



Montana State University

The Year-Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) Report Standard One

August 1, 2024

Presented to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities





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**Submitted to the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

by

Montana State University, Bozeman

August 1, 2024



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INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Montana State University in Bozeman seeks to reapply for accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Standard 2 was submitted to the Northwest Commission in August 2023. The following report covers Standard 1, with a focus on student learning and assessment toward institutional effectiveness.

Seven years ago, the Northwest Commission evaluated Montana State University, which resulted in a letter from the commission to the university. This letter's contents indicated the result that the university was reaffirmed for accreditation. However, recommendations highlighted in the letter were as follows:

1. Identify assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement that are more meaningful for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes (Standard 1.B.2).
2. Inform core theme planning via the consistent collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate the accomplishment of the core theme objectives (Standard 3.B.3).
3. Document, through a more effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete any of its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes (Standard 4.A.3).
4. Consistently use assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicate its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public (Standard 5.A.2).

Montana State University has progressed toward improvement in the areas identified by the commission. This report will identify what steps have been taken to respond to each recommendation and to each component for Standard 1.

Montana State University is deeply committed to teaching students, as the outcome of student learning and program completion forms the basis for the kind of economy and social environment that Montana, the region, the nation, and the world will offer to its citizens. The university has a proud tradition of creating generations of students who leave to do good things well, and the current administration, faculty, and staff endeavor to continue that tradition while continually making improvements. The advice and responses from the Northwest Commission's accreditation process are important to helping Montana State continue to create highly qualified graduates, and we appreciate and seriously use the accreditation process to analyze how we are doing and to determine where to place attention and resources for further improvement.

Overview of Montana State University

Montana State University (MSU) was established in 1893 in Bozeman, Montana, as a land-grant university under the federal Morrill Act of 1862, signed by President Abraham Lincoln. MSU President Waded Cruzado reminds the stakeholders of the university that the institution's purpose is to educate the children of Montana's working class to allow economic and social mobility to graduates.

As a land-grant institution, Montana State began with programs in science, classical studies, agriculture, and engineering. Eight students, five men and three women, enrolled for the first session. In its second year of existence, the university, then known as the Montana Agricultural College, offered its first courses in domestic science with the goal of including more women in the student body. The first graduating class had four students.

To contrast that early beginning, in fall 2023, Montana State enrolled the most students in its 130-year history, with 16,978 students enrolled, which represented a 2% increase over fall 2022. These students represent all 56 counties of Montana, all 50 states in the nation, the five major territories, and 180 countries. The students enroll in 136 unique baccalaureate programs, 72 program areas for master's degrees, doctoral degrees in 48 disciplinary areas, and graduate certificates in 18 areas.

In 2022-23, the university awarded 3,503 degrees and certificates:

- Certificate (graduate): 91
- Certificate (undergraduate): 109
- Associate of arts or science: 124
- Bachelor's degrees: 2,535
- Master's degrees: 540
- Doctoral degrees: 104

Montana State University is the largest university in Montana, with a rich history of outstanding programs in teaching, research, and outreach. The accreditation process will help ensure that the university remains strong and that its claim to outstanding success for the citizens of Montana can be upheld and enhanced.

PREFACE

Update on Institutional Changes Since 2017

Highlights and changes in the seven years since the last Comprehensive Self-Study Report submitted by Montana State University to the Northwest Commission on Colleges are listed in bullets below:

- A new strategic plan was developed and adopted in 2019 with three intentional foci. The strategic plan was amended and updated in 2023 so that it extends to 2026.
- To streamline and standardize advising and to assure students have up-to-date and accurate information about university requirements, advising functions were consolidated for many of the university departments into the [Advising Commons](#) framework.
- MSU extended a heightened effort to provide student support for the various issues that can thwart student success. A complete list of these offices and programs are listed in Appendix A, with one example being the new [American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Services](#).
- Extraordinary efforts to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic with sanitation protocols in buildings, distancing in classrooms, moving parts or all of courses online, and rapidly ramping up training resources for faculty were required to adapt to the pandemic during spring 2020 semester and beyond.
- Added attention to program assessment was exercised by creating the position of assistant provost, who oversees curriculum and assessment under the direction of the vice provost for curriculum, assessment, and accreditation.
- And an ambitious building program received sustained efforts to build or remodel nine campus buildings with private donations, non-state funds, and state funds, emphasizing energy efficiency and resulting in LEED certifications at various levels.

Response to outstanding recommendations that were requested to be addressed in the NWCCU Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness

Updates to the Mid-Cycle Review from fall 2020 follow below.

Recommendation 1: Fall 2020 Mid-Cycle Review

Inform core theme planning via the consistent collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate the accomplishment of the core theme objectives. (2010 Standard(s) 3.B.3 (2020 Standard 1.B.1))

Background

After six years of work by various campus and community stakeholders, including Faculty Senate, the upper administration, deans, working faculty groups, the Associated Students of Montana State University, and a variety of community groups and individuals, Montana State produced a 2019 strategic plan. The plan, titled Choosing Promise, incorporated the NWCCU Recommendation 2 from the 2017 Montana State University Comprehensive Self Study, which asked that Montana State “inform core themes planning via the consistent collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate the accomplishment of the core theme objectives.” The plan document

was produced in hard copy and put on the web, and many news releases, both internal and external, were issued to inform all stakeholder groups about the plan and its purposes.

The core themes identified in the plan were:

- **Intentional Focus 1: Transformational Learning**
- **Intentional Focus 2: Scholarship That Improves Lives**
- **Intentional Focus 3: Expanding Engagement**

Each of the core themes (intentional foci) related to Montana State University’s mission as a land-grant institution, where teaching, creation of knowledge and art, and service to communities form the foundation of all activity at the university. The intentional foci identified in the strategic plan each had goals to further define what constituted “Transformational Learning,” “Scholarship That Improves Lives,” and “Expanding Engagement.” Further, a list of metrics and actions were listed under each goal, which defined success for each of the goals and specified actions that should be taken to construct that success.

In the 2020 Mid-Cycle Review, an ad-hoc group called the Intentional Focus Strategic Effectiveness Team (IFSET), comprising representatives from MSU’s colleges, [Academic Council](#), [Planning Council](#), and [Budget Council](#), was formed to review progress on the intentional focus performance indicators and also to assess accomplishment of each intentional focus through quantitative and qualitative assessments of the strategies being used to achieve the intentional focus objectives. However, eventually, it was determined that the office of University Data and Analytics (formerly called the Office of Planning and Analysis) would be the better group to collect data and report each month to [University Council](#) about the progress occurring on each of the goals within each of the intentional foci. The data collected for each goal were quantitative, although some qualitative results were collected, too. For results to date, please go to the [Planning Council](#) website that has links to each metric. Data is provided to appropriate units for use in assessing progress toward the goals in the intentional foci.

Updates since the NWCCU 2020 Mid-Cycle Review

An unprecedented and unanticipated event affecting the strategic plan in 2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic. Montana State University, along with all educational institutions in the world, faced the reality that the pandemic would have an impact on every function that the public relies on a university to accomplish. MSU’s upper administration formed an action committee to meet daily to create and implement a management response to the changing information and unfolding trends about illnesses. All efforts to manage the impacts of the pandemic focused on students. The goals were to have students enroll in courses, have a quality educational experience as they worked through the courses, and retain the students into the next semester. To meet the demands that COVID-19 forced on the university, the system dedicated massive quantities of time and finances. Nevertheless, the goals of these efforts and resources did not vary from the strategic plan, especially in the first intentional focus, “Transformational Learning.” While the metrics and actions to meet the goals under the “Transformational Learning” intentional focus did not meet the goals set out in 2019, all the efforts and care provided to students during the pandemic resulted in a successful continuation of quality instruction and reasonable retention metrics, given the circumstances. Following the

gradual administration of vaccines and the waning of COVID-19-related illnesses, Montana State is recovering and seeing better metrics on the three intentional foci and the goals under each one.

For interesting reading about Montana State's COVID-19 response, see <https://www.montana.edu/news/mountainsandminds/archives/fall-2020.html>, and for an archive of messages to the campus about COVID-19, see <https://www.montana.edu/health/coronavirus/archived-comms/index.html>.

A second update is that, because of COVID-19 impacts on the campus and, especially, on students, University Council approved an extension of the [strategic plan](#) through 2026. As it states on the strategic plan website:

Accordingly, there are three types of changes reflected in the amended plan of 2023. Changes will be noted with a letter to describe the nature of the recommendation:

- A. These are minimally- or non-substantive changes that update the plan through 2026. They extend or remove timelines for many of the metrics and actions to reflect the ongoing attention MSU is devoting. A word or phrase was changed to better reflect how the university is implementing the metric or action.
- B. Notation of those metrics or actions that the university has accomplished, which allows the university to focus more intently on those it has not yet accomplished. Metrics achieved will be monitored in the interest of continuous improvement.
- C. A few metrics or actions were tied to time-bound understanding, technologies, or environmental factors that have changed in the intervening years. One of these no longer serves the goal or larger intentional focus. The priority on this metric was lowered in favor of achieving the remaining metrics and actions.

To strengthen the production of data, and especially the metrics to track the strategic plan, the Office of Planning and Analysis was reorganized to create [University Data and Analytics](#), which provides data, expertise, analyses, and staffing necessary to support the university's planning, institutional research, and university assessment committees and processes. The planning function resides in [Planning Council](#), whose membership and responsibilities are outlined on the website. Future additions of resources, such as committees or office responsibilities in planning, may be instituted as planning needs arise from reorganizing the Office of Planning and Analysis.

A final concerted effort that MSU has exerted is in assessment, which will be described in the next recommendation. Assessment is integral to the strategic plan because it is a vital component of determining the success of the goals of the intentional foci.

Recommendation 2: Fall 2020 Mid-Cycle Review

Assess student achievement and learning so that students who complete any educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. (2010 Standard(s) 4.A.3) (2020 Standards 1.C.5; 1.C.6).

Background

The 2017 Comprehensive Self-Study Report feedback from NWCCU recommended that MSU institute and document a more effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student

achievement. The purpose of this assessment would be to ascertain if the students who complete any of its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes.

The 2020 Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report stated that MSU launched a fully revised process for the review and improvement of program assessment after three years of work. In the first year, 2017-2018, MSU focused on the process by having departments look critically at their assessment and improve their programs' learning outcomes to be more assessable, develop a more critical means of determining student success, and develop a more integrated approach of reporting results to and engaging faculty in a discussion of student learning.

In the second year, 2018-2019, the Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC) conducted a review of the assessment process and, because of the adoption of the improvements outlined in the review, the second year's assessment processes resulted in substantial improvement in meaningful assessment. The second year's work by the AOC produced a report to each department on the department's assessment and offered ideas for systematic improvements of their assessment processes. Also in the second year, the AOC assessed its own activities, and members offered workshops with the Center for Faculty Excellence to help departments reconfigure their program assessment processes to be more effective.

In the third year, 2019-2020, two new templates were developed to help departments and to allow departments to do a thorough revision of their assessment plans, especially if the AOC found significant issues for the department in the past year. The first new template provided departments with an option to request a year of reprieve where departments could re-evaluate their assessment processes and then develop a new plan. Many departments took this route, called "Year 0" assessment planning year. At the end of the third year, the AOC produced an improved template based on feedback from departments, which was the second template to be put into place. The AOC continued to aid the strengthening of assessment. One result of this work has been that programs are more focused on assessment that can inform them on desired student achievement, by encouraging a more introspective analysis of program curriculum. In the three-year period of work on assessment, the number of curriculum updates submitted for approval doubled. In 2018 and 2019, 134 courses submitted changes based on program assessment, and in 2020, over 150 courses were submitted with changes.

Updates since the NWCCU 2020 Mid-Cycle Review

As of the fourth year of program assessment improvements, in 2020-2021, it was clear that there is an understanding of, acceptance of, and belief in the value of program assessment, which represents a change in university culture. Continual improvements in assessment have occurred since 2020. Currently, MSU faculty members oversee evaluating student learning of their programs on a regular basis. Programs not externally accredited evaluate and assess undergraduate programs annually and graduate programs on a biennial basis (for the previous two academic years). All majors, minors, and certificate programs are required to have specific program learning outcomes (PLOs), and programs have been encouraged to assess their PLOs every three years if possible. Every departmental unit is encouraged to appoint a curriculum committee of faculty members to lead each unit's assessment. In situations where there are limited numbers of faculty, department heads may take the lead instead.

Every year, faculty (whether led by curriculum committees or the department head) revisit the program's assessment plan and determine which PLOs will be assessed. Each department approaches assessment of student learning differently, but all are encouraged to determine which courses will provide student work to collect direct evidence of student learning. Faculty are encouraged to develop program assessment-specific rubrics for each PLO. Faculty report their assessment endeavors using the most [current template available](#) that has been developed by the AOC. Assessment reports are due on Oct. 15 each year with reminders sent to department heads and deans during the summer term ahead of faculty retreats to help keep programs on track.

New programs or programs undergoing substantive curricular revisions turn in a "Year 0" assessment plan report that asks the program to outline assessment planning processes, which includes mapping courses to the program, choosing student artifacts to assess, and creating assessment-specific rubrics, as well as creating assessment-specific rubrics and providing a plan detailing how faculty will be involved in the process during the collection, analysis, and reporting phases.

Assessment reports are submitted to the AOC and reviewed for quality assurance using a specially designed [rubric](#). The AOC members then provide feedback and suggestions aimed at supporting continuous improvement of student learning through thorough and appropriate assessment reporting. Feedback can include suggestions for strengthening PLOs to include actionable, measurable language, viable options for different approaches to assess student learning, and suggestions for using campus partners to strengthen or augment programs depending on assessment results.

Each program assessment report is currently reviewed by two members of the AOC using a rubric to evaluate whether elements of the reports are being included and whether programs are demonstrating that they are making changes based on assessment results. Feedback is provided to departmental programs and deans on potential areas to improve. (For an example of a program assessment report, see the [Department Assessment Plans and Reports](#) website.) The AOC meets each fall and spring semester. Fall semester meetings focus on preparing for providing feedback to the annual cycle of submitted program reports. Spring semester meetings focus on revising assessment report templates, feedback rubrics, reviewing policy, and providing feedback to the assistant provost related to training and support.

The assistant provost provides archival support to departments and programs by maintaining a shared folder of submitted [assessment plans and reports](#) as well as maintaining a web page of department assessment plans and reports containing links to department learning outcomes and assessment pages. Departments are tasked with keeping their websites updated with program learning outcomes and program assessment report results. Some examples of college and departmental outcomes and assessment websites can be found at the [College of Education, Health and Human Development Outcomes and Assessment](#) web page and the [Department of Physics Program Assessment](#) web page.

Faculty are encouraged to consider the results of their annual and biennial assessments as they make their yearly plans and departments submit budgetary requests. These assessments also contribute data points to include in the seven-year cycle program review reports submitted to the Montana Board of Regents by each department.

In fall 2023, approximately 85% of expected program assessment reports were submitted for AOC review. This percentage does not account for programs that were preparing seven-year program review reports or undergoing a leadership transition (the two main reasons programs may be delayed in submitting an annual assessment report). This percentage is higher if units preparing program review reports are excluded from the total expected assessment reports.

Since a culture of assessment has taken root over the last seven years, an effort was made in fall 2023 to get more faculty involved in assessment endeavors and provide an additional avenue for service and training related to academic program assessment. The assistant provost, at the direction of the vice provost of curriculum, assessment and accreditation and on behalf of the AOC, invited college deans to nominate faculty who had an interest in learning more about the program assessment process to join the AOC. Three faculty members volunteered to join the AOC and take part in the assessment report review and feedback process. This will be an annual invitation to get more faculty involved in the decision-making processes related to assessment endeavors at MSU.

In addition to the program assessment, concerted efforts have been made to assess the general education courses, called Core 2.0. The [Core Curriculum Committee](#) was reestablished in 2018 and comprises faculty members from each college, along with one nominated by Faculty Senate. Core 2.0 contains three learning outcomes called “[MSU Core Qualities](#)” that were approved by the Faculty Senate and include: thinking and problem solver; effective communicator; and local and global citizen, as described on the MSU Core Qualities website.

The assessment of the MSU Core Qualities is completed by the Core Curriculum Committee on an assessment cycle:

Thinking and problem solver	Assessed in 2019-2020
Effective communicator	Assessed in 2020-2021
Local and global citizen	Assessed in 2021-2022
Perspectives	Assessed in 2022-2023
Research core and capstones	Assessed in 2023-2024

Assessment reports can be found on the [Core Assessment website](#).

In the 2022-2023 academic year, new core course proposals were put on hold and faculty submitted proposals to renew their courses as part of the core curriculum. Faculty were asked to update their course proposals to link specific assignments for assessment of the MSU Core Qualities and address core qualities in their syllabi. This work was done to close the loop from early-cycle core assessments and better provide feedback to the faculty on student learning. The Core Curriculum Committee is currently establishing the next Core Assessment Cycle plan.

Thoroughly conducting assessments of programs and courses, and then closing the loop between assessment and improvements designed to increase student learning, have become indelibly part of the processes of teaching and learning at Montana State as the university works toward the Choosing Promise strategic plan’s first intentional focus, “Transformational Learning.”

Recommendation 3: Fall 2020 Mid-Cycle Review

Consistently use assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicate the conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public. (2010 Standard(s) 5.A.2) (2020 Standard 1.B.1)

Background

Since 2017, MSU has refined the process of assessment to provide information that can be used in meaningful ways to improve student success, institutionalize continuous improvement, and make determinations of institutional effectiveness and mission fulfillment. The establishment of MSU's strategic plan, Choosing Promise, in 2019 provided the platform creating actions and metrics toward three intentional foci, the first of which is the intentional focus on teaching and learning, "Transformational Learning."

Choosing Promise articulates the university's strategic direction and serves as the road map through 2026. It states the university's mission and values. It also lists areas of intentional focus and goals, as well as metrics that will be used to measure progress toward the intentional foci and the goals listed under each intentional focus. The end of spring semester 2020 marked the end of the first full academic year under the new plan, and in fall 2020, MSU initiated a revised continuous improvement process:

Step 1: President's Leadership Team: Sets budgets and makes strategic investment decisions.

Step 2: Unit/Department: Initiation, elimination, or continuation of strategic activities.

Step 3: Unit/Department: Annual assessment of strategic activities.

Step 4: Intentional Focus Strategy Effectiveness Teams (IFSET): Score strategy effectiveness, assess accomplishment of intentional focus score for each intentional focus. Report back to the unit and to Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC).

Step 5: Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC): Progress toward and final determination of mission fulfillment, review appropriateness of performance indicators.

Step 6: Planning Council: Review IFSETs and IEC reports to inform priority strategic plan objectives for budgeting.

Following Step 6, the process begins again with Step 1 as a continuous improvement loop.

MSU's institutional assessment plan guided the university toward mission fulfillment and provided a framework for building a culture of continuous improvement as the university set and communicated objectives and goals, adjusted to improve performance, achieved goals, and identified new objectives. The new intentional foci were designed to be significant enhancements to MSU's ability to demonstrate mission fulfillment and to guide the university in ways to continually improve on activities and initiatives that will enhance student success and experiences.

Updates since the NWCCU 2020 Mid-Cycle Review

Montana State continues to make progress in establishing institution-wide processes for an ongoing, comprehensive, systematic assessment and evaluation of mission fulfillment. The initial IFSET committee review in late 2020 provided the quantitative metrics and qualitative assessments baseline of the intentional foci of the strategic plan. The most notable takeaway from the IFSET review was to apply the process to the long-term projects we heavily invested in, leading to a review process with Budget Council and a newly developed Strategic Investment Proposal process. A weakness identified in the IFSET process was a failure to convey the process as a planning and improvement process. Responsibility for collection and review of the assessment data was turned over to the Planning Council and University Data and Analytics (previously the Office of Planning and Analysis) in 2021. The current (March 2024) reorganization of the Office of Planning and Analysis and Planning Council is a recognition that the selected model is not an appropriate fit for the university and is a direct response to strengthen and improve this process. Other sources of data for these assessments continue to include the AOC, Registrar's Office, the Financial Aid Office, the Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success, the Honors College, the Graduate School, the University Budget Office, the Office of Sponsored Programs, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Student Engagement.

Choosing Promise has a clearly defined set of [metrics](#) that is available to the public on its website that shows the progress of each of the metrics for the goals affiliated with the three intentional foci. These metrics are useful within the institution and to the stakeholder public. Each year, Planning Council uses the metrics to prioritize two to three goals, which are then approved by the president's cabinet, and a budget is proposed for improvement on the goals for the following year. These priority goals, along with all the goals in the plan, are crucial in several university decision processes, including Strategic Investment Proposals, which is now a biennial process to reprioritize investment in the strategic plan processes and programs at the department level. Budget Council reviews new program developments based on prioritized investments. See Standard 1.B.3 for a table showing the investment dollars made for each of the intentional foci since 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic required time and resources for the management of the pandemic on campus; therefore, investments had to be targeted to this management process. As a result, progress on the goals of the strategic plan was hampered. The metrics indicate some slight improvements in most of the metrics from 2017-18 and from 2018-19. In 2019-20, during the pandemic, declines in the metrics began and continued through 2022-23. At this point, a general trend toward improvement began and continues. Because of the necessary pivot required to manage the impacts of the pandemic, the president directed Planning Council to review each metric and action and present extensions to timelines. The proposed changes were presented to University Council, with the subsequent decision by University Council to extend the timeline for the Choosing Promise strategic plan to 2026.

The university is dedicated to improving all aspects of the land-grant mission through the strategic plan, but especially to improving the teaching and learning activities on campus through assessment of programs and courses, with particular focus on the general education courses, Core 2.0. As areas of need are uncovered in these assessment activities, added resources are provided to contribute solutions to various problems students might face as they continue in their educational journeys. To see a complete list of student services available, please see Appendix A of this report.

Standard One: Institutional Mission

Standard 1.A.1

The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

Response

The five-year [strategic plan](#) was adopted in 2019 with the university's mission statement included as follows:

As the state's land-grant university, Montana State integrates education, creation of knowledge and art, and service to communities.

The vision statement in the strategic plan indicates how the university will direct its energy, based on the mission statement. Montana State's stated vision is:

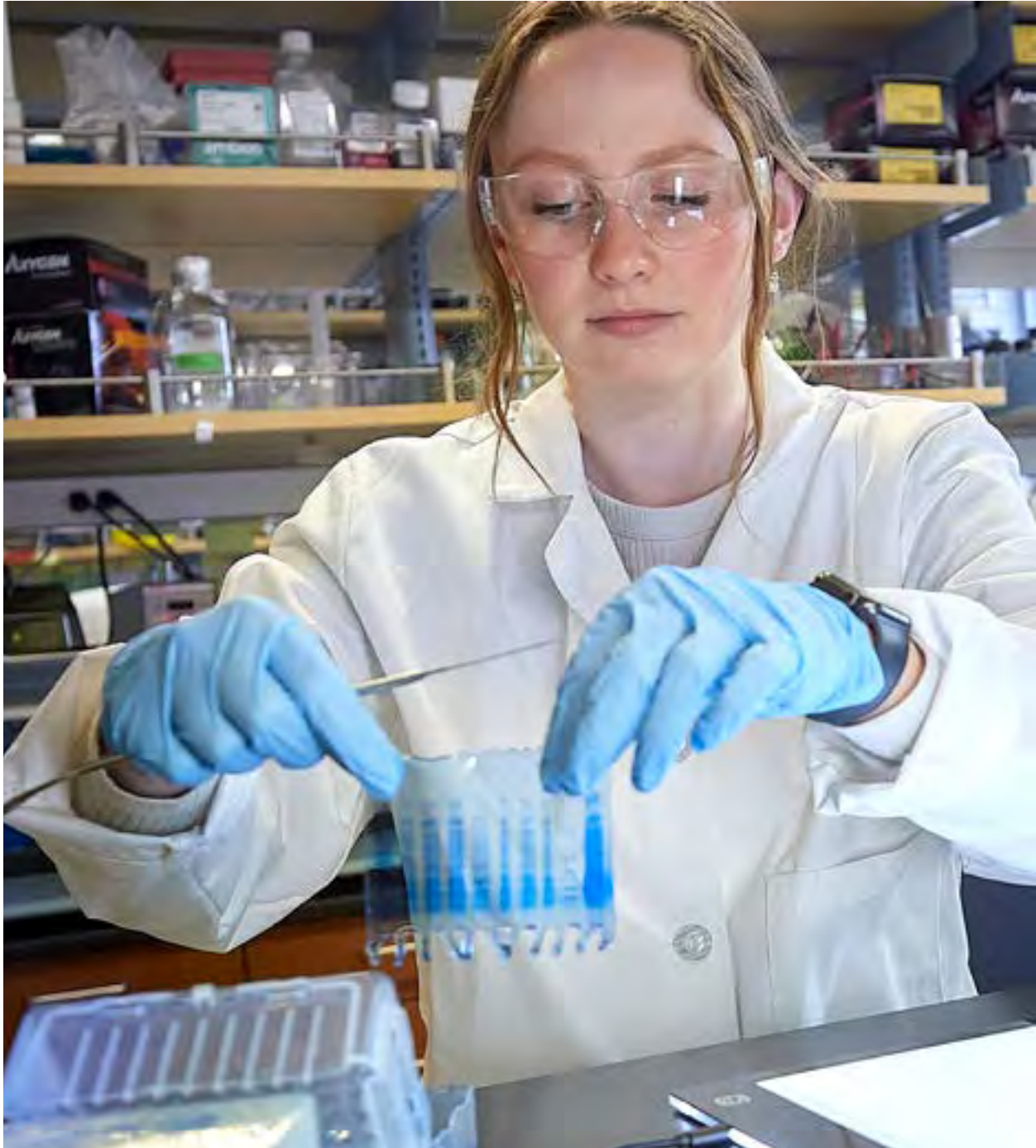
Montana State University will transform lives and communities in the people's interest.

The values inherent in the mission and vision statements were explicitly elucidated in the strategic plan and are as follows:

- **Excellence** –We pursue exceptional outcomes.
- **Integrity** –We commit to honesty, ethical behavior, and accountability.
- **Inclusion** –We create a civil, supportive, and respectful environment where difference and diversity are sources of strength.
- **Collaboration** –We believe that working together produces better outcomes.
- **Curiosity** –We expect inquiry, exploration, creativity, and innovation.
- **Stewardship** –We care for and conserve the human, economic, physical, and environmental resources entrusted to us.

The mission, vision, and values statements are subsumed under the land-grant mission that Montana State University uses as its North Star. Students become involved in the integration of the three legs of the land-grant mission through learning, participating in the creation of research and art, and providing service and outreach to the university's stakeholders. The result is student achievement of the highest caliber, one indicator of which is MSU's extraordinary rate of students selected for Goldwater, Rhodes, Gates-Cambridge, Marshall, and Mitchell scholarships (see the complete list on the [Honors College web page](#)).

Every student can earn an associate degree, a certificate, or a degree (bachelor's, master's, or doctorate) and engage in experiences to fully develop their professional and personal potential through campus organizations such as the [MSU Leadership Institute](#), [student government](#), [student clubs](#), and [study abroad opportunities](#). Montana State strives to address all facets of each student, with offices, services, programs, and rigorous academic offerings to create a graduate who honors excellence, lives with integrity, values inclusion and collaboration, continually indulges their own curiosity, and inculcates all they do with an ethic of stewardship.



Standard One: Improving Institutional Effectiveness

Standard 1.B.1

The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

Response

Presence of a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness: Montana State University's strategic plan, [Choosing Promise](#)

The university, as the state's land-grant institution, has placed high importance on assessing institutional effectiveness. Effectiveness is defined at the institutional level within the strategic plan, [Choosing Promise](#). The strategic plan, adopted in 2019 and renewed in 2023, describes the mission, vision, and values of the institution and follows with three intentional focus areas, with one focus area for each strand of the land-grant mission: teaching and learning, discovery and scholarship, and outreach and engagement. Intentional focus areas each have three or four goals that further describe what the university community aspires to be, with institution-level metrics to hold MSU accountable to demonstrating progress. Planning Council (which comprises a representative from each college and the library, Faculty Senate, Academic Council, All-Staff Council, Associated Students of Montana State University, and Research Council) tracks and communicates progress on the plan and promotes alignment between the strategic plan and the university's resource development and allocation. Strategic plan metrics and actions serve as assessment and continuous improvement tools for the university. Individual units and programs simultaneously evaluate their programs and services at an atomistic level. While local evaluation (program assessment, student services offices, and programs, see Appendix A) will inform continuous improvement at the local level, aggregated success in curricular innovations, student service interventions, policy, and process should also move the institutional metrics forward.

Data sources for the metrics to measure progress toward strategic plan goals

University Data and Analytics (formerly the Office of Planning and Analysis) assembles the [data](#) that tracks the annual progress on each goal and subgoal and tracks whether the benchmark established for each metric or action is achieved.

The data sources for the metrics used to measure progress toward the strategic plan goals include data from the:

- University Data and Analytics
- Registrar's Office
- Financial Aid Office
- Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success
- Honors College
- Graduate School
- University Budget Office
- Office of Sponsored Programs
- Office of the Provost from Faculty Success records
- Office of Student Engagement

Systematic planning and evaluation process

Each year, Planning Council proposes prioritizing two to three goals, which are then approved by the president's cabinet and socialized across campus for planning and resource allocation a full year out. These priorities, alongside the other goals outlined in the strategic plan, are crucial in several university decision-making processes including Strategic Investment Proposals (SIP), a biennial (formerly annual) process to reprioritize investment in strategic plan processes and programs, and Budget Council review of new program development and approval. Policy and process issues are addressed across department, college, and university councils and committees with a focus on the strategic plan goals. University-level data and assessments are shared and reviewed across campus councils, and information is readily available on websites. Monthly training sessions are open to leadership (deans, department heads, vice provosts, vice presidents, and directors) to discuss the data available and encourage data-driven decisions. Regular self-studies and planning have been implemented across processes to encourage reflection, goal-setting, and assessment for programs, departments, colleges, and student services. For example, the current self-study on major-required credits and research from the academic affairs office is a response to concerns about retention and time to degree.

This ongoing, systematic, evidence-informed evaluation and planning is moving the needle on the strategic plan. Through continuous evaluation, the university administration recognized that the selected model for planning and institutional effectiveness was not an appropriate fit for the university, and the direct response to strengthen and improve this process resulted in the reorganization of the Office of Planning and Analysis and Planning Council. The reorganization resulted in the Office of Planning and Analysis being renamed as University Data and Analytics. The planning functions are being reconsidered and will be placed in a newly configured organizational structure.

Achievements and areas of needed continuous improvement: Comparing metrics for goals in the strategic plan from 2017-18 to 2022-23

The table below lists the individual metrics and results as of academic year 2022-2023 for the first intentional focus, “Transformational Learning,” which lists goals for various aspects of student success. This summary is derived from the goal updates posted to [Planning Council’s website](#).

Strategic Plan Goal	Metric	AY 2017-18 Measure		AY 2022-23 Results (Goals Met Indicated in Bold)
Goal 1.1: Broaden access for underrepresented populations and increase academic success for all students through excellence in undergraduate education.	1.1.1: Enrollment of students who are economically disadvantaged, first generation, veterans, adult learners, individuals with disabilities and from underrepresented races and ethnicities will increase in each group’s share of the student body by two points by 2026.	Enrollment- Economically Disadvantaged (Pell-Eligible)	22.4%	15.6%
		Enrollment-First Generation	19.8%	13.7%
		Enrollment-Veterans	1.7%	1.3%
		Enrollment-Adult Learners Ages 25	12.5%	7.9%
		Enrollment-Students with Disability Accommodation	4.9% in 2019-2020	7.1%
		Enrollment-Under-represented Races/Ethnicities	11.0%	13.8%
	1.1.2: Eighty percent of student financial need will be met by 2026, compared to the current 74%.	74%		63%
	1.1.3: Montana State University will increase the number of 1-year and 2-year degrees and certificates awarded by 50% by 2026 (to 360).	183		220
	1.1.4: Montana State University will increase the number of Dual Enrollment students by 40% by 2024 (to 700).	526		710
	1.1.5: Montana State University will increase developmental education and co-requisite course completion rates to 75% by 2026	69.3%		69.6%

Strategic Plan Goal	Metric	AY 2017-18 Measure	AY 2022-23 Results (Goals Met Indicated in Bold)	
<p>1.1.6: Montana State University will increase retention (from 72% to 85%) and six-year graduation (from 48% to 60%) rates for all incoming Montana State students and will reduce disparities for students who are economically disadvantaged, first generation, veterans, adult learners, individuals with disabilities and from underrepresented races and ethnicities by 2026.</p>		Retention-All Incoming Undergraduates	72.2%	72.2%
		Retention- Economically Disadvantaged (Pell Eligible)	65.9%	67.2%
		Retention-First Generation	71.4%	62.6%
		Retention-Veterans	74.2%	70.1%
		Retention-Adult Learners Ages 25+	63.8%	56.0%
		Retention-Students with Disability Accommodations	71.6% (2020-21)	64.4%
		Retention-Under-represented Race/Ethnicities	66.8%	62.2%
<p>1.1.6: Montana State University will increase retention (from 72% to 85%) and six-year graduation (from 48% to 60%) rates for all incoming Montana State students and will reduce disparities for students who are economically disadvantaged, first generation, veterans, adult learners, individuals with disabilities and from underrepresented races and ethnicities by 2026. Graduate persistence and graduation will also be measured and improved.</p>		Graduation-All Incoming Undergraduates	48.4%	52.4%
		Graduation-Economically Disadvantaged (Pell Eligible)	39.5%	42.2%
		Graduation-First Generation	36.6%	45.8%
		Graduation-Veterans	38.0%	50.0%
		Graduation-Adult Learners Ages 25+	NA	NA
		Graduation-Students with Disability Accommodations	NA; data was not collected until recently to be able to calculate a 6-year graduation rate	
		Graduation-Under-represented Race/Ethnicities	36.1%	40.9%

Strategic Plan Goal	Metric	AY 2017-18 Measure	AY 2022-23 Results (Goals Met Indicated in Bold)	
	1.1.7: Montana State University will increase the number of students who receive national and international awards, honors, and prestigious scholarships.	National and International Student Awards (Honors College)	15	16
	1.1.7b: Montana State University will increase the number of students who receive national and international awards, honors, and prestigious scholarships.	National and International Student Awards (Faculty Success: Directed Student Learning)	25	45
Goal 1.2: Expand high-quality graduate education. Montana State University will enroll and graduate more degree-seeking students at the graduate level and enhance the quality of graduate degree programs	1.2.1: Montana State University will enhance its graduate education portfolio with appropriate balance across programs including the social sciences, humanities, and arts by 2024.	Counts of programs offered by degree level and broadfield	See next column for counts by degree level	Arts: 4 masters Health: 6 Certificate 4 Masters 1 Doctorate Humanities: 1 Certificate 5 Masters 1 Doctorate Professional: 5 Certificate 10 Masters Social Science: 1 Certificate 1 Masters 1 Doctorate STEM: 6 Certificate 33 Masters 23 Doctorate Other: 1 Certificate 1 Masters 1 Doctorate
	1.2.2: Montana State University will match up to 20 additional externally funded graduate research assistantships with institutionally supported and competitively awarded graduate research assistant appointments, aligned with Grand Challenge areas, annually by 2020.	Externally Funded Graduate Research Assistants	223	365
		Institutionally Funded Graduate Research Assistants	95	93

	1.2.3: Montana State University will increase the number of research doctoral degrees (to 90), professional practice doctorates (to 30), and master's degrees (to 650) awarded annually by 2026	Degrees Earned-Research Doctoral	66	97
		Degrees Earned- Professional Practice Doctoral	18	33
		Degrees Earned-Master's	569	593
	1.2.4: All graduate degree programs will undergo systematic review and, if appropriate, redesign to ensure that they are structured to meet the diverse career paths of today's students by 2026.	Analysis of process for systematic reviews and curriculum redesign	No uniform method or time frame of review	Yes, all graduate programs are reviewed every seven years as part of department reviews. Graduate programs are assessed every two years.
Goal 1.3: Implement evidence-based, high quality, high-impact teaching and learning practices for every student.	1.3.: Each student at the undergraduate level will engage in at least one sustained curricular or co-curricular high-quality, high-impact practice, demonstrated to positively affect educational or personal development, each year.	Cumulative undergraduate engagement in at least one high-quality, high-impact practice (HQHIP) each year by 2022	63.2% (2019)	67.5%
	1.3.2: The university will demonstrate that all graduating seniors have achieved Core learning outcomes and career competencies by 2026.	Annual core learning outcomes assessments by Core Curriculum Committee		
	1.3.3: All undergraduate students will use e-portfolios for sustained reflection on curricular, co-curricular and dynamic learning by 2024.			This goal was evaluated in 2023 for ongoing relevance and found to be overly time bound and reliant on a single technology; therefore, the goal was dropped.

	1.3.4: At least 70% of undergraduate students will demonstrate sustained campus and community engagement by annually participating in one significant student engagement activity or leadership role attending 20 or more university events annually by 2026.	At least 70% of undergraduate students will demonstrate campus and community engagement annually by participating in one student engagement activity or leadership role by 2020.	15.4%, 2019-20	22.7%, 2020-21
		At least 70% of undergraduate students will attend 20 or more university events annually by 2026.	47.8%, 2017-18	23.6%, 2020-21

Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on strategic plan metrics

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a swift and dramatic pivot to tactical planning and action. MSU invested significant time, intellect, and resources to move to online instruction for the remainder of the spring 2020 term; plan a return to in-person instruction in fall 2020 under new social distancing, isolation, and quarantining protocols; and combat newly exacerbated inequities for students of color, students with need, and students from rural communities with less access to health care and technological supports. Academic and student service delivery dramatically and successfully shifted, and Montana State was able to operate with no layoffs and with only a brief period of online instruction and service delivery. However, progress on several areas of the strategic plan was understandably hampered. Indeed, the metrics for the strategic plan illustrate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on students. The statistics show slight improvements in most of the metrics from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Then in 2019-20, during the pandemic, the declines in the metrics began and continued through 2022-23. In 2023-24, we see a general trend toward improvement in the metrics, along with a growth in enrollment.

The strategic plan was written as a five-year plan expiring in 2024. Because of the necessary pivot to tactical planning and action during the COVID-19 pandemic, at the request of the president, Planning Council in 2023 reviewed the strategic plan for continued relevance. It found enduring elements—mission, vision, values, intentional focus areas, and goals—that still appropriately and effectively direct the university’s work. Planning Council working groups reviewed each metric and action and proposed extensions to timelines and some minor wording changes for discussion by the full council, who in turn proposed changes to University Council, which voted to immediately adopt the Planning Council recommendations in October 2023 so MSU will now have a two-year extension of the plan with a new timeline through 2026.

Establishing and assessing support services

MSU understands that student success, especially in challenging times such as the pandemic years, relies on effective classroom instruction but is also supported by the co-curricular services offered to help students address issues that affect classroom performance, retention, and on-time graduation. Appendix A has a summary chart of student support programs and offices with a brief explanation of their evaluation processes.

All student support offices and programs have an evaluation process. Some of the programs are required to be evaluated through annual reporting, such as the Veteran Services programs, but most are evaluated through metrics developed, collected, and reported by the programs and offices involved. These metrics and results are used by student support offices and programs for future improvements to fulfill the program/office areas of responsibilities.

Summary

Montana State University continually assesses progress toward the strategic plan, Choosing Promise. The metrics for assessment are at an institutional level. To support students and achieve the goals defined in the strategic plan, services have been established to help students solve problems that may preclude successful classroom performance, retention, and on-time graduation. These student services are individually assessed, and an institutional-level assessment measuring the achievement of the strategic plan goals assists in determining the effect of the combined efforts of all student services on student success.

Standard 1.B.2

The institution sets and articulates meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment and to improve its effectiveness in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions.

Response

Meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators

Montana State University articulates its goals and objectives in its [strategic plan](#), Choosing Promise, the product of a yearlong campus-wide collaboration and self-study. The plan is reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in the environment or our community. Our mission, vision, and values influenced the development of three intentional focus areas, which are in turn more specifically described with a mix of aspirational and more-easily-achievable goals. Metrics and actions describe some ways in which MSU will see progress and lend specificity to how we will fulfill our land-grant mission of integrating education of students, creation of knowledge and art, and service to communities.

Metrics and actions in the plan capture only some of the ways MSU documents progress and mission fulfillment. Not all goals can be fully captured quantitatively, and some goals are difficult to measure yet are still critical to articulate and to strive toward. Additional program assessment, ad hoc analysis, narrative, and other sources fill in some gaps.

Quantitative metric targets in the plan were informed by the unique institutional environment of MSU and the performance of identified peer institutions. MSU monitors student success outcomes both for its own students and for its regional peers and identified similar institutions; for example, retention and graduation rate targets set in the strategic plan are informed by the performance of similar institutions with similar student bodies, against which MSU has been under performing. Knowledge creation and dissemination targets are set relative to peer benchmarks.

Additional indicators

In addition to formal strategic plan goals, metrics, and actions, which describe MSU's direction

but do not dictate department- or program-level strategies, MSU's Office of Planning and Analysis, which has been reorganized into University Data and Analytics, monitors and reports widely on other relevant indicators. These data may be gathered from state and national sources and from other MSU offices. Indicators are shared online, publicly where possible, and in monthly reports and data training for councils, committees, department heads, deans, and others.

Some examples of widely used indicators of success across organizational levels (college, department, program):

- Entering undergraduate student (first-time and transfer) retention to the first spring, second fall, and subsequent terms, disaggregated for many demographic groups (race, ethnicity, gender, rurality, high school size, Pell status, etc.).
- Entering graduate student retention to the first spring, second fall, and subsequent terms, disaggregated for many demographic groups (race, ethnicity, gender, rurality, etc.).
- Entering first-time undergraduate student movement between majors and departments.
- Undergraduate and graduate time to degree for every degree level, disaggregated for demographics.
- Employment and wage outcomes by discipline and degree level.
- Student success intervention effectiveness (grades, persistence, graduation) disaggregated as appropriate.
- Student and faculty survey results, with national benchmarks where appropriate and available (e.g., [BCSSE](#), [HERI](#), [COACHE](#)).
- Faculty grant, scholarly product, exhibit and performance, and outreach activities.
- Faculty and staff salaries relative to appropriate peer benchmarks.
- Employee turnover, position vacancies.

Peer comparisons

Within the state of Montana, The Montana University System (MUS) has a set of statistics comparing all of the system's MUS (Montana University System) colleges and universities. Montana State University MSU uses other 4four-year bachelor's degree-granting institutions as comparisons for various key performance indicators, such as retention and time to degree. These include [Montana State University-Billings](#), [Montana State University-Northern](#), the [University of Montana](#), [Montana Tech](#), and the [University of Montana-Western](#). For most student-focused statistics, MSU compares to western land-grant universities:

- [Colorado State University](#)
- [New Mexico State University](#)
- [North Dakota State University](#)
- [Oregon State University](#)
- [South Dakota University](#)
- [University of Alaska-Fairbanks](#)

- [University of Arizona](#)
- [University of California-Riverside](#)
- [University of Hawaii at Manoa](#)
- [University of Idaho](#)
- [University of Nevada, Reno](#)
- [University of Wyoming](#)
- [Utah State University](#)
- [Washington State University](#)

For faculty-centric projects, MSU uses public [Carnegie peer institutions](#) that are rated R1 (doctoral universities with very high research activity) or the land-grant subset of those. Both peer sets include near-peers and aspirational peers.

In addition to standard and ongoing metric analysis, for the self-study, MSU compared its student success outcome data relative to western land-grants, as listed above (excluding California, whose land-grant model and system size/scope are outliers over time). These data are based in IPEDS data submissions and the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard and summarized in APLU and ASCU's [Voluntary System of Accountability Analytics](#) (MSU is a reporting member and an advisory board member). Internal data extend the series for recent years not yet available for the peer set.

Retention to the second fall for the federal (first-time, full-time) cohort for both MSU and peers shows a dip due at least in part to the pandemic. The most recent indicators for MSU point to a potential recovery to pre-pandemic levels. Across the series, MSU trails western land-grant peers.

Graduation rate overall has increased for MSU and peers, with dips in the first class directly affected by the pandemic late in their career. Disaggregation by race, ethnicity, sex, and Pell grant status show variation between groups. Equity gaps remain, both between MSU and peers, and across MSU's populations. Some variance over time is an artifact of small cohort size in the case of some underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. In general, however, MSU lags behind the six-year graduation rates of peers across groups and time. However, median earnings for graduates are similar to peers in the cohorts available through [College Scorecard](#).

MSU awards more Pell and institutional grant aid than the peer average, but the net price remains higher due to a larger proportion of non-resident students enrolled at MSU than at the average western land-grant. The price of a college education has increased steadily for both series, though the peer average dropped in the last year reported while MSU's increased slightly. MSU tuition has remained flat over this period, but the share of students paying non-resident rates has increased, influencing the average cost of attendance and the average net price.

See Appendix B for an example of comparisons of retention rates, graduation rates, average median earnings after graduation, average Pell awards, and average cost of attendance for students with western land-grant peer institutions.

Standard 1.B.3

The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

Response

Inclusive, comprehensive planning efforts

MSU conducts campus- and constituency-wide strategic planning processes before each plan expires to have continual plan presence to guide resource allocation and programmatic decisions. The last comprehensive planning process took place in 2017-2018 and culminated in a plan adopted by University Council in fall 2018, the setting of metrics throughout 2018-2019, and enactment in fall 2019. An ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) guided the planning process, documented on the [SPC's website](#).

SPC employed one-on-one interviews, invitation-based meetings, public listening sessions, a (Bozeman) community leader/partner focus group, a continuously posted web-based feedback form, a group email inbox, and regular requests for input via campus and alumni emails. Drafts of key language and eventually the full plan circulated regularly for input through email, web postings, and in-person governance committee and council meetings.

Ongoing planning and improvement efforts

Planning Council, a standing committee charged by the president with representation from faculty, students, and staff members across all areas of the university, meets monthly to review progress on the strategic plan, discuss needs and successes, and create an annual priority recommendation ([members, agendas, and minutes](#)). In addition to relying on broadly representative formal membership roles, Planning Council meetings are open to the public and regularly include as many non-members as members in attendance. Public comment is included in every meeting agenda.

The MSU executive team receives Planning Council's priority goal recommendation in the summer each year and typically endorses the priorities for campus dissemination. The current year and the next year's planned [prioritization memos](#) are posted on the Planning Council web page and announced in University Council and other venues. University Council, comprising deans, vice presidents, and the chairs/presidents of faculty, staff, and representatives from the Associated Students of MSU, receives reports and holds discussions on plan progress each month ([members, agendas, and minutes](#)). The metrics are [publicly posted](#) on Planning Council's web page and referenced regularly by campus and community stakeholders. Metric presentations are given on an ad hoc basis across campus.

Campus members making budget requests through an annual call for proposals from departments and colleges must tie their requests to the priority goals, ensuring that resource allocation decisions rely on plan priorities. Budget Council was established to create, communicate, and implement logical and easily understood fiscal processes that lead to fair budgetary guidance or resource allocations that directly support university strategic goals and priorities.

The [members](#) of the Budget Council include

- The vice president for administration and finance.
- The executive vice president for academic affairs and provost.
- The vice president for research and economic development.
- The vice president for student success.
- The vice president for information technology and chief information officer.
- The outreach and engagement chair.
- The Planning Council chair.
- A member of the Dean's Council.
- One department head.
- The president of Faculty Senate.
- A representative from Faculty Senate.
- A representative from the MSU All-Staff Council.
- An undergraduate student.
- A graduate student.

The Budget Council reviews approved investments after two to three budget cycles to gauge their effectiveness in driving strategic plan progress ([members, agendas, and minutes](#)). The following tables show the historic allocations made by the [Budget Council](#) to support the strategic plan goals with base investments or one-time-only investments.



Table 1: Base Investments from FY2019 through FY2024 by Strategic Plan Goal

Strategic Plan Goal	FY19 Base in Dollars	FY20 Base in Dollars	FY21 Base in Dollars	FY22 Base in Dollars	FY23 Base in Dollars	FY24 Base in Dollars	Total Investment for Goal
Learning 1.1: Broaden access for underrepresented populations and increase academic success for all students through excellence in undergraduate education	1,569,397	—	2,162,216	911,710	2,455,754	650,397	7,749,474
Learning 1.2: Expand high-quality graduate education	151,098	493,392	—	—	233,032	127,400	1,004,922
Learning 1.3: Implement evidence-based high quality, high impact teaching and learning practices for every student	—	821,638	—	—	—	—	821,638
Discovery 2.1: Enhance the significance of scholarship	—	—	288,153	60,000	—	—	348,153
Discovery 2.2: Expand interdisciplinary scholarship	—	—	68,563	—	—	—	68,563
Discovery 2.4: Elevate expectations for scholarship	—	51,700	—	—	—	—	51,700
Engagement 3.1: Increase mutually beneficial collaborations with Tribal nations and partners	—	—	97,256	—	—	—	97,256
Engagement 3.3: Foster a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement, and individual growth	584,726	466,910	474,350	1,028,786	4,486,809	341,787	7,383,368
Total Base Investment	2,305,221	1,833,640	3,090,538	2,000,496	7,175,595	1,119,584	17,525,074

Table 2: One-Time-Only (OTO) Investments from FY2019 through FY2024 by Strategic Plan Goal

Strategic Plan Goal	FY19 Base in Dollars	FY20 Base in Dollars	FY21 Base in Dollars	FY22 Base in Dollars	FY23 Base in Dollars	FY24 Base in Dollars	Total Investment for Goal
Learning 1.1: Broaden access for underrepresented populations and increase academic success for all students through excellence in undergraduate education	1,456,778	—	2,540,055	2,752,559	130,000	738,409	7,617,801
Learning 1.2: Expand high-quality graduate education	59,799	303,520	—	—	—	40,500	403,819
Learning 1.3: Implement evidence-based high quality, high impact teaching and learning practices for every student	—	782,869	—	—	—	—	782,869
Discovery 2.1: Enhance the significance of scholarship	—	—	540,429	38,500	—	—	578,929
Discovery 2.2: Expand interdisciplinary scholarship	—	509,600	277,975	300,000	—	—	1,087,575
Discovery 2.4: Elevate expectations for scholarship	—	75,000	—	—	—	—	75,000
Engagement 3.1: Increase mutually beneficial collaborations with Tribal nations and partners	—	—	88,323	20,000	—	—	108,323
Engagement 3.3: Foster a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement, and individual growth	438,315	427,879	1,729,810	750,654	1,004,000	500,234	4,100,238
Total Base Investment	1,954,892	2,098,868	5,176,592	2,861,713	1,134,000	1,279,143	14,505,208

Each year, the progress reporting, prioritization, and budget cycle renews. Planning Council carefully considers the priorities of the budget allocations to further make progress on plan goals, with an eye to changes in the larger environment that could influence the plan goal and therefore the budget allocation.

Standard 1.B.4

The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such findings to assess its intended outcomes of its programs and services and indicators of achievement of its goals.

Response

Montana State processes to monitor internal and external environments

Part of the charge to MSU's Planning Council is to "regularly review new opportunities and environmental factors to assess and update the strategic plan." Planning Council, with staff support from University Data and Analytics, monitors performance on the university's strategic plan and conducts at least an annual review of plan metrics and environmental changes (see, e.g., minutes from [Sept. 28, 2022](#), [Sept. 27, 2023](#), or [Jan. 31, 2024](#) for review of one goal in context), then conveys information to the president and University Council on where strategic plan goal performance may be stalled or has become misaligned with Montana University System strategic goals or with the wider environment. The most recent changes, in response to changes in the environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a review of performance on plan goals, resulted in extension of the plan through 2026. These recommendations from Planning Council were adopted by University Council.

Individual units and major university divisions also scan internal and environmental factors, looking at peer institutions, higher education more generally, and local, state, and national trends.

For example, the [Strategic Enrollment Management](#) (SEM) committee, a multi-function group (comprising recruitment, retention, undergraduate, graduate, one- and two-year program personnel, analytical staff, housing and dining professionals, financial aid experts, the registrar, and other student-focused professionals across MSU) meets weekly throughout the year to monitor both internal metrics and external factors to build the next class, improve persistence and graduation outcomes, and share information about ongoing work. This group relies in part on vendors to provide additional national perspective and in part on success metrics from internal program evaluation practices.

Using findings to assess outcomes of programs and services and indicators of achievement of its goals

The outcomes include long-term growth in enrollment (although with COVID-19 impacts), and significant long-term improvement in on-time graduation rates and counts across academic levels, in alignment with strategic goals. Intermediate qualitative and quantitative data are also shared and evaluated for impact on recruitment and retention strategies. Examples of this include conversations with current and prospective students, check-ins with high school counselors, feedback from student and professional resident advisors, faculty members, and academic advisors, and daily and weekly disaggregated registration trends. Via membership of the vice president for student success and the chief data officer on the SEM committee, the president and cabinet are apprised of emerging or changing information.

Governance system uses findings to assess outcomes of programs and achievement of goals

Montana State has a number of governance councils and committees. They include:

- University Council
- Budget Council
- Academic Council
- Outreach and Engagement Council
- Planning Council
- Research Council
- Assistant Deans' Council
- Data Governance Council
- Diversity Council
- All-Staff Council
- Faculty Affairs Committee
- Faculty Senate
- University Graduate Council
- Joint Academic Governance Steering Committee
- President's Executive Council

Each of these councils and committees have responsibilities to monitor internal and external environments through their work with students, faculty, staff, other stakeholders, and data provided by University Data and Analytics and other sources. The members bring this information to their various councils and committees to help shape responses to problems and to better work toward the goals of the university.



Standard One: Student Learning

Standard 1.C.1

The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes that lead to collegiate-level degrees, certificates, or credentials, and include designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

Response

Montana State offers programs with appropriate content and rigor consistent with its land-grant mission

The development of programs has been and is guided by the Montana Board of Regents. In the board's [Policy and Procedures Manual](#), [Policy 303.1](#) provides the guidelines for proposing new academic programs. MSU follows these guidelines and uses the required [academic forms and templates](#) maintained by the Board of Regents. These templates inform how the curriculum inventory management (CIM) system organizes the critical information necessary to review new academic programs. That includes addressing:

- Whether there is a need for the program (regarding the desire to have intellectual content within the economy and labor force requirements).
- What additional resources will be called for.
- Whether there has been any collaboration between Montana University System institutions.
- How the new program will fit into the institutional mission, strategic plan, and existing programs.

Similarly, all new academic courses are determined by the faculty. New proposed courses are submitted to the CIM system and require a letter of support, a syllabus, the faculty member's CV, and actionable, measurable learning outcomes, along with how those learning outcomes will be assessed.

Communicating the requirements for new programs and courses to faculty and staff members is essential to the process. This process is clearly explained in the recently developed [Curriculum Approval Handbook](#).

The creation of content and rigor in programs begins with hiring well-educated faculty members with terminal degrees in their disciplines. These faculty members, who are generally on a tenure-track, will then design or redesign, teach, supervise, and evaluate their own courses and programs

in cooperation with colleagues within the program. They also rely on the standards held in their national professional associations, accreditation of their programs, the accreditation provided by the NWCCU, and a program review every seven years required by the Board of Regents.

Communicating MSU program availability leading to certificates, associate degrees, bachelor degrees, and advanced degrees through the catalog

The university's [Course Bulletin](#) is the official general catalog and contains an inventory of all academic programs and related curricula. The published and accessible catalog is updated annually in June and is effective beginning the next fall term. The catalog pulls directly from the Courseleaf CIM system, where all student learning outcomes at the program level as well as the course level are kept up to date and rigorously reviewed. All curriculum changes are proposed by faculty and reviewed by several separate groups using the CIM system workflow:

- Assistant provost.
- Department curriculum chair.
- Department head.
- College curriculum chair.
- Dean of college.
- Curriculum and Program Committee.
- Faculty Senate.

These reviews are conducted before curricula are updated by the Registrar's Office. The program review process ensures that the institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with MSU's land-grant mission.

Courseleaf CIM requires learning outcomes for programs and courses

The CIM system acts as a repository of program learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, and syllabi. It contains a workflow for review that embeds shared governance committees of faculty reviewers. All proposed changes to programs and courses are submitted to the CIM system and initially reviewed by the assistant provost for alignment between the system and uploaded syllabi and are then forwarded into the review workflow for faculty committees to review and approve.

Currently, MSU is working with Courseleaf on the ability to pull the program learning outcomes from the CIM system into the catalog, so those outcomes are available in another location, in addition to on department and unit websites. All department websites must outline the learning outcomes for the programs offered. Examples of program learning outcomes can be seen at the following department websites: [Health and Human Development](#), [Chemical and Biological Engineering](#), and [Agricultural Economics and Economics](#).

Program assessment used to determine if student learning has been successful

Program assessment is informed by the [Student Outcomes Assessment Policy](#). Results of assessment of student learning are used to identify and support program-level endeavors to improve curriculum and learning in conjunction with stated program learning objectives and goals. Academic program assessment reporting occurs annually for all departments, and programs use a variety of methods.

Program assessment reports are collected by the [Assessment and Outcomes Committee](#), and feedback for quality assurance is shared with faculty curriculum committees and department heads. Comprehensive reports are compiled and shared with college deans. An executive summary of assessment findings is compiled and uploaded to the [Academic Program Assessment](#) website as well as shared with the vice provost for curriculum, assessment, and accreditation.

Academic program assessment is conducted, and methods of data collection and analysis are determined by faculty in their respective departments. The [program assessment template](#) streamlines the reporting process and asks faculty to:

- Reflect on past assessments.
- Update assessment plans and schedules yearly.
- Collect assessment information from multiple courses.
- Use multiple methodologies as needed.
- Identify areas of student learning that can be improved.
- Specify thresholds of student learning within the assessment process.
- Report their results.
- Use assessment results as a faculty body to determine how assessment can be used to improve the curriculum to support continuous student learning improvement.

More information about this process is contained below in 1.C.5.

The Montana University System is adopting the Canvas learning management system statewide and is exploring pricing on compatible assessment tools for individual university adoption. MSU is committed to identifying and deploying an assessment management software tool that would allow for a more comprehensive view of program and institutional assessment.

External accreditation important as a measure and signal of program quality

As previously mentioned, a number of programs are [accredited externally](#). Programs that maintain specialized accreditation through external accrediting agencies are not currently required to turn in annual assessment reports to the AOC. These programs are on different cycles of external assessment and accreditation, but it is expected that programs will update the CIM system with revised program learning outcomes and student learning outcomes as suggested by their external accreditors. These accreditation processes strengthen the content and quality of the programs, and the processes of accreditation are welcome at MSU.



Standard 1.C.2

The institution awards credit, degrees, certificates, or credentials for programs that are based upon student learning and learning outcomes that offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning.

Response

Student learning and learning outcomes

All certificates and degrees are planned, scaffolded, and delivered based upon student learning, learning outcomes, and the assessment of student performance at the course and at the program level.

The first level of student learning outcomes is communicating expectations through the course syllabus. Montana State's [Faculty Responsibilities Policy](#), in its Teaching Responsibilities section, requires faculty to provide students a course syllabus that states in writing the specific course content objectives, expected learning outcomes, and other important expectations of students who are taking the course. To reinforce this faculty expectation, the Provost's Office sends a [sample syllabus](#) to faculty each year to help them use unambiguous, standard language. Further, the Center for [Faculty Excellence](#) holds workshops on syllabus creation that are especially designed for new faculty but are open to all instructors.

Program-level analysis of course requirements and outcomes

At the program level, faculty are held responsible for upholding the standards of their fields of study. This is done by analyzing the entire curriculum of a certificate or degree option to ensure that the courses in each program are scaffolded appropriately to construct a comprehensive set of learning objectives that begin with fundamentals and build to more advanced concepts, theories, knowledge analysis, and synthesis. Faculty in each field of study revisit the courses, sequences, and overall program achievements frequently to keep up with the field and to evaluate student performance and success within the context of the program assessment curriculum mapping and program learning outcomes.

Many MSU programs are independently accredited by nonprofits in their fields of study—see the [full list of programs](#) accredited by discipline-based organizations. These accreditation organizations provide requirements and recommendations to keep the programs up-to-date and comparable from institution to institution. Some examples of accredited programs at MSU include most of the programs in the [Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering](#) and all the programs in the Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing.

Many programs have advisory councils with representatives from government agencies, nonprofits, and businesses that hire MSU graduates. These councils provide advice to faculty to help programs educate students with areas of study required for successful employment. One example is the [Accounting Advisory Council](#) connected to the accounting program in the Jake Jobs College of Business and Entrepreneurship.

Four-year degree programs

All programs at MSU publish a four-year degree plan with a list of the Core 2.0 courses, required courses for a given major, and recommended electives, with a semester-by-semester plan of a 15-credit load. A student may view these four-year plans in the MSU [catalog](#), in their own files in [DegreeWorks](#), and via advisors and faculty. For students who have a declared major and assessed math-level, these four-year plans are automatically loaded into the DegreeWorks planning section for incoming students prior to orientation.

Standard 1.C.3

The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.

Response

Program and degree learning outcomes – departmental websites

All departments and units post their program and degree learning outcomes on their websites to inform students what they will learn by completing a given program and degree. All academic programs require this as part of their annual program assessment and Montana Board of Regents seven-year program review, whether assessed internally or externally. Departments and colleges decide how and where to display this information. The following are several examples of learning outcomes posted on department and college web pages: [Mechanical and Industrial Engineering – BS Financial Engineering Assessment Information](#); [College of Health and Human Development Outcomes and Assessment](#); and [Department of Mathematical Sciences Program Assessment Plan](#). In addition, the university compiles links to all departmental program learning outcomes and assessment websites. The links are located on the [Department Assessment Plans and Reports](#) web page. An area that needs improvement is in creating a consistent location on departmental websites where the information can be found.

Course learning outcomes

As described in the [Faculty Handbook](#), faculty must incorporate course learning outcomes in syllabi and provide that information to students “by the second-class meeting or within a week of the start of the course for online courses” ([Teaching Responsibility, 3g](#)). Montana State instructors may use the online learning management system Brightspace (also known as Desire2Learn or D2L) to post syllabi, materials, lectures, homework, and other learning aids. Most instructors post their course syllabi prior to the start of the semester. Students seeking information about course learning outcomes know they can access syllabi on Brightspace. All MSU instructors, regardless of teaching modality, must use the MSU learning management system, which is now Brightspace (D2L). The university will transition to the Canvas LMS platform in the fall semester of 2025 as part of a statewide initiative led by the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. Consequently, students have ready access to course syllabi and course learning outcomes.

The Courseleaf CIM system, which is used to manage curriculum, is regularly updated with course learning outcomes. This is completed through a full review process by shared governance committees for new course proposals or changes.

Plans underway for future course learning outcome information

Currently, all program and course learning outcomes are housed within the CIM system. The university is working with the Courseleaf CIM system developers to enable program learning outcomes to be automatically loaded into the online course catalog. This will provide more than one place for students to access expected learning outcomes before enrolling in a class.

Linking course learning outcomes to course assignments

A logical way to help ensure students achieve program and course learning objectives is to consider the progression from program learning outcomes to course learning outcomes to student assignments. MSU emphasizes to faculty instructors that well-designed course syllabi explicitly communicate this progression to students. An example of a clear communication link between course learning outcomes and student assignments can be found in Appendix C.

The course syllabi for all core courses require that course objectives be linked to course assignments. The CIM system guides instructors who may be proposing or updating core courses and clearly articulates the requirement that course learning outcomes and assignments are linked. Appendix C provides an example of a CourseLeaf CIM entry for course approval, which shows the purposeful alignment between course objectives and course assignments.

Standard 1.C.4

The institution's admission and completion of graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public.

Response

Communicating admissions requirements and processes

Potential students rely on the MSU website to ascertain the admissions process and to view the wide variety of educational and belonging opportunities available, from the library to veterans' services to campus living and dining to opportunities for recreation and socializing. The MSU [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) admissions requirements and timelines are thoroughly explained on the MSU website. The admissions process is so vital to the university that the link to admissions is on the [homepage](#) for the MSU website.

The university's [catalog](#) has a heading in the table of contents to alert undergraduates to the admission process. The catalog is available online. By clicking on the admission links, either on the homepage or on the catalog's table of contents, potential students and interested members of the public can navigate to requirements for undergraduate admissions, graduate admissions, international admissions, two-year programs, online learning, or summer classes. They can also access information on tuition and fees, financial aid, scholarships, disability services, veterans' services, and registration deadlines, and they can request information. Students apply to the university from the admissions link on the homepage.

In addition to the website, Montana State mails thousands of copies of printed materials to potential students and their families. The print materials explain the admissions standards at MSU and how to apply. Another resource for students and their families is the prominent physical location of the

Admissions Office in the Strand Union Building with easy access to visitor parking. Many students and families visit campus to participate in [tours](#) offered through Admissions and to ask questions of admissions staff about the application process. A popular resource available to any interested applicant and their families is the [MSU Fridays program](#), which is held several times a year and provides a full day of on-campus experiences. Faculty, advising, and admission staff members are available during MSU Fridays to help answer questions.

Communicating graduation requirements

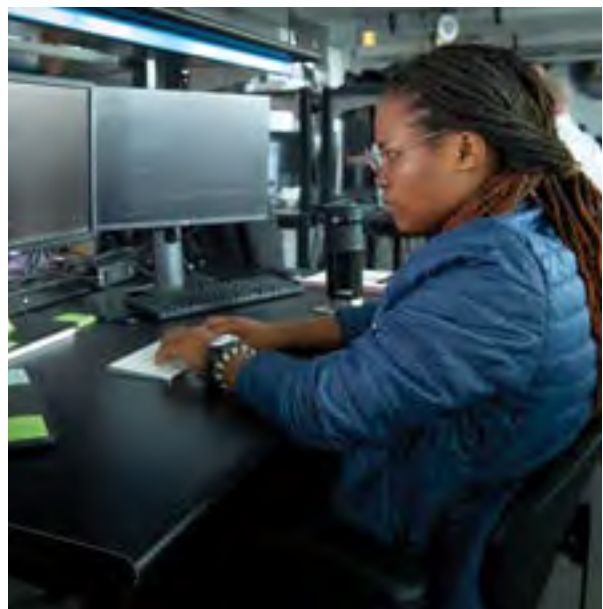
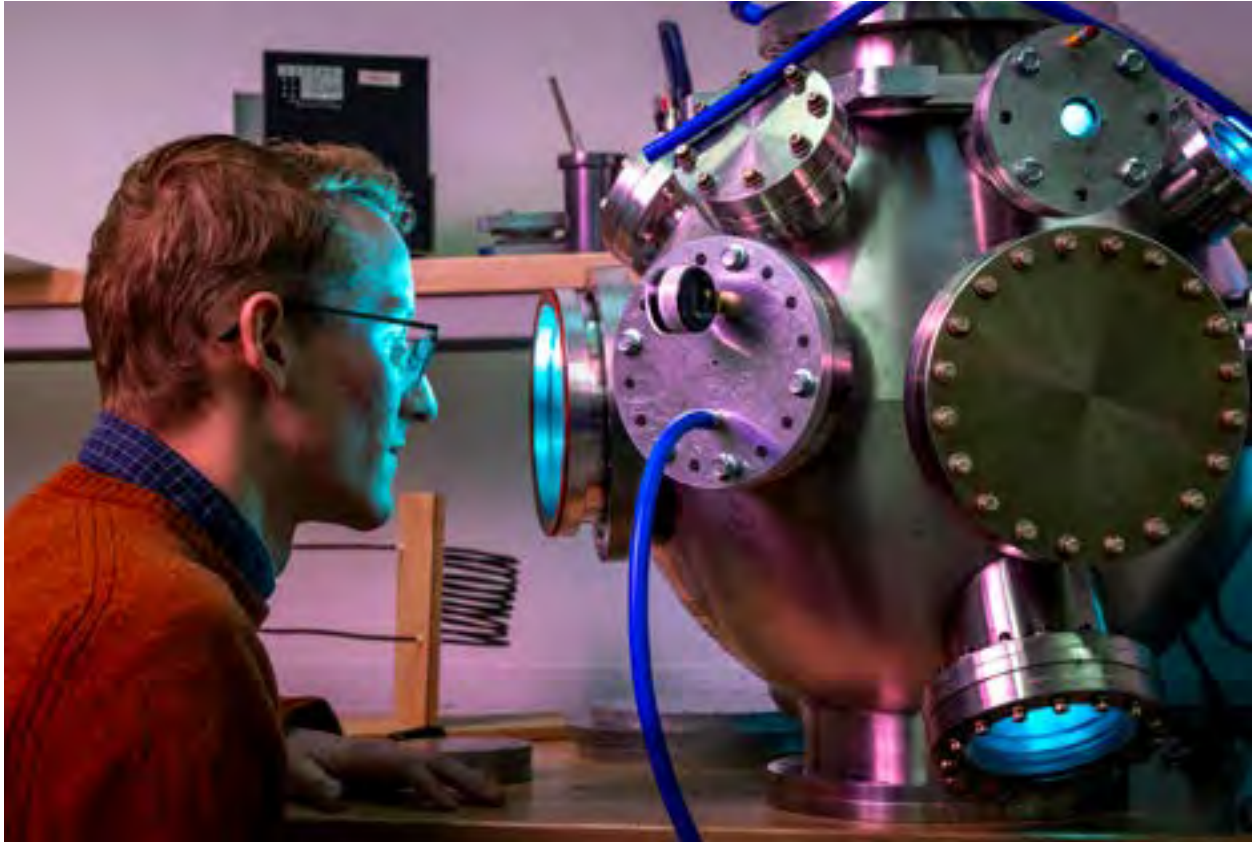
Students have many avenues for learning about graduation requirements. The first introduction to graduation requirements potential students receive is through MSU Fridays, campus tours, and summer orientation events. The leaders of these events are assisted by advisors, faculty members, academic department heads and other members of campus administration. These individuals provide information about many components of the MSU college experience, including general graduation requirements. These leaders also show students how to find and navigate graduation requirements for their specific majors.

Students are instructed to refer to the course [catalog](#) for the official listing of courses required in each major. This catalog is available online and is called the Course Bulletin. The catalog is updated annually, and the catalog for the year in which the student enters the university becomes the official document the student follows for graduation requirements, unless they petition to switch to a later catalog year. Each student has advisors throughout their college career that will review catalog requirements with the student regularly and whenever the student requests such a review, usually each semester or academic year. In addition to electronic resources, advisors can also provide students with print copies that list course requirements for a specific major. Advisors in major-focused pre-professional areas are also available to help students formulate a post-graduation pathway into a variety of post-baccalaureate programs such as health-related professions, pre-med, and pre-law. These focused advising centers review student coursework and assist students to complete the requirements of a given major and to prepare students for entering specific professional post-baccalaureate programs, professions, and/or graduate work. Advisors help students select electives, internships, paraprofessional opportunities, summer work, and other experiences.

Each student has a [DegreeWorks](#) account that tracks courses completed and shows all the courses that need to be completed for every undergraduate major. DegreeWorks is a resource for students for the latest information about curriculum, progress to degree, and any notes posted by their academic advisor(s). DegreeWorks is also helpful for students who may want to explore a different major and are interested in learning what a new major would require based on completed courses. Advisors review DegreeWorks plans with students regularly and whenever they have questions or request help.

President Cruzado initiated a program called [Freshman 15](#), which encourages students to take at least 15 credits per semester so that they can graduate on time and with less college debt. The program reminds students and their families that they do not pay tuition for credits beyond their first 12 per semester. This encourages finishing college in four years—or eight 15-credit semesters, a number based on is based on a typical bachelor's degree of 120 credits.

Montana State faculty, administrators, and staff members know it is important to communicate the admissions processes and graduation requirements as essential information. Because of the importance of that communication, the university provides information about admissions and graduation in many media forms and in-person.



Standard 1.C.5

The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.

Response

Montana State's system of assessment and the role of faculty

MSU faculty evaluate student learning in their programs regularly. Programs which are not externally accredited evaluate undergraduate offerings annually and graduate programs biennially. All majors, minor, and certificate programs must have specific program learning outcomes, or PLOs. Programs are encouraged to assess their PLOs every three years if possible. Every departmental unit is encouraged to appoint a curriculum committee of faculty members to lead each unit's assessment. In situations where there are limited numbers of faculty, department heads may take the lead instead.

Every year, faculty revisit the program's assessment plan and determine which PLOs will be assessed. Each department approaches the assessment of student learning differently, but all are encouraged to determine which courses will provide student work that will serve as evidence of student learning. Faculty are encouraged to develop program assessment-specific rubrics for each PLO. Faculty report their assessment endeavors using the most current template available that has been developed by the Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC). Assessment reports are due on October 15 each year with reminders sent to department heads and deans during the summer term ahead of faculty retreats to help keep programs on track.

New programs or those undergoing substantive curricular revisions turn in a "[Year 0 Assessment Plan](#)" report that outlines the assessment planning processes. It includes mapping courses to the program, choosing student artifacts to assess, and creating assessment-specific rubrics. The plan also details how faculty will be involved in the process during collection, analysis, and reporting.

Assessment reports are submitted to the [AOC](#) and reviewed for quality assurance using a specially designed rubric. The AOC members then provide feedback and suggestions aimed at supporting the continuous improvement of student learning through thorough and appropriate assessment reporting. The AOC's feedback can include suggestions for strengthening PLOs so that they include actionable and measurable language, viable options to assess student learning, and suggestions for using campus partners to strengthen or augment programs, depending on assessment results.

The focus of the AOC is to support assessment processes and provide "a platform for meaningful assessment that will inform faculty and drive continued program improvements." AOC members represent each college, Faculty Senate, and University Data and Analytics. Most AOC members are faculty who have moved into administrative positions. Some members are current faculty serving on the committee as a part of their service to the university. The assistant provost acts as chair to the AOC, summarizes the committee's feedback, schedules program assessment activities, and meets with faculty for individual training and support.

Each program assessment report is currently reviewed by two members of the AOC who use a rubric to evaluate whether elements of the reports are being included and whether programs are making

changes based on assessment results. Feedback is provided to departmental programs and deans on potential areas to improve. (For an example of a program assessment report, see the [Department Assessment Plans and Reports](#) website.) The AOC meets each fall and spring semester. Fall semester meetings focus on preparing for providing feedback to the annual cycle of submitted program reports. Spring semester meetings focus on revising assessment report templates, feedback rubrics, reviewing policy, and providing feedback to the assistant provost related to training and support.

The assistant provost provides archival support to departments and programs by maintaining a shared folder of submitted [assessment plans and reports](#) as well as maintaining the Department Assessment Plans and Reports web page containing links to department learning outcomes and assessment pages. Departments are tasked with keeping their websites updated with program learning outcomes and assessment report results. (Examples of college and departmental outcomes and assessment websites can be found at the [College of Education, Health and Human Development Outcomes and Assessment](#) web page and the [Department of Physics Program Assessment](#) web page.)

Faculty are encouraged to consider the results of the annual and biennial assessments as they make yearly plans and budgetary requests. They are also encouraged to contribute data points to include in their seven-year cycle program review reports submitted to the Montana Board of Regents.

In fall 2023, approximately 85% of expected program assessment reports were submitted for AOC review. This percentage does not consider programs that were preparing seven-year program review reports or undergoing a leadership transition—these are the two main reasons why programs may be delayed in submitting an annual assessment report. This percentage is higher if units preparing program review reports are excluded from the total expected assessment reports.

Since a culture of assessment has taken root over the last seven years, an effort was made in fall 2023 to get more faculty involved in assessment endeavors and provide an additional avenue for service and training. The assistant provost, at the direction of the vice provost of curriculum, assessment, and accreditation and on behalf of the AOC, invited college deans to nominate faculty who had an interest in learning more about the program assessment process to join the AOC. Three faculty members volunteered to join the AOC and take part in the assessment report review and feedback process. This will be an annual invitation to get more faculty involved in the decision-making processes related to assessment endeavors at MSU.

Standard 1.C.6

Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

Response

Establishment of a General Education (Core) curriculum

The [Core Curriculum Committee](#) was reestablished in 2018 and comprises faculty members from each university college and a member nominated by Faculty Senate. The general education curriculum, called Core, contains three overarching institutional learning outcomes, which are termed [MSU Core Qualities](#). The MSU Core Qualities were approved by the Faculty Senate in 2020 and include:

- Thinker and Problem Solver.
- Effective Communicator.
- Local and Global Citizen.

These three MSU Core Qualities (institutional learning outcomes) are attributed across 10 [Core Perspectives](#). Through a deliberative process, the Core Curriculum Committee determined the core quality that is most emblematic of each Core Perspective and is required to be embedded in the curriculum of each Core Perspective as follows:

Core Perspective	Thinker & Problem Solver	Effective Communicator	Local & Global Citizen
Contemporary Issues in Science (CS)	X		X
Diversity (D)		X	X
Inquiry Arts (IA)	X		
Inquiry Humanities (IH)	X	*	*
Inquiry Natural Sciences (IN)	X	*	*
Inquiry Social Sciences (IS)	X	*	*
Quantitative Reasoning (Q)	X		
Research & Creative Experience (R)	*	*	*
University Seminar (US)	X	X	X
Written Communication (W)		X	

*Inquiry Core Perspectives must choose either Effective Communicator or Local and Global Citizen. Research Core Perspectives are normally upper division research courses or capstones and must include at least two of the three Core Qualities.

All MSU graduates must take a Core-designated course from each Core Perspective category as part of their declared major. In some majors, specific Core classes have been integrated into the curriculum to aid students in completing the general education liberal arts component as a part of their major requirements. (For example, Q core designation is attached to all 100-level math courses regardless of major requirement; SOCI101IS is a required course and counts for IS core in the sociology major.)

Assessment of the general education (Core) courses

The MSU Core Qualities are currently assessed by the Core Curriculum Committee on the following assessment cycle:

MSU Core Assessment Cycle	
Academic Year	Outcomes assessed
2019-2020	Thinker and Problem Solver
2020-2021	Effective Communicator
2021-2022	Local and Global Citizen
2022-2023	Perspectives (distribution)
2023-2024	Research Core and Capstones to benchmark for closing the loop

Assessment reports can be found on the [Core Assessment website](#).

In the 2022-2023 academic year, proposals for new Core courses were put on hold and faculty focused on reviewing and renewing their course status as part of the updated Core curriculum. Faculty updated their course proposals to link specific assignments for assessment of the Core Qualities and to ensure that Core Qualities are addressed and described in their syllabi. This work was done to close the loop from early-cycle Core assessments and to provide higher quality and actionable feedback to the faculty on student learning. The Core Curriculum Committee is currently establishing the next Core Assessment Cycle plan.

Standard 1.C.7

The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Response

Description of assessment efforts for academic planning and practices at Montana State University

Montana State has developed a program assessment process to determine how academic and learning-support planning practices are proceeding. The Office of the Provost established a [program assessment website](#) and hired an assistant provost to oversee the program assessment process.

Program assessment at Montana State helps determine whether students can integrate learning from individual courses into a coherent whole and graduate with the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined in the program’s learning outcomes. Further details about program assessment are included on the website. The process of assessing programs begins with learning outcomes, and subsequently

assessing student performance for each outcome. At the most basic level, program assessment is the process of:

- 1) Setting goals.
- 2) Gathering information about progress toward those goals.
- 3) Taking action on the information received.

The program assessment process begins with each department or unit creating an assessment plan, also called a “[Year 0](#)” [assessment plan](#), which is then updated in subsequent years. Undergraduate programs are assessed annually, and graduate programs are assessed biennially. With the Program Assessment Reporting Template, units address their goals, gather information related to the assessment of their program learning outcomes or goals, and express the action they plan to take during their next cycle of program assessment. Examples of these program assessments include the [Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences](#) website, the Department of English website, and the [Gallatin College MSU](#) website.

Using results to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes

As a part of the academic program assessment reporting process, two self-reporting measures were added to the academic Program Assessment Reporting Template in 2019 for faculty to answer as a part of their assessment process: 1) Was the assessment conducted consistent with the assessment plan? and 2) Will there be any changes based on the results of the assessment?

Table 3: Faculty Self-reported Measures from the MSU Programs Completing the Program Assessment Reporting Template, 2019-2020 through 2022-2023

Academic Year	N=Reports Received	Faculty Self-Report: Assessment Consistent with Plan	Faculty Self-Report: Changes to Curriculum or Future Assessment Based on Results
2019-2020	unknown	73%	27%
2020-2021	43	75%	40%
2021-2022	76	70%	51%
2022-2023	52	81%	56%

As indicated in Table 3, faculty reported that academic programs continue to make assessment plans and follow them. Increases in the percentage of faculty who self-reported that they are making curricular changes in their programs or to their future assessment plans indicate positive gains in developing a culture of assessment.

Training opportunities and outreach related to academic program assessment

The position of assistant provost was developed in response to the 2020 mid-cycle recommendations to support academic assessment endeavors and provide ongoing support to faculty as a part of the Academic Affairs team. Within this seven-year cycle, there have been three vice provosts for

curriculum, assessment, and accreditation, as well as three assistant provosts spearheading academic program assessment endeavors, which has led to inconsistent training endeavors. Several support strategies have been created or are in development:

- During the fall 2023 semester, members of the Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC) were asked to invite faculty from their colleges to become involved in the AOC for the purpose of becoming familiar with the current assessment processes so that they could then share that with their respective departments. Only two additional faculty were added to the committee; however, this will be an ongoing endeavor to help train and grow the culture of assessment.
- The assistant provost offered two virtual training and Q&A sessions called, "[Academic Program Assessment Virtual Session: Tips for Faculty Preparing Reports due October 15](#)" to any faculty interested in the learning more about the program assessment process to assist faculty in preparing program assessment reports.
- All departments were invited to formally meet with the assistant provost for more support in their assessment planning processes. A few departments invited the assistant provost to their faculty meetings, and several department heads reached out for additional support on an individual basis.

Closing the loop: Areas of improvement and plans related to academic program assessment

Additional workshops and training opportunities were discussed by the AOC during the 2023-2024 academic year and plans are being developed to offer an "Introduction to Assessment Planning" training in fall 2024. Discussion with MSU's Center for Faculty Excellence is ongoing to co-sponsor additional training related to various aspects of course and program assessment.

Description of assessment efforts for learning support planning and practices at Montana State University

Program review self-studies; program and course assessments; and the assessment of student needs, such as BCSSE, have prompted the university to develop several general and specific learning support services offered to all students including:

- [Smarty Cats Tutoring](#) through the Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success (AYCSS).
- [The MSU Writing Center](#).
- [The Math and Stat Center \(MSC\)](#).
- [The Chemistry Help Center](#).

Additionally, periodic evaluation of disaggregated data by various student service offices uncovered a need for support for specific groups of students, provided by programs such as the [American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Services](#), the [Travis W. Atkins Veteran Support Center](#), the [MSU Hilleman Scholars Program](#), and the Justin Smith Morrill Scholars. Faculty and departmental evaluation of DFW (grades D, F, or Withdrawal) rates for specific courses has led to the adoption of optional recitation and help sessions.

Looking forward, discussions with the vice president for student success have led to an initiative for all offices that sit under Student Success to create departmental learning outcomes and discuss how



institutional learning outcomes may provide a bridge between academic program assessment and student services assessment in order to treat the student in a holistic manner beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Many of these services can be student-initiated. Students are made aware of these services through websites, academic advisors trained in identifying need and making referrals, and faculty and instructors referring at-risk students in relevant courses. For example, students in [Second Wind](#), a suspension recovery program, are mandated to take US 103 Learning Strategies, in which students are strongly guided to avail themselves of relevant service.

Standard 1.C.8

Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality.

Response

Information available on the processes used to allow students to transfer credits to MSU while ensuring academic quality

The Montana State University policy on undergraduate [credit transfer](#) is posted on the university's website. The policy describes the process to maintain quality of undergraduate transfer credits in four ways:

- 1) The requirement for transferring credit is to have the student present official transcripts verified by the institution from which the credit originates.
- 2) Only courses from accredited institutions can be transferred.
- 3) Transferred courses must be at least two semester credits and have a grade of C minus or higher to count for MSU Core. Pass/fail courses are not accepted.
- 4) Credits earned from advanced placement (AP) and international baccalaureate (IB) scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to ensure the integrity of these credits.

Additionally, for domestic undergraduate students, credits are transferred through an evaluation process performed by trained personnel within the Registrar's office. For international undergraduate students, credits are evaluated by trained and experienced staff members in the Office of International Programs. This a helpful resource available to allow students to determine, unofficially, how their courses will transfer before the official evaluation. Students may petition for courses to transfer toward specific Core Perspectives if not initially evaluated as Core through the Core Equivalency Review Committee (CERC).

Finally, individual department faculty members and advisors evaluate courses for academic programs offered within their department by having students provide course syllabi for courses previously taken at another institution so that equivalencies of course content can be compared between an external course and the course offered at MSU.

The [Montana Board of Regents](#) has implemented a common policy regarding minimum course grades across all campuses in the system. As per this policy, a grade of C minus or better is mandatory to meet prerequisites for majors, minors, and certificate programs—and all core requirements. Additionally, a grade of C minus or better is required in all courses counted toward the 42 upper-division credits required for all degrees. Courses with a passing grade of D minus, D, or D plus can only be counted toward the overall 120 credit requirement. This policy of the Board of Regents also extends to courses taken at other institutions and transferred to MSU.

Graduate transfer credit policy is described in the [catalog](#). A limit of nine credits can be transferred, and the catalog describes restrictions, such as:

- Must be a B grade or higher.
- Must be from an institutionally accredited body.
- Must meet age requirements (within six years if to be applied to a master's degree or within 10 years if applied to a doctorate).
- Must have been taken in graduate status (not on an undergraduate transcript)
- Cannot have been used for any prior awarded degree.

For doctoral degrees, up to 30 credits from a prior awarded master's degree can be considered toward the 60-credit minimum. Official transcripts can be submitted at the time of admission or when a program of study is filed. The transfer and considered credits must be approved by the graduate student's faculty committee and by the Graduate School.

[Encouraging students to use transfer credits or credits from prior learning to complete a degree or certificate](#)

A helpful pathway to promote student completion that the Montana University System (MUS) has created is the [common course number system](#) for all institutions within the MUS. Courses, especially in the general education courses, called Core, have a common course number that can easily be evaluated across institutions and are deemed to be acceptable for equal credit across system institutions. Courses that are unique to a particular institution are excluded from this common course numbering process.

Another program called, [Seamless OneMSU-Bozeman](#), consists of a process that makes it easy for a student to complete a form to transfer to another institution within the system or to enroll in multiple MSU institutions at the same time. Filling out one form to accomplish these tasks allows efficiency for the student and for the institutions involved.

Students who have [left college and then returned later as adult learners](#) can transfer credits into their current MSU majors. The policy for credit transfers for those returning to school is the following:

- Coursework within five years will be reviewed for equivalencies to coursework offered at MSU.
- Coursework six to 15 years old will be reviewed for electives with or without Core.
- Coursework older than 15 years is brought in as a block of elective credit and would just show a credit total for qualifying courses for each institution attended.

Regardless of the age of the credits, the Registrar's office reviews all transcripts and determines what credits will transfer going forward. The Registrar's review of transcripts is the official determination on what will transfer. Students desiring to transfer military credits work with the Admissions office to determine how credits can be transferred to MSU.

Montana State University further recognizes [students' prior learning](#) by creating and documenting pathways for students to receive credit for learning completed before enrollment at MSU. Students may receive credit for prior learning through the College Level Exam Program (CLEP), through the Advanced Standing by Challenge Exam, or through the Advanced Placement (AP) system. Students can take a [CLEP exam](#) to earn credits without taking an MSU course. The CLEP exams allowed are listed on the CLEP exam website. Currently, no Core requirements can be satisfied through CLEP exams, although the policy for fall 2024 will be that CLEP exams can be used to replace the Core course options.

The [Advanced Standing by Challenge Exam](#) allows college credits and grade points without formal course enrollment by requiring that the undergraduate student take a comprehensive exam in the subject matter of a course, which is then assessed by faculty and/or administrators to determine a grade on the exam. As an example, MSU's Department of Modern Languages and Literatures has a [placement process](#) via a challenge exam that allows students credit for lower level language classes if they place in and pass a higher level course. Due to faculty request, a similar process is being developed for Advanced Standing by Challenge Portfolio.

[Advanced Placement](#) courses also provide an avenue for earning credit at MSU without enrolling in an MSU class by allowing students to take high school courses and then pass the respective AP exam with a score of 3 or higher. The Office of Admissions will apply these courses to the student's transcript for Core courses or other major requirements.

Montana State University also participates in the MUS's Prior Learning Assessment Task Force and intends to follow those recommendations. For further information, please see the [Montana Board of Regents PLA Policy and Procedures Manual](#). Montana State University is currently reviewing its practices and policies regularly and makes updates and revisions as necessary to meet the Board of Regents recommendations.

Standard 1.C.9

The institution's graduate programs are consistent with its mission, are in keeping with the expectations of its respective disciplines and professions, and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. The graduate programs differ from undergraduate programs by requiring, among other things, greater depth of study, 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 relevant professional practice.

Response

Information available on the processes used to allow students to transfer credits to MSU while ensuring academic quality

Montana State University is a land-grant institution with a tripartite mission of education, creation of knowledge and art, and service to communities. Because of our strong adherence to the land-grant mission, the MSU Graduate School is a central part of the university, linking research and creative arts to education and service.

The [mission](#) of the MSU Graduate School is to enrich the graduate student experience by providing excellent service, timely oversight, and relentless advocacy for student success. The [vision](#) of the Graduate School is that it strives to foster an environment that produces outstanding graduate scholars who contribute innovative ideas and knowledge using creative approaches to solve challenges in an evolving world.

In fulfilling this mission and vision, MSU offers [69 master's degree options and 45 doctoral degree options](#), in addition to a variety of graduate-level certificates.

Graduate programs are in keeping with expectations of respective disciplines and professions

Graduate programs at MSU are led by faculty with terminal degrees in the disciplines. These faculty members are continually advancing their disciplinary knowledge through their research and creative activities. Graduate students are involved in this pursuit and receive the benefits of learning the disciplinary topics while they advance the state of knowledge and create artistic works. Often, faculty members and graduate students attend professional conferences and meetings where they present their work to other qualified peer colleagues. These conferences and affiliations help ensure that the faculty members and graduate students are exposed to and involved with new developments in their fields, ensuring a continual cycle of innovative learning and research at Montana State.

To ensure that academic programs are relevant and that they stay current with the expectations within disciplines and among practicing professionals, different graduate degree programs are involved with accreditation bodies related to their fields of study. For example, the the Didactic Program in Dietetics master's degree is accredited by ACEND, the accreditation body of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. A full list of accrediting bodies that examine programs at MSU for accreditation designations are listed on the [MSU website](#). Accreditation is important at MSU because it signals to students and other stakeholders the quality of programs and because the process of becoming accredited means that the program has aligned learning objectives, courses, and other requirements to the highest quality standards possible.

Nomenclature used to communicate graduate programs

The nomenclature used to communicate the level of study for graduate programs follows generally accepted disciplinary degree and certificate titles. The degrees and certificates offered are clearly labeled on the website that lists all [graduate programs](#) at MSU. The titles of degrees include the following examples:

- M.S., the Master of Science.
- MArch, the Master of Architecture.
- M.A., the Master of Arts.
- Graduate certificates in a variety of discipline areas.

- Ed.D., the Doctorate of Education.
- Ph.D., the Doctorate of Philosophy.

Graduate program requirements indicate greater depth of study and engagement with original creative work or research

All master's degrees and doctoral degrees at MSU require coursework at an advanced level and most require a project that demonstrates the student's ability to create an original product, as accepted by the field of study. Most graduate-level courses are taught by faculty with a degree achievement at least one level higher than the program's degree. Some courses are taught by experts with considerable practitioner experience who hold the same level degree as the course.

The learning objectives in courses taught at the graduate level are written with higher level thinking requirements based on Bloom's taxonomy. For example, the learning objectives might use verbs such as *applying, analyzing, evaluating, researching, or creating*, which indicate higher-level intellectual processes. Learning objectives were developed under the assumption that students have mastered material at lower level thinking processes, such as remembering or understanding. Graduate students can apply advanced learning skills to disciplinary materials in which they incorporate thinking and understanding beyond the fundamentals of an area of study. An essential part of all graduate courses is examining the important literature in the field, especially as the literature informs the research and creative activities. The professional practice required in many of the master's or doctoral degrees requires advanced levels of disciplinary knowledge and ways of knowledge application. For example, the doctorate in nursing allows highly competent practitioners to tackle difficult health issues in patients as independent health care professionals.

Providing institutional support to graduate students

Graduate students receive [support from the Graduate School](#) and from applicable student support services and programs offered at the university. (See Appendix A for a full listing of student support services and programs.) The support ranges from training to be a graduate teaching assistant and professional development to providing information about financing graduate work and career planning. Graduate students also receive substantial support from their major professors and the graduate coordinators who work at the departmental and college levels.

A comprehensive example of student support services for graduate students is the MSU website called [GradCat 360](#) which is a professional development program offered to graduate students at Montana State that focuses on nine areas:

- Teaching and learning.
- Leadership and teamwork.
- Well-being.
- Professionalism and ethics.
- Equity and inclusion.
- Communication.
- Career development and exploration.
- Community engagement.

- Scholarship and innovation.

The goal of GradCat 360 is to help students cultivate a unified set of skills and knowledge for educational success and professional preparation. By providing a central portal for professional development, MSU prepares students more equitably and thoroughly. Students benefit by obtaining enhanced background and skills in professional development, and MSU benefits by enhancing the reputation and success of students in their future places of work.

Assessment of graduate programs

Graduate programs are assessed through the faculty's requirement to examine student learning and program outcomes every two years. See Standard 1.C.5 for more details on assessment.



Standard 1:

Student Achievement

Standard 1.D.1

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

Response

Montana State University devotes substantial resources to recruit and admit students, and then to support students so that they persist in their academic studies through graduation. The offices and programs described in this section include those primarily responsible for recruiting and orienting students and then supporting students through their academic careers.

Recruiting, admitting, and orienting students

Recruiting and admissions

The undergraduate [Office of Admissions](#) is responsible for recruiting and admitting undergraduate students for all academic programs. The Office of Admissions recruits students by casting a wide net to over 400,000 potential applicants from all around the United States, through contracted services with a company and other efforts, such as high school visits, booths at recruitment fairs. The Admissions office uses MSU Fridays, STATE Days, webinars, and virtual and in-person daily campus visits to contact Montana high school students and encourage their applications. Recruitment efforts result in a final group of students who apply, are evaluated for admission, and then subsequently admitted if they meet the admissions requirements. Applicants to the university have access to the student portal and admissions checklist within one business day of submitting an application. Applicants may view their application status any time after the portal is created. They can verify the application term, major, items required and received, and the acceptance decision on the checklist. They are also able to submit changes to the application term and major through the student portal.

The [Graduate School](#), in conjunction with each academic department, recruits and admits graduate students, with academic departments allocating graduate assistantships to incoming and continuing graduate students. Considerable attention has been paid in the last four years to increasing the number and dollar amount of assistantships, as most graduate students must select a graduate program that will be a good financial pathway in addition to providing a valuable graduate degree. The Graduate School has been successful in increasing enrollment in graduate programs across the university in the past four years.

The [Office of International Programs](#) (OIP) recruits international students and evaluates the

academic records to ascertain whether each applicant has the appropriate academic background for the program they aspire to. The OIP recruits via alumni, in-country agents who conduct school visits and attend fairs or events where materials and booths can be displayed, visits to countries by OIP staff members, and through study abroad networks. The OIP has a tuition waiver program to incentivize excellent undergraduate international student candidates. The evaluation conducted by the OIP examines total numbers of students enrolled, country locations of the students recruited, and retention rates for completing degrees.

[Gallatin College MSU](#), the university's two-year college, recruits and admits students to its programs. Gallatin College MSU focuses on recruitment of students from Montana's Gallatin Valley and the surrounding counties. The college conducts research with employers in the area to help design and adjust current curricula to serve employer needs; therefore, students are connected to the skills needed for the local economy. Recruitment for students often comes from employers who know that Gallatin College MSU is serving the needs of businesses in the valley.

New student orientation

Each of these offices conducts [orientation](#) for incoming students. MSU's [Office of Admissions](#) operates new student orientation for undergraduates throughout the year with program emphasis in early spring, summer, and early fall. New student orientation welcomes incoming first-year, transfer, veteran, nontraditional, and international students to campus.

All new undergraduate students must complete an online pre-orientation and an in-person orientation session. The online orientation provides an introduction to the university, the student portal (MyInfo), the various IT systems they will use, and student services available. The online orientation also includes an introduction to their selected academic program, including degree requirements.

In-person orientation sessions are also conducted on campus (required for first-time college students, optional for transfer and non-traditional students) during which students stay on campus in the residence halls, receive additional information and assistance on the above items, receive a more in-depth introduction to their programs, and meet with an academic adviser. During orientation, incoming students are introduced to an orientation leader who is a trained peer to assist in their specific area of study. Specifically, orientation provides academic advising, information about the campus and the college experience in general, helps students understand the academic requirements for a program of study, aids students in registration for classes, and answers questions that students and student families have. The student's family members are invited to attend a concurrent parent and family orientation program that assists them as they look to support their student's transition to MSU. Advising Commons advisers review registration for new orientation students and reach out to students if their registration veers from courses discussed or could jeopardize time to degree.

The [Graduate School](#) conducts an [orientation](#) for graduate students. The orientation is available to all graduate students since it is an online course that has no on-campus meeting times. The orientation covers information about being a graduate student (such as supports available to graduate students, health services, the MSU Writing Center, and so forth) and a separate series of topics are available to those students with teaching assistantships. Additionally, each department and graduate professor

conducts a program-specific orientation for the graduate students studying within the department and its programs.

The [Office of International Programs](#) requires international students to attend orientations along with students from the U.S. The OIP then offers additional onboarding by conducting further orientation for students to help the students not only navigate the university but also gain skills in living in an American community. International student orientations supplement the undergraduate and graduate orientations.

[Veteran Services](#) conducts a similar program, relying on the orientation programs from the undergraduate Office of Admissions, and then offers further orientation designed to help students with military experience integrate into and navigate the MSU campus. [Gallatin College MSU](#) conducts [orientation](#) for its students the semester before they enter the college. This orientation covers information pertinent to Gallatin College MSU students. The orientation is available to students by invitation only, and it is fully online. The orientation materials cover the requirements about students' degree or certificate programs, illustrate the software students will use in courses, and connect the students to their academic advisors.

These orientation sessions are evaluated after every semester with review and input from all orientation staff, student orientation leaders, assistant and associate deans, and advisors. Adjustments are then made for the next orientation cycle. For example, the OIP has expanded its orientation sessions to include more information on American living practices. For more information about student services in general with associated evaluation practices, see Appendix A.

Ensuring students understand the requirements for persisting in an academic program and graduating

The catalog as a central repository of Montana State University university-level and program requirements

Many resources are expended at the university to aid student persistence. The heart of the information regarding university and program requirements is contained in the university [catalog](#). The catalog includes information on all [undergraduate program requirements](#) and all [graduate program requirements](#). The catalog is written in language easily understood by a high school junior or senior. Students referring to the catalog for information will understand the university's requirements for graduation. Of special importance, the student would understand the sequence of courses to be taken to complete a program of study in four academic years, if 15 or more credits are taken each of those eight semesters. Also of importance is the information on the costs of tuition, fees, and other program costs, in addition to explanations about financial aid.

The information in the catalog is also disseminated through various offices on campus. For example, programs of study are distributed through advisors in the [Advising Commons](#), the [Financial Aid office](#) helps with information about various financial aid options, and the [Dean of Students](#) office conveys information about student conduct. If students have questions about anything in the catalog, they will easily find assistance on campus.

Montana State is in the process of expanding and updating the use of the CourseLeaf software to include a feature that displays program learning outcomes in the catalog.

Importance of the MSU advising systems to ensure student matriculation and graduation

The university has invested in a well-organized and thorough advising system to ensure undergraduate students receive accurate and timely information on succeeding at MSU, with a focus on helping students with catalog requirements. The student advising system is comprised of the Advising Commons, faculty advisors, and the Graduate School advising.

The MSU undergraduate advising system devotes substantial resources to help students successfully navigate the university from matriculation through to the student's graduation. The Advising Commons is a team of 41 primary-role advisors (professional staff) who advise students in every college at MSU. The following is a breakdown of advising staff across the University:

- Seven advisors in the University Studies; varying FTE.
- Three advisors in Health Professions Advising.
- Three advisors in the College of Agriculture; two full-time and one part-time.
- Seven advisors in the Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering; five full-time and one part-time.
- Four advisors in the College of Letters and Science; three full-time and one with a split appointment in the Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship.
- Six advisors in the Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship; four full-time and two part-time (one has a split appointment with the College of Letters and Science).
- Four advisors in the College of Education, Health and Human Development; three full-time and one part-time.
- Three advisors in the College of Arts and Architecture; one full-time and two part-time.
- Two advisors in the Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing; both full-time.
- Four advisors who can be assigned where needed.

The Advising Commons advisors are skilled in:

- Teaching students about graduation requirements.
- Helping students understand the components of their degree and how the components work together.
- Using advising-related software.
- Explaining complex policies, procedures, and academic deadlines.
- Connecting students with campus and community resources.

Within the Advising Commons, advisors are organized into small teams overseen by a staff member known as an advising lead. Each team meets regularly to discuss campus-wide initiatives and information specific to advisor focus areas. Advising leads work closely with the leadership teams of the academic units they serve to:

- Communicate critical advising and registration information to faculty and staff.
- Review course availability issues that could cause registration challenges.
- Determine appropriate transition points for students to be assigned to a faculty advisor.
- Provide training and information to faculty and academic unit staff.

All undergraduate students first interact with their academic advisor at orientation, whether they are a new first-year student or transfer student. Academic advisors play a significant role in onboarding new students and are active participants in the orientation program, where they review incoming credits, discuss first semester courses, and explain degree requirements. Each student at MSU is assigned to an academic advisor and must meet with their advisor at least once each semester to review progress toward degree, discuss upcoming classes, and receive their registration PIN number to allow them to enter the registration system.

Montana State offers pre-professional advising for students seeking to attend graduate programs in health professions, law, and veterinary programs. These advisors aid students from any major as well as recent MSU graduates. The advisors educate students about entrance requirements to various post-baccalaureate programs and subsequent career possibilities. Much of their work is focused on coaching students through key components of the admission process including, but not limited to, building a strong academic and co-curricular background, school selection, entrance exam preparation, mock interview practice, writing a compelling personal statement, resume critiques, gathering strong letters of recommendations, and funding graduate work.

The Graduate School provides advising support to graduate students on topics such as Graduate School deadlines, financial aid, and dealing with life events while studying for an advanced degree. While faculty members are primarily responsible for the academic advising, the Graduate School can help students with issues such as graduate school applications, scholarship availability, university deadlines, funding and fellowships, thesis and dissertation guidelines, training and orientation to graduate programs, professional development, internship availability, research opportunities, and more. The Graduate School is committed to creating an inclusive environment for graduate students.

To summarize, advisors are at the heart of the student support services. The advisors can refer students to specialized types of assistance through other student support programs and offices, as explained in Appendix A. Additionally, the university also conducts communication outreach to students. The compliance office maintains a calendar of required regular communications to students like FERPA and Cleary. Other regular communications to students are distributed depending on the nature and subject matter, most of which are routed through the President's Office, the Office of the Registrar, and the Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success.

Software advising support

All students and advisors have a software tool, [DegreeWorks](#), available for academic planning and tracking. DegreeWorks is a web-based degree planning and audit system designed to help students and academic advisors monitor progress toward degree completion. Students and advisors can check degree progress, plan for upcoming semesters, and even see how courses might apply to a new major or minor. It also allows for advising notes and provides a place to create semester plans. DegreeWorks

offers an accessible, convenient, and organized way for students to monitor their academic standing and track their progress toward earning a degree and is available anyplace with an active internet connection.

Montana State has scheduling software, known on campus as CatCourse, that is available to all students. This software facilitates student schedule creation each semester and allows students to add parameters that account for individual schedule needs. Such customization has made it easier for students to consider increased credit loads that can help students reduce the time required to earn a degree.

A new software platform, [navMSU](#) has been instituted for students to help navigate the university. NavMSU is a digital platform that can be accessed on cellphones, computers, and other electronic devices to help students quickly and easily avail themselves of university resources such as tutoring, scholarships, and faculty office hours. Students can quickly schedule with an advisor, find their class schedules, keep track of pressing deadlines, find out what is happening on campus, and investigate other information. The newest feature on navMSU is called “Hand Raise,” where students can ask for help from an in-person MSU staff member who guides them to the appropriate office or resource.

Information on transferring credits

A thorough description of the ways students can transfer credits into Montana State University can be found in Standard 1.C.8. In general, the university allows students to transfer credits into their curriculum through procedures and processes that ensure the quality and veracity of the credits to be transferred.

Other campus resources to support students

Many other offices and programs exist at MSU to help students through their college careers. These offices inform and remind students of the university standards for completing a program, and then help the students work through whatever problem they are facing. The chart in Appendix A summarizes the main offices and programs offering student support of diverse types, along with a brief description of how each of the offices and programs evaluate the work’s effectiveness.

Continual assessment of student resources to improve recruiting, admission, and retention

All university offices and programs that are student-facing engage in recruiting, admitting, and retaining students. All offices and programs want to find the best practices and resources to improve efforts in these areas. For example, MSU President Waded Cruzado championed the idea of the undergraduate [Freshman 15](#), which is a program to encourage all students to register and complete at least 15 credits per semester. Since credits beyond the first 12 per semester are tuition-free (although additional credits require the students to pay associated student fees), taking 15 or more credits can reduce both the cost and the time committed to completing a university program.

Another example of improving the student experience while maintaining academic quality is the Graduate School’s current effort to change the policy that students must be enrolled each semester

while in a graduate program. Because students often work and go to school, and students today try to pay for college programs as they go to eliminate or reduce post-graduation debt, this requirement is onerous and may contribute to students failing to persist through graduation. Therefore, a new proposed policy states that students need to pay for three credits or more only when they use faculty time, such as in taking courses or in advising, or use university facilities, such as the library, research laboratories, etc. They also must pay for a minimum of three credits during the term they sit for their exams or defenses and for the semester of graduation. This new policy allows students to sit out for semesters where they need to take a break, but not lose momentum because of the cost. Standards for the program are maintained, such as the policy requirements stating that master's degrees must be completed within six years and a doctorate within 10.

Standard 1.D.2

Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).

Response

Mission alignment

Montana State integrates the education of students, research and creative arts, and service to communities. Consistent with this mission and reflected in the [first goal of the strategic plan](#), MSU monitors, disaggregates, compares, and makes public statistics regarding student access and success on an annual, term, and intermediate basis.

Peer comparisons

Strategic planners in 2018 compared MSU's performance on retention and graduation to peer benchmarks using regional land-grant universities, R1 universities, and nationally modeled expectations using incoming student academic characteristics as predictors. More specifically, the peer institutions chosen for comparisons include land-grant institutions (one from each state), those states included in the [Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education](#) (WICHE), universities included in the [Carnegie Classification](#) 2015 for doctoral universities at the highest, higher, and moderate research activity levels, and peer institutions with multiple campuses. MSU consistently under-performs both its peer targets and modeled expectations. Further, internal equity gaps have been stubbornly persistent. For example, in the [IPEDS](#) data from 2022, MSU had a fall-to-fall retention rate of 75% for full-time students, where peer institutions (regional land-grant institutions including Colorado State University, New Mexico State University, North Dakota State University, Oregon State University, South Dakota State University, University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Arizona, University of Idaho, University of Nevada-Reno, University of Wyoming, Utah State University, and Washington State University) has a median retention rate of 77% for their same cohorts. Using the same data, MSU had a 6-year graduation rate of 57% in 2022 while the regional peers graduated a median of 62% of those same cohorts. (See Appendix B for more peer statistics.)

The issues of under-performance were and are concerning to all MSU stakeholders. To address its underperformance, MSU's strategic plan includes several student access and success metrics, particularly emphasizing the elimination of equity gaps for several populations of institutional interest. The [strategic plan's aspirational targets](#) are memorialized in [Goal 1.1, Metric 1.1.6](#). The targets were selected based on peer and historical performance.

Montana's Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education also maintains a [publicly accessible retention dashboard](#) for all Montana University System campuses. Compared to Montana peers, MSU performs well on retention rates. For example, as can be determined in this dashboard, the MSU Bozeman retention rate from fall 2021 to fall 2022 was 77.6%. That compares to the University of Montana's rate of 76.2% and Montana State University Billings' rate of 58.9% for the same time period.

MSU staff, faculty, and administrators participate in several multi-institutional collaborations that encourage deeper study of student success differences across institutions. Most recently, MSU participated in the [APLU Powered By Publics initiative](#), where 12 regional land-grant universities shared best practices, worked on joint curricular assessment projects, set goals and [shared data](#) on disaggregated student success outcomes.

Public student achievement measures

While peer benchmarks are used in some cases—most notably in setting institutional targets—internal comparisons are meaningful for designing and assessing interventions to improve student success. Examining the outcomes of students who attend MSU across different academic and demographic groups better informs our collective work than examining differences between MSU and other institutions.

For example, the strategic plan metric 1.1.6 regarding student retention shows that, while the retention of all incoming undergraduates went from 72.2% in the 2017-2018 academic year to 75.4% in 2023-2024, the retention of economically disadvantaged students receiving a Pell grant went from 65.9% to 67.2% over the same period. Data such as these point to demographic groups at the university in need of special programming and effort. Because institutional measures are meaningful, several student progress and achievement indicators are publicly published annually in aggregated and disaggregated forms. These include:

- [Undergraduate student](#) retention and graduation rates presented using definitions from IPEDS for the first-time full-time entering federal cohort, more inclusive admission cohorts (transfer, part-time, and all the above), and disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, Pell status, veteran status, first-generation status, and other dimensions.
- [Graduate student](#) retention and graduation rates, though not required by the federal government, disaggregated by program of student and many relevant demographic groups.
- [Time to degree](#) for undergraduate and graduate students, by program, degree level, and various other dimensions.
- [Student movement](#) between academic units and outside the university.
- A long history of [total degrees](#) awarded and [departmental tallies](#) over time.

- Postgraduation employment information from the [Career Services annual survey](#) of recent graduates and in more aggregated form through the federal [Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes Explorer](#), linked from [University Data and Analytics](#).

Internally available student achievement measures

MSU also makes several intermediate and leading indicators of student success available to appropriate audiences for internal assessment, planning, and intervention.

- Department heads and other academic leaders in the colleges have access to navMSU's population health dashboard. These internal-facing reports allow comparisons of subgroups of students (by major, etc.) to the university on several academic success markers.
- Ongoing next-term registration reports are provided to the Strategic Enrollment Management committee. These are disaggregated by academic and demographic variables. Alongside navMSU's CRM capability, they allow real-time monitoring and targeted interventions to encourage persistence.
- Grade visualizations are available to faculty and academic administrators to track performance in courses and sections, over time, for use in assessment and interventions. These include demographic and major data to allow for disproportionate impact analysis.

Both internal and public visualizations and the underlying data for them are included in regular and ad hoc training for department heads, deans, and other academic leaders. Staff in University Data and Analytics present student success outcomes regularly to University Council, Planning Council, Academic Council, Assistant/Associate Deans Council, and other audiences. The planning duties are being reorganized and reassigned to work with the Planning Council.

Case study

[Recent improvements](#) in overall six-year and four-year graduation rates reflect some success of several strategic efforts (see p. 5 of the linked document). Absent pandemic impacts, the trajectory for completion, particularly timely completion, is quite positive.

Disaggregated data, however, reveal that equity gaps persist. Socializing the [strategic plan metrics](#) that highlight equity gaps in enrollment (1.1.1) and outcomes (1.1.6) helps inform interventions and assessments. For instance, regarding equity gaps in enrollment, the Strategic Enrollment Management committee noted an ongoing decline in first-generation college student enrollment (1.1.1) and proposed automatic four-year renewable scholarships to first-generation students from Montana, based on self-identification on the admission application, without requiring a FAFSA. Leadership approved the proposal for incoming students in fall 2022. There has been an increased first-generation enrollment for fall 2023, and the incoming cohort from fall 2022, the first class to receive the awards, persisted at a noticeably higher rate to fall 2023.

Standard 1.D.3

The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.

Response

Publication and availability of disaggregated indicators of student achievement

Disaggregated student retention and graduation rates for both undergraduate and graduate students, as well as other aggregate and disaggregated student success indicators, are published annually and posted on the University Data and Analytics [website](#).

Aligning indicators to benchmark with peer institutions to ensure continual improvement

Several types of key performance indicators are compared to [peer institutions](#), especially in the design, execution, and assessment of MSU's strategic plan. Peer institutions chosen for comparisons include land-grant institutions (one from each state); those states included in the Western Interstate [Commission of Higher Education](#) (WICHE); universities included in the [Carnegie Classification](#) 2015 for doctoral universities at the highest, higher, and moderate research activity levels; and peer institutions with multiple campuses.

Several persistence and graduation success elements are also reframed and reported as [strategic plan metrics](#). The [strategic plan's aspirational targets](#) are memorialized in Goal 1.1, Metric 1.1.6. These benchmarks were selected based on peer and historical performance. MSU has consistently under-performed expectations based on both peer performance and various nationally modeled expectations using incoming student academic characteristics as predictors, and our equity gaps have been stubbornly persistent. Highlighting this information for the campus community has helped focus institutional efforts, through various task force, department, and college efforts and implementing software and policy to support student success.

Since 2018, MSU has participated in the APLU [Powered by Publics](#) effort, where each institution measured equity gaps in degree attainment, established goals, tracked and reported interim outcomes, and met regularly in small groups of similar universities to share and develop best practices.

These continuous improvement efforts have been ongoing and evolving since 2011. This 2016 MSU [News Service article](#) describes APLU recognition of the earliest phase of process and program improvements that created widespread change affecting all students.

Efforts at Montana State include an array of targeted student interventions such as:

- [Academic success support](#) for students who have overcome challenges and are lower income.
- Participation in the statewide [GEAR UP](#) program (although this grant program ends in July 2024).
- Changes in [developmental and co-requisite](#) math and writing delivery.

- Software to support specific [communication](#) between MSU faculty and staff and their students based on specific student needs.
- Automatically-awarded [renewable grants](#) and improved resources for [first-generation](#) resident students.

One example of this continuous improvement effort was the establishment of the [MSU Hilleman Scholars Program](#) in 2016. The program is named after Dr. Maurice Hilleman, who was born in the small town of Miles City, Montana. He attended Montana State University and then graduate school at the University of Chicago. Hilleman's family was economically disadvantaged, and he was only able to study at Montana State because of a scholarship. He is regarded as a preeminent scientist and serves as an example of the land-grant mission MSU seeks to replicate.

It is estimated that over 1 billion people are alive today through Hilleman's efforts. His work continues to save and improve lives around the world. For more information on Maurice Hilleman, please see his [obituary](#).

Through the public land-grant university ethos, MSU seeks to find and support more "Maurice Hillemans" through this scholarship and leadership program. The scholarship is offered to recent Montana high school graduates who have high financial need and evidence of less academic high school preparation than their peers. Hilleman Scholars receive leadership, character, financial, career, mindset, and communication coaching. Those students invited and accepting the offer to participate in the program begin the program with a month-long intensive math, writing, and critical thinking experience during the Summer Success Academy. The program offers a four-year \$4,000 per year scholarship/stipend plus a \$3,000 contribution to a study abroad experience at the end of the junior year.

Since its inception, the MSU Hilleman Scholars Program has welcomed 150 first-generation college students from 81 Montana hometowns; all are Pell-eligible. One hundred eighty-three students are enrolled in the program at MSU, with 65 more expected in the 2024 entering cohort. 83 students have already graduated from the program with increasing numbers each semester (following a pandemic dip). The program has generated \$12 million in scholarship donations, with \$500,000 alone generated at a fundraising dinner in summer 2023. The entering 2022 MSU Hilleman Scholars cohort retained at 87.5%, which is nearly 10% higher than the entering first-year class. This successful result is even more impactful considering that these students were not likely to attend higher education programs.

A second example of dedication to continual improvement at Montana State is the establishment and work of the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#). As posted on the website, the purpose of this office is stated as follows:

"We believe that excellence at Montana State University is best achieved through a culture of intellectual and personal growth that is diverse and inclusive. Montana State University is on the original homelands of Native peoples and acknowledging this rich history is central to our commitment to learning from the past. We prioritize efforts that create and support diverse working, teaching, learning and research environments and opportunities for the people who make up our

community. We create an environment that welcomes, respects and nurtures all students, staff, and faculty. We cultivate this inclusive environment by respecting and celebrating the diverse dimensions of people’s identities, particularly as those identities intersect in complex ways. We will continuously promote a culture of intellectual and personal growth for all, attuned to the importance of differences in age, race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, sex, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, religion, and spirituality.”

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has contributed to shaping the culture of Montana State to embrace a more diverse population and to be more open and accepting of differences. The office creates various forums, such as diversity and inclusion workshops and Safe Zone training, to educate the campus community on the need for and the pathway to accepting diversity and enacting inclusive language and behaviors.

Both six-year and four-year graduation are improving. (See Page 5 of this [linked document](#).) Increases in timely completion are especially gratifying reflections of MSU’s continuous improvement efforts. Equity gaps are monitored in the strategic plan metric reports presented annually to University Council, as well as other groups. The [latest cohort](#) (see Metric 1.1.6 Retention) shows some mitigation of equity gaps, after a pandemic-related dip in the prior two cohorts. Outcomes for the interventions are measured at least annually within each program and shared with stakeholders but not always in a public forum, as these assessments may contain sensitive employee and student information.

At the graduate level, the data on persistence demonstrated that attrition was largest in the first year of graduate studies, across discipline areas, for master’s and doctoral students in all our graduate programs. As such, effort has been focused on supporting new graduate students through their transition, including creating first-year communities in departments with senior graduate students as near-peer mentors, explicit attention to how to navigate being a graduate student, increased opportunities for graduate students to live in university housing, and increased stipends for assistantships. Due to these efforts, first-year graduate persistence has increased in the past four years from 89% to 92%.

Areas for improvement

Key performance indicators and a strong desire to improve performance within these indicators, especially as compared to peer institutions, have been central to the design of the goals of the [MSU strategic plan](#). In preparation for a succeeding plan, there is a need for more integrated use of specific disaggregated data both in the outset of the planning process and in the evaluation of the progress on the goals. The goal writing, operationalization, and continuous assessment will be aided by the new University Data and Analytics, which will systematically collect and graphically present data to help the assessment process. Strengthening these data analytics and planning areas of responsibility will improve the university’s ability to successfully complete the goals set forth in a new strategic plan.

Standard 1.D.4

The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.

Response

Transparency in processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement

[University Data and Analytics \(UDA\)](#) compiles annual reports on retention rates, graduation rates, time-to-degree, student movement between academic programs, and degree completions. These visualizations are the subject of ad hoc and annual training for academic leaders, and most are [posted publicly](#) and searchable on the UDA website, with self-service documentation.

UDA also submits or has submitted several of these indicators in disaggregated and summary form to external organizations for public or membership consumption: [IPEDS](#), [APLU's Voluntary System of Accountability \(VSA\)](#) and [Student Achievement Measure \(SAM\)](#), University of Oklahoma's [Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange \(CSRDE\)](#), and other ad hoc requestors. Montana's [Office of the Commissioner of High Education \(OCHE\)](#) now also submits data on behalf of all Montana University System (MUS) institutions to the [Post-Secondary Data Partnership \(PDP\)](#) hosted by the National Student Clearinghouse, and OCHE publishes first-time-in-college fall-to-fall retention rates and other student success indicators for all MSU institutions on its website. Additionally, the population health dashboard in [navMSU](#) was released spring 2024. This dashboard gives department heads and others insight into select populations of students with standardized key performance indicators related to persistence and graduation as well as the ability to compare a selected population to the whole student population or other selected population.

Units may request ad hoc reporting and analysis from UDA for specific program proposals and assessments. Some units also conduct their own assessments, though the institution has advocated for and taken steps toward centralization of effort for consistency, transparency, and widespread distribution of the results (see, for example, [Update MSU Institutional Research](#)).

Using indicators of student achievement to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity

Regular annual reports on the university's performance on student achievement measures are presented in public meetings, including [University Council](#), [Planning Council](#), [Academic Council](#), and [Budget Council](#). These presentations and attendant discussions inform strategies and resource allocation. Planning Council elevates one or more goals for additional focus and investment each year; so far, Goal 1.1, which includes improvement in student success measures, has been prioritized every year. See, for example, the [priority goals for FY 25](#). These priorities then guide the MSU president's investment proposal process (see Standard 1.B.3 for a table showing funding for investments proposals). Funded investment proposals that are intended to boost student achievement and equity are evaluated by Budget Council for impact, and that body makes recommendations to the president about continued funding. As examples, see [minutes](#) from a Budget Council meeting, [minutes](#) from a Planning Council meeting, and [minutes](#) from a University Council meeting.

One example of using indicators of student achievement to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity has been the building of the [American Indian Hall](#). Campus administrators, especially under the leadership of President Waded Cruzado, sought to raise the funds to design and build a facility to serve the American Indian population. The fundraising was completed through private donations and revenues from non-state funds and the building was finished in 2022. Its purpose is to provide student support for American Indian and Alaska Native students, office space for the senior diversity and inclusion officer, classrooms, study spaces, a drum room and ceremonial spaces. The space itself serves as an educational tool to instruct all who enter about American Indian culture and practices.

Although many factors contribute to improving student retention, it is noteworthy that between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, retention of students with under-represented race/ethnicities improved from 61% to 71.2%. Many other factors and initiatives are contributing to ongoing improvements of student persistence in under-represented groups at Montana State, including construction of the American Indian Hall, which is noticeably making a difference for many students by serving as a hub for American Indian students at MSU, regardless of their academic discipline, age, or tribal affiliation.



Conclusion: Moving Forward

Montana State University has made many improvements to enhance institutional effectiveness over the last seven years, despite the interruption and resource demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned in the Institutional Overview section of this report, the creation of the Advising Commons, an increase in efforts to enhance program and course learning outcomes, and improved methods in assessment of student learning are some of the important improvements made. In this moment of transition, we are approaching the end of one strategic plan and beginning to plan for the next, and we see the need to improve upon our leadership and process for institutional effectiveness in the following areas:

1. Responsibility established for planning activities.

At the beginning of the strategic plan, the Institutional Strategic Effectiveness Team (IFSET) began to collect data to assess the strategic plan, but it was not a practical solution because data collection and analysis needed to be the responsibility of statisticians. As a result, the Office of Planning and Analysis assumed the job of producing metrics for the strategic plan. However, this office was also assigned the work of both establishing the directions for the strategic plan, along with collecting data to determine the success of the work toward the goals within the strategic plan. Within the last six months, the Office of Planning and Analysis has been reorganized as the office of University Data and Analytics, to include responsibilities only for institutional statistical analysis, especially for strategic plan metrics. The planning function needs to have a prominent home in an equivalent manner, so the work of separating planning from data analysis will continue to further refine these two functions.

2. Peer benchmarking.

Peer benchmarking (both benchmarking compared to state institutions and to national peers, especially western land-grant institutions) is used, but more benchmarks need to be established and the data analyzed as we view progression on metrics for the strategic plan. The University Data and Analytics office can help with dashboards that are easy to use to allow administrators, faculty, staff, students, and interested public members to see benchmarking more easily with aggregated and disaggregated analyses.

3. Program and course learning outcomes.

While program and course learning outcomes are available to the public, more is being done to make these objectives available to students and the public through the catalog. One goal for improving these outcomes' visibility is to put them into the catalog so they can be viewed in one central place. It will take time and organization to have both program and learning outcomes available in the catalog, but it can be done with the Curriculum Inventory Management system.

4. Evaluation of student support programs and offices.

As shown in Appendix A, all offices and programs engaged in student support conduct evaluations of their services. However, the methods of evaluation and feedback to assess institutional effectiveness need to be strengthened; for example, Advising Commons is working on an assessment of advising with an emphasis on relating data and results to the strategic plan measures of goal achievement. All the offices and programs try to help students solve every problem that can stop progress in their programs of study. However, assessing the effectiveness of the total of the support system will help make support efforts more effective, reduce the overlap in services, and increase resources to support that which is effective and needs to be more available.

Montana State University has made substantial progress on strategic plan goals and tremendous progress on meeting the recommendations from the last mid-cycle reports to create more sustainable and clearly defined processes. Program and course assessment processes continue to improve, more universal awareness exists about institutional student outcomes, and the university continues to further commitment toward increasing student retention and persistence.



Addendum

**Addressing Findings from the NWCCU
Review of Montana State University's
Year 6, Standard 2
Policies, Regulation, and
Financial Evaluation Report of
July 2023**

Introduction

Montana State University submitted an accreditation report in August 2023 that responded to the set of standards under Standard 2 of the accreditation documentation. After a review of the MSU report, NWCCU reviewers identified three standards for which more information should be provided. This Addendum will provide more information on the three standards identified.

Standard 2.D.1

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 ensure accuracy and integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

NWCCU Team Verification: Type 1 finding

Evidence:

- Policies/procedures for reviewing published materials (print or websites) that assure institutional integrity.

Rationale:

MSU's academic website contains details of the programs available at MSU for students and includes a digital catalog with a list of courses offered and scheduled. OPA publishes annual reports and institutional data. There is also a calendar of events and a student-facing website. The institution does not provide sufficient evidence for review of its publications.

Response

Montana State University's process for reviewing publications

The university produces a wide range of publications each year, including press releases, print publications for academic recruiting, and publications meant to inform the public about the work of the institution. A publication of central importance is the [MSU Catalog](#) (Course Bulletin) that is produced and posted on a website each year in time for students to refer to each fall. The following describes the processes of review for each major type of publication produced by MSU.

Press releases

Prior to publication, every press release is reviewed for accuracy by all contributors and students, faculty or staff members who are quoted in the release. The draft is also reviewed by the writer's peers in University Communications and then by either the director or assistant director of the MSU News Service for accuracy. Some very technical press releases may also be reviewed by the department head, dean, or vice president overseeing the relevant subject matter area.

Print publications for academic recruiting such as the Viewbook and other materials

All photos and text are reviewed by staff in the Office of Admissions, the graphic designer in charge of the project, the director of visual media, a staff marketing specialist, the director of the MSU News Service, and representatives of each academic or student-support unit highlighted in the publication.

The purpose of the review is to ensure accuracy, use of current and relevant photography, and clarity of message.

Print publications for general consumption, such as [Mountains & Minds](#) magazine

Prior to publication, every story is reviewed for accuracy by any student, faculty or staff member quoted in the release, and by anyone who contributed to the story. The draft is also reviewed by the writer's peers in University Communications and then by either the director or assistant director of the MSU News Service for accuracy. The entire publication is reviewed by the MSU president, vice president of communications, relevant deans, and vice presidents and executives (most commonly the vice president for research, the provost, and the vice president for student success), news director, the university's chief marketing officer, the director of visual media, the lead graphic designer,.

The MSU Catalog (Course Bulletin)

The MSU Catalog is one of the most important documents that MSU produces, as it has all the information students need to navigate the university. The catalog must be correct, so faculty and staff review it to ensure its accuracy. This publication is reviewed by more employees at Montana State than any other publication.

The Registrar's office is responsible for the catalog's content, and it relies on faculty and staff input for creating and checking the content. Each program and the courses affiliated with every program originate in CourseLeaf and the Curriculum Inventory Management (CIM) system, which serve as the repositories for the text used to describe the programs, courses, and their requirements. Changes to programs and courses must be approved, and multiple levels of approval are required for substantive changes. CourseLeaf and the CIM record every editorial action that is taken by reviewers, so a history of the catalog text is created and preserved. In addition to program and course information, university offices including [Financial Aid](#), [Office of the President](#), [Office of the Provost](#), the offices of the vice presidents, [University Student Housing](#), and others create and review catalog text about their services. The [Office of Academic Affairs](#) oversees the entire catalog.

MSU's website

All university publications and releases and other types of information are published on the MSU website, whose management is decentralized. Personnel in university offices and programs create and edit the information they post. Assistance with website creation and editing is available from the Web and Digital Communications office, which is supervised by University Communications. Five web specialists provide online and on-demand training and advice on setting up and editing websites. The Web and Digital Communications office also provides information about web accessibility for all visitors.

Standard 2.G.6

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 and graduate requirements, and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students.

NWCCU Team Verification: Type II finding

Evidence

- Description of advising program, staffing, and advising publications (Student handbook or Catalog; links to webpages—please note specific pages or areas) Y
- Systematic evaluation of advising N
- Professional development policies/procedures for advisors Y

Rationale

Numerous advising materials and resources are available on the Advising Commons website. All resources are web-based and are not typically tied to one manual with page numbers. Multiple student support programs are available, with a special focus on retaining first-time, full-time students. The procedures that advisors need to follow are clear. MSU indicates that it subscribes to NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies Model for advisor development. Reviewers could not find relevant information on systematic evaluation of advising efficacy.

Response

Designing a systematic and effective program of academic advisement

In the last five years, the university has invested in a well-organized, thorough, and more centralized advising system to ensure undergraduate students receive accurate and timely information to succeed at MSU. The student advising system comprises Advising Commons, faculty advisors, and the Graduate School advising.

The MSU undergraduate advising system devotes substantial resources to help students successfully navigate the university from matriculation through graduation. Advising Commons is a team of 41 primary-role advisors (professional staff), who advise students in every college at MSU.

Within the Advising Commons, advisors are organized into small teams overseen by an Advising Lead staff member. Each team meets regularly to discuss campus-wide initiatives and information specific to advisor focus areas. Advising Leads work closely with the leadership teams of the academic units they serve to:

- Communicate critical advising and registration information to faculty and staff.
- Review course availability issues that could cause registration challenges.
- Determine appropriate transition points for students to be assigned to a faculty advisor.
- Provide training and information to faculty and academic unit staff.

The following is a breakdown of Advising Commons advisors across the university:

- Seven advisors in the University Studies Department, varying FTE.
- Three advisors in Health Professions Advising.
- Three advisors in the College of Agriculture, two full-time and one part-time.
- Seven advisors in the Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering, five full time and two part time.

- Four advisors in the College of Letters and Science, three full time and one with a split appointment in the Jake Jobs College of Business and Entrepreneurship.
- Six advisors in the Jake Jobs College of Business and Entrepreneurship, four full time and two part time (one has a split appointment with the College of Letters and Science).
- Four advisors in the College of Education, Health and Human Development, three full-time and one part-time.
- Three advisors in the College of Arts and Architecture, one full-time and two part-time.
- Two full-time advisors in the Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing
- Four advisors who can be assigned to advising where needed.

Maintaining a systematic and effective program of academic advisement

Because most incoming students start with an Advising Commons advisor, approximately half of all undergraduates are advised by a Commons advisor. The Advising Commons shared-service model allows MSU to adjust advisor FTE to meet enrollment changes. In the past four years, Advising Commons has both redirected and added advising FTE to meet student needs. Professional advisor positions and roles are reviewed every year along with the scope of advising duties and tasks in each academic unit. These reviews are documented in advising plans.

Advising plans

Advising plans are documents that detail the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of all academic advising procedures. Advisors in each department or school are asked to update their unit advising plan annually. Plans are saved so that stakeholders can access the plans on demand. Plans are used to:

- Identify roles and responsibilities associated with academic advising within each unit.
- Identify and document advising-related and non-advising tasks completed by academic advisors.
- Ensure that advising and advising-related duties are covered and clearly communicated during times of transition for new advisors or unit personnel.
- Prompt conversations between academic advisors and unit leaders (department heads, directors or assistant deans) to ensure that leaders in each department, school, and college understand all facets of the unit’s academic advising and to address recent or upcoming changes, unmet needs, ideas for improvements, etc.
- Ensure that the Commons team and unit leaders are aware of the advising activities and other tasks primary-role advisors are asked to complete by unit.

The Academic Advising Center (AAC) assists by standardizing the advising process, providing training on changes in the curriculum and other aspects of the university, and continuously monitoring advising needs to ensure that students are served well.

Evaluation of the advising system

MSU Student Survey

The biennial MSU student survey collects feedback on a broad range of services and aspects of

student life. Questions about students' experiences and perceptions of academic advising were incorporated into multiple survey iterations. For the 2024 survey, Advising Commons worked with University Data and Analytics (previously the Office of Planning and Analysis) to improve the advising-focused questions by tying them more directly to identified learning outcomes and advising responsibilities documented in the academic advising syllabus. Results of the survey will provide benchmark data on student learning outcomes. Advising Commons has worked with University Data and Analytics to filter responses based on whether they were provided by students who were advised in the Advising Commons or by faculty and other advisors. This level of detail allows adjustments to training and directs targeted resources to both groups as appropriate. Additionally, the survey will:

- Confirm topics covered in advising sessions with students.
- Determine if advisors are engaging students in advising the students' learning outcomes.
- Identify which individuals are assisting students with common advising topics and issues.
- Gauge student perception of the advising experience, including their overall satisfaction, feedback on advisor availability and communication, and their advisers' knowledge.
- Determine if process changes or enhanced training is necessary.

The first set of survey results is expected in summer 2024. We will share and address the results with advising leadership and at monthly AAC meetings.

Appointment feedback survey

The Advising Commons is working with the navMSU implementation team to create an advising appointment feedback survey. The goal is to provide advisors with actionable information promptly. Specifically, if a student's advising appointment did not cover necessary information or if a student needs more help, advisors will know about it and be able to respond promptly. This survey will be piloted in summer or fall of 2024. Based on pilot outcomes, administrators will review results and consider needed improvements to the survey and advising services offered.

Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students

All undergraduate students are assigned an academic advisor, who is identified in their DegreeWorks profiles. All new students are taught how to access DegreeWorks and about their advising requirements and responsibilities during orientation. Advising requirements and advisor responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students. The [advising syllabus](#) outlines advising requirements and responsibilities. The syllabus is a student-facing document reviewed in online orientation, included in the orientation handbook, and posted on the Advising Commons website. Individual units also review advising requirements and responsibilities in person during orientation advising. From the Advising Commons [website](#), students can find advising services and contacts for MSU colleges, schools, and departments. Colleges and schools maintain advising webpages for their units.

Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities.

Advisor training and onboarding

The Advising Commons has worked to improve and standardize training and onboarding for new primary-role advisors. The formalized training program is housed in an online learning environment, D2L. The training program consists of eight modules covering such topics as academic policies, procedures, deadlines, using advising and registration software systems, curricular requirements, advising theory, and approaches to working with various student populations. As advisors progress through the training platform, they also connect with several training partners in person. Training partners are senior advisors who debrief training content, address questions, take new advisors on a guided resource walk, and introduce advisors to other colleagues on campus. While designed for new primary-role advisors, the training also is available to faculty advisors. Once advisors have been given access to the training platform, they can revisit it as needed.

New primary-role advisors shadow experienced advisors and are shadowed by mentor advisors before assisting students on their own. Additionally, for about a month after new advisors begin advising students on their own, their supervisors check in with them regularly and conduct spot checks on advising notes to confirm that the new advisors are advising and documenting student interactions appropriately. After reviewing advising notes and interactions, supervisors meet with the new advisors to express issues of concern or the need for additional training, and to share information about available resources.

The Advising Manual

Shared with all primary-role advisors during onboarding, the advising manual communicates best practices and policies. The advising manual is accessible via a shared drive. The advising manual is reviewed and updated annually to incorporate additional information and process improvements.

The Advising Commons library

The Advising Commons maintains an online shared library, where the Advising Manual, Advising Plans, meeting minutes, course flyers, and updates and other helpful information are stored.

Monthly advising updates

Advising Commons hosts monthly meetings open to all advisors, student success professionals, and faculty. Critical advising and registration information is shared during these meetings, which are held via Webex. Meetings are recorded, and the minutes are posted on a shared drive. Advising leads follow-up with advisors in their focus areas to review the information presented.

Advisor evaluations

Primary-role academic advisors have an [annual performance review](#) that includes reflection and discussion of prior performance and goals for the coming year. The advisor, academic unit's advising partner, and the advisor's supervisor contribute to the review.

Several months apart from the annual performance review, primary-role advisors complete a self-assessment that asks them to reflect on their knowledge, skills, and abilities in meeting multiple facets of NACADA's Academic Advising Core Competencies. Self-assessments are shared and discussed with direct supervisors. After those conversations, advising leads share the needs of their teams with the Advising Commons director and other lead advisors, and that information is used to identify training priorities. Trainings offered in the past year that resulted from advisor self-assessments included: utilizing navMSU, reviewing changes to academic standing policies, and reviewing study-abroad processes.

Ongoing training and professional development opportunities

All advisors are required to complete the following trainings:

- Mandatory Reporter.
- Indian Education for All in Montana for One MUS.
- Banner, and Information Security Training. Advising Commons advisers participate in initial training through Advising Commons and are encouraged to participate in ongoing campus training and professional development certificate programs such as QPR, Kognito, Safe Zone, Crucial Conversations, Mental Health First Aid, Diversity and Inclusion Development, etc.

Advising Commons also offers multiple single-topic workshops where campus colleagues are invited to share information about

- Services and resources they offer for both students and colleagues
- Changes to existing processes, policies, curricula
- New initiatives, trends, and issues on campus or in higher education

Advancement plan

In summer 2023, Advising Commons introduced an advisor advancement plan that promotes best practices and expects and recognizes advisor's ongoing professional development.

The Montana Academic Advising Community

After a successful drive-in conference for primary-role academic advisors in Montana, MSU continues to host monthly online meetings for the Montana Academic Advising Community (MAAC). These meetings offer advisors the opportunity to engage with colleagues across Montana to share best practices, learn about programs on other campuses, and to discuss trends, challenges, and solutions.

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising

All Advising Commons advisors are encouraged to join NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. Annual membership fees for Commons' advisors are covered by Advising Commons. Each year, Advising Commons sends five to seven individuals to national and regional advising conferences. Attendees then share information and resources with all Commons advisors when they return. Advisors are encouraged to submit presentation proposals for NACADA and other relevant conferences.

Other training opportunities

Advisors are encouraged to join Advising Commons' on-campus training and professional development events.

Advising Commons works with both the Center for Faculty Excellence and individual academic units to offer campus-wide and unit-specific faculty advisor training.

Standard 2.G.7

The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students, including those enrolled in distance education courses and programs, to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures that 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.

NWCCU Team Verification: Type 1 finding

Evidence

- Policies/procedures for ensuring the student who registers in a distance education course/program is the same student who participates in the course and receives credit _Y_
- Policies/procedures make it clear that these processes protect student privacy _Y_
- Notification to students at the time of registration of any additional charges associated with verification procedures _Y_
- Academic policies/procedures for instructors to implement requirements for regular and substantive interaction to distance education courses/programs _N_

Rationale

The student identity verification follows best practices. NWCCU's request for evidence for meeting federal RSI policy requirements is acknowledged with a note that work is in progress. MSU will need to prioritize this.

Response

Montana State University has been developing policies and best practices for distance education courses and programs. The pandemic increased the need for technology, training for faculty and students, policies for ensuring the quality of distance education programs and courses, and best practices for distance education delivery. In the past year, the university has reviewed and accepted a [distance education policy](#), effective as of April 3, 2024, and scheduled for review and renewal in April 2027.

Description of Montana State University's distance education policy

The policy defines distance education as the delivery of instruction primarily via electronic, web-based technologies or other media regardless of a student's or instructor's location. The delivery can be synchronous or asynchronous, can include some face-to-face interaction, and must incorporate regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors.

The courses and programs offered by Montana State University must adhere to the [Board of Regents Policy 303.7](#) regarding online learning. Roles and responsibilities for distance education programs and courses follow all the policies set forth for traditional programs and courses.

The provost and senior vice president for academic affairs are responsible for overseeing distance education in coordination with deans, vice president for administration, vice president for student success and vice president for information technology.

Responsibility of the university to distance education programs and courses

According to the policy, the university must provide faculty with training in course design and implementation for distance education. The university will provide training for the official MSU learning management system and other digital tools used for instruction. The training will be in accordance with the Principles of Quality for [eLearning Courses in the Montana University System](#) and the Consortium for Regional Accrediting Commission's 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines.

Responsibility of the MSU faculty engaged in distance education

Faculty are required to complete Instructional Technology and Distance Education Pedagogy training prior to the term in which they are the instructor of record. Faculty must deliver distance education programs and courses using the official MSU learning management system, which is currently D2L (Brightspace) and transitioning in the 2024-2025 academic year to Canvas. The faculty are to design programs and courses that provide regular and substantive interaction between the instructor/s and students. All assignments will be graded, and the instructor will provide substantial feedback to the student. Other policies regarding faculty are the same as the policies related to teaching in person in the classroom. The [Faculty Handbook](#) outlines these responsibilities.

Inclusion of operational requirements, compliance with MSU policies and procedures, consumer protections, and tuition and fees in the policy

The policy also includes a section, 300.00, called Operational Requirements, which includes

- 310.00 Quality and Learning Goals
- 320.00 Transition from Face-to-Face Delivery to Distance Education Delivery
- 330.00 Review and Approval of Newly Proposed Distance Education Programs
- 340.00 Assessment of Distance Education Learning Outcomes
- 350.00 Identity Verification and Student Privacy
- 360.00 Compliance with MSU Policies and Procedures
- 370.00 Consumer Protections
- 380.00 Tuition and Fees

The policy ensures that programs and courses offered through distance education are delivered with state-of-the-art technology and teaching practices, and that they meet the high standards of quality that are standard at MSU.

Appendix A: Student Support Services

The following table provides the names of programs or offices and a brief description of services and processes of assessment for the major student support efforts at Montana State University. This list does include one of the foundational support efforts at the University, which is the care and support that faculty and staff provide students through their programs of study and the departments in which the programs are housed. This support occurs throughout the day, semester, and year, and is important to acknowledge, in addition to the support services and programs identified below.

List of Student Support Services and Programs

Name of Program or Office	Brief Description of Services	Processes of Assessment of Effectiveness
Services through the Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success		
<u>Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success (AYCSS)</u>	AACSS is the umbrella to the services listed below, each of which provide support and advantage to students through personalized advising, mentoring, tutoring, and coaching	AYCSS assessment plan is focused on two key areas that help influence both the operational practices and strategic initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formative assessment by using weekly metrics generated through CatTracks to assess YTD activities: <u>AYCSS Program Weekly Metrics</u>; <u>Spring '24 Career Ed Metrics</u>; <u>Success Advising – Spring 24</u> 2. Formative assessment through customer point of service surveys: <u>Point of Service Success Advising</u>; <u>Point of Service Career Education Coach</u>. 3. Formative assessment for weekly communication: <u>FA23 CommunicationMetrics</u>; <u>SPRING2024 CommunicationMetrics</u> 4. Formative assessment for weekly holds, registration, withdrawal from courses, and engagements of students: <u>AYCSS Scholars Fall 23 Master List as of 1.30.24</u> 5. Summative assessment to match pair cohort comparisons (see Hilleman Scholars <u>Fall 23 Risk Group Tables 2.23.24</u>) 6. Summative assessment for the end of semester metrics: <u>Fall 23 Risk Group</u> 7. Summative assessment for the end of the year: <u>Metrics Table AYCSS yearly comparison</u>
<u>SmartyCats Tutoring</u>	The program's purpose is to help students manage their learning as they work through the concepts and processes	Weekly Metrics, for example: <u>Tutor Metrics Spring 24</u> Point of Service, for example: <u>Point of Service Tutoring</u>

	underlying their courses.	
<u>1893 Scholarship Program</u>	The program was developed to assess MSU seniors who could benefit from scholarship, academic, career development, and leadership supports.	Weekly metrics, for example: <u>1893 Spring '24 Metrics</u>
<u>HireABobcat</u>	Offers free online recruiting for students to gain employment and internships on campus and off-campus.	Weekly metrics, for example: <u>Spring 2024 Industry and Employment</u>
<u>Gold Standard</u>	Program is the on-campus employment program for students to work on campus while receiving access to professional development and leadership opportunities.	Weekly tracking, for example: <u>2024 New Gold Standard Data</u> ; <u>2024 New Gold Standard Jobs</u> ; <u>Student Contact Audiences & Tracking Gold Standard</u>
<u>Adventures MSU</u>	Provide students with the opportunity to make new friends, explore the great outdoors, and earn academic credit at the same time.	Weekly tracking, for example: <u>Adventures Fall 23 Export 2024-03-18-20-07</u> ; <u>Adventures MSU Fall 23 Info</u>
<u>Champ-Change</u>	Provides students with encouragement to connect with their university through active participation in a variety of university events, with the reward of ChampChange points that can be used to purchase prizes through live and online auctions.	Weekly metrics, for example: <u>Champ Change Metrics Spring 2024</u>

Navigate MSU	<p>Program provides a road map to guide a student's experience before arriving on campus, going through the University, graduating, and finding the right job.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tracking and benchmarking utilization rates among faculty, staff, and students 2. Surveys on effectiveness 3. Focus groups to determine improvement priorities
Montana's Own	<p>Program targets Montana students to help them find purpose, develop a career direction, and learn to network; also connects students with the Montana's Own Scholarship Program.</p>	<p>Weekly metrics, for example: Montana's Own Spring 2024 Metrics</p>
Office of Financial Education	<p>Financial counselors help develop responsible, financially independent students with respect to current information, education, and individualized programs and support so they can define and achieve their life goals.</p>	<p>Weekly metrics, for example: OFE Spring 2024 Template</p> <p>Point of service, for example: Point of Service Financial Education</p>
Return2Learn	<p>Provides scholarships and support to students who are re-enrolling at MSU to help the students chart their next steps toward degree completion.</p>	<p>Weekly metrics, for example: R2L Spring 2024 Metrics</p> <p>Point of service, for example: Point of Service Return to Learn</p>
Hilleman Scholars Program	<p>Program is named for a world-class scientist from Montana who developed vaccines. The program is a leadership program</p>	<p>Weekly metrics, for example: Hilleman Weekly Metrics Spring 2024</p> <p>Weekly tracking, for example: Fall 2023 Hilleman RYG; Spring 2024 Hilleman FYG;</p>

	<p>designed for Montana residents who demonstrate significant academic, leadership, and career potential. Students receive scholarship support, leadership development opportunities, and mentoring through their college experiences.</p>	<p>Hilleman Tables as of 2.29.24</p>
<p>Morrill Scholars</p>	<p>Program is designed for up to 250 scholars as a cohort who received support and guidance through the first two years of college from faculty fellows, staff, and peer mentors/tutors. Each scholar has a team of helpers to promote them to flourish in college.</p>	<p>Weekly metrics, for example: Morrill Scholars Weekly Metrics Spring 2024</p>
<p>Second Wind</p>	<p>Program is designed to provide support to first-time suspended students to allow them to immediately return to campus with the skills, purpose, and commitment to be successful.</p>	<p>Weekly metrics, for example: Spring 2024 Metrics AWandSW</p>
<p>MSU 101</p>	<p>Program to help students identified as those who need extra support to achieve higher academic success through taking a course to provide the resources, strategies, and tools to help students.</p>	<p>Weekly metrics, for example: Spring 2024 Metrics AW and SW</p> <p>Weekly tracking, for example: Fall 2023 Academic Warning Outreach; Spring 2024 Academic Warning Suspension</p>

Women's Center	<p>Works with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create an equitable environment through educational programs and support services. Encourages student engagement and expression, community involvement, critical thinking, and an exchange of ideas to enhance the classroom experience and move forward a dialogue surrounding gender constructs, identity, and equality.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Office staff keeps track of the number of contacts the Women's Center has throughout the academic year. Both method of contact and inquiry subject are noted. 2. We distribute evaluation sheets at most of our educational programs to identify who is attending, opinions of the programs and ideas for future programming. 3. Information about select programs and offerings will be listed in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's Annual Report.
Office of Disability Services		
Disability Services	<p>Provides access to all college programs, services, and activities for students with disabilities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of veterans and dependents using each of the five active Chapters of VA education benefits. 2. Military Friendly Survey Results (statistics) 3. Annual Report of Partner Resources Used
Veteran Services		
Veteran Services and the Travis W. Atkins Veteran Support Center	<p>Provides access to quality education for all veterans through partnering with Disability Services, Financial Aid, and the Allen Yarnell for Student Success to ensure student veterans have access to the resources they need.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of veterans and dependents using each of the five active Chapters of VA Education Benefits 2. Statistics from the Military Friendly Survey results 3. Annual Report of partner resources used.
Academic Advising and Support Programs		
Advising Commons	<p>Academic advising is a collaborative process between students, faculty, and professional advisors designed to empower</p>	<p>Advising Commons is in the process of developing an Appointment Feedback Survey with the navMSU team. Depending on the navMSU team's schedule, we will pilot the survey in Spring or Fall 2024. We will establish criteria and procedures for student</p>

	<p>students to discover who they are as learners, where their academic interests lie, and how their university experience will shape their lives.</p>	<p>follow-up and/or providing additional training and resources for advisors.</p> <p>Advising Commons is working with University Data and Analytics to update advising questions on the biannual student survey. We have requested aggregated responses for the full Advising Commons team to enable targeted training and resources.</p>
<p>Health Professions Advising</p>	<p>HPA advises pre-health students and MSU alumni who aspire to become health professionals after completing their primary degree. The office helps students explore, prepare, and apply to a variety of health professions programs.</p>	<p>Tracking number of students that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use support programs 2. Enroll in HMED courses 3. Receive advising (individual and group meetings) 4. Apply to health profession programs 5. Yearly acceptance rates
<p>TRIO Student Support Services</p>	<p>The program is a U.S. Department of Education federally funded grant designed to serve 140 full-time, undergraduate students who are first-generation, low-income, and/or have a disability. The program provides several resources and support services, including free tutoring, financial education, on-on-one advising, workshops, and book support, to increase the retention and graduation rate of its participation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Performance Report to the U.S. Department of Education 2. External program evaluation by Yellowstone Evaluation Services 3. Scholar count, retention rate, good academic standing rate, six-year graduation rate 4. Student program surveys
<p>TRIO McNair Scholars Program</p>	<p>Program serves the needs of 25 undergraduate students annually who are either first-</p>	<p>Program conducts an Annual Performance Report administered by U.S Department of Education to assess if program goals are being met.</p>

	<p>generation/low income or minorities traditionally underrepresented in graduate school. Students chosen show promise and commitment for graduate school and work to pursue a doctoral degree.</p>	
<p>American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Services</p>	<p>A program of the Department of Native American Studies, advisors serve approximately 800 MSU students by offering services such as advocacy use of the Dan Voyich Student Commons in the new American Indian Hall, academic advising, tutoring, emergency loans, connection to other campus and community resources. Location is in the new American Indian Hall—Dr. Dan Voyich Student Commons</p>	<p>No evaluation of services has been conducted; however, staff members are working on some methods of evaluation.</p>
<p>Office of the Dean of Students</p>		
<p>Dean of Students</p>	<p>Offers dependable services for campus while empowering students to advocate for themselves in the context of advancing appropriate academic and community expectations. Programs may offer support during times of conflict, facilitate healing during times of crisis, and provide</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counts of students assisted 2. Annual Security Report 3. Biennial review of the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act 4. Clery Report 5. Annual DOS Report

	educational opportunities during times of development.	
<u>CARE (Campus Assessment Response Evaluation)</u>	<p>Program is composed of members from the Office of the Dean of Students, University Police, Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Health Service, Residence Life, Disability services, and Veterans Services. The program is responsible for discussing, assessing, and responding to reports of individuals who are demonstrating disruptive or concerning behaviors. The program is designed to be proactive in providing swift, coordinated, caring, and developmental intervention to members of the campus community prior to crisis. The program has two teams: the Behavior Intervention Team and the Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation Team.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counts of students being recommended to the program 2. Report of programs in the MSU Annual Security and Fire Safety Report 3. Number and types of interventions offered 4. Number of completed suicides, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation
<u>Bobcat Parent and Family Program</u>	<p>Program supports parents and families as their student navigate the MSU campus; provides programs and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of attendees at the Parent Family Weekend 2. Number of emails sent to Parent and Family listserv 3. Amount of funds raised from Parent and Family members

	<p>activities; develops resources for families; communicates with university administration; raises funds for scholarships and other functions which directly support student success; works closely with the Bobcat Family Fellows, a framework for family giving and engagement</p>	
<p><u>Diversity and Inclusion Student Commons</u></p>	<p>The unit provides programming that empowers students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally while contributing to a more inclusive campus culture. Staff celebrates the unique identities and perspectives and provides a safe space for constructive dialogues. This is accomplished through programming that includes Safe Zone workshops, Discourse & Nuggets dialogue sessions, and the Diversity & Inclusion Ambassador (DIA) program.</p>	<p>1. Number of participants attending Safe Zone workshops 2. Awareness of LGBTQ+ issues 3. Number of diversity and inclusion ambassadors who participate in the Diversity & Inclusion and Leadership Development seminar class, and the ambassadors' engagement with cultural-centered events and activities.</p>
<p><u>Fraternity and Sorority Life</u></p>	<p>Monitors success of fraternities and sororities; helps problem solve in cooperation with fraternity and sorority officers and members, along with local</p>	<p>Issues yearly report including statistics on: 1. Chapter size 2. Chapter average GPS 3. Number of hazing violations 4. Number of alcohol violations 5. Number of sexual misconduct violations 6. Number of other violations including recruitment, bylaws, and noise violations</p>

	alumni and national HQ staff; holds chapters accountable for violations of university policies through the Code of Student Conduct.	7. Number of hours of community engagement 8. Number of national awards 9. Number of university awards
<u>MSU Assist</u>	A webpage guiding faculty, staff, and those who interact with MSU students support mental health needs or assist those who are in distress	Web analysis of most commonly used sections of the website
<u>Off-Campus Student Life</u>	Serves as a community and campus resources center with experts in food, crisis house and homelessness, applying to SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, WIC or LIHEAP, managing a financial crisis, or working through a legal dispute	1. Counts of housing appointments 2. Number of total students served 3. Counts of legal advising appointments 4. Running lists and totals of property managers in Bozeman, along with numbers of units available and prices
<u>Recreational Sports & Fitness</u>	Provides services and support for student and community health and well-being, committed to student-centered practices, whole person well-being, and inclusive practices.	The structure for all Student Success units is currently in development. Learning objectives for programming will be available in Summer 2024.
<u>Student Engagement</u>	Provides and facilitates student engagement opportunities for MSU students through a variety of programs, events, services, and activities. Provides a hub for students	The structure for all Student Success units is currently in development. Learning objectives for programming will be available in Summer 2024.

	interested in connecting with their fellow Bobcats through student government, student organizations, programs, and events, and engaging in service to the community.	
<u>Student Conduct</u>	The student conduct process at MSU is an educational and developmental process that balances the interests of individual students with the interests of the academic community. Dean of Students and designees monitors and responds to issues of student conduct.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of cases adjudicated 2. Number and types of violations 3. Number of medical amnesty cases adjudicated 4. Number of Safety Questionnaire applicants
<u>Academic Conduct</u>	The academic conduct policy establishes community standards and procedures necessary to maintain and protect an environment conducive to learning and in keeping with the educational objectives of the university.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of cases adjudicated 2. Number and types of sanctions/outcomes
<u>University Police</u>		
<u>University Police</u>	Provides all Montana State University students, faculty, staff, and visitors a safe and secure environment for living and learning. Continuously strive to build and cultivate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daily Crime Log 2. Fire Log 3. Crime Stats 4. MSU Sexual or Violent Offender List 5. Annual Security Report 6. Clery Report

	relationships, foster ongoing education, and provide a visible and welcoming presence for the university community.	
Safe Cats	An app to provide students with an ability to communicate with University Police and for Police to communicate quickly with students.	A count of student-generated communications
Writing and Math Centers		
Writing Center	Create a dynamic, collaborative environment that fosters and maintains a vibrant community of writers across the MSU campuses by fostering community, respect, collaboration, reciprocity, and change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of student contacts 2. Assessment of student writing in course partnerships 3. Ongoing reflection from tutors and faculty partners
Math and Stat Center	A student support service within the Department of Mathematical Sciences designed to help students taking mathematics and statistics courses at MSU.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counts of student usage and distribution of courses. 2. Attendee logs of tutor training meetings 3. Annual tutor performance reviews to receive formative program feedback and assist in individual tutor growth
<u>Student Wellness</u>		
Student Health Services	Provides acute and continuity health care, dental pharmacy, nutrition, travel health, LGBTQ+ health, women's health, and COVID information services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AAAHC Accreditation processes 2. Patient satisfaction surveys 3. Quality Improvement program 4. Total usage counts and usage trends
Counseling and	Provides culturally sensitive services to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Client evaluations of services 2x/year

<p><u>Psychological Services</u></p>	<p>MSU’s diverse student population by providing individual counseling, group counseling, couples counseling, consultations, self-help resources, crisis intervention, community referrals, and seminars and presentations on mental health topics.</p>	<p>2. Clinical outcomes measured with the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) 3. Monthly statistics review of utilization, crisis services, and ongoing services</p>
<p><u>Dental Services</u></p>	<p>Provides students with more accessible and affordable dental care.</p>	<p>1. Tracking of patient visits and treatment rendered 2. QR code posted in the clinic for patient feedback</p>
<p><u>Office of Health Advancement</u></p>	<p>Educates, empowers, and energizes the MSU community to thrive through a balanced lifestyle by promoting generalized well-being through educating on topics such as sexual health, nutrition, physical activity, stress management, use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.</p>	<p>1. Student learning outcomes 2. National College Health Assessment Survey 3. Various community health assessment surveys</p>
<p><u>Campus Recreation</u></p>	<p>Provides services and support for student and community health and well-being, committed to student-centered practices, whole person well-being, and inclusive practices.</p>	<p>1. Student learning outcomes 2. Student Employee outcomes 3. NACE competency development 4. Total usage counts and usage trends</p>
<p><u>Bounty of the Bridgers Campus Food Pantry</u></p>	<p>A program of the Office of Health Enhancement. Provides supplemental and</p>	<p>1. Total users and user trends 2. Total volume of food 3. After service feedback surveys 4. Student need surveys</p>

	emergency food assistance to students, faculty, staff, and family members at no cost	
<u>VOICE Center</u>		
<u>VOICE Center</u> As of July 2024, combined with the Office of Institutional Equity and called Campus Civil Rights	Committed to the belief that all people have the right to live free from violence and the fear of violence. The Center provides safe, highly confidential place on campus for survivors of interpersonal violence, offering support, advocacy, and resources.	Due to concern for the privacy of clients, evaluation of the services is confined to a record of the number of clients served.
<u>Athletics</u>		
<u>MSU Athletics</u>	Contributes to Montana University's land grant mission through excellence in the classroom, competition, and a holistic approach to student-athlete well-being, with a commitment to integrity, inclusion, respect, and service to foster a lasting connection between the MSU community, State of Montana, and Rocky Mountain Region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual surveys of all student-athletes and athletic programs 2. Real Response Anonymous Reporting, which is an online software platform that allows student-athletes to submit anonymous messages at any time 3. Evaluation of reporting APR, GSR, and FGR reporting to NCAA and Big Sky Conference 4. NCAA compliant violation reporting 5. Roster numbers counts and student-athlete numbers 6. Tracking of community service engagement hours 7. Awards at Golden Bobcats 8. Track of awards student-athletes receive
Services to International Students		
<u>Office of International Programs</u>	Serves as Montana State University's international gateway by facilitating connections, programs, and experiences that bring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of students participating in faculty-led programs abroad annually 2. Number of students studying individually abroad annually 3. Number of students studying at Montana State University from international locations annually

	<p>the world to Montana and Montana to the world by enabling students, faculty, staff, and communities to explore the international dimensions of learning, discovery, and engagement.</p>	
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Office of Institutional Equity

<p><u>Office of Institutional Equity</u></p> <p>As of July 2024, combined the Office of Institutional Equity and the VOICE Center to create the <u>Campus Civil Rights</u> office</p>	<p>Supports the University’s goals of non-discrimination and equal opportunity by promoting an inclusive, diverse, and supportive environment for students to excel regardless of their race, color, national origin (ancestry), sex, sexual preference/orientation , gender identity, gender expression, marital or parental status, age, creed, religion, or political beliefs, mental or physical disability, genetic information, or status as a veteran.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total number of cases in a year 2. Number of formal investigations 3. Number of Title IX cases 4. Number of cases based on each protected class 5. Number of days cases are open
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Information Technology Assistance

<p><u>University Information Technology</u></p>	<p>Provides support for the campus community to provide central information technology services to MSU. Students are aided with passwords, portal access, student computer labs, email support, software support, learning</p>	<p>The number of students across the four MSU campuses that have used the password reset tool (ReACT), for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --12 month = 97,922 --24 month = 186,782 --36 month = 295,275 <p>Student Lab (VDI) usage over the past 12 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Total number of VDI user sessions: 154,809 --Total number of unique VDI user: 8,522 (while these are primarily students using our labs (or the
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	management systems (Brightspace by D2L) iClickers, and library resources	virtual VDI labs) this number also includes faculty and staff; we have no way to separate them out of our data collection). See information on the Self-Service NetID Password Portal See information on IDs, Passwords, and Services
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Montana State University Library

Montana State University Library	The mission of the MSU Library is to support and advance teaching, learning, and research for Montana State University and the people of Montana by providing access to information and knowledge.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain instructional data, reach, and student evaluations. https://www.lib.montana.edu/about/dashboards/ 2. The guide at https://guides.lib.montana.edu/facultyservices/teaching allows MSU faculty to develop their own materials with the templates provided, co-develop assignments and learn objectives, with a librarian, or utilize a wealth of learning materials that have already be developed for them. 3. Collect systematic and dynamic student feedback throughout the academic year that allows the library to adapt to meet student needs. In FY24, the MSU Library added lab goggles, mini whiteboards, and molecular building kits to the tech checkouts based on student input. 4. Industry Standard LibQual survey (make public facing) administered every 4 years to evaluate service and user experience. The MSU Library modifies its spaces and services based on input from LibQual survey.
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College-level Student Support Offices

Empower	A student support program in the Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering. It fosters the inclusion and success of underrepresented minorities and women in engineering and other fields of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) at MSU. The Empower program provides a variety of support to	Number of students served.
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	all underrepresented students in STEM programs across campus.	
<u>Caring for Our Own</u>	This is a program of the Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing designed to provide support for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students pursuing nursing degrees.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retention rate of AI/AN students enrolled in nursing 2. Number of degrees completed for AI/AN students 3. Number of students enrolled in nursing programs 4. Tribal affiliations of students 5. Home locations of students
<u>Cable Advantage</u>	This is a program of the Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship. The Jabs CABLE Advantage is a learning community for business majors at MSU CABLE, which stands for a Community of Aspiring Business Leaders, provides participating students the opportunity to connect with each other, their classes, the MSU campus, and to earn scholarship money, thereby improving retention.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Track students from fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall to calculate retention rates 2. Collect qualitative data through a student satisfaction survey
<u>The Bracken Center</u>	The Bracken Center is a program of the Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship and offers support and coaching throughout the student's academic and professional journey. The Bracken Center coaches offer consultative one-on-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of student appointments 2. Number of presentations given 3. Number of internships established and students placed 4. Number of job placements made 5. Number of interactions with employers 6. Number of employers worked with

	one meetings to create an action plan to help each student secure the internship or job that best suits their career goals.	
<u>Indigenous Pathways in Agriculture</u>	This program is located in the College of Agriculture and focuses on the success of Indigenous students studying in the College of Agriculture. The program offers scholarships, tutoring, and mentoring.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Numbers of students served 2. Numbers of scholarships awarded to indigenous students 3. Qualitative assessment of the increase of communication between tribal colleges and MSU College of Agriculture
University Student Housing and Culinary Services		
<u>University Student Housing</u>	University Student Housing provides on campus housing for undergraduate and graduate students in residence halls and apartments.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in national survey conducted by EDI, survey of all students living in university housing to evaluate amenities, sense of safety, the student resident's sense of belonging, and other areas such a learning to work with others through living in campus housing. 2. Student survey about resident advisor performance
<u>Culinary Services</u>	Culinary Services is a self-operated department that provides high quality food, variety, convenience and flexibility to MSU's students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Staff members provide support to students with food allergies, intolerances, dietary preferences, and other dietary needs to help students stay healthy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Count of CatCard swipes to enumerate number of meals served to students. 2. Appointments, emails, and phone calls to dietician for help with food allergies, eating plans, and other dietary issues. 3. Participate in a student satisfaction survey with Residence Life to ascertain level of student satisfaction on various domains of culinary service.

Appendix B: Peer Institution Comparison Facts & Figures

Table B.1:**Comparison of Retention Rates with MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions**

MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions			
<i>FY22 IPEDS Data</i>			
Percentage of Students Who Began in Fall 2021 and Returned in Fall 2022			
Institution Name	State	Full Time Students	Part Time Students
Montana State University	MT	75%	55%
Colorado State University – Fort Collins	CO	86%	67%
New Mexico State University – Main Campus	NM	72%	47%
North Dakota State University – Main Campus	ND	75%	29%
Oregon State University	OR	87%	71%
South Dakota State University	SD	79%	39%
University of Alaska Fairbanks	AK	70%	43%
University of Arizona	AZ	86%	67%
University of California - Riverside	CA	87%	34%
University of Hawaii at Manoa	HI	79%	49%
University of Idaho	ID	74%	38%
University of Nevada- Reno	NV	80%	48%
University of Wyoming	WY	75%	35%
Utah State University	UT	74%	44%
Washington State University	WA	81%	55%

Note: Data Gathered from the [Intergrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#) on June 18th, 2024

This table demonstrates Western land grant institutions as designated by the Montana University System (MUS) in their MUS Peer Analysis, 2023. Peer description is defined as “Western States (WICHE), Land grant institutions, one institution from each state, Public Research Doctoral, Moderate to Highest Research Activity” by the MUS.

Table B.2:**Comparison of Graduation Rates with MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions**

MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions Graduation Rates					
IPEDS DATA					
Students who began their studies in Fall 2017					
Institution Name	State	Overall Graduation Rate	Transfer Out Rate	Graduation Rates for Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees Percentage of Full-time, First-time students who graduated in the specified amount of time and began in Fall 2017	
				4 Year	6 Year
Montana State University	MT	57%	22%	36%	57%
Colorado State University – Fort Collins	CO	67%	16%	47%	67%
New Mexico State University – Main Campus	NM	52%	0% (Undisclosed)	32%	52%
North Dakota State University – Main Campus	ND	64%	22%	45%	64%
Oregon State University	OR	71%	17%	47%	71%
South Dakota State University	SD	60%	0% (Undisclosed)	42%	59%
University of Alaska Fairbanks	AK	32%	19%	21%	33%
University of Arizona	AZ	66%	18%	51%	66%
University of California - Riverside	CA	77%	12%	65%	77%
University of Hawaii at Manoa	HI	63%	0% (Undisclosed)	40%	63%
University of Idaho	ID	61%	18%	41%	61%
University of Nevada-Reno	NV	62%	0% (Undisclosed)	42%	62%
University of Wyoming	WY	60%	23%	40%	60%
Utah State University	UT	57%	0% (Undisclosed)	30%	55%
Washington State University	WA	62%	0% (Undisclosed)	43%	62%

Note: Data Gathered from the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#) on June 18th, 2024

Table B.3:

Comparison of Average Cost of Attendance with MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions

MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions Average Cost of Attendance IPEDS Data							
Institution Name	Enrollment & Housing Status		Total Expenses per Academic Year				
			2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	% Change 2022-2023 to 2023-2024
Montana State University	In State	On Campus	\$23,059	\$23,286	\$24,527	\$26,671	8.7%
		Off Campus	\$23,059	\$23,286	\$24,527	\$26,671	8.7%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$42,789	\$44,022	\$46,404	\$49,925	7.6%
		Off Campus	\$42,789	\$44,022	\$46,404	\$49,925	7.6%
Colorado State University – Fort Collins	In State	On Campus	\$28,466	\$29,109	\$30,449	\$32,439	6.5%
		Off Campus	\$27,466	\$27,915	\$29,132	\$31,512	8.2%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$47,746	\$48,389	\$50,309	\$53,294	5.9%
		Off Campus	\$46,746	\$47,195	\$48,992	\$52,367	6.9%
New Mexico State University – Main Campus	In State	On Campus	\$23,040	\$24,192	\$24,399	\$26,111	7.0%
		Off Campus	\$21,895	\$22,010	\$23,012	\$26,847	16.7%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$39,506	\$40,658	\$41,523	\$43,235	4.1%
		Off Campus	\$38,361	\$38,476	\$40,136	\$43,971	9.6%
North Dakota State University – Main Campus	In State	On Campus	\$23,246	\$23,879	\$24,369	\$24,698	1.4%
		Off Campus	\$23,246	\$23,879	\$24,369	\$24,698	1.4%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$27,549	\$28,534	\$29,023	\$29,352	1.1%
		Off Campus	\$27,549	\$28,534	\$29,023	\$29,352	1.1%
Oregon State University	In State	On Campus	\$29,000	\$29,402	\$30,343	\$32,205	6.1%
		Off Campus	\$29,000	\$29,393	\$30,343	\$32,205	6.1%

	Out of State	On Campus	\$48,609	\$48,793	\$51,118	\$54,375	6.4%
		Off Campus	\$48,609	\$48,784	\$51,118	\$54,375	6.4%
South Dakota State University	In State	On Campus	\$22,476	\$22,616	\$22,934	\$24,744	7.9%
		Off Campus	\$24,015	\$24,304	\$25,271	\$26,498	4.9%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$25,951	\$26,126	\$26,444	\$28,254	6.8%
		Off Campus	\$27,490	\$27,814	\$28,781	\$30,008	4.3%
University of Alaska Fairbanks	In State	On Campus	\$22,366	\$22,438	\$23,196	\$25,340	9.2%
		Off Campus	\$25,476	\$25,548	\$26,196	\$27,640	5.5%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$36,502	\$36,574	\$37,332	\$39,452	5.7%
		Off Campus	\$39,612	\$39,684	\$40,332	\$41,752	3.5%
University of Arizona	In State	On Campus	\$30,686	\$30,686	\$31,625	\$33,126	4.7%
		Off Campus	\$30,136	\$30,136	\$31,125	\$30,726	-1.3%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$55,208	\$55,208	\$57,927	\$60,595	4.6%
		Off Campus	\$54,658	\$54,658	\$57,427	\$58,195	1.3%
University of California - Riverside	In State	On Campus	\$35,681	\$36,460	\$37,226	\$40,285	8.2%
		Off Campus	\$31,726	\$32,312	\$33,169	\$35,451	6.9%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$65,435	\$66,214	\$67,298	\$71,062	5.6%
		Off Campus	\$61,480	\$62,066	\$63,241	\$66,228	4.7%
University of Hawaii at Manoa	In State	On Campus	\$29,861	\$29,920	\$30,331	\$32,331	6.6%
		Off Campus	\$29,861	\$29,920	\$30,331	\$35,868	18.3%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$51,893	\$51,952	\$52,363	\$54,363	3.8%
		Off Campus	\$51,893	\$51,952	\$52,363	\$57,900	10.6%
University of Idaho	In State	On Campus	\$21,898	\$22,254	\$22,846	\$23,980	5.0%

	Out of State	Off Campus	\$24,884	\$25,410	\$25,518	\$23,980	-6.0%
		On Campus	\$41,134	\$41,490	\$42,802	\$44,948	6.8%
		Off Campus	\$44,120	\$44,646	\$44,754	\$44,948	0.4%
University of Nevada- Reno	In State	On Campus	\$26,252	\$26,796	\$28,056	\$29,264	4.3%
		Off Campus	\$26,252	\$26,796	\$28,056	\$29,264	4.3%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$41,906	\$42,888	\$44,598	\$46,220	3.6%
		Off Campus	\$41,906	\$42,888	\$44,598	\$46,220	3.6%
University of Wyoming	In State	On Campus	\$20,790	\$21,805	\$22,815	\$25,868	13.4%
		Off Campus	\$20,790	\$21,805	\$22,815	\$22,228	-2.6%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$34,530	\$36,355	\$37,965	\$41,648	9.7%
		Off Campus	\$34,530	\$36,355	\$37,965	\$38,008	0.1%
Utah State University	In State	On Campus	\$21,672	\$21,944	\$22,384	\$22,920	2.4%
		Off Campus	\$21,836	\$22,168	\$22,618	\$23,166	2.4%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$36,360	\$37,604	\$37,958	\$38,494	1.4%
		Off Campus	\$36,524	\$37,288	\$38,192	\$38,740	1.4%
Washington State University	In State	On Campus	\$28,520	\$28,767	\$29,743	\$30,532	2.7%
		Off Campus	\$28,520	\$28,767	\$29,743	\$30,532	2.7%
	Out of State	On Campus	\$43,463	\$44,083	\$45,427	\$46,608	2.6%
		Off Campus	\$43,463	\$44,083	\$45,427	\$46,608	2.6%

Note: Data Gathered from the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#) on June 18th, 2024

This table demonstrates the average cost of attendance for each institution and is categorized by residency status and housing status of students. The data provided is the estimated expense for full-time beginning undergraduate students, meaning those who are entering postsecondary education for the first time

*Every institution included estimated cost for off-campus living, which varies by state and local economies. They also factored in the predicted average cost of “Books and Supplies” and “Other Expenses”, which may vary by program and individual need.

Table B.4:
**Comparison of Average Pell Grants Awarded with MSU Western Land Grant
Peer Institutions**

MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions				
IPEDS Data				
Undergraduate Student Financial Aid, 2022-2023				
Institution Name	Number Awarded Aid	Percent Awarded Aid	Total Amount of Aid Awarded	Average Amount of Aid Awarded
Montana State University	2,447	17%	\$12,654,473	\$5,171
Colorado State University – Fort Collins	4,870	19%	\$24,428,313	\$5,016
New Mexico State University – Main Campus	4,671	42%	\$24,953,312	\$5,342
North Dakota State University – Main Campus	1,890	19%	\$8,410,244	\$4,450
Oregon State University	6,462	23%	\$28,609,730	\$4,427
South Dakota State University	1,597	18%	\$7,761,041	\$4,860
University of Alaska Fairbanks	1,261	31%	\$5,342,965	\$4,237
University of Arizona	10,168	27%	\$52,324,628	\$5,146
University of California - Riverside	10,698	47%	\$60,900,449	\$5,693
University of Hawaii at Manoa	3,480	25%	\$17,272,971	\$4,963
University of Idaho	2,005	31%	\$9,816,185	\$4,896
University of Nevada-Reno	4,089	26%	\$20,203,034	\$4,941
University of Wyoming	1,889	23%	\$9,673,984	\$5,121
Utah State University	6,379	31%	\$43,496,396	\$6,819
Washington State University	5,787	26%	\$29,265,774	\$5,057

Note: Data Gathered from the [Intergrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#) on June 18th, 2024

Table B.5:**Comparison of Average Median Earnings with MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions**

MSU Western Land Grant Peer Institutions U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard Data		
Institution Name	State	Median Earnings
Montana State University	MT	\$53,263
Colorado State University – Fort Collins	CO	\$60,543
New Mexico State University – Main Campus	NM	\$39,067
North Dakota State University – Main Campus	ND	\$62,203
Oregon State University	OR	\$64,010
South Dakota State University	SD	\$55,070
University of Alaska Fairbanks	AK	\$48,866
University of Arizona	AZ	\$59,979
University of California - Riverside	CA	\$67,699
University of Hawaii at Manoa	HI	\$57,624
University of Idaho	ID	\$54,670
University of Nevada- Reno	NV	\$60,614
University of Wyoming	WY	\$56,880
Utah State University	UT	\$54,022
Washington State University	WA	\$68,905

Note: Data gathered from [U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard](#), on June 18th, 2024

*This table demonstrates the median annual earnings of individuals that received federal student aid and began college at this institution ten years ago, regardless of their completion status. Earnings are measured for individuals working and not enrolled in school. *

**These calculations are based in part on calendar year 2020 earnings, which may have been impacted by the pandemic and may not be predictive of earnings values in non-pandemic years. **

Appendix C: Example of a Submission of a Course into the CIM System

In Workflow

1. **Provost Office**
2. FSNK Head
3. ED College GR CC Chair
4. ED Dean
5. UGC Agenda
6. UGC Chair
7. Grad Dean
8. Faculty Senate Agenda
9. Faculty Senate Chair
10. Registrar
11. Banner

History

1. Aug 18, 2022 by Mariah Meyer (p52q738)
2. Nov 8, 2023 by Skyeler Huntsman (k44n256)

Date Submitted: Fri, 10 May 2024 19:04:20 GMT

Viewing: **NUTR 520: Nutrition, Public Health, & Systems Change**

Last approved: Wed, 08 Nov 2023 11:50:45 GMT

Last edit: Fri, 10 May 2024 19:04:19 GMT

Changes proposed by: Lindsay Ganong (k68x947)

Rubric

NUTR

Course Number

520

Core Designation

Department

Food Systems, Nutrition, and Kinesiology

College

College of Education/HHD

Course Title (for catalog)

Nutrition, Public Health, & Systems Change

Course Title (for schedule of classes)

Nutr, Pub Hlth, & Systems Ch

Is this course co-convened with another course?

No

Effective Term

Summer 2025

Credit hours

3

Credit hours by mode of instruction

Lecture:

3

Lab/Studio:

0

Other

0

TOTAL:

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes for this course:	
1	Demonstrates knowledge of the cultural competence models.

Learning Outcomes for this course:

- 2 Applies knowledge of foods, cultural foods, eating patterns and food trends.
- 3 Identifies challenges that arise when different cultures, values, beliefs and experiences exist between clients/patients and nutrition and dietetics professionals.
- 4 Identifies and implements strategies to address cultural biases and differences.
- 5 Applies culturally sensitive approaches and communication skills.
- 6 Develops awareness of one's own personal beliefs, values and biases to better serve clients/patients of different cultures and backgrounds.
- 7 Recognizes and communicates the cause of disease and nutrition risks.
- 8 Identifies, prioritizes and implements health risk reduction strategies for individuals, groups and populations.
- 9 Examines the influence of the determinants of health on health and wellness.
- 10 Designs food and nutrition activities for various audiences considering factors relevant to individuals, groups and communities.
- 11 Applies behavior change theories for nutritional health promotion and disease prevention.
- 12 Examines the trends and current issues that impact public and global health from existing, new and reemerging diseases that spread through immigration, travel and global trade.
- 13 Examines the impact of global food supply and sustainability and related factors.
- 14 Examines how globalizing processes impact nutrition, nutrition education and nutrition-related diseases in developing countries.
- 15 Recognizes how determinants of health, epidemiological findings, health disparities, political interest, availability of resources, and accessibility influence the nutritional health and well-being of a community and population.
- 16 Conducts community and population-based assessments considering all relevant factors.

Learning Outcomes for this course:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 17 | Identifies the resources and connects with partners needed for sustainability of the program. |
| 18 | Develops and implements a program considering relevant data addressing the nutritional needs of the community or population. |
| 19 | Interprets and uses nutrition surveillance and global health and safety data. |
| 20 | Evaluates the program using measurement indicators and outcomes. |
| 21 | Communicates evaluation findings, outcomes, recommendations and research findings to promote change and justify program. |
| 22 | Considers multiple factors when problem solving. |
| 23 | Incorporates the thought process used in critical thinking models. |
| 24 | Engages in reflective practice to promote change and continuous learning. |

Learning Outcomes Display (show only)

Primary Mode of Delivery:

On-Line Only

May a student enroll more than once for additional credit?

No

Will course be a "restricted entry" course?

No

Prerequisites:

Graduate standing in Dietetic Systems MS

Co-Requisites:

Linked Co-Requisites:

Does this course have fees?

No

Instruction Type

Lecture

Typically Offered

Summer

Default Grading Method:

Traditional

Course Attributes:**Interdisciplinary**

Interdisciplinary Department(s)

Department
Health & Human Development

Course Description

Provide a general description of the course explaining the need for the course, its goals, and its overall structure. This is the most important part of the application and should offer a good sense of what students will experience by taking this class. Please make note of any major restrictions in your course description.

This online course will explore the connection between nutrition and disease - with an emphasis on the global, national, and local systems/programs through which nutrition interventions are applied. Students will gain a basic understanding of community and population nutrition health theories as related to nutrition-based intervention, education and program planning toward a goal of disease prevention and health promotion. As well, the intent is to cultivate leaders that will integrate evidence-informed practice, research principles and critical thinking into their future dietetic practice.

This course will develop informed health care leaders: (a) who value nutritional science as the platform for effective public health promotion and disease prevention; (b) who are highly capable individuals able to identify considerations surrounding food choices, nutrition policy decisions and controversies; (c) who have competent skills that foster an expanded vision of health and well-being in the context of food with an appreciation of a system approaches to

solving public health challenges; and (d) who display in their professional practice a sincere care for the wellbeing of communities and individuals.

Catalog Description:

Community and population nutrition health theories with an emphasis on the global, national, and local systems/programs through which nutrition interventions are applied, education and program planning toward a goal of disease prevention and health promotion.

Provide a syllabus indicating:

**Course Identification (Rubric, Number, Title)*

**Major topics with a brief description of the material to be covered under each major topic heading*

**List of student learning outcomes (learning outcomes on the syllabus must match those in the course proposal.)*

**Schedule of assignments*

**List of required tests*

**Means of Assessment*

**Grading Scale*

Upload Syllabus

advanceddietanddiseasesyl.pdf

Course Numbering Rationale

Has the course been offered previously under x91 (Special Topics Course)?

No

Will this course be co-convened with an undergraduate course? If so, what additional requirements will students enrolled in the graduate course be expected to fulfill?

No

Instructor Information

Is the instructor a member of the regular faculty (i.e., tenured or tenure-track)?

Yes

Are there tenure track faculty available to teach this course?

Instructor Name:

Please insert faculty profile link if available.

Student Learning

Is this course part of a new degree program?

Relationship to other Courses, Curricula, and Departments

Does this course build on, interrelate or overlap with any other courses in your curriculum?

Yes

Does this course build on, interrelate or overlap with the curriculum of another department?

Does your course cover any topics taught in other departments?

No

List the related courses. Explain how they are related and/or overlap.

This course is a summative application of knowledge and practice of systems change in public health, clinical nutrition, policy and food environment from preceding Dietetic Systems Leadership coursework: HDFS 465R: Family Law & Public Policy, NUTR 527: Critical Thinking & Evidence-Informed Practice, NUTR 525 Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy, SFBS 552: State of the Food Environment: Policy, Measurement, and Practice

Does this proposed course have a significant interdisciplinary course content? Will the course be co-sponsored, taught by faculty from more than one department, or include content that overlaps multiple disciplines?

No

Students Served

Does the course serve majors only? Non-majors only? Both majors and non-majors?

Majors Only

Other Supporting Material

Include any additional information you feel is needed to support this request.

Justification of change (please include the date and your name):

The course title did not clearly emphasize the learning objectives. This course creates informed professionals who

- Value nutrition as a science and as a platform for public health promotion and disease prevention;
- Can apply critical thinking skills to decision-making about food choices, nutrition issues, and health;
- Appreciate the behavioral, cultural, social and environmental issues underlying dietary patterns; and
- Who are able to identify considerations surrounding food choices, nutrition policy decisions and the influence of global, national and local systems change on individual and community health

Any further considerations not listed on this form:

Resources

Will additional resources (e.g., additional instructional FTE, required technologies/IT needs) be required to offer this course?

Yes

Describe the necessary additional resources.

Faculty summer salary as included in the MS Dietetic Systems Leadership Level II proposal submitted to the Montana Board of Regents.

A letter of support from your department head is required.

Existing course.pdf

Are there inherent resource issues for the students who will take the course (e.g., required technologies, travel, on-line access requirements)?

Yes

Describe the inherent resources issues, and the impact on the students.

Online access.

Will there be an additional fee charged to students taking this course? (the fee approval process can take up to 18 months)

No

What existing information resources - print (books, journals, documents), audiovisual (videos, DVDs, CDs or other), and/or electronic (e-books, databases, electronic journals and web sites) - provided by the MSU Library will be used by students in this course? Provide examples as well as descriptive information. If additional information resources are necessary, please discuss those acquisitions with the library (x6549 Collection Department) at least three months prior to the beginning of the semester in which the course will be taught.

The available library and information resources are adequate to support the proposed course. The instructor and students will utilize current MSU electronic education platforms and University Information Technology Center (UIT) services.

Administrative Only

Reviewer Comments

Key: 4713

Select any proposals you would like to bundle together for approval. Only proposals you have saved are available to bundle.

Bundle Title:

Course:

Proposal A

Program:

Proposal B

