed following the issuing of the report. Management takes every opportunity to work with the auditors to remedy the sources of or find solutions to any audit recommendations. Auditors follow up on recommendations in subsequent audit periods and report on the status of the audit recommendations.

**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 [MSU Billings Foundation](#) advances the goals of Montana State University Billings through the solicitation, investment, and stewardship of financial support for the University. This relationship is carefully guided by an [operating agreement](#) between the two entities. The Foundation works to expand philanthropy toward the University, advance awareness of the University in the community, and promote University and community partnerships. The Foundation conducts broad-spectrum annual fund-raising campaigns, targeted major gifts efforts, and occasional major campaigns to provide support for University needs and initiatives.

In 2006, the Foundation successfully completed the University's first-ever major fund-raising campaign: *People, Pride and Promise: The Campaign for Excellence at Montana State University Billings*. The Foundation raised more than \$30 million during the five-year effort, well above the \$21 million goal. The campaign fund-raising efforts specifically addressed key endowments and scholarships for the University.

In 2012, the Foundation successfully completed the *Opportunity Campaign for MSU Billings Scholarships*, raising \$7.2 million in gifts and pledges over the three-year life of the campaign. By setting the campaign goal at \$6 million in its first campaign since the onset of the 2008 recession, the Foundation communicated recognition of and sensitivity to difficult economic times for donors while conveying the enormous and ever-growing financial challenges faced by many students struggling to pay tuition. By surpassing the \$6 million goal, the Foundation reasserted the importance of support for the University and its students. The community response reflects the healthy relationship between the Billings community and MSU Billings.

Although perceived to be important educationally and economically to the city since its founding, the University continues to gain recognition and respect from all constituencies. The vision, outreach efforts, and commitment to meeting the workforce needs of a growing city by the current administration were reciprocated in the community response to these campaigns.

The Foundation is currently deeply engaged in a fund drive to finance \$5 million as a matching grant to renovate and build an addition to the existing Science Building into a new Yellowstone Hall that will house both the Science Department and the Allied Health Programs. With staunch support from the majority of the Montana legislators and Governor Steve Bullock, the 2013 legislature appropriated a \$10 million allocation as a challenge match for a \$15 million project, launching this fundraising effort with 66% of the monies

firmly in place.

## **2.G – 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 initiatives and goals of Facilities Services align with the University Strategic Plan and support the University vision. The University has successfully been implementing changes to operations and facilities based on demand-based analyses of its students. Some of these projects include:

- Completion of a major renovation of the Student Union Building in September 2012, which incorporated several student priorities including informal study space, a copy center, a convenience store, and vastly improved instructional space for the Academic Support Center. The \$3.9M project also significantly improved the aging mechanical infrastructure of the building.
- Completion of a major renovation in one of the University's large lecture halls. The layout, furniture, and technology were all upgraded to respond to student/faculty needs and trends in higher education. The \$500K project was needed to update aging instructional space.
- Completion of a major renovation that focused on improving student services operations at the MSU Billings City College Technology building. A joint library was created with the City of Billings, new space was provided for testing, disability support services, student health services, and improvements were made to the improved student commons. The \$1M project significantly improved the services at the two-year campus.
- Planning efforts continue for a new residence hall and conference center to be located on the MSU Billings Campus. These are tied directly to the FutureU strategic plan.
- Renovation of several key instructional labs within the Science Building, which improved aging instructional space and incorporated current technologies / equipment for students.
- Renovation / relocation of the photography lab within the Liberal Arts building which consolidated operations and improved aging instructional space.
- Major replacement of campus sidewalks and stairs to eliminate safety hazards and increase the ease of access for students with mobility impairments.
- Resurfacing of several campus parking lots in summer 2013 to increase the lifespans of these facilities.
- Improvements to University food service operations, including a new coffee shop, several branded concepts, and upgrades to the serving line at the City College.

Biennially, Facilities Services completes [customer satisfaction surveys](#) to insure maintenance, repairs, custodial, and grounds are all meeting the expectations of the University faculty, staff, and students. These survey results are then used to adjust and improve the services within the Department.

In 2010, the Administrative Services Division began the process of developing a unified [Strategic Plan](#) which will serve to provide a flexible roadmap for the future of the division. This effort transitioned each of the Departments out of completing individual biennial surveys and will endeavor to unite the division in metrics and goals for increased cross-department integration. The strategic plan was developed in three phases: Current State Assessment, Future State Design, and Implementation Plan. The services for each of the

departments, including Facilities Services, were identified in the plan and both the current assessment and future opportunities were identified. Seven distinct goals were developed for the plan and annual objectives and action items were developed to guide the process. This plan was integrated with the University Strategic Plan in 2013. The final core theme of the FutureU plan, “Essentials for Success,” is closely tied in several ways to Administrative Services initiatives.

Overall, performance was very good in the most recent [Facilities Services survey](#), with positive trends in all areas but one. Custodial Services demonstrated negative trend lines and in response to this, a custodial services plan was developed based on Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers (APPA) guidelines. [Work plans](#) for each building were developed, [standards](#) established and staffing levels determined. Through implementation of these new standards and metrics, the quality of custodial services is now above acceptable levels and customer feedback is positive.

Relative to the Administrative Services Strategic Plan, the first goal and subsequent survey was to develop a [comprehensive training strategy](#) and program for the University to build awareness, knowledge, and skills for Administrative Services and processes. The objectives were to identify and prioritize training needs through a survey of current staff and then develop a plan to deliver these needs. Facilities Services had most key functions identified as either important or very important to the department. Comments were reviewed and feedback will be implemented into the next strategic plan.

### **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 Billings employs a Hazardous Material/Waste Coordinator, who is the agent for procurement of hazardous material and the single agent for hazardous material disposal. Annually, the coordinator attends an 8-hour HAZWOPER refresher course meeting the requirements outlined in OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 and provides annual training for University personnel as appropriate. The Coordinator has been trained in the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) as required by OSHA. The Coordinator has provided GHS training for University personnel who handle hazardous materials.

Current GHS safety data sheets are located in all areas where hazardous materials are stored or used. MSU Billings is classified as a small-quantity generator by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) with fewer than 1,000 kilograms of [hazardous waste](#) generated per month. The coordinator monitors storage areas and quantities monthly and provides all documentation to the MDEQ yearly regarding disposal of materials.

The University purchased a fluorescent bulb crusher through a MT Safety Smart Grant which has greatly increased the safety and efficiency of the process, as well as reducing the associated costs. As the University works to transition to LED lighting technology, eventual elimination of all fluorescent bulbs and ballasts will someday be a reality.

### **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.**

The University Master Plan was first completed and published in December of 2000. Associated studies were published in September 2002 and December 2006. In 2010, the University completed a [comprehensive update of the Master Plan](#), including specific focus on Auxiliary operations (housing, recreation, athletics). This process yielded many new and exciting ideas, goals, and priorities for the University. The University Master Plan is a living document that is updated continuously to adjust the long range goals and future plans for



the University (see the [2012 update](#)). It is from this document that the University derives the projects which will be carried forward into the [Montana State Long Range Building Program](#). The University Strategic Plan calls for an annual review of the University Master Plan in relationship to its relevance to the Strategic Plan.

Along with the internal Master Planning process, the State of MT provides a program through its budgeting process whereby “new space” is identified, prioritized, and the associated capital/operating funds are allocated to the University. The [presentation on the Life Sciences Building](#) illustrates MSU Billings’ most recent major renovation project requested through the State’s Long-Range Building Program, which strives to insure appropriate support for the University’s infrastructure. Additionally, FY2010-2011 Repair and Restoration accounts were established to address the needs for major pieces of equipment which historically had required allocation of specific Building Fees or LRBP Deferred Maintenance funds that may not have been available when needed.

**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.**

There are several distinct areas in which equipment is essential to Facilities Services supporting the University core theme objectives and goals. These areas are equipment related to infrastructure, equipment related to services, and equipment related to student learning.

Equipment related to infrastructure is constantly evaluated and Facilities Services employs two full-time preventative maintenance mechanics who do all routine maintenance on campus. Several major mechanical projects have been completed within the last two years, including a \$1.5M mechanical upgrade in the Student Union Building, a \$1M mechanical upgrade in the Science Building, and most recently an \$800K mechanical upgrade in the Physical Education Building. The University has been completing many energy-related projects as well across the campus, including its first photovoltaic array and a collaborative venture with a private company to install a VAWT (Vertical Axis Wind Turbine) at the MSU Billings City College.

Equipment related to services is a challenging area due to tight budget constraints therefore creative means have been utilized recently to enhance the funds available for these items. Within the last two years, Facilities Services has applied for and received over \$100K through grants to upgrade aging service equipment. Most notably, a new Bobcat 5600 Toolcat was purchased through a \$43,000 RMTD loss mitigation grant for snow removal. This new equipment replaced two 1960s vintage tractors that were unreliable and past their usable service life. The new equipment dramatically increased both the efficiency of operations and safety of the campus. Other equipment that has been recently purchased for Facilities Services through safety grants includes two additional hydraulic pickup lift gates, a fluorescent bulb crusher, state-of-the-art utility locator, and a new two-ton truck used for sanding the streets and parking lots during winter months.

Student equipment is a key area of support necessary for academic programs. Over the past three years, roughly \$2.5M has been allocated to the colleges for the replacement and purchase of instructionally related equipment. Many needed items have been funded, from a climbing wall in the Physical Education Building to a Psychology seminar room in the Liberal Arts Building. The equipment intensive programs at City College have received significant upgrades. Equipment in the Science Department has also been a focus for recent upgrades. Laboratory equipment is provided for the biology, chemistry and physics laboratories through the Science Technical Services budget, faculty research grants, the College of Arts

& Sciences and Administration Equipment Funds. Partnerships between MSU Billings and the local medical community have yielded over \$1M in new equipment for students and faculty research, including a nitrogen generator/compressor for the laser laboratories as well as several other key pieces of equipment.

### **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.**

The [Office of Information Technology](#) provides services for three fundamental areas: 1) IT infrastructure, computing, and data management, 2) Institutional Research and data analysis, and 3) technical integration of all resources into academic and online instructional computing and resources and providing initiatives in the use of technologies in teaching and research environments. Specifically, IT provides support, purchasing and replacement for all state-funded computing equipment and software. Student computer laboratories, classroom equipment, and faculty computing needs, as well as library computers, are all supported centrally by the Office of Information Technology, headed by the Chief Information Officer (CIO). All technology design and purchases are coordinated with the CIO. The office designs, implements, and operationalizes all data management, storage, and analysis. The office develops the design and implementation of technologies into the academic and instructional environments.

Banner is part of the Enterprise Resource Planning System, which involves the four campuses of the Montana State system. MSU Billings shares the governance, cost, and operations of the ERP. The CIO collaborates with the MSU Bozeman CIO and staff to help set priorities, future direction, and operational support. The four campuses have additional systems that share vendor and/or software installations: parking (T2), residential halls (StarRez), card systems (CBORD), learning management system (D2L), libraries (Ex-Libris), customer relationship management (Radius), student conduct (Maxient), web authoring (OUCampus), and other smaller applications. This is part of a Board of Regents initiative to increase shared services to become more efficient in purchasing, implementing, and operating software systems on all campuses but primarily with the four MSU campuses.

The campus provides, from central funding, current desktop computers for all faculty and staff who are full-time. Part-time faculty and staff, as well as student employees, are provided with rejuvenated computers. All computers have the latest campus software installed as part of the campus site licensing model.

The campus provides a wide array of software for all faculty, staff, and students. This includes vendors such as the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office 365, Mathematica, Matlab, ESRI GIS, SPSS, R, AutoCAD, BrightSpace (Desire2Learn), Turnitin, Cisco WebEx, Cisco Spark, and other program specific software.

MSU Billings is moving many of its operations and services to the cloud. Examples include services such as Box, Azure, OneDrive, and other similar cloud services. Subscriptions to training services are provided to all faculty, staff, and students by Hoonuit services (formally Atomic Learning).

Student classrooms and open computing labs are provisioned with a consistent set of software on all machines. This matches the software installed on faculty machines. This enables students to go to any lab and faculty to go to any classroom and have the same software.

The campus has implemented two unique technological classrooms named TEIL (Technology Enhanced Interactive Learning) classrooms. The classroom consists of collaborative desks seating six students, each outfitted with two TV's and a Cisco Telepresence system; which allows each student group/table to work within their collaborative group, with students off-campus (using WebEx), and to share between tables work and projects. This has initiated some new teaching techniques, faculty are finding new ways of using the technology and increasing use of flipped classroom pedagogies.

IT has initiated several collaborative projects to support faculty/students in their online courses, online student support, and employee productivity. The use of unified communications and unified collaboration systems has enhanced the ability of the campus and students to build learning and working environments that span time and place. Examples include VoIP, WebEx, Spark, Office 365, Box, and other integrating systems.

The library locations on both campuses host the Information Commons, a computer facility for student use created as a unique study/computing environment. There are additional hardware and software features in the library to support faculty and students such as scanning capabilities, inter-library loan, and other technological resources.

MSU Billings has provided for research and grant computing. As part of the shared services initiative there is a new [Research Computing Group](#) at MSU Bozeman to support the increasing federal data requirements for the four campuses. The campus faculty are encouraged to develop their high-performance computing (HPC) projects in a local sandbox then scale up to the four campus HPC facilities.

Classrooms are provisioned with computers, projection systems, and Elmos. Approximately 25% of campus computers are replaced annually on a four-year cycle. Network equipment and servers are replaced on a four-to-six-year cycle. Smart classrooms are replaced on a four-to-six-year cycle. Other equipment purchased by grants, donations through the MSU Billings Foundation, or areas funded by designated funds are replaced as those budgets allow, using the four-year replacement cycle as a standard.

The Office of Information Technology provides emergency communication services. Phones are installed in most classrooms and labs, the InformaCast system provides emergency broadcast for campus emergencies such as lockdowns. These messages are integrated with email, texting, and carillon systems and are tested on a monthly basis and are coordinated with the Emergency Crisis Committee activities.

The campus network is 10 Gig at the core in each building, 1 Gig/100 Mbs to each desktop. The network infrastructure is replaced every 6 years and core equipment every 6-8 years or when new technologies may be used in the academic or administrative environment.

During the past several years as data lakes, data warehouses, and data analytics have improved there has been effort to construct a strong analytics campus structure. This has involved the IT infrastructure team, IT programmers, and Institutional Research. Data management has been an emphasis to develop good data governance, data storage, and data analytics on the MSU Billings campus while also following practices, procedures, and policies used for the four MSU campus family.

Each year additional third-party applications are adopted that require integration with Banner. The four MSU campuses manage about 100 such applications with about 40 on the MSU Billings campus. Each of these requires collaborative efforts between all four campuses IT staffs. MSU Billings is adopting many cloud services and applications. These include Office 365 and its many applications, Box, WebEx, and other functional specific services.

## **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 Office of Information Technology manages the campus technology as well as the e-Learning operations. IT also trains across applications that reside on multiple campuses, hosted sites, and local installations.

The Banner training is performed primarily by the functional offices to the campus users. This involves the Banner modules: Student, Financial Aid, Finance, and Human Resources. The Student and Finance modules are the predominant areas providing training for campus users. This is done through documentation, periodic classes for end users, and clear outlined procedures for particular functions. This particular training is one of the objectives of the [Administrative Services Strategic Plan](#).

The four campuses are beginning the migration from Banner 8 to Banner 9. This requires a new collaborative training and development plan. The primary goal is to complete the transition to Banner 9 by December 2018. Each functional area is working with the other campuses to develop their plan under the auspices of the MSU University Information Technology Office. Our local MSU Billings IT and staff participate in the oversight and operations of this group and planning.

Faculty and related support staff receive training on the learning management system from the e-Learning Office. A multi-pronged faculty development program provides guidance and t for faculty to enhance their online course delivery These programs are offered to all new faculty as well as those wishing a refresher or additional development. Sessions are presented during annual back-to-school training time, any updates or new versions during the year, and on demand – the latter is the most popular and is provided by the e-Learning staff.

The IT Institutional Research, Analysis and Programming (embedded in IT) provide regular training for the campus at large who want additional information on data sources, data definitions, and data analytics. Additional focused training efforts included regular administrative assistant sessions in 2015-16, [monthly data discussions](#) in 2016-17, and Tableau departmental dashboard training in 2017-18. These sessions have been used to inform the overall campus data governance documentation and policies in conjunction with the four campus MSU Data Governance Committee.

The IT and e-Learning staff jointly provide training for use of the TEIL classrooms. Faculty must receive this preparation before they can schedule a course in one of the two TEIL classrooms. This training and development consist of technical details of running the classroom and pedagogical discussions on best practices to use the technology and how to develop new instructional methods to be used in the TEIL classrooms.

Media services staff members within IT provide training on the multimedia resources in classrooms, auditoriums, and other specialized areas. They also provide support and training for clickers, sound systems, and presentation

Office of Information Technology (including e-Learning and Institutional Research) staff participate in up to two conferences per year for technical training necessary to look to the future, install and implement new technologies, and provide professional development. Front line staff members are provided with release time and funding for local and online technical training.

The campus is introduced to new desktop and business applications using electronic communications, special classes during the annual back-to-school activities, classes during the year, and one-on-one training. Additionally, the campus uses Hoonuit, Microsoft's vast

online training resources, Adobe training resources, and provides local supplemental task specific training to campus members, both employees and students.

The fast-moving adoption of cloud services, cloud applications, and a cloud infrastructure has required more frequent educational sessions to provide the information to users needed to adopt the services. Each month there is a new application appearing in the cloud services portal. IT staff tests, thoughtfully considers how this might work in an office environment or pedagogically in an academic environment, and then proceeds to provide the necessary training for users.

**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.**

Systems that involve the four MSU campuses are vetted through functional groups on each campus, four campus functional governing groups, local administration, and the OneMSU governance council. The four MSU campuses identify relevant projects, a business plan is developed for funding, implementation, and staffing then prioritized by the campus Executive Budget Committee. The Chancellor takes this priority list to OneMSU for final four campus prioritization. The MSUB Bozeman Information Technology office supports these prioritized projects.

Campus hardware and software purchases go through several steps in an information gathering process. All purchases and technology choices are approved by the CIO. All software is purchased on either an annually renewing site license or concurrent license to allow for updates and new versions. All fee and state supported computer purchases are entered into a purchasing master plan and noted in the inventory when refreshment is to take place according to a four-year cycle.

The technology purchasing process begins with a request submitted with rationale (written or verbal). Relevant IT staff members answer implementation and operational questions from the CIO. A well-developed set of options is provided by the Office of Information Technology to the requestor. In some cases, a four-campus impact is evaluated by IT staff members on the MSU campuses. Pricing quotes are returned to the requestor. Once all agree on the purchase, IT staff members proceed with purchase, receipt, installation, implementation, operation, and maintenance.

Campus hardware purchases are made with the view that this equipment must be able to run the latest software four to six years after purchase. Software purchases are made with the view that the latest software should be purchased to insure a full set of capabilities, the most up to date security, and compatibility with other newly purchased software.

In the case of grants, there is collaboration between the CIO and the Principal Investigator (PI) in consultation with IT staff on the implications of the purchase, long-term costs, and requirements on infrastructure that may be incurred.

**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.**

The four MSU campuses have established a common [IT Strategic Plan](#). This plan meets the criterion set out in the MSU and MUS Strategic Plans while also allowing specific objectives that meet the criterion set out in the MSU Billings Strategic Plan.

The [MSU Billings Strategic Plan](#) has several components: 1) facilities, operational technology, and overall campus master plan with divisional plans. These plans detail what should be



done. The operational technology master plan is a response to the criterion, what will be needed while adhering to the technological standards of currency, standard replacement, and viability. These plans set the stage for infrastructure requirements, types of technology needed, and quality of implementation and support.

The student and employee plans are updated annually based upon current year purchases, replacements, and changes in use. The student computing resources are reviewed annually by an Academic Information Technology Committee that reviews the plan, approves the current year expenditures, and makes revision suggestions.

The MSU Billings technological infrastructure has been driven by adopting current technology for infrastructure, developing new technology for teaching and learning, and providing a current environment for the University's faculty, staff, and students. Each purchase is made with an eye to what will be needed in five years, what practices will be used in that time, and the technology students may be using. Additional considerations are given to research activities to assure an adequate network and infrastructure for support of research activities. The IT strategic plans were carefully folded into the University Strategic Plan and IT has major responsibilities in helping the University meet its goals as part of the Core Themes.

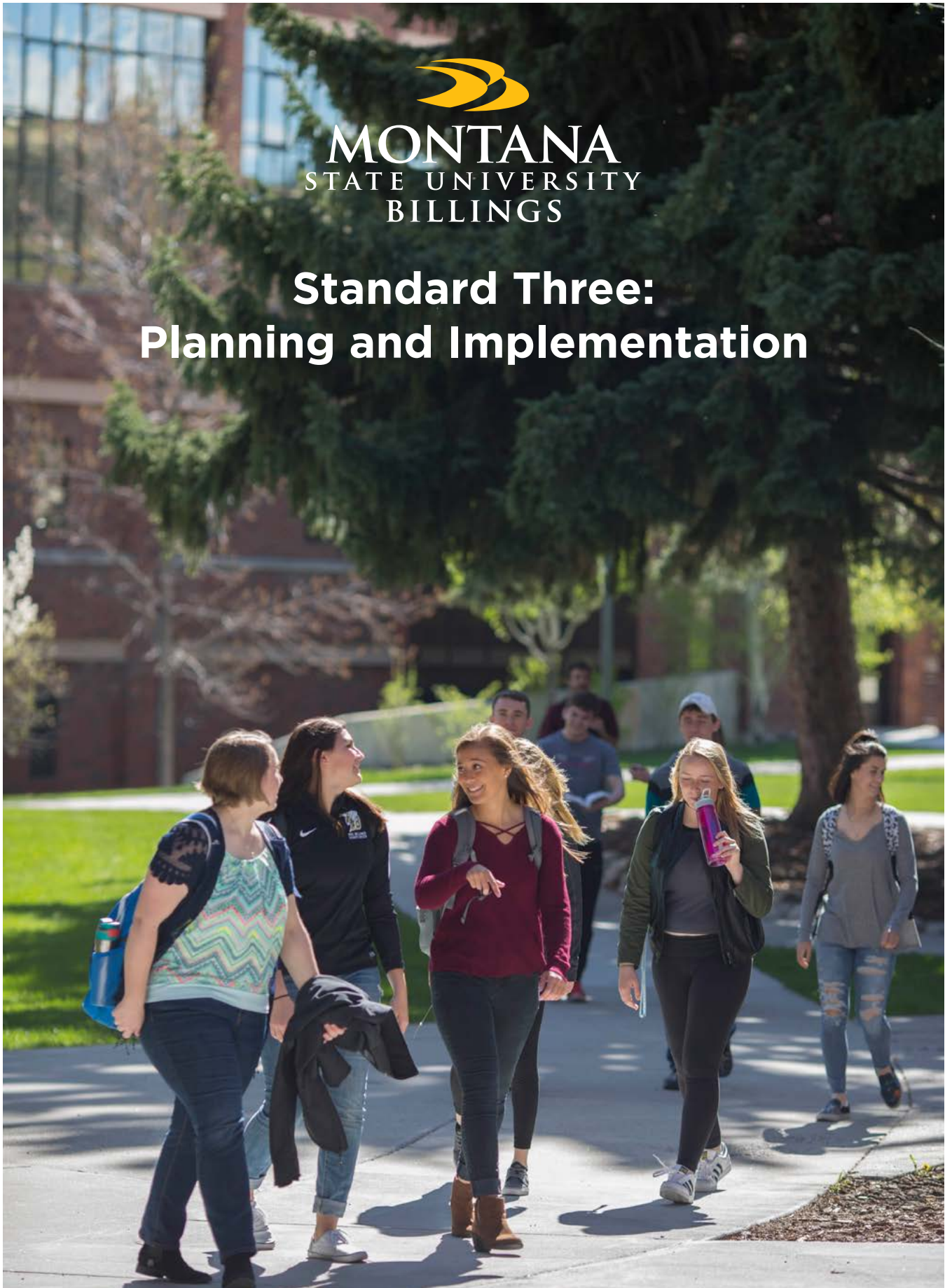






**MONTANA**  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
BILLINGS

## **Standard Three: Planning and Implementation**





## Standard Three – Planning and Implementation

### 3.A 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 Billings has several planning processes. They range from departmental plans, college master plans, facility master plan, division master plans, athletic master plan, and the University Master Plan. Program specific plans are developed in conjunction with departmental, college, or division advisory boards. The most recent campus master strategic plan is called [FutureU](#), the site provides the specific plans for each college and other departments and divisions. In addition to these plans there are facilities, auxiliaries, and athletic plans found on the [Facilities Services webpage](#).

The divisional plans were created with input from the key stakeholders for each organization. In addition, consultants with expert knowledge were used to facilitate the planning in many departments including facilities, auxiliaries, and athletics.

Montana State University Billings (and Eastern Montana College before 1994) developed at least two university-wide strategic plans prior to 2011. The retirement of a long-time chancellor and the hiring of a new chancellor and provost led the campus to develop a new strategic plan in 2012. Each strategic plan developed during the history of the institution involved a broad spectrum of the campus community. The process to develop a new strategic plan during the 2012-2013 academic year followed the same inclusiveness.

The [FutureU plan](#) was developed by thirty-seven campus and community members from across the institution. During the summer of 2012, a two day retreat was held to beginning the planning process. Results of these intensive discussions were gathered and documented then disseminated by the committee members to their constituents for comments, brought back to the committee for a final version created in time for Back to School activities during Fall 2012. The result was a series of goals and metrics for the campus as outlined in the FutureU plan.

As the campus neared the end of the 2013-2018 strategic plan, and with the change of leadership in both the Chancellor's and Provost's positions, conversations began at the system level on how to initiate getting input from the community with which to develop the next campus master strategic plan. The result of that conversation was the creation of the Community Taskforce in 2017, co-chaired by the deputy commissioner of Higher Education and the campus interim chancellor, to provide the university system and campus with input regarding what the community views as needed by the University to improve the Billings area. This taskforce consisted primarily of community members but also included several campus members to provide a campus context. The report was completed and presented to the Montana Board of Regents so the stage has been set to use this material in the next planning process.

To quote from the [report](#):

With this report, the Taskforce provides suggestions, priorities, and ideas gleaned from the group's work. The Taskforce recognizes that MSUB has already undertaken planning and programs to address some of these issues. Inclusion of those ideas in the report reflects the community's support for existing efforts. The Taskforce seeks to supplement MSUB's own planning efforts by offering ideas to strengthen the University's connection and responsiveness to the region and to develop community strategies and partnerships to grow enrollment and increase excellence.

The work of the Taskforce revealed the strong ties between MSU-B and the region. In this document “community” is meant to be interpreted liberally, with a focus on people who have a stake in the success of MSUB, such as business leaders, education leaders, health care leaders, tribal leaders, and alumni. It focuses on those living in and around the areas MSUB serves, including Yellowstone County, Eastern Montana, Northern Wyoming and the Western Dakotas.

### **3.A.2 The institution’s comprehensive planning process is broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies.**

#### **University-wide Planning: FutureU**

The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan included thirty-seven individuals who represented both campus and the larger Billings communities. There were representatives from all divisions, colleges, governance entities, and supporting departments.

Members of the FutureU Committee included the provost (FutureU co-chair); Academic Senate chair (FutureU co-chair); the directors of Alumni Relations, Athletics, the Budget Office, the Library, the downtown campus (now known as Extended Campus), Advising and Career Services, Financial Services, and University Relations; representatives from campus auxiliaries, Staff Senate, and ASMSUB Senate; the chief information officer; deans of the Colleges of Arts and Science, Allied Health Professions, Business, Education , and the College of Technology (now City College); the president and CEO of the MSU Billings Foundation; the institutional researcher; the vice chancellors of Administration and Student Affairs; the presidents of the two faculty unions; and a community member from St. Vincent Hospital.

The following letter from the Chancellor initiated the campus-wide planning process. The planning committee represented all aspects of the campus population, distributed by faculty, staff, and students and by division and function. In addition to campus representation, the Strategic Planning Committee included a Billings community member. The planning sessions were led by a professional strategic planning consultant who was also used for the previous strategic plan.

*Date: April 17, 2012  
Office of the Chancellor*

*I want to thank each of you for your willingness to serve Montana State University Billings as an active participant in this planning process. This process of reassessment and renewal is brought about in small measure by the inauguration of a new chancellor, but also by the passing of time since the most recent planning process, and by changes in the educational, economic and cultural environment in which we operate.*

*We undertake this initiative to examine our position and to chart a course for the future. The expected result will be a strategic vision and plan that identifies goals, objectives, and implementation strategies to redefine MSUB for the next several years.*

*Your charge, your task, is to help define the characteristics that ought to describe us as an institution in the next five to seven years. Then, I ask you to offer recommendations on how the University should move in the direction of those characteristics.*

*How will your efforts be used? I urge you to keep Students at the heart of your planning. I urge you to be creative and to open your imaginations. I urge you, to the degree possible, to leave the hats that you wear every day at the door and to think of the University as a whole and of how it can best serve Billings and Montana as a goal.*



The following diagram was used to demonstrate the wide range of input to consider as the plan was developed. The goal of the diagram was to have the committee members consider not only campus issues but to align the plan with the needs of the immediate community, the State of Montana and national and global issues relevant to higher education.



In 2015, the new (now former) Chancellor Nook initiated an effort to launch a new strategic planning process to replace the FutureU plan; however, he departed the campus within six months of proposing the new planning process. During the fall semester of 2017, MSU Billings and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) initiated the aforementioned Community Taskforce to serve as a foundation for strategic planning that will commence in September 2018.

### Billings Community Taskforce

The Community Taskforce was co-chaired by the Montana deputy commissioner of Higher Education and the MSU Billings interim chancellor. [Membership](#) represented leadership from the university, Billings Community and the state. The committee's deliberation and the final report were completed in March of 2018; [the report](#) was submitted to the Montana Board of Regents at the March 2018 meeting.

### Campus Planning

On the campus level, divisions, colleges, and departments initiate plans that incorporate input from their respective stakeholders. The Division of Student Affairs retained a consultant to guide them through the input, evaluation, analysis, and drafting of the [strategic plan](#) in 2012. The Division of Administrative Services internally worked with stakeholders, including Montana State University Bozeman, the Montana University System, and state interests to conduct a SWOT analysis in creating [their plan](#) in 2011. Athletics worked with the campus, conference plans, and NCAA plans to develop their plan in October, 2016. The [Athletics Strategic Plan](#) is exemplary of the factors included in campus-wide plans, in that it is "structured to help MSUB reach its strategic goals outlined in the university's FutureU strategic plan. The core themes and objectives in the plan are also consistent with the mission, vision and core values of the Great Northwest Athletic Conference, and the NCAA Division II conference of which MSUB is a member."

Each of the colleges and offices within the Division of Academic Affairs developed their plans in the context of the overall campus plan, used their internal knowledge and vision, and consulted with their advisory boards on meaningful ways forward.

**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.**

Montana State University Billings has multiple resources to access institutional data and several personnel who, at least in part, are dedicated to its collection, analysis, and presentation for planning and decision making. Sources of institutional data are the Institutional Research, Analysis, and Planning group, MSU Bozeman's operational reporting groups and Enterprise Services Group, and the MUS research office developed data applications and reports. Within MSU Billings, personnel distributed throughout units provide reporting for their areas, with official institutional information produced and distributed through Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming. A new model is currently under development with the College of Education, whereby the COE data analyst has access to the MSUB Data Warehouse and works in close concert with Institutional Research, Analysis and Programming staff to support COE as well as the Graduate Studies Office information needs.

In 2013-2014 the long-time person in Institutional Research retired. In 2014 a new hire was made after a national search. The transitions in administration and new personnel provided an opportunity to review existing institutional processes and the types and frequencies of reports produced by the office. During this review, careful attention was given to how to develop a strong foundation for a campus culture of data access, understanding, and use. Institutional Research developed the following:

- Progressive professional development for Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming staff
- An inventory of existing data applications and how each is accessed
- Appropriate access to and regular training for data applications
- Documentation of data applications and reports
- Wide-spread campus access to aggregated institutional reports originally available only via a restricted SharePoint site and moved to Box
- Tracking ad hoc requests via online software systems to identify gaps information needs and gaps
- Regular opportunities to discuss higher education information and definitions through meetings with administrative assistant, [data discussions](#), meetings with academic, student affairs and administrative departments, and as a part of regular committee meetings
- Complete and thorough knowledge of institutional efforts to better support their data needs through revisions to existing data applications, analysis, and development of new data applications and reports
- [Links](#) to other sources of MSU Billings data such as [MUS Data and Reports](#) and the [IPEDS Data Center Tool](#)

Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming supports data requests and analysis for:

- Gateways to Completion
- Complete College America – meta majors, enhanced replacing remedial, math pathways
- Enrollment Management Council

- Academic Program Review – Academic Prioritization Process and Program Health Initiative
- Early Alert
- NASH Taking Student Success to Scale Grant

Institutional assessments and [studies](#) are conducted including:

- National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity (The Delaware Cost Study)
- National Community College Cost & Productivity Project (formerly The Kansas Study)
- National Survey of Student Engagement(NSSE)/Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
- Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)/Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE)
- Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), including Student Achievement Measures (SAM)

Data applications are developed, maintained, and supported data applications, including:

- APEX self-service reports
- Argos self-service reports
- Tableau Server self-service reports
- Microsoft Access databases
- Web forms
- Qualtrics surveys

To manage the data generated for and by these initiatives, MSU Billings constructed and maintains a data warehouse. Data tables from the MUS Data Warehouse including enrollment, graduation, faculty, course, and financial aid information are copied back to the MSU Billings warehouse on a nightly basis. Additional data is fed from local sources and the Banner student information system to supplement these tables. This data warehouse provides an excellent foundation for analysis and reporting. With the expansion of Tableau Server to a greater number of end users in 2017-18, real time data analysis has been made available to Cabinet, Provost Council members, Student Affairs directors, and department chairs. There are five staff members in Information Technology who create Tableau Server applications including the CIO, Institutional Research Director, and three staff members.

The Institutional Research director and staff are members of several standing campus committees and initiatives to provide insight, information, and research data perspectives. Among the groups and initiatives that benefit from this IR perspective are the Council on Enrollment Management, the Student Affairs Council, Athletic Compliance Committee, the University Budget Committee, and the University Executive Committee. The Institutional Research director reports to the Chief Information Officer who is a member of the, Provost's Council and Administrative Council, and who also participates in data management, analysis, and data acquisition. Every major campus group has access to the Information the data assembled by the Office and to personnel for assistance in accessing and interpreting that data.

Data are used for planning projects and initiatives, as well as assessing the impact these projects and initiatives have on students. Programming, pedagogy, and student services are adjusted accordingly. Data analysis and assessment of their impact are used to inform the following broad university goals and the University's mission, in particular:

Expanded licensing for Tableau server: provided a primary source of data for academic program analysis, for example the Program Health Reports

- Gateways to Completion: comprehensive approach to addressing student success through DFWI rate reduction in specific courses
- Complete College America: Montana University System-wide approach to implementing proven strategies to enhance student completions
- Enrollment Management Council: comprehensive University-wide re-examination of student recruitment, admissions, advising, retention, and completion
- Program Review Initiative (Program Health Reports): comprehensive initiative to enhance program efficiency and long-term health through data-based decision-making and planning
- Early Alert: identification of students in need of additional assistance early enough in the semester to facilitate remediation or re-direction as appropriate for students' success.

### **3.A.4 The institution's comprehensive plan articulates priorities and guides decisions on resource allocation and application of institutional capacity.**

Planning, intended to identify strategic priorities and guide decision-making processes on the deployment of resources at the University, has taken a number of notable forms at MSU Billings. Among the richest are the [Academic Program Prioritization](#) process, the Program Health Reports, and university budget planning processes informed by the [Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming](#) and coordinated by the [Budget Office](#).

#### **Program Prioritization**

The administration of MSU Billings recognized that an orderly, coordinated effort to examine program priorities on campus would require a great deal of preparation and study. To provide a solid foundation for this important effort, twelve campus representatives attended a program prioritization workshop in Denver in June of 2011 with additional workshops offered statewide later in 2012. Coincidentally, in 2012 and 2013, the Montana Board of Regents urged state universities to initiate and use program prioritization for planning purposes. Provost Mark Pagano initially recruited an *ad hoc* committee to begin the process and report to the Chancellor's Cabinet. In June 2013, a committee request was sent to Bruce Brumley, Academic Senate Chair, to recommend members who could represent the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Graduate Committee, and City College. To ensure faculty participation, solicitations for representatives were also requested from the colleges of Allied Health Professions, Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, and City College to serve on Academic Prioritization Council (APC). This process of recruitment served to provide a broad base of input from those directly involved with campus programs, i.e. appropriate constituencies.

The council included program representation across the University: four faculty members, one student, one director, one administrator, and one dean. Specific members were Dr. David Craig (Professor, Director of the University Honors Program), Dr. Nafi Heiat (Professor, College of Business), Mr. Craig McKenzie (Instructor, Department Chair, City College), Dr. Ken Miller (Professor, Department Chair, College of Education), Dr. Matthew Redinger (Professor, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs), Dr. Stan Wiatr (Professor, Department Chair, College of Arts and Sciences), and Mr. Ryan Shore, (ASMSUB President). The APC was chaired by Dr. Diane Duin (Dean, College of Allied Health Professions). To prepare the APC, each member was given the book *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services* by Dr. Robert Dickeson. The model and process presented by Dr. Dickeson was reviewed and adapted as the basis for MSU Billings program prioritization.

Provost Pagano's charge dictated that the APC develop a process appropriate for MSU Billings with a specific time frame and criteria for decision making. Specifically, the

process included: 1) development of program criteria and model, 2) a timeline that would be completed by the end of the 2013-2014 year, and 3) assurance that faculty would be informed and involved. During August, 2013, the academic program prioritization rubric was developed, reviewed, and finalized prior to a roll-out for the campus. Key decisions about the process by the APC included: 1) agreement on the process, 2) each major and program to be reviewed with the same criteria, 3) the process was to be used as a prioritization tool, and 4) the process should be transparent as possible. Opportunity to comment on the criteria was made available to all constituencies. The primary tool for this prioritization process was the [MSU Billings Academic Program Prioritization Rubric](#).

During the fall 2013 University-wide meeting, the APC presented the criteria and timeframe to the faculty and staff. Transparency and engagement by the University community were paramount to the APC and demonstrated by student, staff, and faculty involvement. This wide involvement helped mold the final rubric by which all academic programs would be assessed, based on eight criteria: Centrality of the Program to the University Mission and Strategic Plan, Productivity by Program, Internal Demand, External Demand, Quality, Size and Scope, Future Potential, and Productivity by Department.

Under the plan developed by the APC, constituencies throughout the division of Academic Affairs were to use these eight criteria to comment on the programs' viability and future. The following groups or individuals had to assess the academic programs: department committees, the department chair, the appropriate college dean, the Academic Senate, and the APC. Following the APC assessments, the reviews went back to the department chairs for a final comment.

Program assessments using these criteria were based on data compiled by the director of Institutional Research and resulted in one of four recommendations. Programs were identified as either 1) worthy of continuing, 2) deserving to be grown through new investments, 3) folded into another program for efficiency or 4) having reached the end of their effectiveness and needing to be phased out. Following these thorough reviews, the final recommendations were made by the provost to the chancellor for final disposition.

Based on the rubric developed by the APC, and data provided by the Office of Institutional Research, the final results of the process for the 160 programs under review were these:

- MAINTAIN: 90 programs (56% of program recommendations)
- GROW: 36 programs (23%)
- INTEGRATE: 15 programs (9%)
- PHASE OUT: 19 programs (12%)

Following completion of the process, a Resource Committee reviewed these recommendations and determined the human resource gains that would be recovered as a result of accepting these current actions would be modest (i.e. a few FTE). It was clear that implementing these recommendations made the catalog cleaner, deleted several minors that were very low enrolled, and prepared the campus for a more efficient and relevant set of program offerings.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of this process was that it introduced MSU Billings to campus-wide data-based decision-making processes. Clearly, most programs had been using data for such decision-making, but the APC-guided process was instrumental in acculturating the campus to such a university-wide process, which led to the Program Health Report process.

### **Academic Program Health Reports**

Beginning in the fall of 2017, Provost Robert Hoar directed all programs in Academic Affairs to implement an [annual reporting process](#) making use of a Tableau dashboard



constructed by Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming. [This dashboard](#), modeled after the APC process, is comprised of enrollment, completions, student credit hours taught, retention, graduation rates, costs, cross-campus course consumption and faculty instructional unit data points to inform an annual program assessment process. During the fall semester, the Institutional Research director met with many academic departments to introduce department faculty to the dashboard and review the data available.

The Provost's annual assessment reporting process builds on a foundation of the 2013-2014 APC-led process, and further bolsters the data-based decision-making assessment process at work at MSU Billings. The goal of the Program Health Report initiative is to identify programs that are healthy and to plan to improve the health of the programs that are not trending in a desirable direction. Importantly, it is not expected that departments will justify the existence of the programs; neither the quality nor importance of programs is in question.

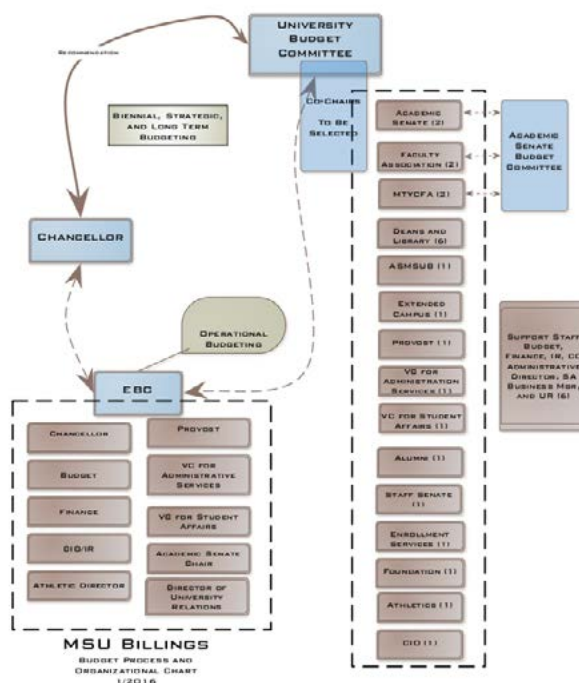
Program leads or department chairs are expected to use the Program Health Department Dashboard to complete a [Program Health Report](#) for each program. Generally, the Program Health report asks if the program is trending in a healthy direction, for identification of the specific data points used to evaluate the program, and for reasons for program health or plans to increase program health in the coming year.

The Program Health Reports formed the foundation of productive discussions between the provost and academic departments in the 2017-2018 academic year. The provost anticipates that this process will be performed on an annual basis, with Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming updating the Tableau dashboard annually to establish a seven-year data source for departments to evaluate.

### **University Budget Committee**

The various budget planning processes, guided by institutional data facilitated through [Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming](#), demonstrates use of the metrics the institution collects and reports. Institutional Research provides a wide variety of data at the institution, college, and departmental levels. The office oversees participation in national peer studies, state comparisons, and campus benchmarking to all contribute to the data to assist in planning and operations.

The plans are used to guide and direct the budget process in fulfillment of the University mission, vision, and objectives. The [Budget Office](#) coordinates this activity. The budget process consists of three entities: [University Budget Committee](#) (UBC), Executive Budget Committee (EBC), and the chancellor. In short, the UBC ensures and guides the strategic direction of the budgeting development and process, EBC conducts the weekly budgeting operations and activities and directs divisions, colleges, and departments with budgeting objectives, with the overall responsibility lying with the chancellor for approving activity and ensuring appropriate input has been considered. Each group uses the various campus strategic plans to direct and guide their considerations concerning the use of institutional resources and the identification of strategic priorities. The UBC is a broadly-representative body that includes representative from administration, staff, faculty, students, alumni, and the shared-governance bodies:



Note that this [diagram](#) also depicts, on its left side, the circular feedback relationship between the three budgeting entities. Taken as a whole, the Academic Prioritization Process, the Program Health Report process, and the University Budget Planning protocols constitute a robust mechanism for identifying institutional priorities and goals, and for making decisions at various levels in their pursuit.

### 3.A.5 The institution's planning includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupt normal institutional operations.

University Police, Facility Services, division offices, and Information Technology all have plans in place to prepare for unexpected activity and conditions. The primary plans are pre-disaster mitigation, emergency preparedness, business continuity, and data storage and backup.

#### Pre-disaster Mitigation

Facilities Services has developed a [pre-disaster mitigation plan](#). This plan is an environmental analysis of issues that might arise from power outages, earthquakes, storms, etc. It also provides remediation and continuity procedures to be followed in those cases.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plans have been developed for eight campuses of the Montana University System to identify the hazards that each campus faces and assess the vulnerability to a potential event. Hazards, whether they are technological or natural, affect campuses with varying frequency sometimes causing death and injury, imposing monetary losses and disruption of the University's mission as an educational institution. Losses can be measured in loss of educational class time, faculty and student departures, decreases in research funding and increases in insurance premiums. Losses can be substantially reduced or eliminated through comprehensive pre-disaster planning and mitigation actions.

Top hazards with the potential to affect the MSU Billings campus (in alphabetical order) include:

- Flooding
- Hazardous Material Incidents
- Structure Fire
- Terrorism, Civil Unrest and Violence
- Wind and Thunderstorms including Hail and Tornadoes
- Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Other hazards profiled in this plan but deemed to be low risk and low probability, and not addressed by mitigation actions at this time include:

- Aircraft Accidents
- Communicable Disease
- Landslides
- Volcanic Ash

This system-wide disaster mitigation prepares the University to deal with emergent situations and thus, continue serving our students.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

MSU Billings has a comprehensive [Emergency Response Guidelines](#) manual and provides training to the Emergency Crisis Communications Committee (ECCC) and other workgroups within the university. Expanded Emergency Preparedness links are provided on the [MSU Billings Safety and Emergency Preparedness website](#). Members of the ECCC are expected to be [NIMS](#) (National Incident Management System) trained and follow the procedures laid out in that structure.

MSU Billings' Emergency Crisis Communications Response manual outlines the roles, responsibilities and protocols that will guide the university in promptly sharing information with all of the University's community and interested parties during both natural and human-caused emergencies or crisis situations. While all student and employee procedures and responses are communicated to the campus, it should be noted that due to the sensitivity of University Police responses and campus operating in emergency situations (such as a shooting lock down) not all ECCC information is available to the public. The procedures and manual are administered by University Relations and Communications and is available to all ECCC members from both on campus and off-campus.

The guiding principle in emergency preparedness responses will be to communicate facts as quickly as possible, update information regularly as circumstances change, ensure the safety of the MSU Billings community and the continued operation of essential services.

Included in the Emergency Communications Procedures manual are operational procedures to provide timely and accurate communications to the campus and community via the MSU Billings Emergency Notification System (ENS) as well as social media channels. The system keeps interested parties informed before, during and after events. The University uses an [Emergency Notification System](#) capable of notifying the campus community upon the confirmation of a significant emergency and/or dangerous situations involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students or employees occupying the campus. Students and staff are informed of the need to sign up for this notification system at required orientation sessions, registration, or when they begin employment. Community members are also encouraged to sign up for notifications. Registration for the system can be accessed at the MSU Billings website. Depending on the individual's location, they will be notified of alerts via email, text, telephone and/or broadcast carillon.

MSU Billings uses multiple media channels to reach as many people as possible with

accurate, timely information. Currently media available are text messaging, email, the University web site, Informacast phone messaging, bull horns, and the loud speaker system installed on McMullen Hall. The messages are sent out to all media for each announcement. This is especially important in the first hours and days of an emergency or a crisis. The goal is to be open, accountable and accessible to all audiences, while also being mindful of legal and privacy concerns. In the event of an emergency described above, all reports are funneled to campus administrators and the campus ECCC who consult with University and Billings law enforcement in order to confirm that there is a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students and/or employees occurring on the campus, determine the impacted cross-section of the campus community, determine the content of the notification, and initiate the notification system. MSU Billings performs routine testing of the ENS. Employees, students and community members registered to the system are included in tests.

### **Business Continuity Plan**

MSU Billings administrative information systems is part of a four-campus implementation protocol run at MSU Bozeman in Bozeman, Montana. Their [pre-disaster mitigation plan](#) addresses the business continuity of the administrative system:

#### **3.5.4 Information Systems, Telephone, Communications and Internet**

MSU-Bozeman's Information Technology Center (ITC) is located in the basement of the Renne Library and the 1st and 3rd floors of Montana Hall. ITC is the provider of central information technology services to MSU-Bozeman and is responsible for the campus data network, servers for central applications including e-mail, the campus telephone system, the University-wide administrative software system (finance, human resource, and student information), web infrastructure and web page development, desktop support and maintenance, the ITC student computing laboratories, smart podiums in campus classrooms, the campus computer store, the campus information technology Help Desk, enterprise security, IT governance, project and program management, and the campus communication wiring group.

ITC manages the Banner Enterprise Resource Planning system, the centralized four campus administrative ERP. This commercially developed computer application is used to administer campus operations by all units of the Montana University System. In 2010 ITC developed a comprehensive disaster recovery plan for the computers that host the Banner administrative software system and institutional database which includes tape backups of the Banner System and offsite tape storage.

MSU Bozeman and MSU Billings are connected by a 10 Gig circuit; the campuses also have two other Internet circuits with network rules in place to allow transitioning to another circuit should one or more become unavailable.

### **Local data storage and management**

In support of MSU's [Enterprise Data Stewardship Policy](#), the goal of data loss prevention (DLP) is to protect student and employee data. The established procedures provide users with the knowledge and tools they need to manage Personally Identifiable Information (PII) appropriately. In order to minimize data loss, should a breach occur, the University has an established data breach procedure. Each campus in the four-campus group follows the same IT policies with [Data Stewardship Standards](#) developed to manage data appropriately and data breaches should they occur.

DLP begins with discovering information and the places it lives. When the data are located, the immediate goal is to appropriately identify them and determine if they are sensitive. Once this is accomplished, decisions can be made about the location of [appropriate storage](#), and how the information should be handled to keep it secure. Data are stored on secure local shared drives following standard industry recommendations and in Box. As seen in the Data Stewardship Standards, the determination of which storage is used is based upon the type of data and the security required.

Local data are contained on either Microsoft server shared drives backup up daily, weekly, and monthly as well as the cloud service Box. Backup tapes of the local shared drives are stored both on University Campus and City Campus five miles west. As noted above, administrative data are maintained at the MSU Bozeman campus with similar procedures for data management and backup.







**MONTANA**  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
BILLINGS

**Standards 3B, 4A, and 4B**





## **Standards 3B, 4A, and 4B**

### **Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 22 and 23**

#### **Student Achievement**

The student learning outcomes for degree and certificate programs of study at Montana State University Billings that lead to a certificate, Associate, Baccalaureate or Master's degree in a specific area have student competencies and learning outcomes identified and published in the [General Bulletin](#), the [City College Catalog](#), or the [Graduate Catalog](#), as appropriate.

Programs are required to file assessment reports that document student achievement of these learning outcomes to the Vice Provost, which are reviewed and evaluated by the Assessment and Accreditation Council.

#### **Institutional Effectiveness**

As documented in this report, Montana State University Billings demonstrates it has identified evaluation and planning procedures, employs those procedures to assess the extent to which it achieves its mission and core themes, and uses the results of assessment to effect institutional improvement throughout the University. It uses a wide variety of data sources, both internal and external, to regularly assess the effectiveness of the planning processes themselves and the impact of their strategies on core theme indicators, as well as to monitor the degree to which changing circumstances may impact the institution's mission and its ability to ensure its viability and sustainability. Periodic performance reports are made available to key constituencies on the University website and are presented in meetings.

#### **Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement**

At MSU Billings, the core themes arose organically out of the university mission statement. The highest level at which this planning takes place is the university strategic planning process. The current MSU Billings Strategic Plan, "FutureU – Charting Our Course, The MSU Billings 2013-2018 Strategic Plan," took shape in the 2012-2013 academic year. In March, 2012, Chancellor Rolf Groeth charged Provost Mark Pagano with leading the process of identifying the broad goals and opportunities intended to carry out the core themes at the heart of the strategic plan. These core themes, spelled out in the campus 2011 Year One Self-Evaluation Report to NWCCU, provided a foundation upon which the strategic plan would take shape. The University Strategic Planning Initiative Committee benefitted from the university-wide participation of stakeholders, including representation from many different divisions, departments, and organizations. Operating in consultation with the Assessment and Accreditation Council, this committee reviewed best practices in the summer of 2012, culminating in a 2-day summer retreat. This retreat, in addition to follow-up meetings and campus listening sessions, resulted in the official launch of the MSU Billings Strategic Plan in January, 2013. The strategic plan encompasses the campus goals and initiatives, as well as the programs and curriculum that align with the institution's chosen core themes. The Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs was assigned responsibility for oversight of the Strategic Plan. That office developed an implementation plan to facilitate planning and execution of the tasks that constituted the heart of the Strategic Plan. Implementation of the Strategic plan was delayed with the transition from former Chancellor Groeth to Chancellor Mark Nook in July of 2014. The new Chancellor chose to jump-start Strategic Plan implementation by reconvening the Strategic Planning Committee, issuing a new charge, a review and revision of the Strategic Plan as "The MSUB Advantage," to that body on October 31, however there was only a single meeting of the re-formed committee and a

new plan never came to fruition, however it did prompt a closer examination of the FutureU plan

A subset of the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the efficacy of the Cabinet's task completion measures; distinguished "ongoing" tasks from tasks that could be completed; and removed or added tasks to align the Strategic Plan with the environmental exigencies of launching "the MSUB Advantage." Central to the approach of the Strategic Planning Committee was the acknowledgement that the immediate responsibility of the committee was to review the tasks intended to carry out the broad goals of the plan, and to refocus on the core themes and values at the heart of the plan. As a result of that review, four tasks were deleted, five tasks were altered, and three new tasks were added. This Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report is built upon the revised Strategic Plan that has resulted from the process of review implemented by Chancellor Nook.

Inextricably interwoven with the core themes are the University's values. The University's planning process is undergirded by the following core values:

**Integrity:** MSU Billings' actions are ethical and principled to assure dignity and equity for all.

- **Educational Excellence:** MSU Billings provides distinctive programs and challenging educational experiences for a diverse university community.
- **Student Achievement:** MSU Billings provides academic support and administrative services to foster academic and professional achievement of the university community.
- **Community of Learners:** MSU Billings respects and nurtures variety in intellectual contribution and scholarship enriching both the University and its extended community.
- **Meaningful Engagement:** MSU Billings supports all members of the university community in their individual growth toward confidence, individual sense of purpose and acceptance of civic responsibilities.
- **Responsiveness:** MSU Billings meets the changing needs of our learners with informed action and innovation based on current standards of educational and technical excellence.
- These values provide a context for university-wide planning. The decision-making process at MSU Billings is aligned with the core themes in the strategic plan and is guided by the indicators by which core theme achievement is measured.

In the following section of the report, each core theme is analyzed and the standards of 3.B., 4.A. and 4.B are applied.

- Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence
- Core Theme 2: Providing an Environment for Learning
- Core Theme 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility
- Core Theme 4: Enhancing the Community, and
- Core Theme 5: Essentials for Success

**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.**

**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.**



**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.**

### **Executive Summary**

Montana State University Billings directs its operations in alignment with its commitment to high quality outcomes. This process is guided by the articulation of its programs and services to core themes that have been clearly expressed in a strategic plan. The strategic plan has been produced and continues to be considered through a public and open process of assessment, consideration, and planning that broadly involves all Montana State University constituents in an affirmation of MSU Billings' commitment to five institutional Core Themes. The following report seeks to identify the processes and the documentation of MSU Billings' regular and systematic collection, analysis and distribution of data in support of evidence-based institutional planning in the achievement of Mission of the institution and the Core Themes that comprise that Mission.

The MSU Billings Strategic Planning Taskforce, as a result of consultation and consideration of constituencies across the institution in 2012-2013, established five institutional Core Themes.

- Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence, includes MSU Billings' focus on fostering a high-quality and innovative environment for teaching.
- Core Theme Two: Providing an Environment for Learning, focuses on engaging student through the delivery of high quality academic programs while providing support for individual learning.
- Core Theme Three: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility, includes the infusion of civic responsibility across the curriculum and a university-wide commitment to cultivating a sense of civic engagement.
- Core Theme Four: Enhancing the Community, includes the University's participation in advancing the community intellectually, enriching the local culture, extending activities into the social community, and contributing to the local economy.
- Finally, the overarching Core Theme Five: Essentials for Success, emphasizes the University's standing as an institution of access, excellence, service and value, with a continuing focus on efficiency, aggressive implementation of best practices in technological, educational and service areas, and continuous engagement with students.

These core themes derive directly from the University's mission statement and the indicators used to measure the institution's progress toward their achievement have undergone review to ensure they reflect an accurate picture of the University's values and vision. The indicators by which the campus community (through the Assessment and Accreditation Council), assesses progress toward fulfillment of institutional expectations of Core Themes collectively supply appropriately defined data carefully identified through the strategic planning process.

The first step in this process required the facilitation of information sharing and distribution among interested constituencies. Montana State University Billings has worked to develop a normative data collection processes through the Office of Institutional Research, Analysis, and Programming. The Institutional Research office maintains a coordinated data-reporting system upon which self-service data applications (APEX, Argos, and Microsoft Access) are built and from which regular aggregated institutional reports are produced using



agreed upon standards and definitions. Underlying data is updated regularly on a schedule. Both self-service data applications and institutional aggregate reports are available to program chairs via a password-protected Tableau server and Box. For example, academic department chairs use an annually updated Tableau server dashboard to complete annual [Academic Program Health Reports](#), in which chairs assess trends in their programs, based on data such as student credit hours produced, enrollment and retention trends, consumption reports, and program costs.

The University is committed to a constant program of assessment and improvement. Montana State University Billings is committed to assessing all programs in light of these core themes. While the assessment of student learning is central to the core themes, it is the mission of Montana State University Billings to provide “Access and Excellence” in all institutional activity. Goals for student learning are published in course syllabi as well as on the [Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs webpage](#) for other student and learning enrichment programs. Departmental and program assessments occur annually through a standard program review process, with exceptions for the following programs with specialized accreditation requirements (listed with their accrediting bodies):

- Music (National Association of Schools of Music)
- Art (National Association of Schools of Art and Design)
- Education (Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation)
- Business (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
- Athletic Training (Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education)
- Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (Council on Rehabilitation Education/Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs)
- Automotive Body Repair (National Automotive Technician’s Education Foundation)
- Automotive Technology (National Automotive Technician’s Education Foundation)
- Diesel Technology (National Automotive Technician’s Education Foundation)
- Nursing (Montana Board of Nursing)
- Auto Collision Repair & Refinishing (Inter Industry Conference Auto Collision Repair Course)
- Paramedic (Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professional and Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs)
- Welding (American Welding Society). National Automotive Technician’s Education Foundation

Courses are taught by fully qualified and degreed faculty; Career and Technical Education program instructors have experience in their fields, combining qualifications of degrees and industry certifications. All programs and departments assess student learning with the participation of instructional faculty.

### **Institutional Framework for Evaluation**

The NWCCU accreditation process has offered MSU Billings a clear path toward a program of data-driven self-study and improvement. The completion of the seven-year assessment cycle has encouraged a culture shift across the institution regarding data collection, evaluation, and program assessment. While this adoption of best practices has touched every part of the University, the degree of implementation through practice has varied from unit to unit. In some cases, the practice of data-driven self-study has been robustly adopted and a full-cycle of self-study has been executed by implementing programmatic change on the basis of the collection and assessment of data. In other cases, departments and programs are only beginning to implement the proper evaluation and planning for action

that would be required for the implementation of program evaluation. Finally, some units continue to adapt to the data culture that supports a fully inclusive commitment to self-study.

Montana State University Billings recognizes and is committed to the benefit of a fully formulated and data-driven process for the evaluation of programs and services in support of the institution's Mission and Core Themes. Nevertheless, MSU Billings appreciates the nature of institutional change and the challenge of achieving that goal across the truly diverse set of programs offered by a regional comprehensive institution of higher learning like MSU Billings. As a result, the institution has emphasized process in the execution of its University-wide assessment.

MSU Billings' assessment process has proceeded as follows.

- First, the Strategic Planning Taskforce, which included faculty, staff, administrators, and community members established Core Themes in alignment with the Institutional Mission.
- Next, individual departments and programs completed their own strategic plans with the specific charge that they align programmatic goals and objectives with the Mission and the Core Themes of the Institution. In relatively short order, this process included programs' identification and application of assessment outcomes, activities, and program evaluation processes for programs, departments, and services. Here, the Assessment and Accreditation Council, in collaboration with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, evaluates and provides feedback for the quality and effectiveness of each unit's chosen measures and assessment plans for programs without external accreditation through a two-year cycle. For programs with external accreditations, their accrediting bodies' standards on assessment measures and evaluation provide primary guidance in the assessment process.
- Finally, data-based program assessment reaches its zenith with the Academic Program Health Report, whereby program chairs analyze a stunning variety of institutionally produced data to annually assess programmatic trends and report on the health of their programs.

This MSU Billings assessment system regularly collects data in alignment with the mission and core themes of the institution. Data collected are employed in the evaluation of MSU Billings' effective fulfillment of core themes and institutional mission, planning processes and procedures, the quality of instruction and student learning, and departmental and program outcomes, as well as budget and resource allocation.

The following sections of this chapter will address each of Montana State University Billings' chosen Core Themes. As the purpose of this report is to illustrate MSU Billings' approach to the planning, assessment, and improvement efforts in each core theme area, each stage in the assessment cycle will be addressed as each theme is presented in order. Each of the standards requested in this portion of the report will be addressed in turn: Core theme planning (Standard 3.B), assessment (Standard 4.A) and improvement (Standard 4.B). The discussion of core theme planning will strictly adhere to core themes development as a predicate to assessment. The discussion of assessment and improvement in each core theme area will involve a wide variety of departmental practices, programs and services that contribute in various degrees to the achievement of MSU Billings' core themes.

## **The Core Themes**

### **CORE THEME 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence**

Montana State University Billings' **Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence**, reflects the institution's strong commitment to teaching excellence that stretches back to its founding in 1927. That commitment is evidenced by close connections between students

and faculty in classroom and online learning environments, experiential teaching and learning opportunities in the community, and a learning environment that encourages leadership and involvement. The University continuously strives toward opportunities to further cultivate teaching excellence by enhancing support systems for instructors and students in traditional, blended, and online courses and activities. Additional opportunities for improvement in this area address the maintenance of a university learning environment that appreciates, stimulates, and supports faculty and student research and creative endeavors. Clearly, this requires investment of resources.. Therefore, the institution aspires to serve as a good steward of resources and to pursue new external funding sources for the improvement of teaching and the enhancement of learning via new technologies, lab equipment and endowed professorships.

The University Strategic Planning Initiative Committee, which formulated the university's approach to carrying out Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence, identified six "opportunities to achieve" by which the University community could pursue fulfillment of Core Theme 1. MSU Billings has derived each of its core themes directly from the University's mission statement, using indicators of core theme success as measures of progress toward the institution's mission fulfillment. Core themes and their indicators undergo a review to ensure that they reflect an accurate picture of the University's values and vision. The indicators by which the campus community, through the Assessment and Accreditation Council, assesses progress on Core Theme 1 collectively supply appropriately defined data identified through the strategic planning process.





**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.**

Montana State University Billings commitment to quality through self-study is reflected in the recent adoption of curricular mapping for academic departments and programs as well as the identification of learning outcomes and their articulation in course syllabi. These improvements will greatly facilitate the development of assessment regimes for individual academic departments and programs. The MSUB Assessment and Accreditation Council has served as the primary mechanism for dissemination and support for best assessment practices, and the Assessment and Accreditation Council will evaluate those reports in order to provide feedback with constructive suggestions for improvement. Academic departments, programs, and individual faculty members will avail themselves of this evaluation process to continuously improve the assessment and documentation of student learning. A continuous process of assessment will prompt the development of plans response to the feedback received for the improvement of departments, programs, and individual courses.

Although lacking a fully-integrated and unified approach to assessment, Montana State University Billings does implement an institutional framework for documenting planning, assessment, and improvement. Core Theme indicators have been identified and are used to collect and evaluate evidence longitudinally. This data collection process is institutionalized and repeated on a two-year cycle (for programs without external accreditation) in support of a culture of evidence that bases policy decisions on concrete and visible results for the purpose of institutional improvement. This process is also the foundation of the aforementioned Academic Program Health Reports. The continuous collection of data over a period of time enables MSUB to evaluate and adapt to contingencies including state budget cuts, variations in yearly enrollment, as well as growth and change in the workforce and requirements for workforce preparation.

In preparation for the 2010 Focused Interim Report, MSU Billings developed an [assessment report template](#) whereby student learning outcomes are regularly reviewed and updated. This system supports oversight of assessment processes as well as informing participants of their roles and reporting obligations in MSU Billings' ongoing efforts to build a data-driven decision-making academic culture. The fulfillment of Montana State University Billings' mission is dependent upon the full and collaborative participation of faculty, staff, and other constituencies in the process of evaluating the alignment of MSUB's processes and procedures to its mission.

The Assessment and Accreditation Council, informed by the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, assumes responsibility for reviewing assessment processes in terms of the core themes to ensure that they align with the core themes and are authentic assessments that help direct planning and improvement at MSU Billings. The AAC has identified four indicators of success for Core Theme 1, Cultivating Teaching Excellence:

<b>Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence</b>					
	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Institutional success threshold met/not met</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Professional Development Funds Awarded to Faculty (Average for all FT faculty)</b>	<b>\$613</b>	<b>+2%/year</b>	<b>\$680</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>e-Learning Professional Development Funds Awarded (Average for all FT faculty)</b>	<b>\$137</b>	<b>+2%/year</b>	<b>\$171</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Professional Development Funds Awarded to Staff (total for all staff)</b>	<b>\$14,666</b>	<b>maintain</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Total Grants and Sponsored Program Funds Received per Contract Faculty</b>	<b>\$2,391</b>	<b>+5%/year</b>	<b>\$1,938</b>	

In the continuing pursuit of carrying out the planning, assessment, improvement cycle, we have established a three-year average from 2014-2016 as the baseline metric from which we are able to identify trends in the various indicators for 2017 and beyond.

**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.**

**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.**

**4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.**

**4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, 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.**

**4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.**

#### **4.B 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.**

**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.**

Assessment of student learning is a central element for the planning and enhancement of courses, programs, and services aimed at student achievement and success. Under the core theme of Cultivating Teaching Excellence, the institution has used assessment of student learning to direct resources toward proven student success initiatives. This committee, formed at the charge of former [Chancellor Mark Nook](#), was tasked with improving student retention. Its [recommendations](#) led to the University's initiatives to decrease the DFWI rate in gateway courses, to initiate the use of Supplemental Instructors (SIs), and to create requisite courses in Math and Writing in order to help students progress through their degree in a timely fashion. MSU Billings has collected data on each of these initiatives. In the case of the high DFWI rates, MSUB made the decision to join the Gateway to Completion project under the auspices of the Gardner Institute. Institutional Research has been instrumental in aiding this project; they have identified target courses, tracked individual DFWI rates across the project and compared these rates to courses not in the cohort of faculty who are part of the Gardner group. As a result, the University is aggressively scaling up the types of teaching innovation advocated by Gardner.

The assessment of campus progress in pursuit of this core theme is based on measurement of indicators that have been examined and verified for their propriety as measures of success. Faculty excellence in teaching, effective distribution of professional development funds (whether for individual research projects, university retention initiatives, online pedagogical excellence, or staff development), and the efforts by the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs to find and lead faculty in acquiring grant funds are all indicators of our success in cultivating excellence in the classroom and outside of it at MSU Billings. In particular, the use of professional development funds has sparked—and been sparked by—planning across the board at the university. Indeed, planning for the use of funds in the various retention initiatives and for e-Learning excellence is directly driven by this thrust toward excellence in teaching.



## **A. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance excellence in traditional, online, and blended pedagogies.**

### **Planning**

Teaching, whether online, face-to-face, or blended, is top-priority at MSU Billings. In principle as well as in practice, online courses and programs are seamlessly interwoven into the fabric of the academic programs. Planning for academic coursework—however delivered—is in the hands of the faculty and academic leaders in each discipline.

Across the university, dozens of policies, procedures, and practices require excellence of our teaching faculty. It is the responsibility of individual faculty and the chairs of departments or program directors to guarantee the quality of instruction through hiring committees and oversight of instruction through faculty evaluations, syllabus review policies and review of curriculum. This is supported by the work of various committees, including the General Education Committee, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, as well as the Graduate Committee, the Provost's Council, and the Academic Senate.

In the University Campus Collective Bargaining Agreement ([CBA](#)), excellence in teaching is identified as one of the three criteria for retention of [probationary faculty](#), and tenure and rank advancement for [non-probationary faculty](#). The City College Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association ([MTYCFA](#)) contract establishes excellence in teaching as a criterion for [faculty tenure and rank advancement](#), as well as a requirement for [merit pay increases](#).

In terms of online instruction, MSU Billings has been the leader in online education in the State of Montana, [with more unique courses](#) and programs available online than any other institution. This position in the forefront of Montana online education is important to the campus, and a demonstration of MSU Billings' commitment to maintaining online excellence through professional development in online teaching. Here programs designed to maintain excellence in online teaching, through professional development, are assessed through both Indicators 1 and 3 of the SPIAR. In terms of planning, e-Learning policy is developed through collaboration between the e-Learning Faculty Fellows and the academic programs with which e-Learning interacts. Policy that has impact across programs (i.e., policy such as the Core Principles, and the Intellectual Property Policy) is taken to the Academic Senate or to the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Internal department policy, such as how to handle helpdesk requests, or faculty and student complaints, is developed by the e-Learning team (the Director of e-Learning, the Instructional Technologist and the Instructional Designer). The team bases policy decisions on MSU Billings' documents (CBA and MTYCFA contracts or the Student Handbook), national best practices, academic literature, and executive rule making (DOE, DOJ, etc.).

### **Assessment**

The Departmental Rank and Tenure Committees assess faculty, in probationary and post-tenure reviews, in terms of developing or continued excellence in teaching as demonstrated in student evaluations and peer reviews of classroom teaching. Faculty are assessed for quality of teaching regardless of modality (traditional, hybrid or online) Finally, the institution annually celebrates excellence through the [Faculty Excellence Awards](#) and the Associated Students of MSU Billings Outstanding Faculty Awards.

The CBA outlines a regular schedule of evaluation for faculty, including requirements for peer review. Under terms described in the CBA, faculty members are expected to participate in the peer evaluation process to aid in reappointment, tenure, and rank advancement processes (See [CBA §9.100](#), [§9.300](#), and [§10.120](#)).

Evaluations of City College Campus faculty for promotion and tenure are guided by the MTYCFA contract. Evaluation of teaching is clearly spelled out in the contract (see [MTYCFA § 7.1](#))

If the evaluation process results in determination a faculty member is not meeting expectations as specified in the CBA, the DRTC and Dean, along with the faculty member outline a plan-of-improvement in support of the faculty member's efforts toward continuing professional development. The plan focuses on areas of concern and is reviewed during the next annual review cycle (see [CBA § 9.710](#) and [MTYCFA § 7.1](#)).

MTYFCA Faculty are reviewed and evaluated for both Tenure and Promotion by means of a series of committee reviews consisting of faculty reviews and administrative reviews. Once submitted, the faculty member's materials are first reviewed by a group of peer faculty from the department to which the faculty member has been assigned. The result of this review is conveyed to the faculty member, and is transitioned to the Dean of the College for the next review. Once the Dean completes the second step of the review, the recommendation and comments from that review are distributed to the previous evaluating committee, the faculty member, and the next committee to evaluate the materials. The third review is conducted by a peer group of faculty members from the college, consisting of one (Tenured if possible) member from each department at the college. Once the College review committee completes the third step of the review, the recommendation and comments from that review are distributed to Dean, the faculty member, and the Provost. The Provost completes the fourth step in the review process. After the Provost has completed the review of materials, that recommendation and comments will be distributed to the faculty member, the college review committee, and the Chancellor. The Chancellor will perform the final review of materials for promotion or tenure at the campus. The Chancellor's recommendation will be shared with each of the evaluating groups, the faculty member, and forwarded to the Board of Regents (if a positive recommendation).

## **Improvement**

Since 2014, MSU Billings has been pursuing an intensive and integrative Student Success Initiative, designed to guide professional development opportunities for faculty aimed at optimizing students' classroom experience—both face-to-face and online—through focus on innovative, proven pedagogies. In 2013 the Director of e-Learning, in conjunction with the e-Learning Faculty Fellows developed and promulgated [Core Principles of Quality for Online Courses](#), which establishes criteria by which online courses are assessed. MSU Billings Extended Campus requires the same high standard of their online instructors, and that all online courses be vetted and approved by the Director of e-Learning.

Since then, the [Student Success Committee Report](#) (completed in October 2015) has become the standard by which pedagogy-oriented planning and professional development applications have been measured. Again here, faculty professional development activities designed to improve the classroom experience for both faculty and students are assessed as part of Indicator 1 of the SPIAR.

At the heart of assurance of quality in teaching is assessment of the academic programs. A key element of improvement in the assessment of programs has been a renewed sense of purpose and direction for the Assessment and Accreditation Council (See 2.C.1 above). The AAC has worked with program leads and chairs across campus to develop a two-year program planning and assessment cycle that includes annual reporting and feedback on program planning and assessment. See Standard 4, below, for more on university-wide assessment activities of the AAC.

## **B. Opportunity to Achieve: Develop a culture that maintains and supports rigorous academic achievement as well as creative and inquisitive scholarly endeavors.**

MSU Billings has worked hard to foster a culture whereby scholarship, artistic expression, and academic rigor are valued across the institution. Through the continuing development of, and investment in, the University Honors Program (UHP), undergraduate research as demonstrated in the 2014-2017 Research, Creativity, and Community Involvement Conferences (previously known as the “Undergraduate Research and Creativity Conference”), the reorganization of the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs, and continued support for the Creative and Research Endeavors (CARE) grant program, this campus has demonstrated creativity and scholarly development are not compromised while maintaining a focus on classroom teaching.

### **Planning**

#### **Research, Creativity and Community Involvement Conferences**

Professor Kurt Toenjes (Biology), Cindy Bell (Director, Grants and Sponsored Programs—GSP), Jenay Cross (Operations Analyst, GSP), and David Craig (Director, University Honors Program) serve as principal planners for the Research, Creativity, and Community Involvement Conference. They coordinate efforts with other appropriate professionals on campus and begin planning early in the academic year and continue to meet regularly, including a wrap-up meeting shortly after the conference is over.

#### **Creative and Research Endeavors (CARE) Grants**

Creative and Research Endeavors ([CARE](#)) grants, also administered by the Provost’s Office, have two purposes: 1) Research Grants that support scholarly activity through funding for faculty research projects, and 2) Proposal Development Grants, that provide summer salary for the Principle Investigator to allow him/her time to write a proposal to a major funding agency.

Oversight of the CARE grant is shared by the Grants and Sponsored Programs Office and the Academic Senate’s CARE grant committee. The Committee is made up of representatives from each of the Colleges (two from CAS due to its size), with the Grants and Sponsored Programs Director as an *ex officio* member.

A few months prior to the CARE submission deadline, the GSP Director will request the year’s funding amount from the Provost (the CARE funding level is determined annually during the Provost’s budgeting process) and will call a meeting of the Committee. At this meeting, the Committee will elect a Chair and recommend changes to the proposal and review process (i.e. example, changes to guidelines and procedures, additions to CARE writing workshop content and materials, etc.). Minutes from the previous year’s meeting/s help in guiding decisions and substantive changes are submitted to the Provost for discussion/approval. The GSP office is responsible for implementing recommended changes.

### **Assessment**

#### **Research, Creativity and Community Involvement Conferences**

The Conference Planning Team does not have a formal assessment plan, but they meet each year after the conference to evaluate and assess the event worked and what changes they want to implement in the coming year.

### **Creative and Research Endeavors (CARE) Grants**

**Program Assessment:** Formative assessment of the CARE program occurs at the annual CARE Committee meetings described above, as the successes and challenges of the previous year are reviewed. Annual summative assessment consists of 1) number of proposals submitted per year, 2) number of proposals awarded each year, and 3) amount of funds expended by year-end. Summative assessments may be used to justify continuing, increasing, or decreasing program funding levels, and to plan the upcoming fiscal year's budget.

**Project Assessment:** There are two versions of CARE grants—Research and Proposal Development. CARE-Research supports scholarly or creative activities/projects related to faculty's non-teaching portfolio. CARE-Proposal Development provides summer salary support to faculty to write a major proposal to a funding agency.

Faculty members awarded Research grants are required to submit a final report to the GSP office, summarizing the results (aims and objectives) achieved by the project as well as an account of the funds spent. Recipients are also expected to present the results of their work at a University-sponsored event. Proposal Development grants have one objective—faculty must prepare and submit a proposal to a major funding agency—and therefore these awards are primarily assessed on the completion of that objective. Faculty who were awarded grants in one year but did not submit an annual report are denied access to the following year's funding.

### **Improvement**

#### **Research, Creativity and Community Involvement Conferences**

Since the conference's inception, the Planning Team' goal has been to make the Conference an increasingly important element of MSUB's academic culture—to celebrate student research and creativity and the guidance of their mentors. In its four years, the number of students participating has increased every year:

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
48	88	99	129	142

Each year, there have been significant developments. In 2015, the Conference partnered with the Juried Student Art Show so that creativity became a more consequential dimension of the event. In 2016, graduate students participated in the conference for the first time and a keynote speaker was added. In 2017, the conference included student engagement projects and as a result, the name of the conference's was changed to reflect this new dimension. There were two other important changes in 2017 as well: the Provost agreed to provide \$1500 annual funding for the conference, and the University Honors Program became principal sponsor. The latter change provided a vehicle for continuity in conference planning, for student assistance in the organization and implementation, and, via the Honors Council, a forum for faculty consultation. In the efforts to improve the conference over the years, there have been many other changes as well including: moving venues (from the LA/Library corridor to the SUB) to create more visibility for the event, establishing an annual date (third Friday in April) for the conference, and rearranging the time of the keynote address so that it provided a formal opening to the event.

### **Creative and Research Endeavors (CARE) Grants**

Programmatic assessment has resulted in minor and major changes in recent years.

- In 2015, it was noted that a number of senior faculty had over the years requested and been awarded multiple (up to 10) CARE-Research grants, which are meant to act as seed funding for projects that might lead to external funding, rather than as a

multi-year funding source for ongoing projects. A review of final reports suggested that these awardees were consistently meeting their proposal objectives. To allow the CARE competition to align more consistently with its purpose as seed funding, the Committee recommended to a) give preference to new projects and junior faculty, and b) institute a separate CARE program to assist senior faculty in applying for larger, external grant funds-- the CARE-Proposal Development grant. This has resulted in both an increase in CARE awards to junior faculty and the submission of several proposals to external agencies by more experienced faculty.

- In 2017, the Committee noted there had been an overall decrease in 2016 submissions and expenditures. After reaching out to faculty, the Committee recommended that the CARE program retain the same level of annual funding but add an additional (fall) competition to the current spring competition, rationalizing that funding should be accessible year-round to faculty, as an opportunity for research could present itself before or after the former March deadline. This change was implemented in the 2017/18 academic year and will be assessed in fall 2018.

### **Opportunity for Additional Improvements**

Aside from the current-year application materials, information regarding CARE, such as recipients' and overall program success, is not easily accessible to the campus community. The GSP and CARE committee intend to work in the upcoming year/s at publicizing CARE results on the Academic Senate and GSP websites and in a GSP newsletter.

### **C. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance compensation for faculty and staff.**

#### **Planning**

Since 2014, MSU Billings has mobilized portions of the Performance-Based Funding (PBF) allotments from the BOR to address intractable compression and inversion issues among faculty and staff. Progress on this effort, however, has been compromised by the disparity between the documented financial needs to fully resolve this situation and the size of the fund available to address it. Nonetheless, the campus remains committed to working to enhance compensation for faculty and staff.

#### **Assessment**

Tracking this intractable issue has been an on-going effort by a subcommittee of the [Faculty Administration Collaborative Committee](#) (FACC). This subcommittee has been working to identify the scale of the problem, comparing faculty salaries with CUPA data and gauging the gaps between CUPA averages and current faculty salaries. Budget allocations intended to deal with issues of compression and contraction are managed by Montana State University in Bozeman (the flagship with which MSU Billings is affiliated), and are in addition to the regular budgeting process.

#### **Improvement**

Compression and inversion conversations by the FACC subcommittee are an on-going effort to resolve these issues. Discrepancies between available funding and the increasing scale of the problem makes this an issue with which the University will have to deal for the foreseeable future, especially in light of challenging budgeting issues faced by the State of Montana.

### **D. Opportunity to Achieve: Facilitate additional professional development opportunities and resources for faculty and staff.**

The professional development of faculty and staff is very important to the successful



planning for the life of the university. For the past several years, the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs has administered several professional development funds for faculty. These funds derive from two main sources: performance-based funding, and Student Assessment Fees. Specifically, programs and initiative that provide professional development funds to faculty are assessed under Indicator 1 of the SPIAR.

## Planning

Performance-based funding resources have been distributed by the Provost on the basis of faculty and administrative requests and are aimed at improving fall-to-fall first-time Freshman retention rates through investment in professional development focusing on classroom pedagogy and student support services in the Academic Support Center (ASC). Within the ASC, initiatives such as the Supplemental Instructor program and expansion of tutoring services have benefitted from one-time-only PBF funding.

<b>MSUB Performance Funding Expenditures</b>	
1.1 Education Advisory Board	\$25,000
1.2 Co-requisite Initiative and High Impact Projects	\$61,000
1.2 Supplemental Instruction	\$40,000
1.3 Peer Mentoring	\$25,000
1.4 Bridge Programs	\$30,000
1.5 Early-Alert System	\$22,000
1.6 Math Pathways	\$40,000
Total PFE	\$243,000

Professional development for faculty and staff is also supported by the Student Assessment Fee fund, and is administered by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. One of the hallmark efforts in professional development funded by this account has been the campus commitment to reduce DFWI rates in gateway courses, which is the specific goal of the Gateways to Completion (G2C) program, offered by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education (JNGI). The findings of the Student Success Committee provided ample justification during the planning process for employing the Student Assessment Fee to the G2C student success initiative. Here programs intended to support faculty and staff development and to facilitate participation in initiatives such as those outlined previously are assessed under Indicators 1, 2, and 3 of the SPIAR. Initiatives specifically intended to bolster the University's retention indices, such as SI and G2C programs, are assessed under Indicator 1 of the SPIAR.

## Assessment

Professional development in pursuit of student success has taken several forms, including campus-wide conferences and efforts to send faculty to conferences that encourage their participation in adopting new pedagogy to meet student needs. In the fall of 2016, the campus-wide back-to-school conference, featuring Dr. John N. Gardner, resulted in an impressive collection of notes and feedback on the campus reflections on various

student success initiatives and perspectives. A major element of that experience was the widespread impact of having members of the campus community hear from John Gardner about the “Undergraduate Experience”. This experience provided members of the campus community a common basis for reflection on the topics raised in the event. For two days (August 24-25), the campus community assembled to learn from Dr. Gardner and then shared perspectives in a series of rich discussion sessions. This experience was widely recognized as a tremendously valuable professional development experience for faculty, staff, and administrators. In the fall of 2017, a similar event, featuring Dr. Saundra Y. McGuire (with another common reading: Saundra McGuire's *Teach Students How To Learn*), resulted in a similarly deep and rich professional development opportunity. Finally, faculty members participating in teaching the five courses selected for G2C have presented at, and participated in, the Gateway Course Experience Conferences in 2016 (Atlanta, GA), 2017 (Las Vegas, NV), and 2018 (Houston, TX). These conferences provided invaluable professional development experiences for faculty working to reduce DFWI rates in gateway courses and thereby maximize student success.

### Improvement

As a result of the professional development opportunities afforded through the G2C effort, faculty participating in the initiative have experienced a remarkable resurgence of investment, enthusiasm, and interest in embracing new pedagogical practices to reduce DFWI rates. Faculty implementing “best” or “promising” practices in active student learning and engagement have resulted in statistical gains overall in the effort to reduce DFWI rates in these gateway courses:

Course Rubric	Course name	DFWI Rate (2014-2015)	DFWI Rate (2016-2017)
ACTG 201	Principles of Financial Accounting	43.3%	41.4%
CHMY 121	Introduction to General Chemistry	31%	29.8%
HSTA 102	American History II	27%	16%
PHL 110	Introduction to Ethics	14.4%	20.2%
SOCI 101	Introduction to Sociology	25.3%	22.2%

Besides these statistical gains, anecdotally, there was a more marked increase in faculty and student engagement and enthusiasm for the content material in each of these courses. Senior faculty can be among the most reluctant to embrace change, particularly changes in the way they approach their life in the classroom. Faculty in the G2C courses have witnessed an impressive increase in student engagement in the classrooms. Again, it is clear that the statistical significance of the early results from summer and fall 2016 may be modest. But faculty across-the-board in the G2C courses are hopeful that even if the DFWI rates in their individual course may not have improved (noting that some, in fact, increased), this new level of student engagement in the classroom will foster a higher level of student completions and retention in the long run at MSU Billings.

### **E. Opportunity to Achieve: Identify and procure increased external funding through grants, contracts and foundations.**

#### **Planning**

The GSP office underwent a significant reorganization in academic year 2016/2017, with

the retirement of the previous Director, the subsequent replacement of that position, and establishment of a new position—Grants and Sponsored Programs Operations Analyst. This new analyst position provides logistical assistance to the office in monitoring budgets, seeking out grant opportunities, and streamlining and improving processes. The focus of the office has shifted somewhat, placing increased emphasis and planning efforts on customer service and direct assistance to all campus grant seekers. The office is in the process of planning and implementing professional development opportunities/trainings for faculty and staff in writing grants and clarifying and/or improving office policies and procedures.

### **Assessment**

Prior to the 2017 restructuring, the GSP office did not have a written assessment plan and the office's efforts were assessed solely on annual revenue from external funding. However, funding levels vary from year to year, responding to changes in federal and state legislation (for example, the 2011 ban on earmarks) and government funding levels. Annual revenues are also partially dependent on faculty/staff willingness to pursue external funding, which can be affected by a variety of factors. While bringing in revenue to support individual and university goals remains the primary function of the GSP office, the quality of efforts and services provided by the office must be assessed by additional measures. Increased faculty participation and growth of external funding will be accomplished through two goals.

**Goal 1:** Increase average 3-year external funding amounts by 5%, from a benchmark of \$3,862,089 (2014-16 revenue average), through increased direct services to faculty and staff. Using a three-year average as a benchmark provides room for annual fluctuations in funding that stem from factors beyond the office's control, such as those mentioned above. Progress on this goal will be identified in annual and three-year external revenue reports generated by the Financial Services Grants Manager.

In order to meet this goal, four objectives have been identified:

Objective 1: Increase 5% annually the number of grant applications submitted, from a 2016 benchmark of 37. Progress on this goal is tracked through the GSP office's internal spreadsheets used to track the number of applications submitted annually, and will be used to generate an annual activity report for campus distribution.

Objective 2: Increase diversity in grant submitters. Historically, a handful (25-35) of faculty and/or staff have submitted all campus proposals. Research proposals generally come from the College of Arts and Sciences, with very little representation from the Colleges of Business and Allied Health. The GSP will reach out specifically to faculty in under-represented colleges to identify funding sources that fit college/faculty needs and interests, with a goal of at least two submittals per year from currently under-represented colleges. The GSP office's internal spreadsheets track the number of distinct faculty/staff submitting proposals, and will be used to generate an annual activity report for campus distribution.

Objective 3: Increase new submitters (faculty/staff who have never before submitted a proposal to an external funder), by 3% annually from a 2016 benchmark of two. The GSP office's internal spreadsheets will track the number of new submitters, and will be used to generate an annual activity report for campus distribution.

Objective 4: Provide professional development opportunities to grant-seeking faculty and staff. Increase professional development opportunities from an

average of three per year to an average of six or more, responding to faculty/staff requests/recommendations. GSP will track attendance at professional development workshops. GSP will distribute and collect workshop evaluations, which will include an opportunity for attendees to recommend future workshops.

**Goal 2:** Improving GSP's customer service will make the office more appealing, thereby reducing barriers to faculty participation in grants. Identifying the need for improvement and tracking progress will be through an annual satisfaction survey to all GSP clients—grant submitters, workshop attendees, and others. To meet this goal, three objectives have been developed:

Objective 1: Improve flow of required grant and IRB submittal documents. An electronic submission process will be initiated by fall 2018.

Objective 2: The office will clarify and document all GSP policies and practices. A GSP policy and training manual will be publicly available by fall 2018. The GSP website will be significantly updated by fall 2018.

Objective 3: The office will celebrate the accomplishments of faculty/staff. Awarded PIs will be recognized in a variety of media: GSP newsletter, campus-wide publications/announcements, local news media, and university awards ceremonies.

**Programs and initiatives to expand grants and other external funding sources are assessed under Indicator 4 of the SPIAR.**

## **Improvement**

Early results of Grants and Sponsored Programs' revised goals and objectives are promising—particularly in terms of reaching out to and recruiting new grant-seekers. In Fiscal Year 2017, there were eleven “new submitters”—individuals who had never before submitted for external funding—as compared to three in FY 15 and two in FY 16. The College of Business saw its first research grant submission since 2010, and the College of Allied Health its first since 2011. Efforts at providing more hands-on services to grant writers have also been fruitful. The success rate (percentage of proposal submitted that were awarded) has steadily increased, from 66% in FY 15, to 76% in FY 16, and 78% in FY 17; dollars awarded have also increased in the past year, from \$2,089,060 in FY 16 to \$3,618,220 in FY 2017.

## **F. Opportunity to Achieve: Implement an Online Learning Office to facilitate e-Learning leadership at the college and university levels.**

Clear and intentional planning in the Office of e-Learning, aligned with Core Theme 1, is the foundation of the campus commitment to maintaining MSU Billings' leadership in Montana online education. The Director of e-Learning has established a cadre of e-Learning Faculty Fellows across campus to facilitate planning and implementation of online policy. The Office of e-Learning has also established a faculty development program for faculty teaching online to ensure that MSU Billings' classes meet current standards for quality design and implementation.

## **Planning**

In the drafting of the FutureU Strategic Plan in 2012-2013, then Provost Mark Pagano recognized the need for creating the position of Director of e-Learning. The responsibilities for administering this vital program had been assigned to the Chief Information Officer, and this situation did not provide the best platform for the growth and development that the University needed in online education.

## Assessment

In 2014, Provost Pagano hired Dr. Susan Balter-Reitz, Professor of Communication and Rhetoric, as the Director of e-Learning.

## Improvement

In accomplishing this objective of the strategic plan, the University secured stable leadership of an important arm of the academic program. Having an administrator with faculty credentials and tenure lead this initiative has provided a vital sense of direction to the e-Learning operation, and has built an impressive array of faculty development opportunities provided by that office, as well as the [Core Principles of Quality for Online Courses](#), which establishes criteria by which online courses are assessed and approved.

In 2013, the e-Learning faculty development funding was set at \$50,000 per year. Faculty were invited to apply for this funding in concert with the University's Professional Development Grants. Both sets of applications were reviewed by the Faculty Development Committee, which consists of Faculty representatives from each College. After three years of soliciting applications in this manner, the committee recommended separating the e-Learning solicitation from the general faculty development grant call because they felt that the types of applications they were reviewing were not leading to the most appropriate development activities for faculty. After the Director of e-Learning consulted with the Provost and CIO, the e-Learning funds are now spent on bringing cohorts of faculty to the most highly regarded e-Learning conferences (D2L, OLC Accelerate and the ITC Online Teaching Conference). Policies and programs that advance excellence in teaching in general are assessed in Indicator 1 and online teaching are assessed in Indicator 2 of the SPIAR.



## CORE THEME 2: Providing an Environment for Learning

Montana State University's **Core Theme 2, Providing an Environment for Learning**, is central to the MSU Billings mission and provides an important evaluation of MSU Billings' institutional performance. MSU Billings values individual learning at all levels – in the classroom, in cooperative education experiences in leadership opportunities, etc. As a consequence of planning driven by core theme consideration, several opportunities to bolster MSU Billings' commitment to an inclusive student learning environment have been identified. These include offering high-quality academic programs by further establishing MSU Billings' reputation as a high-value, affordable institution; continuing MSU Billings' enrollment management initiative; building capacity for programs that are in high demand, enhancing student retention and graduation rates; continuing academic program enhancement; expanding graduate programs; improving international student recruitment;



solidifying MSU Billings' reputation as the frontrunner for online learning in Montana; developing a general education philosophy; and embracing the new mission of two-year education in Montana.

MSU Billings engages in regular and systematic program planning and assessment of chosen indicators for its core themes, with particular emphasis placed on verifying the salience and utility of that data. These data are also evaluated in the context of institutional progress as well as alignment with the institutional mission and vision statements. Evidence of these processes and their functions can be demonstrated by the construction and adoption of Core Theme Indicators. The finalization of that process has helped MSU Billings to define the infrastructure necessary to implement this self-study regime.








## **4.B 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 assessment of campus progress in pursuit of this core theme is based on measurement of indicators that have been examined and verified for their propriety as measures of success. The degree to which the University deploys its resources to establish a foundation upon which an environment for learning can be built is a legitimate measure of institutional progress on fulfilling our mission. Specifically, University enrollments, graduation rates, retention rates, diversity in the student body, and resources garnered to facilitate student progress toward their degrees are meaningful indicators of the University's attention to its obligation to provide that environment. Since University enrollments, graduation rates, and retention rates are all elements of the Montana University System's current Performance Based Funding model, these indicators are central to institutional planning, decision making, and resource allocation. The number of graduate students and dual credit students (students in high school courses taught by qualified high school teachers for college credit) the University counts among its student body are essential indicators of the breadth of the University's reach and mission, and extensive planning and resource decisions are made based on these indicators. Finally, scholarship funds and other fiscal resources deployed at the University by the MSU Billings Foundation both spark the institutional decision making and resource allocation activities. Appropriate constituencies have been kept informed through open forums and open meetings.

It is the responsibility of the Assessment and Accreditation Council, informed by the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, to receive the data sets that are now regularly produced, for the purpose of reviewing assessment processes in context of the core themes, ensuring their alignment with objectives and the quality of their contribution to direct planning and improvement at MSU Billings. It is the direct result of the self-study regime that MSU Billings has established the indicators of success for Core Theme 2, Providing an Environment for Learning have been identified: (indicators 1-4 measure Core Theme 1)

Core Theme 2: Providing and Environment for Learning					
	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Metric	Institutional success threshold met/not met/shows improvement
5	Six-Year Graduation Rate - University Campus	25%	+1%/year	24%	
6	Three-Year Graduation Rate-City College Campus	24%	+1%/year	23%	
7	First-Year Retention Rate (First Time - FT, Fall to Fall)	54%	60% (2018 goal)	56%	
8	Dual Credit Students Served	245	+10%	354	
9	General Fund Scholarships and Waivers Awarded as % of Total Tuition	12.3%	+1%/year	14.2%	
10	Private Aid Awarded Through MSU Billings Foundation as % of Total Tuition	8.2%	+1%/year	10%	
11	Student Credit Hours in Internships as a % of total SCH	.78%	+5%/year	.89%	

**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.**

Assessment of student learning is a central element of planning and enhancement of courses, programs, and services aimed at student achievement and success. Under the Core Theme of Providing an Environment for Learning, the University has used assessment of student learning (indicated in part by retention, enrollment, and fiscal resources collected to facilitate student progress toward their degrees) to direct resources toward proven student success initiatives. Indeed, the work of the Student Success Committee was focused on identifying current best practices in student success initiatives across the country.

**A. Opportunity to Achieve: Establish MSU Billings' reputation as: Enhanced Affordability and Excellence.**

### Planning

A primary means of achieving Montana State University's institutional mission is through the provision of a range of opportunities for successful student learning and achievement. MSU Billings addresses student learning and achievement in its Strategic Plan, which was developed through a university-wide planning process, guided by the University Strategic Planning Initiative Committee, and approved by the Board of Regents. The Montana State University Strategic Plan formulates the institution's approach to carrying out Core Theme

2: Providing an Environment for Learning, identifying eight “opportunities to achieve” by which the University community could pursue fulfillment of Core Theme 2 objectives.

MSU Billings is keenly aware of the mutual reliance between the wider Billings community and the University. Access to educational opportunities in Eastern Montana is constrained by the financial burden that students must accept in order to attain an education. In recognition of cost as an important factor limiting educational access, the institution has embarked on a number of initiatives designed to secure for Billings and Eastern Montana opportunities for and access to the highest quality educational experience possible allow the lowest possible cost. Furthermore, the MSU Billings Foundation has worked diligently to mitigate educational costs. Between 2001 and 2006, the MSU Billings Foundation ran a record-setting fundraising campaign, specifically identifying three strategic initiatives: scholarships, capital, and excellence funds for the university and its colleges. That campaign’s original goal was \$21 million, but it raised more than \$30,100,000. By 2006, the Foundation had more than doubled both the number of named scholarship endowments and the value of its endowed assets.

In addition to scholarships, the campus also benefitted from a number of capital projects such as the softball stadium, the Health Sciences building at City College, and acquisition three concert grand pianos for MSU Billings students. The Foundation successfully launched and completed a second campaign, The Opportunity Campaign for MSU Billings Scholarships, which ran from 2010 – 2012 with a goal to raise \$6 million for students who would not typically qualify for traditional financial aid. The Foundation raised over \$7.2 million for scholarships that included awards for students in 2-year degree programs and/or non-traditionally aged students.

### **Assessment**

In its effort to help tackle the difficult problem of student debt accumulation, MSU Billings benefitted from a grant from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) from 2013 to 2017. This grant funded the establishment of the BeMoneySmart Financial Literacy Program, where the Financial Aid office worked closely with students and other members of the campus community to increase awareness of the financial responsibilities students face, particularly those borrowing student loans. During the four years of the program’s existence, institutions have either remained stable or have seen an increase in their default rates. However, MSU Billings saw a 2.3% drop in its Three-Year Cohort Default Rate (CDR), which is significant when compared to rising CDRs amongst many of its peers within the state.

### **Improvement**

The BeMoneySmart Financial Literacy Program ended in June of 2017 when the OCHE grant funding ceased. Nonetheless, the University remains committed to this consumer education effort and has repurposed a position in Jacket Student Central at City College to continue financial literacy and default prevention programming. Students are also introduced to money management during their orientation.

**B. Opportunity to Achieve: Implement recommendations from the recent MSU Billings Enrollment Management Initiative. Fully communicate the initiatives to all faculty and staff.**

### **Planning**

Another important indicator of Montana State University’s institutional mission fulfillment and an instrument for addressing **Core Theme 2, Providing an Environment for Learning** is the MSU Billings Enrollment Management Initiative. The MSU Billings Enrollment

Management Council has been tasked to create and implement strategies to achieve annual university-level enrollment and retention goals within targeted areas and will be guided by the Future U Recruitment and Retention Initiative.

The Future U Recruitment and Retention Initiative Plan formulates the institution's approach to realizing key aspects of Core Theme 2: Providing an Environment for Learning, addressing enrollment and retention policies and procedures that contribute directly to fulfillment of Core Theme 2 objectives. The original intent of FutureU Recruitment and Retention Initiatives was to develop a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan for MSU Billings and City College. In 2013, staff in enrollment services had discussions with colleagues in graduate studies, international studies, and all academic and student affairs departments about specific enrollment goals and recruitment and retention planning for the institution. Due to the departure of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs/Enrollment Management and changes in institutional leadership and direction at the Chancellor and Provost level, we did not finalize an institutional strategic enrollment plan. However, within New Student Services, there is an annual Recruitment Plan for domestic undergraduate students with action plans, communication plans, and recruitment goals set by territories and by student type for freshmen and transfer students. In 2015-2016, MSU Billings reinvigorated enrollment planning with implementation of several enrollment teams including an action team, university wide planning team, and executive team to move recruitment and retention initiatives forward.

The mandate provided to the Enrollment Management Council by the Future U Planning Document constitutes the following objectives:

1. Develop an information strategy that results in broad knowledge and use of recruitment/retention tools known as the Future U Recruitment and Retention Initiatives.
2. Develop and implement strategies that deliver effective services, programs and activities to support accessibility, recruitment, and retention efforts of all diverse student populations by meeting their apparent and more subtle needs.
3. As a part of task 2 above, set overall recruitment and retention goals for each student demographic group.
4. Create and implement strategies to achieve annual university-level enrollment and retention goals within each of these targeted areas.
5. Implement college-level and administrative-level plans to address Future U Recruitment and Retention Initiative needs.

### **Assessment**

The Enrollment Management Council meets regularly to achieve the objectives laid out in the Future U Planning Document. The committee reviews salient recruitment and student success data, as well as the associated policies and procedures, discussing improvements for the purpose of enrollment and retention improvement.

### **Improvement**

These recruitment efforts, administered by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, have been complemented by efforts within the Division of Academic Affairs, chiefly through the provost's deployment of professional development funds aimed at addressing retention issues. Building on the [Student Success Committee Report](#), the Provost has made funds available on a competitive basis to faculty interested in investigating ways in which innovative pedagogy could be implemented in gateway courses to bolster student retention rates. See "Opportunity to Achieve: G" below for a fuller description of these retention efforts.

### **C. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance programs that have room to grow and potential to expand.**

Among the efforts to fulfill this opportunity to meet the challenges of a thriving and evolving institution are the development of the University Honors Program (UHP), and an ongoing analysis to determine the appropriate number and variety of programs at the University, an excellent example of which is the work of the Academic Prioritization Council (APC).

#### **Planning**

##### **University Honors Program**

The Director of the University Honors Program and the Honors Council are jointly responsible for the planning for the University Honors Program. The Council meets at the beginning of the year for their annual retreat where they make plans for the upcoming year. Additionally, they hold monthly meetings during the academic year to take care of departmental business.. The director takes the lead in day-to-day operations as well as the planning and movement of the UHP towards fulfilling the National Collegiate Honors Council's "[Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program.](#)"

##### **Academic Prioritization Council**

In the 2013-2014 academic year, recognizing the need to effectively strive for balance between resources and the requirement of fulfilling our mission, and to embrace program prioritization for planning purposes, MSU Billings embarked on the Academic Prioritization Process. In June 2013, Chancellor Rolf Groseth and Provost Mark Pagano formed and launched the work of the Academic Prioritization Council (APC), which was comprised of representatives of the Academic Senate, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Graduate Committee, and a faculty representative of each of the five colleges in the University. The APC then began the process of crafting a protocol by which all academic programs in the institution would undergo analysis. Between August and October, 2013, the [Academic Program Prioritization Rubric](#) was developed, reviewed, and finalized prior to a roll-out for the campus. The rubric, by which all academic programs would be assessed, was based on eight criteria: Centrality of the Program to the University Mission and Strategic Plan, Productivity by Program, Internal Demand, External Demand, Quality, Size and Scope, Future Potential, and Productivity by Department.

#### **Assessment**

##### **University Honors Program**

The UHP has strategic objectives, which it regularly updates, and a number mechanisms for assessment, most notably the evaluation of student portfolios. The Objectives document is the work of the Honors Council and the director. During times of significant budget and enrollment problems, these objectives are regularly updated as the UHP works to become an exemplum of MSUB's motto, Access and Excellence, and responds to the challenges confronting the university. Although the portfolio requirement is only in its second year, it has already brought about important changes to the requirements for honors courses and contracts. Additionally, the Honors Council and director use a variety of other means to assess the progress of the program: number of members and graduates; enrollment in honors courses; success of its sponsored events (e.g. Research and Creativity Conference and Service Saturdays); members' GPAs; and prestigious accomplishments such as scholarships, conference participation, research experiences, and graduation awards.

##### **Academic Prioritization Council**

Under the plan developed by the APC, constituencies throughout the division of



Academic Affairs were to use these eight criteria to comment on the programs' viability and future. The following groups or individuals had to assess the academic programs: department committees, the department chair, the college dean, the Academic Senate, and the APC. Following the APC assessments, the reviews went back to the department chairs for a final comment.

Program assessments using these criteria were based on data compiled by the director of Institutional Research, and resulted in one of four recommendations. Programs were identified as either 1) worthy of continuing, 2) deserving to be grown through new investments, 3) needing to be folded into another program, or 4) having reached the end of their effective lifespans, and needing to be phased out. Following these thorough reviews, final recommendations were made by the provost to the chancellor for final disposition.

## **Improvement**

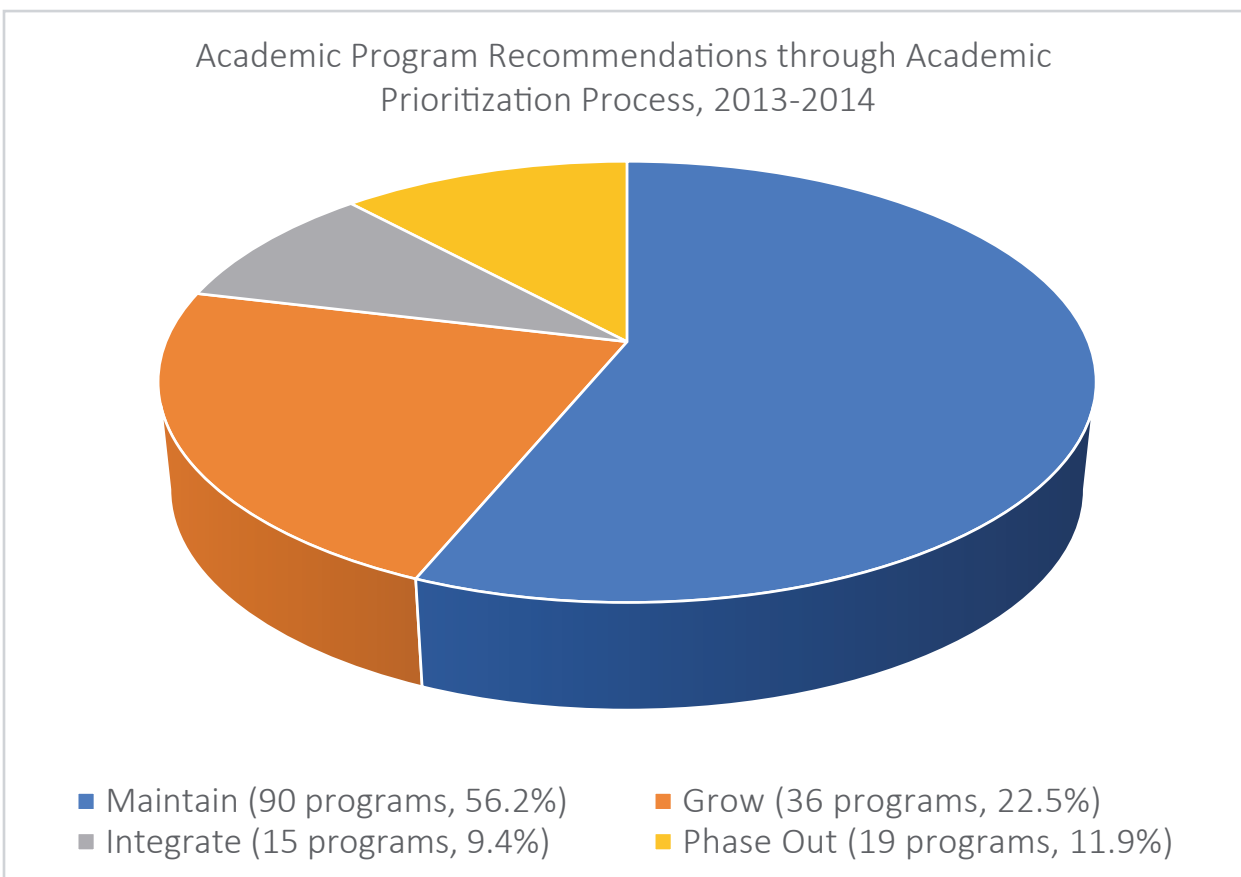
### **University Honors Program**

UHP assessment has resulted in a number of improvements to the UHP and contributions to the University's reputation for academic quality:

- Building an honors curriculum from General Education options to an honors capstone requirement and developing the Interdisciplinary Honors Minor;
  - Developing honors options such as Writing 101 that are open to honors and non-honors students;
  - Enabling professors to propose and develop honors seminars open to honors students and majors such as Professor Joseph Bryan's The Scientific Revolution; and
  - Sponsoring the Honors Guest Writer in Residence in which a professional writer offers a semester-long seminar in a subject of his or her choosing.
  - Making internship and professional experience options important elements of the honors curriculum;
- Contributing to undergraduate research by co-founding and sponsoring the Research, Community, and Community Involvement Conference and by making research a necessary component of honors courses;
- Encouraging and preparing students for prestigious scholarship opportunities (resulted in MSUB's first Goldwater Scholarship awarded and first Honorable Mention) and competitive awards such as the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates;
- Building UHP enrollment from approximately 40 members in 2017 to 94 in the 2016-17 academic year;
- Developing the features that characterize successful honors programs such as a Student Handbook, dedicated honors space, and honors rituals and ceremonies; and
- Having a graduating class in double digits for the first time in 2017.

### **Academic Prioritization Council**

Based on the rubric developed by the APC, and data provided by the Office of Institutional Research, the final results of the process for the 160 programs under review were these:



Following completion of the process, a Resource Committee reviewed these recommendations and determined the human resource gains that would be recovered as a result of accepting these current actions would be modest (i.e. a few FTE). It was clear that implementing these recommendations made the catalog cleaner, deleted several minors with low enrollment, and prepared the campus for a more efficient and relevant set of program offerings.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of this process was that it introduced the campus to campus-wide data-based decision-making processes. Clearly, most programs at MSU Billings had been making such decision-making, but the APC-guided process was instrumental in acculturating the campus to such a university-wide process. Beginning in the fall of 2017, Provost Robert Hoar directed all programs in Academic Affairs to implement an annual reporting process based on a database constructed by the Institutional Research Analysis and Programming. This database, modeled after the APC process, is comprised of data points including enrollment, completions student credit hours taught, retention, graduation rates, costs, cross-campus course consumption, and DFWI rates in this annual program-assessment process. The Provost's annual assessment reporting process builds on a foundation set down through the 2013-2014 APC-led process as an introduction, and further bolsters the data-based decision-making assessment process at work at MSU Billings.

#### **D. Opportunity to Achieve: Expand Graduate Program Opportunities.**

From the beginning of its work, the Strategic Planning Committee recognized that MSU

Billings, as a regional comprehensive university, had to balance its undergraduate programs with strategically identified graduate programs. Expansion of the University's graduate programs requires solid leadership and a clear impression of the market demands for the institution's graduates. From the summer of 2015 to the summer of 2017, Dr. Diane Duin, Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions, served as the Director of Graduate Studies and reported to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Beginning in the summer of 2017, Mary Susan Fishbaugh, Dean of the College of Education, began serving as the Director of Graduate Studies.

MSU Billings' graduate programs are highly decentralized. Each graduate program is housed in the College in which it resides and responsibility for the program rests with the dean. The appointment of a dean as the of a Director of Graduate Studies has already contributed to a level of planning and coordination among MSU Billings' diverse graduate offerings that was hitherto untapped as a strategic planning resource. The Office of Graduate Studies coordinates and supports graduate programs housed in three of MSU Billings' five colleges. Faculty in the colleges have responsibility for program development, curricular oversight/change, and determination of student outcomes for the specific program in which they teach.

## **Planning**

### College of Arts and Sciences

There are two graduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences: Psychology and Public Relations. Planning for expansion in these programs is based on student and advisory board feedback, as well as internship sites (for the Psychology program), and staffing (which is currently limits the options for planning for expansion by the Public Relations program).

### College of Education

In the College of Education, there are two graduate degrees (M.Ed. and M.S.S.Ed.) with three options: Reading (M.Ed.), School Counseling (M.Ed), and Special Education/Applied Behavior Analysis (M.S.S.Ed). The Reading program has carried out planning through program meetings, alumni surveys, investigation of different program-delivery formats, and an advisory committee. The School Counseling program has carried out planning to expand its programming through varied delivery protocols and a new accreditation. Finally, the Special Education/Applied Behavioral Analysis program has relied on graduate program feedback and marketing insight, plus expansion of programmatic connections with Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic for sharing visiting scholars and collaborative internship partnerships.

### College of Allied Health Professions

Planning for expansion in the College of Allied Health Professions' two graduate programs, Athletic Training and Health Administration is based on a variety of factors. Athletic Training is facing a tremendous increase in the number of programs in direct competition as undergraduate programs phase out baccalaureate programs and develop graduate programs to comply with new accreditors' requirements. That program is responding with creative approaches to program delivery, such as 2+3 or 3+2 programs. The Health Administration program has based its planning on information sharing through open houses and public meetings, as well as exploring additional accreditations (Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education). Furthermore, the Master's in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (CACREP accredited) depends upon accreditation standards, advisory board members, and professionals in the field for input regarding the planning for change and growth. Upon careful external review by the

Education Advisory Board and collaboration with community partners, the University has begun expanding its graduate offerings by developing an entry-level Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT) and a Master of Science in Adventure Leadership in Health and Recreation (MSALHR). (See Appendix D) Each of these programs represents the University's responsiveness to the community it serves.

### **Assessment**

Each graduate program at MSU Billings determines its overall capacity. As many of MSU Billings' graduate programs already meet the standards for self-study and accreditation of external accreditors, many of these programs rely upon their individual accreditation regimes and faculty loads to determine their program capacity. Programs have been encouraged by the office of the Director of Graduate Studies to identify enrollment capacity and programs that have room to grow have taken measures to increase enrollment.

#### College of Arts and Sciences

Programmatic assessment in the Psychology program through student surveys has elucidated an important demand for a clinical track in pursuit of Licensed Clinical Professional Psychologist (LCPC) certification, rather than research-oriented, graduate opportunities, which has led to further investigation of appropriate internship sites in the region. In Public Relations, an extensive self-study has identified capacity for additional students, in part as a result of the University's recent application to join the [Western Regional Graduate Programs](#) (WRGP) consortium. This program allows masters, graduate certificate, and Ph.D. students who are residents of WICHE's fifteen member states, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam to enroll in more than 400 high-quality programs at fifty-nine participating institutions and pay resident tuition at public institutions.

#### College of Education

Assessment of the opportunities for the Reading program has been accomplished through meetings with stakeholders in the community to develop understanding of the needs of local districts as well as districts across the state, as well as the COE Advisory Board. In School Counseling, assessment of the program has demonstrated that a high percentage of students and those interested in the program are full-time teachers. This made an online program option necessary. Finally, Special Education and Applied Behavioral Analysis faculty have conducted student inquiries and have re-examined key courses that are central to program quality.

#### College of Allied Health Professions

Athletic Training faculty depend on accreditation standards, national trends (e.g. number of programs), the number of clinical sites available for student placement as well as program enrollment and retention data to determine capacity. In Health Administration, faculty have assessed program health through engagement with college Advisory Board members, student surveys, and graduate surveys. Furthermore the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program continues to evaluate the effectiveness of program delivery and outcomes based on graduate survey data and yearly accreditation reviews. Here the program reviews curriculum and syllabi annually to ensure accreditation standards are being taught and addressed in the courses within the program.

### **Improvement**

#### College of Arts and Sciences

There are concrete examples of program improvement as a result of assessment. In Psychology, a new sixty credit track was added to the traditional forty-two credit track

to accommodate students who wish to become pursue LCPC licensure which requires additional credits of graduate work. Internship sites have been developed that have provided useful training for students and have created opportunities for multiple students to simultaneously work in common internship sites as a means of strengthening bonds among cohort members. Another example of program improvement as a result of the practice of self-study that was supported through an extant accreditation regime was realized in Public Relations. During the summer of 2016, it was determined that this program had capacity for additional students. This expanded capacity was closely linked to the program's successful application to join the WRGP.

#### College of Education

In 2015, when enrollment in the Reading program was at its lowest, several meetings focused specifically on increasing enrollment. Faculty engaged in a variety of efforts, including a mass mailing, updated website (twice), updated plan of study, updated format (to online), and WICHE funding. More recently, the program formed a program advisory committee to further advance opportunities in the program. In the School Counseling program, as a result of innovations to the program, there has been a 38% increase in enrollment since 2013-2014. This demonstrates that the on-line format has been successful in expanding graduate program opportunities for active teachers and other students who desire to complete their degree while working. In addition, 44% of current MSU Billings School Counseling interns are completing internships in Class B or C schools (which comprise the smallest school enrollment divisions in Montana). This indicates that a high percentage of our active school counselors-in-training reside in rural areas and are benefitting from the on-line access.

#### College of Allied Health Professions

Early indications of successful planning for improvement in the Athletic Training program enrollment are clear in the early statistics. Currently the "plus" options appear to be promising as majority of the students starting the ATP in summer of 2018 are enrolled as part of either a 2+3 or 3+2 option. Improvements in the Health Administration program include increased numbers of hours required in internships, the addition of four two-day professional seminars to enhance collegiality and interaction with industry experts, and, as a result of course mapping, the development of an international rural health course with travel to Zawiya Ahansal, Morocco, with the objective of service learning and health research. Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling continues to offer online and evening courses to accommodate working students' schedules. Additionally, student continue to engage in experiential learning opportunities through the on-campus counseling clinic, internships and practicum coursework.

**Opportunity to Achieve: Continue to strengthen the university initiative to expand outreach and recruitment of international students.**

#### **Planning**

Expanding the outreach and the recruitment of international students has been a goal of the University since before the inception of the strategic plan. The first effort to accomplish this was to establish leadership in International Studies, and then to begin coordinating efforts across the University to broaden our reach.

#### **Assessment**

Beginning in 2012, a concerted effort was launched to refocus University attention on international students. Assessment of the required qualifications by the International Studies Director Search Committee took into account the needs of the office and devised a position description for the Director of International Studies and Outreach that focused on the twin



demands of academic and administrative skills. The committee also noted a strong director would need to be in place in order to have the office staffed appropriately to engage in this general effort to expand outreach for and recruitment of international students. Assessing the requirements for successfully expanding the outreach and recruitment of international students and make it clear the Office of International Studies would need to work closely with other offices across campus to maximize the impact of International Studies' efforts.

### **Improvement**

In the past five years, MSU Billings had made significant strides in its goal of expanding the outreach toward and recruitment of international students. Following a national search, the University hired Dr. Paul M. Foster to become the executive director in 2013. Dr. Foster has the necessary academic (Ph.D. in Slavic Philology from Columbia University, tenured professor in Slavic Studies) and administrative experience (Senior Vice-President of Academic Affairs, SEE University, Macedonia, Director of Center of Languages of the Central Asian Region at Indiana University Bloomington) to create and direct the University's internationalization strategy and implementation. In turn, Dr. Foster has hired professional staff to oversee and develop international outreach and marketing initiatives, immigration issues, and study abroad programs.

During this period, the Admissions and Records Office hired an international admissions officer to work closely with International Studies and Outreach (ISO) in an effort to serve the international student applicants. The University redesigned and updated a suite of offices for the ISO in the College of Business on the University Campus of MSU Billings. Under the stable leadership and professionalism of ISO personnel, all University units have a clear understanding of and support the institution's internationalization strategy, including recruiting international students, increasing undergraduate participation in study abroad programs, increasing opportunities for faculty to participate in international research and teaching, adding global competencies to the curricula, and making the local and regional community key stakeholders in the internationalization strategy.

### **Opportunity to Achieve: Maintain the MSU Billings edge as frontrunner for online education in Montana.**

#### **Planning**

MSU Billings has emerged as the leader in Montana in the number of both courses and programs available [online](#). That has only been possible by careful planning and analysis. While we are proud of the diversity and quantity of our online offerings, MSU Billings has adjusted its focus to a strategic growth model in online education that serves its population, rather than focusing on growth overall.

#### **Assessment**

In the last four years, the e-Learning team, in conjunction with the Provost and Information Technology, has developed initiatives to focus on quality in online courses and well as providing pathways for students to complete their degrees. All changes in the program have been the result of consultation and analysis by the e-Learning Fellows.

#### **Improvement**

MSU Billings has developed course design and redesign grants that encourage faculty to evaluate their offerings in light of [student pathways](#). MSU Billings is currently investigating integrating Hyflex courses, developed by San Francisco State University, as an option for course delivery that would allow students to choose their preferred learning environment in any course. This course delivery option allows students to choose how they interact during any given class period (in person, synchronous web conference with the in person class, or fully online).

**Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance student learning through cutting edge teaching and learning techniques that utilize technology, experiential learning, inter-disciplinary approaches, and a well assessed and analyzed general education philosophy.**

One of the most important efforts undertaken by the University community in the recent past has been the intentionality with which the campus has addressed retention rates, particularly fall-to-fall retention of first-time/full-time students, and assessment of General Education. The following section covers the pedagogical innovations intended to enhance student learning and the consequential effort to increase student retention.

### **Planning**

Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, the Provost has made funding available to faculty on a competitive basis to engage in planning innovative pedagogy designed to engage students more in their academic lives so more of them choose to stay in enrolled in the University. Some of the most important gains in these gateway courses has been in the degree of both faculty and student engagement. Even long-time veteran faculty members are finding new energy and enthusiasm in their classes because of the implementation of such innovations as Supplemental Instructors, discussion groups, and alternative methods of developmental education.

The Supplemental Instruction Program is a good example of how Retention Initiative funds were used to provide direct academic support to students in large courses identified with a DFWI rate of more than 20%.

### **Assessment**

The following is a list of those courses, derived from the DFWI data made available to all interested institutional constituencies:

DFWI Courses 2014-2015 Enrollment 100+			
Course	DFWI Rate	Enrollment	Total
College Writing I	28.4%	1365	392
Discover Biology	29.4%	1208	357
Introduction to Statistics	33.6%	801	270
Introduction to Psychology	26.4%	857	227
Principles of Financial Accounting	35.1%	590	208
Human A&P I	51.7%	358	185
Introduction to Sociology	29.1%	611	178
Introduction to Computers	29%	599	174
Introduction to Ethics	33.3%	518	173
Introduction to General Chemistry	35%	473	168
Introduction to Public Speaking	20.9%	931	163
Principles of Microeconomics	27.6%	576	160
College Trigonometry	25%	275	153

## Improvement

The following is a table containing the outcomes of this funding initiative, listing only those courses demonstrating improvement:

Spring 2017 Supplemental Instruction Data										
Course	Ave GPA	Average GPA of Non-SI	Ave GPA In SI Group	GPAs attended at least 1 mtg	GPAs attended at least 3 mtgs	Avg. DFWI 2014-16	Course Average DFWI Spring 2016-17	DFWI Improvement	DFWI Rate In SI Group	% of At-Risk In SI Group (D-C)
Courses with DFWI rate improvement between 3% and 10%										
PSYX 100-001	2.975	2.83	4.0	4.0	4.0	26.4%	22.5%	+3.9%	0%	0%
ARTH 150	2.38	2.31	2.92	3.33	2.5	22.8%	16.66%	+6.14%	9%	25%
ACTG 201	2.4	2.4	2.33	N/A	2.33	35.1%	27.7%	+7.4%	33%	66%
HSTA 102	2.43	1.62	2.74	2.46	3.25	22.7%	14.9%	+7.8%	5.9%	17.7%
BIOB 170	1.89	1.96	2.25	N/A	2.25	25.6%	17.2%	+8.4%	25%	75%
BIOH 211	2.23	2.4	2.0	1.66	3.2	29.7%	20.9%	+8.8%	27%	45.5 %
Courses with DFWI rate improvement between 11% and 20%										
KIN 105-001	2.37	2.23	2.0	3.33	2.0	33.5%	21%	+12.5%	16%	33%
BIOH 201	1.97	1.7	1.92	1.87	2.0	51.7%	38.5%	+13.2%	54%	30.8%
SOCI 101	3.08	2.95	3.75	N/A	3.75	29.1%	12.5%	+16.6%	0%	0%
KIN 105	2.84	3.0	3.0	3.33	2.66	33.5%	15.8%	+17.7%	11.8%	0%
Courses with DFWI rate improvement of more than 20%										
PHL 111	2.61	2.75	2.53	2.0	3.0	37.3%	13%	+24.3%	15.8%	26%
M 088	2.57	2.53	2.64	2.0	3.0	52.9%	14.3%	+38.6%	9%	27%

These data demonstrate improvement in DFWI rates resulting from the allocation of resources on the basis of data. Funding for the Supplemental Instruction Program will continue, targeting the courses with persistently high DFWI rates. Using data in this way, MSU Billings can anticipate significant progress toward improvement in student success and retention rates, two important measures of Core Theme 1 achievement. This is only one of many examples of the data-driven allocation of resources to target Core Theme fulfillment, efforts that the institution recognizes as critical to the realization of MSU Billings' mission.

**E. Opportunity to Achieve: Embrace the new mission of two-year education in Montana, and provide students from the City College service region with access to comprehensive, full service two-year attributes of a comprehensive community college mission.**

## **Planning**

City College's embrace of a comprehensive two-year mission has been a central component of planning since 2009. The linchpin elements of this effort are:

- A focus on work force preparation in non-credit, one-year certificate, and two-year associate degree programming.
- Provision for developmental education for students requiring remediation to enter college-level academic work.
- General education academic programming for transfer to MSU Billings baccalaureate and other four-year academic institutions within and outside the state of Montana.
- Alignment of the institution with the needs and requirements for local business and industry as well as the desire to provide students with meaningful life-long preparation for the world of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Billings, Yellowstone County, and the surrounding region.

## **Assessment**

Assessing the college's progress on these elements of a comprehensive two-year mission requires examination of the college's contributions to student success, workforce development, transfer analyses, and the college's responsiveness to local and regional needs. The annual assessment cycle yields two documents from each of City College's program of study: the program assessment plan and the program assessment report. Assessment plans and reports are stored in an internal shared drive and can be accessed by administration and all faculty members on campus. Formal assessment meetings with each program director are conducted by the Associate Dean (Dr. Florence Garcia) and Assessment Coordinator (Lance Mouser) twice a year. These meetings focus on the previous year's assessment reports (fall meetings) and revisions the plans and results of the assessment data gathering (spring meetings).

Owing to the diversity of the goals for this "opportunity to achieve," the college has not developed a single mechanism for carrying out this assessment, but instead points to progress in metrics for these initiatives individually.

## **Improvement**

Because of the work being performed at City College in pursuit of this comprehensive mission, students, our community, and the region as a whole have benefited. Assessment of City College's work on the primary elements of the comprehensive two-year mission have resulted in several specific improvements:

- In terms of the focus on work force preparation, City College has launched the following certificates and associate's programs: Practical Nursing (fall 2016), Pharmacy Technology (fall 2017) and Ultrasound Technology (fall 2018).
- For the developmental education responsibilities of a comprehensive two-year

college, City College has adopted an aggressive program of folding supplemental in-time supports to students in college-credit-bearing courses through co-requisite courses beginning in fall 2015 WRIT 095, the (former) developmental education course to bring students up-to-speed in college writing, is now paired with WRIT 101, so students who need support receive it when they need it and complete the college-credit course far more quickly than was the case under the old Developmental Education program.

- In pursuit of a full General Education academic program, City College has launched several courses that provide students coursework for both transfer preparation, but also to help them meet specific disciplinary needs. For example, City College began offering Mathematics courses for healthcare professionals in fall 2016.
- It is in City College's alignment of programmatic offerings with local and regional workforce needs that the college really finds its niche. The Workforce Training Center at City College offers non-credit and custom training to the local community. Many of the courses offered have been a part of U.S. Department of Labor grants and include Commercial Driver License and Defensive Driving courses, Certified Nurse Assistant, Sonography, Energy Industry Essentials, and other related industry and healthcare courses. Short-term welding has been a recent focus with the inclusion of incumbent workers. The Workforce Training Center at City College offers continuing education and certification such as Safety Officer Training and National Incident Management training to local refineries including ExxonMobil, Phillips 66 and CHS Cooperative.

### **CORE THEME 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility**

**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.**

**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.**

The faculty, staff, and administration at MSU Billings are very clear about the place of the institution in the wider Billings community. More than 38% of MSU Billings' graduates live and work in Yellowstone County. Those 13,500 alumni work in all levels of the local economic sector, and account for nearly 10% of the Billings population.

Civic and public engagement are hallmarks of MSU Billings, and the university seeks to build partnerships and contribute in local, regional and global contexts. Active involvement in our communities not only ensures we fulfill our role as part of the MSU Land Grant University family, but it also demonstrates our desire to be a regional asset with global aspirations. MSU Billings strives to be a civic-minded institution that encourages students, faculty and staff to embrace civic responsibility, diversity and a determination to make a difference.

Planning for the achievement of Core Theme 3 is executed through various planning committees in alignment with the institution's mission and Strategic Plan. Planning for each core theme begins with the University Strategic Planning Initiative Committee which has engineered the institutional vision that the Assessment and Accreditation Council evaluates in each unit. Individual units are committed to the promotion and engagement in civic responsibility to varying degrees. Many academic programs incorporate this core theme into their individual planning and assessment goals and criteria for success; whereas, other programs are fully dedicated to the core theme (notably, the Office of Community Involvement and the Office International Studies



**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 indicators by which the campus community, through the Assessment and Accreditation Council, assesses progress on Core Theme 3 collectively supply appropriately defined data carefully identified through the strategic planning process. One example of data-driven planning is Indicator 12, “Courses that include Service Learning Activities.” Prior to 2013, service learning was rare at MSU Billings. However, since this was identified as a priority task on the Strategic Plan, the number of courses that include service learning activities has doubled, from thirteen courses in FY2013, to twenty-six courses in FY2017. Courses that include a Service Learning component are tracked through Indicator 12 of the SPIAR. Moreover, the aforementioned “Outstanding Service Learning Faculty Award” has become a sought after recognition on campus alongside other prestigious awards made by the MSU Billings community.

The University Strategic Planning Initiative Committee developed the institution’s approach to Core Theme 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility, identifying four “opportunities to achieve” after surveying MSU Billings’ resources, programs, and activities across the variety of communities with which the institution interacts. It was determined that improving and promoting MSU Billings’ reputation as an engaged local, regional, and global partner presented concrete opportunities to achieve Core Theme 3.

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**




**4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.**

**4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, 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.**

**4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.**

MSU Billings engages in regular and systematic assessment of the indicators of its core themes, with particular emphasis placed on verifying these data as meaningful and assessable, and the University’s pursuit of progress on these indicators remains wholly aligned with its mission and vision statements.

The Assessment and Accreditation Council, informed by the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, assumes responsibility for reviewing assessment processes in terms of the core themes to ensure they align with the core themes and are authentic assessments that help direct planning and improvement at MSU Billings. They have identified three indicators of success for Core Theme 3, Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility:

<b>Core Theme 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility</b>					
	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Institutional success threshold met/not met</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Courses that include Service Learning Activities</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>+2%/year</b>	<b>32</b>	
<b>13</b>	<b>Campus-wide Hours Volunteering in the Community and Region</b>	<b>5474</b>	<b>+3%/year</b>	<b>13,200</b>	
<b>14</b>	<b>Annual Student Enrollment in Study Abroad Programs</b> (as a % of total Bachelor and Associate Degrees Conferred)	<b>2.81%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>	<b>3.1% (2017)</b>	

#### **4.B 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.

**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.**

**A. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings' reputation as a locally, regionally, and globally engaged Institution.**

#### **Planning**

The MSU Billings Office of Community Involvement oversees community engagement activities, including service learning activities in classes across the institution. The campus has initiated conversations within the academic departments about the place of service learning in their curricula with the goal of incorporating a service learning or community volunteer activity into every academic program as appropriate. That service area stretches into Yellowstone County and the surrounding counties. In recognition of this wider influence, MSU Billings is seeking an improved level of engagement, with a broader impact upon the surrounding city and region as well as a recognition of MSU Billings role within the community as a resource for education and service.

## Assessment

MSU Billings began to formalize its community engagement through membership in the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, even being honored at the 14<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium as the 2013 campus worthy of Honorable Mention for our efforts at outreach to the community.

As a campus, we have institutionalized the celebration around recognizing faculty for their community engagement work. Beginning in the 2014-2015 academic year, the campus added the “Outstanding Service Learning Faculty Award” to the list of the honors with which MSU Billings’ faculty are awarded. This award, which carries with it a monetary award and a plaque, is awarded during the annual celebration of faculty excellence held each spring.

## Improvement

The degree to which the University deploys its resources to cultivate in students’ minds an obligation to engage in civic responsibility is a clear measure of success in this core theme. The campus community does this by expanding opportunities for students from the classroom to the community. The Office of Community Involvement has successfully worked to expand the number of courses that include service learning activities, as well as growing the number of volunteer hours spent in the community and the region. Specifically courses that include Service Learning components are tracked in Indicator 12, and hours of volunteer work in the community and region are tracked in Indicator 13 of the SPIAR.

Global engagement efforts at the University are covered in Opportunity to Achieve D below.

### **B. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings as a well-recognized, locally engaged institution.**

Engagement with the wider Billings community has been at the center of MSU Billings’ mission since its founding in 1927. As noted on the MSU Billings website:

Montana State University Billings has been an integral part of the Billings community and a student-centered learning environment since its early days as Eastern Montana College. Founded in 1927, the university continues to nurture a longstanding tradition of educational access, teaching excellence, **civic engagement and community enhancement** in an urban setting. In the classroom and in the community, students receive a well-rounded unique education and training for Associate’s, Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees for careers through the University’s five colleges — arts and sciences, business, allied health professions, education and City College.

Two hallmarks of that local engagement are the work of the Office of Community Involvement, and the MSU Billings Community Taskforce. The Community Taskforce is discussed in terms of planning, assessment, and improvement in the next “opportunity to achieve” below, as it effectively folds in MSU Billings’ local and regional impact.

## Planning

Planning for the Office of Community Involvement (OCI) is centered on that office’s efforts to get MSU Billings students out into and working in the community. The OCI focuses its planning efforts to fulfill its mission to “connect students to the community through service and educational opportunities, which will strengthen the relationship between the University and local, state, and national agencies.” By intentionally pursuing this connection, the OCI helps get “students directly involved in civic engagement and will provide opportunities to help them become connected to the campus and Billings community.”

## Assessment

OCI continues to work intentionally with the First Year Seminar (FYS) course in an effort to provide intentional community engagement experiences for first year students enrolled in the course. Each student enrolled in the course is required to participate in two hours of service in the community. A representative from the OCI works directly with FYS instructors to visit the classes at the start of the semester to promote these opportunities.

This model has helped strengthen growth and intentional programming for enrolled students as noted with the following data:

Program/Facility	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	% Change (+/-)
FYS Service Learning Projects	230	265	No report available	14%

At the completion of the course students reflect on their experience through a written paper or a classroom presentation. In both cases, the students intentionally reflect on their experience and how it can support their personal growth and their academic development within their major. An example of the reflection papers can be found [here](#).

Unfortunately, the Director of the Office of Community Involvement left the University in 2016 and a replacement has not been hired. As a result, data on service learning projects has not been collected for the past two academic years.

## Improvement

The growth of the Service Learning component of the FYS has resulted in an expansion of the community organizations with which FYS students can work. As of 2015-2016, there are five major community partners with whom students can volunteer: Head Start, the Salvation Army, Service Saturday, Billings Parks and Recreation Department, and Student United Way.

### C. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings as a well-recognized, regionally engaged Institution.

## Planning

In early 2017, Montana University System Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian created the MSU Billings Community Taskforce. Tapping into the region's strong support for MSU Billings, Commissioner Christian charged the taskforce with engaging the broader community in planning the future of the University.

The work of the Taskforce revealed the strong ties between MSU Billings and the region. The taskforce offered recommendations to the commissioner, the Board of Regents, the President of Montana State University Bozeman, and to MSU Billings' faculty, staff, and administration for their consideration. The recommendations are premised on the community's commitment to remain involved in the future of MSU Billings. As a result of the recommendations of the task force, MSU Billings will establish a permanent Community Advisory Board.

## Assessment

Thorough assessment of what the University needs to become more of "a well-recognized, regionally engaged Institution" has led the taskforce to the following recommendations, which constitute the "Five Pillars" of the institution's future:

### Leadership

The community recognizes the pivotal role of MSU Billings in the growth, development, and vitality of this region. The community also recognizes its role in the University's success and the need for the community to take ownership of that role. The Taskforce proposed ways to enhance community involvement with MSU Billings' leadership and in assisting the University's leadership in planning for student success based on the economic needs of the community.

### Student Success

With student success as a primary goal, MSU Billings uses best practices to provide pathways to graduation through dual-credit for high school students, academic and advisory support for traditional and non-traditional students, and links to career and professional opportunities and employment.

### Program Offerings

Future success at MSU Billings lies in its differentiation as a university focused on career and professional success. By focusing energy and resources on key programs in healthcare, business, teacher preparation and applied technology, the university positions itself to be on the leading edge of student engagement and success. This recommendation allows the university to guide existing faculty and student service excellence into new directions that will build partnerships and create a new institutional identity to rally the community.

### Marketing and Identity Branding

An improved, comprehensive marketing and communications plan is essential to the University achieving its strategic objectives. With this plan, MSU Billings can establish a stronger brand that attracts and retains students, involves the community, and connects with state and regional needs for higher education.

### Facilities/Infrastructure

Much can be done to accomplish solid progress in advancing the physical footprint and outward appearance of the University and City College campuses as "One MSUB." The first is completion of fund-raising and breaking ground for the Yellowstone Science and Allied Health Building. The second is the demolition of the former academic support center. MSU Billings can also expand support for community and local business activities on both the University and City College through expanded communication and effective marketing of conference and meeting spaces (small and large). Expansion of those activities provides an effective means of showcasing MSU Billings to local and regional community members.

## **Improvement**

It is too early to determine the full impact of the MSU Billings Community Taskforce in strengthening the University's position as a local and regional leader. There are clear signs, however, that the primary taskforce goals are coming to fruition. Deepening awareness that both two- and four-year program pathways can be enhanced by further integrating Billings K-12, City College and University campus curriculum is lighting a path forward. Enhancing these "town and gown" connections will further the public's understanding of the linkages between the two MSU Billings campuses. The University is well-positioned at its University Campus to take advantage of partnerships with public and private schools and downtown business. The City College campus can best respond to the growth trends on Billings' west end. In future strategic planning, both MSU Billings campuses can emerge as leaders in the growth in student population and economic development in the region.



## **D. Opportunity to Achieve: Strengthen MSU Billings as a well-recognized, globally engaged Institution.**

### **Planning**

The Office of International Studies and Outreach (ISO) created a [strategic plan](#) in 2013, which was subsequently affirmed by the University leadership. The strategic plan identifies multiple activities and key stakeholders needed to accomplish the goal of internationalizing the institution. In our attempt to create a globally-engaged University, the ISO has worked with the university's alumni relations office to identify and contact alumni in all world areas, with particular attention to China and Saudi Arabia.

### **Assessment**

Assessment of student learning is a central element of planning and enhancement of courses, programs, and services aimed at student achievement and success. Under the Core Theme of Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility, the University has used examined efforts to position itself as a globally engaged institution, and determined that the voices of those previously involved in the program would prove invaluable. ISO personnel regularly contact and meet international alumni during their travels. In 2014, the University joined the Institute of International Education's Generation Study Abroad initiative and pledged to achieve the goal of having 5% of all graduates participate in study abroad. An endowed scholarship has been created to support local students with the expenses of studying abroad, resulting in an increase in student participation. Particularly, student participation in study abroad programs is tracked in the Strategic Plan Indicator Assessment Rubric under Indicator 14.

### **Improvement**

Students have benefited from newly created exchange programs and during this period, MSU Billings sent its first ever students to new partners in Slovakia, Japan, China, Korea, Morocco, and France. The University has also increased program articulation agreements, joint degree programs and other collaborative efforts with international partners. Presidents of several key Asian partner universities visited MSU Billings, University faculty taught at several Asian and European universities, and a new lecture series on international issues was begun. The Model United Nations program has also attracted hundreds of local and area high school students to the MSUB Billings campus.

Since 2016, MSUB has been an active participant in US Department of State's International Education Week (IEW) initiative. In November 2016 and November 2017, the Office of International Studies organized and hosted a full calendar of events targeting students, faculty and staff, and the larger community. Highlights of this week have been university-wide receptions honoring faculty and staff who have been leaders in internationalizing their curricula, teaching abroad, and leading students on Study Abroad programs. Local and regional professionals participated in roundtable discussions with students to demonstrate in practice how international engagement can support career goals. Information sessions highlighting Study Abroad programs at the university were held. One day was dedicated to World Languages to allow language professionals and instructors to market MSUB language programs to prospective students. In both of these years, MSUB was the only Montana university to support international education through this initiative.

**CORE THEME 4: Enhancing the Community**

**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.**

**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.**

Because MSU Billings is a university deeply connected to the Billings community, it is essential for the University to contribute to the intellectual, cultural, social and economic advancement of the city. Faculty, as experts in their fields of study, and staff, who are passionate about cultural engagement, have leadership opportunities in this theme. Students are encouraged to follow their passions as far as possible in this effort. As such, it is imperative that the university establish the infrastructure necessary to sustain those efforts.

Engagement with the local Billings community as well as the greater community constituted by the region of Greater Eastern Montana is central to Montana State University Billings' vision and mission. Building partnerships and contributing in local, regional and global contexts through active involvement in our communities fulfills our role as part of the MSU Land Grant University family and guides our work as a truly regional institution of higher education. MSU Billings will continue to make individual impacts on students as well as contributions to the betterment of the communities in which those students live.

Planning for Core Theme 4 begins with the University Strategic Planning Initiative Committee which has engineered the institutional vision that the Assessment and Accreditation Council evaluates in each unit. However, execution of this task is challenged by the size of the region MSU Billings serves and the diversity of the communities with which MSU Billings is engaged. Thus, the institution has dedicated a number of units and initiatives to facilitate planning, resource allocation, and execution of tasks to bring MSU Billings' institutional performance into alignment with the institution's Mission and Strategic Plan. Specific individual units that have been charged with the responsibility for realizing core theme 4 outcomes include, the MSUB Extended Campus, the Women's Study Center, the Office of Advising & Career Services, the Library, the Office of New Student Services, and the Office of Community Involvement. Academic programs also incorporate this core theme into their individual planning and assessment goals and criteria for success. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Assessment and Accreditation Council to evaluate each unit's alignment with and execution of this core theme. Many different departments share responsibility for this core theme: we highlight several below.

**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 indicators by which the campus community, through the Assessment and Accreditation Council, assesses progress on Core Theme 4, collectively supply appropriately defined data carefully identified through the strategic planning process. One example of data-driven planning is Indicator 16, "MSUB Community Partnerships." Many community partnerships are a result of a need that has come to Extended Campus staff's attention either through



their outreach efforts or by an organization contacting them. The data that help determine needed new courses or programs also points to new partners that may be able to assist them meeting the need. For example, Extended Campus contacted the “Next Gen” group of young professionals of the Billings Chamber of Commerce to assess their needs for additional training. After conversations with their education steering committee, Extended Campus surveyed all of the members of this group as well as employers to see if the topics identified through this input were shared by the other Next Gen members and employers. The feedback verified these topics and Extended Campus then partnered with the Billings’ Chamber of Commerce to incorporate them into a new manager’s training program. Similar processes have helped identify and develop training for the nonprofit community in Billings. As a result, Extended Campus has developed partnerships to plan and teach content and establish a nonprofit advisory group.

**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.**

**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.**




**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.**

**4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.**

**4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, 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.**

**4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.**

The Assessment and Accreditation Council, informed by the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, assumes responsibility for reviewing assessment processes in terms of the core themes to ensure that they align with the core themes, and are authentic assessments that help direct planning and improvement at MSU Billings. They have identified three indicators of success for Core Theme 4, Enhancing the Community:

<b>Core Theme 4: Enhancing the Community</b>					
	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Institutional success threshold met/not met</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Clients Served through MSUB Extended Campus</b>	<b>4318</b>	<b>+3%</b>	<b>1913</b>	
<b>16</b>	<b>Community Partnerships through MSUB Extended Campus</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>+5%</b>	<b>52</b>	
<b>17</b>	<b>Number of MSUB Community Events</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>59</b>	

#### **4.B 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.**
- d) The assessment of campus progress in pursuit of Core Theme 4 is based on measurement of indicators examined and verified for their propriety as measures of success. The degree to which the University deploys its resources to make the community a better place to live, work, and play is a clear measure of success in this core theme. Instrumental in the effort to fulfill this core theme has been the community outreach arm of the University, MSU Billings Extended Campus. Extended Campus has engaged in extensive outreach to enhance the community through providing training opportunities and establishing numerous partnerships within the community. The University has emerged as a center of activity in the Billings community due to the dozens of annual events located on, or sponsored by, the University. Appropriate constituencies have been kept informed through open forums,



and meetings. Specifically, the number of community events with which MSU Billings is involved is tracked under Indicator 17 of the SPIAR.

**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.**

Montana State University Billings appreciates the function of program assessment and values the benefit of data-driven planning in the achievement of important if complex goals, like those articulated in Core Theme 4. The challenge to an assessment of the institution's contribution to community enhancement is few institutional structures exist linking student learning to the institutional impact on local and regional communities.

Recognizing this gap, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) convened the MSU Billings Community Taskforce. The Taskforce examined the interface between the academic success and preparation of MSUB students in the context of their successful integration into and contribution to the workforce, social, and cultural needs of Billings and the greater region of Eastern Montana. Data regarding the MSUB budget, student retention, academic offerings, educational philosophy, and graduate placement are all factors considered and improvements to institutional practices and processes are solicited from community members. Effective suggestions are adopted as improvement in future planning and are evaluate for potential strategic institutional practices. For example, program offerings and recruitment materials received community suggestions that will be acted upon in the fall 2018.

**4.B 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.

**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.**

**A. Opportunity to Achieve: Develop and launch an MSUB Extended Campus initiative.**

**Planning**

The faculty, staff, and administration at MSU Billings are very clear about the place of this institution in the wider Billings community. The institutional mechanism for facilitating that connection is the MSU Billings Extended Campus, which is committed to the achievement of its motto, "Connecting the Campus to the Community." The Strategic Plan identifies specific metrics for establishing the Extended Campus at MSU Billings. Goals including, establishing clear leadership, and linking University faculty with community workforce efforts and outreach, have been identified, completed or are in the process of implementation. The Provost oversaw a process that selected and hired a director with extensive experience in summer 2013 and implementation of the strategic plan, including investigating and purchasing a new non-credit registration system began immediately. The director oversaw the acquisition of the Aceware registration system in 2014, which is in use for credit and non-credit registration.



Extended Campus' mission is to connect the campus to the community: "... to support the University's mission by engaging our community and our region with innovative services, programs and activities delivered in alternative formats and locations." That office's goal is to build the number of financially self-supporting offerings that meet community needs in five different program areas: Certificate Programs, Community Programs, Continuing Education for Educators, Professional Development and Youth Programs. Here the number of community events with which MSUB is involved is tracked under Indicator 17 of the SPIAR.

New program opportunities are identified through a number of means. This includes gathering input from advisory groups, conducting market research, and surveys of target groups.

### **Assessment**

All individual programs offered are assessed in terms of meeting the financial goal (at a minimum breaking even financially) and meeting participant learning expectations. At the conclusion of every course and/or program, an evaluation is administered. This feedback is reviewed by the appropriate Extended Campus program coordinator and is shared with instructors.

### **Improvement**

Before a program that contains multiple courses (e.g. new manager training program) launches, Extended Campus staff members assemble all of the instructors to review program topics and to discuss the best way to coordinate sessions so that each builds upon the previous session and minimizes redundancy (unless deemed appropriate). This ensures all of the instructors are on the same page in terms of designing an integrated overall program.

At the conclusion of each course, an evaluation is given to participants and for programs containing multiple courses or sessions, feedback on the overall program is requested. After reviewing participant feedback, if the information suggests, changes may be needed to better address learner needs, EC meets with program instructors to review and discuss improvements. For example, in the second cohort of the new manager training, session instructors and staff observers noticed a drop off in student engagement as compared with the initial cohort of students. During a post program meeting of instructors, ideas were generated to increase engagement and were implemented in the next iteration of the program.

### **B. Opportunity to Achieve: Engage the community through a wide range of activities and events.**

Community engagement takes a wide variety of forms at MSU Billings. This campus is an integral part of, and contributes to, the vitality and energy of the wider Billings community. The institution strives to welcome the community to the campus, as illustrated by the [MSUB Cares](#) website. The University hosts dozens of community events annually, both on campus and in the community. The campus is a hub of activity in Billings, though the institution knows that it can become still more so. Among the types of events the campus hosts each year are athletic competitions, arts and culture symposia, educational and social outreach events, professional development opportunities, and honors and commemorations.

Two notable examples of specific departments or divisions providing outreach with a goal of more fully integrating the campus and the community include the extensive list of activities sponsored by the Women's and Gender Studies Center and the MSU Billings Library.

## Planning

### **Women's and Gender Studies Center**

The Women's and Gender Studies Center (WGSC), established in 2014, has hosted an impressive array of outreach and community-building activities in its short existence. Among these activities to which the community is invited, are lecture series, film series, Women's Faculty Caucus scholarship showcases, brown bag/Lunch-and-Learn programs, makers' workshops, and book discussions.

The director of the WGSC works closely with the WGSC Advisory Board, Women's Studies Faculty, and the Gender Studies Club (comprised of students), and the Women's Faculty Caucus to plan, coordinate, and assess events for each semester. At various points in the year, the leaders from the center meet to discuss how to improve events, reach a wider audience, and evaluate about what worked best for students and community members. For example, after feedback from students, it was discovered lunchtime programming (brown-bag lectures) and early afternoons often worked best with their schedules. The center also plans a number of events to engage community members, who are often available after the regular workday and rely on faculty to provide feedback on events in order to better serve students. Oftentimes, the WGSC will host discussions, panel presentations, or tabling events to coordinate with topics being discussed in classes around campus.

### **The MSU Billings Library**

The MSU Billings Library has been a prime driver of the campus efforts to enhance the community through activities and events. All library staff are responsible for planning outreach and community events. The Library has many campus and community connections and collaborates and plans outreach and events with different entities. Library staff apply for outreach and programming grants to bring educational exhibits and displays to campus; such as the "*Native Voices: Native People's Concepts of Health and Illness*" exhibit provided through a grant received from the American Library Association during February 2018. Library staff have developed extensive relationships in the Billings community, including the Billings Cultural Partners, the Writer's Voice, and the Billings Public Library. The MSU Billings Library collaborates with the community on different programming efforts such as the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read events. Library staff members are embedded in the Billings community and serve on many different committees to plan community and outreach events, including the High Plains Book Award. In addition, the Library regularly collaborates with MSU Billings faculty to plan events, such as the popular Library Lecture series. This ongoing lecture series is intended to provide opportunities for broad community involvement, as evidenced by the breadth of the topics covered recently, including the Civil War, World War I, The 1880 Crow Delegation to Washington DC, Food and American Culture, Remembering the 1960s, The Frontiers of Democracy, Art, Life and Culture Surrounding *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers, and Women's History. Hundreds of community members come to campus for these lectures. The MSU Billings Library is a member of the Federal Depository Library Program. This affiliation with the federal government allows the library to request learning materials, free of charge, from federal government agencies to supplement the many featured outreach activities that are programmed.

## Assessment

### **Women's and Gender Studies Center**

The Women's and Gender Studies Center assesses programming and support in a number of ways. The WGSC Advisory Board is one important aspect of this process. The board is comprised of community members with a variety of expertise (non-profit, health and human

services, education, advocacy, etc.), faculty members, and a student representative. The board makes recommendations for future programming, provides internship opportunities for the Senior Service Learning Capstone course, and suggests ways that the center can meet the needs of the community.

Most recently, a board member with Zonta Club of Billings provided the WGSC with the opportunity to apply for a grant for programming development. The WGSC organized a series of events, [16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence](#) which took place in November and December 2017. Part of this funding supported an inaugural film screening of “When They Were Here,” directed by Ivan and Ivy MacDonald. This film, focusing on the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women” attracted media attention from across the nation and the filmmakers, members of the Blackfeet Tribe, have been contacted by Native American actors in Hollywood in support of their film, by journalists in New York, and have been offered financial support to continue their work on the documentary, as well as invitations to participate in film festivals across the country. The widespread support of the film was evidenced by the standing-room only attendance and the support of the Native American community in our region.

### **The MSU Billings Library**

The library’s staff includes an Electronic Resources & Assessment Librarian. This librarian is responsible for gathering and assessing information to provide management with numbers to make data driven decisions, including decisions about outreach and community activities. For example, numbers are routinely captured for attendance at community and outreach events. The library lecture series collaborates with and relies heavily on the talented faculty employed at MSU Billings to deliver high quality lectures. The lectures are typically held in Library Room 148, which has a room capacity of 200. Relying on the data collected at the weekly lectures; assessment indicates that the lecture series typically draws a crowd of 150-200 attendees each week; sometimes additional chairs have been brought in to accommodate the crowd. Outside speakers are also secured for special events and for the lecture series programs. For example, “Memories of Heart Mountain” featuring Sam Mihara, who was forced to move into the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp at the age of nine, drew a crowd of 400 people in Petro Theatre in the fall of 2015. In addition to formal data collection, library staff continually conduct informal surveys with attendees of the outreach and lecture series events. These informal surveys have provided library management with ideas for future programming topics and suggestions for how to improve the lecture series. In addition, outreach and programming activities have allowed library staff to create a contact list to keep the community informed about upcoming programming, introduced the community to the MSU Billings campus, library staff, and the wealth of knowledge possessed by the talented faculty at MSU Billings.

### **Improvement**

#### **Women’s and Gender Studies Center**

In Spring 2017, the WGSC Advisory Board suggested finding ways to provide more visibility within the community. In order to do so, the WGSC re-vamped its [website](#), started an active social media presence and coordinated with a number of community organizations for events. For example, the WGSC partnered with Global Village (a local non-profit organization) to raise awareness of human trafficking in Montana. The event led to students joining the Yellowstone Valley Human Trafficking Task Force and developing a project in one of their communication courses. The Center also screened a documentary at our local non-profit independent theatre, the Art House Cinema.

The central aim of the WGSC is to create active and engaged citizens, who make social justice part of their everyday lives. In order to do this, it is necessary to connect with the local community and our region. Engaging with the community is a crucial component to the mission of the WGSC.

### **The MSU Billings Library**

Assessment has indicated that when people are unable to attend the lecture series, they would be interested in being able to access a recorded version of the lecture on the library's website. When the lecture series was initially started in 2013, library staff recorded the programs but lack of staff, technical skills and equipment to do this, resulted in poor quality recordings. In the future, library staff would like to fulfill this need. To achieve this goal, research is needed to investigate staffing, affordable technology equipment needed for this, options for recording the programs (i.e. delivering them as podcasts) and possible collaborations with other university departments on campus.

### **C. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance partnerships with two-year and tribal colleges.**

Updating, maintaining, and expanding articulation agreements is the most direct way to encourage partnerships with two-year and tribal college partners, and this is an activity in which the Office of Advising & Career Services, in collaboration with the recruitment efforts of New Student Services, engaged in regularly. These offices cultivate these partnerships by working closely with two-year and tribal partner colleges, attending recruiting events on the college circuit, traveling to meet with advisors and faculty at individual colleges, and working closely with MSU Billings faculty to develop transfer [articulation agreements](#), and will continue to do so. Planning, assessment and measuring improvement in the current core theme focuses primarily on relations with tribal campuses through the Office of American Indian Outreach (AIO). The state of Montana has defined this as an area of focus and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education established the [American Indian/Minority Achievement Program](#) (AIMA). MSU Billings is deeply involved in this initiative; two of our staff members are members of the AIMA council (Emily Williamson, director of Financial Aid and Florence Garcia, Associate Dean of City College).

### **Planning**

American Indian Outreach (AIO) moved into a larger facility with ample space for new programming opportunities. In collaboration with Native American Studies, (NAS) AIO plans to build on an initiative that has emerged as a focus of scholarly research into issues among tribal people, and implement tribal food sovereignty projects that include classroom instruction, internships, gardens, and distribution of food products within the local community. Tribal colleges have established food sovereignty projects that AIO and NAS will collaborate with while providing a continuum of training for their students who transfer to MSUB. The larger facility also enables planning for a Natives-In-Residence program to support Native students, faculty, and staff at MSUB. The initial discussions about Natives-In-Residence include mentoring students, cultural activities, classroom lectures, and consultation with staff and administration. Partnerships with tribal colleges are critical for recommendations of tribal members the tribal community endorses for the Natives-In-Residence program.

### **Assessment**

Food sovereignty projects will be assessed by student performance in classroom instruction, the degree to which grant funded goals and objectives have been met, and increased partnership activities between AIO/NAS and Montana's tribal colleges. The assessment of the Natives-In-Residence program will include survey measures from key stakeholders such as students, staff, faculty, and administrators. The number of campus touch points with the

Natives-In-Residence presenters will be tracked with hopes of seeing trends in the increased use of Native expertise at MSUB.

### **Improvement**

AIO continues to strive for increased funding for partnerships with Montana's tribal colleges to help overcome obstacles, such as great distance between the institutions and appropriately staffing and supporting the most effective activities. Additionally, AIO advocates for creating a centralized method of tracking partnerships between tribal colleges and MSUB departments and colleges that collects data necessary to improve successful partnerships as well as derive meaningful assessments of the various projects.

### **D. Opportunity to Achieve: Better utilize faculty, staff and program expertise for community outreach.**

Collaboration between the Provost's Office, the Office of University Relations and MSU Billings Extended Campus has resulted in outreach initiatives that are responsive to business, industry, and community and should seamlessly connect with faculty, staff and students. One example of this connection is MSU Billings faculty providing instruction for the new manager training program (developed in cooperation with the Billings Chamber of Commerce), a training program for non-profit leaders, participation in popular science outreach through the "atomic circus" and the chemistry magic show, advancing student research through the Science Expo and the Research and Creativity Day, and delivery of dual credit course work to qualify high school teachers to offer dual credit courses. A hallmark example of this collaboration is the [Craft Brewing and Fermentation Program](#). This program has responded to the burgeoning craft brewing industries in the State and a need for more skilled employees.

### **Planning**

Planning for this program involved gathering representatives from craft brewing industries (beer, wine and spirits) to form a program review and advisory committee. The group reviewed all of course content and discussed how they might serve as potential internship sites for student capstone experiences.

### **Assessment**

The University is confident the efforts to respond to community needs is evident due to the fact several program completers have started new craft brewing businesses or have gone to work for existing craft businesses. In addition, the program receives calls from regional craft brewing industries looking for qualified employees.

### **Improvement**

The outreach provided by this program has advanced MSU Billings' efforts enhance the community by providing specialized course work specific to the needs of the craft brewing industries. Program completers possess the knowledge and skills to make an immediate positive impact on these businesses and further enhance their competitiveness.

### **E. Opportunity to Achieve: Implement the MUS College!Now initiative.**

From 2011 to 2015, the Montana University System (MUS), with financial support from the Lumina Foundation, engaged in a comprehensive plan to increase the number of Montanans with college degrees or credentials. A key to this effort is the [College!NOW](#) initiative under which the MUS is conceptualizing the former colleges of technology into comprehensive two-year institutions.

### **Planning**



City College, an embedded two-year college within Montana State University Billings, continues to advance its two-year mission through collaboration with the community that focus on preparing a skilled and educated workforce. To that end, the City College collaborates with the Big Sky Economic Development Association (Big Sky EDA) and BillingsWorks to assess and meet community workforce needs. City College also maintains partnerships with business and industry through program advisory committees, internships, scholarships, and career opportunities. The National Advisory Board, now renamed the City College Advisory Board, was restructured to more effectively represent the Billings community and its intersection with the comprehensive two-year mission.

### **Assessment**

The rebranding of City College was completed in 2017: the City College website has been updated, including program pages, and the College has successfully marketed programs, including new programs (such as the Pharmacy Technology Certificate) with promotions including print, broadcast media, and social media and special events such as “Career Information Nights.”

### **Improvement**

City College participates in the University Campus’s commitment for strong shared governance through various Montana University System initiatives. Major advancements in shared governance can be observed with the increasing presence of City College faculty on key committees and leadership in the MSU Billings university governance process. The Big Sky Pathways grant program and the dual enrollment initiative have strengthened relationships with the Billings Career Center and area high schools. The comprehensive community college mission continues to strengthen with expansion of dual enrollment, the evolution to the co-requisite model for developmental math and writing instruction, partnership with School District 2 and rural school districts in our service area, the maintenance and development of strong career focused applied technology programming, general education transfer, and strong workforce development offerings in partnership with local business and industry.

## **Core Theme 5: ESSENTIALS FOR SUCCESS**

**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.**

**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.**

Everyone associated with MSU Billings, faculty, staff, students, alumni and community supporters, has a role to play in the institution’s efforts to fulfill its core themes. Through the intentional effort of an enhanced attention to institutional resources, facilities, operations, procedures, and communication across all levels of the University, MSU Billings’ can create an opportunity to improve its standing as an institution of access, excellence, service and value. With a continuous and self-reflective focus on efficiency, aggressive implementation of best practices in its, educational, technological and service areas, and continuous engagement with students, MSU Billings sets itself apart.

The University Strategic Planning Initiative Committee, which formulated the university’s approach to carrying out the core themes, recognized larger efforts that provide an

essential context that enables the campus to pursue its previous four core themes. That committee identified the last Core Theme: “Essentials for Success” as the mechanism for providing that context. The Strategic Planning Committee outlined four “opportunities to achieve” by which the University community could pursue fulfillment of the Essentials for Success:

**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.**

MSU Billings verifies its effort to realize the Essentials for Success as a core theme is an effort that derives directly from the University’s mission statement, and that the indicators of success in the institution’s pursuit of this core theme receive regular review to ensure that they reflect an accurate picture of the institution’s values and vision. The indicators by which the campus community, through the Assessment and Accreditation Council, will assess progress on the fifth of its core themes, will supply appropriately defined data carefully identified through the strategic planning process.

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.**




**4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, 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.**

**4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.**

Montana State University’s **Core Theme 5, Essentials for Success**, is central to the MSUB mission and provides an important evaluation of MSUB’s institutional performance. As a consequence of planning driven by core theme consideration, several opportunities to improve the efficiency and availability of services have been identified. These include: enhancing efficiency, awareness, and operations across campus; evaluating and reassigning personnel and financial resources to match strategic plan priorities; enhancing

communication concerning the institution's relevant image across all stakeholders; and update university facility plans to integrate with FutureU.

These indicators provide assessable and meaningful metrics of the success of Essentials for Success because they focus on the infrastructure necessary for the University to achieve the various elements of the current strategic plan including each opportunity in the previous four core theme areas listed above. Overall budget allocation is an essential baseline statistic that provides a context for the successes of the other elements of this core theme and provides a tool to gauge how the institution's budgeted financial resources are being deployed to match its strategic priorities. Given the baseline budget, efficiencies in the system will become paramount. For example, the indicators that focus on expenditure ratios are valuable measures of the degree to which the University can focus its resources on its prime directive: providing a quality education to its students. Finally, an essential auxiliary to the student experience is the University's ability to provide services to the student body that is possible through infrastructural development financed through Auxiliaries and Gifts.

<b>Core Theme 5: ESSENTIALS FOR SUCCESS</b>					
	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Institutional success threshold met/not met</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Expenditure Ratio: Instruction/Total</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	
<b>19</b>	<b>Expenditure Ratio: (Instruction + Academic Support + Student Services)/Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>71%</b>	
<b>20</b>	<b>Construction Dollars Expended</b>	<b>\$2,109,997</b>	<b>increase</b>	<b>\$1,862,351</b>	

#### **4.B 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.**
- d) **The assessment of campus progress in pursuit of Core Theme 5 is based on measurement of indicators examined and verified for their propriety as measures of success. The degree to which the University deploys its resources to make the community a better place to live, work, and play is a clear measure of success in this core theme. Appropriate constituencies have been kept informed through open forums, meetings, and campus announcements.**

**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.**

**Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance efficiency, awareness, and operations across campus.****Planning**

A comprehensive service excellence initiative has been a goal of the University since the FutureU Strategic Plan was completed. Over the first three years under the current strategic plan, several individuals expressed a desire to begin working on this project, but it rapidly became clear such a comprehensive effort would require more dedicated expertise than was readily available on campus, and other external solutions were considered.

**Assessment**

In December 2016, MSU Billings secured the services of a professional organizational development firm ([FutureSYNC, International](#)) to assist in advancing the service excellence initiative. A goal of the initiative was development of service principles to guide interactions with students and other staff members. Guided by this firm, fourteen faculty, staff, and student members formed the Jacket Proud workgroup and accepted the charge to create a work plan to fulfill the goals of the service excellence initiative. The workgroup began its work on the initiative in December 2016. The work will continue to the end of 2018.

The creation of a preliminary work plan occurred in May 2017. Building the Yellowjacket community is one of the major goals within the plan. The intent is to create a connected, unified, engaged MSUB employee community by encouraging participation in campus events through better promotion, use of departmental Jacket Proud Ambassadors, and the use of effective communication channels.

Another major goal within the initial Jacket Proud work plan focuses on the addition of employee engagement related elements in the employee search process and on creation and implementation of a six-month new hire onboarding process. The goal is to align operations with the intent to recruit and retain individuals with the capacity and interest in becoming highly engaged MSUB employees.

**Improvement**

The Jacket Proud workgroup agreed on a vision statement, three focal points for service principles, and nine service principles. In May 2017, additional employees joined the workgroup as Jacket Proud Ambassadors. The role of the ambassadors is to inform



themselves and others about the service principles and model the desired behaviors in their departments. Dissemination of this message has taken place through campus-wide workshops and training sessions, as well as public display of these “Jacket Proud” principles:



### **Jacket Proud: Catch the Buzz**

#### **Our Vision**

*Building from our strengths, we desire to create a welcoming, engaged community where faculty, staff, and students demonstrate pride and commitment.*

#### **Our Points of Focus and Our Service Principles**

##### **Engage**

*You can expect that I will provide personalized individual attention*

*You can expect that I will acknowledge you with gracious intent*

*You can expect that I will honor our interaction with respect and civility*

##### **Promote**

*You can expect that I will be involved in our Yellowjacket Community*

*You can expect that I will be a positive spokesperson and demonstrate Yellowjacket pride*

*You can expect that I will inspire active participation in MSUB events/activities*

##### **Support**

*You can expect that I will celebrate your accomplishments*

*You can expect that I will listen and provide solution-focused answers*

*You can expect that I will provide professional responsiveness within a clear timeframe*

**A. Opportunity to Achieve: Evaluate and reassign personnel and financial resources to match strategic plan priorities.**

### **Planning**

As part of the annual budget planning cycle, budgeted expenditures are aligned with enrollment projections, state funding allocations and estimated tuition collections. This alignment has necessitated reductions and reassignments of personnel and operating expenses in years with reduced resources available. To address reductions strategically, four budget principles guide budget decisions:

- Minimize the impact on students and invest in their long-term success.
- Work diligently within the shared governance process and current contracts.



- Involve and engage the entire campus community in balancing our budget.
- Ensure strategic reductions and reallocations are not unilateral or opportunistic.

In academic areas, part-time and summer session faculty budget pools are reviewed and realigned with enrollment projections. Approval to hire vacant faculty positions occurs after review of enrollment trends and programmatic needs of departments, colleges and the University as a whole. A departmental dashboard was created to report enrollment and faculty trends by department for the purpose of identifying the health and sustainability of academic programs. Moreover, plans for reinforcing positive trends and addressing negative trends are under development by the Provost's office.

In the Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs divisions, services and workloads are reviewed and reassigned in response to strategic change in focus and to gain efficiencies. Enrollment declines, however, are not typically accompanied with a decline in workload in administration, finance, and student services because our headcount and student population require a higher level of student services than the FTE indicates. The University now serves more part time students than in the past, requiring appropriate staffing levels but without the additional funding that a full-time student brings to the University. Implementation of electronic services for application, registration, and financial transactions has reduced personnel time requirements in some areas. Personnel reductions have occurred and reassignment of personnel to other funding sources has ensured sufficient levels of staffing and service. Other efficiencies implemented have reduced utilities, printing, and mailing costs. Additionally, as part of the Seamless MSU initiative, the Montana State System is currently investigating ways to reduce costs without impacting the quality of services.

### **Assessment**

Assessing the ability of the University to deploy its budgetary resources in pursuit of strategic initiatives is complicated by the more immediate need to respond to cuts in funding from the state or falling tuition income. MSU Billings has set its sights on the appropriate pursuit of strategic priorities, but those goals have frequently been sidelined by reductions in budgetary resources that require immediate response.. The overarching goal of MSU Billings as a whole and the Budget Office in particular, is to allocate resources to accomplish strategic initiatives. In the recent environment of reduced enrollments and reduced tuition and state revenues, it has proved to be a challenge to advance many of the University's strategic initiatives. The University has achieved notable successes in two budget-related strategic goals. First, the institution has met its goal of allocating at least 50% of the general operating budget in the instruction program. Second, the University has met its strategic goal of allocating at least 70% in instruction, academic support, and student services. These goals have been met through revising organizational structures and intentionally seeking efficiencies in operations. These priorities underlie the principle that budget reductions should minimize the impact on students.

### **Improvement**

The University continues to review and revise base budget allocations to invest in opportunities for enrollment growth. The efficiencies identified in the face of declining state resources have garnered increased funding available for institutional priorities. In Academic Affairs, the program health dashboard is anticipated to not only to clarify strategic initiatives for the academic side of the house, but it is hoped the the process will identify efficiencies in the academic programs to free up resources to work towards other strategic goals.

## **B. Opportunity to Achieve: Enhance communication concerning our relevant image across all stakeholders.**

The University Relations and Communications (UR) office has divided its communication responsibilities into three “segments.” Segment 1 includes communications to faculty, staff, and administration. Segment 2 covers University communications with students. Segment 3 includes University communication to the community. The planning, assessment, and improvement efforts of these segments is detailed below.

### **Planning**

Segment 1: In the fall of 2017 University Relations and Communications began surveying the University’s communication needs. They researched other institutions and their use of a weekly email newsletter. In January, 2018, UR introduced a weekly email newsletter, the *Buzz Bulletin*.

Segment 2: In fall 2017, discussion began between UR and the vice chancellor for Student Affairs regarding expanding the reach of the weekly student email newsletter that was sent to residential students to all students (as residential students are only a small portion of our overall student population). A pilot was initiated for a weekly email newsletter. It was sent to a test group, which then met to share feedback. In spring 2018, Student Affairs launched an email newsletter, the *Jacket Journal*, to all students, both on and off campus.

Segment 3: In spring 2017, the MSUB Community Taskforce was formed, and over the period a year, they worked to develop key recommendations for the University to use in its upcoming strategic planning process. One of these recommendations was for the University to communicate more with the community. This led to the formation of the Chancellor’s Community Advisory Board in May 2018 with the arrival of Chancellor Dan Edelman. To facilitate the University-community communication, a new monthly newsletter will be sent to key community contacts.

### **Assessment**

Segment 1: The faculty and staff weekly email newsletter (*Buzz Bulletin*) dramatically reduced the number of emails (internally called “Admin\_General”) to faculty and staff inboxes. Prior to the *Buzz Bulletin*, faculty and staff would receive up to three emails per day. Now they receive one email from UR each Monday, resulting in increased faculty and staff engagement. The number of departments and individuals submitting information for inclusion in the weekly newsletter has grown. The newsletter features events, community involvement and achievements by faculty, staff and students.

Segment 2: Now, all students are receiving weekly email newsletters on important campus events and initiatives. Only four weeks into sending the email newsletter, the Office of the vice chancellor for Student Affairs has received student and staff feedback about how to better format the newsletters and the preferred type of information featured. Overall response has been positive from students.

Segment 3: This is a new initiative will begin as the Community task force undertakes its work.

### **Improvement**

Segment 1: Plans are in place for fall 2018 to offer training sessions to faculty and staff to teach them how to better submit valuable content to the *Buzz Bulletin* and improve the workflow. UR will also seek feedback from faculty and staff on how to improve the *Buzz Bulletin* newsletter.

Segment 2: UR plans to increase engagement with content curators for the *Jacket Journal*, and to solicit ongoing feedback on what content students' value.

Segment 3: This is a new initiative with plans in place but not yet enacted.

### **C. Opportunity to Achieve: Update university facility plans to integrate with FutureU.**

#### **Planning**

The University continues updating both the Auxiliaries and Athletics Master Plan to remain current with the changing priorities and goals set forth within the documents. Studies and programming have been recently completed for a new fieldhouse / soccer stadium on the University campus. MSUB Business students completed an in-depth assessment at past, current, and future athletic program offerings which account for Title IX requirements and growth potential. A consultant completed an overall Athletics strategic plan in 2016. Lastly, planning and programming were completed in 2014 for the Phase II Student Union renovation, including a new conference center facility and commercial kitchen.

#### **Assessment**

The University completed a comprehensive Facilities Condition Index effort as part of a biannual process of evaluating replacement costs and deferred maintenance for all University buildings in 2017. The [long-range building program](#), which is also a biannual process, has been updated and submitted to State A/E Division, identifying MSUB strategic goals within those of all other State agencies. Facilities Services completes [an annual customer satisfaction survey](#), utilizing data from all University groups. This survey is utilized to identify the needs of faculty, staff, students, academic programs, and infrastructure. Assessing these needs and the correlation between resource allocation and improvements, insure that priorities continue to align properly.

#### **Improvement**

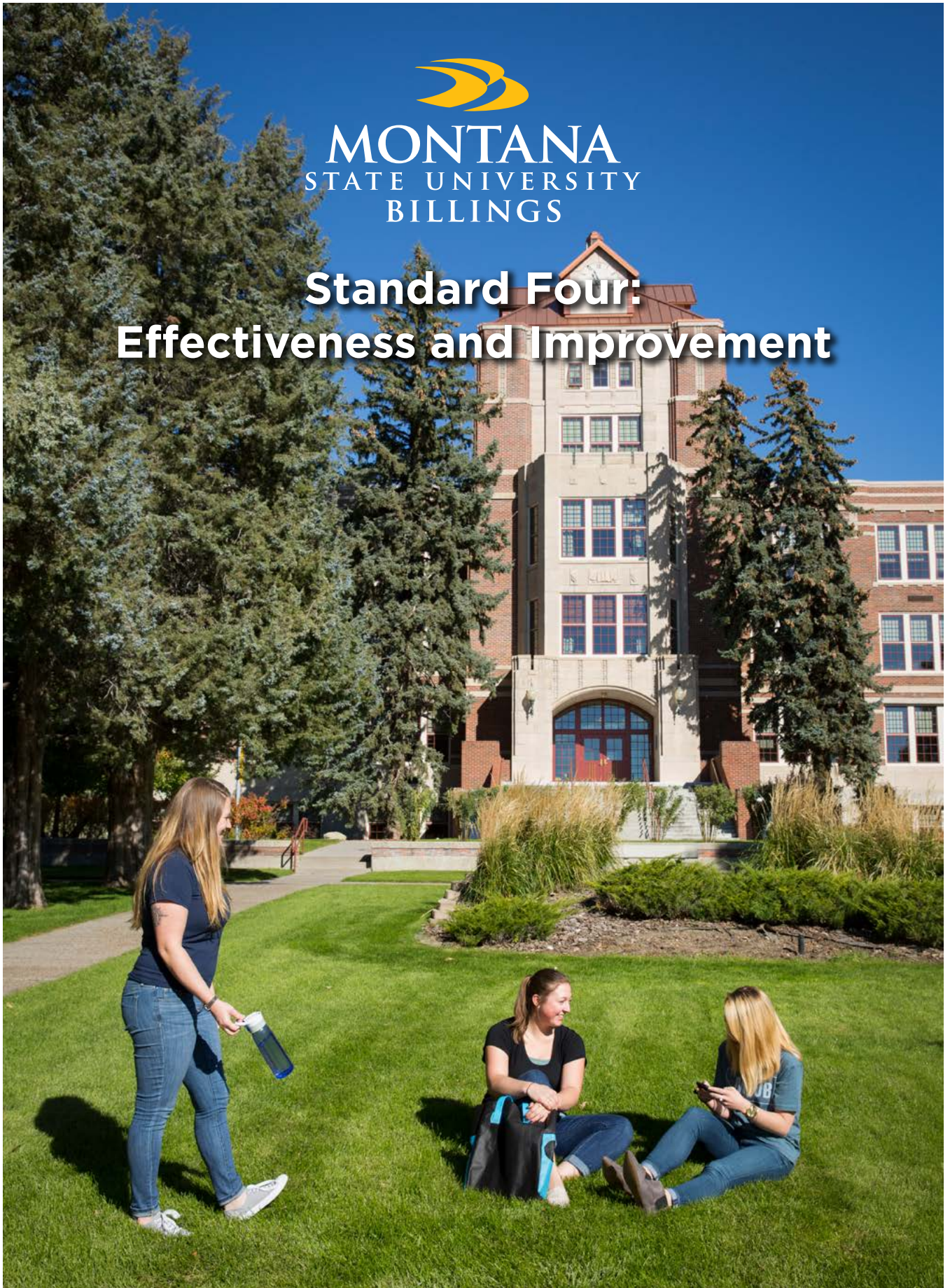
A long list of projects has been completed which specifically tie to several Core Themes. Several notable projects in relation to Core Theme 2 include the completion of two Technology Enhanced Interactive Learning (TEIL) classrooms, Phase I of the Student Union building, the College of Education student commons, major upgrades to the MSUB Library, the City College Sustainable Energy Technician laboratory, a three-phase renovation of our Student Health Service, and a climbing wall located in the Physical Education building. Several other notable projects also related to Core Theme 4 include: partnership with a Japanese manufacturer to install and test a wind turbine as City College, a collaborative project with Northwestern Energy in which our Sustainable Energy students are completing a six-phase ground mounted solar array, completion of a 9/11 memorial in collaboration with many community groups, an exciting partnership with a local developer on a mixed-use development which will benefit our students, and a partnership with a local business to complete great improvements to our softball facilities.





**MONTANA**  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
BILLINGS

## **Standard Four: Effectiveness and Improvement**







## Standard Four – Effectiveness and Improvement

### 4.A 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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.**

**4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, 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.**

**4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.**

Assessment systems at MSU Billings are largely decentralized. While the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs oversees the assessment of programs for the institution, that office does not impose a common assessment protocol across the board. Essentially, the University has four categories of assessment systems, each with its own reporting schedule and protocols. These four categories are: Accredited Academic Programs, Non-Accredited Academic Programs, General Education, and Co-Curricular Programs. Programs in each of these categories undergo periodic examination based on meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data to regularly assess those programs' accomplishments in terms of meeting the University's core theme objectives.

Indeed, as has been noted earlier in this report, the University, as a whole, has reached an impressive milestone in its approach to assessment. Following numerous meetings during which the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs consulted with individual program chairs and leaders across the institution, that office retains a high degree of confidence that, across the board, majority programs embrace a culture of "assessment for program improvement" that is the result of organic, grassroots approaches to assessment, rather than "assessment for compliance" that would likely result from an imposed overarching assessment system.

Assessment of University programs and services is possible only because MSU Billings' program faculty and staff have identified intended program learning outcomes for all programs and services, have mapped curricula (where appropriate) with those program outcomes to assure alignment of curricula with the outcomes, and employ assessment tools with which to measure student achievement of those outcomes. The results of

those assessments are used to improve programs and services and are communicated appropriately to those programs' constituencies.

The following sections track this outcomes/alignment/assessment development for each of the four categories identified above and provide examples from programs within each category.

### **Accredited Academic Programs**

Each accredited academic program adheres to assessment protocols as determined by its individual accrediting agency. Typically, these assessment protocols exceed the requirements of established for non-accredited programs by the Assessment and Accreditation Council. Below, the accredited programs at MSU Billings outline how they identify student learning outcomes, their assessment protocols, how the programs collect, analyze, and act upon assessment results, and how they assure alignment with University core themes.

#### **College of Allied Health Professions:**

##### **Athletic Training Program**

The mission of the MSU Billings Athletic Training Program (ATP) is accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education \(CAATE\)](#) and maintains the goal of preparing future athletic training professionals through educational challenges and clinical opportunities, who will then serve and contribute to their profession through education, scholarship, clinical service and professional involvement. The Athletic Training program upholds the mission, vision and core values of the University, the College of Allied Health Professions and Health and Human Performance (HHP) Department. For example, one of the core values for Athletic Training program is "responsibility to others" which aligns with the MSUB's Core Theme Three: "Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility." Furthermore, the Athletic Training program supports the vision of MSU Billings to "translate knowledge into practice" as our students are presented with educational challenges and clinical opportunities throughout the curriculum and are required to apply what they learn in the formal classroom to their clinical experience and practice. Last, the Athletic Training program supports the University's core value of "integrity" with the core value of "respect for all."

The core Athletic Training Faculty, program director, and clinical education coordinator collaboratively discussed and developed the following student learning objectives:

The students will meet or exceed minimal requirements for professional certification.

1. Students will ascertain and demonstrate the required skills for all NATA Athletic Training Education competencies and clinical integration proficiencies.
2. Students will display critical thinking skills and formulate sound clinical decisions in their clinical field experiences.
3. The students will establish professional relationships with medical and allied health care providers.
4. The students will develop, design, and execute independent research projects.

The Athletic Training Program provides didactic education and a variety of experiential and clinical opportunities in collaboration with the affiliated clinical sites over the two-year program. The master assessment plan is used to 1) assess quality of both didactic and clinical education and 2) direct future changes (program sequence, clinical education, curriculum, etc.). The master assessment plan for the ATP uses multiple formats (formative and summative) designed to evaluate, assess and recommend programmatic changes on

regularly scheduled basis. Programmatic review, evaluation, and assessment strategies performed by the core athletic training faculty are used to determine the effectiveness of both the didactic and clinical education. These reviews and evaluations are then used to make decisions and to propose changes in the program or curriculum in order to better meet the concerns and needs of the program as well as the Department, College and University. Assessment data currently collected and analyzed for program evaluation includes:

- student coursework to assess student knowledge, skills and abilities (i.e. oral and written exams, projects, papers, etc.),
- student evaluations of instructors and courses,
- student progression (GPA, clinical hours),
- clinical preceptor evaluations of students,
- students' evaluations of clinical preceptors,
- clinical site evaluations,
- BOC pass rates and exam data.
- MSU Billings Career Services Graduate Data (employment and salary).
- The AT program has also used exit student interviews, alumni surveys and employer surveys, but these tools were found to be not as helpful as other tools still used today. The assessment process and evaluation tools have and will continue to evolve in order to recognize any deficiencies, determine modifications as well as to determine the program effectiveness as related to its mission, goals and objectives. Lastly, the athletic training program must submit annual reports to CAATE to ensure compliance with accreditation standards.

### **Rehabilitation Counseling Program Learning Outcomes**

The Rehabilitation Counseling program bases its student learning outcomes on the nationally-identified criteria. For the [Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling \(MSCRMHC\)](#), Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Education Related Program (CACREP) requires that programmatic learning outcomes be include on all syllabi, and align with [CACREP standards](#), as well as feedback from employer surveys. At the undergraduate level, although the [Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation and Related Services](#) (BSRRS) program is not accredited by the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission, programmatic learning outcomes are aligned with [\(NASAC\) standards](#), and are included on all syllabi.

### **Program Assessment**

In the graduate program, assessment is administered in three different areas of the program. Faculty assess the students through course-level learning outcomes. They also meet weekly with students at the Mental Health Counseling Education Clinic to assess accomplishment of learning outcomes for the counseling education part of the program. Finally, graduate students are assessed in their field experiences as well.

Undergraduate program faculty assesses the students to determine if they have met the learning outcomes in through coursework. They also meet to assess learning outcomes for the counseling education part of the program. Additionally a site supervisor in the community will administer assessments as well. They assess learning goals that are outlined and defined in the goal packet in the internships in the field.

For both programs, employer surveys are used to assess student learning of skills they need for the world of work. If the program faculty need to change learning outcomes to make up for a deficit in an area, program faculty adjust the curriculum to account for the discrepancy.

## **Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting**

Data from the assessments listed above are entered into a shared file each semester for program faculty use in program analysis and modification. Surveys are sent out on a rotational annual basis to three groups of stakeholders: program graduates, practicum/internship site supervisors, and employers; respondents are asked to indicate on five-point scales their levels of satisfaction with the program areas being evaluated. The forms also included a section to provide impressions of the major strengths and weaknesses of the program as demonstrated by student success on the job.

Data are reported to the Assessment and Accreditation Council in the Program Assessment Reports (PARs) at both the [undergraduate](#) and the [graduate](#) levels. As outlined earlier in Standard 4, the AAC and the vice provost use the PARs to review program assessment practices, and if necessary, to make recommendations for the improvement of program assessment protocols. In addition, program faculty meet with an advisory board for the department that includes local supervisors, employers, students, the chancellor, the provost and the dean. Faculty use the results of both the faculty program reviews and feedback from the advisory committee to make improvements to the program at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

## **Core Theme Alignment**

Montana State University Billings' [Core Themes](#) stand at the heart of program outcomes for both the MSCRMHC and the BSRRS as evidenced by the high range on all assessments of program quality based on:

- Excellent Teaching
- Student course evaluations and annual faculty reviews for tenure track faculty, and five year faculty reviews for tenured faculty.
- CACREP standards (graduate program)
- NASAC standards (undergraduate program)
- Support for Individual Learning (class sizes are small, allowing for a great deal of support for student learning; numerous internships provide students the opportunity to learn counseling skills in authentic settings)
- Employer surveys
- Faculty/site supervisor evaluations
- Students in both programs are required to take courses in counseling ethics, and engage in ethical behavior at all internship sites. They are involved in their communities through internships.
- Annual Advisory Board reviews recommendations and provides stakeholder feedback.

## **RN to BSN Program**

The RN to BSN program at MSU Billings is currently seeking initial accreditation with [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\)](#). The program has an accreditation visit in April 2018 and should receive its final report in October 2018. CCNE uses these four standards to determine accreditation status:

Standard I: Program Quality: Mission and Governance

Standard II: Program Quality: Institutional Commitment and Resources

Standard III: Program Quality: Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Practices

Standard IV: Program Effectiveness: Assessment and Achievement of Program Outcomes.

The RN to BSN program has adopted the following program goals, which guided the program to develop program student learning outcomes, which, in turn, are incorporated into courses:

#### Program Goals

The RN to BSN Degree completion curriculum offers additional education to prepare its graduates to:

1. Provide holistic nursing care to patients as a whole or family unit within their communities by using effective communication, assessment and collaboration with interprofessionals.
2. Promote patient safety through effective communication and use of information technology by being a leader within the health care system.
3. Utilize current research to promote understanding and application of evidence-based practice and quality improvement in the nursing field.
4. Evaluate vulnerable patient populations utilizing concept maps to manage patient care.
5. Reflect upon professional accountability utilizing nursing ethical standards of practice.

#### Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO):

1. Understand theoretical nursing knowledge and apply advance nursing theory.
2. Participate in quality improvement processes to provide high-quality safe nursing care in our coursework and virtual simulations.
3. Communicate critical information to make evidence-based decisions.
4. Collaborate with inter-professionals to further enhance patient care.
5. Use information technology to make evidence-based decision.
6. Incorporate professional communication and collaborative skills to deliver evidenced based decisions.
7. Demonstrate ability to provide inclusive care in a professional manner according to legal and ethical standards.
8. Demonstrate a strong commitment to the nursing profession that embraces the core values of excellence, caring, ethical practice, civility, accountability, and life-long learning.
9. Advocate for clients using effective communication skills to provide relationship centered care.

CCNE requires that the program faculty have in place an assessment and evaluation plan with which they will evaluate all program, course and curriculum outcomes. The RN to BSN faculty have created a systematic review plan that will be reviewed each summer for overall program effectiveness and also to ensure all program outcomes and course outcomes are relevant in the course and program. The systematic review plan is tailored to the standards listed above. Within each standard are between six and eight essential components that further break down the standard. A systematic review plan was created to ensure that students meet each essential component within each standard. Below is an example, using Standard 1A.1, to illustrate this systematic review plan:



Evaluation Component	Expected Outcome (Benchmark)	Data Source	Collection and Analysis Party	Schedule of Collection	Actual Outcome	Action plan based on Actual Outcome	Action Result	Evidence Location
<b>STANDARD I—Program Quality: Mission and Governance</b>								
I-A.1 Mission, goals, and expected student outcomes of program are congruent with those of the parent institution.	RN to BSN mission, goals and expected student outcomes are 100% congruent with the parent institution.	University and RN to BSN missions, goals, and expected student outcomes	Program Coordinator (PC)	Annual- August or as needed	Mission, goals and expected outcomes of program are congruent with parent institution	Outcome Met- No action plan needed at this time	N/A	RN to BSN Student Handbook MSUB website

The program also uses an array of surveys to determine students' perception that program and course outcomes are being met. These surveys are also analyzed and used in Standard IV of our systematic review plan. The systematic review plan allows the program coordinator to evaluate student learning outcomes, administer assessments and surveys to discern if students are achieving the program outcomes along with the course outcomes, collect data from those assessments/surveys, use the analysis of that data to improve the program, and assure the alignment between your program and the University Core Themes.

### **College of Arts & Sciences:**

#### **Department of Art**

The degree programs in the Art Department at MSU Billings (the B.F.A. in Art, the B.A. in Art, and the B.A. in Art Education) are fully accredited by the [National Association of Schools of Art and Design \(NASAD\)](#), an accreditation held since 1980. This decennial accreditation was reaffirmed in 2012 following the completion of a [self-study](#), followed by a [NASAD Visitors' Report](#) and on-site visitation by outside evaluators.

#### **Art Program Assessment—Internal**

The primary internal means of assessment for the Art degree programs is the required Senior Capstone/Project. Senior Capstone/Projects include professional presentation of artwork, art historical research, and/or items relevant to art learning and teaching kindergarten through grade twelve; preparation of a professional portfolio, Artist Statement, and Resume/Curriculum Vita; and critical discussion of artwork and/or scholarship. An evaluation rubric, appropriate for each individual degree program, is used to rate students in four categories: Body of Work, Presentation/Installation, Professionalism, and Oral Defense. All full-time faculty members attend each Senior Capstone Review and complete the rubric; the scores are averaged and used to determine the student's grade in ARTZ 499 Senior Project/Capstone. Students enrolled in ARTZ 499 Senior Project/Capstone also complete a twelve-question program evaluation form, which is reviewed by the unit faculty yearly.

Results of the Art Praxis Content-Knowledge exam taken by recent graduates seeking teaching licensure with an endorsement in art are compiled each year. The Department of Art began administering a pre- and post-test on Content Knowledge in Art in fall 2010. The test was adapted from the Praxis test. Students take the test in their first 100-level foundations course and then again at the time of their Senior Project/Capstone.

The Department of Art requires a minimum grade of "C" in all art courses taken to fulfill requirements for its majors and minors. Each course offered by the department follows the Official Course Syllabus as approved by the unit full-time faculty. Each syllabus contains

specific Course Objectives and Course Outcomes, which address the body of knowledge and skills to be acquired and developed in that course. Pre-requisites for courses are also listed on the syllabi. Registration for 200-, 300-, and 400-level studio courses is by “consent of instructor” to ensure that courses are taken in the proper sequence and that all pre-requisites have been met.

Students must pass a sophomore portfolio and transcript review before being admitted to the B.F.A. degree program. Students must have a minimum 3.00 Art GPA and a minimum 2.50 Cumulative GPA. Their portfolio is evaluated by the faculty in four categories: Awareness of Content, Presentation, Technical Skills, and Statement.

Finally, the Student Juried Show, which is held each spring, is an indicator of student success in achieving professional competence. Each year an honorary juror from the region judges the submissions and determines which artworks will receive cash prizes. The show is under the jurisdiction of the Art Students League in conjunction with the Northcutt Steele Gallery Director.



### **Assessment Analysis and Program Improvement**

NASAD standards are reviewed annually to ensure the department is aligned with any new revisions. After self-study visitations, the department responds to the reports provided by the on-site evaluators and the NASAD Commission on Accreditation with a series of progress reports outlining progress made per their suggestions for improvement. Curriculum revisions, studio safety concerns, and personnel issues have been the primary areas addressed in recent years.

Analysis of pre- and post-tests are used to assess the art curriculum's strengths and weaknesses in imparting content knowledge. Curriculum revisions have been made in response. Praxis exam scores, BFA applications, Senior Capstone rubrics scores, Senior Capstone program evaluations, and comments from the Student Juried Show juror are reviewed by the faculty yearly in an effort to determine strengths and weaknesses. Recently, changes in individual course assessment methods and content have been made as a result of these reviews.

### **Alignment with the University's Core Themes**

The majority of the Art Department's assessment measures align with the Core Themes One (Cultivating Teaching Excellence) and Two (Providing an Environment for Learning), as

means of analyzing the success of the curriculum and the adequacy and safety of facilities and equipment.

In alignment with the Core Themes Three (Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility) and Four (Enhancing the Community), faculty members emphasize professionalism in art exhibition practices; include service learning components in individual courses; supervise and evaluate student art teachers; and promote community outreach through our student organizations, one of which includes community members. Students are also encouraged to do Internships in the community under site and faculty supervisors, with evaluations completed by both. All professional and student gallery exhibitions are open to the public and thematic programming is designed to meet the needs of the region we serve. Students also work as assistants and interns in the professional gallery under the supervision of a faculty member.

### **Department of Music**

The degree programs in the Music Department at MSU Billings have been fully accredited by the [National Association of Schools of Music \(NASM\)](#) since 1978. The music degrees accredited are General Music, Music Business, Music Performance, and Music Teacher Licensure. The accreditation was reaffirmed in 2010, following the completion of a self-study, followed by a NASM Visitors' Report and on-site visitation by outside evaluators.

#### **Music Program Assessment—Internal**

The primary internal means of assessment for the Music Degree Programs differs by degree:

**B. A. in General Music** assessment is measured by the courses taken and passed with a grade a "C" or better. The student is required to successfully pass one year (two semesters) of the TAK series (Theory, Aural Perception, and Keyboarding) with a grade of a "C" or better. With an instrument or singing, the student must perform in at least one large ensemble concert, for two semesters. The level of music performed in large ensembles challenges students to play/sing at a high level. Each student must present and successfully pass a recital jury in front of the full-time music faculty plus their applied teacher (if that person is adjunct) one month before presenting the recital. The student's applied study teacher gives them a specific grade for their senior recital. The assessment is based on the student's progress, performance level of the recital literature, and quality of performance.

**B. A. in Music Business** assessment is measured by the courses taken and passed with a grade a "C" or better. The student is required to successfully pass one year (two semesters) of the TAK series with a grade of a "C" or better. With an instrument or singing, the student must perform in at least one large ensemble concert, for two semesters. The level of music performed in large ensembles challenges students to play/sing at a high level. Each student must complete three internships in the community. Upon the 130 hours per internship, the student presents a portfolio and oral presentation to the full-time faculty. The rubric used to rate the success of the student is their ability to present what they have learned at the internship, along with a rigorous question/answer period with the faculty. The MSU Billings Music Faculty Supervisor assigns a grade based on assessment of the student's written work, on-sight supervisor evaluations, and full-time music faculty comments.

**B. A. in Music Performance** assessment is measured by the courses taken and passed with a grade a "C" or better. The student is required to successfully pass two years (four semesters) of the TAK series with a grade of a "C" or better. With an instrument or singing, the student must perform in at least one large ensemble every semester. The level of music performed in large ensembles challenges students to play/sing at a high level. Students must pass a sophomore "upper divisional" jury, where they must prepare and perform thirty minutes of music. A transcript review is completed before the student is admitted

into the degree program. Students must have a minimum 3.00 Music GPA and a minimum 2.50 Cumulative GPA. The jury is evaluated by the faculty in the following categories: pitch, musicianship, style, dynamics, performing abilities (multiple languages for singers), and success of the music performed. Each student must present and successfully pass junior and senior recital juries in front of the full-time music faculty plus the applied teacher, if that person is adjunct, one month before presenting their recital. The student's applied study teacher gives them a specific grade for their senior recital. The assessment is based upon the student's progress, performance level of the recital literature, and quality of the performance.

**B. A. in Music Teacher Licensure** assessment is measured by the courses taken and passed with a grade a "C" or better. The student is required to successfully pass two years (four semesters) of the TAK series with a grade of a "C" or better. With an instrument or singing, the student must perform in at least one large ensemble every semester. The level of music performed in large ensembles challenges students to play/sing at a high level. Students must pass a sophomore "upper divisional" jury, where students must prepare and perform twenty minutes of music. A transcript review is complete before the student is admitted into the degree program. Students must have a minimum 3.00 Music GPA and a minimum 2.50 Cumulative GPA. The jury is evaluated by the faculty in the following categories: pitch, musicianship, style, dynamics, performing abilities (multiple languages for singers), and success of the music performed. Each student must present and successfully pass one senior recital jury in front of the full-time music faculty plus the applied teacher, if that person is adjunct, one month before presenting the recital. The student's applied study teacher gives them a specific grade for their senior recital. The assessment is based upon the student's progress, performance level of the recital literature, and quality of the performance. The student must successfully complete junior field work before applying to student teach. Although note graded by the music department, the student must receive a student teaching grade of "C" or better to successfully complete the grade.

## Conclusion

Results of the Music Praxis Content-Knowledge exam taken by recent graduates seeking teaching licensure with an endorsement in music are compiled each year. The Department of Music began administering a pre-and post-test on Content Knowledge of Music in fall 2010. The test is taken directly from the text "Praxis." Students take the test in their first month of school at the 100 level, and then again during their final senior semester.

The Department of Music requires a minimum grade of "C" in all music courses taken to fulfill requirements for its majors and minors. Each course offered by the department follows the Official Course Syllabus as approved by the unit full-time faculty. Each syllabus contains specific Course Objectives and Course Outcomes, which address the body of knowledge and skills to be acquired and developed in that course. Pre-requisites for courses are also listed on the syllabi, as well as being listed online. Registration for all applied lessons courses are by "consent of instructor" to ensure that the student has the basic knowledge and ability to perform and pass this course with a grade of "C" or better.

The music department has formed a community music advisory board made up of individuals from the community, many whom are teachers. Our annual meeting with this group gives us a true assessment of how our students are aligning with other musicians/teachers in our region. This board is crucial in MSUB's ability to keep current with the needs of community and gives us a realistic evaluation as to the preparedness of our students for the job market.

## Assessment Analysis and Program Improvement

NASM standards are reviewed annually to ensure the department is aligned with any new



revisions. After self-study visitations, the department responds to the reports provided by the on-site evaluators and the NASM Commission on Accreditation with a series of progress reports outlining progress made per their suggestions for improvement. Curriculum revisions, course evaluations, and personnel issues have been the primary areas addressed in recent years.

Analysis of pre-and post-tests is used to assess the music curriculum's strengths and weaknesses in imparting content knowledge. Curriculum revisions have been made in response. Praxis exam scores, supervising teachers, on-sight supervisors, and upper divisional success are all reviewed by the full-time faculty yearly in an effort to determine strengths and weaknesses. Recently, changes in individual course assessment methods, syllabi clarity, and course content have been made because of these reviews. The music department keeps track of its graduates and monitors the success of its students in the job market.

### **Alignment with the University's Core Themes**

The majority of the assessment measures align with the Core Themes One (Cultivating Teaching Excellence) and Two (Providing an Environment for Learning), as they are means of analyzing the success of our curriculum and the adequacy and safety of facilities and equipment.

In alignment with the Core Themes Three (Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility) and Four (Enhancing the Community), our faculty members emphasize professionalism in music performance practices; include service learning components in individual courses; promote community outreach through our student lead groups, and professional ensembles where our faculty belong and perform. All on-campus student recitals are free of admission and open to the public. All on-campus concerts are free of admission for MSU Billings faculty, staff and students. Students also manage all concerts and recitals as house managers, stage managers and recording technicians.

### **College of Business:**

#### **Bachelor of Science in Business Administration**

The College of Business (COB) at Montana State University Billings has been accredited by the [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business \(AACSB\)](#) since 2010. Guided by AACSB standards, the College of Business stands as one of the leading programs at MSU Billings in program assessment and reporting. With these strict standards in mind, student learning outcomes are crafted and subsequently reviewed by the COB faculty every five years. These learning outcomes require students to achieve high levels of distinction in the following areas:

- Communication (Oral and Written),
- Ethics,
- Quantitative Thinking Skills,
- International Business, and
- Creative and Critical Thinking Skills.

Following the most recent COB faculty review of these student learning outcomes, the faculty chose to omit the "Technology" outcome, as it was no longer appropriate in the technologically advanced world of today's students.

Each learning outcome is assessed through instruments administered twice in a five-year cycle. This assessment is carried out in courses taken by senior or junior students. These assessments are staggered over a five-year period so that usually there are not more than two in a single semester. The students are graded in three categories: Below Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Above Expectations. The COB goal is to demonstrate that at least



80% of students either meet or are deemed as above expectation. If a learning outcome is below the standard of 80% meeting expectations for two continuous cycles then remedial steps are taken to rectify the shortcoming. Such remediation steps could range from introducing a new course (as was done for quantitative skills) to putting more emphasis on certain topics (e.g. international aspects).

MSU Billings' Core Themes are broadly defined (cultivating teaching excellence, providing an environment for learning, promoting and engaging in civic responsibility, enhancing the community and essentials for success). The College of Business learning outcomes are more specific and help students by providing a general foundation and guidance necessary for COB students to demonstrate achievement within the core themes. These learning goals inculcate in students the qualities that will help them to succeed and excel not only as a student but also as future business professional.

### **College of Education:**

#### **Education Preparation Program**

The College of Education Department of Educational Theory and Practiced Education Preparation Program (EPP) developed an Assessment System Handbook approved by the National Council for Assessment of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 2010, and the revised system handbook was approved by the [Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation \(CAEP\)](#) in 2017. Student learning outcomes for undergraduate and graduate initial licensure candidates are based upon the national INTASC Standards, as required by the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS). The COE has voted to adopt the Danielson Framework for Teaching as our underlying conceptual framework. The components of this framework align with INTASC but are more easily understood by students. Key program assessments have been designated and data from those assessments are entered into the COE database with summaries reported by the COE Data Specialist. Faculty review and analyze the summaries at the COE August Retreat to determine necessary program changes.

Current student learning outcomes for Advanced Programs are scheduled for review and revision during AY 2018-2019. The current outcomes were determined by faculty and approved by NCATE in 2010. As of the CAEP review in 2017, CAEP Standards for Advanced Programs remained in draft form. They have since been approved. The faculty have considered the NBPTS standards for advanced program outcomes in the past and may again consider those as building upon the INTASC Standards/Danielson Framework foundation. Once the college has either maintained current or revised outcomes for Advanced Programs, key assessments will be determined and data will be collected, summarized, and analyzed as are data for Initial Programs. The COE is working with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI, the state education agency) and the nine other Educator Preparation Programs in Montana to determine a statewide assessment of our graduates' impact as they begin teaching on P-12 students' learning. This assessment process includes a Completer Survey, an Employer Survey, and Case Studies. The Completer and Employer Surveys have been piloted, revised, and are being disseminated August 2018. Results will be aggregated statewide and can be disaggregated by individual program.

The COE assures alignment with the MSUB University Core Themes as follows:

- Core Theme One: Cultivating Teaching Excellence—Teaching is what the College of Education lives, researches, and prepares future educators to do. COE faculty model High Impact Practices (HIPs) for their students in every class period. COE courses delivered on-line are interactive with intentionally planned faculty presence and student interaction.
- Core Theme Two: Providing an Environment for Learning—COE faculty have to

prepare their students to provide environments conducive to learning for p-12 learners. This preparation means that faculty demonstrate care for their students, provide clear expectations of performance, provide assessment rubrics for assignments, and provide the opportunity to improve.

- Core Theme Three: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility—COE faculty serve on boards of professional associations and service agencies at local, national, and international levels. The college has students in community schools and childcare agencies from the beginning of the program through graduate degrees. Faculty offer continuing professional development for local educators and parent assistance in dealing with children who have exceptional learning needs.
- Core Theme Four: Enhancing the Community—Education enhances the community. The COE prepares future educators who in turn are guiding the future leaders of this and other communities.

### **City College:**

#### **Auto Collision Repair and Refinishing Technology**

The learning objectives for the Auto Body Technology Program have been developed collaboratively by unit faculty and in keeping with the recognized standards of the [ASE Education Foundation](#) (formerly NATEF). The program outcomes are that students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Demonstrate competent knowledge of the functions and application techniques of automotive basecoat/clearcoat products.
- Demonstrate competent knowledge of the functions and applications techniques of automotive undercoat

Data sources for program assessment include the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification exam results, cooperative education and capstone projects, final exams as well as student, faculty and employer evaluations. Assessment instruments and measures are based on the four ASE categories in Collision Repair & Refinishing: Painting & Refinishing, Non-Structural Analysis & Damage Repair, Structural Analysis & Damage Repair, and Mechanical & electrical Components.

The auto body program develops curriculum based off of ICAR Certifications. Students will study the curriculum throughout his/her post-secondary Auto Body degree.

#### **Automotive Technology Program**

The learning objectives for the Automotive Technology Program have been developed collaboratively by unit faculty and are in alignment with the recognized standards of the [ASE Education Foundation](#). The program outcomes are that students will be



able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Diagnose problems throughout the eight ASE areas in modern automobiles;
- Repair complex systems throughout the eight ASE areas in modern automobiles;
- Perform diagnosis techniques and proper repair procedures relative to flat rate time standard; and
- Identify health and safety hazards and demonstrate proper techniques and practices associated with the automotive industry.

Data sources for program assessment include the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification exam results, cooperative education and capstone projects, final exams as well as student, faculty and employer evaluations. Assessment instruments and measures are based on the eight ASE categories: engine repair, automatic trans/transaxle, manual drive train/axles, suspension and steering, brakes, electronic systems, heating and air conditioning, and engine performance.

### **Diesel Technology Program**

The learning objectives for the Diesel Technology Program have been developed collaboratively by unit faculty and are in alignment with the recognized standards of the [ASE Education Foundation](#). The program outcomes are that students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Diagnose problems throughout the eight ASE areas in medium/heavy trucks;
- Repair complex systems throughout the eight ASE areas in medium/heavy trucks;
- Perform diagnosis techniques and proper repair procedures; and
- Demonstrate proper techniques and practices associated health and safety hazards.

Data sources for program assessment include the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification exam results, cooperative education and capstone projects, final exams as well as student, faculty and employer evaluations. Assessment instruments and measures are based on the eight ASE categories in Medium Heavy-Duty Truck: Gasoline engine repair, Diesel engine repair, drive train, Brakes, Suspension & Steering, Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning, and Preventive Maintenance Inspection.

### **Fire Science Program**

The student learning outcomes for the Fire Science program, developed by program faculty who have assured compliance with the [International Fire Service Accreditation Congress \(IFSAC\)](#), are:

Students who successfully complete this program will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Demonstrate safe, standards-based, entry-level firefighting skills;
- Demonstrate leadership and influence to promote the mission of fire and emergency services and lead change in the fire service;
- Create a personal firefighter resilience portfolio for fire and emergency services work;
- Demonstrate application of National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) and Blue Card incident command to various emergency incidents;
- Analyze modern, research-based fire behavior studies in structural firefighting operations;
- Apply principles of firefighter safety, air-management and crew-resource management to fire and emergency services;
- Apply risk assessment techniques to hazardous materials incidents, and safely control, contain, and confine hazardous materials while wearing chemical protective equipment;
- Apply human factors principles and National standards to wildland firefighting incidents;

- Develop a proactive and mission-based fire prevention, inspection, and public education mindset; and
- Apply instructional technique and learning theory to training environments in fire and emergency services.

Student learning outcomes in the fire science program are assessed through a variety of quantitative and qualitative assessment methods. Qualitatively, the fire science program has a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) with several local fire department chief officers as members. When the PAC meets, the program solicits input and feedback on how students are performing in the workplace. Another qualitative measure is student course and instructor evaluation at the end of each semester. Students comment on the course anonymously, and these comments provide qualitative texture indicating students are achieving stated learning outcomes in the fire science program. A final qualitative measure is the input and feedback provided by the Fire Services Training School (FSTS) of Montana. The FSTS is the legislatively mandated fire training body for the State of Montana and offers certifications for fire training and education.

Quantitatively, the fire service has a long history of developing industry standards based on a job/task analysis of firefighter work. From this task analysis, checklists and scoring rubrics are developed that allow students to demonstrate their ability to perform firefighting skills and functions. Within each firefighter course in program, students are assessed using performance checklists, scoring rubrics, to demonstrate their achievement of program learning outcomes. Additionally, students are assessed via written examinations, quizzes, interviews, presentations, and simulations.

### **Alignment with the University's Core Themes**

The Fire Science program is firmly aligned with the University core themes. The program at City College is strongly aligned with Core Theme Three: Promoting and Engaging Civic Responsibility due to the number of students volunteering in local fire departments. The program is also aligned with Core Theme Four: Enhancing the Community, since the very basis of fire service and emergency services is to serve and enhance the community. While Core Theme Three and Four are strong areas of alignment, the Fire Science program also aligns with the other three core themes. For example, the program director is involved in a High-Impact Practices cohort at MSU Billings in keeping with Core Theme 1: Promoting Teaching Excellence, and all instructors in the program are subject matter experts and create professional and positive environments for learning.

To conclude, the Fire Science program captures qualitative and quantitative data on an ongoing basis and this data is used by the fire science program director to adjust where necessary to meet programmatic learning outcomes of the program.

### **Paramedic Program**

The student learning outcomes for the Paramedic program were developed through collaboration among program faculty and consultation with industry partners, and in compliance with standards established by the [Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions \(CoAEMSP\)](#) and the [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs \(CAAHEP\)](#). The outcomes are that students who successfully complete the program will be able to

The stated learning outcomes for the paramedic program are:

- Explain, apply, and integrate the cognitive knowledge essential to function as an entry-level paramedic;
- Demonstrate technical proficiency in all of the skills necessary to fulfill the role of an entry-level paramedic; and



- Demonstrate personal behaviors consistent with professional and employer expectations of an entry-level paramedic.

The Paramedic program learning objectives are based on the knowledge and skills necessary for a paramedic student to pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam (NREMT), a nationally supported test that grants certification to paramedics. This exam tests students' knowledge of content as well as the ability to demonstrate a proficiency in skills necessary to function as a paramedic. Assessment instruments in this program include examinations and "EMS Testing," a national testing site that compares our students with other programs around the nation. Additionally, skills checklists and scenario driven tests are used to test the students' ability to perform a skill, process information, and formulate treatment plans. For a student to complete the program they must successfully pass a field internship on an ambulance functioning as a paramedic under the supervision of a working paramedic. This capstone is the final stage of the program for the student. Feedback from the students and the preceptors allow us to collect data on how the students are performing and identify any deficits. The final check off is the National Registry Exam which licenses the student. Pass rates of the National Registry exam and alumni and employer surveys are used to modify the program as needed.

### **Non-Accredited Academic Programs**

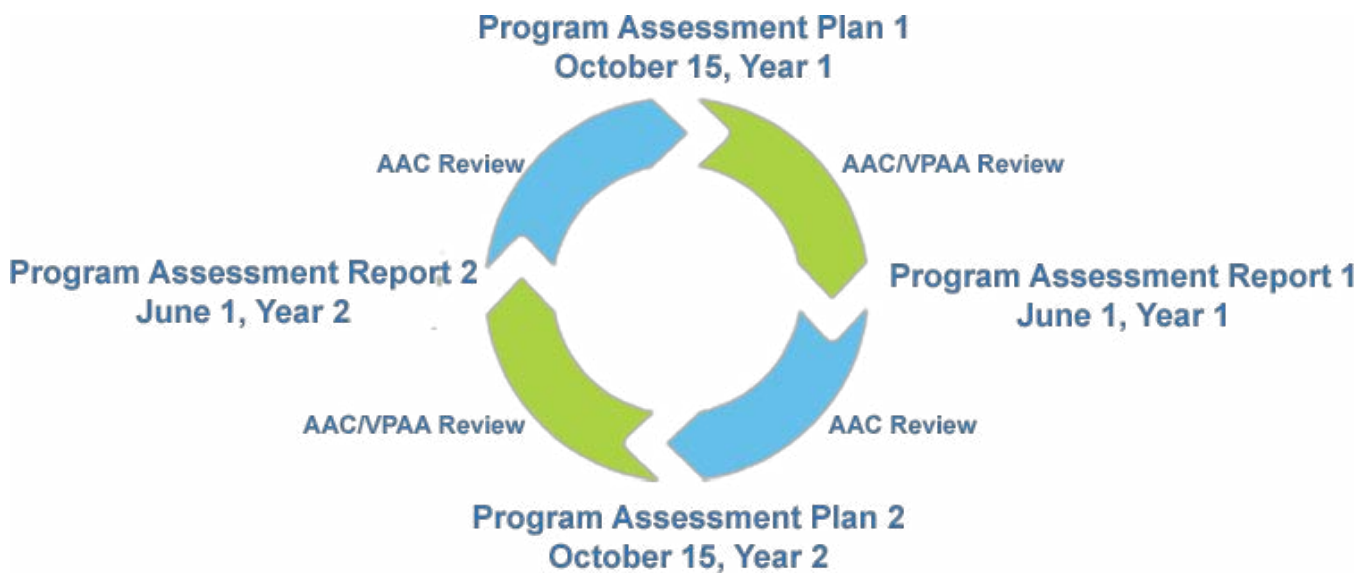
Non-accredited academic programs at MSU Billings undergo systematic collection of data specifically designed to verify that students who complete the University's courses, programs, or earn a degree or credential have met student learning outcomes established by the faculty in those programs. All non-accredited programs (those without disciplinary accreditations administered by external entities) follow the same assessment protocols overseen by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the Assessment & Accreditation Council.

Academic programs have been devising student learning outcomes since before the 2008 NWCCU visit. Following the 2010 Interim Focused Visit, more intense work by the Interim Associate Provost with academic programs resulted in recognition by the NWCCU visiting team in 2011 that progress had been made in revising learning outcomes that the visiting team deemed vague or inappropriate. That progress continues, as programs re-examine and revise their learning outcomes as part of the annual assessment cycle.

Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, academic programs participated in a mapping project, where all programmatic student learning outcomes were mapped to the courses within each program's curriculum. This process was intended to allow program leads an opportunity to re-examine their curricula to assure that their programs bring the right classes to bear in carrying out their program learning outcomes. Mapping assesses where in a program the essential learning outcomes are introduced (I), developed (D) or mastered (M). The exercise also helps chairs determine where they can gather evidence of student performance for each outcome; and where they can set an expected performance threshold and assessment schedule for each outcome. Finally, chairs can also quickly see if their programs need a different course, or if there are outcomes for their programs that have not been well articulated. Examples of these curricular maps are located in the [in the documents to support the Mission Fulfillment Visit](#).

The University-wide body that oversees assessment activities at MSU Billings is the Assessment & Accreditation Council (AAC), chaired by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The AAC and the Vice Provost share assessment oversight responsibilities, and each has a particular role to play in guiding the assessment activities of University programs through the two-year assessment cycle:





This cycle cements into the academic year calendar predictable dates as deadlines for the academic programs and departments that do not have externally-imposed accreditation schedules to report their Program Assessment Plans (PAPs) and Program Assessment Reports (PARs) to the AAC and the VPAA.

PAPs are due each October 15, and are reviewed by the AAC and the VPAA, with a report due back to the programs by the end of the calendar year. PARs are due on June 1, and are reviewed by the AAC with a report back to the program chairs by mid-summer to provide them time for planning before the fall. The two-year cycle is predicated on regular review and refinement of assessment protocols, with different goals for each year. “PAP1” constitutes the program assessment plan at the start of the cycle, repeated every third year. In the PAP1, programs establish their assessment protocols for the cycle and identify appropriate assessment instruments of their programmatic student learning outcomes. At the end of the year, following the PAP1 protocols, the program or department submits the first of the Program Assessment Reports (“PAR1”), which constitutes the programs’ report on outcomes assessment data garnered from the assessments identified in PAP1. “PAP2,” at the start of the second year of the cycle, is each program’s plan for using the PAR1 feedback from the AAC to re-examine their curriculum and assessment protocols for the second year. The cycle ends with the AAC review of the “PAR2,” which constitutes each program’s final report on how the program used the data and review by the AAC to refine and improve the curriculum.

These PAPs and PARs follow standardized templates that each program uses in preparing their reports. PAPs require program chairs to rearticulate programmatic student learning outcomes, what instruments the program will use in its assessment of those outcomes, whether those assessments are direct or indirect, and a timeline for carrying out that assessment. The PARs follow a different template, which aligns the outcomes with the time, instruments, results, areas needing improvement, and recommendations for change in the instruments, timing, or course, as appropriate.

Alignment between the individual programs and the University’s core themes is tracked periodically. The most notable example of this process was the Academic Prioritization Process (APP) of 2013-2014. Appropriate for this question, the rubric by which all programs assessed themselves, and by which the appropriate dean, the Academic Senate, the Academic Prioritization Council, and the Provost, subsequently assessed each program,

begins, as the first element of the assessment, by requiring chairs to note the degree to which their program was central to the University's mission and core themes.

### **General Education**

The [NWCCU Evaluation Committee's Response to the 2008 MSU Billings Self-Evaluation Report](#) included a recommendation that learning outcomes, and their assessment, be re-examined. In the campus's [2008 Self-Study Report](#), the institution outlined a collaboration between Information Technology, the Academic Senate, and the GEC to devise a database into which faculty teaching in the General Education program could input assessment data. This database was launched in early 2008. By 2011, it was clear that the database was not providing the quality assessment feedback that the University needed to fully and effectively assess its General Education program. Building on their long-standing reliance on the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Test, a representative of the Department of Biological and Physical Sciences recommended moving to the ETS Proficiency Profile as a method of General Education Program assessment.

In the 2012-2013 academic year, MSU Billings began using the ETS Proficiency Profile test to assess our General Education Program. For each of the first three years (through academic year 2014-2015) the GEC used the abbreviated version of the Proficiency Profile, administered primarily in courses taught by members of the GEC. This evoked a minimal response, so the GEC decided to recruit additional faculty members to administer the exam. The GEC invited instructors with junior or senior students enrolled in their courses to solicit volunteers to take the exam. A \$25 university campus store gift card was used to incentivize participation. Instructors from a variety of departments selected times and volunteered as proctors for the exam. No standardized guidelines were developed to present to the students prior to completing the exam. Due to low participation rate, the following year the GEC solicited support from the Deans to encourage faculty engagement in the ETS testing process. This too, was unsuccessful. Because participation was "spotty" and still primarily limited to those faculty on the GEC, and because the use of the abbreviated exam required larger sample sizes for accuracy, the committee decided to abandon that test and examine how our university could implement the full version of the exam, and make that test a mandatory graduation requirement. That discussion ran through the 2015-2016 academic year and thus no exams were given that year. At the beginning of the spring 2017 semester, representatives from the GEC appealed to the Academic Senate for support and received permission to implement the full ETS exam, on a trial basis, to graduating seniors in the spring and fall of 2017. The Academic Senate also approved the request to refund testing volunteers' graduation application fee (\$50) to incentivize participation. Letters were e-mailed to all graduating seniors, followed-up with a second mailing as the testing dates approached. For the first full ETS offering this spring, only 54 (15.9%) students volunteered and took the exam. Based upon the low turn-out the GEC will appeal to the Academic Senate to make the ETS test a graduation requirement in the future to assure that a more representative sample. In March 2018, the Academic Senate approved the request from the GEC to require the ETS Proficiency Profile of all students before graduation. Details regarding implementation will be determined in AY 2018-2019.

## General Education Assessment Report – Spring 2018

A detailed report of the assessment of the General Education program, tracking various metrics across several years, was produced in Spring 2017. During the 2017/2018 academic year, the General Education Committee (GEC) successfully lobbied the Academic Senate to make the ETS Proficiency Profile exam a requirement for all graduating seniors. This requirement will not go into effect immediately, however. First, the language must be built into the Undergraduate Catalog, to take effect when freshmen entering MSUB under that catalog graduate. Additionally, it was decided that, initially, we would require all seniors to take the exam online and unproctored. Thus, to get at least some data prior to this exam becoming a requirement, it was decided to continue to offer the \$50 reimbursement to graduating seniors who would take the exam online (unproctored) voluntarily. In 2018, 53 students completed the exam. Because all students took the exam in an unproctored format, the appropriate comparative data for 2018 differs from those used in previous years (where most or all students took the proctored exam in-house). However, we have included data from 2017 for the 14 students that ALSO took the unproctored exam online in that year. These data were previously presented in the 2017 report, but because they were a minor portion of the assessment in 2017 they were analyzed (at the time) via the “proctored” exam comparative database. We have included these data here because they are more appropriately analyzed using the database for unproctored exams.

The ETS Proficiency Profile is designed to test general outcomes to be expected from a General Education Program. It was used to assess general education (at some point, from freshmen through seniors) by 294 institutions across the country as of June 2017 (the latest date for which comparative data are available). ETS provides comparative data for various types of institutions (by Carnegie classification) and for students at various stages in their academic career (from freshmen through seniors). Because the exams were given to graduating seniors only (online and unproctored), the appropriate comparative data are those for “Master’s (Comprehensive) Colleges and Universities I and II, Senior, (More than 90 semester hours or more than 145 quarter hours), Unproctored Administration.” As of 2017, this comparative list included 41 institutions and 31,158 students who took the test. All analyses below are based on this comparative data set.

ETS provides eight scores along with national comparative data:

- Total Score – overall score on the exam as a whole

- Four “Skills Sub-scores”: general abilities to be expected after completing a General Education Program:

  - Critical Thinking

  - Reading

  - Writing

  - Mathematics

- Three “Context-Based Sub-scores”: general knowledge areas to be expected after completing a General Education Program:

  - Humanities

  - Social Sciences

  - Natural Sciences

MSU Billings has thirty [General Education Assessment Objectives](#), broken into five categories and reproduced below. The eight scores resulting from the Proficiency Profile exam can, in part, address twenty-three of these objectives. The appropriate objectives are

referred to in the analysis of each of the eight scores below.

### General Education Assessment Objectives

## **I. Global Academic Skills**

### **A. Mathematics**

1. Demonstrate ability to solve problems quantitatively.
2. Solve problems with various mathematical methods of the discipline.
3. Communicate using mathematical terminology.

### **B. English**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of and competence in the use of conventional written forms: mechanics, spelling, punctuation, syntax, grammar, etc.
2. Demonstrate ability to apply knowledge of writing strategies.
3. Demonstrate the ability to undertake and accomplish original work in written form.

### **C. Communication & Information Literacy**

1. Engage in hands-on research as a process of gathering, assessing, interpreting, and using data from multiple sources to express ideas.
2. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose in oral or written form.
3. Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

## **II. Natural Sciences**

### **A. Life Science**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of knowledge related to the life sciences.
2. Demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge from different subject areas concerning the life sciences.
3. Demonstrate the ability to use logical or quantitative approaches to solve problems related to the life sciences.

### **B. Physical Science**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of knowledge related to the physical sciences.
2. Demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge from different subject areas concerning the physical sciences.
3. Demonstrate the ability to use logical or quantitative approaches to solve problems related to the physical sciences.

## **III. Social Sciences and History**

### **A. Social Sciences**

1. Analyze human behavior, ideas, and social institutions for historical and cultural meaning and significance.
2. Gather information, analyze data, and draw conclusions from multiple hypotheses to understand human behavior.
3. Synthesize ideas and information with regard to historical causes, the course of events, and their consequences, separated by time and place.

### **B. History**

1. Demonstrate an ability to use analysis of a variety of types of sources to construct historical knowledge.
2. Demonstrate an ability to organize a variety of historical sources and express

them effectively in written form.

3. Demonstrate basic understanding of the historical context of events.

#### **IV. Cultural Diversity**

1. Demonstrate an ability to identify and solve problems relating to cultural diversity within the discipline.
2. Demonstrate the ability to communicate and analyze effectively concerning cultural diversity within the discipline
3. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the importance of awareness of cultural diversity within the various disciplines.

#### **V. Arts and Humanities**

##### **A. Fine Arts**

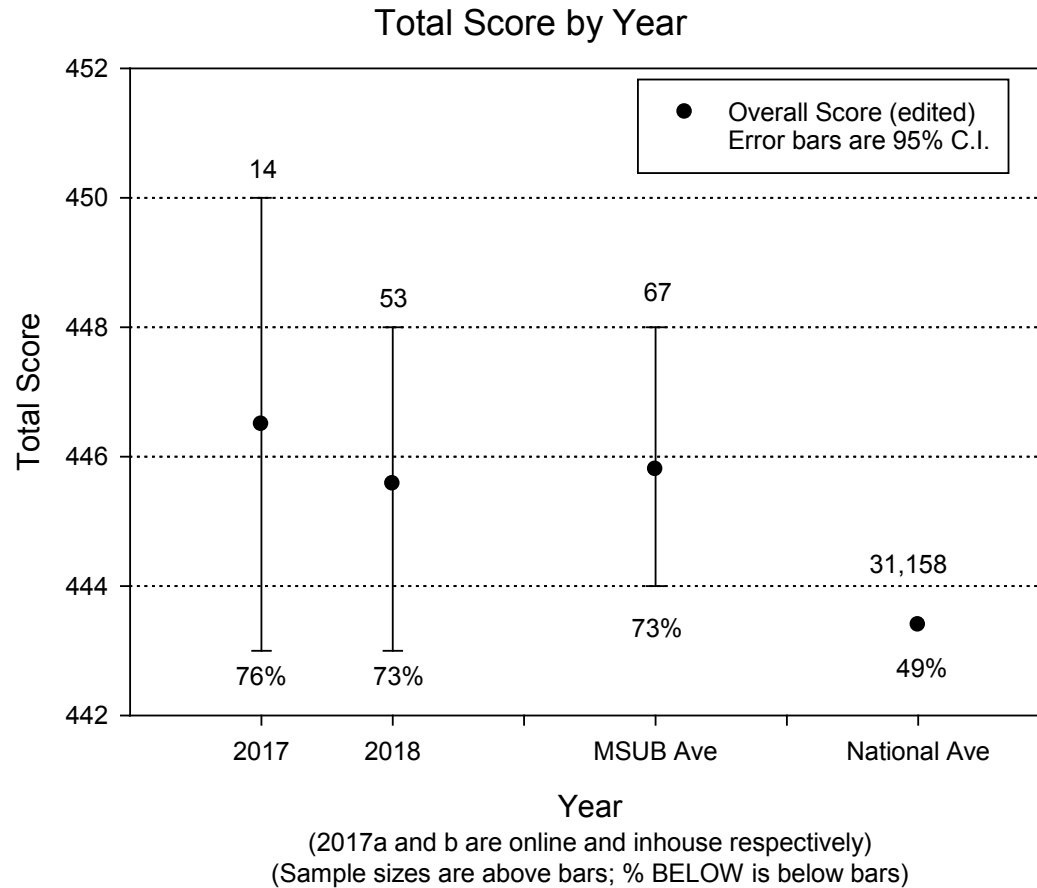
1. Demonstrate cultural awareness through fine arts at the local, regional, national, and international levels.
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the power of imagination and expression.
3. Demonstrate an appreciation for the fine arts and what that appreciation can mean as a quality of life issue.

##### **B. Humanities**

1. Develop an awareness of the role that the humanities play in culture, i.e., politics, philosophy, economics, science, math, etc.
2. Create an awareness of how to cross-relate/reference humanities-based information.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of issues surrounding life, death, and morality.

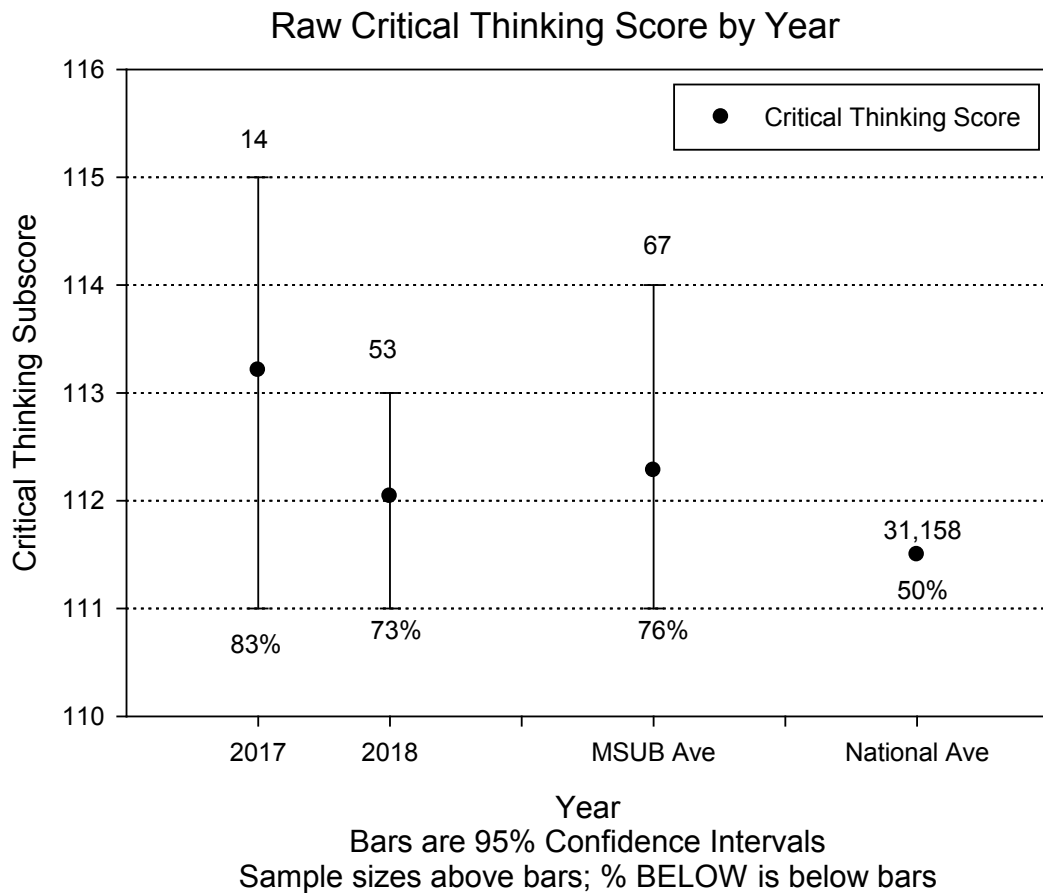


## MSUB Overall Performance on the Proficiency Profile Exam



The figure above shows MSU Billings' total score this year (2018) and for the subset of students that took the online, unproctored version of the Proficiency Profile exam last year. On this exam, when compared to other universities (N=41, 31,158 students) using the unproctored online version, students from MSU Billings performed well above the national average.

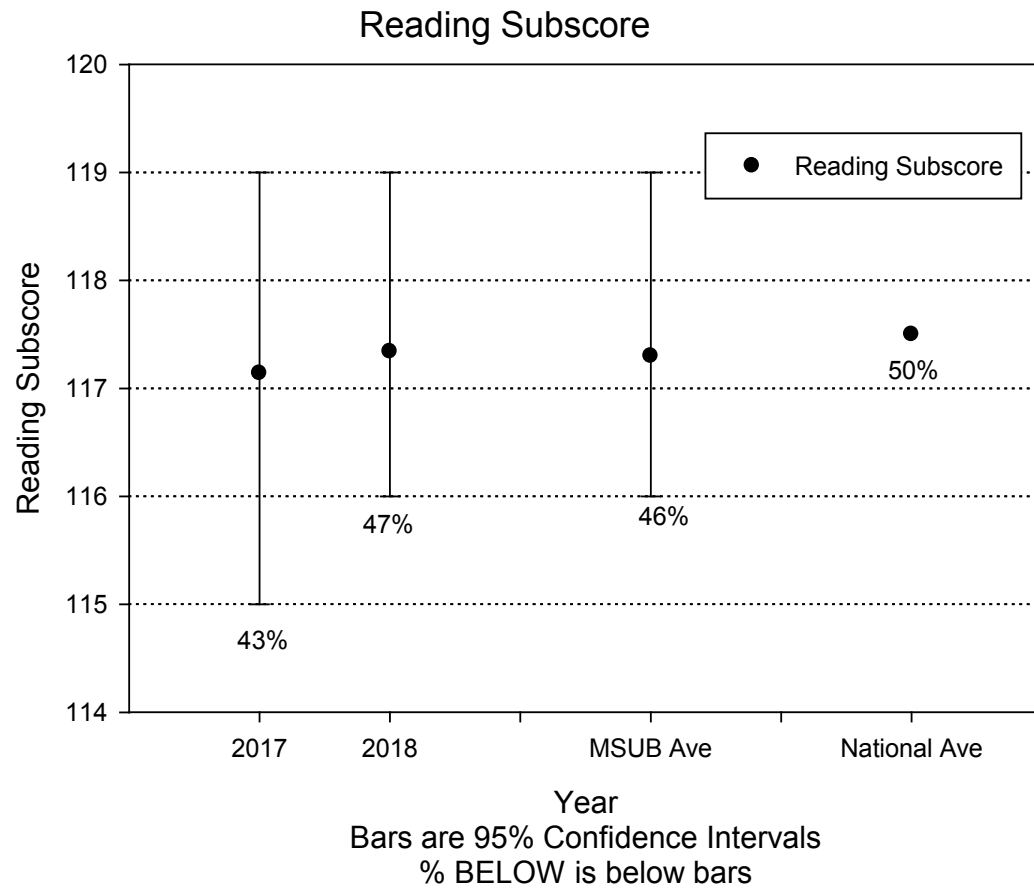
When comparing performance in 2018 to the report covering 2013-2017, it might appear that our students have somehow increased their performance strikingly; however, that is not the case. Rather, the comparison data set has changed, and thus the percentiles have changed. Prior to 2018, most students took the exam in a proctored setting, and they took the pencil/paper version of the test. Thus, for those years, the appropriate comparison data set was that for the proctored exam. In 2018, all 53 students took the unproctored, online version of the exam necessitating comparison with the unproctored data set. Overall, average scores on this comparison data set are lower than those on the proctored set, and the result is that students from MSUB score quite well compared to the national average.

**MSUB Performance on Skills Sub-scores:****Critical Thinking**

The figure above shows the sub-score for Critical Thinking by year along with the MSU Billings and national averages. In 2018, MSUB students scored slightly lower than the group that took the online exam in 2017 (N=14), but our average is still above the national average.

**Interpretation**

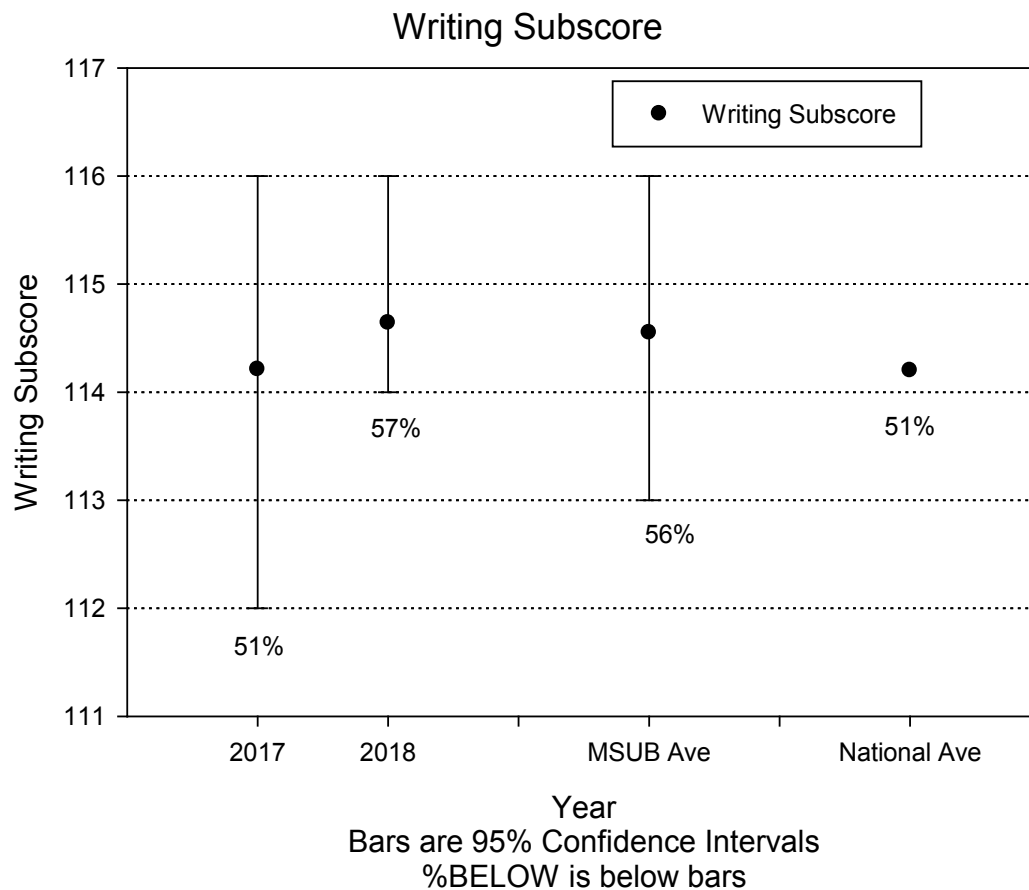
The Critical Thinking sub-score encompasses objectives IIA2, IIB2, IIIA2, IIIB1 and VA2-3. While the national average is within the 95% confidence intervals for the average scores for MSUB, our students scored above the national average. The GEC concludes that, though there is room for improvement, the institution is meeting its objectives here.

**Reading**

The figure above shows the results for the Reading sub-score. Sample sizes above the bars have been omitted because they are the same as those in the first figure for the overall score and for the critical thinking sub-score. In 2018, MSUB students scored slightly higher on this subscore than in 2017, but are still slightly below the national average.

**Interpretation**

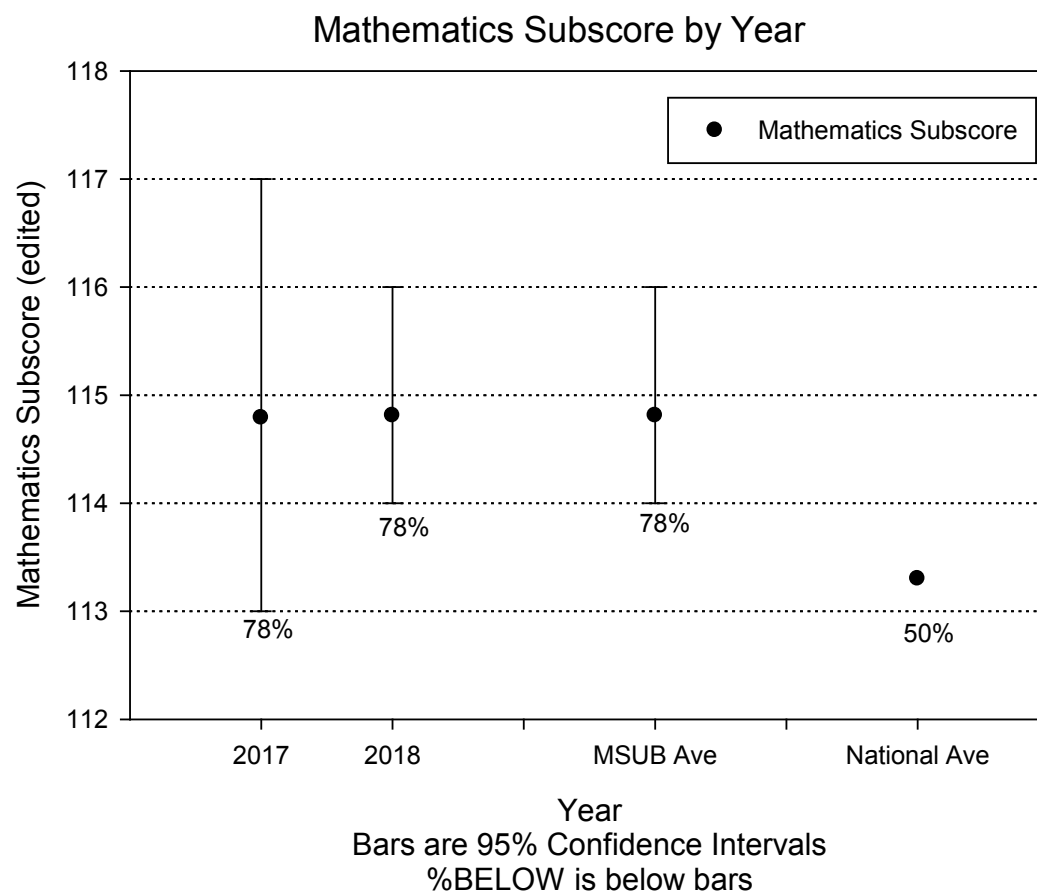
The reading sub-score directly addresses objective IB1. This may be an area in which MSU Billings can show improvement.

**Writing Sub-score**

On the writing sub-score, students from MSUB perform essentially at (slightly above) the national average.

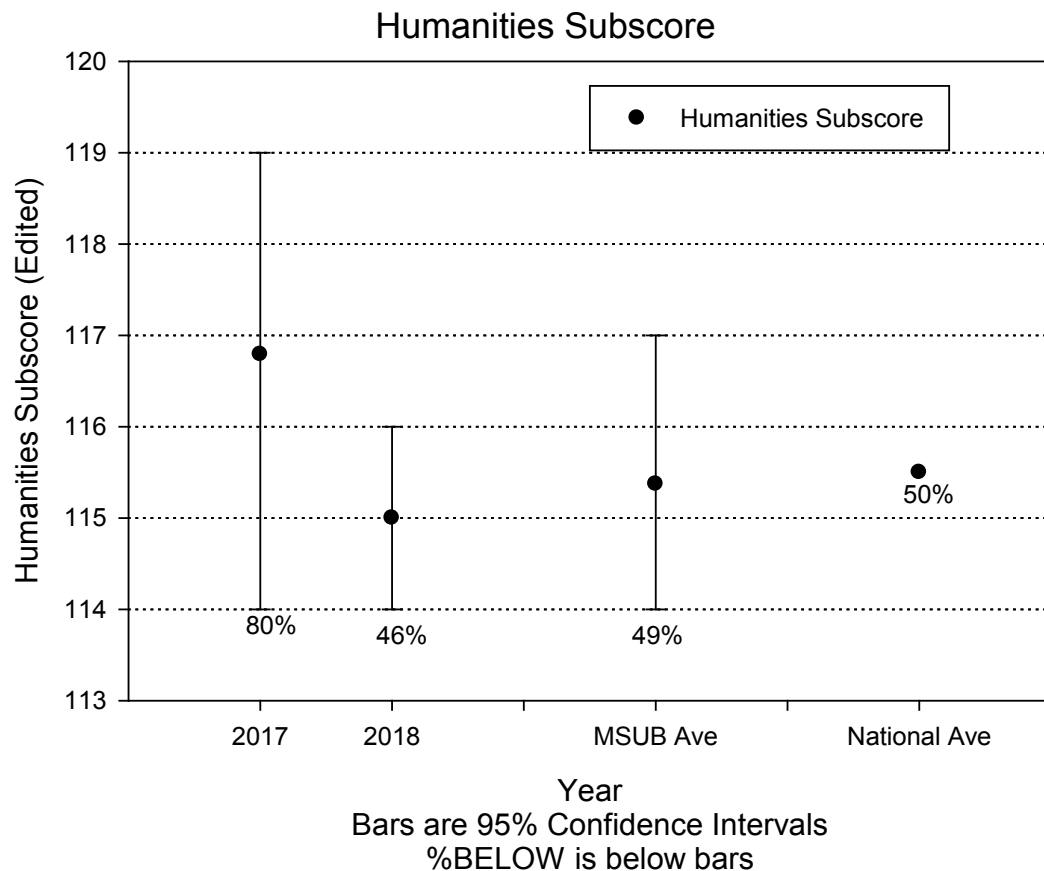
**Interpretation**

This sub-score relates directly to objectives IB2 and IC2. Writing clearly and effectively is an important skill and our students are similar to those at the other institutions using this unproctored exam.

**Mathematics Sub-score****Interpretation**

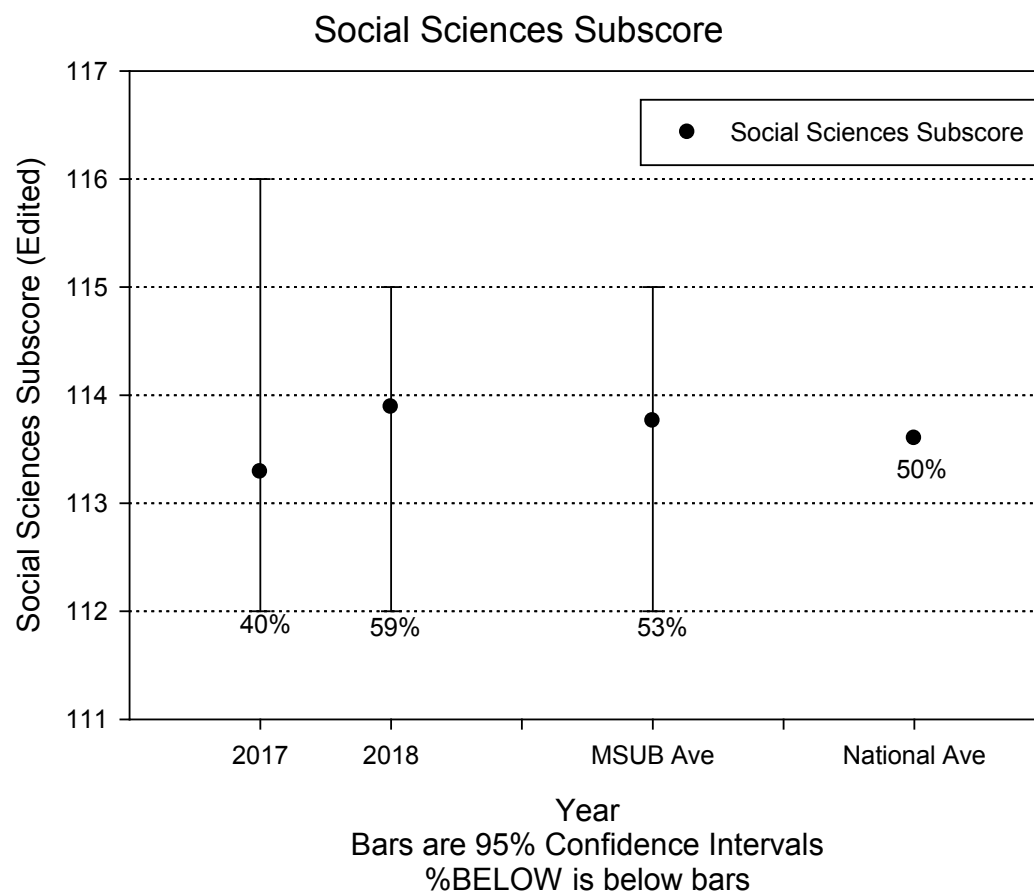
This sub-score addresses objectives IA 1-3. In 2017 and 2018, MSUB students performed quite well on the unproctored exam for this subscore. Our averages are significantly higher than the national average and MSUB scored above 78% of the other institutions on this subscore. The Gen Ed Committee feels that we are meeting our objectives here.



**Humanities Sub-score**

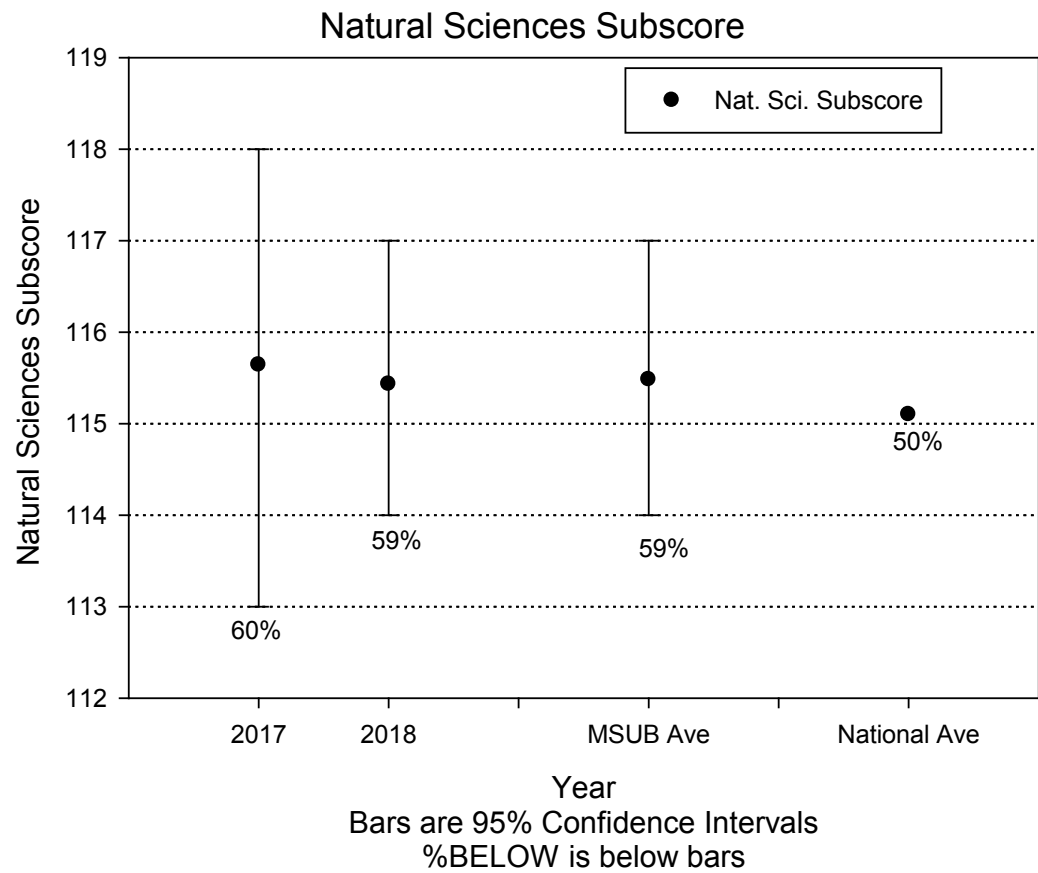
There is a clear difference in performance on the Humanities Sub-score between the sample of students in 2017 (N=14) and the sample in 2018 (N=53). The overall average is essentially at the national average.

**Interpretation** This sub-score encompasses objectives IIB3, VB1-3, and VA1. Variation among years is evident, and we will have to gather more data before making firm conclusions here. However, the larger sample size (2018) suggests that there may be room for improvement here.

**Social Sciences Sub-score****Interpretation**

This sub-score encompasses objectives IIIA1 and IIIA3. In 2018 MSUB students scored higher than in 2017, and our overall average is slightly higher than the national average. The GEC feels that we are meeting our objectives on this subscore.

Natural Sciences Sub-score

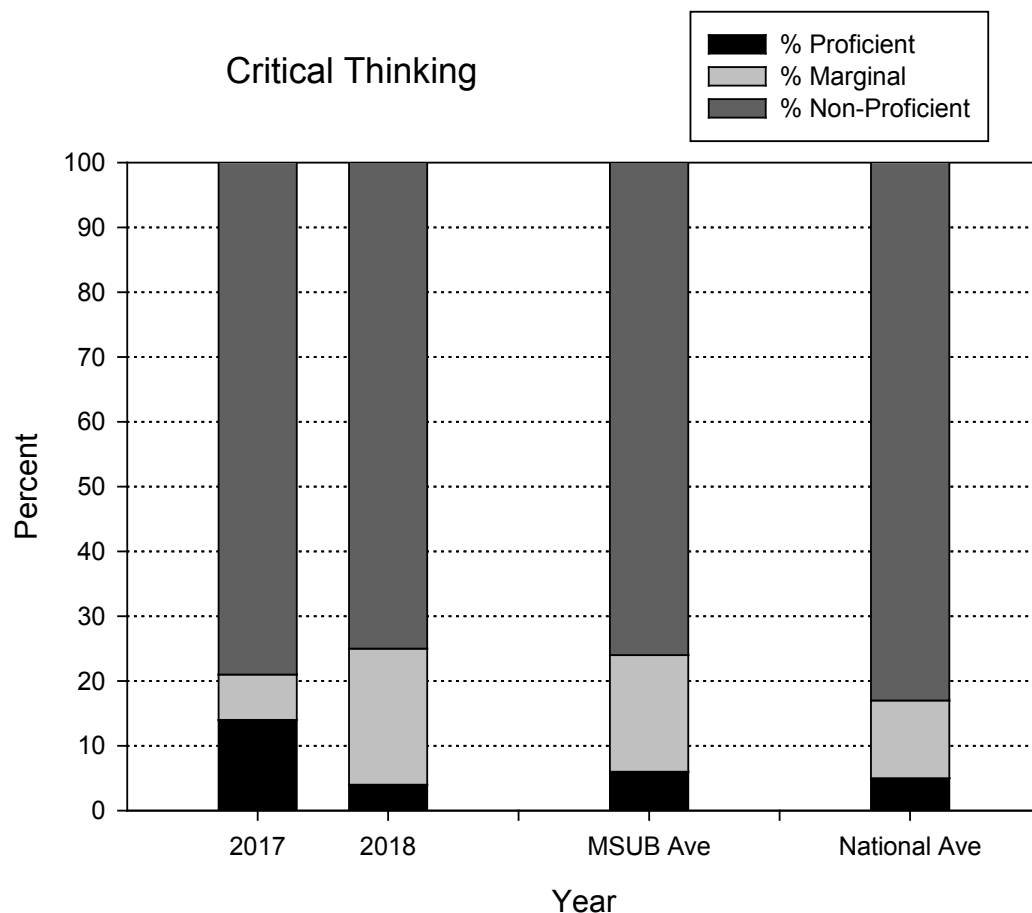


Interpretation

This sub-score encompasses objectives IIA1, IIA3, IIB1 and IIB3. In each year, students scored slightly higher on this sub-score than the national average. The GEC feels we are meeting our objectives with respect to this sub-score.

The ETS Proficiency Profile exam also provides “Proficiency Classifications and Proficiency Level Statistics.” These data are shown in the figures below. The first classification is Critical Thinking. ETS considers a student proficient at this level if they are able to:

- Evaluate competing causal explanations
- Evaluate hypotheses for consistency with known facts
- Determine the relevance of information for evaluating an argument or conclusion
- Determine whether an artistic interpretation is supported by evidence contained in a work
- Recognize the salient features or themes in a work of art
- Evaluate the appropriateness of procedures for investigating a question of causation
- Evaluate data for consistency with known facts, hypotheses or methods



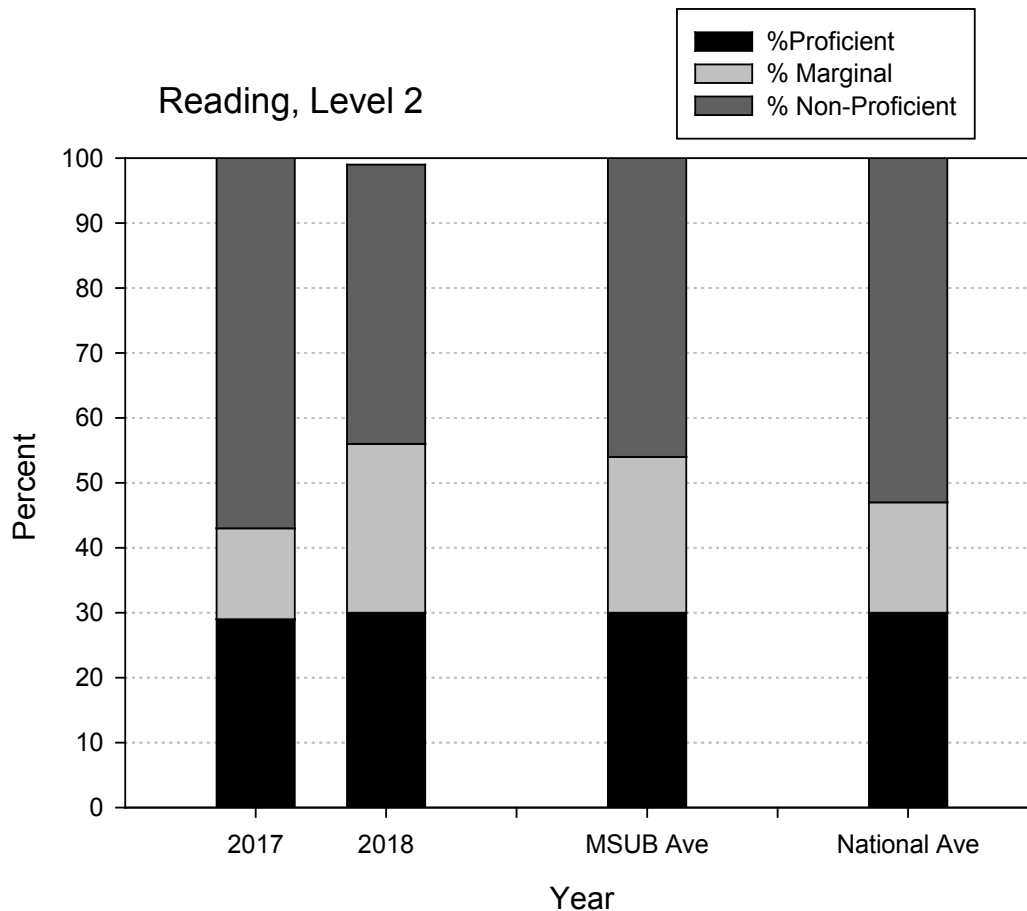
Overall MSU Billings averages (N=67) vs. National Averages for Critical Thinking are:

	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	6%	5%
Marginal -	18%	12%
Non-Proficient -	76%	83%

Interpretation – Although there is variation among years, the institution’s students show critical thinking proficiencies similar to national averages (though only 5% nationally are proficient here)

ETS considers a student proficient at Reading, Level 2 if they are able to

- Synthesize material from different sections of a passage
- Recognize valid inferences derived from material in the passage
- Identify accurate summaries of a passage or of significant sections of the passage
- Understand and interpret figurative language
- Discern the main idea, purpose, or focus of a passage or significant portion of a passage



Overall MSU Billings averages (N=67) vs. National Averages for Reading, Level 2 are:

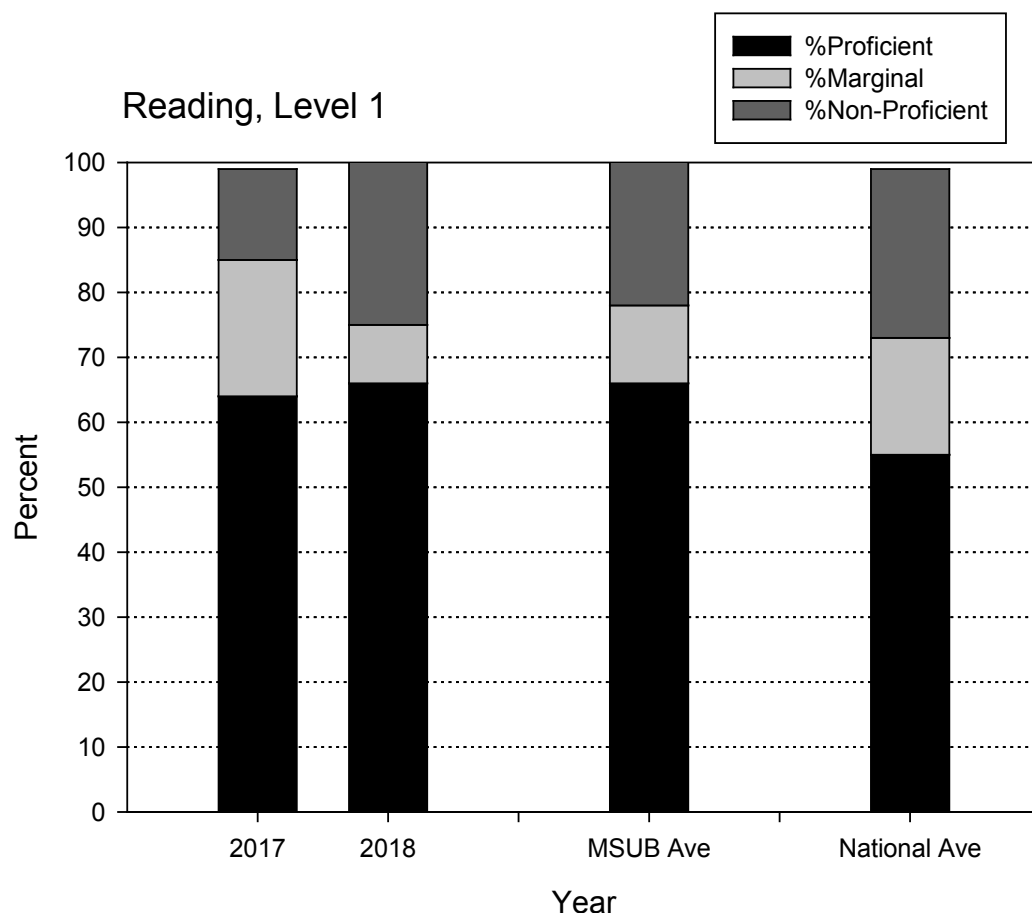
	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	30%	30%
Marginal -	24%	17%
Non-Proficient -	46%	53%

Interpretation - These data suggest that MSU Billings has fewer “non-proficient” students at Reading, Level 2 than the national average. Thus, the institution seems to be performing well on this metric.



ETS considers a student proficient at Reading, Level 1 if they are able to

- Recognize factual material explicitly presented in a reading passage
- Understand the meaning of particular words or phrases in the context of a reading passage



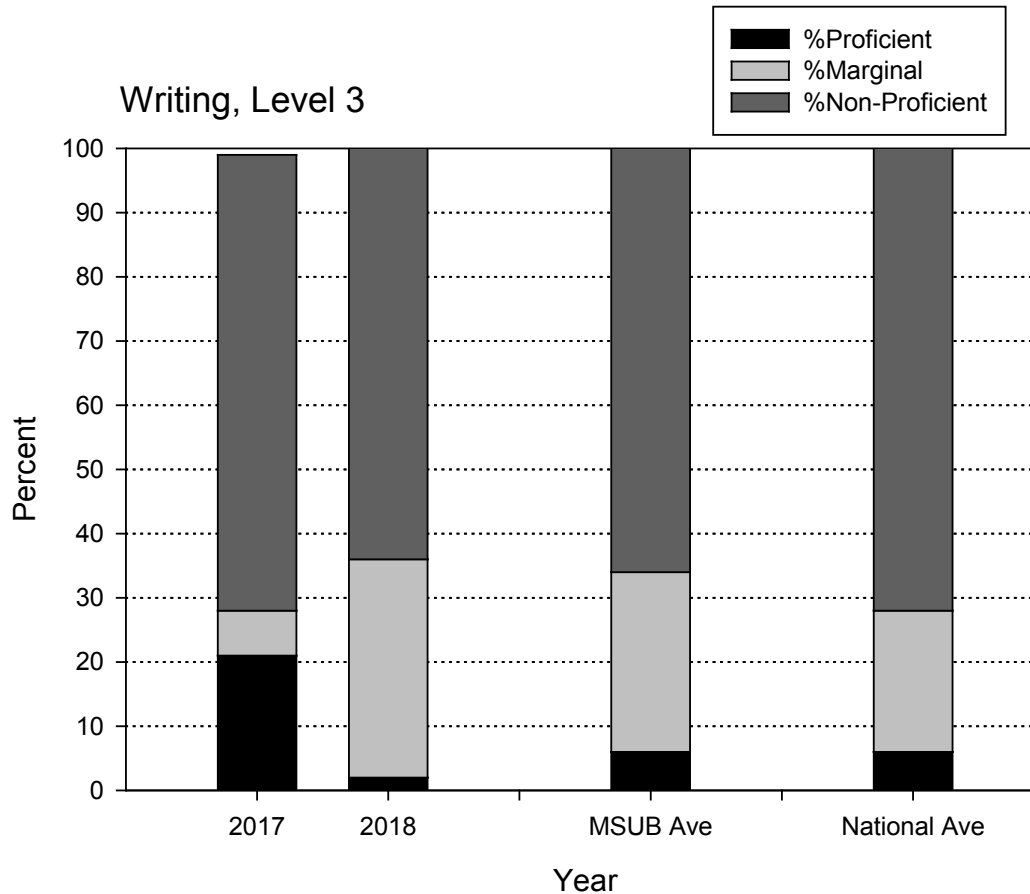
Overall MSU Billings averages (N=67) vs. National Averages for Reading, Level 1 are:

	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	66%	55%
Marginal -	12%	18%
Non-Proficient -	22%	26%

Interpretation - The University's students are performing above the averages for Reading, Level 1.

ETS considers a student proficient at Writing, Level 3 if they are able to:

- discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate use of parallelism
- discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate use of idiomatic language
- recognize redundancy
- discriminate between correct and incorrect constructions
- recognize the most effective revision of a sentence



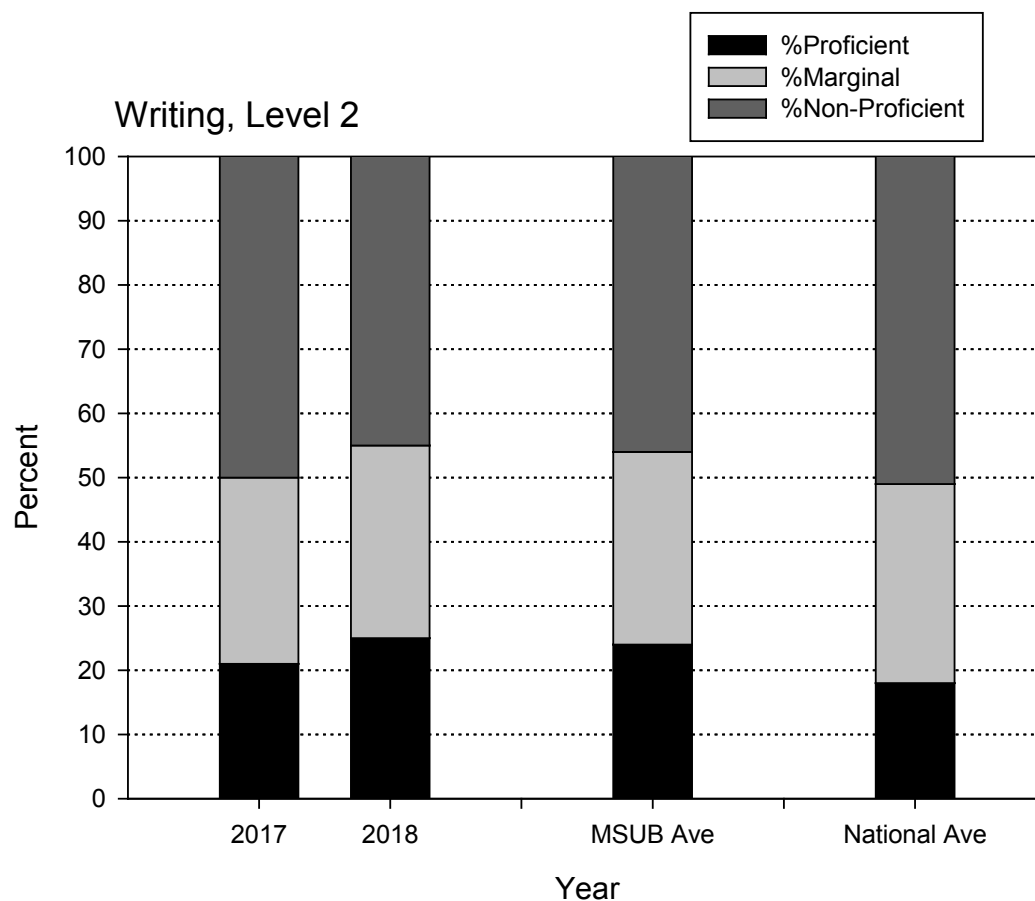
Overall MSU Billings averages (N=313) vs. National Averages for Writing, Level 3 are:

	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	6%	6%
Marginal -	28%	22%
Non-Proficient -	66%	72%

Interpretation - MSUB has a slightly greater number of “marginal” students than the national average in Writing, Level 3.

ETS considers a student proficient in Writing, Level 2 if they are able to:

- incorporate new material into a passage
- recognize agreement among basic grammatical elements (e.g., nouns, verbs, pronouns and conjunctions) when these elements are complicated by intervening words or phrases
- combines simple clauses into single, more complex combinations
- re-cast existing sentences into new syntactic combinations.



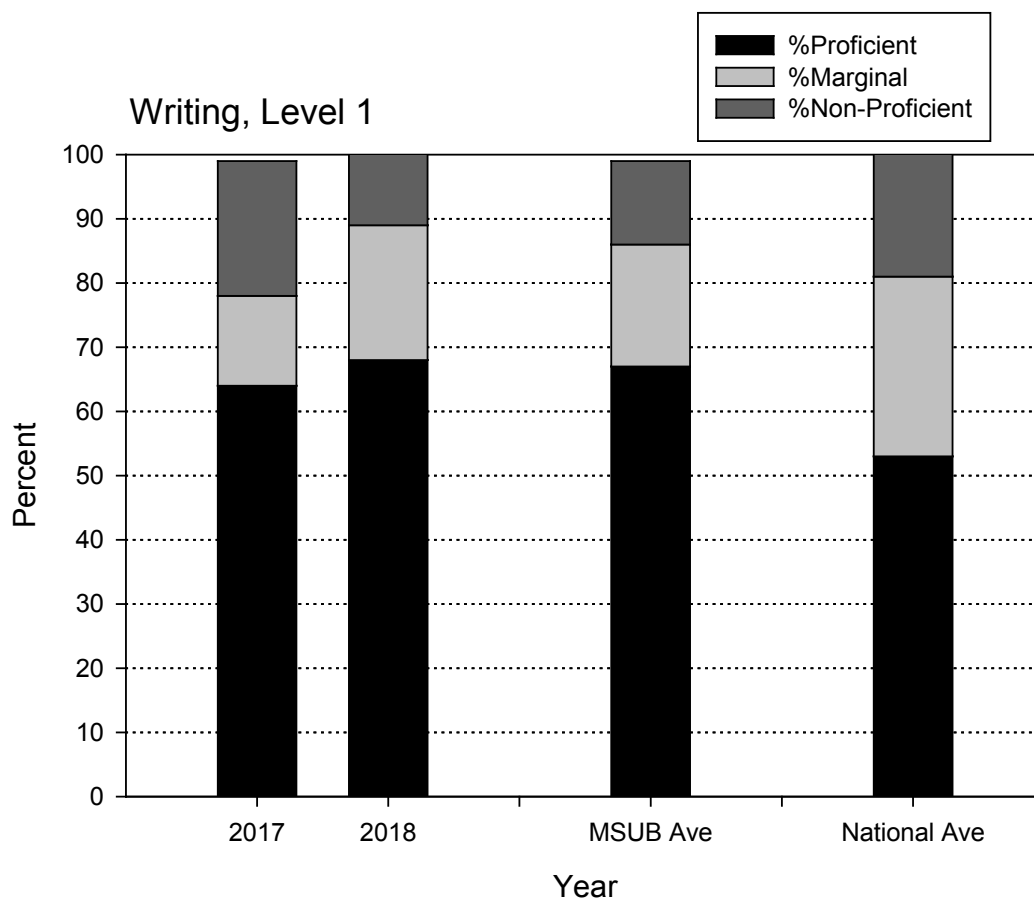
Overall MSU Billings averages (N=64) vs. National Averages for Writing, Level 2 are:

	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	24%	18%
Marginal -	30%	31%
Non-Proficient -	46%	51%

Interpretation - MSUB has a greater number of "proficient" students than the national average in Writing, Level 2.

ETS considers a student proficient at Writing, Level 1 if they are able to

- recognize agreement among basic grammatical elements (e.g., nouns, verbs, pronouns and conjunctions)
- recognize appropriate transition words
- recognize incorrect word choice
- order sentences in a paragraph
- order elements in an outline



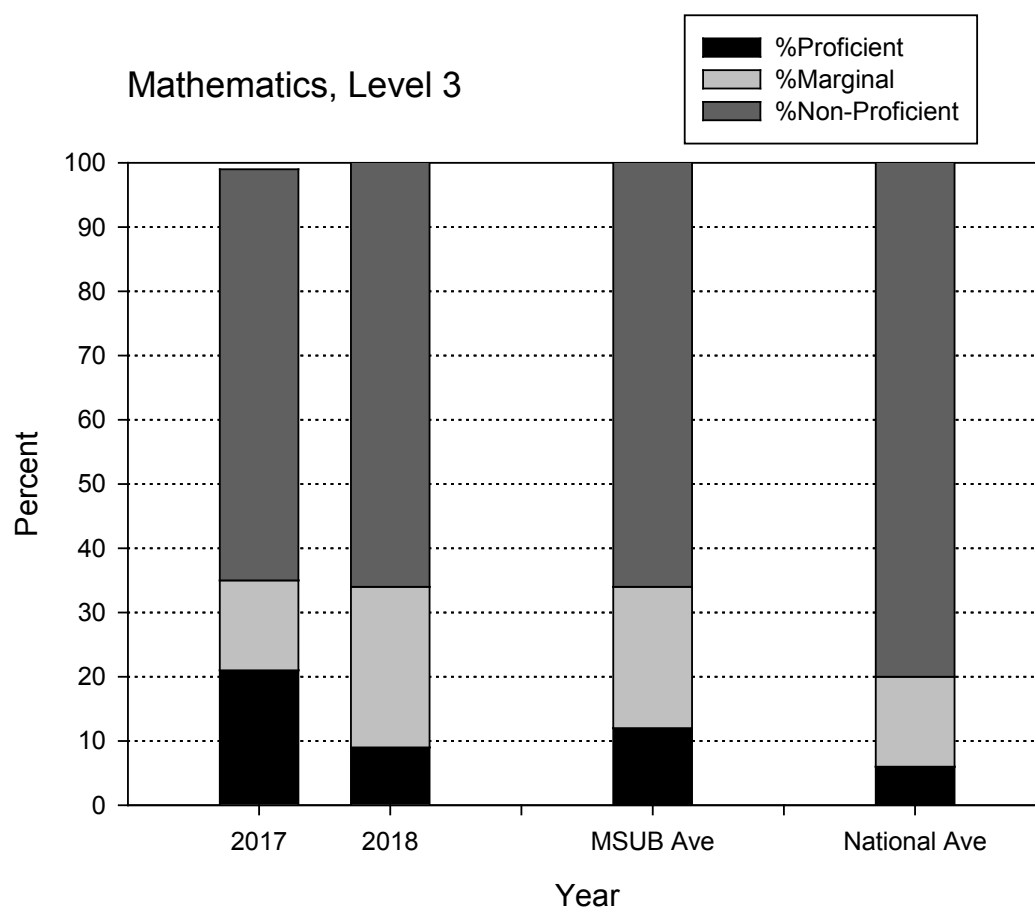
Overall MSU Billings averages (N=64) vs. National Averages for Writing, Level 1 are:

	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	67%	53%
Marginal -	19%	28%
Non-Proficient -	13%	19%

Interpretation -The University's students perform above the national average at Writing, Level 1.

ETS considers a student proficient at Mathematics, Level 3 if they are able to

- solve word problems that would be unlikely to be solved by arithmetic; the answer choices are either algebraic expressions or are numbers that do not lend themselves to back-solving
- solve problems involving difficult arithmetic concepts such as exponents and roots other than squares and square roots and percent of increase or decrease
- generalize about numbers, e.g., identify the values of (x) for which an expression increases as (x) increases
- solve problems requiring an understanding of the properties of integers, rational numbers, etc.
- interpret a graph in which the trends are to be expressed algebraically or in which one of the following is involved: exponents and roots other than squares and square roots, percent of increase or decrease
- solve problems requiring insight or logical reasoning



Overall MSU Billings averages (N=67) vs. National Averages for Mathematics, Level 3 are:

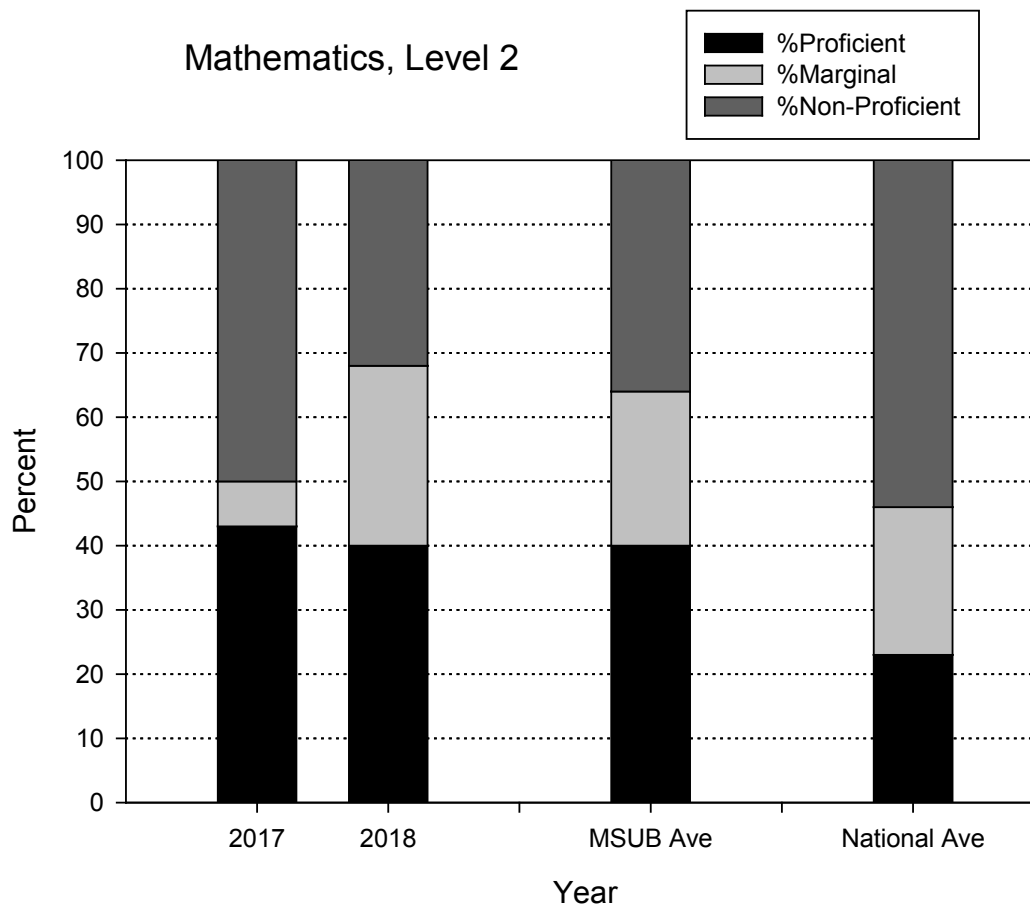
	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	12%	6%
Marginal -	22%	14%
Non-Proficient -	66%	80%

Interpretation - MSU Billings has a greater proportion proficient and marginal students at Math, Level 3 than the national average



ETS considers a student proficient at Mathematics, Level 2 if they are able to

- solve arithmetic problems with some complications, such as complex wording, maximizing or minimizing and embedded ratios (These problems include algebra problems that can be solved by arithmetic [the answer choices are numeric].)
- simplify algebraic expressions, perform basic translations and draw conclusions from algebraic equations and inequalities (These tasks are more complicated than solving a simple equation, though they may be approached arithmetically by substituting numbers.)
- interpret a trend represented in a graph, or choose a graph that reflects a trend
- Solve problems involving sets (The problems would have numeric answer choices.)



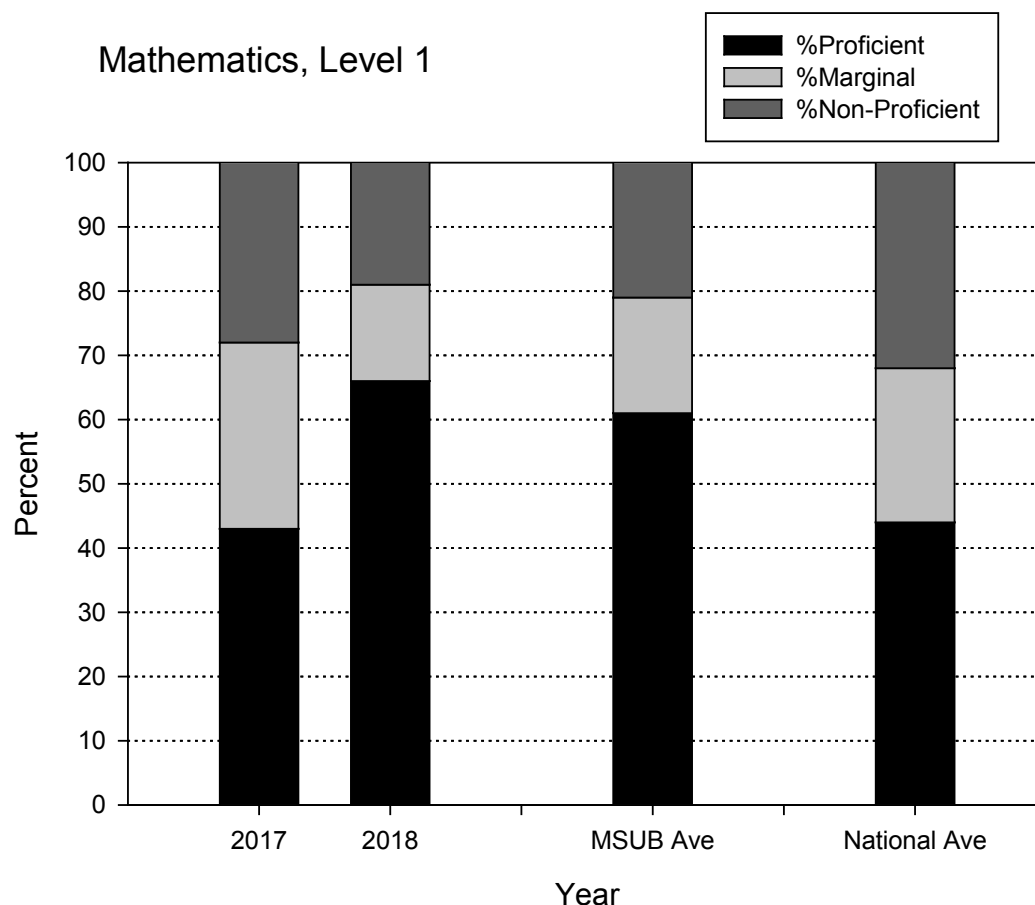
Overall MSU Billings averages (N=67) vs. National Averages for Mathematics, Level 2 are:

	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	40%	23%
Marginal -	24%	23%
Non-Proficient -	36%	54%

Interpretation - MSUB exceeds the national averages for proficient and marginal students in Mathematics, Level 2.

ETS considers a student proficient at Mathematics, Level 1 if they are able to

- solve word problems that would most likely be solved by arithmetic and do not involve conversion of units or proportionality (These problems can be multi-step if the steps are repeated rather than embedded.)
- solve problems involving the informal properties of numbers and operations, often involving the Number Line, including positive and negative numbers, whole numbers and fractions (including conversions of common fractions to percent, such as converting  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 25%)
- solve problems requiring a general understanding of square roots and the squares of numbers
- solve a simple equation or substitute numbers into an algebraic expression
- find information from a graph (This task may involve finding a specified piece of information in a graph that also contains other information.)



Overall MSU Billings averages (N=67) vs. National Averages for Mathematics, Level 1 are:

	MSU Billings	National Average
Proficient -	61%	44%
Marginal -	18%	24%
Non-Proficient -	21%	32%

Interpretation - MSU Billings' students perform above the national average in Math, Level 1.

## Overall Conclusions

In 2017, the GEC produced an assessment of several years-worth of data using the “proctored” version of the ETS Proficiency Profile exam. In that report, the ETS “proctored” data set was appropriately used as the comparison. In 2018, students took the exam online in an “unproctored” environment. ETS has an appropriate “unproctored” comparison data set for analysis, and that is what was used in this report.

The “unproctored” data set (N=41 institutions; 31,158 students) has lower overall averages for all metrics (apparently, students do not do as well in an unproctored environment). This resulted in scores from MSUB being, in almost all cases, at or above the national average.

The ETS Proficiency Profile provides an objective test of many of our General Education Objectives. Approximately twenty-three of thirty objectives can be assessed with this exam. The remaining objectives (objectives IB13, IC1, IC3, IIIB2, and IV1-3) will need to be assessed in another way and the GEC is currently discussing how best to do that.

Overall, students at MSU Billings seem to perform at or above the national average on most metrics. Thus, the University’s General Education Program is certainly no worse than the average general education program in the U.S. However, simply being “average” is not good enough and there are some areas (e.g. Reading, Humanities) where the University could show some improvement and still solidify its “average” status. However, the GEC views these data as “baseline” and intends to work to get a better picture of exactly where the University’s students and its program fit nationally.

Because MSUB has recently agreed to include the ETS Proficiency Profile as a graduation requirement for all entering freshmen once the catalog has been changed (likely Fall 2019), we should have a much better view of the performance of our General Education program in just a few years.

## Co-Curricular Programs

Co-Curricular programs, chiefly run out of the Division of Student Affairs, have a long embraced a culture of assessment-for-improvement with a focus on satisfaction and needs assessment within the division. Data obtained, chiefly from surveys and evaluations, were used to determine ways to improve services, as well as identify areas for adding or removing programs (due to attendance/usage). For example, see the [Student Affairs Assessment Plan Presentation](#).

Between 2014 and 2016, new leadership within Student Affairs challenged the division’s directors to focus assessment efforts on *learning outcomes* to parallel the assessment efforts ongoing in the division of Academic Affairs, and to align what students learn inside the classroom with what they learn outside of it. As a result, during 2016, the division participated in a “Building a Culture of Evidence” retreat facilitated by the vice chancellor for Student Affairs, along with a faculty member from the College of Allied Health Professions to develop *Divisional Learning Outcomes*.

As a result of the workshop, the Student Affairs Council (comprised of all directors within the division and members of the Student Affairs Assessment Committee) approved learning outcomes through the following process:

- Members carried out a comprehensive review of learning outcomes and assessment tools developed by other universities and organizations, as well as AACU Value Rubrics, and CAS Standards, and
- Members paid attention to the integration and relatedness to both MSU Billings’ General Education learning outcomes and the Student Affairs mission.

Directed by these resources, the following Student Affairs Learning Outcomes were

developed:

### **INFORMATION LITERACY DOMAIN**

**Divisional Learning Outcome:** *Students who engage with Student Affairs offices, programs, activities, and services will be able to identify, integrate and apply information and skills gained from their experiences that will advance their academic, personal, and career growth.*

- a. Students will be able to identify, locate, and/or utilize campus services
- b. Students will be able to learn how to utilize services on campus
- c. Students will be able to use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- d. Students will be able to learn how to navigate electronic platforms
- e. Students will be able to learn how to find and use information about campus resources, policies and procedures
- f. Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills
- g. Students will be able to develop decision making skills

### **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION DOMAIN**

**Divisional Learning Outcome:** *Students who engage within Student Affairs offices, programs, activities, and services will be able to communicate effectively.*

- a. Students will be able to work collaboratively and seek feedback from others
- b. Students will be able to write and speak professionally and purposefully
- c. Students will be able to demonstrate active listening skills
- d. Students will be able to effectively self-advocate

### **PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DOMAIN**

**Divisional Learning Outcome 1:** *Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and activities will be able to understand and demonstrate competence of personal wellness*

Students will be able to identify and incorporate healthy lifestyle choices in the areas of physical, social, environmental, intellectual, spiritual, financial and emotional wellness

- a. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of balance between education, work and personal time
- b. Students will be able to set, articulate, and pursue personal and professional goals, and overcome obstacles
- c. Students will be able to identify characteristics of healthy interpersonal relationships.
- d. Students will be able to maintain feelings of self-worth and manage emotions appropriately.

**Divisional Learning Outcome 2:** *Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and activities will demonstrate an understanding and exhibit competence of civic responsibility & engagement, and diversity.*

- a. Students will be able to establish productive professional relationships in the campus community and community at large
- b. Students will be able to develop leadership skills
- c. Students will be able to develop an awareness of social change, social justice and civic awareness
- d. Students will be able to understand and demonstrate a commitment to integrity and civility
- e. Students will be able to understand the complexity and dynamics of various communities, including the university
- f. Students will be able to identify their personal level of engagement
- g. Students will be able to engage in meaningful service to the community

Directors then identified one “signature” program within their department and developed

learning outcomes associated with one or more of the Divisional Learning Outcomes, as well as linking to the University Strategic Plan and Core Themes. Some examples of selected assessment of departmental signature programs include [Advising & Career Services: Orientation Peer Leader Program](#), [New Student Services: Campus Tour Program](#), [Campus Activities & Engagement: Inaugural Student Leadership Series](#), and [City College Jacket Student Central: Group Registration Sessions](#). Student Affairs Assessment Council members review assessment programs on a quarterly basis during a Directors' Working Meeting.

During the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years, nearly twenty-five assessment projects were completed in Student Affairs. A wide range of departments conducted these assessments including Advising & Career Services (including Orientation), Financial Aid, Campus Activities & Engagement, Residence Life, Upward Bound, Student Support Services. The Student Affairs Assessment Committee/Directors Working Meetings continue to work on refining assessments across the division. In addition, the division has written a program review schedule; the Office of Disability Services conducted a successful [administrative program review](#) during Fall 2017





**MONTANA**  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
BILLINGS

**Standard Five:  
Mission Fulfillment**



## Standard 5: Mission Fulfillment

### Eligibility Requirement 24

The faculty, staff, and students at Montana State University Billings have developed a strong collaborative atmosphere in which the University has embraced a clear data-oriented approach to planning and decision-making. As demonstrated in its Year Three Self-Study (2013), and augmented by the Standard Three report above, the institution employs planning and assessment practices to ensure it has sufficient resources to carry out its mission and core themes. With the arrival of a new chancellor, his stated goals of growing enrollment, and the beginning of a new strategic planning effort in fall 2018 to carry out these goals, the institution is well poised to continue these practices to carry out its mission and core themes in the foreseeable future.

#### **5.A Mission Fulfillment**

**5.A.1 The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.**

**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.**

Montana State University Billings' Mission is to provide a University experience characterized by

- Excellent Teaching
- Support for Individual Learning
- Engagement in Civic Responsibility
- Intellectual, Cultural, Social and Economic Community Enhancement.

The FutureU strategic plan was designed explicitly to ensure the University met these goals. Strategies that emerged from the plan are founded primarily on engagement in teaching, learning, and community: engagement of the faculty in their teaching (Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence), students in the classroom (Core Theme 2: Providing an Environment for Learning), engagement of the University in the life of the Billings community (Core Themes 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility, engaging in relationship building with various individuals and agencies with the community (4: Enhancing the Community) and providing the necessary fiscal and infrastructure resources to allow this engagement to flourish. (Core Theme 5: Essentials for Success).

The indicators below measured the university's achievement of the mission as expressed through the core themes. The University set a target of meeting 70% of these indicators, and it has done so. However, this campus strives to ensure that all faculty, students, staff and the community are engaged by the university.

## MSUB FutureU Strategic Plan Indicator Assessment Rubric

Metrics	Baseline (1)	Target	Metric (current FY)
<b>Core Theme 1: Cultivating Teaching Excellence</b>			
<i>Professional Development Funds Awarded to Faculty (2)</i>	\$613	+2%/yr	\$680
<i>E-Learning Professional Development Funds Awarded (2)</i>	\$137	+2%/yr	\$171
<i>Professional Development Funds Awarded to Staff</i>	\$14,666	maint.	\$8,000
<i>Total Restricted Grant and Sponsored Program Funds Received for Research per Contact Faculty</i>	\$2,391	+5%/yr	\$1,938
<b>Core Theme 2: Providing an Environment for Learning</b>			
<i>Six-Year Graduation Rate - University Campus</i>	25%	+1%/yr (4)	24%
<i>Three-Year Graduation Rate- City College Campus</i>	24%*	+1%/yr (4)	23%
<i>First-Year Retention Rate (First Time - FT, Fall to Fall)</i>	54%*	60%	56%
<i>Dual Credit Students Served</i>	245	+10%	354
<i>General Fund Scholarships and Waivers Awarded as % of Total Tuition</i>	12.3%	+1%/yr	14.2%
<i>Private Aid Through the MSUB Foundation as % of Total Tuition</i>	8.2%	+1%/yr	10.0%
<i>Student Credit Hours in Internships as a % of total SCH</i>	0.78%	+5%/yr	0.89%
<b>Core Theme 3: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility</b>			
<i>Courses that include Service Learning Activities</i>	26	+2%/yr	32
<i>Campus-wide Hours Volunteering in the Community and Region</i>	5474	+3%/yr	13200
<i>Annual Student Enrollment in Study Abroad Programs (as a percentage of total Bachelor and Associate Degrees Conferred)</i>	2.81%	5.00%	2.13% (2016)
<b>Core Theme 4: Enhancing the Community</b>			
<i>Clients Served through MSUB Extended Campus</i>	4318 (5)	+3%	1913
<i>MSUB Community Partnerships</i>	49 (5)	+5%	52
<i>Number of MSUB Community Events</i>	55	50	59
<b>Essentials for Success</b>			
<i>Expenditure Ratio: Instruction/Total</i>	48%	50% (4)	50%
<i>Expenditure Ratio: (Inst. + Acad. Sup. + Stu. Ser.)/Total</i>	68%	70% (4)	71%
<i>Construction \$'s Expended</i>	\$2,109,997		\$1,862,351

(1) Rolling average of previous three years, unless otherwise noted, current metrics: 2014-2016

(2) Expressed as funds per contract faculty member

(3) Previous year's average

(4) Reflective of Performance Based Funding criteria

(5) 2016-2017

\* Baseline calculated on FY 15-16

**Montana State University Billings' mission focuses on excellent teaching and support for individual learning led to the formation of the Student Success committee in 2014.** Three guiding principles guided the work of the Student Success Committee (SSC):

1. The SSC was to maintain focus on the university mission and motto of "Access and Excellence" in order to continue to provide broad access to higher education and seek to deliver an excellent education to all committed to reaching their educational goals;
2. The SSC was to take into account the diverse nature of the students MSU Billings serves and research the best practices in serving traditional students, adult students, at-risk populations including underrepresented minorities, international students, first-generation students, and low-income students; and
3. The SSC was to research best practices in supporting all students as they persist to graduation including freshman seminars, learning/living communities, peer mentoring/tutoring, and early warning systems, with particular focus on those aimed at improving student success in key academic courses that have high rates of students dropping out or receiving grades of W, D or F.

The SSC issued a [final report](#) in October, 2015, outlining major initiative recommendations for the campus backed by research into state-of-the-art practices in the scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The SSC's recommendations fell into two broad categories: [Gateway/High DFWI Courses](#), focusing on enhancement of developmental education, through linked or co-requisite courses & student cohorts, integration of learning assistance programs, such as Supplemental Instruction, revisions of the University General Education program, and [Holistic, Multi-Tiered Advising](#). The Holistic, Multi-Tiered Advising approach included development of a faculty-initiated MSU Billings-tailored early alert system, revisions to the First Year Seminar, implementation of peer mentoring models, and analysis of training and procedures for both faculty and staff advisors.

In pursuit of the first goal, the university engaged the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education and its three-year Gateways to Completion (G2C) program. The G2C program helps faculty use a data-intensive approach to find and implement a wide variety of active Learning techniques proven effective in mitigating traditionally high DFWI rates in these gateway (generally, General Education) courses. The interventions adopted in the G2C courses thus far, including such practices as flipped classrooms and Supplemental Instruction, have proven remarkably successful in two significant ways. For most of the courses, the interventions and pedagogical reforms accomplished the primary goal of reducing their DFWI rates, and in some cases, doing so dramatically (see page [233](#) below). In pursuit of the SSC's second goals, a broadly representative Council on Enrollment Management (CEM) (comprised of nearly thirty representative from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Administration and Finance) team started work redefining the institution's approaches to orientation, the First Year Seminar, living-learning communities, the development of intensive advising training for faculty and staff advisors, and the development of an advising syllabus. These two categories, focusing on gateway courses and intensive advising/student services programs, are broad enough to encompass a wide variety of student success initiatives. These initiatives constitute a multi-pronged approach to one primary goal—student success—with two complementary objectives: student retention and completion.

The narrative below will briefly summarize the various initiatives that have spun out of the SSC effort (Early Alert System, Advising Training and Procedures, First Year Seminar, Developmental Education, Structured Learning Assistance, General Education, and High DFWI Courses.



## Early Alert System

MSU Billings recognizes at-risk students—those most likely to leave the institution—rarely self-identify or seek out services. Reaching out to these vulnerable students, often before they realize they are, at risk of not persisting in their studies, is the essence of an early alert system. The keys to effective early alert systems are early identification coupled with aggressive responses. The best early alert systems coordinate the efforts of numerous offices within both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. Moreover, “evidence suggests that these synergistic relationships are most effective when information is actively shared... in order to mount a coordinated response.” In the spring and summer of 2016, Information Technology created an Academic Alert System. The goal of this home-grown system was two-fold: to familiarize faculty members with the protocols of early assessment leading to early interventions, and to identify which early warning features were most useful for the faculty, staff, and students to effectively identify criteria for intervention.



This system is intended to improve students' persistence and academic success by helping faculty and staff to be proactive, supportive, and collaborative in facilitating the academic components of student retention. The system is designed to quickly link students whose faculty members have detected potential problem areas such as attendance, basic academic skills, and poor performance, to members of the Advising Academic Alert Response Team for quick intervention in an effort to prevent small issues from becoming semester-ending crises.

The first year of implementation, fall 2016 through spring 2017, was considered a pilot year. In that academic year, IT and the Provost's Office identified a specific group of faculty members to participate in the trial. During the pilot, thirty-four faculty members submitted 175 academic alerts for 160 students representing dozens of majors. Point of clarification, the faculty who participated in both semesters, and subject students are double counted, however four additional faculty members participated in spring 2017 [link]. Of [the alerts from fall semester 2016](#), seventy-five were linked to concerns arising out of a specific course and eight were for general academic concerns. By the end of that semester, the alerts that arose out of specific courses were linked to transcribed grades of A-to-C (twenty-two of the alerts), D, F, or I (thirty alerts), and W (sixteen alerts). Of primary importance in this pilot phase is that faculty began to appreciate the need for early assessments and focused interventions, and the students who received passing grades may not have otherwise persisted to the end of the semester if not for the early alert and resultant interventions. Refinement of the existing system is in gradual progress as the Montana State University family of campuses considers a four-campus subscription to a commercial product.

## Advising Training and Procedures

General advising at MSU Billings takes the form of a combination of professional staff advisors and faculty advisors. The most important change to advising practices has been the development and implementation of the Orientation Peer Leader Program (identified as an Advising and Career Services Signature Program). This is a peer model built to provide various outreach and touchpoints where first year students can connect with an orientation peer leader to establish and maintain meaningful relationships. Peer mentors foster student engagement with other students and within the campus community. Among the elements of the Peer Leader Program is a closed Facebook group where the peer leaders and first year students connect on Facebook, coordinate attendance at Welcome Week events to facilitate student connections made during orientation, and peer mentor walk-in hours during fall semester where students maintain contact with their peer mentors as they

progress through their first semester.

Advising and Career Services assessed this peer mentor program through surveys administered to first-year students. The results were dramatic: 87% of students who attended orientation established a relationship that lasted throughout their first year of college, 79% of students believed their peer mentors helped students connect with others on campus, and 90% of students surveyed were better able to find resources on campus and ask for help than they would have been otherwise.

### **First Year Seminar**

First-Year Experiences are widely recognized as among the most significant high impact practices. Institutions across the country have implemented various types of formats and models with positive retention outcomes including persistence from first semester to second semester, persistence from first year to second year, persistence to graduation, and improved academic standing. MSU Billings' First Year Seminar (A&SC 111), is considered an "extended orientation seminar," which reflects national trends in the nature of the course as the single largest course-type in recent studies AS&C 111 includes in its outcomes: developing a connection with the institution, building student confidence in their ability to access university services and resources, developing academic skills, and cultivating in first-year students an awareness of the importance of civic engagement. The last element responds specifically to Core Theme Three: Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility.

The staff members in the Division of Student Affairs who teach and administer the First Year Seminar have maintained attention on program assessment and have developed a robust assessment protocol. Using a "Civic Engagement Reflection Essay" assignment and the end of the semester course evaluation, they are able to demonstrate successful student learning outcomes were achieved in ASC 111. Of the 176 students who completed the "Civic Engagement Reflection Essay," 83.5% earned an A or B grade. Staff also measured how students perceived what they learned from the course through an end of the semester course evaluation. On that evaluation, students were posed the following question "As a result of this class, I have an increased awareness of community and civic engagement concepts, as well as service learning opportunities." Of the 187 students who responded to that question, 156 either strongly agreed or agreed with that statement, thirty-one students were neutral, and no students indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### **Developmental Education**

MSU Billings has worked to respond to national trends and initiatives to reform developmental education. The campus recognizes many students placed in developmental courses fail to attain college-level credit or to advance to gateway college coursework within reasonable timeframes, contributing to a lack of degree completion, and extended time to degree completion. Retaining students, particularly students who could succeed in college-level work but who face barriers in traditional developmental education, has become a priority for the University and has resulted in a number of initiatives.

Early efforts to address the particular needs of underprepared students resulted in a number of innovations. One early reform effort was the modularization of introductory and intermediate Algebra, which allows students to earn credit at multiple stages of a five-module course sequence. Another effort was to link developmental education courses with college-level courses, such as Developmental Reading with Anatomy and Physiology or Introduction to Psychology to assist students with passing gateway courses. This follows the recommended practice of contextualizing developmental coursework to increase the relevance and applicability of basic skills instruction and improve student success in college-

level courses.

Among the most notable efforts in helping under-prepared students succeed is the Co-Requisite Education initiative, which began as a Writing co-requisite pilot in spring 2014 and went full-scale in fall 2017. Co-requisite courses for Contemporary Math began as a pilot in fall 2016 and went full scale in fall 2017. Co-requisite courses for statistics began being offered in fall 2017 as well.

The writing co-requisite courses have significantly increased student success at MSU Billings. When considering the historical pass - persist - pass rates for students beginning in WRIT095 (developmental writing) going into WRIT101 (college-level writing), approximately 33% completed the sequence successfully within one year. With the writing co-requisite courses, this has improved to 67% in one semester. This means almost twice as many students who would have taken a two-course (two semester) sequence now successfully pass the college-level writing course in one semester when they receive targeted, co-requisite support. This is an impressive degree of impact on student success, however these results are preliminary, and reflect only the beginning of the program. Placement protocols are still in flux as the campus adjusts cut scores and other indices to maximize this impact.

Math students showed dramatic results in the first semester the program was offered. Students in co-requisite sections routinely scored higher than their traditionally prepared peers and passed at rates far beyond what could be expected. Over the course of the first year (AY 2016-2017), 85% of students who took the co-requisite course passed their college-level mathematics course while receiving co-requisite support. During the first semester of the pilot, 100% of students in the online co-requisite section of M 105 passed the college-level Math class. In fall 2017, 75% of students in M 105 successfully completed the “enhanced” (the label used to identify co-requisite) sections of the course, thereby earning college-level credit in their General Education Math course in one semester, whereas the historical pass-rate for students in the one-year (developmental education to General Education) sequence was approximately 35%.

Another drastic improvement in math student success is the time it takes developmental students to successfully complete M 105 (Contemporary Mathematics) or STAT 141 (Introduction to Statistical Concepts). Before co-requisite instruction was offered for M 105, it took developmental students, on average, one and a half semesters to finish developmental mathematics and two and a half semesters to complete M 105. Now they are able to take M 105 during their first semester. For STAT 141, the numbers are similar – students previously took 1.4 semesters of developmental mathematics and completed STAT 141 after 2.4 semesters. This, too, is reduced to one semester of co-requisite study.

Nationally, the vast majority of students who begin in developmental education do not graduate within six years. Co-requisite programs have worked to reduce attrition points, build higher pass rates and enhance the ability for students to take classes without hitting financial aid funding hurdles. These all improve success rates and reduce the time and money students spend in pursuit of their degrees. In addition, more students are retained. These are the students who are at the highest risk for dropping courses. If the statistics prove true at MSU Billings, developmental students will get their degrees at a higher rate than the national average.

### **Structured Learning Assistance**

MSU Billings maintains a strong commitment to providing students a high level of academic support while reducing course withdrawal/failure rates and increasing the number of

students who pass some of the most challenging and highest risk-for-failure university courses. While the University recognizes there are formal requirements for a “Structured Learning Assistance” program, MSU Billings, due to the concurrent pursuit of the list of Student Success Committee (SSC) initiatives noted here, was unable to mobilize the significant faculty development and fiscal resources required to meet those formal requirements. Instead, the University has chosen the Supplemental Instruction (SI) program, administered by the Academic Support Center, to fill the SSC’s expressed need for academic assistance in the classroom.

The SI program at MSU Billings began in the 2016-2017 academic year with twelve courses receiving SI support. In that pilot year, these courses experienced reductions of DFWI rates of between 4% and 39%. In fall 2017, beginning the second year of the SI initiative, the Academic Support Center oversaw SI support for twenty-two courses, which saw an average DFWI-rate reduction of 9%. This program has been particularly successful, as evidenced by the steady expansion of the number of disciplines and courses that include supplemental instructor support.

### **General Education**

As is the case at many colleges and universities around the country, the General Education program at MSU Billings has been the subject of periodic change, focus, reform, and revision for decades. As the largest single program at the University, it is the only program all students must either complete or produce transcribed evidence of completion elsewhere, and a program in which students must demonstrate proficiency prior to graduation. The Student Success Committee included the Gen Ed program in its final report due to its centrality in the academic program of the University.

The General Education Committee (GEC) (comprised of representative from all colleges and the library; provost, deans, vice provost, director of advising and vice chancellor of student affairs serve as ex officio members) is a standing committee of the Academic Senate, and bears responsibility for the oversight, maintenance, assessment, and revision of the Gen Ed program. To carry out its oversight responsibilities, the GEC has maintained a regular schedule of program chair reporting to the GEC on issues of course learning outcome alignment and Gen Ed category learning outcome alignment. Assessment of the Gen Ed program is described in detail in Standard 4, p. [181](#).

### **GATEWAYS TO COMPLETION (G2C)**

The largest and most important assessment effort at MSU Billings over the past four years has involved the institution’s work to address high DFWI rates, particularly in high-enrolled gateway (typically General Education) courses. Research into various programs intended to reduce DFWI rates introduced MSU Billings to the Gateways to Completion (G2C) program offered by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education (JNGI). This program was particularly interesting to MSU Billings because of the inordinate influence high-enrolled gateway courses have on student decisions to persist in school. Studies have shown student failure in these particular courses has a tremendous influence on their decisions to stay in school because of the deleterious effect of failure on students’ self-efficacy.

G2C is a three-year program designed to introduce faculty who teach high-DFWI gateway courses various pedagogical approaches to remedying high DFWI rates. JNGI affords campuses the opportunity to focus on as many as five courses for the life of the program. In Year One, MSU Billings faculty analyzed DFWI rates in gateway courses and identified pedagogical reforms they would introduce in their courses to reduce those rates. In Year Two, faculty implemented the planned reforms. And in Year Three, the G2C faculty assessed the results of those reforms to see which worked best, which did not achieve the desired results, and how they could use those assessments to inform their planning for the future. MSU Billings

completed the G2C program in spring 2018.

The first step in the G2C process involved an upload of institutional of data including every undergraduate student in every course for the previous year into the JNGI G2C Inventory. Here MSUB adhered to protocols maintained by the Gardner Institute and utilized data from the 2014-2015 academic year to develop protocols for the 2015-2016 academic year. Therefore for the purpose of continuity in this report, these data are labeled in tables under the year of the data and the G2C program years in the narrative are the next year. The G2C Steering Committee used the JNGI analytics capabilities to identify five gateway courses for participation in the program (with corresponding DFWI rates at the beginning of the G2C process):

RUBRIC/#	COURSE NAME	2014-2015 DFWI RATE
ACTG 201	Principals of Financial Accounting	39.3%
CHMY 121	Introduction to General Chemistry	44.8%
HSTA 102	American History II	30.7%
PHL 110	Introduction to Ethics	31.1%
SOCI 101	Introduction to Sociology	31.8%

Armed with these data, faculty began participating in webinars and conference calls with faculty in other G2C institutions to begin exploring ways to address these DFWI rates. JNGI facilitated faculty connections through the G2C Community of Practice (representatives from G2C institutions across the country) and the Teaching and Learning Academy (specifically for faculty teaching our specific courses in G2C institutions across the country). The 2015-2016 academic year—the first year of the G2C process—was dedicated to analysis, surveying students and faculty about perceptions of their gateway courses, and planning for pedagogical reform. The MSU Billings administration, faculty, and staff took the campus commitment to student success seriously and the entire university community participated in a two-day symposium by John N. Gardner to kick off the 2016-2017 academic year. Exposed to these new perspectives, the G2C faculty planned to implement innovative teaching practices including:

- Deconstructed writing
- Student-directed group work
- Partially “flipped” courses and use of Technology-Enhanced Interactive Learning (TEIL) classrooms
- Emphasis on metacognition
- Implementation of Supplemental Instruction
- Re-examination of “course coverage” to make sure courses are not preloaded with material better included in major-specific courses, rather than the gateways
- Implementation of a co-enrolled developmental course
- Re-examination of the number and timing of writing assignments
- Increasing the quality and character of faculty feedback on student writing

Most disciplines implemented various innovations across multiple sections taught by different faculty whereas other disciplines (e.g. chemistry) adopted a team approach due to the nature of their chosen intervention

While the statistical significance of the early results of these innovations is greatly reduced



by the small sample size and compounding variables (the faculty teaching the courses who contributed to the DFWI rates in the G2C courses above had not all taught these courses by the end of fall 2016), the campus made significant gains in these G2C courses (noted in table below).

Year Three of the program, the 2017-2018 academic year, was dedicated to assessment of the results of the reforms and modifications, and refinement thereof. The G2C Steering Committee (comprised of members of the Student Success Committee) with the vice provost assuming responsibility for the representing the committee in the work of the G2C initiative) and the faculty involved in the G2C process were pleased that their work resulted in concrete improvements in the rates of student success in foundational courses:

RUBRIC/#	COURSE NAME	2014-2015 DFWI RATE	2015-2016 DFWI RATE	2016-2017 DFWI RATE	2017-2018 DFWI RATE
ACTG 201	Principals of Financial Accounting	43.3%	36.5%	41.4%	28.6%
CHMY 121	Introduction to General Chemistry	31%	29.1%	29.8%	28.8%
HSTA 102	American History II	27.1%	19.8%	16%	11.2%
PHL 110	Introduction to Ethics	14.4%	39.2%	20.2%	22.1%
SOCI 101	Introduction to Sociology	25.3%	19.6%	22.2%	28.4%

In many ways, MSU Billings has been profoundly transformed because of our involvement in the Gateways to Completion effort. From the beginning of the process in summer 2015, which focused on data compilation, analysis, and planning, through the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, which was dedicated to assessment of the impact of the program's reforms, the campus perspective on student success and life in the classroom has developed more fully. Anecdotally, faculty attitudes have been changed, the classroom experience has changed, and these changes have had a beneficial impact on DFWI rates for the five General Education gateway courses under examination in the G2C process.

The Gateways to Completion program constitutes the best example (among many) of MSU Billings carrying out a systematic, comprehensive, participatory, self-reflective and evidence-based assessment of its primary goal of providing a University experience characterized by excellent teaching, learner support, and social/civic responsibility for the greater good. It is also an example of the completion of the assessment cycle of analysis, planning, assessment, and improvement. Lessons learned in the G2C project will be carried forward into subsequent student success initiatives

### **New University Student Success Initiatives**

The initiatives driven by the SSC report have had a transformative impact on the University which is now in the "second generation" of student success efforts. MSU Billings is facilitating these efforts through participation in two grants at the national level, both of which focus on students' first year experience at MSU Billings for both freshmen and transfers: Complete College America, and the National Associate of System Heads' Taking Student Success to Scale (High Impact Practices).

### **Complete College Montana**

In 2013, the Montana University System joined thirty-three other states to participate in the Complete College America (CCA). Though the first of these initiatives began before the SCC issued its report, campus attention and energy has accelerated within the campus

context of the SSC work. Here the [Complete College Montana](#) (CCM) program is focused on identifying pathways to completion and insuring that the University provides the necessary guidance and communication to help students achieve their goals. Among the University's recent efforts under CCM are:

- Collaboration between Academic Affairs and the Office of Advising and Career Services to focus on ways to optimize advising to convince students to register for a full load (CCA calls this "15 to finish")
- Development of clear "degree maps," which are more specific than degree plans. The map recommends which General Education courses to take depending upon the student's major. Another element of degree maps is "milestone mapping," in which the institution identifies key courses for students to complete at specific points in their academic career which are necessary to be successful in a particular program, and effectively communicate that to students.
- Creation of specific thirty-credit first-year programs that students have to opt out of, rather than opt in to. Under this plan, students would complete their Writing and Math General Education requirements within the first year.

## NASH HIPs

The second major initiative in this "second generation" of SSC programs is the [NASH Taking Student Success to Scale](#) grant through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. The NASH project is the more recent of these new student success initiatives. MSU Billings is one of six institutions in Montana to take the lead in this program. This grant's goal is to advance High Impact Practices in students' first year of college. The Office of the Provost made money available on a competitive basis for faculty to identify opportunities for integrating HIPs into the first year. That faculty cohort has been identified, and they begin their work in fall 2018. Integral to the NASH grant is systematic assessment at both the course and university level.

## Determination of Mission Fulfillment

The University has identified a list of indicators by which the university assesses its progress on fulfilling its mission (see SPIAR, p. [226](#)). These indicators facilitate an objective assessment of that progress. MSU Billings has determined if the University is able to demonstrate significant progress toward, or full attainment of at least 70% of the targets in the SPIAR, then it is substantially meeting that standard. As indicated in the Core Themes Planning, Assessment, and Improvement Report (see pp. [125](#)), the university has met that goal.

## 5.B 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 theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.**

Through its shared government structures, including the Academic Senate, University Budget Committee, and the Assessment and Accreditation Council, Montana State University Billings regularly evaluates its academic, student services and administrative services investments. These groups consider how to maximize the limited economic resources available to the campus. New programs are assessed internally and by the Board of Regents to insure that resources are expended in alignment with the mission of the University. Additionally, MSU Billings has used its allocation from Performance Based

Funding to bolster its student success initiatives.

**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.**

As detailed in Standard 3 above, MSU Billings has a developed system of planning. On a macro-level, the [FutureU](#) strategic plan provides the most immediate example of university-wide planning. Evaluation of progress on fulfilling the goals of the FutureU plan took place primarily within the office of the vice provost for Academic Affairs, in concert with the various responsible parties charged with oversight of the specific tasks in the plan. The [results of these updates](#) were reported to the Chancellor's Cabinet, and were occasionally posted to the [FutureU website](#). With the impending expiration of the FutureU plan in 2018, the University, in collaboration with OCHE, began preparations to launch a new planning process through the Community Taskforce (see p. [113](#) above).

Resource allocation, assessment of institutional capacity, and assessment of the adequacy of University resources are, and remain, the primary responsibility of the [University Budget Committee](#) (UBC), the Executive Budget Council (EBC), and the chancellor. The UBC is a broadly-representative body that includes representative from administration, staff, faculty, students, alumni, and the shared-governance bodies. As noted above in Standard 3 (see p. [109](#) above), the UBC ensures and guides the strategic direction of budgeting development and process, EBC conducts weekly budgeting operations and activities based on that group's analysis of resource allocation and institutional capacities, and directs divisions, colleges, and departments with budgeting objectives. The overall responsibility for these activities lies with the chancellor for approving activity and ensuring appropriate input has been considered. Each group uses the various campus strategic plans to direct and guide their considerations concerning the use of institutional resources and the identification of strategic priorities.

**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.**

MSU Billings continually monitors its internal and external environments through its governance system, by which the University uses these findings to assess its strategic position and define its future direction. At the state level, the University is required to submit regular reports to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) for inclusion in their reporting to other universities, colleges, and educational institutions in the state. MSU Billings also reports directly to the Board of Regents during their scheduled meetings. These reports often entail discussion of the university's future direction and how best to review and revise key performance indicators. These reports often analyze our progress to achieving our strategic initiatives, including data on new programs, enrollments, retention efforts, etc. In January 2016, the University, in concert with OCHE, created a Community Taskforce and charged it with analyzing the University's mission vis-à-vis the community of Billings. The Community Taskforce was composed of members of Billings business, educational and cultural communities and met regularly for a year. The [final report](#), in which the taskforce outlined five pillars crucial to MSU Billings' ongoing success, was presented to the all university stakeholders during on campus meetings and in several citywide meetings. The final report provided five pillars that the taskforce identified as crucial to the

University's ongoing success.

There are others means by which the University monitors its external environment, specifically in terms of the local, regional and state labor markets. The University regularly contributes and responds, when appropriate, to on-going analyses of current and future trends in local industry. For example, in June 2017, the Montana Department of Labor and Industry released a report titled [\*Meeting State Worker Demand: A Report on the Labor Market Outcomes for Montana Colleges\*](#), which was widely shared inside and outside of the University. Two additional supplements to this report zeroed in on specific programs and how they related to the local economy and workforce development: [\*A Supplemental Report for Montana State University Billings - Labor Market Outcomes and Supply and Demand Analysis for Graduates from MSU Billings\*](#) and [\*A Supplemental Report for City College- Labor Market Outcomes and Supply and Demand Analysis for Graduates from City College\*](#). The University provided much of the data in the report and uses the findings to analyze the sustainability and viability of our academic programs.

At the University level, several collaborative bodies are responsible for assessing MSU Billings' strategic position and defining its direction. The Chancellor's Cabinet, the University Executive Council, the Executive Budget Committee, University Budget Committee, and Academic Senate all ensure the University is adapting to its environments. Additionally, MSU Billings has implemented regular program reviews for all academic units. Departments submit reports that identify enrollment trends and propose adaptations that fit current pressures; both internal and external.

Finally, the faculty and staff of MSU Billings live, work, and play near our campuses in the city of Billings and are vital and active members of the Billings and regional community. Many of our faculty and staff serve on community boards and executive committees of local, regional and national non-profits and civic organizations. University leadership regularly is invited to contribute to diverse organizations including: Billings School District #2, Billings Chamber of Commerce, Billings Rotary Clubs, Big Sky Economic Development, Downtown Business Alliance, YMCA, YWCA, the Billings Symphony and Chorale, the Billings Clinic Foundation, and the St. Vincent Hospital Foundation, among others. Data on the current and emerging patterns, trends and expectations are transmitted to the University through a network of engaged citizens, concerned and actively supporting of our mission and goals.

## **CONCLUSION**

Montana State University Billings prides itself on its commitment to community. The FutureU strategic plan, which sunsets in 2018, was an explicit articulation of how the University views itself and its mission and promise, in relation to its students, faculty, staff and local and global neighbors. MSU Billings has done its best to keep the promises it made in the current strategic plan; the university's focus on quality teaching and learning, civic engagement, community partnerships and providing the infrastructure for success have positioned it well for its next move.

Preparation is currently underway for the 2019 Strategic Plan. During its June meetings, the Chancellor's Cabinet began discussing the composition of the strategic planning committee and the structure of its deliberations. In late September 2018, a large constituent group will be assembled to create the next blueprint for MSU Billings. Students, faculty and staff, as well as members of the Billings community, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and representatives from Montana State University (Bozeman) will be invited to participate. The goal is to have the majority of work on the plan completed by the end of fall 2018 so the plan can be implemented in spring 2019.

Concurrently, the University is creating a Holistic Enrollment and Retention Committee (HERC), which will begin its work in August 2018. HERC is composed of faculty, staff and administrators from across campus. The charge of the committee is to answer the question “how can MSUB recruit and retain more students?” This group will be empowered to examine everything from recruitment, advising, program offerings, student support, financial issues, class scheduling, student activities and any other relevant issues that affect student success on campus.

These two major committees will build on the successful initiatives MSU Billings has implemented over the past several years. As a result of this self-study, the campus is deeply aware of how to conceptualize the new strategic plan and set reliable, measurable indicators for its success. As the only urban university campus in the state of Montana, MSU Billings has a unique position in the Montana University System and in the region. Our communities are deeply invested in the success of MSU Billings and the University pays dividends in return through successful students, alumni, faculty and staff and their many contributions across the state, nation and world.





