

**The University of Montana Western
2010 Comprehensive Self-Study
for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

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PREFACE: EXPERIENCE ONE: FROM IDEA TO IMPLEMENTATION AND INITIAL SUCCESS

1) Creating Experience One

In the mid 1990s, during strategic planning conversations in the process of developing a university mission statement, the University of Montana Western faculty agreed experiential learning was a widely-shared teaching and learning method that could, in the midst of declining state high school graduation rates and greater competition for students, give Montana Western a more distinctive profile and niche. Some faculty felt their ability to implement experiential learning was undercut by the regular semester schedule, which made it difficult, for example, to plan field trips for one course when absence from campus would interfere with students' abilities to keep up with three or four other courses. The block scheduling system employed at Colorado, Cornell, and Tusculum Colleges seemed to offer a solution to this dilemma.

During the fall of 1997, The University of Montana-Missoula (UM) began a strategic planning process involving the four UM campuses—Missoula, Montana Tech, Helena College of Technology and the University of Montana Western. The idea of Experience One (at that time called “One-Class-At-A-Time”) surfaced formally during these strategic planning meetings. In spring 1998, the provost and two Montana Western faculty participated in a fact-finding visit to Colorado College to see block scheduling in action.

In 2000-2001, Montana Western, continuing its own strategic planning process,

forwarded the idea of Experience One and developed a marketing and recruitment plan to complement the new learning organization. Experience One, according to the university, is intended “to improve student learning by providing expanded opportunities for active, hands-on, experiential learning; improve student success by allowing them to focus on a single course at a time; improve student retention; improve student graduation rates, and gradually improve enrollment.” The university applied to the U.S. Department of Education for a Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant to help with the expenses of developing experiential learning/block scheduling demonstrations focused on first-year students and the general education curriculum.

In 2001-2002, upon the second attempt, the Department of Education awarded UMW the FIPSE grant. Planning for the implementation of block scheduling and experiential learning with a cohort of first-year students began, and students, as part of the admissions process, were invited to volunteer to participate in the experiment. Over 100 students applied for 75 places, demonstrating support for Experience One, despite vocal opposition to the new model from some faculty, staff, students, and local community members.

During 2002-2003, the first year of the FIPSE grant, the grant implementation committee gathered baseline data on students and faculty for project evaluation,

selected faculty for teaching in the experimental block courses, revised course syllabi to reflect the block, and completed other administrative tasks. A cohort of first-year students took general education courses in the one-class-at-a-time format with faculty using experiential learning pedagogical strategies. Research by Professor Mark Krank (Department of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences [HPSS]) indicated, though many first-year students entered the college under-prepared for undergraduate-level work, Experience One increased fall-to-spring retention among these students. Further, qualitative research indicated Experience One helped students manage their time better than students in the traditional model, helped them to process information at a deeper level, enabled them to develop better academic self-concepts, establish better relationships with their faculty, and gain higher grade point averages. (See **Exhibit P.1**, Mark Krank, 2003. Immersion scheduling and experiential learning: Predictors of traditional-aged, first-time college student success. 2002-03 FIPSE Annual Report.)

In 2003-2004, the second FIPSE grant year, 75 students, half of the incoming first-year class, participated in block scheduling and experiential learning. Though better prepared for college than the 2002-2003 student cohort, assessment revealed little difference in performance or retention rates between the Experience One cohort and those learning by traditional methods. Faculty believed this lack of difference was due to the absence of an orientation to Experience One for students, to organizing the students into ability cohorts, and to the

need for faculty to learn a broader range of experiential learning pedagogical strategies.

The administration formed a large Block Implementation Task Force to determine the various changes necessary to make block scheduling with experiential learning work. The Task Force formed two subcommittees, one focused on academic issues, the other on student support issues. The findings and work of these two subcommittees were instrumental in preparing for a full campus transition. Local opposition to the new model peaked then began to diminish as the interim chancellor and provost, supported by faculty, staff, and students, helped the Board of Regents of the Montana University System to understand the virtues of Experience One while successfully addressing identified issues with implementing the new system. (See **Exhibit P.2**, Mark Krank, 2004. Immersion scheduling and experiential learning: Predictors of traditional-aged, first-time college student success. 2002-04 FIPSE Annual Report.)

In the third year of the FIPSE grant, 2004-2005, Experience One was extended to involve all 150 new first-year students. Assessment revealed retention and academic self-concept among those involved in Experience One were significantly above those for students experiencing the traditional educational model. Students also reported satisfaction with immersion in their courses, being able to focus on one subject at a time, and improved relations with faculty. The campus, accordingly, geared up for full implementation of Experience One in fall 2005. (**Exhibit P.3**, Mark Krank,

2005. Immersion scheduling and experiential learning: Predictors of traditional-aged, first-time college student success. 2002-05 FIPSE Project Evaluation Report; **Exhibit P.4**, Steve Mock. 2005. FIPSE Project Final Report.)

Montana Western universalized Experience One in 2005-2006 as admissions and marketing emphasized the new system to prospective students within and outside Montana.

Montana Western soon began receiving feedback demonstrating the success of Experience One. The 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement demonstrated high levels of academic achievement for Montana Western first-year and senior students—in many cases higher than those for students at The University of Montana-Missoula, Montana State University, and MSU-Billings. Enrollment and retention rates continue to improve. (**Table P.1**, Comparative NSSE Scores, next page.)

In 2008-2009, the University of Montana Western recruited its largest first-year class, and announced its highest fall-to-fall first-year student retention rate (70 percent) in decades. The Department of Education received renewed accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), while the Department of Business and Technology received its first accreditation from the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). Both accrediting organizations noted the positive impacts of Experience One.

In fall 2009, environmental sciences and geology professor Rob Thomas, one of the original proponents of Experience One, won the Outstanding Baccalaureate Colleges U.S. Professor of the Year award from The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). The award bespoke not only Professor Thomas' dedication to undergraduate teaching, but also his (and Montana Western's) commitment to experiential learning. Also in fall 2009, U.S. News & World Report ranked Montana Western as 18th among baccalaureate universities in the western region. Subsequently, the news magazine ranked Montana Western as second among "30 well-regarded and affordable colleges with lots of small classes." Fall-to-fall retention among first-time, first-year students rose to 74 percent. The university experienced its highest fall and spring semester enrollments ever. (See **Exhibit P.5**, David Nolt, "Rob Thomas selected U.S. Professor of the Year" (November 18, 2009), <http://news.umwestern.edu/2009/11/rob-thomas-selected-u-s-professor-of-the-year/>; **Exhibit P.6**, David Nolt, "Montana Western ranks second nationally for value" (December 28, 2009), <http://news.umwestern.edu/2009/12/montana-western-ranks-second-nationally-for-value/>)

Though the initial success of Experience One gave Montana Western observers

TABLE P.1: University of Montana Western Senior Student Scores on Selected NSSE Questions Compared with Those of Senior Peers at University of Montana Missoula, Montana State University Bozeman, and Montana State University Billings, 2008 Survey

NSSE Statement: Percentage of Senior students who:	UMW	UM Missoula	MSU Bozeman	MSU Billings
Group Learning Experiences				
worked with classmates on assignments outside of class	98%	94%	96%	44%
tutored or taught other students	71%	53%	67%	24%
spent at least 6 hours per week participating in co-curricular activities such as student organizations and intramural sports	31%	18%	23%	11%
Active Learning Experiences				
spent at least 6 hours per week preparing for class	80%	80%	87%	84%
worked on a research project with a faculty member	36%	31%	21%	11%
participated in an internship, practicum, or field experience	95%	74%	52%	48%
participated in community service or volunteer work	67%	80%	60%	52%
participated in study abroad	4%	19%	14%	9%
made at least one class presentation last year	100%	93%	95%	58%
Institutional Commitment to Student Learning and Success				
believe this institution provides support for student success	97%	93%	93%	67%
rated the quality of academic advising at this institution as good or excellent	78%	66%	60%	70%
reported that this institution provided help in coping with work, family and other non-academic responsibilities	71%	54%	54%	18%
reported working harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	95%	94%	91%	61%
Student Satisfaction				
would attend this institution if they were starting over again	82%	83%	80%	84%
rated their entire educational experience as good or excellent	86%	86%	80%	84%
reported that other students were friendly or supportive	91%	89%	82%	58%
Student Interactions with Campus Faculty and Staff				
believed that the campus staff were helpful, considerate, or flexible	56%	70%	50%	42%
believed that faculty are available, helpful, or sympathetic	86%	89%	74%	57%
reported that faculty members provided prompt feedback on their academic performance	94%	91%	94%	64%
discussed reading or ideas with faculty members outside of class	84%	71%	70%	28%
reported that they often tried to understand someone else's point of view	62%	67%	65%	67%

much reason to hope the university is well-poised for continued growth and greater achievements, Montana Western will not be able to calculate six-year graduation rates for students whose entire undergraduate careers occurred in Experience One until 2010-2011.

Montana Western's success in implementing Experience One and making it work is not due to the extraordinary vision and dedication of university faculty, staff, and administrators alone; it is also important to recognize the success of the project was predicated upon stable state funding and increasing student tuition and fees, and upon careful use of those funds to forward the redefined mission and strategic plan of the university. Unfortunately, the decade of fiscal stability has ended in an economic recession the governor and legislature believe will not be fully relieved for two to three funding biennia. While the Montana University System (MUS) benefitted from a substantial infusion of funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (nearly \$18 million) that enabled the MUS to weather the initial damage from the recession, it appears the state legislature is highly unlikely to replace all federal dollars with state funds in the next biennium, and, because state tax sources are substantially diminished, is likely to cut base funding for the state university and college system.

Despite the somewhat bleak financial prospects, the two-year delay in reducing university funding allowed the MUS to plan in advance for base budget cut-backs. Accordingly, Montana Western expects to continue to be able to offer a first-class

education through Experience One for the foreseeable future.

2) The Self-Study Process

Preparations for writing the self-study report began in summer 2008 with clarification of the research and documentation necessary for each standard and identifying the persons responsible for assembling the materials necessary for writing each standard. Subsequent to presentation to Senior Staff (the chancellor's main advisory committee), primary authors for each standard were chosen (along with small committees for each standard to help the author, read chapter drafts, etc.). Each author was supplied with a copy of the appropriate standard from the 2000 self-study and a copy of NWCCU's 2003 Accreditation Handbook. Some authors began writing immediately, while others planned periods during which they could put their routine work aside and focus only on their self-study responsibilities.

In the meantime, the assistant provost began gathering evidence, a process that involved him in discussion with a very large portion of Montana Western's faculty, administrators, and staff, as well as representatives of Student Senate. When he achieved a critical mass of evidence, the assistant provost began planning the Web site that would accompany the report, allowing the accreditors to read the primary evidentiary materials remotely.

Given that the self-study was not completed until quite close to deadline, the plan is to

print multiple copies of the document and distribute them broadly to key administrators, faculty, staff, and students, inviting them to write comments, which can be compiled and provided to the accreditors at the beginning of their visit. This means community comments should be fresh and, given the six-week period between the completion of the report and the accreditation visit, those who wish to study and comment on the entire document in detail will have the ability to do so.

The overall, shared goal of the self-study is to step back from the immersive day-to-day immediacy of teaching and learning under Experience One and to evaluate the extent to which the new model of curriculum delivery is effective and efficient in enabling the university to progress toward meeting its strategic goals appropriately. In general, the Montana Western community is pleased that the new system is, by and large, working well, as demonstrated by direct and indirect learning outcomes and student satisfaction assessments, by increased enrollments and fall-to-fall new first-year retention. Accordingly, Montana Western intends to continue to work with the new, and now fundamentally stable, curriculum delivery model, paying attention to improvements and elaborations, which enhance its effectiveness.

3) The Contributors

John Hajduk, professor of history, wrote Standards 1, 6, and 9. Assistant provost, Brian Price, wrote most of Standards 2 and 4. Nicole Hazelbaker, Dean of Student

Affairs, wrote Standard 3. Director of the Library, Mike Schulz, wrote Standard 5. Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Susan Briggs, wrote Standards 7 and 8. Dean of Outreach and Research, Anneliese Ripley, wrote Standard 2G, and, along with Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Karl Ulrich, contributed significantly to Standard 4.

Brian Price, Anneliese Ripley, Karl Ulrich, and David Nolt all read and edited the entire document. Chancellor Richard Storey and Vice Chancellor for Finance, Administration, and Student Affairs, Susan Briggs, also read and edited most of the text.

Many, many others contributed significantly to the creation of the self-study and the accompanying Web site. Among them are Bethany Blankenship, Ilene Cohen, Diane Conover, Cory Creighton, Eric Dyreson, Mark Durham, Jim Efta, Brooke Erb, Sean Eudaily, Liane Forrester, Mike Gilbert, Chris Guttenberg, Verna Hand, Margo Heberling, Kathey Hupp, Ricki Jones, Sarah Juran, Jason Karch, Shelly Kessel, Christy Keyes, Mark Krank, Cathi Love, Gary Lundy, Steve Mock, Mike Morrow, David Nolt, Delena Norris-Tull, Kent Ord, Amberley Pahut, Mike Piazzola, Catherine Redhead, Lee Richardson, Donna Rouse, Rob Thomas, Mark Ward, and Tyler Wines. Behind most of these individuals are staffs and colleagues who helped them to make a difference. In the best sense, this self-study and the story it tells are products of the Montana Western community acting as a community.

On the other hand, any short-comings of the self-study are the fault of Brian Price, who is

responsible for overseeing its preparation and finalization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
of The University of Montana Western
Self-Study Report
for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

The University of Montana Western story of the last decade is that of the development and implementation of Experience One, the one-class-at-a-time scheduling system which facilitates an emphasis on experiential learning of the authentic skills, knowledge, and orientation of professionals within and across the academic disciplines the faculty represent. Experience One also enhances student-faculty face-to-face interaction, the efficient and effective use of class time, and enhanced student recruitment and retention as direct and indirect learning outcomes and other assessments demonstrate.

The development and implementation of Experience One positively impacted faculty, students and classroom teaching and learning conditions. It also resulted in the creation of important scaffolds to support student success, such as the Academic Advising Office and the Learning Center. The implementation of a university-wide learning outcomes assessment system also aided by grounding improvements to courses, curriculum, and pedagogy in data on student learning and by creating space for faculty and academic administrators to discuss programmatic initiatives in the context of Montana Western's mission and strategic plan.

At the same time, because Experience One gives Montana Western a unique niche in public higher education, it was appropriate

for the university to reorganize and upgrade its admissions and recruitment operations and to create a marketing and university relations office in order to spread word about the university's unique approach to undergraduate education.

In the last decade, Montana Western improved access to higher education for students, not only by expanding the on-campus student population, but also by generating an effective School of Outreach, which offers in-person and on-line courses at physically remote locations around the state, enabling students to work and live at home while pursuing certificates and degrees. This development is aided by the library's reshaping of resources to make many more available on-line twenty-four hours per day, 365 days per year, serving off- and on-campus students equally well.

As a growing university with a distinctive character and approach to higher education, Montana Western places considerable emphasis upon effective communication by both formal and informal means. Within the university, this means reliance upon especially critical committees—Senior Staff, University Council, Faculty Senate, and Student Senate—to communicate effectively across multiple constituencies. Because it is only one of many state public higher education institutions under the leadership of the Montana State Board of Regents for

Higher Education and the Office of the Commissioner for Higher Education, and because, like the others, it is dependent upon the state for a significant portion of its funding, it is critical Montana Western maintains strong lines of communication with the state higher education leadership, the leadership of The University of Montana-Missoula, and with the governor and state legislature. The university does so by assigning academic and other administrators, and, as necessary, faculty and students, to a variety of state-wide committees, which directly affect the institution. The presence of these university representatives at Board of Regents and other meetings also means the university has the opportunity to forward initiatives and collaborate with colleagues on a range of statewide issues and concerns.

Montana Western's successes in the last decade, especially Experience One, relied upon ten years of relatively stable, predictable funding. However, because the current economic recession is undermining this stability, the university, as it moves forward, will place even greater reliance on financial efficiencies and careful resource management. Clearly, budget shortcomings will make a number of important Montana Western tenets more difficult to live by. Can the university continue to emphasize hiring

of and teaching by full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty? Can Montana Western more effectively organize its curriculum so as to balance the competing demands of the general education curriculum and the academic majors? Can the institution be as inventive in meeting the needs of developmental students for enhanced skills in writing and mathematics as it has been in creating Experience One as a whole? Can academic innovation continue to occur in the absence of more substantive opportunities for faculty pedagogical development? In short, can the university maintain its remarkable forward movement in adverse, as well as positive, economic circumstances? We are likely to find out within the next decade.

No amount of data will allow us to predict Montana Western's future. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that, by virtue of imagination, creativity, and stomach for sheer hard work that staff, faculty, and administrators demonstrated in developing and implementing Experience One, the university laid an excellent foundation upon which to build a legacy of further, long-lasting achievement.

STANDARD 1--INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS, PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS

INTRODUCTION

The University of Montana Western (Montana Western) is part of the public system of higher education in Montana. The Act of Congress under which the state of Montana was admitted to the Union set aside 100,000 acres of the public domain for the establishment and support of a State Normal School in 1893. The 1897 legislature created an Executive Board that selected a president and faculty. The first session of the school opened on September 7, 1897. In 1903, the legislature changed the name of the institution to the Montana State Normal College. On April 6, 1931, the State Board of Education approved the four-year course and authorized conferring the degree of Bachelor of Education. On December 8, 1947, the State Board of Education changed the name of the degree to Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, and by an act of the legislative assembly changed the name of the college to Western Montana College of Education, effective July 1, 1949.

In April 1954, the State Board of Education authorized the granting of a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education and the degree of Master of Science in Education. The 1965 Legislature changed the name of the institution to Western Montana College, effective July 1, 1965. The Montana Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) authorized the granting of Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and in

English on April 13, 1972. On September 12, 1977, the BOR approved the Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies and Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Heritage to be implemented Fall Quarter 1978. Western Montana College recommended and the BOR approved the transfer of the B.A. degrees in English and History to The University of Montana, Missoula in 1978.

At the January 1987 meeting of the BOR of the Montana University System, the board took action to administratively merge Montana Western with The University of Montana, Missoula. Western Montana College of The University of Montana became a four-year campus of The University of Montana, Missoula in July 1988. In May 1988, additional changes were implemented, including the mandated discontinuation of the bachelor degrees in Business, Natural Heritage, and American Studies, and the administrative merger with The University of Montana, Missoula.

The BOR authorized an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Liberal Studies (B.L.S.) degree in 1991. This degree was renamed, with BOR approval, in 1997 as a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree with five recognized option areas. Approved programs (options) within the B.A. degree included Arts, Business and Communications, Environmental Sciences, Literature and Writing, and Social Sciences. In 1996, the

university added an Associate of Arts degree in Computer Layout and Design to replace a similar emphasis area in the Associate of Arts degree. The same year, the university added a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) degree to allow students with an Associate of Applied Science degree to more efficiently complete a four-year degree program.

In 1997, the BOR adopted a new taxonomy for two-year degrees that better reflected contemporary national terminology. This change was based on recommendations of the Two Year Committee of the Montana University System. A number of Montana Western's two-year offerings were subsequently renamed in 1998 to reflect the new taxonomy with the approval of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The Associate of Arts (A.A.) and Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees both became 60-credit degrees with no designation of field of study, but containing the full baccalaureate general education component. The Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) title was assigned to those A.A. and A.S. degrees that previously had a designated field of study and less than a full baccalaureate general education component. This created the following A.A.S. degrees: Business Administration (2+2), Business (with four option areas), Computer Layout and Design, Early Childhood Education, and Tourism and Recreation.

In 2001, the BOR authorized a name change to the University of Montana Western and approval was subsequently given by the

Montana state legislature. Discussions on campus prior to this name change request focused on the awkwardness, length of the then current name, and its unusual nature.

A Bachelor of Science degree in Business and an Associate of Applied Science degree in Equine Studies were approved in 2002. An Associate of Applied Science degree in Education Studies was approved in 2003. In 2004, an Associate of Applied Science degree in Natural Horsemanship was added and followed by a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Horsemanship in 2005.

In keeping with its traditional role as a regional institution, Montana Western offers baccalaureate programs in business, arts & sciences, elementary education, secondary education, equine studies and a variety of associate degrees. With the transition to Experience One scheduling and course delivery (see below), the structure of each of these programs evolved to reflect Montana Western's commitment to experiential learning.

In summary, Montana Western exists in its present form and location because of its original creation as a normal school in 1893; its long and successful history of preparing public school teachers; and its ability to respond to the changing educational needs of the people of Montana and expand its offerings to best serve those needs. Experience One, as the above suggests, is only the University of Montana Western's most recent, and, hopefully, most successful, transformation.

STANDARD 1 A: Mission and Goals

Most recently updated during the transition to block scheduling and Experience One, the mission of the university evolved over the history of the institution to reflect changing conditions in relation to its legislative mandate, its relationship to other elements of public higher education in the state, and the broader social, economic, and political conditions that shaped higher education generally across the country. The current mission statement effectively places Montana Western into its proper context with respect to how we serve the needs of the state of Montana and the nation as a whole. It reads as follows:

The University of Montana Western provides innovative interdisciplinary education through experiential learning that combines theory and practice. Montana Western serves citizens of all ages with its academic, community-service, and lifelong-learning programs. As a part of the global community, Montana Western encourages diversity, international awareness, environmental responsibility, and mastery of technology as a gateway to the world.

The BOR approved the university's mission statement in 2005-2006 and subsequently appeared on the first page of each addition of the University catalog, as well as the student handbook. (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, p. 1; **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook, p. 109.)

Montana Western's current mission statement resulted from broad-based

discussions involving all campus constituencies during the transition to Experience One, the course delivery system built on the principle of experiential learning. Experiential learning is the cornerstone of the mission statement, and emerged as the central focus of what Montana Western does based on an evaluation of the unique qualities that defined Montana Western at the end of the 20th century (in terms of its location, size, professional expertise, and economic circumstances). It is also based on the belief that this institution is more connected to global concerns and that UMW graduates to be prepared to engage in a more technologically complex world than was ever true in our previous history.

Montana Western's goals are best described in the school's 2006-2012 Strategic Plan, which is the touchstone for Senior Staff, University Council, and Faculty Senate committee discussions. (See **Exhibit 1.3**, 2006-2012 Strategic Plan; **Exhibit 1.4**, 2006-2012 Strategic Plan with Updates to May, 2009.) In addition, the Strategic Plan committee gathers information about concrete actions intended to address the plan's goals every semester so that consonance between intention and action in meeting strategic goals is consistently evaluated. The strategic plan is easily accessible via the chancellor's web page (<http://www.umwestern.edu/strategicplan/>) and is updated each semester following campus-wide feedback and discussions in University Council, acting as the Strategic Planning Committee.

Experience One was developed on this campus following several years of discussion and planning. The impulse behind those talks was to carve out a distinctive academic identity for the university in the face of challenging demographic shifts and regional competition for students and also to maximize the unique features of the university's location and generally favorable student-to-faculty ratio. Most importantly, Experience One offered, the campus community believed, a better way for our students to experience teaching and learning. These discussions unfolded over several years in the late 1990s and culminated in a successful faculty-written grant awarded by the federal government's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). (See **Exhibit 1.5**, FIPSE Grant Proposal)

The grant support funded a year of planning and two years of a pilot program, during which a segment of the incoming freshman classes in 2002 and 2003 took a full year of block classes to complete their general education courses. By the end of the first pilot year, the benefits of this new system were sufficiently evident (in terms of student success and retention), and the chancellor committed to taking the entire campus to Experience One by the fall of 2005. In the summer of 2004, concentrated faculty meetings were conducted to work out the necessary curricular changes to make the new system work; additional meetings followed before the start of the fall semester that year, and a somewhat accelerated approval process was adopted to get all the changes through in time for full

implementation in 2005. In the fall of 2004, all incoming freshmen were enrolled into block scheduling (following the model piloted in the previous two years, concentrating solely on general education offerings). By the time full implementation of Experience One occurred in fall 2005, all continuing faculty had ample opportunity to participate in the campus and departmental discussions regarding the change, and in many departments (excluding education and business), a significant number of faculty had gained some experience in the model by participating in either the pilot program or the freshman implementation. Knowledge and understanding of the mission was fundamental in making this change effective, and it is regularly referenced as the touchstone for all policy and curricular changes derived from the creation of Experience One.

As Experience One continues, it has become central to our recruiting efforts. For both students and faculty, its success established the highest priority in allocating resources. The current strategic plan identifies Experience One's success as its core goal.

Because of its consonance with experiential learning, public service is not only consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution; it is central to Montana Western's mission. Experience One scheduling allows for public service projects to be more easily incorporated into classes. Indeed, students and faculty in some courses completed valuable research for public agencies with insufficient funds to carry out the work themselves. Program

internships often involve students in providing public service. Further, Montana Western faculty and administrators often lend their expertise to the community and to regional public schools. They participate in efforts to improve the community through economic development, marketing, and planning committees. A number of Montana Western administrators and staff underwent Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training and are prepared to assist the community in the event of natural or human-caused disasters.

Montana Western's commitment to experiential learning was adopted largely because the university believed it provided the best possible methodology for graduating conscientious professionals and active, engaged citizens. Ongoing discussions and revisions to aspects of the educational program (such as the structure of the general education core) regularly reference these desired outcomes as motivating factors. Ensuring such outcomes was not automatic with full implementation of Experience One four years ago, but is an on-going part of the transition. Thus, Montana Western is in a position to constantly improve on its efforts in this regard.

Finally, Montana Western administrators closely consult with Commission officials before making major changes. Most recently, this included the adoption of Experience One, which, although of far-reaching consequence, was not deemed to be a substantive change by the Commission.

STANDARD 1.B – Planning and Effectiveness

Montana Western's commitment to Experience One predominantly shaped the current strategic plan for the university. Charged by incoming Chancellor Richard Storey to craft a new strategic plan, a steering committee was created in fall 2005. The creation of the plan began with an all-campus meeting in August where broad priorities were discussed and evaluated by faculty, staff, students and administrators. Following this, the steering committee designed a survey, by which additional information was collected from additional stakeholders, including students, alumni, all employees, board members, and the Dillon community. The survey process lasted into spring 2005, at which point the steering committee analyzed the collected data and began drafting lists of goals, objectives, and action items. These were compared to MUS strategic directions and the BOR's strategic plan to ensure compatibility with those overarching criteria. At the fall 2005 faculty conference, additional feedback was solicited from the campus community, and the steering committee spent much of that semester refining and fine-tuning the draft plan. This involved further alignment with the BOR's strategic plan and input from the Chancellor's Council (Senior Staff) who identified levels of priority and responsible parties for individual actions. The Strategic Planning Committee recommended the final version of the plan and posted the plan to the campus Web site in spring 2006.

After approval by University Council, the plan was approved by Chancellor Storey and subsequently by the president of the University of Montana, Missoula, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and, finally, by the Board of Regents.

There were several broad goals reflected in both the process behind the creation of the plan and in the final product. It was recognized that earlier plans had not always been a part of daily decision-making at Montana Western. At the urging of the campus community, the new plan was designed to be more interactive: in structure by identifying clear action items in the service of particular goals and objectives; and in implementation by collecting and posting regular progress reports to the strategic plan Web site. The steering committee was kept intact as an ongoing committee responsible for managing updates and progress reports. Regular prompts for updates were expected to keep the elements of the plan at the forefront in addressing issues that would arise over the coming years. Through spring 2008, progress reports, indicating actions taken in support of specific objectives in the plan, were posted at least once a semester. In the fall of 2008, the progress report took a slightly different form, representing a more comprehensive attempt to isolate the most critical remaining objectives and establishing more concrete timelines and benchmarks for those particular items. This report went through several revisions in response to feedback solicited from Senior Staff and University Council. The latter is responsible for assuring the centrality of the

strategic plan to the university's on-going activities and planning.

As described above, students, faculty, staff, administrators, community members, the Local Executive Board and others were fully consulted during the most recent strategic planning process. As the institution accumulates evidence of its progress in meeting its goals, summaries are distributed by email to all campus constituencies. Highlights are conveyed to the surrounding community by way of the chancellor's regular column in the Dillon Tribune. (See **Exhibit 1.6**, Chancellor's Dillon Tribune columns.)

An example of resource allocation stemming from systematic evaluation activities is that involving the development, expansion of, and consistent support for academic advising and other student services, including the Learning Center and Career Services, associated with the office of the Director of Student Success. Recognizing the transition to block scheduling would be somewhat confusing for students that students would be able to register for, or change their choice of, courses four times per semester; and that the intensity of focus and discipline necessary for successful participation in three-and-a-half week-long courses would require significant support for the broad development of new study and work patterns, the university chose to invest in enhanced academic advising by creating a new, easily-accessible office, by expanding available hours and the number of tutors in the Learning Center and by formalizing the position of Director of Student Success to oversee Academic Advising, the TRiO

program, the Learning Center and Career Services, and to liaise with Student Affairs regarding student needs. On-going analysis demonstrated that having a single person housed in the Learning Center and assigned to lead both the Learning Center and Career Services could both enhance Learning Center usage and involve students from the start of their undergraduate experience in learning about the diversity of careers available to them, as well as procedures for successful application for employment. The appropriate changes were swiftly made to implement this restructuring of assignments.

The university also realized that, in the process of transitioning to Experience One, even while in the midst of a demographic downturn in the number of Montanans graduating high school, it had an opportunity to broaden its potential student audience within and outside the state by developing an appropriate marketing office. Accordingly, Montana Western reallocated funds to both create the Director of Marketing and University Relations position and office, and to simultaneously enhance admissions office and financial aid resources in order to enable the university to more effectively participate in recruitment activities regionally. Further, the previous position of Dean of Enrollment Management was split to create separate Director of Admissions and Director of Financial Aid positions.

The university continues to monitor and evaluate the success of strategic plan-driven resource allocations such as the above. To this point it appears the Learning Center is

indeed utilized by more students more frequently, that more students are seeking career advice earlier in their undergraduate experience, that first- to second-year student retention markedly improved (for instance, retention for first-time, first-year students increased from 51 percent in 2004-2005—the year prior to full implementation of Experience One—to 74 percent for 2008-2009), and that enhanced marketing and recruitment led to small but consistent increases in the overall number of students attending Montana Western. (See Standards 2 and 3 for detail on the above.)

All offices and departments are involved in strategic planning implementation. Accordingly, all gather relevant information so that decisions are data-driven. Indeed, the institutional culture of evaluating, planning, prioritizing and implementing institutional improvements is an essential part of the daily routine of most administrators and staff. The Banner system allows for easy access to and processing of relevant data, and departmental and divisional managers and institutional leaders routinely share appropriate data, ideas, and perspectives. Further, a number of offices—admissions, academic advising, the Carson Library, and the Learning Center, for example—maintain their own databases, usually on Access or Excel, so that data can, as necessary, be integrated across platforms and offices. As a result, the university is able to operate with a high degree of coordination and unison.

As the institution gains experience with Banner, and as the needs of the university change, managers, staff and other

constituencies frequently request data that is not currently routinely gathered and organized. At such moments, discussion of the value to multiple departments of newly configured information routinely occurs. Further, because departmental managers are members of either Senior Staff or University Council (or both), and because faculty are well-represented on both committees, communications regarding research and data needs, what is available and what needs to be generated, is on-going and, though sometimes quite informal, systematic.

Finally, because various internal and external audiences require a range of information and documentation, usually close to the beginning and to the end of the fall-spring academic year, the university has at least two reliable periods in the year to review and improve research efforts, evaluation processes, and planning activities. In addition, occasions such as National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE), and Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) professional accreditations offer useful times to assess, communicate about, and improve all aspects of research, evaluation, and planning.

In addition to Banner, the university benefits from the generation of learning outcomes data at the departmental level. Simultaneous with the development of the strategic plan, the campus also developed a plan for systematic departmental learning outcomes assessment (largely organized by two members of the Strategic Planning Steering

Committee, allowing for a high level of coordination with institutional goals). Subsequently revised in 2008 by the assistant provost with the intention of simplifying the process and making it possible to carry out assessment as a substitute for other means of grading, rather than as an added burden to already hard-working faculty, “The University of Montana Western Program Review Policies and Procedures” is posted on the University Web site, and each academic department now evaluates its programs on a regular basis. This process already resulted in revised departmental program descriptions to reflect the key outcomes associated with specific classes or courses of study. The assessment tools also provide a foundation for departmental seven-year program reviews scheduled to unfold over several years, during which individual departments (typically two per year) will compile and evaluate both long- and short-term data, including input from a qualified outside reviewer, with the goal of establishing curricular, programmatic, and resource priorities to be implemented in subsequent years. (See **Exhibit 1.7**, The University of Montana Western Program Review Policies and Procedures.)

The above demonstrates strategic and data-driven decision-making is well-organized within the university. But the university is just one small part of the Montana University System. Accordingly, Montana Western’s upper-level administrators regularly attend BOR meetings and appropriate state legislative sessions. Several are members of state-wide

committees organized by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. Others are in almost daily communication with counterparts and colleagues at The University of Montana-Missoula. Thus, the university routinely stays abreast of, and contributes significantly to, discussions of important strategic, budgetary, and other matters at the state level, while continually communicating the significance of those issues to the university and its constituencies and gathering feedback and incorporating it into formal and informal responses that proceed back up the chain of command. The primary conduits for this two-way communication are Senior Staff, University Council, Faculty Senate, and Student Senate. The chancellor also reports his twice-per-block open office hours have regularly enabled him to maintain useful lines of communication, especially with students.

Moreover, recent innovations aid university personnel in staying current regarding state and national issues affecting Montana Western specifically and higher education generally. Frequent conference calls and on-line workshops and conferences, especially in winter, enable state-wide communication among members of, for instance, OCHE's Transferability Initiative Coordinating Committee, promoting significant progress on tasks while remaining safely off the often-dangerous roads.

On-line workshops and conferences have, in 2008-09 alone, enabled university constituencies to maintain currency in recruitment strategy, academic advising, issues concerning first-year student

retention, and the implications for higher education of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, as well as higher education sustainability efforts, all at a fraction of the cost of sending personnel to off-campus conferences. Further, a larger proportion of staff, administrators, faculty, and students can participate in on-line events than could ever be sent off-campus. This also eases communication issues as appropriate constituencies are so frequently present for events concerning their interests.

Communication of the formal results of implementing the strategic plan and of significant data-driven decisions within the campus community occurs primarily through meetings and email. Formal processes facilitate written and oral communication with OCHE and BOR. The federal government requests annual reports of various kinds (IPEDS, for instance) which the university's responsible offices routinely fulfill.

Less formal means, however, distribute information to Montana Western's surrounding community. Dillon community members are continually curious about the university's progress and successes. The chancellor, vice chancellors, and other administrators, by virtue of such outlets as the chancellor's regular newsletter (see **Exhibit 1.6**, Chancellor's Columns for the Dillon Tribune) in the Dillon Tribune newspaper and the athletic coaches' morning radio shows, participation in community organizations from the Beaverhead County Development Corporation to the Chamber of Commerce

and the Rotary Club, quarterly Local Executive Board meetings, and even the university's annual community winter party, to say nothing of living in community neighborhoods, buying groceries in local stores, and walking along the main streets of town, are in constant communication with our local public. Indeed, it is the chancellor's policy to facilitate public access to his office telephone. More formally, the Departments of Education and Business and Technology have advisory boards comprised of local citizens with appropriate interest and expertise.

Beyond our local community, the Director of Marketing and Public Relations employs the university Web site to inform the interested public, parents, and university supporters about significant events and achievements in the life of the university. (See <http://www.umwestern.edu/>)

Finally, the Director of Development and Alumni Relations regularly sends e-mail newsletters to alumni and donors. Thus, from the local to the national level, Montana Western is regularly responsible to the complete range of information requests, both formal and informal. (See **Exhibit 1.8**, Alumni Relations Newsletters)

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: Originating as a teacher training college, Montana Western's mission changed as the university developed a broader range of academic programs. Most recently, Montana Western's mission and strategic plan focused upon the block

scheduling and experiential learning of Experience One. With Experience One came the creation of an effective academic advising and student success program, the development of a marketing and recruiting plan, and the implementation of learning outcomes assessment. Experience One enabled the campus to develop a strong marketing and recruitment niche in a challenging demographic environment while academic advising and student success helped significantly in increasing retention and success of newly recruited students. Learning outcomes assessment enables the university to continue to innovate and to improve Experience One, the primary goal of the strategic plan.

Areas of Improvement: The strategic plan, deliberately designed to enable all constituencies to contribute to the university's progress, contains a very large number of goals, objectives, and action items. Given the financial strictures likely to impact the university in the next two to three biennia, Senior Staff, with the help of the Strategic Planning Committee, agreed to devote more concentrated effort to the highest priority items—such as strengthening admissions and marketing.

However, Montana Western's ability to maintain forward progress is most affected by resource limitations, which are likely to increase in the near future as the emergency funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will not be replaced and the state's tax base is constricted by slow recovery from recession.

STANDARD 2--EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

STANDARD 2.A – General Requirements

Montana Western is one of three four-year schools administratively connected with The University of Montana-Missoula (the third is Montana Tech in Butte). The University of Montana schools comprise one half of the Montana University System (MUS). The other half is connected to Montana State University (MSU), Bozeman. The connected four-year schools on the MSU side are MSU-Billings and MSU-Northern, in Havre. The Montana State Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR) created the Montana University System and the bifurcated University of Montana/Montana State University arrangement in 1994, and it has remained stable and consistent since. On behalf of the BOR, the MUS negotiates for all of the state two- and four-year higher education institutions with the state governor and legislature regarding resources to maintain and deepen the quality of all institutions.

Routine attendance at BOR meetings by administrators from all of the four-year institutions facilitates consistent face-to-face discussion and negotiation. The senior academic officer meetings at the BOR involve idea- and information-sharing, pursuit of common initiatives and discussion of resource needs, among other issues.

In addition, various administrators participate in regular statewide meetings

on more specific issues. Montana Western's Dean of Outreach is a member of OCHE's Two-Year Education Council (because some of our two-year degrees, especially in early childhood education, involve off-campus teaching arrangements for place-bound adults), and the Distributed Learning Advisory Council. The assistant provost participates in General Education Committee and Transfer Initiative Coordinating Committee meetings.

This consistency of presence and participation enables Montana Western to maintain a high profile that serves it well in budget and other critical negotiations.

Montana Western's mission statement is as follows:

The University of Montana Western provides innovative interdisciplinary education through experiential learning that combines theory and practice. Western serves citizens of all ages with its academic, community-service, and lifelong-learning programs. As part of the global community, Western encourages diversity, international awareness, environmental responsibility, and mastery of technology as a gateway to the world.

Each degree program has its own mission statement that is consistent with the university's mission statement. (See **Exhibit 2.1**, Degree Program Mission

Statements.) Each program is thoroughly reviewed every seven years. During the process, every aspect of each program, including its mission statement, is scrutinized, evaluated, and either reaffirmed or amended and updated. Montana Western's program review and assessment processes are described in detail later in this chapter.

The university catalog and website enable students to easily discover full information about the general education program, the honors program, and all degree options. Degree program descriptions include program mission statements, more detailed descriptions of what students can expect by way of degree and career options, special curricular features such as internships and other experiential learning requirements and opportunities, outcomes expected of all program graduates and means of assessing student performance. (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 College Catalog, pp. 60-150.)

Changes to the curriculum are the responsibility of Montana Western's faculty. Most changes—course additions and deletions, substantive changes in course content—are initiated by individual faculty who first seek approval at the departmental level before proposals go to the faculty-composed Curriculum Committee, which evaluates changes from the point of view of the curriculum as a whole, paying particular attention to the impact of proposed changes on departments other than the sponsoring one. Curriculum proposals

for change are then evaluated by Faculty Senate, the provost, and the chancellor. At each step, the responsible body or person may accept or reject proposals or advise changes to the original proposal, whose initiator then must seek approval again from each of the responsible parties.

Policies and procedures for adding and deleting courses are reviewed through conversation among faculty at the departmental, curriculum committee, and faculty senate levels, as well as by direction from the provost.

Substantive curricular and program changes are not retroactive. As in the case of the transition to Experience One, wherein incoming students worked in the block system while returning students continued to work in the normal semester-long, multiple-course arrangement, students' learning experiences are governed by the policies declared in the course catalog of the year of their admittance to the university. Regardless of subsequent procedural or program changes, students proceed to graduation under the same rules as those in place when they matriculated. Appropriate accommodations are always made to assure timely graduation.

Through the assessment system, faculty are responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of the various departmental curricula by way of regular review. Regular meetings of department chairs and curriculum schedulers enable information about course and other

programmatic changes to the curriculum to be communicated efficiently.

Montana Western's degree and certificate programs include two-year Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees, as well as professional four-year degrees in early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and business management. Montana Western currently offers a single Bachelor of Arts degree with options in biology, environmental sciences, environmental interpretation, social sciences, literature and writing, mathematics and visual arts.

All two- and four-year degrees (except the AAS degree) require students to complete a 31-32 credit General Education program.

At present, Montana Western offers certificate programs in computerized machine tool technology, early childhood, and information technology and network administration. In addition, the university offers AA and AS degrees, which comprise the general education program and electives in the liberal arts and sciences. AAS degrees are available in business, early childhood education, education studies, equine studies, natural horsemanship, and tourism and recreation. For AAS students who wish to pursue a bachelor's degree, Montana Western offers a Bachelor of Applied Science degree with focused options in fine arts and humanities, business, early childhood education, health and human

performance, industrial technology, mathematics, natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and interdisciplinary studies. Students can choose Bachelor of Arts degree options in biology, environmental interpretation, environmental sciences, literature and writing, mathematics, social science, and visual arts. Bachelor of Science degrees are available in business administration, natural horsemanship, early childhood education, elementary education, and secondary education (with majors in art K-12, art K-12 broadfield, biology, business and computer applications broadfield, earth science, English, general science broadfield, history, industrial technology, mathematics, music K-12, physical education and health K-12, and social science broadfield). (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 College Catalog, pp. 60-150)

At Montana Western, all degree programs are available to students without any tuition differentiation. If courses using laboratory equipment or taking field trips need funding for such purposes, they may, with agreement by the Provost and the BOR, assess a course fee.

Under Experience One, block scheduling means minimal conflict among course times, lack of distraction from competing courses, and classes occurring in three-hour blocks, meaning students have either mornings or afternoons reliably available for either study or work. Because of a lack of

competition from other courses, faculty can plan field trips, both short and long, knowing they are not taking students away from other conflicting academic responsibilities. Thus, block scheduling facilitates optimal learning.

Most Montana Western courses occur either at least once per semester or once per year, making them reliably available to all students. However, most departments offer some courses on a two-year rotation. Such courses are clearly marked in the course description section of the university catalog (see **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 College Catalog, pp. 156-209). Faculty and advisors work closely with students to help students plan and time their course selections appropriately.

Montana Western academic administrators and faculty are currently planning to transition from degrees organized by option and related areas to more easily understandable majors and minors. As new degree programs have to be approved by faculty, the chancellor, the president (at University of Montana-Missoula), and the Board of Regents, we anticipate that, with the new majors and minors designed by the end of Spring 2010, the approval process will be complete by the end of Spring 2011.

Montana Western supports high standards of teaching and learning by allocating its resources such that the large predominance of courses are taught by full-time faculty with terminal degrees, in courses the vast majority of which contain 25 or fewer students,

facilitating maximum contact and interaction between faculty and students. Because its curriculum is organized through block scheduling, wherein faculty teach and students take one course at a time for three-and-a-half weeks, three hours per day, four to five days per week (depending upon whether the course is worth three or four credits), both faculty and students focus without distraction upon a single subject area at a time. Further, the block system enables more in-class contact hours than the normal multi-class arrangement because contact hours are actually full hours, not fifty minute hours or 75 minute hour-and-a-half periods. Students in a regular semester system average about 40 contact hours per course per semester, while those at Montana Western average about 54 contact hours per course.

Finally, Montana Western's emphasis upon hands-on experiential learning (Experience One) through undertaking authentic disciplinary and professional practices enables students to integrate theory and practice through individual and group research projects in class and through internships, senior theses, and other required projects.

Because of Experience One's emphasis on having students experience the practices authentic to the academic disciplines and associated careers, research is fundamental to all students' learning experience. Thus, research in the library is a normal part of nearly every Montana Western course. Further, because our library's physical holdings

are relatively small, students gain experience using a range of databases and programs, which enable them to download research materials or order them through Interlibrary Loan. (See **Standard 5**—Library and Instructional Resources.)

In addition to block courses, which constitute about 85 percent of the curriculum, Montana Western also offers a small number of “stringer” courses, which meet once or twice per week throughout the semester, usually in the evenings. Such courses enable working adult students to pursue a degree without having to take time off work, as block scheduling requires, as well as enabling full-time students to take extra credits up to the 20 credit limit.

Faculty are exploring the scheduling flexibilities permitted by block scheduling. For instance, some are experimenting with “stretch” courses. These courses last two consecutive blocks. In fall 2008, for example, the English department experimented with “stretches” by connecting the developmental writing course, ENG 091, with the college composition course, ENG 102. By enabling developmental writers to work intensively with the same teacher for two blocks while moving seamlessly from one course to the other, the department hopes to provide a viable alternative to offering ENG 091 as an evening “stringer,” a tactic which has not worked as effectively as the faculty would like. The faculty assessed the learning outcomes

of developmental writers in both stringer and stretch classes at the end of fall 2008 and agreed to generate more stretch courses. (see **Exhibit 2.2**, English Department Assessment of Developmental Writing “Stretch” Courses.)

In addition, the Honors program is interested in exploring team-teaching in stretch format, enabling cohorts of students who register for both linked courses to work intensively on significant issues and questions. Finally, the General Education Committee is considering the utility of linked, team-taught courses in stretch mode, as a means of delivering a more integrated general education curriculum to first-year students.

Innovation goes beyond scheduling alone. Thus, the university is in the midst of developing an articulation agreement with the intention of moving Montana Western’s secondary education major in Industrial Technology to the University of Montana Helena College of Technology. There, students completing two-year degrees in various technologies will be able to matriculate seamlessly into the four-year BS industrial technology teaching program whose industrial technology courses will be taught in the COT’s facility by a Montana Western faculty, while education courses will be delivered on-line. Montana Western anticipates this inter-institutional arrangement will enable the industrial technology education program to take advantage of

both Helena COT's superior facilities and technology, as well as its much larger demographic base to generate and maintain a sustainable student base for the program, which otherwise would have to be closed.

STANDARD 2.B – Educational Program Planning and Assessment

Montana Western's current program review policies and procedures are available to all faculty on the university's web site (see Exhibit 2.3, UMW Accreditation web site). While procedures vary somewhat from department to department, all have at their center the direct learning outcomes assessment of student work at the mid-point of their involvement in their majors as well as prior to graduation. Each department and program performs an intensive program review once every seven years. From these reviews emerge reports that identify changes the department or program made or wishes to make as a result of its reflections.

The assistant provost is in the process of refining the current assessment system for three primary reasons. First, for too many faculty, learning outcomes assessment is associated with the seven-year program review process and, thus, appears to be something that needs to be carried out only once every seven years rather than annually and routinely. Second, too many faculty do not understand either the purpose or the fundamental methods of learning outcomes assessment, and especially how to make assessment simultaneously effective and minimally time-consuming. Third, the current

assessment system is far too complex and regimented to make it either easily understandable or effective for routine use. Thus, simplification of a kind which makes the system more transparent and friendly to faculty and which can be implemented easily with minimum time investment is critical to the process of normalizing assessment as an integral element of faculty work lives.

Exhibit 2.4 contains policy descriptions of the learning outcomes assessment and program review processes in use for the last few years, while Exhibit 2.5 consists of the new, streamlined and simplified system developed by the assistant provost.

Learning outcomes for each degree program are stated clearly in the university catalog, prior to the credit summaries for each option (see **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 College Catalog, pp. 2008-09 catalog, pp. 71, 73, 76, 79, 83, 87, 90, 93, 101, 105, 108, 110-15, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 153).

Since Montana Western's previous accreditation visit, the university devised learning outcome assessment procedures that were implemented in whole or in part by most academic departments. The most successful implementations are those of the professional programs (business and education), in part because of the stimulus of accreditation by their professional bodies (NCATE and IACBE). However, several arts and science programs also carried out learning outcomes assessment as part of their seven-year program reviews. The outcomes of the accreditation and program reviews, especially curricular

and other changes implemented as a result of direct learning outcomes assessment, are reported below. In addition to direct learning outcomes assessment, Montana Western participates in a range of indirect learning outcomes assessments. Reported below are results of our graduate and employer surveys, the National Survey of Student Engagement and Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Surveys.

1) Department of Mathematics Seven-Year Program Review

During the period of its review, the Department of Mathematics was involved in working to establish a mathematics major to complement the contributions of its faculty to the secondary education mathematics degrees and to the elementary education degree. Accordingly, a considerable portion of the seven-year review reflected this interest, particularly as the external reviewer emphasized further building the upper level dimension of the curriculum. (See **Exhibit 2.6**, Department of Mathematics Seven-Year Program Review Self-Study.)

While the department did do some assessment of different sections of the same course to compare student performance under block scheduling and experiential learning against regular courses (block scheduling enhanced student performance), and of student perceptions of aspects of the department, it did not perform any significant

learning outcomes assessment, mostly because the number of majors is small enough (about 20 at the time of the review) that faculty members are familiar with them all, discuss their progress regularly, and share advice regarding student concerns and problems.

The department has made several significant curricular changes since its 2006 seven-year review. For instance, the department recommended to the Education department that its B.S. Secondary Education Mathematics Broadfield major be deleted and the B.S. Secondary Education Mathematics major be bolstered by two 400-level capstone courses. The Education department agreed to the changes as they allow math education majors more immersion in math content. Further, following the advice of their external reviewer, the department developed a stand-alone mathematics major, which is now available to potential majors. (See **Exhibit 2.7**, Summary of Department of Mathematics Assessment discussions, 2006-10.)

One curricular area into which the department (and the university as a whole) does need to inquire is the developmental mathematics course for students who do not meet BOR requirements for admission into four-year programs. As the BOR raised ACT and SAT admission scores, the academic administration calculated up to 70 percent of each new first-year class will require developmental mathematics. The

average size of each section of the developmental course (now designated M 095) is 35 students, ten higher than the norm across the curriculum. About one-third of students taking M 095 fail the first time, meaning that in addition to offering a significant number of sections of M 095 for students who need it, the department also must offer an additional number of sections to enable students to attempt it a second time. At a time when, because of the current economic recession, coupled with increased competition for a declining number of Montana high school graduates, first-year student retention is critical for the survival of the university, it is important to refocus on developmental mathematics, asking at least two pertinent questions: 1) Would reducing the size of M 095 sections to a maximum of 25, thus allowing faculty more time to spend aiding fewer students, and signaling to students that M 095 is a course taken as seriously by the university as any credit-bearing class, make a positive difference to student first-time success rates? 2) Is the content of M 095 (primarily algebraic) appropriate? Might a statistically-based course be a useful alternative?

In order to address these questions, the assistant provost will be spending part of summer 2010 assembling data on the subsequent academic histories of students taking M 095 in order to discover the impact (if any) upon first year students of success or failure in the course. Discussions of the data with the mathematics faculty might result in new

approaches to meeting the needs of developmental students. Further, given that Dr. Mark Krank, professor of psychology in the History, Philosophy, and Social Science (HPSS) department, is an expert in the field of math anxiety, Montana Western may be positioned to make a creative contribution to meeting the needs of students with developmental mathematics needs.

2) The Department of Business and Technology Program Review

The Department of Business and Technology has been making substantive changes to its curriculum in response to concerns expressed by the NWCCU visiting team in fall 2004. At that time, NWCCU stated the department did not allow its students enough elective credits, required too many 100- and 200-level courses and not enough upper division courses, had too complicated a core curriculum, and allowed too few opportunities for students to take liberal arts courses. The department addressed these problems, prior to NWCCU's focused visit in 2007, in the process of conducting its first seven-year review under Montana Western's new program review process and implemented its new curriculum in 2007-08.

However, at the time of its seven-year program review in Spring 2007, the department had not yet implemented its learning outcomes assessment processes, designed to be appropriate for NWCCU and IACBE accreditation. As a result, its assessment processes consisted of satisfaction surveys of internship

supervisors, graduated students and employers and external review by an IACBE consultant.

The satisfaction surveys revealed some student learning weaknesses in the more quantitative subjects, particularly accounting, finance, economic modeling, and quantitative analysis. The department attributed this weakness to faculty failure to reinforce skills in multiple courses and resolved to employ iterative processes across the curriculum to address the issue.

The external reviewer praised the department's core curriculum change, implemented in 2007-08, for its appropriate coverage of fundamental business topics. He also spoke positively to the department's reduction of the number of general education course prerequisite requirements of business majors, as this both reduces departmental regimentation and enables students to make more of their own educational choices. He observed as a weakness that the department requires more computer and fewer economics courses than other schools and, as a strength, the department's internship/cooperative education requirement, which enables students to practice and develop their business skills in "real-world" contexts. (See **Exhibit 2.8**, Department of Business and Technology Seven-Year Program Review Self-Study.)

3) The Department of Business and Technology IACBE Accreditation Report

The IACBE accreditation report contains the first substantive results of the Business and Technology department's learning outcomes assessment program. In regard to oral and written communication, the department developed a common rubric and employed it at the beginning of student's engagement with the department (in BUS 217 Business & Electronic Communications), again at the mid-point of students' progress (in BUS 325 Principles of Management or BUS 347 Principles of Marketing), and prior to graduation (in BUS 461 Small Business Management or BUS 400 Internship). Analysis of the data demonstrated students' written and oral communication skills improve markedly during their education within the department. More specifically, 64 percent of BUS 217 students demonstrated appropriate writing and speaking skills. Competence in these areas improved by the mid-point assessments, wherein 74 to 91 percent of students in the courses assessed demonstrated communications competence. This percentage rises to 96 to 99 percent of students in capstone courses prior to graduation.

In Spring 2008, faculty administered two disciplinary content tests to a sample of business students who were close to graduation, with the intent of 1) assessing student disciplinary content

knowledge, and 2) selecting which of the two tests they would employ in future years. The tests are the ETS Major Field Test for Business and the PBL test used by IACBE member schools. No significant differences in results emerged to separate the two tests. Faculty chose to go forward with the PBL test. Regular use of the test will facilitate the collection of valuable longitudinal data.

Regarding student mastery of disciplinary content, the tests revealed student strengths in finance, marketing, legal, and information systems knowledge, and weaknesses in economics, quantitative business analysis and management. Students performed acceptably on accounting and international issues.

After review of the assessment findings, the faculty agreed upon the following actions:

1. Given good student performance in finance, the faculty decided not to substantially alter the accounting curriculum, except to better segue students into other courses.
2. To improve economics scores, faculty decided to integrate economic information and concepts into the entire core curriculum. In addition, the faculty decided to move from a single, integrated economics course to creating both micro- and macroeconomics courses, enabling students to gain a deeper experience of neoclassical economics.

3. Due to concern about low management scores, the faculty created a cohort of students in spring 2009, who took team-taught, integrated marketing, finance, quantitative analysis and management courses together. Their learning outcomes, as measured by the standardized content test the faculty chose, were compared with those of students taking regular block courses, demonstrating that the maintenance of the team-taught, integrated model is warranted. (See IACBE update for 2009-10.)
4. Faculty will use the departmental advising system to assure students taking the quantitative management course have adequate advance preparation in statistics.
5. As the department is considering reducing the number of hours of information systems credit required of students, enabling them to take more core-related courses, it will develop an additional learning assessment in information systems to assure student performance in this area does not decline. However, the faculty anticipates that, because students have to pass a computer literacy test prior to graduation, and because technology expertise is developed throughout the curriculum, student performance in this area will not be negatively affected.
6. Marketing, finance and legal courses will continue for the present without specific changes.

In addition to direct learning outcomes assessment of oral and written communication and business content, the department continued to interview students returning from internships and to survey graduates and employers. In 2007-08, internship returnees stated that they enjoyed and valued their learning experiences at UMW, but wished their courses were more demanding. Graduates indicated they would have liked more in-depth courses and more experience in economics and quantitative analysis. Employer surveys were generally positive and complimentary.

In response to the surveys, faculty decided those teaching economics would use a common textbook and agree upon the primary concepts to be covered; that economic concepts would be reinforced throughout the core curriculum; and that advisors would assure that, prior to taking quantitative management, all students have appropriate preparation in statistics. Further, to encourage students to make cross-disciplinary connections, the department decided to adopt a common text each school year (Friedman, The World is Flat, in 2007-08, and Diamond, Collapse, in 2008-09). (See **Exhibit 2.8**, Department of Business and Technology IACBE Self-Study.)

4) Department of Business and Technology (B&T) 2008-09 Report to IACBE

Responding to concerns identified by IACBE accreditors during their visit, the Business and Technology department's 2008-09 report to the IACBE lists a variety of accomplishments managed within a short time frame. First, in regard to learning outcomes assessment, the department recounts changes to its mission statement and required courses that resulted from analysis of its data. Second, the department moved out of Main Hall to a different building (previously the Industrial Technology building), which was renovated and augmented with smart classrooms in order to better meet the teaching and learning needs of the students and faculty. Third, B&T gained an additional faculty member who is successfully helping to share the workload involved in teaching the business "core." Fourth, B&T phased out two of its option areas in computing, replacing them with a single, more coherent Web design and application option. In addition, the industrial technology program, due to declining student numbers in Dillon, is moving to Helena through a collaborative articulation with the University of Montana's Helena College of Technology. This move enables Montana Western to maintain a program that has significant public support while taking advantage of a far larger demographic base, more physical space and more contemporary machinery and equipment. Fifth, B&T and the Equine Studies program parted ways, as the latter gained the size and stability necessary for a more independent

existence. Finally, the department revised and streamlined its learning outcomes assessment plan, building in more emphasis on global business issues and retuning the plan to take into account the new emphasis. (See **Exhibit 2.10**, Department of Business and Technology 2008-09 Report to IACBE; **Exhibit 2.11**, Department of Business and Technology Revised Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan.)

5) The Department of Education NCATE Accreditation Report

The Department of Education's learning outcomes assessment system has been developed and refined through several iterations since its previous NCATE visit in 2002. Following a 2002 revision of its conceptual framework, the department developed and implemented an assessment system, thoroughly reviewing and revising it in 2004-05 to incorporate Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards for candidate proficiency, thus enabling the department to meet Montana state, NCATE, and INTASC standards with a single, integrated curriculum and assessment model. In the same year, faculty developed common syllabi for all courses, and embedded in each the essential institutional standards and indicators required by the state, NCATE, and INTASC. In 2005-06, the department adopted LiveText, an on-line electronic document and portfolio software system, enabling faculty to

aggregate data on assessments used during courses. In fall 2006, the department implemented a new ACCESS database to keep track of the progress of candidates and the success of programs. The database was revised in spring 2008. In fall 2007, the faculty consolidated a number of assignments critical for assessment, and adopted a single rubric to be used by faculty in assessing student writing at the beginning, middle and end of student involvement with the department's programs.

In short, the Department of Education has been consistently proactive in refining and improving its curriculum, aligning course content and student experiences to meet various professional standards, refining its assessment system and its technological base and using its assessment results to improve the quality of faculty teaching and student learning within the department. It has done so successfully, even in the midst of the transition to Experience One.

Candidates for licensure as elementary and secondary school teachers develop and maintain Teacher Education Program (TEP) portfolios organized into three phases: Phase I documents each student's induction into his/her program; Phase II documents each student's progress to the beginning of clinical practice; and Phase III documents the student's experience from clinical practice through graduation. Within each phase, students gather materials that document their learning, while faculty

complete observation forms in response to the development of each student's proficiency in intellectual and disciplinary content, pedagogical content and professional dispositions. Most of the materials students gather, and many of the observation forms, can be used to assess multiple aspects of student performance and competency.

In addition to direct assessments of student learning outcomes, department faculty pay attention to graduate and employer surveys, as well as to scores of national surveys like the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

The 2007-08 direct assessments of elementary and secondary student teacher candidates demonstrated proficient performance in regard to content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, the integration of technology into their teaching and professional dispositions. Further, the assessments demonstrated substantial student progress toward appropriate proficiency over the three phases of their growth, as documented in their TEP portfolios. However, the faculty noticed some variability in student scores that caused them to make a variety of changes in both their curriculum, and in their assessment system.

For example, in assessments of students' pedagogical content knowledge, the faculty noted students tended to score better on their portfolio assessments than on the various observation forms (performance assessments). Concerned lest the better portfolio assessment

scores revealed some grade inflation, the department implemented a sequence of portfolio assessment training sessions to help assure accuracy in faculty assessments of portfolios.

While candidates generally demonstrated proficiency in their development of professional dispositions, faculty noticed that elementary candidates were slightly stronger than secondary candidates in regard to developing lessons for diverse students and in classroom management. While they attribute this difference to elementary candidates having more practical opportunities in elementary classrooms to develop these skills relative to secondary students, despite numerous conversations, faculty have not yet come up with a way of reducing this discrepancy between elementary and secondary students.

On the other hand, in Phase II, in regard to some other dispositions, faculty noticed slightly greater strength among secondary candidates relative to elementary students. They attributed these differences to the fact that secondary students tend to enter the education program in the junior year, allowing them an additional year to mature, while elementary students tend to enter their program in the sophomore year. The differences in accomplishment are significantly reduced by Phase III, however.

In TEP Phases II and III, candidates are weak in expressing their educational philosophy and in understanding how

social constructivist philosophy can be incorporated into their teaching. Faculty attempted to assure both topics are addressed in more classes and plan to assess the differences their attempts made.

In Phase II and III, candidates are weaker than faculty would like in regard to professionalism (including timeliness and appropriate dress). Accordingly, faculty modified some observation forms used prior to student teaching, enabling them to make note of and discuss candidate deficiencies well before they enter the classroom.

The above examples indicate something of the level of detail at which the Department of Education's assessment methods enable faculty to understand both the quality of student performance and its improvement over time, as well as to continue to refine their assessment methods.

All department faculty meet once per month, and faculty subgroups associated with particular programs (elementary, secondary, etc.) also meet monthly. In addition, the department holds late spring and late summer retreats. At all of these meetings, discussion of assessment methods and outcomes is continuous. Further, because the department operates democratically (with a rotating chair, dispersed administrative responsibilities, etc.), there is minimal inhibition to frank conversation and minimal bureaucracy to inhibit fast-paced, consensus-based change. Democratic organization is consistent with the department's social

constructivist philosophy and pedagogy, and facilitates the broad distribution of faculty engagement in the work of on-going assessment. No other Montana Western department has so deeply and effectively embedded learning outcomes assessment in the normal routine of its daily operations. (See **Exhibit 2.12**, Department of Education NCATE Self-Study.)

6) Department of Education 2008-09 Report to NCATE

The Department of Education, in the year subsequent to its renewed NCATE accreditation, proposed numerous curriculum changes to the curriculum committee and faculty senate in order to better enable the department to address weaknesses in student knowledge emerging from its annual learning outcomes assessment. The curriculum changes are intended to improve teacher candidates' abilities to work effectively with special needs students, understand school law, understand child development, develop better classroom management strategies and incorporate American Indian content across the curriculum in accordance with Montana's Indian Education for All law. The department also added field work to some courses so that students are better prepared for their eventual teaching practica. Finally, in addition to successfully replacing one retiring faculty, the department gained an additional faculty to strengthen the literacy dimensions of its curriculum.

(See **Exhibit 2.13**, 2009 Part C of the AACTE/NCATE Annual Report.)

7) Department of English Seven-Year Review

At the beginning of its seven-year review process, the Department of English faced two significant problems: First, it needed to address the growing number of students arriving at Montana Western in need of developmental writing experience. Second, it needed to alter its basic writing course staffing strategy in order to try to increase its number of majors. In addition, the department needed to embrace learning outcomes assessment for the first time.

In general, the department confronts the difficult task of providing courses for literature and creative writing majors, for elementary and secondary education majors, for the general education program (both in literature and basic writing), and for developmental writers, and of doing so with minimal faculty to fulfill all the demands upon it. The difficulty of this task has been exacerbated because the Board of Regents increased the ACT/SAT standard for entry into four-year academic programs, resulting in up to 40 percent of the first year class requiring remedial writing. Thus, the department has had to respond quickly and thoughtfully to the need for appropriate developmental courses on the one hand, while trying to increase the number of

literature and creative writing majors on the other.

To meet the needs of developmental students, the department initially offered a developmental “stringer,” which met one evening per week for the entire semester. Having passed this course, students could then take ENG 102 whenever they chose. However, recognizing the virtues of consistency of practice and time on task for developing writers, the department created “stretch” courses integrating the developmental course, ENG 091, with the basic writing course, Eng 102, so that students have the opportunity of working on their writing skills for seven weeks, not the usual three-and-a-half weeks of a single block. In addition, the department was able to hire (beginning in fall 2009) a tenure-track rhetoric and composition faculty is now in charge of monitoring, assessing, and improving both the developmental course and Eng 102.

An initial assessment of the first, integrated developmental “stretch” courses (compared with the once-weekly “stringer”), indicated greater proficiency and student satisfaction with the integrated “stretch” course. Accordingly, an increased number of “stretch” courses were offered in Fall 2009 (all with a cap of 18 students). (See **Exhibit 2.2**, English Department Assessment of Developmental Writing “Stretch” Courses.)

In regard to increasing the number of Literature and Writing majors, the department decided to end its practice of

having its non-tenured visiting assistant professors teach most of its basic English writing courses. Instead, all department members agreed to rotate on an egalitarian basis into teaching ENG 102. In this way, all faculty have the ability to recruit majors among new students. As a result, the number of departmental majors has increased by one-third in two years, now numbering over 60.

The department also assessed its students' achievements in a mid-point (200-level) and an end-point (400-level) course in order to discover the extent to which students were meeting Literature and Writing department outcomes. The assessment revealed that 400-level students were appropriately performing at a "proficient" and "superior" level at significantly higher percentages than 200-level students, and also that the rubric did not allow two of the department's outcomes (oral communication and revision practices) to be measured, indicating that the outcomes and rubric may need to be rethought.

Fortunately, the department, immediately after the completion of its seven-year review, began planning for the university's transition from academic options and related areas to regular BA and BS majors with focused options. Faculty have the opportunity to redesign and refocus the department majors in line with their diverse interests and expertise, creating a context for expanding student majors again. (See

Exhibit 2.14, Department of English Seven-Year Program Review.)

8) Visual Arts Program Seven-Year Review

The primary issue focused upon during the Visual Arts program review was the need to increase the number of visual arts majors. While two years of assessment, using scholarship portfolios and art history and criticism essays, demonstrate convincingly that visual arts majors gradually and consistently build their skills and experiences so as to competently meet program outcomes prior to graduation, the issue is to involve more students and student teachers in the major, despite the American cultural stigma against the arts. (See **Exhibit 2.15**, Visual Arts Program Seven-Year Program Review Self-Study.)

The faculty is aided in this challenge by a private endowment, which enables them to maintain cutting edge facilities, as well as to offer substantial scholarships to all visual arts majors. The faculty addressed the need to increase its pool of majors by greatly increasing the number of arts courses qualifying as options in the general education program, meaning students can approach visual arts from many more angles of interest. Further, deliberately discovering adept students and proactively inviting them to consider the visual arts major helped reverse the

decline of the major while growing the number of majors to nearly 50.

With the help of the program's external reviewer, the three-faculty Visual Arts team also agreed, upon conclusion of their seven-year review, to use the occasion of the university's preparation for moving from options and related areas to majors and minors to reexamine their curriculum. Up to this point, the three-faculty team has tried to maintain student access to the broadest range of courses—in drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, glass, artistic blacksmithing, jewelry-making, fiber crafts, and so on. The team can now consider reducing the range of courses offered to majors to those compatible with their expertise and interests, and creating a curriculum that facilitates greater depth of practice and experience.

Unfortunately, curriculum revision must now wait because one faculty is on sabbatical, while another accepted a position at another college. In the spring 2010 semester, however, the two remaining faculty will discuss possible curricular revisions and program redirection while going through the hiring process for a tenure-track replacement hire.

Finally, the assistant provost for assessment and accreditation advised the entire Fine Arts program, including Music and Drama, will be assessed and examined seven years from now, rather than the degree-granting visual arts program alone.

9) Department of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences Seven-Year Review

The HPSS faculty, individually and collectively, are excellent proponents of experiential learning, especially in immersing their students in the authentic experience of disciplinary practices through well-scaffolded research projects. Further, because the faculty are small in number, but their courses are in high demand by department majors, elementary and secondary education majors, and all taking general education, they are often stretched thin and obliged to teach overload courses. This reduces opportunities to take advantage of faculty development blocks, even as it increases the risk of exhaustion posed by the intensity of experiential learning pedagogy and block scheduling. Nevertheless, HPSS regularly offers the most efficient curriculum of any department, and reliably sends a considerable proportion of its graduating majors to graduate programs.

Embracing history, philosophy, geography, psychology, political science, anthropology and sociology, department faculty developed intellectual collaborations that benefit students by exposing them to interdisciplinary work and integrative thinking. Further, HPSS faculty demonstrated a commitment to experimentation in course content and pedagogy that resulted in the creation of honors courses, linked courses for first year students and well-regarded

international experiential learning courses in Ireland, Italy, Germany and the Czech Republic.

To the department's great credit, it took ownership of its learning outcomes assessment process, utilizing it to evaluate student performance and improve the quality of its courses on an annual basis, not just once every seven years required for program reviews. The department focuses on courses taken by majors near the end of their Montana Western careers, such as HISTA 412 American Thought and Culture, HISTR 452 European Intellectual History, and SOC 450 Social Stratification. Having assessed examples of students' most important research writing for each course, each faculty assembles and reflects upon the quantitative summary data in light of his or her experience of the course. As a result, individual faculty are able to make both subtle and important changes to their syllabi to better serve students the next time the course is offered. Further, because the faculty discuss their individual course results together, they are able to identify patterns of commonality across courses and, therefore, discuss department-wide improvements, especially in supporting students in further developing their research, written and oral communication skills.

Department members engaged in several important discussions with their external reviewer in January 2010, and the external reviewer's report raises issues that the academic administration must

take up in consultation with the HPSS faculty. First, in terms of facilitating departmental growth, even while making workloads more manageable, the reviewer recommends hiring a second psychology faculty in order to grow a program in high demand around the nation. Second, the reviewer recommends the administration strongly consider adding at least two years of Spanish language to the curriculum, in part to enable more Montana Western HPSS and other graduates to be better prepared for graduate school, and in part to strengthen the intellectual foundation necessary for international engagement and global understanding. While difficult to accomplish in lean budget times, both proposals, nevertheless, are under consideration by the academic administration. (See **Exhibit 2.16**, Department of History, Philosophy, and Social Science (HPSS) Seven-Year Program Review Self-Study and External Reviewers Report.)

10) Graduate Survey Results for 2007-08

Fifty-five 2006-2007 graduates returned surveys during 2007-2008, about a 30 percent return rate. Students from 12 departments or programs responded to the survey, including 15 secondary education and 11 elementary education students. Six environmental science, five AAS early childhood, three BS early childhood education, two AAS education studies, two social science, two English, and two visual arts

graduates also responded. Statistical use could be made of the graduate surveys if all graduates responded to the same survey. However, each academic department designs its own survey and asks different questions, making school-wide analysis very difficult. Qualitative analysis, however, even if rudimentary, is possible. (See **Exhibit 2.17**, 2007-08 Graduate Surveys.)

Quantitatively, it is possible to report that of the 55 graduates surveyed, 39 are employed in the fields in which they majored, 10 are currently in graduate school, and 15 are considering graduate school in the near future. Forty-four are employed in Montana, with most of the remainder in contiguous states. All but four students reported considerable satisfaction with their academic experiences by responding to all questions with “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” Twenty students reported feeling that they had developed strengths in regard to oral and written communication, five reported significant research skills, and education graduates, especially, commented positively upon their leadership and advocacy skills.

Asked to suggest ways in which Montana Western could strengthen its academic program, business graduates suggested more emphasis on economics, and courses that combine business with health and fitness. Education students asked for more emphasis on classroom management skills. Two visual arts students believed that block courses did not allow them time to appropriately

develop their art skills. Four students asked for more career direction, including assistance from faculty in using their contacts in their professional communities to the benefit of their students.

As noted earlier, business faculty are committed to reinforcing economics instruction by embedding economic concepts in more business courses. The Education Department embeds classroom management in several courses. (It is important to note that as many students expressed satisfaction with their classroom management skills as asked for more reinforcement.)

One possibility currently under discussion in the General Education Committee is to utilize more “stretch” courses that last two blocks. Discussion of how visual arts faculty can get involved in “stretch” courses is ongoing.

11) National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Spring 2008

Montana Western administered the National Survey of Student Engagement for the first time in Spring 2008, receiving its results in the fall. (See **Exhibit 2.18**, NSSE 2008 Results.) The outcomes were extremely good. For instance, Montana Western first-year and senior students are both **more likely** than their peers at other Rocky Mountain public colleges and universities and at all institutions surveyed by NSSE to have,

for example, asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion; made a class presentation; worked with other students on projects during class; and discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class.

Montana Western first-year students are **more likely** than their comparator peers to have, among other things, prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in; worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources; worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations; and worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.

Montana Western senior students are **more likely** than their comparator peers to have tutored or taught other students; worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.); written papers or reports of 20 pages or more; and completed a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience or clinical assignment.

Montana Western first year and senior students are **less likely** than their comparator peers to have: memorized facts, ideas, or methods from courses or readings so they can repeat them in pretty much the same form; done foreign language coursework; and studied abroad.

Given Montana Western's emphasis on experiential learning, we might expect

our first year and senior students to be more likely to have participated in a community-based project (e.g. service-learning) as part of a regular course; taken classes that emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations; and found their experiences at Montana Western contributing to their knowledge, skills and personal development in writing clearly and effectively, thinking critically and analytically and working effectively with others. But, in fact, Montana Western students' scores are **very similar** to those of comparator peers in all of these areas.

NSSE combines individual questions into categories to help facilitate an overview of institutional strengths and areas for improvement. Thus, in regard to "**Level of Academic Challenge**" (number of assigned readings, paper and report assignments, coursework emphasizing analysis, synthesis, making judgments and applying theories and concepts in the real world, etc.), Montana Western first year and senior students' scores are **higher** than either of their comparators.

On "Active and Collaborative Learning" (asking questions and contributing to class discussion, making class presentations, working with other students in and out of class, etc.), Montana Western first year and senior students' scores are **significantly higher** than those of their comparators.

On "Student-Faculty Interaction" (discussing issues and working with

faculty in and out of class, etc.), Montana Western first year and senior students' scores are **significantly higher** than those of their comparators.

On "Supportive Campus Environment" (support to succeed academically and personally, quality of relationships with other students, faculty, etc.), Montana Western first year and senior students' scores are **higher** than those of their comparators, especially the other Rocky Mountain public colleges.

Only in regard to "Enriching Educational Experiences" (participating in co-curricular activities, practica, internships, and community service work, doing foreign language coursework, study abroad, etc.), do Montana Western first year and senior students' scores fall **lower** than those of their comparators, especially the NSSE 2008 schools.

Finally, we have been able to compare Montana Western's senior students' scores on 23 NSSE questions with those of seniors at our sister institutions, University of Montana-Missoula, Montana State University-Bozeman, and Montana State University-Billings. Montana Western ranked first among the four universities on 13 of the 23 questions, and second on a further five, suggesting our new system, Experience One, is impacting our students and the university most positively. (See **Table P.1**, Comparative NSSE Scores, p. 4.)

12) Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Surveys, May 1998 and December 2006

The Noel-Levitz surveys give Montana Western another indirect measure of the extent to which Experience One is meeting student needs. In 1998, the university was still operating under the traditional semester system. In 2006, Montana Western was in the second year of complete implementation of Experience One. The surveys feature Lichert scales of 1 (low) to 7 (high), and students respond to a range of questions which are combined into 12 categories. The categories are academic advising, instructional effectiveness, recruitment and financial aid, registration effectiveness, concern for the individual, safety and security, campus climate, campus support services, student centeredness, service excellence, campus life, and responsiveness to diverse populations. The 2006 satisfaction scores on ten scales (two were not comparable due to survey changes between 1998 and 2006) are higher than those for 1998 by an average of more than half a point (0.59), the smallest difference being 0.37 (recruitment and financial aid), and the largest 0.91 (campus support services). The average score for 2006 was 5.32, with a low score of 4.84 (safety and security), and a high score of 5.56 (responsiveness to diverse populations). This contrasts with a 1998 average score of 4.70, a low of 4.11 (safety and security) and a high of 5.10 (student centeredness). (See **Exhibit 2.19**, 1998 and 2006 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Surveys.)

Relative to students at other colleges and universities, Montana Western's 1998 average scores were higher in six categories and lower in five, while in 2006, Montana Western's scores were higher than the national averages in all 12 categories, in 10 categories to the .001 level of statistical significance.

In terms of strengths, 2006 students indicated greatest satisfaction with the quality of Montana Western's academic advising system, the quality of faculty and instruction, and the atmosphere of the welcoming, safe campus. The most significant challenge identified by 2006 students is adequate financial aid. Given that 70 percent of our student body is Pell grant-eligible, this concern is not surprising.

In short, the Noel-Levitz surveys demonstrate clearly that Experience One is highly successful in the eyes of Montana Western students. Further, Experience One facilitates levels of satisfaction consistently and significantly higher than those operating on traditional semester and quarter systems.

13) Upcoming Learning Outcome Assessment Activities

The above demonstrates Montana Western's direct and indirect learning outcomes assessment system is up and running, and it is facilitating productive curricular and pedagogical improvements that are in line with the

university's mission and strategic plan. In 2010-11, the environmental science, environmental interpretation, biology, health and human performance, and equine studies/natural horsemanship programs will be completing their seven-year program reviews. The final curricular area to undergo assessment will be the general education program, which is currently under discussion by the General Education Committee who are interested in altering the make-up of required credits so as to facilitate more emphasis on the global and diversity dimensions of the curriculum. The committee is simultaneously gathering examples of outcomes assessment matrices to help guide the formation of an assessment policy for general education once the programmatic changes have completed the circuit of examination by the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate.

STANDARD 2.C – Undergraduate Program

1) General Education: At Montana Western, the general education program requires 31-32 credits of all students (except those in AAS degree programs), the credits distributed across the liberal arts and sciences. The general education program requirements are described in **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 College Catalog, pp. 60-62.

The philosophy guiding the general education program at Montana Western is as follows:

All baccalaureate degree-seeking students at Montana Western complete a program called “General Education”. The purpose of the General Education program at Montana Western is fivefold: to introduce all students to the core arts and sciences disciplines, to prepare students for university-level thinking, to help students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong learning, to give each student a foundation in democratic values, and to foster engaged participation in a global society.

In keeping with its Mission Statement, Montana Western recognizes and values both the integrity of the individual and membership in an increasingly diverse and global society. Thus, the General Education program is experiential, multidisciplinary, and multicultural. This multidisciplinary program consists of at least two semesters of focused study. Each course in the General Education program presents a breadth of content including a survey of basic information, methods of identifying and solving problems, methods to communicate the results of scholarly endeavors, and a general set of inquiry skills that can be transferred or adapted to other disciplines.

The program is scheduled so that each student with the prerequisite skills can complete the requirements in one academic year, preferably the freshman

year. The intent of the program is to provide a coherent academic experience through selected courses, some interdisciplinary, with the emphasis in each on developing students’ intellectual and communication skills.

Montana Western students are encouraged to work closely with a faculty advisor to select courses that focus on developing his/her individual qualities and interests. Articulation agreements among the Montana University System institutions ensure that students can transfer from one Montana institution to another with minimal loss of credit or time.

Montana Western’s General Education program is consistent with the Montana University System General Education Standards found at <http://www.mus.montana.edu/transfer/courses.htm>.

Courses proposed for inclusion in the general education curriculum are evaluated first by the General Education Committee, then, as approval is gained, by the Curriculum Committee, then Faculty Senate, the provost, and the chancellor. The basis of judgment regarding the suitability of a proposed course for the general education curriculum is the general education philosophy statement.

At present, general education requires four credits in each of written and oral communications, mathematics, humanities: expressive arts, humanities: literary and artistic studies, seven or

eight credits in behavioral and social sciences, and eight credits in natural sciences.

However, discussion is underway within the General Education Committee regarding the possibility of moving away from the random, piecemeal arrangement of the current curriculum, and inaugurating a themed curriculum characterized by linked courses or learning communities, each team-taught by two faculty, each lasting two blocks or seven weeks. If approved, we anticipate such a curriculum, integrative and interdisciplinary in its design, will enable students to make cross-disciplinary connections routinely. In addition, we believe that transitioning from high school to the block system by way of a seven-week stretch course will increase student retention to the sophomore year. Finally, because we can associate an academic advisor with each stretch course, we can provide consistent support to students as they adjust to the rigors of undergraduate intellectual work, as well as to living in residence halls. (See **Exhibit 2.20**, 2008-10 General Education Committee Minutes.)

2) Transfer Credit: For two years, Montana Western has been collaborating with the Montana Legislature, the BOR, and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), as well as with faculty colleagues from across the state, to implement a transferability scheme intended to allow Montana resident students to transfer seamlessly between any Montana public or tribal

community college, college of technology, or four-year college or university. Since OCHE initiated the transferability process, the BOR has changed its strategic plan to extend the transferability initiative beyond general education to the entire curriculum of each school.

OCHE established transferability councils for each academic discipline. The councils consist of at least one disciplinary participant from each public and tribal school. Their work is to develop shared learning outcomes for introductory courses, and to complete a transferable course matrix. Once each matrix is complete and verified, each school in the system is obliged to automatically accept in transfer any course it has designated as an equivalent to, or as a substitute for, its own required course.

Once completed, all matrices will be available to students through the Montana University System (MUS) web site, accompanied by such guidance as is necessary to make the transfer process transparent and seamless.

Montana Western faculty have so far actively participated in the transferability councils for anatomy and physiology, business, chemistry, communications, economics, mathematics, philosophy, psychology, history, biology, political science, literature, sociology, computer science/IT, and geosciences. They will continue to participate in the discussions of all relevant disciplines until the

transferability initiative is fully implemented in 2010-11.

3) Academic Advising: Academic advising at Montana Western occurs in a variety of interconnected ways. In general, all incoming students are initially assigned to one of the university's two academic advisors. Low income, first generation and learning disabled students who are accepted by the program are advised by TRiO Student Support Services advisors. Once new students have chosen majors and been accepted by the degree programs in which they are interested, faculty members within the relevant departments are assigned to them as advisors. Even after this point, many students continue to interact regularly with their Advising Office advisor. TRiO students, in addition to the support of a faculty advisor, receive consistent advising support from TRiO advisors from matriculation to graduation.

Under Experience One and block scheduling, students can change course registrations at the beginning of each block, if they so choose, putting a premium on excellent advising on an on-going basis, rather than only before fall and spring registration. While the additional interactions with advising office and faculty are welcomed, they make constantly updated curriculum information indispensable, as accuracy of advising is critical. New faculty are introduced to the advising system during their new faculty orientation and

subsequently mentored by departmental colleagues. New faculty do not participate in advising during their first year of teaching, but subsequently are assigned the faculty average of about 20 students each.

Registrar's staff and academic advisors update faculty about changes to the curriculum and to policies and procedures on a regular basis. Advising staff are available to individual faculty and to departments for support in the advising process.

At the beginning of the 2007-2008 academic year, the Advising Office advisors took the initiative of assembling Academic Advising handbooks for every student, explaining advising and related procedures. Faculty requesting them received handbooks, also. Feedback indicates both students and faculty value the clarity and concision of the handbooks. (Copy available in work room.)

4) Developmental Coursework: The 2008-2009 University Catalog details procedures for admission for students in need of developmental coursework (pages 10-11). Because Montana Western contains two-year as well as four-year degree programs, students in need of developmental courses (especially in English and mathematics) can enroll in a two-year program, then transfer to a four-year program upon successful completion of their developmental courses. Alternatively,

the university can provisionally admit students in need of developmental coursework to four-year programs. The developmental courses are noted on the student's transcript, but s/he does not receive credit for them.

STANDARD 2.G – Continuing Education and Special Learning Activities

In accordance with UMW Policy 201.1, the School of Outreach oversees and facilitates all off-campus, continuing education and special learning programs. (See **Exhibit 2.21**, UMW Policy 201.1.) The school's mission is to provide high quality learning opportunities to citizens of all ages. Programs are designed to

enhance Montana Western's mission, and focus on teaching, learning, scholarship and service. Programs are approved, administered and evaluated under established institutional procedures. Responsibility for the administration of Outreach programs clearly resides within academic affairs.

The School of Outreach's course and program offerings fall into three categories: 1) state-funded, credit bearing, 2) self-supporting, credit bearing and 3) self-supporting, non-credit bearing. Five-year enrollments and annualized full-time equivalents for credit-bearing programs are summarized below. Enrollments and revenue for non-credit programs are summarized in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: State- and Self-Supported Credits by Headcount and FTE, 2004-09

Academic Year	State-Supported Credit		Self-Supporting Credit	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
2008-2009	2,314	205.54	753	57.73
2007-2008	1,988	173.17	656	53.86
2006-2007	2,512	213.60	526	40.00
2005-2006	2,550	211.10	415	35.83
2004-2005	2,921	243.44	416	30.74
5 Year Average	2,457	209.37	553.2	43.64

1) State-Funded Programs: State-supported programs include summer school, extended studies and early

college. These programs target a wide age-range of students and utilize

traditional and non-traditional modes of course delivery.

a) Summer School: Montana Western offers a full-term summer session that includes three blocks (A, B and C). Students enjoy full access to financial aid because Montana Western is a header school, meaning that summer school marks the start of the academic-year calendar and awarding of federal financial aid. Summer school offerings emphasize general education options, business and education program requirements and internship opportunities. The goal is to help students accelerate their progress toward degree completion. Some summer school offerings are experimental and vary from year to year. Experimental courses undergo the same proposal, review and approval processes described below.

b) Extended Studies: Montana Western offers its Bachelor of Science degree in early childhood, elementary and secondary education at a number of off-campus locations. Coursework is offered in traditional classroom settings, as well as online. Degree requirements and faculty qualifications for extended studies programs are guided by institutional policy and are the same as for on-campus programs. Academic departments retain responsibility for oversight of off-campus programs.

From 1999 to 2008, Montana Western delivered its Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education at Salish Kootenai College. Salish Kootenai

College is a Tribal college located in Pablo, Montana (232 miles from Dillon). The two-plus-two partnership was successful in graduating 42 students. With financial support from a Title III grant and academic support from Montana Western, Salish Kootenai College began offering its own elementary education program in Fall 2007.

c) Early Childhood Education: Montana Western has coursework for a child development associate (CDA) certificate in nine Montana communities (Billings, Butte, Bozeman, Dillon, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Hamilton, and Missoula) since 1998. The CDA courses are taught in a face-to-face format. The CDA coursework was made available online in 2009; however, enrollment in online courses is restricted. The CDA certificate curriculum articulates to associate of applied science and Bachelor of Science degrees in early childhood education. Most of the coursework for the AAS and BS is available online.

d) Butte Elementary and Secondary Education: The School of Outreach facilitates distance delivery of the School of Education's degrees in elementary and secondary education. The program is available in Butte. Students complete much of their general education coursework at Montana Tech or online. Education courses are delivered online and face-to-face.

e) Fifth-Year Licensure: In 2009, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher

Education approved distance delivery of Montana Western's fifth-year certification in secondary education. Students in the program take 80 percent of their required coursework online, and the remaining 20 percent face-to-face. The program addresses the Office of Public Instruction's requirement for Class 5 certified teachers to obtain a Class 2 certification within a three-year period. Five teachers completed the program in 2009, 22 teachers are currently in the program, and five have stated their intent to start Summer 2010.

2) Early College Programs: Montana Western has offered high school students an early admission option for years. In 2009, the university began efforts to provide dual credit options to high school students. In accordance with guidance from the Office of Public Instruction and the OCHE, Montana Western established inter-local agreements with seven high schools. The university also encouraged interested faculty to obtain a Class 8 teaching license. To date, Montana Western offered one dual credit class at Beaverhead County High School—no students enrolled for college credit. Although dual credit opportunities are popular in many larger communities, their acceptance and popularity in Beaverhead County is limited. Montana Western will continue to make dual credit opportunities available to Montana students, but much remains to be done to promote these opportunities.

3) Self-Supporting, Credit-Bearing Programs: Extension courses are self-supporting and credit-bearing. Although there is no distinction between extension and resident credit (BOR Policy 304.1), Montana Western policy limits the number of extension credits (<30) that students may apply toward a degree program. Most of Montana Western's extension courses target specific audiences—the courses may count toward a degree program, but they are not designed as part of a degree program. Montana Western adheres to established criteria for extension faculty credentials, educational resources, instructional facilities, fees, student eligibility, credit reporting and course approval (See **Exhibit 2.22**, BOR Policy 304.1.)

a) *Montana Youth ChalleNGe*: The Montana National Guard Youth Challenge program assists at-risk youth in developing skills and abilities necessary to become productive citizens. (See **Exhibit 2.23**, <http://www.ngycp.org/site/state/mt/>.) The program individualizes instruction based on each student's personal needs in order to prepare the student to take and pass the GED test. Students who pass the GED test are enrolled in extension courses through Montana Western's School of Outreach. Students earn two elective credits in writing and two in either art or health. All courses are developed, approved and taught by Montana Western faculty. Between 40 and 60 students annually enroll in this sponsored opportunity.

b) *La Cense Professional School of Horsemanship*: Established in 2009, the La Cense Professional School of Horsemanship offers a one-year program to prepare professional horsemen. (See **Exhibit 2.24**,

<http://www.lacensemontana.com>.)

Students learn to coach and develop exceptional horses utilizing techniques described in the American Quarter Horse Association's Fundamentals of Horsemanship. The La Cense program requires students to complete seven extension courses from Montana Western and log 2,000 hours of applied horse care and training. The extension courses are taught by Montana Western faculty. La Cense staff oversees the applied horse care and training requirements. La Cense awards a certificate of completion to students who successfully fulfill the program requirements. Two students are currently enrolled in the program.

c) *Library Media Endorsement/Library Media K-12 Minor*: Montana Western and the University of Montana-Missoula (UM) collaborate in offering a 27-credit library media curriculum (UM endorsement or Montana Western minor). Students are formally admitted to a home campus and are extension students of the other campus. Students complete 15 credits from their home campus and 12 credits from the extension campus. Nearly 200 students have been admitted to the program, and approximately 60 maintain active enrollment. (See **Exhibit 2.25**,

<http://www.umwestern.edu/academics/library/page7.htm>.)

d) *Rosetta Stone*: In Fall 2009, Montana Western began offering foreign languages using Rosetta Stone online. Twenty-two languages are available. Students complete their online assignments at their own pace throughout the 15-week semester. During its first offering, seven students enrolled in four languages. In spring 2010, 16 students enrolled in nine languages. The rapid growth in Rosetta Stone enrollments indicates strong student interest in studying foreign languages. Without access to Rosetta Stone online, Montana Western would not be able to offer the breadth of foreign languages students are interested in. (See **Exhibit 2.26**, <http://www.rosettastone.com/>.)

e) *Virtual Education Software, Inc.:* Since 1997, Montana Western has partnered with Virtual Education Software (VESi) to offer recertification options to in-service teachers. Montana Western currently offers 18 courses. Some of the courses have also been approved for continuing education units (CEUs) for licensed professional counselors and social workers. Montana Western's Education Department approves the curricular vitae and syllabi for all of the VESi courses. See **Exhibit 2.27**, <http://www.virtualeduc.com/>.)

Montana Western offers extension credit for courses developed by Virtual Education Software, Inc., and Rosetta Stone. These courses are self-supporting, are subject to review and approval by academic departments, and are consistent with Montana Western's continuing education mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities to citizens of all ages (NWCCU Policy A-6). Montana Western's School of Outreach is responsible for monitoring the performance of these relationships, ensuring the courses meet academic standards and disclosing the nature of the relationship to students.

Montana Western faculty members are involved in the planning and evaluation of all credit-bearing courses and programs. In accordance with BOR Policy 304.1, all continuing education credit-bearing courses are proposed, reviewed and approved prior to being offered for student enrollment. A common course proposal form for continuing education credit courses is utilized that requires a course description, syllabus, expected learning outcomes, grading scheme, scheduling format and faculty vita. Upon submission to the School of Outreach, the proposal is reviewed for omissions, assigned a course number and forwarded to an appropriate academic department chair for approval. If a course proposal or instructor is not approved, department chairs may consider a second submission. The School of Outreach does not continue to forward proposals after two denials. (See **Exhibit 2.28**,

School of Outreach Course Proposal Form.)

In accordance with Montana Western Policy 201.1, the School of Outreach oversees all continuing education and special learning activities. The dean responsible for the School of Outreach reports to the provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. The School of Outreach provides administrative support for all of Montana Western's electronically mediated and distance delivery courses. Electronically mediated and distance delivery courses are designed to meet the needs of off-campus students. They are offered as stringers, not as block courses. Stringers allow students sufficient time to interact with faculty and meet other challenges (e.g., work, family, health, etc.). Students in electronically mediated and distance delivery courses have access to Montana Western's library and student support services.

Fees for state-supported courses comply with Board of Regents approved fee structures. Fees for non-credit courses and self-supporting programs are based on program specific budget formulas and comply with BOR Policy's 304.2, 940.10 and 940.13.1. (See **Exhibit 2.29**, Board of Regents Policies 304.2, 940.10, and 940.13.1.) Fees are published each semester in the School of Outreach course bulletin. Campus refund policies are published each year in the University Catalog and each semester in the schedule of classes.

In accordance with BOR Policy 309.1, the method for granting credit for continuing education and special learning activities is consistent with the method used in the regular academic program. (See **Exhibit 2.30**, Board of Regents Policy 309.1.)

administers non-credit programs and courses in accordance with BOR Policy 304.2 (See **Exhibit 2.31**, Board of Regents Policy 304.2.) Table 2.2 shows the extent of use of, and revenues derived from, the three primary Outreach self-supporting, non-credit programs:

4) Self-Supporting Non-Credit Programs and Courses: The School of Outreach

**Table 2.2: Self-Supporting, Non-Credit-Bearing Program
User Days and Revenues, 2004-09**

Year	Birch Creek		Community Outreach		Elderhostel	
	User Days	Revenue	Enrollment	Revenue	Enrollment	Revenue
2008-09	4,149	\$ 117,248	242	\$ 36,209	1,118	\$ 999,210
2007-08	3,424	\$ 111,442	311	\$ 30,967	1,105	\$ 891,831
2006-07	4,294	\$ 109,369	320	\$ 23,956	879	\$ 648,613
2005-06	4,633	\$ 109,255	342	\$ 22,114	664	\$ 756,814
2004-05	3,797	\$ 101,570	160	\$ 22,808	763	\$ 734,857
5-Yr Ave.	4,059	\$ 109,778	275	\$ 27,211	846	\$ 806,265

a) *Anaconda Job Corps*: Between 1982 and 2010, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service contracted Montana Western to provide an instructor for the Anaconda Job Corps' business technology program. Students in the Job Corps' program (ages 16-20) earn their high school diploma (GED) and learn valuable career skills. Montana Western granted no credit for this program. In February 2010, the Anaconda Job Corps eliminated all external contracts for program instructors and directly employed Montana

Western's former instructor. (See **Exhibit 2.32**, <http://anaconda.jobcorps.gov>.)

b) *Birch Creek Outdoor Education Center*: The Birch Creek Outdoor Education Center, located on seven fenced acres in the Pioneer Mountains, was constructed in 1935 for use as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp. Since 1983, Montana Western's School of Outreach operated the Center under a special use permit issued by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service. A new 20-year special use permit was finalized in February

2010. The Center provides a comfortable and safe environment for diverse educational, recreational and social opportunities. The Center services three primary audiences—school-age children, college-age adults and undifferentiated adults. The Center’s season runs from late April to mid- October. The Center’s services include dining, lodging and educational programming. The Center does not offer credit for any of its offerings; however, some college-age students earn academic credit while participating in programs that utilize the Center. Each year, the Center fills over 4,000 user days and generates more than \$100,000 in revenue. (See **Exhibit 2.33**, [http://www.umwestern.edu/birchcreek/.](http://www.umwestern.edu/birchcreek/))

c) Community Outreach: Montana Western operates a small non-credit community outreach program. Topics range from dancing to art techniques to cooking methods to bow-making. Since 2005, between 160 and 311 community members enrolled in the offerings each year. Community outreach programs annually generate between \$20,000 and \$40,000.

d) Elderhostel/Exploritas: Montana Western has been an Elderhostel program sponsor since 1978. Elderhostel changed its name to Exploritas in October 2009. Montana Western is the largest provider of Exploritas programs in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and the Dakotas. Most Montana Western programs feature the history, geology and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. In 2008, Montana Western expanded the breadth of its offerings assuming sponsorship of programs in the

Teton region of Wyoming and Idaho. Montana Western annually offers between 50 and 60 Exploritas programs. Each year, the programs attract more than 1,000 participants and generate nearly a million dollars in revenue. (See **Exhibit 2.34**, <http://www.exploritas.org.>)

e) Gatlin Education Services: The School of Outreach, in partnership with GES, offers online, open enrollment programs designed to develop skills necessary to acquire professional positions for in-demand occupations. Each term, Montana Western offers over 25 GES courses. A sampling of course offerings includes website development, financial planning, medical transcription billing and coding, pharmacy technician, freight broker/agent, project, records and casino management, grant writing, website development and veterinary assistant. Instructors/mentors are actively involved in the student’s online learning experience. Assessment consists of online examinations and instructor evaluation of student work. Students who finish the coursework receive a certificate of completion from Montana Western. Participation in the GES courses is limited (7, 3 and 4 students in years 2007, 2008 and 2009, respectively), but these courses provide much needed workforce training in the local community. (See **Exhibit 2.35**, GES, <http://www.gatlineducation.com.>)

5) *Distance Delivery of Courses, Certificate and Degree Programs*

Montana Western offers some of its educational courses and programs at off

campus locations and via technology. BOR Policy 303.7 (**Exhibit 2.36**, BOR Policy 303.7) establishes the guidelines for all MUS distributed courses. In accordance with the policy, all of Montana Western's distance offerings originate from on-campus offerings and are congruent with the university's mission to serve citizens of all ages, provide interdisciplinary experiential education and utilize technology.

In 2009, Montana Western offered 99 online courses, generating 140 annualized FTE. Coursework is strategically designed to meet the needs of off-campus students enrolled in Montana Western's early childhood, elementary, secondary education and business programs, library media minor and special education minor. Off-campus students constitute approximately 60 percent of Montana Western's online enrollment. This is in stark contrast to most other MUS campuses with approximately 30 percent off-campus student enrollments.

Responsibility for oversight of distance delivery rests with the School of Outreach. The responsibility for academic quality rests with the provost and academic departments. The School of Outreach and provost follow established academic policy and procedures to review and approve distance course offerings. In accordance with BOR Policy 303.7, the OCHE staff approve electronic offerings of existing campus programs. Approval of off-campus face-to-face delivery of Montana Western programs also requires BOR approval.

Electronically mediated and distance delivery courses are designed to meet the needs of off-campus students. They are

offered as stringers, not as block courses. Stringers allow students sufficient time to interact with faculty and meet other challenges (e.g., work, family, health, etc.). Students in electronically mediated and distance delivery courses have access to Montana Western's library and student support services.

Montana Western uses WebCT as its learning management system (LMS). The Information and Telecommunication Services (ITS) staff maintains WebCT software on a dedicated campus server with backup and creates course shells for all Montana Western courses—on-campus and off-campus. In 2006, Blackboard purchased rights to WebCT and plans to phase out support for WebCT by 2011. Montana Western, in collaboration with the other University of Montana System campuses, is currently researching LMS options. Montana Western's Technology Steering Committee tasked a subcommittee to explore the campus' LMS needs. The subcommittee includes several members of the Technology Steering Committee and faculty from each academic department. The goal of the subcommittee is to research on campus needs and work with the other University of Montana System campuses to select one LMS that meets the needs of all campuses. The University of Montana issued a formal request for information in fall 2009 and a request for proposals is being prepared to issue in this summer. The University of Montana expects to start migrating courses to a new hosted LMS by fall 2010. Full migration to the new hosted LMS is scheduled to be complete by fall 2010.

Throughout the last decade, the School of Outreach has routinely obtained online development funds from OCHE. Funding opportunities ranged from \$10,000 to \$20,000 in any given year and required a direct match—resulting in \$20,000 to \$40,000 worth of mini-grants to faculty. Using the OCHE funds and other campus resources, the School of Outreach consistently promotes professional development activities for online instructors. These funds support faculty training, course development time, software and equipment purchases and conference attendance. Additionally, the School of Outreach works with the campus instructional technologist to conduct workshops on using WebCT and teaching online. In 2009, the School of Outreach required new online faculty requesting development funds to enroll in an online development course offered by the University of Montana’s Extended University. In addition to accommodating their schedules and learning how to design assignments and post information online, faculty who enrolled in the online development course learned what it is like to be an online student. Feedback from faculty who participated in the course was very positive.

Montana Western follows established policies from the BOR and The University of Montana related to ownership of materials, copyright issues and utilization of revenue derived from online courses. Every two years the BOR reviews and approves Montana Western’s online fees. Montana Western currently assesses an online fee of \$15 per credit. The university is authorized by the BOR to assess up to \$40 per credit.

Online fees support purchase of LMS software license, computer hardware, administrative support in the School of Outreach and faculty training. The BOR approved student computer use fee, collected in an account managed by ITS, also pays a share of these costs. Online fees generate approximately \$41,000 per year and are managed by the School of Outreach. This budget is adequate to support Montana Western’s current LMS; however, it likely will not support the cost of a new LMS. The university is well positioned to support the increased costs of a new LMS. Forward planning resulted in BOR authority to assess higher online fees as deemed appropriate. The School of Outreach is also preparing to hire a new full-time position to support students and faculty during and after the transition to a new LMS.

Students access WebCT via the campus website or DAWGS (<http://dawgs.umwestern.edu/login/>). DAWGS is the student registration and information website. Once in WebCT, students have access to information about their classes, campus schedule, library resources and links for technical support. See Standard 5 for a complete discussion of electronic library resources.

Students enrolled in online and distance courses have full access to support services and follow the same procedures as on-campus students for admissions, registration, financial aid, grievances and graduation. The director of distance education in the School of Outreach provides additional support for off-campus students by helping them to navigate and understand campus

procedures. The School of Outreach also provides a toll-free telephone number to off-campus students. Students are encouraged to call the toll-free number to receive direct assistance or to be transferred to appropriate offices so that they make sure they know who to talk to and to lessen their financial burden.

Student evaluation of faculty teaching online courses is not part of the CBA. Because most School of Outreach contracts with faculty represent additional teaching load, the School of Outreach reserves the right to evaluate all online courses. Course evaluation forms are posted to students on WebCT. There is no mechanism in place requiring students to complete the online evaluation form. Responses are limited, but the School of Outreach compiles evaluation feedback and forwards the information to the course instructor. Evaluation responses are reviewed by and kept on file in the School of Outreach. The information is used to improve course quality, faculty performance, and support the teaching and learning environment.

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: Experience One, through block scheduling, maximizes opportunities for student learning, while experiential learning enhances the quality of student learning. By maintaining a maximum cap of 25 on nearly all courses, and by maintaining its emphasis upon hiring full-time, tenure-track faculty, the university maximizes student-faculty interaction, especially with full-time faculty.

Montana Western now has in place a working learning outcomes assessment system, which, once it has been experienced by all faculty during seven-year reviews, will become sustainable and usable for smaller-scale annual reviews. The current assessment process facilitates practical changes in course and program content and design (that is, assessment leads to action for improvement), and, by requiring concluding conversations between faculty and academic administration, relates proposed changes to strategic plan fulfillment (that is, mission and strategic plan infuse the conversation about implementing improvements).

Finally, Montana Western has a strong, well-organized outreach program, one which benefits students, community members, and others while helping to support (financially and otherwise) the core mission of the university.

Areas for Improvement: The university needs to make teaching and learning conditions in its developmental courses at least equal to norms in the rest of the curriculum. While the English department has done an excellent job of creating an innovative developmental writing program, much remains to be achieved in regard to the developmental mathematics course.

The curriculum, while much enhanced by Experience One, still tends to be somewhat inefficient in its organization, resulting in struggles every semester to create enough general education courses, while upper division courses in many majors remain consistently undersubscribed. However, the academic administration now has five years of Experience One curriculum data and is

thus in a better position to orient departmental chair and curriculum schedulers to efficient deployment of faculty to meet all students' needs.

Finally, while learning outcomes assessment is proceeding well through seven-year reviews, more needs to be done to assure annual assessment occurs, that the data is

discussed by departmental faculty as a basis for curricular improvement and that improvements are consistent with the imperatives of the strategic plan.

STANDARD 3—STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

On average, the University of Montana Western enrolls 246 new freshmen a year. The average high school grade point average for new freshmen is 3.0. Twenty-one percent of new freshmen ranked in the top 25 percent of their graduating class, and 52 percent ranked in the top 50 percent. Those who took the ACT scored an average of 18 on English and an average of 19 on Math. Those who took the SAT scored an average of 443 Verbal and an average of 454 on Math. Of the 246 new freshmen, 172 students are from Montana, 46 percent are women and 54 percent are men.

The University of Montana Western enrolls, on average, 115 new transfers each year. Of the 115 transfer students, 90 are from Montana, 60 percent are women and 40 percent are men.

At the start of 2009-2010, Montana Western had a total of 1,190 total students, of whom 97 percent are undergraduates and three percent are post-baccalaureates. Nine hundred and three students are Montana residents, 281 are from out of state, and six are from foreign countries. There are about 330 students involved in athletics. (See **Table 3.1**, Admissions Report, next page.)

The purpose of student affairs at Montana Western is to support the academic mission and the institution, as a whole, by meeting the needs of all these students.

The Student Affairs mission statement is as follows:

The University of Montana Western is a community that honors freedom of inquiry, freedom of expression, and freedom of the individual. Within that community the mission of all departments within student affairs is to promote active student citizenship. Beyond citizenship, student affairs facilitate individual growth through providing leadership opportunities within the context of extra-curricular experiences.

By providing essential support services in a timely and responsive fashion, student affairs personnel support the information and resource needs of students as they progress through the academic structure and complete their educational program. Additionally, student affairs personnel and offices serve to foster a campus-wide understanding of students' rights, freedoms, obligations, and conduct expectations.

Student services at Montana Western consists of 20 service-providing departments and programs. Appendix 3.1 consists of organization charts of the relevant Student Affairs departments and programs. (See **Appendix 3.1**, Student Affairs Organization Charts.)

Student services are spread across campus and report to several administrators. Nevertheless, students receive timely

STANDARD THREE – STUDENTS TABLE 1 ADMISSIONS REPORT				
	Evaluation Year (2008)	1 Year Prior (2007)	2 Years Prior (2006)	3 Years Prior (2005)
First Time Freshmen Applications Received	424	474	447	419
Admitted	336	454	439	405
Denied				
Enrolled	227	251	250	227
Transfer Applications Received	215	195	248	249
Admitted	156	187	232	218
Denied				
Enrolled	109	117	142	163
Readmission Applications Received	48	44	42	22
Admitted	48	44	42	22
Denied				
Enrolled	38	28	31	17
Graduate Applications Received				
Admitted				
Denied				
Enrolled				
Professional Applications Received				
Admitted				
Denied				
Enrolled				
Non Degree Applications Received	NR	NR	NR	NR
Admitted				
Denied				
Enrolled	NR	NR	NR	NR

NR: No record...we have so few, we don't actively track these individuals.

services with personnel supporting their information and resource needs as they progress through the academic structure and complete their educational program.

A directory of student services appears in Montana Western's 2009-2010 Catalog and 2009-10 Student Handbook. (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, pp. 30-2; **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook, pp. 116-27.) The directory can also be accessed at **Exhibit 3.1**, the Student Life web page, <http://hal.umwestern.edu/studentlife/>.

Standard 3.A – Purpose and Organization

The BOR of the Montana University System (MUS) has developed policies and procedures as they pertain to each student affairs department. Each student affairs department is led by one of the two vice chancellors on campus.

Student services serves students in six primary areas: First, student services (in collaboration with Admissions) orients students to Montana Western by organizing summer Ready2Rock Days during which new students learn about campus and its rules and policies, as well as registering for classes; formal orientation activities for new first-year and transfer students prior to the beginning of fall classes; and by providing students with an annually updated student handbook, which contains all student-related policies and procedures.

Second, student services also comprise auxiliary services such as dining services, residence halls and hall activities, as well as security and safety.

Third, student services manage student physical health care and mental health counseling and disability services.

Fourth, student services involve student activities, including student governance (Associated Students of the University of Montana Western, or ASUMW) and clubs.

Fifth, student services embraces intercollegiate sports and intermural sports and other activities.

Finally, while all of the above services report through the Dean of Student Affairs to the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, student success activities report through the Director of Student Success to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Student success offices include Academic Advising, TRiO Student Services, the Learning Center and Career Services.

The student Affairs staff profile (see **Table 3.2**, Student Affairs Staff Profile, next page), shows the qualifications and years of experience among the professional and support staff. Student involvement is a major factor in each of the student affairs offices thanks to federal work study, which offers students the opportunity to work on campus and continue to be full-time students. Each of the professional staff

and support staff are defined by job descriptions. The students are hired by the manager in each department and job descriptions are on file at the financial aid or the career services offices. Direct

supervisors carry out annual evaluations of professional and support staff. The evaluations are shared with each employee and retained in the human

STANDARD THREE – STUDENTS TABLE 2 STUDENT AFFAIRS STAFF PROFILE				
(Data requested may be provided in computer format compatible to the institution’s data information system.)				
	Professional	Support	Student	Other
Female	8	33	40	
Male	4	15	30	
Degrees: PhD, EdD		2		
MD, JD, MSW	1			
MA, MS	4	7		
BA, BS	5	23		
AA, AAS, Certificate, etc.		7		
Years Experience in field:			2	
None				
Less than 5	1	13	68	
5 – 10	3	16		
11 – 15	2	6		
16 – 20	1	7		
More than 20	5	8		
Full-time: 9/10 months	2	16		
12 months	9	29		
Part-time: 9/10 months		2	68	
12 months		4	2	

resource office. The primary function of the evaluations is to assess and enhance student services.

When any of the Student Affairs offices has vacancies, they are filled using the appropriate employment pool of the local, regional, or national labor markets. Staff

members are hired using a search committee relying on screening criteria including educational level, skills, and experience related to position responsibilities as required by personnel policy. Job descriptions and responsibilities are publicly available through the personnel office and

the Montana Western Policy and Procedures Manual. As with professional and support staff, work-study student selection is based upon listed requirements for the position.

Student affairs policies and procedures are published in Montana Western's Student Handbook. (See **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-2010 Student Handbook, pp. 127-57.) Both handbook and catalog are revised annually through a stepped and tiered process involving students, staff, administrators, and faculty. This process offers a regular opportunity for review and revision of student affairs procedures and priorities.

Student affairs budget resources are distributed on the basis of previous allocations, with possible annual adjustments in response to requests and to area priorities.

Standard 3.B – General Responsibilities

1) Data and Assessment

The registrar annually composes data tables that allow an overall understanding of new students' basic characteristics—in-state versus out-of-state place of residence, race, gender, and so on. (See **Exhibit 3.2**, Registrar's Enrollment and Institutional Research Page, <http://hal.umwestern.edu/registrar/page10.htm>.) The Student Success office and the Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs create further data tables analyzing student academic characteristics, especially ACT, SAT, and other test results, high school grade point averages, and so on. These data are shared with student success staff.

Further, TRiO staff compile data on the students with whom they work.

Opportunities to share data and to cause data to be gathered and analyzed arise from the participation of student activities and student success staff on Senior Staff, University Council and other committees, as well as at morning meetings when staff gather to share, discuss, and address student needs.

In regard to student academic needs, student data analysis has, for example, resulted in the timely provision of writing and mathematics courses to fulfill the growing developmental needs of new students. On the student activities side, data and student and parent feedback have resulted in substantive changes to summer advising and registration days (currently named Ready2Rock Days), as well as fall Orientation.

Each year a student services satisfaction survey is administered by the Director of Residence Life. (**Exhibit 3.3**, Student Satisfaction Survey and Summary Results.) Most departments experience responses indicating high or moderately high student satisfaction, and student satisfaction in most areas is growing each year. Each of the managers receives a copy of the results and is expected to share with their department and make the necessary changes to improve satisfaction.

For everyone connected with student services, the student services satisfaction survey operates as an effective tool for productive change. In the Registrar's office, for example, changes implemented as a direct result of the survey include improved

customer service training, especially for student workers, and multiple improvements in student access to information. Now, students can access their educational records and class schedules on-line via DAWGS (Banner self-service), can register for courses on-line, and can download printable forms with instructions. Students have on-line access to enrollment verification and transcript request services (with the assistance of the National Student Clearinghouse).

Further, increasing familiarity with Banner has enabled staff to give advisors and department chairs swift information about students not attending classes, as well as students receiving D and F grades. As a result, advisors, chairs, and faculty can immediately contact students in trouble and support them in becoming more successful. Thus, student intervention can take place immediately following the end of each of the semester's four blocks, not just after the end of each semester. This early response capability partly explains the increased student retention the university has enjoyed since the inception of the block system.

Thanks to the survey, dining services has made many improvements in menu offerings, especially in healthy options. In addition, dining services has been able, for instance, to extend hours of operation in order to better meet the needs of athletes.

Residence life has increased student support by providing additional residence hall assistants, staffing the front office with knowledgeable student workers, and keeping the office open during weekends and holidays. For the convenience of

students a credit card machine is now available on campus, and laundry costs (a significant source of student complaints) have been contained.

Finally, disability services hired a full-time assistant to help better serve students with a diversity of disability needs.

In short, the student satisfaction survey resulted not only in useful assessment of services, but also in a broadly-shared commitment to continuous improvement, even as student needs change over time.

2) Student Participation in Governance

The university provides opportunities for students to participate in institutional governance in a number of ways. The Associated Students of the University of Montana Western (ASUMW) is the official student government body for the campus. ASUMW representatives serve on all institutional standing committees, faculty search committees, University Council, and Faculty Senate. The BOR includes a student Regent (who, for the 2008-2009 school year, was Montana Western student, Mitch Jessen). The BOR regularly schedules meetings with student government representatives from each of the campuses of the Montana University System at each of its six yearly meetings. (See **Exhibit 3.4**, ASUMW, Student Government Constitution, By-Laws, and 2009 Committee Assignments; **Exhibit 3.5**, ASUMW, 2008-10. Student Senate Minutes.)

Faculty is involved in the development of ASUMW policies, programs, and services.

The ASUMW Student Senate has one faculty advisor and one administrative advisor. Along with members of the Student Senate, faculty serve on Montana Western committees concerned with critical student issues, including academic standards and financial aid appeals and university court.

3) Student Rights and Responsibilities

Montana Western publishes and distributes the catalog to both prospective and enrolled students. Catalog contents describe the university's mission, admission requirements and procedures, student rights and responsibilities, academic regulations, course descriptions, graduation requirements, and tuition and fees. The catalog is currently published on an annual basis. Considerable redundancy exists purposely among the catalog and the student handbook to ensure that directive information is readily available to students and other interested parties. Both the catalog and student handbook are also available on the university web site.

Policies on student's rights and responsibilities, including those related to academic honesty and procedural rights, are clearly stated and published in the student handbook. The student handbook is distributed at orientation and Ready2Rock Days and is available at the Student Affairs Office and at the bookstore for students to pick up when they purchase their books. The handbook is distributed to every student, staff, and faculty at no charge. The handbook is published annually to reflect policy and other changes. Like the catalog,

the student handbook is reviewed and revised annually through a stepped and tiered process that includes students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

All student disciplinary actions follow set procedures described in the student handbook. Informal disposition of a case is possible when the facts of the case are not disputed, and there is an agreed settlement, consent order, or failure to appear. For minor disciplinary infractions in residence halls, the Director of Residence Life may impose a penalty. In cases of major disciplinary actions involving resident and non-resident students, the Dean of Students may impose the penalty. If case facts are disputed, or if the charged party rejects the informal disposition option, a formal hearing is held pursuant to the process outlined in the student handbook. The process for appeals, student complaints against faculty or requests for grade changes are also outlined in the student handbook. (See **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook, pp. 139-51).

4) Student Safety

The Campus Safety and Security Committee serves the campus community in a variety of ways, with primary emphasis on the protection of life and property. The committee meets when needed and the chair of the committee keeps the campus informed of safety issues. For the past three years, the Dean of Students took on the responsibility of keeping the campus trained and informed of any crisis, health issues, safety procedures, and drills.

Securitas, the university's night watch, completes safety and security rounds for the university between 10 pm until 6 am every day. These rounds require guards to verify that buildings are secure, to respond to fire alarms, to escort individuals on campus, and to check routine facility conditions.

Securitas informs Facilities Services and/or the Student Affairs Office when there are situations that warrant attention beyond its scope. Emergencies or situations involving students are reported to the Student Affairs Office after-hours emergency line, while situations involving facilities are reported to the Facilities Services after-hours emergency line. Securitas is not an armed response service and thus works with local police in situations that might involve a physical confrontation.

The Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act, also known as the Clery Act, is a federally-mandated act that applies to all universities offering financial aid to their students. The report is currently distributed through the student handbook. (See **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook, pp. 154-56, 170). Other information on safety and security is contained in the student handbook and other documents distributed to students as well as at informational sessions during new student orientation.

Standard 3.C - Academic Credit and Records

Evaluation of student achievement is described in each class syllabus, in addition to the course outline, objectives, requirements, methods of instruction, and

faculty office locations and telephone numbers. The syllabus must be distributed to students on the first day of each block. Copies of course syllabi are placed on file in the Provost office and can also be found on WebCT.

The student handbook and catalog both contain definitions of credit, grading, audit procedures, and the policy appeal process. (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, pp. 25, 42-45; **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-2010 Student Handbook, pp. 131-32, 140-42, 150-51.) Appeals of academic policies are referred to the Academic Admissions and Standards Committee. The committee meets at the beginning of each block and as needed to discuss student petitions for policy waivers.

The established criteria for awarding credit are consistent with BOR policy and NWCCU guidelines. Courses are normally scheduled for a minimum of 750 minutes per credit. Courses taught by both traditional and nontraditional means, such as the internet, are regularly evaluated.

Evaluation of student performance in all internship and thesis projects is performed according to a contract individually developed between students and the faculty supervisor and approved by the provost. This assures criteria are appropriate to the degree level. Some departments have guidelines for all faculty within their department to use while others rely on the judgment of individual faculty members under the scrutiny of the provost. Students work closely with their faculty advisor to select thesis projects and internship opportunities that serve as capstone experiences that make use of and further

reinforce what they learned in their class work.

Transfer credit policy is stated in the catalog (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, p. 11). A transfer applicant is one who has attempted 12 or more credits at an accredited college or university. Typically, the transfer evaluation begins in the Advising Office and involves department chairs and faculty, as necessary.

Within the Montana University System (MUS), credit transfer is facilitated by BOR Policy 301.5 (See **Exhibit 3.6**, Board Of Regents Policies, Section 301.5), which dictates that an approved list of classes will transfer readily from campus to campus within MUS. The MUS mandates all campuses in the system to implement a common courses numbering system. Montana Western is diligent in keeping compliance with the new mandate and informing students of course name and number changes, especially prior to each registration period.

Academic advisors make decisions about transferable credit with input and advice from faculty. The entire process is made somewhat simpler by the BOR's state policy on transferability, which maximizes the number of general education courses automatically transferred within state higher education institutions.

Security of electronically filed academic records is preserved through password access. Electronic transcript files are stored on the campus minicomputer. The files are backed up on a tape each night and stored in a fireproof safe. Older transcripts are

secured in fireproof files and stored in the basement of the James Short Administrations Building. Student identifiable records are shredded when the office files are purged. Transcripts are stored on a CD-ROM.

Standard 3.D – Student Services

The Office of Admissions of Montana Western is guided by policy established by the BOR. The policy is published in the university's annual course catalog, office publications, and is navigable from Montana Western's online application. (See **Exhibit 3.7**, Board Of Regents Policies, Sections 301 to 301.2; **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, pp. 7-16; **Exhibit 3.8**, UMW Web Site, <http://hal.umwestern.edu/admissions/> .)

In spring 2004, Montana Western created a selective academic program, natural horsemanship. The Admissions Office was instrumental in assisting the selection board for the program in collecting additional application requirements. During the recruiting process the Admissions Office communicates the additional steps through specific communication to all applicants and prospective students interested in any of the equine programs to eliminate confusion regarding which students did and did not have to provide the institution with additional application materials.

The Office of Admissions started restructuring in summer 2005. The process began with the hiring of a director of admissions and proceeded through the hiring of an admissions evaluator and an

administrative assistant for the office. The admissions evaluator position was created to carry out evaluation of applicants based on the guidelines of the BOR. The administrative assistant position was created to manage the campus visitor (prospective student) program, to support the admissions recruiters, and to act as the campus telephone operator.

The academic transition to Experience One gave Montana Western the opportunity to distinguish itself in markets inside and outside Montana by developing recruiting strategies that would consider state, regional, and national markets. Subsequently, both in- and out-of-state markets both grew. As a result, the number and diversity of Montana Western students also grew. To sustain both growth and diversity, the university allocated additional funding to the Office of Admissions for the 2010–2012 biennium. In addition, the university's marketing and public relations department developed a new publication campaign.

As noted earlier, the MUS requires all college freshmen to satisfy one of three standards of admission to four-year colleges: an ACT composite score of 22 or higher or SAT I combined Mathematics/Critical Reading/Writing Score of 1540 or higher, a high school grade point average of 2.5 or higher, or a ranking in the top half of the student's high school graduating class.

Montana Western offers both baccalaureate and associate degrees. As a result, students who do not meet admissions standards may enroll in a two-year degree program and move to a four-year program once their

developmental needs are successfully addressed. Developmental students have three semesters during which to remediate. Both the math and English departments created developmental courses to help students generate the skills and knowledge prerequisite to success in two- and four-year degree programs. The Learning Center offers group tutorial sessions for students taking developmental courses.

In the past five years a central focus of the campus and administration has been toward providing more services related to the retention and persistence of our students. Block scheduling, or one-class-at-a-time, was fully implemented five years ago. With this change, student success programs were enhanced and centralized under the director of student success. This position answers directly to the assistant provost. The director is part of the Academic Council and participates in campus committees related to student academic needs. The programs that are part of student success are the advising center, The Learning Center and Career Services (under a single director), and TRiO Student Support Services.

The Advising Center opened five years ago to provide general advising for all new students as well as transcript evaluations, information about the Teacher Education Program (TEP), and a centralized place for students to gain information and assistance in navigating the university system. There are two full-time advisors in the center.

Before the Learning Center (previously the Learning Assistance Center for Excellence [LACE]) opened in fall 2005, there was minimal tutoring support for students. Now

guided by a director who is also in charge of Career Services (co-located in the Learning Center), the Learning Center tutors are all students recommended by their particular departments who agree to complete an initial training, as well as ongoing trainings throughout the year. Now containing a computer lab and operating with varied hours to accommodate student schedules, the Learning Center also provides study groups for different classes, especially the developmental writing and math classes.

Career Services offers students a wide array of services from job information on campus, post-degree employment opportunities, placement files, graduation and follow-up surveys for ongoing assessment, and workshops related to student and employment success. Its co-location in the Learning Center enables the director and tutors to involve students in considering career options well prior to graduation.

TRiO Student Support services is a federal grant-funded program working with low-income and first generation students as well as students with disabilities. The program director and three retention specialists serve approximately 160 students a year, providing direction in academic planning, understanding and meeting basic college requirements, and supporting students in moving successfully toward degree completion.

Students who are self-identified as disability students receive three formal services from Student Affairs (books on audio, note-takers, and special proctoring of tests). These students are also encouraged to visit the Learning Center for tutorial support.

Students who take advantage of this service find they spend less time studying and have higher grade point averages than students who do not.

For the past two years all the Student Affairs and Student Services managers met daily at 8:15 a.m. to communicate student needs, issues of concern, and new information to each other. These meetings resulted in successful early intervention for a large number of students and excellent referral and coordination of services to meet the emerging needs of individual students.

One indicator of the success of the above offices is the fact that fall-to-fall retention of new first-time first-year students increased from 53 percent in 2004 to 74 percent in 2009.

Policies and procedures for placement of students in appropriate courses are based on both the Montana University Systems' standards and individual standards required by departments at Montana Western. Information about admissions requirements is available on the website and in the catalog. Individual prerequisite requirements for courses are available under the specific course requirements noted in the catalog.

The university catalog contains the process followed by students and personnel regarding continuation in, or termination of, participation in an educational program. The appeals process is also given in writing to sanctioned students. Procedures for readmission are outlined in the catalog (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, p. 44.)

Upon receipt of a graduation application, personnel in the Montana Western Registrar's Office complete degree audits, which are summarized in letter form, copies of which are sent to the candidate, the candidate's faculty advisor and the appropriate academic department chair. In completing a degree audit, staff compare course work completed by candidates/applicants (as recorded on official transcripts) with course and other academic requirements outlined in the applicable catalog; any deficiencies (courses not completed, residency requirements not met, insufficient grade point averages, minimum grades not attained, etc) are noted and explained on the audit letter. Prospective graduates must submit Application for Graduation forms at least one full semester before their intended degree/program completion date; application deadlines are outlined in the current catalog.

The Student Right-to-know Act is found in the student handbook and is followed along with the Clery Act. The Clery Act report is found on our website and a hard copy can be obtained at the Student Affairs Office. (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, pp. 21-22; **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook, pp. 128-29; **Exhibit 3.9**, UMW Web Site, http://www.umwestern.edu/studentlife/Microsoft Word - Clery_Report_2008.pdf.)

The Financial Aid Office awards federal Title IV, state, and institutional funds and scholarships to students who might not otherwise be able to have access to higher education due to limited resources. To be eligible for consideration for financial aid, students must complete the Free Application

for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year, preferably by the priority deadline for consideration of campus-based funds, and be in good standing (that is, making academic progress per federal and institutional policies). The proportion of students who apply for aid each year varies from 80 to 90 percent of Montana Western's student body. Montana Western is a Title III-designated school with over 50 percent of our students receiving Pell Grants.

Kinds of financial aid are clarified in the catalog. (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-10 Catalog, pp. 34-37.) In addition, the University of Montana Western Foundation annually publishes a list of the scholarships it manages and makes the list available to students on demand and through the Financial Aid Office.

The following federal grants are available to eligible Montana Western students: Pell Grant, Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National SMART Grant (to support students majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics degrees), and Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG). State-level grants include the Baker/MTAP Grant (for state resident students with substantial financial need) and the Access Grant (funded by Student Assistance Foundation of Montana). Access grants are intended to provide access to college and to reduce debt for low to middle income students with financial aid loans. Finally, eligible Montana residents have access to the Montana Higher Education Grant (MHEG), which supports students with demonstrated financial need.

Fee waivers using state funds are also available in a number of categories from the university.

The federal TEACH Grant supports education majors who intend to teach in a public or private elementary or secondary school serving students from low-income families in a teacher shortage subject.

Scholarships are also available from private funds donated to the Montana Western Foundation. Some of these scholarships are endowed while others come through yearly gifts. The Scholarship Committee meets each year to disburse these scholarship funds in close coordination with the award of other forms of financial aid.

Eligible Montana Western students can access federal and state work study programs either to work on campus or to serve certain non-profit groups.

In terms of loans, eligible Montana Western students can apply for federal Perkins, Stafford and PLUS loans. In addition, Montana created a short-term retention scholarship revolving loan fund from federal funds to support students with extreme financial needs.

Montana Western employs a packaging policy designed to reduce student loan debt and lower default rates. Grant aid and work study funds are always packaged first and loans are offered last, after consideration of all other resources.

Montana Western employs a veterans' coordinator in the Financial Aid Office who serves as the certifying official for the

Department of Veterans' Affairs while providing student veterans with information and resources. The office also works with Tribal Higher Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, State Fund, Job Service, Student Life, and other resource providers to assist students.

Students are provided with financial aid process and resource information via several resources. The UMW catalog contains full descriptions of the programs we participate in, as well as our academic progress and enrollment and attendance policies. Students are notified as to their responsibilities in the financial aid process via system-generated letters, postcards, and e-mail, as well as via the UMW Web site. Examples of the catalog text, FAFSA worksheet, tracking and award letters and web site information are attached. (See **Exhibit 3.10**, Financial Aid Information.)

A formal, required session on financial aid occurs during fall and spring orientations.

Students are given tours by admissions personnel during campus visits, during orientation, through the resident assistants during floor meetings, or as needed or requested by the student.

Orientation is provided to all first-time students twice a year. Fall orientation is a three-day event, which includes moving into the residence halls, convocation, activities for students and parents, and required information sessions on alcohol policy, safety and security issues, sexual assault prevention, and student services on campus. Student athletes, especially football players, whose training schedule conflicts with

orientation, receive their own day-and-a-half orientation immediately before training camp begins in the fall. Spring orientation in January is a one-day event, which involves informing students of policies and procedures, registering for classes, and a campus tour.

New students are invited to come to orientation and bring two family members with them. They receive a schedule prior to coming on campus and once here each student receives a gift, student handbook, and one-on-one guidance from staff, faculty, and student orientation leaders.

Students new to Montana Western, whether first-time freshman or transfer students, are all initially advised through the Academic Advising Center. Currently staffed by two full-time academic advisors, the center is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day to assist students in all facets of their education, from transcript evaluations, class selection, and explanations of paperwork, to addressing an extraordinary range of individual questions. Two years ago, the advisors created a concise and inclusive advising manual intended to enable students to understand and interpret advising protocols independently. A manual is given to each new and transferring student during their first semester at Montana Western.

During their first semester at Montana Western students are assigned a faculty advisor in their area of study. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisors each semester to ensure they are on track for graduation and planning their sequencing of courses appropriately.

Each semester, every student is assigned an alternate (PIN) in order to register for personal identification number classes. Students can only obtain their PINs by meeting with an advisor. Information about degree choices, lists of required classes and schedules of classes are all available on the campus website. The advising center updates degree requirements each year and posts them so students can track their progress toward graduation.

The Career Services office provides assistance to both current student and alumni. The office is located within the Learning Center to ensure students have easy access to both services and to make Career Services visible to students from the start of their undergraduate careers. The Career Services office provides job search strategies, employment opportunities and career exploration information. Information and services offered include resume writing, interview techniques, a weekly posting of employment opportunities and Web-based career inventories.

Placement files are developed and maintained through the Career Services office. Primarily, these files are used for education majors, although the service is available for all students. The director of the Learning Center and Career Services provides an orientation to all education students in their senior year about the documentation necessary for these files and then is responsible for sending out the information to prospective employers.

Career Services is also responsible for gathering survey data from students after graduation, and from employers. Low rates

of survey returns have posed an on-going problem for Career Services. Recent changes in strategy resulted in some slight gains in survey returns, and the directors of Student Success and Career Services both continue to look for further improvements. For example, in the past, graduating students were mailed a graduate survey with their diploma and asked to complete it and return it after they obtained employment or went to graduate school. But in spring 2009, the survey was distributed to graduates prior to graduation and the return rate was dramatically higher. More troubling is the post-graduation student satisfaction and employment survey, mailed between six months and one year after a student's graduation. Mailed to the student's most recent address, many surveys are returned due to inaccurate addresses. Many are not returned at all despite the provision to respondents of a stamped, addressed envelope. Nevertheless, two years ago, in an attempt to raise response rates, Career Services sent a letter with the survey, stating the importance of responding and entering respondents in a prize drawing. Unfortunately, the return rate increased only minimally.

During summer 2009, a steering committee was formed to address the need for accurate information on all surveys and to figure out a way to centralize the information received. This task force is still meeting to address the concerns above and to look at alternate ways of collecting data.

Montana Western, along with the other campuses in the MUS, participates in a committee with representatives from each

campus to work together to ensure all students with six or more credits have medical insurance. For the last 15 years, Blue Cross Blue Shield has been the provider for our students. Students who have fewer than six credits can opt to have the medical insurance by informing the Business Office and paying the premium. Fall semester students are covered from the first day of class through the day before spring semester begins. Spring semester students are covered from the first day of class through August 31 of that year. Students can waive the insurance by providing proof of other medical insurance to the Business office or the Dean of Students. (See **Exhibit 3.11**, Student Health Insurance Plan.)

Mental health counseling is available to all our students at no charge through our in-house counselor. If a student chooses to go off campus for counseling they can use their medical insurance to cover the cost.

Medical health needs are met through a contract with the Dillon Community Health Center, located across the street from campus. Primary care services offered at no extra charge to the student include sick visits, STD testing and treatment, pregnancy tests, family planning, contraceptives, annual PAPS, flu shots, tetanus shots, TB tests, and depression and anxiety. If the student needs further care, the Dillon Community Health Center refers the student to another doctor or to the hospital for care.

Student housing, or residence life, is housed in the Student Affairs office and is appropriately staffed by a housing director, facilities manager, two custodians, hall

directors, resident assistants, and front office student employees. The residence life staff reports to the Dean of Students. The student employees are trained by the housing director through procedure manuals, retreats, and weekly meetings. (See **Exhibit 3.12**, Resident Assistant Training Manual; **Exhibit 3.13**, Student Affairs Office Training Manual) One hall director and two resident assistants are on call every night to complete regular inspections of their areas of responsibility, including checking for damages, safety violations, lighting needs, and the condition of smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. Fire drills are held in the residence halls each semester.

The Student Affairs Office, located in Davis Hall, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, Sunday and holidays from noon to 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. If the office is closed, a sign is posted on the door with phone numbers of location of the hall director and resident assistant.

Montana Western's dining services consists of a main cafeteria and a convenience store. The primary meal plan for students allows all-day access from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the cafeteria. Traditional hot meals are served three times a day and a salad and sandwich bar are offered at times between the main meals. Flex dollars are built into each student's meal plan that can be used in the convenience store. A commuter plan is available for students living off campus. A variety of cross-cultural meals are served to expose students to a diverse selection of menu items. Catering services are also available for campus and community events.

Dining services currently employ 18 full-time workers and 15-20 part-time and student workers.

The implementation of a Farm to College Program began in 2005 and continues to provide support to state and local food producers. The program focuses on fresh, nutritional foods, energy savings from reduced long-distance distribution of foods and sustaining support for local ranchers and other food producers. Seventeen percent of the total food budget is spent on local items.

In 2009, dining services went tray-less in an effort to save money and reduce the cafeteria's impact on the environment by minimizing food and water waste. An unexpected benefit of the tray-less program is that students make use of smaller, hand-carried food portions, resulting in significantly reduced food waste.

Since Montana Western's last full-scale accreditation visit, Student Affairs underwent another re-organization. The Associated Students of the University of Montana Western (ASUMW) is now completely responsible for student activities and intramurals. ASUMW hires students to organize, inform, and staff all the activities and intramurals. Any educational activities, such as sexual assault, suicide prevention, and health promotions are done through the Student Affairs Office, Dean of Students, counselor, and wellness director. Students are now getting a variety of activities from several offices to meet the needs of the majority of the university's students. A list of student clubs can be found in the student handbook. (See **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook, pp. 123-27.)

The bookstore is operated by a very competent manager, a part-time, retired bookstore manager, and students. The bookstore provides required textbooks, supplies, and supplemental materials, as well as Montana Western Bulldog clothing and memorabilia.

The bookstore was remodeled in summer 2009 to better meet the needs of students and to update items available. The bookstore is also able to serve the students efficiently through a program that allows the cash register to communicate with the Banner information management system, which, among other things, allows for online shopping. The bookstore also updated its credit/debit card machine.

The adoption of block scheduling greatly altered the patterns of student book-buying and altered the numbers of books necessary for the bookstore to stock. For example, some freshman courses are now offered during a number of blocks and students are able to pass books down to students in succeeding blocks, either by themselves or through selling the books back to the bookstore for resale. While the bookstore learned to compensate for this situation, the number of books sold, and thus the bookstore profits, which fund other student activities, are down.

Montana Western's student-run newspaper, the Wescolite, was cancelled at the end of the 2008-2009 school year due to lack of student interest in the journalism course run by the English department. In addition, student demand for other courses resulted in the department not being able to any longer assign a faculty member to the journalism

course. ASUMW is now considering supporting an online version of the Wescolite.

The university owns a radio station managed through ASUMW and supported by a faculty advisor and an advisory committee. The latter help ensure the proper use of the radio, as well as compliance with broadcast policies and procedures.

Standard 3.E – Intercollegiate Athletics

Two years ago, the university hired a full-time athletic director to oversee both intercollegiate and intramural sports, and to operate the physical education complex. The athletic director reports directly to the chancellor. The director ensures athletic program goals and objectives, as well as the expectations of the university, are regularly communicated to the head coaches who then communicate with their assistants and trainers, as well as athletics staff, through departmental policies and procedures (see **Exhibit 3.14**, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Policies and Procedures, http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/pubs/handbook/NAIA_Official_Handbook.pdf). The duties and authority of various faculty and staff involved in the program are stated in written job descriptions. A faculty advisory committee, chaired by the faculty representative, provides input into policy and other discussions. The director evaluates the athletic program monthly in order to assure compliance with all rules and regulations.

The Admissions Office handles admission procedures for student athletes. Student athletes must meet the same academic standards and degree requirements as non-athletes. All financial aid awards for athletes are processed by the Financial Aid office. All contracts for athletic scholarships are reviewed by the financial aid officer and appropriate amounts are entered in the database and award notices mailed with supplementary information. When student-athletes qualify for other financial aid such as Pell Grants and Stafford Loans, the files are reviewed to ascertain there are no awards exceeding federal and state regulations. For additional information about financial aid awards and review, see the section on financial aid in this standard.

The athletic director prepares an annual budget using historical information and goals for the current year. All funding sources, including State appropriations, ticket sales, booster club memberships, advertising income, special events income, student fees, camp participation fees, fundraising proceeds, and development donations are estimated. The estimated revenues and expenditures are reviewed by the vice chancellor for administration and finance.

The Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance submits the budget to the chancellor for approval. The vice chancellor provides the budget authority for the intercollegiate athletic program and approves all expenditures. The vice chancellor, who is also the campus budget officer, prepares periodic financial status reports comparing budgeted revenues and expenditures to

actual results. Like all campus fiscal transactions, athletic department expenditures are processed through the state's accounting and budgeting system. The Business Office reviews transactions for compliance with state regulations, and records are subject to audit by the state legislative auditor.

Funds deposited with the University of Montana Western Foundation for the support of the athletic program are accounted for under the generally accepted practices followed by that separate entity. The financial activities of the foundation are subject to annual independent audit. See Standard Seven for additional information.

Finally, student participation in athletics is supported by the university's "Hold Harmless" policy. This assures that, as long as student athletes inform their faculty in a timely manner at the start of each course, faculty will work with the students to create, for instance, alternative assignments and other means to enable them to meet their academic responsibilities successfully. (See **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook. pp. 151-52.)

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: There is a high degree of unity and commitment among the student affairs and student success staff and administrators who are the front-line of student activities and services at Montana Western. Thanks to morning meetings among the principals, and data-sharing regarding students with academic and other

issues at the conclusion of each block, there is excellent, swift communication regarding the immediate needs of students. Student service staff and administrators also take seriously and benefit from the annual student satisfaction survey, which is always used as a platform for developing improved services. As a result, despite limited budgets, students are served with increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

Areas of Weakness: As usual, limited budgets are a primary concern, especially as all student services offices are sparsely staffed. Accordingly, a strategy of cross-office training may become an important element of staff development in the next few years.

STANDARD 4—FACULTY

STANDARD 4.A—Faculty Selection, Evaluation, Roles, Welfare, and Development

Faculty selection, evaluation, working conditions, academic freedom, workload, role in campus governance, and other issues are covered in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the University of Montana Western Faculty Association and the Montana Board of Regents of higher education (BOR). (See **Exhibit 4.1**, Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2007-11) Copies of the current CBA are distributed to all potential faculty at the interview stage. When a new CBA is printed, all faculty receive copies.

Montana Western's full-time faculty are represented by Local 4323 of the Montana Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. While faculty are not required to join the Faculty Association, they are required to pay representation fees. Currently, only two of the over 50 faculty members eligible to be members of the Faculty Association elect not to belong.

The CBA and BOR policy define categories of faculty. The core faculty are those in full-time tenure-track or tenured positions (45 total). They are supplemented by full-time faculty in non-tenure-track (temporary) positions (18 faculty total) and by adjunct faculty (31, plus the on-line and early childhood faculty). All faculty are assigned academic ranks appropriate to their experience and qualifications, as defined in the CBA (See **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 13-14;

Exhibit 4.2, Board of Regents Policy 702.1, 706.1, 711.3).

Faculty who teach fewer than nine credits per semester are considered adjunct faculty. This category of faculty includes some appropriately qualified full-time personnel (contract professionals) such as librarians, administrative staff, and athletic coaches who have a portion of their regular salaries assigned to their teaching duties. Other adjunct faculty have no full-time position with the college and are generally paid per credit hour taught, the amount varying with qualifications (currently \$761 with a masters degree, \$861 with a doctoral degree). Adjunct faculty are not part of the faculty bargaining unit, but are covered by some provisions of the CBA and BOR policy.

Tables 4.1, Institutional Faculty Profile, and **Table 4.2**, Number and Source of Terminal Degrees of 2008-09 Montana Western Faculty (see next pages) show the make-up of Montana Western faculty.

Montana Western remains committed to hiring full-time, tenure-track faculty with terminal degrees in their fields to the maximum extent possible within the context of a balanced budget. This commitment resulted in the expansion of tenure-track hires (in music, biology, environmental science, and health and human

TABLE 4.1: 2008-09 Institutional Faculty Profile

	Number		Number of Terminal Degrees					Full-time Faculty-Month Salary		
Rank or Class	Full-time	Part-time	DR	M	B	Prof. License	Less than Bac.	Min		Max
Professor	23		20	2		1		52,413	59,242	66,154
Associate Professor	12		12					47,762	50,684	58,938
Assistant Professor	8		6	2				45,277	45,587	47,475
Visiting Assist. Prof.	2		1	1				40,315	40,315	40,315
Instructor	12	4		14	2			34,115	37,591	42,070
Adjunct Instructor		32	3	12	6			600	3,367	9,600
Totals	57	36	42	31	8	1				
	Years of Experience at UMW			Total Years Teaching				Fall 08 Credit Hour Load		
Rank or Class	Min	Med	Max	Min	Med	Max	Min	Med	Max	
Professor	6	13	24	7	19	31	12	14.2	20	
Associate Professor	1	4	9	3	11	24	4	10	13	
Assistant Professor	1	1.25	3	1	1.6	4	11	12.9	16	
Visiting Assist. Prof.	3	3.5	4	4	17	30	8	10	12	
Instructor	1	5.4	15	1	5.5	15	12	12.5	19	
Adjunct Instructor	1	8.5	13	5	13	29	1	4.7	12	

performance, for instance) in the last five years.

In regard to faculty participation in curriculum development and governance, **Exhibit 4.3** comprises complete lists of university committees from 2004 to 2009, demonstrating the range of faculty engagement in academic and university affairs. The faculty of individual departments and programs are responsible for planning, creating and maintaining departmental curriculum. While the General Education, Honors, and International Committees plan specific aspects of the curriculum, the Curriculum Committee makes university-wide decisions and recommendations regarding new courses, and the Chairs and Schedulers Committee works with the provost, assistant provost, and director of student success to review and develop an annual curriculum that meets the needs of all students. Faculty Senate evaluates and responds to curricular initiatives and changes and makes recommendations to the provost. Further, the faculty is represented on the University Council and Senior Staff (Chancellor's Council), both of which help guide academic planning, especially to assure that it occurs in concert with the strategic plan. Other committees whose work impacts academic planning and curriculum development at least indirectly are the Workload and Teaching Development Committees.

All full-time, tenured faculty are assigned student advisees, as are tenure-track faculty after the completion of their first year of teaching. The number of student advisees

per faculty varies, especially depending on the number of majors per department. Faculty advising is supported and supplemented by the academic advisors, the TRiO advisors, and the director of student success.

Unevenness exists in the quality of advising received from advisor to advisor. The Advising Center was developed to serve as a supplement to faculty advisors to help provide advice to students, especially new incoming students. Since the best faculty advisors tend to attract the most advisees, this factor, along with the differences in numbers of majors from department to department, has created an imbalance in faculty advisee loads. The goal of the academic administration is to improve the advising of less knowledgeable and less skilled advisors by providing them information and training.

The normal, expected teaching load of all full-time faculty is 12 credits per semester. For arts and sciences faculty, this equates to an average of three courses per semester. Thus, these faculty teach three out of four blocks per semester. The fourth block is a faculty development block. To ensure faculty use their two development blocks per year in a manner appropriate to the development of their pedagogical and professional skills and knowledge, the CBA requires all faculty to use their development blocks for professional activities such as research, grant-writing, creative activities, or class development. If faculty are off campus for these activities, they need to leave contact information with the provost and posted on their office doors.

Unlike the arts and sciences departments, the departments of education and business and technology still offer a considerable (though diminishing) number of one-, two-, and three-credit courses. As a result, while workloads remain 12 credits per semester, some of these faculty teach all four blocks or make other, more complex arrangements to fulfill their teaching obligations.

As departments segue from the current arrangement of options and related areas to majors and minors, the academic administration is encouraging faculty to maximize four credit courses and minimize offerings for fewer credits.

Though some faculty, and especially full-time instructors, often teach more than 12 credits (with extra compensation), the academic administration is making every effort to minimize such occurrences by working with faculty to organize the curriculum in more efficient and effective ways, thus enhancing the ability of faculty to benefit from professional growth and renewal. This has been hampered to some extent by the conversion to block scheduling with its smaller class sizes requiring the addition of more class sections, especially at the lower level.

A normal teaching workload of six, four-credit block courses per year (each lasting 18 teaching days), requires only 108 teaching days plus a few days for grading final examinations and reporting grades. Thus, a normal faculty teaching workload does not significantly interfere with professional growth and development. However, there is some concern that other elements of faculty workload such as

committee work, advising, and assessment activities consume too much of some faculty members' time.

Faculty salaries are negotiated in collective bargaining negotiations and are published in the final CBA, which is well distributed. (See **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 29-30.)

Incoming faculty candidates are advised of the salary range and likely salary offer before being brought to campus for interviews. In general, faculty salaries remain among the lowest in the state public four-year university system, as well as remaining low relative to those of faculty at appropriate peer universities. Salaries are most competitive at the lower ranks of instructor and assistant professor, less competitive at the ranks of associate and full professor.

Part of the reason for this trend is that Montana Western faculty for the past decade have not been willing to accept merit increments to their salaries and the promotion increments are not large enough to keep pace with the salary differentials that exist between ranks on most other campuses. Nevertheless, the university has been able to attract strong pools of applicants for most positions and to hire well-qualified faculty, most with appropriate terminal degrees. Montana Western's capacity to do so has long been aided by the attraction of excellent quality of life in Dillon and southwest Montana, and, more recently, by the innovative appeal of Experience One. While a few faculty left in recent years to accept other, higher paying positions, the campus rank distribution remains skewed towards the top end,

indicating faculty retention in most areas is not a major issue.

Low salaries were a focus of recent faculty bargaining sessions. After receiving the highest raises in the Montana University System in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, Montana Western faculty were not able to negotiate raises for the current biennium. Salaries of most state employees are frozen for the biennium, except for promotion or merit increments. Recent negotiations included the selection of a peer comparator group, which will serve as a reference for future salary increments if the funding can be identified.

Faculty performance is regularly evaluated. The CBA details evaluation processes regarding the quality of faculty teaching and other institutional responsibilities (See **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 15-22) These processes are consistent with BOR policy. (See **Exhibit 4.4**, BOR Policy 705.3.)

Different categories of faculty are evaluated in different, but similar, ways. Tenure-track faculty (who are appointed for a fixed term with no right to reappointment) are evaluated every year. Tenured faculty are evaluated every two years. Full-time temporary appointees are also evaluated each year. Adjunct faculty are evaluated in a less formal manner through student evaluations and in some cases peer observations. On such a small campus, poor quality teaching does not escape the attention of the administration. More formal and multi-faceted evaluation of adjunct faculty is done for off-campus adjunct faculty, primarily those teaching at the multiple early childhood education sites.

All faculty evaluations involve the consideration of appropriate institutional requirements, as well as unit standards of the respective academic units. Faculty are required to provide documentation of their activities during the evaluation period. This documentation includes the faculty's annual professional development plan. At least one peer (chosen by agreement between the faculty member and the provost) evaluates each faculty during each review period. Students evaluate faculty each semester in a course chosen by the provost in the fall and by the faculty member in the spring. Students complete specified evaluation forms, which allow results to be compared with the aggregated results for peers at Montana Western and nationally. Faculty portfolios, which include the written responses of the peer evaluator and the numerical and written results of student evaluations, are given to the provost. The provost writes an evaluation summary including, where necessary, a formative assessment regarding progress toward tenure or promotion.

Where problems with faculty performance are determined to exist, the Faculty Association appoints a formative support committee to assist the faculty member in improving his/her professional performance. In addition, any faculty may work with the assistant provost on pedagogical issues.

Montana Western's faculty hiring procedures are detailed in Section 8 of the CBA. A document describing in detail the entire search process from requesting a position to the final hiring process is provided to departments requesting a new or

replacement faculty position. (See **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 12-14)

When the administration agrees with a departmental recommendation or request for a new or replacement position, and the funds exist to pay for the position, the administration, after consultation with appropriate faculty, creates a job description, which is then advertised extensively. The provost appoints a search committee composed of a majority of faculty, accompanied by students and administrators. The search committee makes its recommendation in writing to the administration and accompanies it with supporting data, including the candidate's credentials, evidence of scholarship or creative work, letters of recommendation, and written statements from all who participated in the interview process.

All faculty, including those newly-appointed, receive a written statement of employment specifying rank, salary, tenure status, and other terms and conditions of employment.

The CBA describes minimum qualifications for appointment to tenure-track and tenured positions.

Montana Western's policy regarding faculty academic freedom is detailed in Section 3.500 of the CBA (See **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 3-5), and is followed by an equally clear and compelling policy on academic responsibility. Based upon the standards developed by the American Association of University Professors, both also comport with BOR and NWCCU policies.

According to the terms of the CBA (**Exhibit 4.1**, p. 14), adjunct faculty may be hired only in two circumstances:

1. When the person involved is a full-time or essentially full-time employee of another agency and is participating in the instructional program or cooperating in a joint project. These appointments have in the past been referred to as courtesy appointments or faculty affiliates.
2. Where a position is funded by an outside grant and there is no commitment by the university to continue the position if funding stops, or where the position is temporary even though supported by state funds.

The academic administration and faculty make every effort to hire those adjuncts with the strongest possible credentials and/or experience relevant to the teaching assignment. A master's degree is the normal minimal qualification for adjunct faculty, except in exceptional circumstances where experience, special skills, or other qualifications are paramount. The CBA requires the administration to confer with the department before hiring any faculty in their area. This serves as a further screening of individuals with regard to their having the appropriate credentials and experience to teach a particular class.

Part-time and adjunct faculty participate in new faculty orientation prior to fall semester and are provided with a substantive information package covering work expectations and responsibilities, conditions

of employment, and tips to make negotiating campus and its policies and regulations

The academic administration, the faculty senate, department chairs, and interested faculty review hiring policies and practices in the annual process of determining and ranking hiring priorities. Because the primary job of faculty is teaching, and because high quality teaching is associated with full-time commitment to the institution, the administration, like the faculty, remains committed to maximizing the hiring and retention of full-time, tenure-track and tenured faculty to the extent made possible by the academic needs of the university and the flexibility allowed by each biennial budget.

STANDARD 4.B – Scholarship, Research, and Artistic Creation

Multiple examples of faculty scholarship, research and creative activity are available in the NWCCU Accreditation Committee's work room. To an increasing extent under block scheduling, faculty included students in their original research. It is now common to have students present their research on campus during open class presentations and every April there is a student research conference on campus that includes mostly science research projects. A number of students and their faculty carried this to a higher level presenting papers or posters at regional and national meetings and occasionally publishing in peer reviewed journals. An environmental science class is participating in an on-going study of the Big Hole River and each year publishes a very

professional book of its findings. This report is used by management agencies. This and many other examples of student scholarship and creativity will be available in the committee's workroom.

While the CBA contains general parameters regarding scholarship, stating that, for example, no faculty member can be promoted to full professor without demonstrating scholarly and/or creative productivity (see **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 18-19), and provides criteria for the creation and change of departmental unit standards, and for the evaluation of faculty relative to unit standards, the faculty in each department create, review, assess, and change or maintain the unit standards of their particular departments, subject to the review and approval of the university-wide Unit Standards Committee and the provost (see **Exhibit 4.5**, Departmental Unit Standards.)

The unit standards of each department specify a range of acceptable ways of meeting criteria for teaching, scholarship/creative activity, and service, usually assigning point values to each element in each range, thereby establishing a baseline for minimal acceptable performance for tenure and promotion.

Teaching remains the faculty's primary assignment, but the unit standards are certainly achievable within the constraints imposed by teaching and professional service responsibilities.

In a manner consistent with BOR policies, the CBA details institutional policies regarding scholarship, research, and creative

activity. These include the statements on academic freedom and responsibility. (See **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 3-5.)

Montana Western's grant activities fall into two general categories: educational programming and research. These activities are consistent with the mission of the university.

The Dean of Outreach and Research is responsible for coordination and oversight of research and government funded program activities. The dean assists faculty in obtaining appropriate institutional review and with identifying, applying for and managing federal and state grant opportunities. (The Montana Western Foundation Director is responsible for coordination and oversight of privately sponsored program activities.)

Table 4.3 lists current grants held by Montana Western faculty in fiscal year 2010, while **Table 4.4** summarizes grant expenditures for 2004-2009. (See following pages.) The six-year trend for grant expenditures is down, but Montana Western faculty members increased their grant writing efforts during the last year. The increase in faculty grantsmanship is due, in part, to two things: first, after five years of being internally focused on implementing Experience Once, faculty members are beginning to refocus their efforts on external funding and research opportunities; second, faculty members responded favorably to financial incentives the research office sponsored in 2009. Faculty received a small stipend for submitting grant proposals to federal and state agencies. The stipend amount was dependent on the size of the

proposal. Many of the recently submitted proposals remain under agency consideration for funding.

All research projects dealing with human subjects and grant proposals to state and federal agencies are reviewed and approved by the Dean of Outreach and Research. The dean is responsible for ensuring budgets meet appropriate campus, program and government accounting principles and that research protocols comply with federal requirements for human subjects review. The dean is a member of The University of Montana's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The dean is authorized by the IRB to conduct exempt and expedited review of research proposals. Montana Western proposals that do not qualify as exempt or expedited are forwarded to The University of Montana's IRB for full consideration. Given Montana Western's educational mission, few research efforts merit full IRB consideration.

Beyond grants, the university has relatively little funding to support faculty scholarship and research. The Montana Western Foundation maintains a fund to support scholarly activities, and provided over \$12,000 in 2008, and over \$10,000 in 2009, to faculty in support of scholarly and creative activities. In addition, the university maintains a state-supported faculty development fund, which currently stands at \$11,000 per year and was increased by \$1,000 per year for the past six years. These funds primarily support faculty participation

TABLE 4.3: Faculty Grants, 2010

Grant Title	Funding Agency	PI	Award Amount
BRIN	NIH	Morrow	\$101,475
BRIN	NIH	Gilbert	\$101,475
Campus Corps	Americorps	Cohen	\$13,468
Clark Fork Watershed Partnership	Department of Education	Norris-Tull	\$15,198
ECE Bright Beginnings Mentor Grant	DPHHS	Bullard	\$62,000
Gear Up	Department of Education	Ripley	\$29,185
Greater Yellowstone Community Schools	Department of Agriculture	Lyon	\$4,968
Job Corps	Department of Agriculture	Ripley	\$51,779
Know How 2 Go	SAF	Cohen	\$3,125
Montana Space Grant	NASA	Roberts/Zaspel	\$47,282
TRIO SSS	Department of Education	Keyes	\$237,676
TRIO SSS Financial Awards	Department of Education	Keyes	\$30,000
		Total Awards	\$687,631

TABLE 4.4: Faculty Grants, 2003-09

Grant Title	Funding Agency	PI	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
African Exchange	Dept. of State	Oldendorf	\$77,935					
BRIN	NIH	Morrow	\$63,508	\$460				
BRIN Subgrant KAR2 Gene	NIH	Morrow	\$2192					
Campus Corp	Americorp	Cohen	\$12,484	\$14,531	\$14,682	\$1,975		
Clark Ford Watershed Partnership	Dept. of Education	Norris-Tull				\$21,594	\$28,275	\$25,810
Curious Minds Mini-Grant	DPHHS	Bullard		\$1424				
ECE Mentor Grant	DPHHS	Bullard	\$11,018	\$61,608	\$65,005	\$53,903	\$32,656	\$81,653
Early Care and Ed Training	DPHHS	Bullard	\$28,485					
FIPSE	Dept. of Education	Mock	\$110,578	\$69,141				
Geological Road Signs	MDOT	Thomas/Roberts	\$13,684	\$2,042	\$22,664			
Goshawk	Dept. of Agriculture	Kirkley	\$4,525	\$2,988	\$2,835			
Humanities Montana—Aloha	NEH	Ulrich					\$784	\$216
INBRE BRIN	NIH	Morrow/Gilbert		\$151,499	\$214,067	\$135,098	\$197,788	\$181,032
INBRE BRIN Supplemental	NIH	Morrow		\$30,109	\$30,177	\$18,712	\$41,203	\$9,246
Infant/Toddler Curriculum Grant	DPHHS	Bullard			\$8,516	\$12,121		\$20,845
Job Corp	Dept. of Agriculture	Ripley	\$57,610	\$59,556	\$61,716	\$58,790	\$66,360	\$67,854
Montana Reads	Americorp	Forrester	\$77					
Montana Space Grant	NASA	Zaspel					\$8,238	\$8,739
Prep. Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology	Dept. of Education	Schulz	\$100,347	\$1,204				
RETC	Dept. of Education	Ripley	\$97,800	\$176				
RUI: Magnetic Thin Films	NSF	Zaspel	\$6,432	\$8,167	\$3,514			
SSS Community Partner	Americorp	Keyes				\$272	\$49	\$663
Tech Prep Grant	Dept. of Education	Staff	\$90,789	\$486				
Title II: Improving Writing Proficiency	Dept. of Education	Wingo	\$16,417	\$37,405	\$46,731	\$59,676	\$6,517	
Title II: Probability and	Dept. of Education	Dyreson	\$3,991	\$4,874				

Statistics								
Title II: Training Paraprofessionals	Dept. of Education	Reitan	\$29,198	\$68,327	\$65,831	\$21,460		
TRIO Math-Science Upward Bound	Dept. of Education	Pilcher	\$237,335	\$216,416	\$219,175	\$245,199	\$80,190	
TRIO Financial Awards	Dept. of Education	Keyes	\$29,448	\$29,210	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
TRIO SSS Program	Dept. of Education	Keyes	\$225,284	\$187,484	\$213,425	\$188,031	\$200,465	\$213,213
Wildlands Fires Ed for Guides	Dept. of Agriculture	Clark	\$9,367	\$1,052	\$163			
		Annual Totals	\$1,225,434	\$947,889	\$998,501	\$846,831	\$692,525	\$639,271

in conferences, faculty training, and faculty attendance at state meetings. In addition to the Montana Western Foundation's faculty development funds, the provost manages a \$55,000 equipment budget. Each year faculty may request use of these funds to purchase equipment for instructional and research endeavors. The institution also supports research equipment purchases from its facilities and administration account.

One of the benefits of Experience One block scheduling is the 3.5-week faculty development block. Faculty teach three out of four blocks each semester, leaving one block open for professional activities. Having one block each term to pursue scholarship, research and artistic creation is one form of ongoing institutional support for faculty. Additionally, to facilitate research, each faculty is provided with a computer, and departmental and other funds can be used to purchase computer programs of use to particular researchers (SPSS, for example). All science faculty have dedicated classroom/laboratory space to aid in research. **Standard 5** documents the extensive access to online and other research tools available to faculty as well as students. Like students, faculty can also make interlibrary loan requests, which are most often fulfilled with alacrity.

In their unit standards, all departments specify teaching as faculty's primary responsibility, but also clarify expectations regarding scholarship/creative activity and service. These make minimum adequate standards of performance quite clear to every new and ongoing faculty member. Tenure and promotion, rather than, for

instance, merit pay, are the primary rewards for faculty excellence.

Two sabbatical leaves are available for eligible faculty each year, each offering applicants either a full year of sabbatical at two-thirds salary, or one semester at full salary. (See **Exhibit 4.1**, CBA, pp. 35-36.) In addition, faculty are encouraged to apply for additional renewal opportunities such as Fulbright scholarships and faculty exchange opportunities organized through The University of Montana Missoula.

Faculty apply for grants and other financial support for research depending upon their own intellectual interests, but because these interests relate to their departmental teaching and other responsibilities, they fall within the parameters of the strategic plan. In addition, some faculty, especially Drs. Mike Morrow and Mike Gilbert (both biology), secured grant support enabling them to involve both undergraduate and high-achieving high school students as research participants. This is consistent with the institution's commitment to experiential learning, especially regarding learning through authentic professional practices.

Finally, again, faculty freedom to pursue scholarship/creative activity is protected by the academic freedom and responsibility sections of the CBA. That freedom is fundamental to Montana Western's mission and goals, and is consistent with the university's strategic plan.

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: High quality, student-centric, full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty are the backbone of the academic enterprise. These are the faculty who created Experience One and who are making it work effectively on a daily basis. These are the faculty for whom quality teaching and learning is the first priority.

Areas of Improvement: In the immediate future, likely state funding decreases undercut the administration's ability to provide appropriate faculty salary increases and to expand the number of tenure-track faculty in tandem with increasing numbers of students.

It is helpful to have determined a list of peer colleges and universities against whom to compare faculty salaries. It is vital, however, to assure that faculty at each peer school teach the same amount of credits per semester and that their unit standards are equivalent in order to prevent apples to oranges comparisons.

Regardless of funding, the academic administration needs to work with faculty to improve the overall quality of faculty advising and to facilitate the kind of pedagogical development that can give faculty flexible options in grounding their courses in experiential learning.

Finally, the academic administration needs to continue to work closely with faculty to assure student needs for general education courses are met with the same alacrity as the

needs of departmental majors. Increasing the efficiency of the curriculum (by minimizing under-enrolled courses, placing low enrolling courses on longer rotations, etc.) is critical to this effort.

STANDARD 5—LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SOURCES

STANDARD 5.A – Purpose and Scope

The Carson Library and Swysgood Technology Center (STC) comprise Montana Western's print and digital library and information commons. Clustered information and technology services, coupled with flexible facilities and professionally-led staff, combine to deliver the highest level of tools and services to our patrons.

Montana Western's information resources, services, holdings, equipment, and personnel are sufficient to accomplish the university's mission and goals, as the following attests:

The Carson Library maintains a diverse collection of information resources including traditionally printed books, journals and magazines, as well as E-books, databases, DVDs, and other media types. Further, the library provides access to digital items housed on remote servers. Finally, the library houses special collections, such as those of the Montana NASA Regional Education Resource Center and the Montana Office of Public Instruction K-12 Media Collection.

The open hours of the Carson Library and the Swysgood Technology Center are sufficient for campus-based and local users; indeed, Montana Western's library hours are the fourth highest in the Montana University System. Students

and faculty also have 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, remote access to library resources through the university Web site. (See **Exhibit 5.1**, Library Web Page, <http://hal.umwestern.edu/library/>.)

Further, the library developed a very responsive resource-sharing system through Interlibrary Loan (ILL). In fact, Montana Western has been a net lender of ILL resources within the state for a number of years, another indicator of the library collection's strength. **Table 5.1** (next page) demonstrates lending and borrowing patterns from 2000 to 2008.

The Swysgood Technology Center (STC) offers faculty and students access to 100 computers (80 personal computers and 20 Apple computers) in four stationary labs. In addition, the center hosts two wireless computer laboratories, each consisting of 20 laptops. The center also offers patrons a number of other technologies, including digital video and audio equipment, as well as other traditional items like overhead projectors, to aid the teaching and learning process.

The computers and other instructional technology have a regular replacement cycle. One computer lab is upgraded with new equipment each year. The replaced technology is used as necessary to temporarily upgrade other labs or

academic areas, simultaneously reducing unnecessary technological waste. Further, all instructional technology is repaired and replaced as needed.

STC, including the Microsoft Office suite and WebCT. Upon request, faculty and students can arrange for special software installation for specific classes.

General support of Montana Western's mission is provided from software in the

Copyright guidelines are complied with regarding the installation of all software.

Table 5. 1 Number of Interlibrary Loan Lenders and Borrowers, 2000-08

Lending	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Academic	260	261	194	217	250	260	278	215	272
Public	198	176	203	202	284	249	323	321	393
Special	64	39	42	37	26	19	47	25	37
School	56	220	151	220	111	75	56	58	24
Out of State	843	574	329	301	291	233	252	214	144
Out of Country	17	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Lending	1438	1281	919	977	962	836	956	833	870
Student Borrowing	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Business	43	34	4	18	16	20	28	13	11
Education	75	34	71	81	58	53	179	150	196
English	19	39	29	21	41	41	25	56	75
Environment Sci/Math	20	2	12	77	35	57	75	130	174
Fine Arts	7	22	38	26	22	34	31	48	61
Social Sciences	146	48	112	105	169	448	460	125	146
Total Student Borrowing	310	179	266	328	341	653	798	522	663

Faculty Borrowing	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Business	21	9	5	28	4	13	15	15	17
Education	132	100	64	70	57	51	86	32	43
English	192	115	171	45	23	27	33	45	74
Environment Sci/Math	72	35	33	115	54	18	39	192	72
Fine Arts	75	74	80	114	77	115	128	108	31
Social Sciences	65	35	27	130	45	51	57	77	41
Total Faculty Borrowing	557	368	380	502	260	275	358	469	278
Staff Borrowers	77	38	47	98	60	57	42	13	21
Off Campus Borrowers	81	96	67	82	102	141	128	147	144
Totals of All Transactions	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
	2463	1962	1669	1987	1725	1962	2282	1984	1976

The STC provides three fully mediated classrooms and three fully mediated computer labs for classroom use. The six mediated rooms are equipped with ceiling projectors for computer, DVD, and VCR projection. **Table 5.2,** Classroom Technology Inventory (next page), indicates the full extent of technological support in classrooms and labs in each campus building.

The Carson Library and STC are adequately staffed to meet Montana Western's mission. The library is staffed

by two full-time equivalent (FTE) professional librarians and two FTE paraprofessionals. This staff is augmented by 3.25 FTE work-study students fall and spring semester and 3.3 FTE work-study students during the summer. The STC is staffed by one FTE instructional technologist and one FTE computer support specialist. This staff is also enhanced by 1.75 FTE work-study students fall and spring semester and 3 FTE work-study students during the summer. These staff maintain the technology, support the development in

faculty, staff, and students of technology literacy, and provide WebCT instruction. The library and STC are supported by the staff of the Information Telecommunications Services with its five FTE. This separate organization provides the campus with the technological backbone for all telephone and computing services.

Maintaining currency of resources is a primary and on-going concern. On the one hand, during the last two years, library staff culled all the Dewey subject collections in consultation with faculty and are currently working on rebuilding each area. On the other, acquisition of new information and technology resources and services is oriented by Montana Western's mission, support of the curriculum, and by research, with individual items selected for quality and individual merit. All of the above relies upon regular, open communication with university constituencies.

For instance, the Library and Technology Advisory Committee, composed of faculty, students and library and center staff, serves as the communication conduit to the administration, academic departments, Student Senate and students in general.

The Technology Steering Committee provides technology leadership for the campus and distance learning efforts. Since much of the money for technology is derived from a student per credit fee, the Student Computer Use Committee and Regents' Equipment Fee Committee collaborate with the Technology Steering Committee to determine fund expenditures. Representatives of the library and STC sit on all three of these committees. Further, to connect the library and STC with the overall university leadership (and through it, the Strategic Plan), the library director sits on both the University Council and the Academic Council.

The library collection development process at Montana Western works in an inclusive, democratic manner. Thus, any patron can suggest print or virtual material to be added to the collection. Further, each academic department has a library resource budget the size of which is determined by student FTE served by department. Faculty make requests using these funds throughout the year. The library professional staff communicates with faculty liaisons on items requested, ordered and received. The librarians also meet with departments and supply

TABLE 5. 2: University of Montana Western Classroom Technology Inventory

Swysgood Technology Center

Main Floor – 3 computer labs (all labs are mediated*)

Room 103 - 40 Dell PCs

Room 104 – 20 Dell PCs

Room 105 – 20 Dell PCs

Basement – 1 computer lab*

Room 004 – 15 Macintosh/PC dual platform computers and a SMART board

Room 005, 007, & 008 are fully mediated rooms.*

Second Floor – Room 201 – METNET Video Teleconference System

Room 203/204 – Large mediated meeting/conference center*

Block Hall

Basement - 1 computer lab

Room B3B – 19 Macintosh computers. The lab is mediated.*

Four additional mediated classrooms*

Two multimedia carts located in the building.**

Business and Industrial Technology Building – Currently under renovation and repurposing, this building houses the Business and Technology department and the Industrial Technology woods lab.

Room ??? Business Office Simulation Laboratory– ??? Dell PCs

Room ??? IT Information Technology computer lab – 9 Dell PCs

One mediated classroom*

IT Metals Building: 5 Dell PCs.

Library

The first and second floors contain 12 Dell PCs, and basement, first and second floor are wireless and hard wire accessible for data and cable

There are two fully mediated class and meeting rooms*, five study rooms, the first floor seating area with TV/DVD/VIDEO mounted equipment, as well as photocopy and microform duplication

Main Hall

There are five mediated classrooms*

Three multimedia carts located in the building.**

Room 314 (Small Auditorium) is mediated* and is used as both a classroom and a performance venue.

Physical Education Complex

Rooms 203, 207, & 208 are mediated* classrooms.

Room 203 contains 5 wireless laptops for athletic study tables.

** All rooms designated mediated rooms include an instructor's computer, projector, and screen.*

***Multimedia carts are equipped with a computer, projector, and DVD/VCR player.*

All classroom buildings have wireless nodes. In addition to the classrooms buildings there are wireless nodes in the Student Union, and Davis and Matthew residence halls.

individual faculty with titles of items that may be appropriate to add to the collection. Library staff also provide each department's library liaison with lists of items targeted for de-selection. The targeted items are then moved to a weeding area where liaisons can peruse titles for re-inclusion or de-selection.

Montana Western offers an increasing number of distance learning courses in addition to remote program offerings (in early childhood education, for example). Accordingly, equal attention is devoted to the e-books and databases as is devoted to printed material. Purchase of new virtual materials and de-selection of older virtual materials is handled through the same processes and committees as for printed materials.

STANDARD 5.B – Information Resources and Services

As outlined above, the equipment and materials for the library and technology center are selected based on current research, best practice in each academic field, and success in a block scheduling environment with a patron-driven focus.

Through experience, the center and the library use tried-and-true suppliers providing not only excellent products but quality service. As is true for every aspect of our facilities, technology is used and statistical information is collected on the organizations that are used to provide our equipment and information resources. For example, an integrated automation system provides assistance and information for acquisitions,

interlibrary loan, media and cataloging departments.

The items added to our combined collection are organized and maintained in the most professional manner. For example, the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) system is used not only to add the electronic collection records to our integrated library automation system, but to also list them onto its own international bibliographic catalog. This system is the gold standard for library work and allows our collection to be constantly accessible to our patrons both on campus and off. The Serials Solutions tool corrals library database resources and makes many thousands of digital articles easy to locate by patrons. The Endeavor Voyager library automation system is an industry standard used by the University of Montana System to provide a catalog to the system's collection, as well as a host of other services. The use of such tools enables Montana Western's library to serve its constituencies with considerable efficiency at relatively low cost.

Information and technology literacy are critical to appropriate use of the library and the facilities of the STC. The professional librarians offer information literacy instruction one-on-one, as well as to groups of faculty and students in the library, classroom, computer lab or office, each instructional meeting tailored to the subject or assignment. The instructional technologist provides additional instruction on the use of technology in the classroom. Both librarians and technologists provide block break training for faculty and staff. They also see all incoming first-time

students during student orientation to provide an information and technology literacy overview.

Thus, the library has a very robust information literacy mission, one that grows stronger each year. For example, library and technology professionals led 36 literacy events during the 2006-2007 academic year, but 52 such sessions during 2008-09. (See **Exhibit 5.2**, Information Literacy Instruction, 2006-2010.)

The Carson Library Collection Management Policy and up-dates, as approved through the Montana State Library, are contained on the library Web site. (See **Exhibit 5.3**, <http://www.umwestern.edu/academics/librariy/page15.htm>.) The Library Web site is upgraded daily.

The library has worked hard to build its collection of digital resources, which are accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To make this access possible, the library relies on such digital tools as ILLIAD (resource sharing management software) for interlibrary loan; Electronic Reserves (ERES) for electronic reserve; OCLC for cataloging and document sharing; Endeavour Voyager for item circulation and tools like

bibliographies and placing holds on items in the collection; RefWorks for citation and exporting of research; scheduling software for library and STC room booking; Serials Solutions for locating digital and print collections held by Montana Western; and Question Point for 24/7 access to reference librarians.

Further, the library subscribes to a large number of digital periodicals and databases, as well as to two e-book library collections, NetLibrary and Ebrary. NetLibrary's eContent includes more than 160,000 titles, embracing hundreds of global [publishers](#). Ebrary offers a growing selection of tens of thousands of e-books available in multiple subjects. Further, since The University of Montana is the state federal document depository and Montana Western library shares the same catalog, library patrons benefit from access to this huge government digital collection. Finally, the library houses the Montana NASA Regional Education Resource Center and the Montana Office of Public Instruction K-12 Media Collection. (See (**Exhibit 5.4**, Carson Library Databases, 2008-09.)

STANDARD 5.C – Facilities and Access

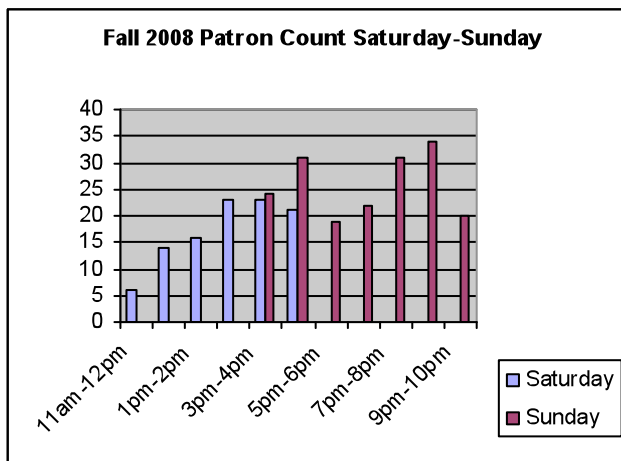
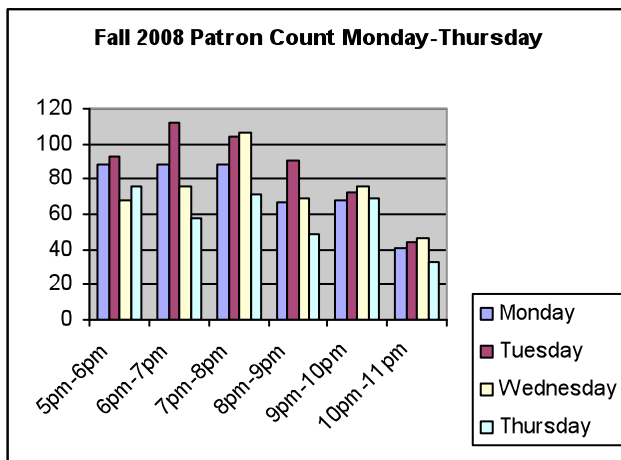
The Carson Library was completely remodeled when the STC was built in 2002. This remodel opened up new study rooms, storage and class space. At this time, Montana Western's technology infrastructure was enhanced by adding wireless and wired computer, cable and satellite connections to every floor and area. The Learning Center and Career Services were constructed in the library basement. The second floor collection of the library was adjusted to meet the Americans with Disability Act during summer 2008.

Further, as noted previously, Montana Western ranks fourth overall among Montana University System schools in terms of open hours and fifth among all post-

secondary institutions in the state. In part, Montana Western is able to maintain this level of access because the six professional staff in the library and STC each work 12 nights per academic year, while student staff cover weekend hours.

Chart 5.1 below shows patterns of use in the library for fall 2008, indicating that the library receives heavy use, especially on week nights.

CHART 5.1: Library Users per Hour, Weekdays and Weekends.



The library has cooperative agreements with a number of groups that assure collections and services are complemented and improved. A short but non-inclusive list of these organizations includes The University of Montana System, The Montana State Library, OCLC, Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR), the American Psychological Association, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, NASA, and the Montana Small School Alliance. All cooperative agreements between Montana Western and these organizations are filed yearly in the library files.

STANDARD 5.D – Personnel and Management

As noted above, the Carson Library is staffed by two FTE professional librarians, two FTE paraprofessionals, and 3.25 FTE work-study students fall and spring semester and 3.3 FTE work-study students during the summer. The STC is staffed by one FTE instructional technologist, one FTE computer support specialist, 1.75 FTE work-study students fall and spring semester, and three FTE work-study students during the summer. The library and STC are supported by the five FTE staff of the Information Telecommunications Services. (See **Exhibit 5.5**, Library and STC Staff Curriculum Vitae; **Exhibit 5.6**, Library and STF Staff Job Descriptions.)

Montana Western provides a travel budget to support employees in seeking professional growth opportunities. All employees are eligible for these funds and are encouraged to take part in state-wide regional trainings and conferences. Further,

library professionals can participate in on-campus faculty development workshops.

The STC and Carson Library staff do a masterful job of connecting these two organizations to provide the important managerial and technical linkages that provide both information and technology literacy support to patrons on campus and off. They benefit from folding together in this mix media production and distribution services for the campus. They provide buildings replete with telecommunication and Internet access points, whether wired or wireless. The campus ITS department provides support for the mission of the center and library in its work.

Montana Western does provide adequate resources to support the library and technology center. Over the past several years, the library benefited from an annual inflation increment. This has been most helpful in combating rising information costs. The library also benefited from instructional technology funding from the BOR and from Montana Western. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) funding purchased equipment and other items to aid visually, auditorally, and physically challenged patrons, as well as facilitating a reconfiguration of the library's second floor book holdings so that they are handicapped accessible.

The technology center has a rather small operating budget, but it is augmented by assistance from both the student computer use and Board of Regents' equipment fees. These three funding sources do provide stable levels of financial support for the STC.

STANDARD 5.E – Planning and Evaluation

The library and STC benefit from advice from both the Library Committee and the Technology Steering Committee. The Library Committee is a group of faculty and students who provide communication to and for the library with the various campus constituencies. The technology committee provides direction for campus technology efforts.

The Computer Use Fee Committee directs the use of student computer fees. Since both the library and STC contain computer labs used by students, the needs of these two centers are partially met by funding awarded by this committee, which is largely student-driven.

Further, as was mentioned previously, there are many informal ways the library and technology center involve the campus community in directing its planning process. These include serving on committees like University Council and Academic Council, as well as presenting to groups of faculty and students in mass as well as by department, course, and individually.

The STC and library evaluate their functioning through a number of avenues. The major avenue is through statistical analysis of the data both entities collect. They also benefit from the communication provided by and to the committees upon which center and library staff serve.

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: The fundamental strength of the library and STC is its excellent staff who collaborate closely to assure seamlessness in Library-STC operations and who, with limited, but adequate funding, maintain currency in library holdings and in instructional technology.

A second strength is the remote availability of library resources to the growing number of off-campus and on-line students.

Areas for Improvement: Maintaining currency in electronic and virtual resources is as much of a challenge as is maintaining paper resources. While the library has been fairly well-funded for the last few years, if the university's funding is reduced, it is vital to try to retain the library's proportion of the diminished budget.

STANDARD 6—GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

STANDARD 6.A – Governance System

Under the Montana state constitution, governance and control of the Montana University System (MUS) are vested exclusively in the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR). The BOR possesses full authority and responsibility to supervise, coordinate, and manage public higher education. In addition to The University of Montana campuses, the BOR shares oversight of three community colleges: Miles Community College, Dawson Community College, and Flathead Valley Community College. There are also four campuses of Montana State University, structured like those of The University of Montana. Under state constitutional mandate, the BOR appoints a Commissioner of Higher Education as the chief administrative officer of the Montana University System. The commissioner serves as the chief administrative officer for these units as well.

The BOR Policy and Procedures Manual is a public document governing campus operations unless superseded by other signed agreements of the BOR or by state statute. The manual and revisions are distributed in print format and are also available at the BOR website. (See **Exhibit 6.1**, Board of Regents Policy Manual, also at <http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>). The manual is regularly reviewed and periodically updated, with the most

recent changes approved by the BOR in March 2009.

Board of Regents meetings are normally held six times a year, with advance public notice, in the state capital at MUS headquarters or on MUS campuses. Meeting notices, agendas, and minutes may be found on the MUS website. (See **Exhibit 6.2**, 2008-10 Board of Regents Meeting Minutes.)

Although the BOR governs the MUS, it is dependent on the state legislature for funding. Over the past twenty years, the state share of higher education funding significantly eroded. Thus, since 1992, while state appropriations for higher education increased 23.5 percent, the state share of unrestricted operating funds decreased from 74 percent in 1992 to 38 percent in 2008. (See **Exhibit 6.3**, MUS Funding History by Revenue Source, and MUS Budget and Finance Facts, also at <http://mus.edu/data/facts/BudgetFinance.asp>). Often, the financial burden has shifted to students in the form of higher tuition and other mandatory, program, and course fees. Since most of the cost of new initiatives to improve the education of students is likely to be borne by the students themselves, the BOR has been hesitant to approve any initiatives that might result in further increased financial burden on those students. In addition, during the 2007-2009 biennium, the governor, in cooperation with the BOR, announced a “College Affordability Plan,” which

instituted a freeze on tuition hikes. (See **Exhibit 6.4** Governor Brian Schweitzer's College Affordability Plan to the Board of Regents. **Exhibit 6.5**, BOR 2010 Strategic Plan, Goal 1 (3), pp. 12-13.) However, in some instances, Montana Western students have voted to approve higher fees on themselves to cover costs of improved classrooms, computer labs, the radio station, and other non-academic facilities.

Under provisions of the University of Montana Western Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), approved by the BOR on July 1, 1999, Montana Western created a faculty senate model of shared governance, which began operating at the end of the 1999-2000 academic year. (See **Exhibit 4.1**, Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2007-11.) The primary responsibilities of the faculty senate include coordination of the university's academic program; maintenance of academic freedom and academic responsibility; the promotion of creative and responsible inquiry, thought, and expression in an atmosphere of scholarly excellence; and the protection of a vital balance among the various academic programs of the university, free of prejudice or undue partiality. The senate exercises these responsibilities through recommendations made to the university administration. The Articles of Faculty Organization, most recently revised in the spring of 2008, detail the structure and responsibilities of the senate and associated committees and are posted to the campus Web site. (See **Exhibit 6.7**,

<http://www.umwestern.edu/academics/facultysenate/#cba>, and <http://www.umwestern.edu/academics/facultysenate/page2.htm>). Nearly every university governance committee is routinely designed with the intention of facilitating participation from the range of university constituents.

Like all other state public higher education institutions, Montana Western's governance practices take into account its collaborative relationship with other public colleges and universities, with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), and with the BOR. While clear, BOR governance policies do not define all aspects of daily practice, however.

In practice, each of Montana Western's upper level administrators works with counterparts at the other institutions and the appropriate deputy commissioner for higher education to develop positions and proposals that are first agreed upon by institutional peers—the chief academic officers, budget officers, or chancellors and presidents, depending on the group—then by OCHE. With agreement achieved, important items are then readied for presentation to the BOR, with whom they are discussed prior to final decision-making.

At the same time, it is possible for the BOR or OCHE to create an initiative (such as the common course numbering/transferability initiative or the two-year college initiative), and arrange through OCHE for committees

of faculty and administrators from the colleges to participate in implementing the project. (See **Exhibit 6.8**, Transfer Goals for the Montana University System, and <http://mus.edu/transfer/index2.asp>). It is possible for proposals to be implemented whether they are initiated at the top or the bottom of the state-wide governance chain.

STANDARD 6.B - Governing Board

The Montana Board of Regents consists of seven members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate, plus the governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Commissioner of Higher Education as non-voting, *ex-officio* members. Not more than four regents may be from one state congressional district, and not more than four may be affiliated with the same political party. Board of Regent members, other than the single student member, are appointed to seven-year terms. Student appointments are generally for a single year, but may be for as many as four years. When vacancies occur, the governor appoints a replacement to serve out the remainder of the term.

The officers of the BOR consist of a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. The chairperson and vice chairperson are elected from the appointed membership of the board for a period of two years or to the expiration of his or her term on the board. In the

absence of the chairperson, the vice chairperson presides. If the office of chairperson or vice chairperson is vacated prior to the expiration of the term, the board holds an election to fill the vacated office. The newly-elected officer serves for the remainder of the term. The Commissioner of Higher Education serves as secretary of the BOR.

The general description of the composition and responsibilities of the BOR and OCHE officers are defined in Section 200 Governance and Organization of the BOR Policy Manual. (See **Exhibit 6.9**, Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 200.)

OCHE's Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal Affairs not only oversees finance and administration for OCHE, but also for the MUS. The deputy commissioner also operates as the Commissioner's chief of staff.

The Deputy Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs coordinates the development, review, and approval of campus mission statements, new academic programs, and academic program reviews within the MUS. The deputy commissioner works with the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the BOR, which makes final recommendations to the full board. The BOR has the final authority to approve all significant academic changes related to degrees, certificates, and diplomas. Board of Regent approval is also required for substantive changes in

institutional mission, policies, and programs.

The BOR mandates an internal program review of all academic programs on every campus (except the community colleges) at least once every seven years (this policy was revised in 2007; prior to that it was done every four years). (See **Exhibit 6.10**, Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 303-3.) Based on these reviews and other data, the BOR may overturn campus decisions to continue or abandon certain programs based on enrollment, graduation data and other evidence offered by the campuses in relation to their reviews.

The Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year Education and Workforce Development is responsible for enhancing student access to, and improving the quality of, two-year education, as well as ensuring two-year college responsiveness to the needs of employers and employees for workforce development.

Finally, the Associate Commissioner for Planning, Technology, and Communication is responsible for developing and improving communication among the state's public colleges and universities through integrated information systems, an initiative partially funded by the state legislature and the Lumina Foundation. (See **Exhibit 6.11**, MUS Two-Year Education Initiative; **Exhibit 6.12**, Making Opportunity Affordable Grant Proposal.)

Board of Regent policy mandates accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities for all campuses of the MUS. Therefore, the BOR requires campuses to submit copies of self-studies and all accreditation reports to the board.

STANDARD 6.C - Leadership and Management

The chief executive officer of Montana Western is the chancellor. The chancellor reports to the president of The University of Montana system. The chancellor is advised by the Local Executive Board (LEB), composed of three individuals appointed by the governor to staggered three-year terms. The LEB exists to facilitate communication between the university and the Dillon community. Operational policy development, including staffing, budgets, and enrollment management, is determined by the chancellor after consultation with Senior Staff. The chancellor also solicits input from the Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and the University Council. Labor-management committees, defined by Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) with faculty and staff, address working conditions that go beyond the detail developed in the CBA between the faculty and staff associations and the BOR. The Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs serves as the chief academic officer and second-in-command of the institution.

Annual evaluations of senior level administrators are conducted by the chancellor based on goals statements submitted each year.

The applicable ethics code for campus administrators is the Standard of Conduct for State Employees as administered by the Department of Administration, State Personnel Division, last revised in September of 2001. (See **Exhibit 6.13**, Montana Department of Administration, State Personnel Division. 2001. Ethics: Standards of Conduct for State Employees. Also available at http://209.85.173.132/search?q=cache:UzujHRBO_UIJ:www.montana.edu/hr/News-TerminatingEmployee/Standard%2520of%2520Conduct%2520for%2520State%2520Employees.doc+Montana+standard+of+conduct+for+state+employees&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us).

Institutional marketing and public relations activities are conducted through Montana Western's Office of Marketing and University Relations, while fundraising and alumni relations are managed by the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, in association with the University of Montana Western Foundation. The role of the director of marketing and university relations is to facilitate productive relationships between the university and its internal and external constituencies. The Office of News and Events, part of University Relations, is in charge of ensuring all advertising, news releases, and

publications of the university are consistent, accurate, and supportive of the mission and goals of the institution.

The director of development and alumni relations also serves as the Montana Western foundation director. The foundation is a not-for-profit, independent corporation chartered under the laws of the State of Montana. It raises and receives gifts from the private sector, administers funds, and manages assets to enhance the quality of education at the university. The foundation provides discretionary funding for scholarships, faculty development, equipment and facility enhancement, and other expenditures. Most gifts are designated by donors for particular purposes. The foundation uses an accounting system to assure all designated gifts are used for their designated purposes. The foundation is audited annually.

The University of Montana Western Foundation serves as an integral part of institutional advancement for the campus of Montana Western. The foundation was formed to promote and support the university and its institutional goals; to involve alumni and friends in the life and future of the university; to serve as a liaison with the public; to establish programs to serve alumni needs; to provide scholarship support to deserving students; and to assist in a variety of academic programs and campus activities. The chancellor of the university serves as a non-voting member on both the full foundation board and executive board. The

foundation sets its fundraising priorities in conjunction with the university strategic plan and from input from the chancellor.

The director of the foundation, the chancellor, and the Montana Western Foundation perform the primary fundraising activities on behalf of the campus. The independent foundation and the university cooperate for the good of Montana Western, but operate and function at “an arms length.” Montana Western and the foundation support university departments, programs, clubs, athletic teams, committees and organizations in their efforts to pursue various fundraising activities.

However, university policy requires each person and campus organization to discuss and receive approval from the foundation director prior to initiating any fundraising activities or events. This includes, but is not limited to, solicitations, raffles, auctions and all on- and off-campus events for or involving Montana Western where fundraising is a goal or intention. These activities benefit from strategic planning and coordination through the development office and, separately, the foundation.

The foundation, in cooperation with the director of development, assumes administrative and management responsibilities for university-wide and specific fundraising efforts. In this role, the foundation is responsible for all approved fundraising activities conducted for the benefit of the

university. Any literature that may be prepared to cultivate or solicit private funds by any department or program is to be approved by the foundation and development office to ensure a consistent, quality image to the external community.

The chancellor and the foundation executive director together determine the level of funding required to name projects, endow professorships, endow chairs, name scholarships, or other appropriate endeavors. These naming opportunities then follow the university and BOR’s Naming Policy guidelines.

Advancement initiatives include annual giving from alumni and others via the annual fund drive and the various telephone and electronic campaigns, capital campaigns or building campaigns, deferred or planned giving programs (such as estate planning for the benefit of the university), special projects (such as raffles or solicitations) or gifts (such as art collections or a corporate gift of computers), special fundraising efforts directed to various constituencies (targeted audiences and for special purposes), and fundraising efforts or campaigns by all university departments, programs, clubs, athletic teams, committees and organizations.

The Montana Western Foundation and the chancellor publicly announced the Inspired by the Past, Building the Future, the Campaign for Montana Western, on October 22, 2009. This five-year initiative is focused on raising funds for

scholarships, program support, faculty development, the student experience, facilities and the foundation operating budget. The initiatives for this campaign were established through the campus strategic plan and a foundation board charette.

Cooperation and coordination across administrative units is easily facilitated at Montana Western. Bi-monthly senior staff meetings bring together unit and department leaders to discuss, problem-solve, foster communication and implement initiatives related to the imperatives of the strategic plan, many of which require cross-divisional collaboration. University Council meetings have two purposes: first, the council serves as the strategic planning committee; second, it works to share information across divisions, which can then be communicated by council members to their staffs. Faculty are represented on both committees; a member of faculty senate serves on senior staff, and faculty representing multiple departments on University Council. The chancellor, the vice chancellors, and other administrators frequently attend Faculty Senate meetings. In addition, the chancellor holds monthly open meetings to facilitate two-way communication with all campus constituencies. Thus, communication between faculty, staff, and administrators is comprehensive and routine.

The two vice chancellors meet regularly with their subordinate administrators in

order to assure coordination and knowledge- and idea-sharing within their own domains. The vice chancellors' weekly meeting with the chancellor provides another mechanism for cross-divisional information-sharing and collaboration.

Collaboration across boundaries is also made routine by the inclusion of staff and students on academic committees and the participation of faculty in cross-divisional committees, such as those related to intercollegiate athletics.

The registrar and the assistant provost carry out most of the university's institutional research. On his Web page, the registrar maintains up-to-date data tables on enrollment, retention, number of majors and graduates per department and degree program, social characteristics of students, and information regarding new freshmen and transfer students. It was the registrar's data which helped generate institution-wide concern with first-year student retention (vital in an era of adverse demographics) and a variety of initiatives to combat attrition. Among these, as mentioned previously in **Standard 3**, was the decision of student affairs and academic affairs leaders to meet each school-day morning to discuss emerging issues with students, individually and collectively. This informal, but systematic morning routine led to numerous early interventions that provided students with important scaffolding to enable them to weather

emergencies and stay on track to their degrees.

The assistant provost primarily analyses curricular data with the intention of creating routes to greater efficiency and effectiveness. Though his data is not available to the public, it is routinely shared with Senior Staff and University Council, as well as Chairs and Schedulers, and, as appropriate to the construction of seven-year program reviews, with department faculty.

Although salaries for administrators and staff, like those of faculty, are low relative to other public universities and colleges in the state, and low relative to those of comparator institutions, administrative and staff turnover is also relatively low.

Experience One enables the university to attract and retain first-rate administrators and staff, many of whom are attracted to Dillon by the innovative possibilities available at a newly-transformed institution. Further, Dillon and its surrounding area and recreational opportunities attract the interest of potential administrators and staff, indicating that salary concerns are often off-set by the available quality of life. While some administrators earned degrees appropriate to their administrative roles—degrees in educational administration, for instance—many Montana Western administrators transitioned to administrative work from faculty positions, while others began in administration and gradually rose to

positions of responsibility on the basis of their experience and performance.

This variety of academic backgrounds, along with breadth and depth of practical experience, benefits Montana Western by combining the talents of individuals who have been at Montana Western for many years and who know the university intimately with those of relative newcomers who have cutting-edge knowledge of best practices shown to be effective nationally at other higher education institutions. The administrative blend at Montana Western is also characterized by flexibility of roles and responsibilities. The development and implementation of Experience One, after all, called upon the improvisational skills of all administrators and staff as unanticipated issues emerged when the university began occupying previously unexplored pedagogical and managerial terrain. That Montana Western was successful in becoming the first public higher education institution in forty years (since The Evergreen State College in 1967) to systematically transform the manner in which it delivers high quality undergraduate education, speaks well of the malleability and collaborative capacities of the university's administrators, as well as its faculty, staff, and students.

STANDARD 6.D – Faculty Role in Governance

The primary vehicles for the faculty role in shared governance at Montana Western include the Faculty Association and its committees, and the Faculty Senate and its committees. The composition and duties of Association committees are described in the CBA, and include the Tenure and Promotion Committee, the Labor-Management Committee, the Workload Committee, and the Unit Standards Committee. (See **Exhibit 4.1**, Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2007-11.)

Senate responsibilities and by-laws, along with senate committee structure and duties are laid out in the Articles of Faculty Organization, as revised in the Fall of 2007. (See **Exhibit 6.14**, Articles of Faculty Organization, <http://www.umwestern.edu/academics/faculty senate/page4.htm>). Senate committees include the Curriculum Committee, the Advising Committee, the General Education Committee and the Academic Admissions and Standards Committee. The faculty senate was created in 1999, by provision of the CBA, Section 16.100. The association functions as the faculty voice in matters related to working conditions (such as compensation, workload, grievance procedures, etc.) while the senate represents the faculty in academic matters (such as curricular development, academic standards, etc.). While the association is comprised of all eligible members of the faculty who meet a certain workload threshold, the senate is a representative body with one member

from each academic department, (except education, which has two senators), and one at-large member representing the entire faculty, for a total of nine voting members.

The faculty senate meets twice per block during the academic year with an agenda that is circulated to faculty and administrators prior to the meeting (which is open to all interested parties). Reports from committees are received, as well as regular reports from administrative officers (several of whom sit on the senate as *ex-officio*, non-voting members). The primary role of the senate is to make recommendations to the administration in matters of academic policy and practice, and they serve as the board of review on proposed curricular changes, which are then passed along to the administration (and, as necessary to the president of The University of Montana- Missoula, OCHE and BOR) for final approval.

The implementation of the faculty senate ten years ago has resulted in enhancing the faculty voice in shaping academic policy on campus, and, in particular, streamlined the process for curricular change, making it more efficient and timely, which was especially important during the initial period of transition to Experience One scheduling.

The faculty of the University of Montana Western have been represented in collective bargaining by the Montana Education Association or Montana Federation of Teachers since 1975; in

2000, those two entities merged and Montana Western's Faculty Association became affiliated with the combined organization. Bargaining has occurred every two years, and the most recent agreement is enshrined in the 2007-2011 contract. (See **Exhibit 4.1**, Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2007-11.)

Policies governing many of the activities of the campus are found in the Montana Western Policy and Procedures Manual. Campus activities are governed by the BOR Policy and Procedures manual. (See **Exhibit 6.15**, University of Montana Western Policy and Procedures Manual, and **Exhibit 4.1**, Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2007-2011.) Board of Regents policies may be overridden by collective bargaining agreements between the board and the Faculty Association. However, such an action is extremely uncommon and no significant conflicts between the CBA and BOR Policy are known to exist.

Montana Western students play a strong role in governance through their student government organization, the Associated Students of the University of Montana Western (ASUWM). All students registered for seven or more credits are members of ASUMW, and pay a student activity fee as part of their overall registration fees. ASUMW is governed by officers elected each year, including president, vice president, and senators. The position of manager is appointed by the president to assist the Student Senate in its day-to-day operations. The Student

Senate is a member of the MUS associated student group, and members often attend BOR meetings.

The Student Senate is concerned with all policy matters directly affecting the student body, and acts as liaison with the university administration. All decisions of the senate and its committees are subject to approval by the chancellor, pursuant to the December 9, 1981 ASUMW Constitution. (See **Exhibit 6.16**, Associated Students of the University of Montana Western [ASUMW] Constitution). The senate meets once each week during the academic year in an open format to allow any interested students to attend. Students are encouraged to bring any problems or questions to the attention of any member of the senate, who will try to assist in resolution or fact-finding as necessary.

Standing committees of the student senate include finance, student union building (SUB), rules and by-laws, legal services, intramurals, regulation and legislation, visibility, and health insurance committees. (See **Exhibit 6.17**, ASUMW Student Senate Current Standing Committees). Two additional divisions of senate are the Elections Commission and Student Court. These are constitutionally separate bodies whose members are appointed by the ASUMW president with senate approval. The student senate offices are located in the Student Union Building (SUB) lower level.

In addition to its own internal committees, the Student Senate also appoints student representatives to serve on most campus committees, and the ASUMW President is an *ex-officio*, non-voting member of the Faculty Senate. Also, in fall 2008, Gov. Brian Schweitzer selected Montana Western student Mitch Jessen to serve a one-year term as the student member of the BOR.

University of Montana-Missoula Policy 406.4 establishes Montana Western's commitment to affirmative action and equal opportunity:

The University of Montana-Missoula rigorously pursues affirmative action to provide to all people the equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in University activities without

regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital or family status, disability, or sexual orientation and seeks to employ and advance in employment qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era. Responsibility for effecting equal opportunity accrues to all university administrators, faculty, and staff. This responsibility includes assurance that employment and admission decisions, personnel actions, and administration of benefits to students and

employees rests exclusively upon criteria that adhere to the principle of Equal Opportunity. The university will protect against retaliation any individual who participates in any way in any proceeding concerning alleged violations of laws, orders, or regulations requiring equal education and/or employment opportunity. (See **Exhibit 6.18**, University of Montana, Missoula Policy 406.04.)

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: As a small university characterized by a lively and engaged campus community, Montana Western employs multiple means, both formal and informal, of maintaining a high quality of communication, both among campus constituencies and between the university and The University of Montana, Missoula, and OCHE and the BOR. Aided by clear and easily-available system and university policies and procedures, Montana Western's governance works with a high degree of efficiency.

Areas of Improvement: As Montana Western continues to grow, it is important to assure the current lines of communication remain robust and new members of the community are appropriately linked into their main communication routes.

STANDARD 7--FINANCE

INTRODUCTION

The financial goal of Montana Western is to support the educational mission to meet the needs of students and the community. Montana Western has a long history of maintaining educational quality and innovative programming despite challenging financial conditions. A major difference from the last ten-year visit is that Montana Western had a decade of a more stable fiscal environment to allow for strategic initiatives and growth in all areas of the campus. The fiscal challenges of the next decade are beginning to appear; however, the dedication of Montana Western's faculty, students and staff will meet these challenges to fulfill its mission.

At Montana Western, by necessity, financial planning and budgeting must be ongoing, realistic and support the mission of the institution. In the last decade, financial planning was linked to the university's strategic plan and directions (**Exhibit 1.3**, 2006-12 Strategic Plan; **Exhibit 7.1**, 2010 Budget Metrics). Like other educational components of the State of Montana, the university primarily draws its funding from state appropriations and student tuition and fees. Montana Western has been able to maintain a strong record of financial solvency despite funding limitations.

STANDARD 7.A – Financial Planning

There are two concurrent financial planning processes in progress at all times. First, preparations are made to follow the procedures for submission to the governor's appropriations budget request for the next biennial legislature. This involves collaboration across all state colleges and universities. At the Montana University System (MUS) level, planning is being done for the next biennial legislative process, developing the model that will become the MUS request in the governor's budget and then used to distribute the lump sum appropriation from the legislature. This is a campus-intensive project of future planning for the operating budget and the Long Range Building Program (LRBP) request. This planning includes all the system campuses' fiscal officers. The second financial planning process is the ongoing financial planning and budgeting at the campus. This process monitors the budget approved for the current biennium, the annual operating budget and developing the needs for the next MUS planning cycle.

As a component unit of the State of Montana, Montana Western is required by state statute to follow certain policies and procedures mandated by the state Office of Budget and Program Planning and the state Department of Administration.

7.A.1

Montana Western has appropriate autonomy in financial planning and budgeting within the state and MUS guidelines. The Montana Legislature meets each biennium and establishes a lump sum appropriation for the MUS. That appropriation is based on the State's budget request submission process. Autonomy is given to the BOR for the distribution of the appropriation. Until the 2007 biennium, the lump sum appropriation was distributed using a cost of education formula, which was based on a formula developed by the New Mexico Commission of Higher Education. Since that time, the appropriation was distributed on a "base plus cost" model agreed to each biennium between the MUS fiscal officers, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), the Governor's Budget Office, and the BOR budget committee and approved by the BOR. This determines the biennial budget request and pro rata share of state resources for each campus. Declining funding of the lump sum appropriation led to a greater reliance on tuition and fee revenues for operational funding. Montana Western is then given autonomy to budget its share of state resources, in addition to tuition revenues, based on the institution's mission and goals. Montana Western has autonomy for planning and budgeting non-appropriated funds. Montana Western's annual all-funds operating budget is then submitted to the BOR for approval (**Exhibits 7.2**, CHE Operating

Budget; **Exhibit 7.3**, Current Operating Budget).

7.A.2

The strategic plan and the campus master plan guide financial planning and budgeting at Montana Western. The Strategic Plan For Action 2006-2012 and the Campus Master Plan 2003 are reviewed and updated annually with a status on progress. The ability to respond effectively to the planning goals in the Strategic Plan for Action can be limited by revenue volatility and the impact of budget shortfalls during certain times. Enrollment fluctuations contribute to revenue volatility. Enrollment has been increasing slowly this decade, which has led to a period of innovation, growth and change at Montana Western.

Although the current master plan calls for a 2009 Campus Master Plan, the campus is in the midst of managing construction and energy projects, precluding time for the development of the new plan. A process for a new master plan will begin within the next two years. Through the annual review of the master plan, the campus has moved steadily forward in this area.

The campus uses a four-year operating budget projection model of the current and upcoming biennium based on the identified strategic directions. The campus also develops a long-term list of campus building and deferred maintenance needs based on the master plan. The State Legislature's Long Range Building Program (LRBP) is the

primary source of support for non-auxiliary campus capital construction and maintenance activities (**Exhibit 7.4**, 2010-2011 Long-Range Building Program; **Exhibit 7.5**, 2012-13 Long-Range Building Program Request).

7.A.3

Montana Western's development of the annual general operating budget is a campus community process led by the Budget Committee. The chancellor and the senior administrative officers are responsible for ensuring representatives of the campus participate in the process using the strategic plans and goals of Montana Western, The University of Montana, and the BOR. The Budget Committee is responsible to recommend a budget that balances institutional needs and constituent requests with the funds available. The final proposal is approved and implemented by the chancellor. The annual general operating budget is finalized in accordance with the directions from the Commissioner of Higher Education, and is presented to the BOR for approval. The budgets for non-state appropriated funds are developed between the budget manager of each account and the vice chancellor. The needs of the department, students, and university priorities guide these budgets. These budgets are approved by the BOR in the annual budget approval.

A copy of the approved operating budget is provided to all budget managers and is available on the BOR Web site. The budgets of the four campuses of The University of Montana are published

annually and copies distributed as required (**Exhibit 7.3**, Current Operating Budget). The vice chancellor recommends necessary budget revisions to the chancellor and provost, and the revisions are made promptly when approved. If significant, a revised copy of the budget is provided to affected constituents.

7.A.4

State and BOR policy guides the use of debt in the MUS. In the 1990s, under the direction of The University of Montana president, leaders of the four campuses resolved to invest in the system through improvement to the physical resources on all UM campuses. The majority of the long-term debt at Montana Western is attributable to six series of revenue bonds, cross-pledged and issued by The University of Montana. These BOR-approved bonds are detailed in the footnotes of the annual UM revenue bond audit (**Exhibit 7.6**, Annual UM Revenue Bond Audit). The revenue stream supporting the bond debt service is derived from auxiliary operations, student fees and other self-supporting activities. The revenue stream is clearly defined as pledged revenues within the bond documents, and the revenues are cross-pledged across the UM System. These revenues more than meet the coverage requirements of the indentures. These requirements and the cross-pledging between the campuses ensure the debt is not dependent upon revenues that would otherwise be used for educational purposes on any campus.

To ensure The University of Montana System is not overextended in terms of debt, the Debt Management Team was formed in 1999 to review the indebtedness of the system. This team, which the vice chancellor has been part of since inception, reviews all the current and new debt. The team meets at least annually and as needed to review the bond activity and recommend additional long-term debt requested from any campus.

Montana Western continues to cover all required bond payments and increase its contribution to the future debt service as outlined in the Debt Management Plan (**Exhibit 7.9**, Debt Management Plan). Hard work over the last ten years led to much improved auxiliary business and budget practices increasing revenue and auxiliary fund balances, which further ensure not impacting funds for educational purposes.

The bond activity, in addition to other long-term debt, is audited by independent auditors on a regular basis and, since 1999, continues to be carefully controlled and reviewed by the Debt Management Team. A combined University of Montana annual report of outstanding debt is provided to the BOR (**Exhibit 7.7**, Combined UM Annual Report of Outstanding Debt).

Standard 7.B – Adequacy of Financial Resources

During its 117-year history, Montana Western was never unable to fulfill its core educational mission, despite the limitation of available financial resources. At times it was necessary (and may be in the near future) to redirect resources, eliminate programs and reduce staffing, but a quality education has always been provided to Montana Western's students. The MUS hired the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) in 2008 to select peer institutions for each campus based on number of students and similarity of programs and then compare the unit funding to that of its peers. Montana Western's funding was in line with these peers. Each biennium, Montana Western met its financial obligations. Financial stability is a hallmark of the last seven years, allowing for innovation on the campus.

7.B.1

Between state appropriations and tuition revenue, the university has a stable funding base. Montana Western has the normal mix and variety of revenue sources as other colleges and universities similar in size. Montana Western continually seeks increases in all types of revenue and aligns financial commitment of revenues with the overall MUS, University of Montana, and Montana Western strategic directions.

Examples of revenue sources include:

- State appropriation and 6-mill levy to support education and general operations of the campus. The State Legislature's lump sum appropriation is determined most fundamentally by its judgment regarding the appropriate shares of the cost of education to be borne with public funds, tuition, grants and contracts overhead and other revenue sources. Montana Western, working with The University of Montana and MUS, makes a concerted effort in the pursuit of public funding primarily during the biennial legislative sessions.
- Tuition and fees to support education and general operations of the campus. The challenge is to manage these rates so as not to adversely affect efforts to actively recruit new students from Montana, as well as from out-of-state.
- Grants and contracts to support research, education and special projects received from federal appropriations, state appropriations and private sources. Montana Western averaged at least \$995,067 in the last decade. The facilities and administrative (overhead) revenues from these grants provide additional funding.
- Mandatory fees are charged to students to support computers, technology, instructional equipment, student activities, radio and newspaper, tutoring, the student union, and so on.
- Class and lab fees are charged for courses with additional expenses including field trips and class projects.
- Land grant income from the lease, timber sales and sale of State of Montana trust lands.
- Sales and service fees charges as appropriate in auxiliary enterprises and designated fund service departments. The lease of auxiliary services to the Montana Youth Challenge Academy provided a steady income over the last decade.
- Investment earnings from careful cash management.
- Revenue from participation in federal and state financial aid programs designed to help eligible students pay for their education.
- Private donations from the Montana Western Foundation for student scholarships, faculty development, athletics and specific programs. This support continues to increase.

The allocation of these resources is based on priorities established in the strategic plan, but also has to be responsive to short-term emergencies and new opportunities.

7.B.2

Debt service schedules for all short- and long-term debt are maintained in the Business Services Office and are reviewed annually as part of the financial statement preparation process (**Exhibit 7.7**, Combined UM Annual Report of Outstanding Debt; **Exhibit 7.8**, Debt Management Memorandum; **Exhibit 7.9**, Debt Management Plan; **Exhibit 7.10**, 2009 UM Report on Outstanding Indebtedness). Most of

Montana Western's long-term debt was issued in conjunction with The University of Montana revenue bonds. The structure of those bonds ensures the availability of funds to meet debt service requirements on a system rather than on a campus basis. The bond indenture requires The University of Montana to pledge specific revenues to the service of its debt; the required coverage ratio requirement (ratio of pledged revenues to debt service) is 115 percent. The University of Montana system has always been well above this requirement, as demonstrated in the annual revenue bond audit (**Exhibit 7.6**, Annual UM Revenue Bond Audit). Based on the 1999 report of the Debt Management Committee, substantial coverage ratios currently projected ensure adequate resources are available for debt service and that no adverse impact on educational programs should be anticipated. Montana Western's challenge is to continue the success achieved in the auxiliaries the last decade in order to pay a pro rata share of the debt service requirement.

All debt is reported annually to the BOR (**Exhibit 7.7**, Combined UM Annual Report of Outstanding Debt). The vice chancellor is involved with the financing of any other short- or long-term debt for recommendation to the chancellor and the University of Montana Debt Management Committee. The revenue stream for debt service must be clearly defined and not adversely affect revenues committed to education programs.

7.B.3

The financial statements indicate a history of financial stability at the operational level and there have been no material deficits the last five years. Annual IPEDS reports are done in accordance with GASB 34 and 35 (**Exhibit 7.11**, IPEDS, 2006-07; **Exhibit 7.12**, IPEDS, 2007-08; **Exhibit 7.13**, IPEDS, 2008-09). The auxiliary deficits of the late 1990s were all corrected and auxiliaries now carry operational fund balances. Clean audit opinions also indicate financial stability. Montana Western is required to report annually on any major fund group with a negative cash balance two years in a row and all accounts with negative fund balances (**Exhibit 7.14**, 2008 Outstanding Loan And Negative Cash Report; **Exhibit 7.15**, 2009 Outstanding Loan and Negative Cash Report). These reports require realistic plans to eliminate any deficit. These reports also reflect the financial stability of the last decade.

Operating revenues are budgeted and divisions are not allowed to deficit spend. Any deficits during the course of a year are addressed immediately.

7.B.4

All of Montana Western's transfers among major funds and inter-fund borrowing comply with MOM 2-5000 Interfund Activities. Inter-fund borrowing is approved by OCHE and the State Department of Administration. Mandatory and non-mandatory transfers are approved and controlled by the

appropriate person. These transfers are included in the financial statements and the operating budget requests. A transfer report is also provided to OCHE during the annual budget process (**Exhibit 7.16**, Transfers Report). Internal and external audits provide checks that transfer guidelines are followed.

7.B.5

Montana Western continues to offer mission-oriented programs and seeks ways to fund new initiatives and specialized programs. Adequate resources are allocated to protect the academic programs and to ensure the success of strategic initiatives. Examples in this decade include Experience One and the new degrees in equine studies and natural horsemanship. The university worked hard to maintain a nearly stable or increasing percent of the general fund budget being allocated to instruction, academic support, and fee waivers. Unit operations budgets have remained fairly static and this is a recognized fiscal challenge; however, steady increases were possible in the library and instructional technology budgets. The largest funding deficiency both at the university and in Montana in general is salaries. Most faculty and professional staff are between 70 and 85 percent of peers based on peer statistics from the College & University Personnel Association (CUPA) annual survey.

7.B.6

Montana Western's student financial aid comes from three main sources: federal and state programs, the University of Montana Western Foundation scholarships, and institutional aid. As detailed in **Table 7.4** (see tables at end of chapter), the federal government provides the bulk of financial aid for Montana Western's students in the form of grants and loans. These sources are followed by institutional aid (fee waivers), private donations, and state funds. Over the past five years, the share of total aid from each of these sources has remained quite stable. Federal and state aid is defined by the various government programs and foundation scholarships are governed by the fundraising efforts of the foundation. Through a strategic budget initiative in the 2007 biennium, Montana Western was able to increase funding for institutional aid in the form of fee waivers by \$100,000, although implementing the program has taken longer than planned. Montana Western has made a consistent effort to maintain its contribution to total aid as it recognizes the importance of these resources in the recruitment and retention of students. Montana Western's default rate has been decreasing.

7.B.7

Building adequate reserves has been one of the main budget goals over the last decade, and, although this will always be a challenge based on funding rules and the size of the budget, Montana Western

is in a much better position than it was at the last ten-year report. Montana Western now has a budgeted enrollment reserve in the state operating budget and fund balances in the auxiliary and designated funds to offset temporary setbacks.

The sensitivity of the general operating fund to enrollment fluctuations requires the ability to have contingency funds available. However, the inability to carry these reserves forward as operating budget between biennia presents a disincentive. Montana Western now budgets a one- to two-percent enrollment reserve in the annual general fund budget for contingencies that can be carried forward between the two years of the biennium. Additionally, this is used for one-time budget allocations, covering deficits, or special projects if enrollment meets the budget projections. The university has been very conservative in estimating tuition revenue in the event enrollment levels or the mix of resident and non-resident students is different than projected. With steadily increasing enrollment, this created the need to request a budget amendment from the OCHE for increased spending authority to spend or transfer the additional tuition revenue as allowed under state and BOR policy for several years (**Exhibit 7.17**, Budget Amendment Certification, 2009; **Exhibit 7.18**, Budget Amendment Certification, 2008). State law allows for remaining general fund at the end of the biennium to be transferred to a deferred maintenance account the second year

after the end of the previous biennium. Montana Western has built a deferred maintenance reserve by using this provision. The BOR also instituted Policies 901.10 and 901.15 that allow transfer of general operating funds for the purpose of saving for faculty termination pay-outs and for an emergency fund that can only be spent with BOR approval. Montana Western took advantage of these policies to create reserves in both of these areas (See **Exhibit 7.19**, BOR Policies 901.6, 901.10 and 901.15).

Adequate debt service reserves are maintained under the revenue bond indenture agreement of The University of Montana and are fully funded. Additional reserves have been built through the Debt Management Plan.

The operational plans to take care of auxiliary and designated funds deficits of the late 1990s were continued in order to build operating fund balances to serve as reserves in these funds. Most operating accounts have an adequate fund balance to carry them over the summer and certain key accounts in each fund group hold emergency balances for projects or set-backs. These funds can only be used to augment otherwise unfunded requests in academics and elsewhere through recommendation of the provost and vice chancellor with approval by the chancellor. Additional renewal and replacement (R&R) accounts were set up in the plant funds to create deferred maintenance accounts for designated fund equipment and

auxiliary fund buildings. The auxiliary accounts have been in a position to transfer monies to the auxiliary R&R account to begin making progress on the auxiliary capital deferred maintenance list.

The aggressive pursuit of reserves over the last decade helped create a more stable financial environment. Based on current state revenue projections, the MUS is expecting funding issues in the next few years reflecting those already being faced in other states. These reserves will most likely be required in Montana Western's response to funding changes.

7.B.8

As reflected in the financial statements and the revenue bond audit, auxiliaries and the education and general operations of the institution are independent. Auxiliary enterprises are expected to be entirely self-supporting. The education and general fund operating budget is not used to supplement the auxiliary operations and Montana Western is not dependent on the income of its auxiliaries to financially support the operations of the university. Auxiliaries are charged for service provided them by other operating units of the university. Both areas serve the overall mission and goals of the institution, but funding is not commingled.

Standard 7. C – Financial Management

Montana Western's financial management structure is very similar to

many other colleges and universities of its size. As an affiliate campus of The University of Montana, there is an additional level of management and financial oversight through the president and vice presidents of The University of Montana. As an institution of the MUS, Montana Western follows the policies and guidelines of the BOR and the OCHE regarding financial management.

7.C.1

The chancellor of Montana Western is a member of The University of Montana Executive Committee, which meets regularly with the president. The chancellor also reports regularly to the BOR at the bi-monthly meetings. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the chancellor submits an annual operating budget for approval by the BOR. The budget provides a detailed summary of the actual expenditures of the previous year and of proposed revenues and expenditures for the current year. Staffs on the campus, The University of Montana, and OCHE monitor the monthly budget status reports through the Montana University System Financial Data Warehouse. Annual reports are provided to the BOR regarding all outstanding debt, negative fund and/or cash balances along with the both the revenue bond audit and the annual financial audit. The chancellor brings all major financial matters to the BOR for review and approval according to the requirements of the policies.

7.C.2

The Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs is Montana Western's Chief Fiscal Officer (CFO). The vice chancellor has 24 years of experience in the Montana University System – eleven as the CFO of Montana Western. The vice chancellor reports directly to the chancellor and is part of Senior Staff, and University Council. The CFO is also an Associate Vice President of The University of Montana, with informal reporting responsibility to the university's Vice President for Administration and Finance. Position responsibilities include oversight of all campus finances and services through the help of an excellent group of deans, directors and managers. Managers reporting to the vice chancellor include the Director of Business Services, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Information Technology Services, Associate Director of Human Resource Services, Dean of Students, Director of Admissions, Manager of the Bookstore and Manager of Facilities Services. All of the directors and managers are qualified experienced managerial personnel. To streamline the management structure, beginning in 2009 and 2010, the Director of Business Services reports to the Director of ITS, who is on an additional appointment as Assistant to the Vice Chancellor and Sustainability Coordinator; the Director of Financial Aid reports to the Director of Admissions in an expanded role in Enrollment Management. Good financial and compliance audits demonstrate the effectiveness of this division

(organizational chart and resumes available in document room).

7.C.3

All Montana Western financial issues are fully controlled by the institution. Fiscal responsibility for grants and contracts resides with the Director of Business Services. Financial aid programs and resources are controlled and managed by the Financial Aid Office. Montana Western income and expenditures from all sources are recorded in the institution's financial management system, BANNER, and are then transmitted to the State of Montana financial management system, SABHRS. The BANNER system, as well as Montana Western, are audited by the Legislative Audit Division of the State of Montana. All state rules, regulations, and procedures, generally accepted accounting principles as well as BOR policy are followed in the spending, recording and reporting of revenues and expenditures. All funds are included in the regular planning and budgeting process and expenditures are reviewed through supervisory review, system approval queues, budgetary and internal controls.

7.C. 4

Montana Western has clearly defined cash management policies. The Director of Business Services is responsible for cash management and follows the State of Montana and BOR policies. The university invests through the State Board of Investments in the short term

investment pool (STIP) as required. Bond indentures, for bonds approved by the BOR, further define permitted investments. Montana Western adopted an aggressive investment policy in an attempt to maximize return with available investment opportunities. Privately donated funds are held by the University of Montana Western Foundation, and are invested in accordance with the policies approved by the foundation board.

Cash reports from the state accounting system by fund group are monitored weekly, if not daily. Cash collection points on campus are closely monitored by the head cashier and The University of Montana's internal audit department. Training is provided for all cash custodians by Business Services.

7.C.5

The university follows the standards of accounting and reporting as prescribed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). For financial reporting purposes, the university is considered a special-purpose government engaged only in business type activities. The university's financial statements include the basic financial statement required under GASB statements No. 34 and No. 35. The university continually monitors new and proposed standards promulgated by GASB to ensure that applicable pronouncements are implemented timely and effectively. The university also reviews technical guidance provided by the National Association of College and

University Business Officers (NACUBO) on various accounting issues.

All of Montana Western's accounting transactions are recorded on the integrated University of Montana BANNER Finance and Human Resource System. The centralized databases, housed at The University of Montana, provide a streamlined accounting structure for the University of Montana System. This enhances the ability to generate consistent required reports and provides useful information for budget planning and resource forecasting on all the University of Montana campuses.

The BANNER Finance Accounting System is designed to present the financial statement in accordance with generally accepted principles of accounting. Montana Western's accounting information is consolidated with The University of Montana System to present the financial statements audited by the Legislative Audit Division of the State of Montana. The accounting system is coded to interface with the State of Montana accounting system, which is used to prepare the State of Montana Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

7.C.9

All university funds, including those utilized for student financial aid programs, are audited by the Legislative Audit Division (LAD) of the State of Montana. Montana Western is audited on a biennial basis with the four

campuses of The University of Montana System and a single University of Montana System report is issued (**Exhibit 7.20**, 2009 Annual Financial Audit). The results of that audit are included in the statewide Single Audit Report. This audit complies with the reporting requirements of the Government Auditing Standards, the Single Audit Act, and the Office of Management and Budget Circulars. In conjunction with the Single Audit, the LAD conducts a financial compliance audit of the university to determine if the financial operations are properly conducted, the financial reports are presented fairly and the university has complied with applicable laws and regulations. The annual IPEDS report corresponds to these statements.

7.C.10

All funds, including financial aid funds, are audited by the Legislative Audit Division. Special purpose audits are conducted by qualified independent auditors, and are prepared annually. Montana Western is a component part of the annual revenue bond audit required by The University of Montana Indenture of Trust. Periodic audits of sponsored research programs may be mandated by a funding agency in accordance with Federal Circular A-133. The University of Montana Western Foundation is audited annually by independent auditors and the report is shared with the university.

7.C.11

The internal audit function is handled through The University of Montana's Office of Internal Audit. This function reports directly to the President of The University of Montana and works on all four campuses. The Office of Internal Audit provides an independent appraisal function through internal review and audit of financial and compliance issues on the campuses. The office also coordinates external audits of university funds. On a scheduled and ad-hoc basis, the office conducts routine audits of departments on all campuses. The office also conducts preliminary investigations of any suspected fraudulent activity. The office is adequately staffed with trained and qualified personnel. (Audits available in document room.)

In addition, Montana Western works hard to maintain a well-established system of internal controls and adequate separation of duties to maintain financial integrity.

7.C.12

The Office of Internal Audit coordinates and complies in writing the university's response to the Legislative Audit Committee for each finding and recommendation. The office also coordinates the development and implementation of a system audit plan to respond to each recommendation. A responsible individual is assigned to each recommendation on the affected campus. While it is that individual's responsibility to implement any action included in the audit response plan, Internal Audit monitors the institution's

progress to ensure compliance. The office also coordinates the response and action plan for special purpose audits. Audit response plans are closely monitored by Montana Western administration. The same process is used to respond to internal audit on each campus.

7.C.13

Audits of Montana Western are a matter of public record and will be available for review.

Standard 7.D – Fundraising and Development

Fundraising is increasingly important to higher education in order to meet academic needs as state funding shrinks and tuition continues to increase. Fundraising is essential both for student access through scholarships and programming and to help ensure the academic quality of the institution.

7.D.1

The University of Montana Western Foundation (formerly the Western Montana College Foundation) was established in 1978 to promote the educational objectives of the university per BOR Policy 901.9. The Montana Western Foundation serves the university as an independent charitable non-profit organization under an Internal Revenue Service 501c(3) designation,

and is the official fundraising office of Montana Western. A 22-member board of directors maintains fiduciary and operational responsibility for the foundation and embraces its goals:

- to work with the university community to ascertain financial needs of the university;
- to raise private funds to meet the university's needs; and
- to provide sound stewardship of private assets.

The foundation accomplishes these goals by seeking gifts, grants, bequests, and other forms of financial support; by conducting public relations programs with alumni, students, faculty, government entities, the business community, the general public and other appropriate groups; and by managing the assets of the corporation in accordance with its purpose and fiduciary responsibilities.

The foundation adopted a comprehensive set of by-laws, policies and guidelines addressing the operational aspect of soliciting, accepting and documenting gifts as well as investing, distributing and managing those gifts with appropriate donor recognition and stewardship. Adhering to those policies, the Foundation Board, director and employee conduct their work in a professional and ethical manner (**Exhibit 7.21**, UMW Foundation Policies; **Exhibit 7.22**, UMW Endowment Report).

The foundation works in close partnership with the university administration and faculty to determine needs and establish priorities for Montana Western's programs. The foundation director serves as a member of the Montana Western Senior Staff, Strategic Planning group and as Montana Western's Director of Development and Planning. At the retirement of the long-time director in 2007, the foundation and Montana Western were fortunate to secure a highly-qualified director who is moving the foundation forward. The foundation director and the chancellor recently launched a five-year capital campaign: *Inspired by the Past. Building the Future. The Campaign for Montana Western*. Total foundation assets grew from \$5 million in 1999 to slightly over \$7 million in 2008.

The foundation is audited annually by an independent certified public accountant (**Exhibit 7.23**, UMW Foundation Audit, 2008).

7.D.2

The University of Montana Western Foundation manages the endowment, trusts and life income funds of the foundation and of Montana Western. The management of those funds is covered under the foundation's Investment Policy. The policy reflects standards and best practices in management, stewardship, investment risk and documentation for these funds. The foundation maintains complete records of these funds and complies with

applicable legal requirements. These funds and assets are managed through Sage MIP Fund Accounting Solutions software.

Foundation gift documentation is reviewed by the independent auditor during fieldwork for the annual audit. Blackbaud (Raiser's Edge 7) software is used to manage all gifting data.

7.D.3

Montana Western has a clearly defined relationship with the University of Montana Western Foundation. Montana Board of Regents Policy 901.9 requires approval of the biannual operating agreement between any foundation and a campus of the MUS. The agreement clarifies the operating responsibilities of each and includes that the foundation maintain financial and accounting records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, is audited on an annual basis by an independent certified public accounting firm and distributes copies of the audit to the institution. The agreement, or additional memorandum of understanding, delineates any other contractual arrangements between the university and the Foundation. (See **Exhibit 7.24**, BOR Policy 901.9.)

The university recognizes that the foundation provides an opportunity for individuals and organizations to contribute to the institution with the assurance that the benefits of their gifts supplement, not supplant, state appropriations, provides assurance to

donors that their contributions will be distributed and used for specific purposes, and creates an effective forum for alumni and community leaders to help strengthen the institution through participation in the solicitation, management and distribution of private gifts. Montana Western recognizes the value of the foundation.

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: Led by a vice chancellor with considerable experience and expertise, and supported by excellent staff, Montana Western enjoyed a decade of financial improvement and stability, which led to continuous improvement and helped make institutional innovation possible.

Areas of Concern: The challenge is to maintain this stability in increasingly difficult economic times.

STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE TABLE 1 CURRENT FUNDS REVENUES - PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS ONLY

Source (IPEDs Report)	ACTUAL						PROJECTED						
	Year 1 (2007)		Year 2 (2008)		Year 3**(2009)		Year 4***(2010)		Year 5 (2011)		Year 6 (2012)		
	Amount	%*	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	
Tuition and Fees	4,375,737	20.63	5,463,051 ¹	28.6	5,460,807	27.7	5,795,328	25.7	5,870,328 ³	27.6	5,895,328 ⁶	28.1	
Government Appropriations													
Federal													
State	5,671,151	26.74	6,288,318	32.9	6,616,324	33.5	6,830,580	30.3	6,489,051 ⁴	30.5	6,164,598 ⁴	29.3	
Local													
Government Grants & Contracts													
Federal	Unrestricted	1,000	0.005										
	Restricted	2,916,112	13.75	2,441,462	12.8	2,591,265	13.1	3,004,558	13.3	2,738,349	12.9	2,738,349	13
State	Unrestricted	122,738	0.579	138,755	0.73	168,651	0.85	230,090	1.02	165,059	0.77	165,059	0.79
	Restricted	20,071	0.095	57,289	0.3	170,323	0.86	439,370	1.95	82,561 ⁵	0.39	82,561	0.39
Local	Unrestricted			633	0								
	Restricted	199,609	0.941	127,071	0.66	148,172	0.75	228,200	1.01	175,763	0.83	175,763	0.84
Private Gifts,	Unrestricted	8,100	0.038	2,975	0.02	500	0					0	
Grants, Contracts	Restricted	316,783	1.493	354,072	1.85	319,815	1.62	308,615	1.37	324,821	1.52	324,821	1.55

Endowment	Unrestricted												
Income	Restricted	226	0.001	142	0	84	0	200	0	100	0	100	0
Sales and Services of Educational Activities		238,943	1.126	324,015	1.69	278,533	1.41	1,295,135 ²	5.74	534,156	2.51	534,157	2.54
Auxiliary Enterprises		3,243,004	15.29	3,369,935	17.6	3,538,887	17.9	3,399,271	15.1	3,387,774	15.9	3,387,774	16.1
Other Sources		4,097,646	19.32	555,408 ¹	2.9	453,010	2.29	1,037,800	4.6	1,535,966	7.21	1,535,966	7.31
Total Current Funds Revenues		21,211,120	100	19,123,126	100	19,746,371	100	22,569,147	100	21,303,928	100	21,004,476	100

* Percentage of Total Current Fund Revenues ** Most recent fiscal year for which audited financial statements are available *** Budget for Current Year

¹ FY08 Reclassification of Elderhostel income led to an increase in Tuition and Fees and corresponding decrease in Other Sources

² FY10 Budget includes Interdepartmental recharges

³ FY11 Budgeted \$75,000 increase in Tuition and Fees

⁴ FY11 and FY 12 Anticipated decrease in state funding of 5% per year

⁵ FY11 and FY12 anticipated decrease in state funding

⁶ FY12 Budgeted \$25,000 increase in Tuition and Fees

All financial resources reported are as reflected in the audited financial statements

STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE TABLE 2 CURRENT FUNDS EXPENDITURES AND MANDATORY TRANSFERS - PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS ONLY

Functions(IPEDs Report)	ACTUAL						PROJECTED					
	Year 1 (2007)		Year 2 (2008) ¹		Year 3**(2009)		Year 4***(2010)		Year 5 (2011)		Year 6 (2012)	
	Amount	%*	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Education and General Expenditures												
Instruction	6,214,565	29.30	6,445,882	33.71	6,817,688	34.53	7,169,199	31.77	6,954,963	32.65	6,748,654	32.13
Research	122,822	0.58	267,793	1.40	222,009	1.12	302,531	1.34	293,905	1.38	285,538	1.36
Public Service	723,409	3.41	884,796	4.63	1,032,656	5.23	1,254,840	5.56	1,217,495	5.71	1,181,270	5.62
Academic Support (Excluding Libraries)	470,355	2.22	446,587	2.34	547,225	2.77	543,545	2.41	527,239	2.47	511,421	2.43
Library Expenditures	461,504	2.18	458,186	2.40	429,906	2.18	434,232	1.92	421,205	1.98	408,569	1.95
Student Services	1,847,157	8.71	2,161,825	11.30	2,247,509	11.38	2,665,460	11.81	2,585,568	12.14	2,508,073	11.94
Institutional Support	1,586,532	7.48	1,753,371	9.17	1,694,702	8.58	2,452,737	10.87	2,350,148	11.03	2,279,853	10.85
Plant Operations & Maintenance	3,221,324	15.19	1,414,857	7.40	1,932,790	9.79	3,565,706	15.80	3,435,347	16.13	3,221,965	15.34
Scholarships and Fellowships		-		-		-		-		-		-
Awards from Unrestricted Funds	(705,159)	(3.32)	(922,676)	(4.82)	(923,743)	(4.68)	(872,250)	(3.86)	(846,083)	(3.97)	(820,701)	(3.91)
Awards from Restricted Funds	1,612,201	7.60	1,959,986	10.25	2,144,889	10.86	2,473,065	10.96	2,399,009	11.26	2,327,174	11.08

Educational and General Mandatory Transfer		-	149,888	0.78	(367,704)	(1.86)	(354,850)	(1.57)	(354,850)	(1.67)	(354,850)	(1.69)
Total Educational and General Expenditures/Mandatory Transfers	15,554,710	73.33	15,020,495	78.55	15,777,928	79.90	19,634,215	87.00	18,983,946	89.11	18,296,966	87.11
Auxiliary Enterprises (including Transfers)	3,899,566	18.38	3,467,925	18.13	4,013,711	20.33	4,260,797	18.88	4,141,778	19.44	4,026,330	19.17
Independent Operations (Including Transfers)		-		-		-		-		-		-
Total Current Funds Expenditures & Mandatory Transfers	19,454,276	91.72	18,488,421	96.68	19,791,639	100.23	23,895,012	105.87	23,125,724	108.55	22,323,296	106.28

* Percentage of Total Current Fund Revenues ** Most recent fiscal year for which audited financial statements are available *** Budget for Current Year

STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE TABLE 3 SUMMARY REPORT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES - PUBLIC* AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

	ACTUAL			PROJECTED		
	Year 1 (2007)	Year 2 (2008)	Year 3**(2009)	Year 4***(2010)	Year 5 (2011)	Year 6 (2012)
	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount
Education and General						
Revenues	17,968,116	15,753,191	16,207,484	19,169,876	17,916,154	17,616,702
Expenditures	16,739,407	15,987,813	17,237,531	17,260,955	18,777,496	18,090,516
Transfers - Mandatory	(293,820)	(316,704)	(367,704)	(354,840)	(354,850)	(354,850)
- Non Mandatory	(430,074)	145,877	(206,032)	172,840	148,400	148,400
Net Excess (Deficit)	1,952,603	(63,795)	(456,311)	2,090,921	(654,893)	(267,364)
Auxiliary Enterprises						
Revenues	3,243,004	3,369,935	3,538,887	3,399,271	3,387,774	3,387,774
Expenditures	3,837,019	3,359,260	3,564,619	3,649,793	3,848,274	3,732,825
Transfers - Mandatory	350,864	360,652	370,379	409,504	409,504	409,504
- Non Mandatory	(127,686)	(39,936)	(83,698)	(116,000)	(116,000)	(116,000)
Net Excess (Deficit)	(817,193)	(310,041)	(312,413)	(544,026)	(754,004)	(638,555)
Net Operational Excess (Deficit)	1,135,410	(373,836)	(768,724)	1,546,895	(1,408,897)	(905,919)

* Percentage of Total Current Fund Revenues ** Most recent fiscal year for which audited financial statements are available *** Budget for Current Year

All financial resources reported are as reflected in the audited financial statements

STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE TABLE 4 SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID - PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

	ACTUAL						PROJECTED					
	Year 1 (2007)		Year 2 (2008)		Year 3**(2009)		Year 4***(2010)		Year 5 (2011)		Year 6 (2012)	
	Amount	%*	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Annual Private Contributions	474,496	6.75	797,553	9.97	797,971	9.30	867,065	9.84	800,000	9.19	800,000	9.22
Governmental State Aid	108,663	1.55	133,911	1.67	118,804	1.38	132,000	1.50	125,400	1.44	119,130	1.37
Federal Aid (Pell, SEOG, WS)	1,684,154	23.96	1,814,294	22.69	1,960,205	22.84	1,970,000	22.36	1,970,000	22.62	1,970,000	22.70
Endowment Earnings (Non-Foundation)	226	0.00	142	0.00	84	0.00	200	0.00	100	0.00	100	0.00
Institutional Unfunded Aid	672,754	9.57	689,658	8.62	716,687	8.35	769,429	8.73	746,346	8.57	723,955	8.34
Federal Student Loans (if applicable)	4,047,765	57.58	4,509,023	56.38	4,924,759	57.38	5,000,000	56.76	5,000,000	57.42	5,000,000	57.62
Nonfederal Workstudy Aid	42,176	0.60	52,461	0.66	64,837	0.76	70,000	0.79	66,500	0.76	64,505	0.74
Total Financial Aid	7,030,234	100.00	7,997,041	100.00	8,583,347	100.00	8,808,694	100.00	8,708,346	100.00	8,677,690	100.00

* Percentage of Total Financial Aid ** Most recent fiscal year for which audited financial statements are available *** Budget for Current Year

All financial resources reported are as reflected in the audited financial statements

STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE TABLE 9

OPERATING GIFTS AND ENDOWMENTS - PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS (If Applicable)

	ACTUAL			PROJECTED		
	Year 1 (2007)	Year 2 (2008)	Year 3**(2009)	Year 4*** (2010)	Year 5 (2011)	Year 6 (2012)
	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount
Annual Gifts						
Operations Restricted	316,483	354,072	319,815	308,615	324,746	324,746
Operations Unrestricted	8,100	2,975	500	-	-	-
Endowments Exclusive of Foundation Gifts						
Plant						
Total	324,583	357,047	320,315	308,615	324,746	324,746
Ratio of Annual Gifts to E & G	1.80%	1.94%	1.68%	1.44%	1.52%	1.55%
Endowment Fund Balance						
Permanent	4,579	4,721	4,655	4,672	4,758	4,758
Term						
Quasi						
Total	4,579	4,721	4,655	4,672	4,758	4,758

* Percentage of Total Current Fund Revenues ** Most recent fiscal year for which audited financial statements are available *** Budget for Current Year

All financial resources reported are as reflected in the audited financial statements

	ACTUAL			PROJECTED		
	Year 1 (2007)	Year 2 (2008)	Year 3**(2009)	Year 4***(2010)	Year 5 (2011)	Year 6 (2012)
	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount
Land						
Beginning Cost	693,231	693,231	693,231	693,231	693,231	693,231
Additions						
Deductions						
Ending Cost	693,231	693,231	693,231	693,231	693,231	693,231
Buildings						
Beginning Cost	22,794,096	22,936,821	24,527,523	25,049,361	25,771,045	30,522,888
Additions	142,726	1,590,702	521,838	721,683	4,751,844	6,000,000
Deductions						
Ending Cost	22,936,821	24,527,523	25,049,361	25,771,045	30,522,888	36,522,888
Furniture and Equipment						
Beginning Cost	772,536	890,741	993,237	1,096,068	1,256,368	1,256,368
Additions	118,205	102,496	112,826	160,300		
Deductions			9,995			
Ending Cost	890,741	993,237	1,096,068	1,256,368	1,256,368	1,256,368
Construction in Progress ü						

Beginning Cost	416,252	2,007,951	70,062	(0)	3,451,494	61,673
Additions	1,591,699	533,880		4,166,463	1,362,023	5,938,327
Deductions		2,471,769	70,062	714,969	4,751,844	6,000,000
Ending Cost	2,007,951	70,062	(0)	3,451,494	61,673	(0)
Debt Service						
Principal	112,186	123,672	101,618	70,189	57,642	124,832
Interest	399,758	396,543	381,377	367,850	364,260	361,240

* Most recent fiscal year for which audited financial statements are available *** Budget for Current Year ✓ Briefly describe the nature of the projects under way and / or anticipated (e.g., dormitories, classroom facilities, auditorium). Also , indicate sources of Funds for the project (i.e., fund raising programs, debt).

Current Projects:

Facility Type:

Source of Funds:

Renovation of I.T. Woods Classrooms

Classroom/Faculty Offices

State Appropriation

Main Hall Improvements – Phase I

Classroom/Faculty Offices

State Appropriation

Main Hall Improvements – Phase II

Classroom/Faculty Offices/Auditorium

State Appropriation

Block Hall Improvements

Classroom/Faculty Offices

State Appropriation

PE Complex Facility Electrical Update

Classroom/Faculty Offices

Debt

PE Complex Facility Mechanical Update

Classroom/Faculty Offices

Debt

STANDARD EIGHT--PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Introduction

The collective goal of the University of Montana Western – to provide students with the finest undergraduate experience possible through a mission of teaching, learning and discovery – is affected by the ability of the university to provide updated facilities and modern equipment for students, faculty and staff. This is reflected in the university’s strategic plan as one of the five connected strategic goals: **Goal 4. Enhance successful development, maintenance and improvement of the campus in support of long-range development plans.**

The improvement in this area over the last 15 years is one of Montana Western’s great success stories. Significant strides were made in building functionality and upkeep, in availability of technology, in the ability to fund reoccurring maintenance, in campus signage and landscape, and in sustainability initiatives, to name a few. Along with many other successful projects, three major projects mark the last decade – the 2002 completion of the Swysgood Technology Center, Montana Western’s first new building in 30 years; successfully converting the campus heating system to biomass fuel (wood chips), saving \$145,000/year in energy costs; and recently securing funding for Phase I and Phase II of the Main Hall renovation project, upgrading the university’s 100-year-old historical landmark. Montana Western, even with the construction messes, has never looked better. The continual challenge is and

always will be staying on top of the cyclical nature of maintenance and renovation, the ever-improving technology and continued planning for growth.

The campus of Montana Western consists of approximately 39 acres, of which 30 acres comprise the main campus (see **Campus Map**). The athletic field, which is approximately seven city blocks from the main campus, makes up the other nine acres. The beautiful setting of the main campus provides a backdrop for 16 major instructional and student support buildings. The university’s buildings have an estimated replacement value of \$101,542,268 and represent approximately 689,281 square feet of usable space (**Exhibit 8.1**, Facility Replacement Value).

Main Hall, Montana Western’s first building and architectural centerpiece, was constructed in 1896, while the most recent addition to campus, the Swysgood Technology Center, was completed in 2002. Main Hall is currently undergoing a major renovation and upgrade funded through the Montana Long Range Building Program and federal stimulus dollars.

The Birch Creek Center provides additional outdoor education opportunities to enhance Montana Western’s mission. This educational facility, located approximately 20 miles north of Dillon, is a former Civilian Conservation Corps camp located on seven acres of land leased from the U.S. Forest Service. The Bender Center, a teaching,

conference and dining facility of 7,016 square feet, is owned by the university. The U.S. Forest Service owns the six other buildings, totaling 12,406 square feet, which are used for instructional space and housing.

Standard 8. A – Instructional and Support Facilities

8.A.1

Montana Western is committed to providing instructional and student facilities that are sufficient to achieve the institution's mission and goals. In fact, even with the university's main classroom space (Main Hall complex) off-line during fall semester 2009, the university was able to provide appropriate spaces and mobile technology to cover all classes. The unique needs of Experience One, where a classroom space must be assigned each block for one instructor every day for three hours, were an initial challenge. Scheduling morning and afternoon blocks makes this work and also keeps prime teaching space from being underutilized as it would be if only scheduled for one class a day. The addition of the Swysgood Technology Center in 2002 provided the first new teaching space since Block Hall was constructed in 1971. This new space includes four new computer labs for both classes and general student use and three modern multimedia classrooms, along with needed general assembly space. Block Hall provided the university with adequate science laboratory space; however, this is an area that will be a future challenge as enrollments increase. One of the main priorities in the programming for the Main Hall renovation was to increase classroom space and include modern technology in

those spaces; this was included in both Phase I and II construction plans. Plans are in place and funds are being requested for Phase III renovations for areas of the building not finished under Phases I and II. Montana Western also increased classroom space through a renovation of the IT (Industrial Technology) Woods building and creating a new Student Science Center in the basement of Block Hall. Instructional facilities are sufficient for current enrollment and for some continued steady growth. The current student support spaces are also adequate on both the state side and in auxiliary services. The Campus Master Plan provides plans for future state and auxiliary facilities as needed for continued growth (**Exhibit 8.2**, Campus Master Plan, 2003).

8.A.2

The instructional programs operate in adequate facilities, although some of the spaces are not as electronically sophisticated as necessary for the full use of multimedia. Through the campus Technology Steering Committee, there has been a plan of systematically upgrading classrooms to use electronic media and providing mobile media carts in the meantime. Significant progress was made on this plan in the last two years. Multimedia is also part of current renovation plans in Main Hall.

The ability to have horses on campus for equine science labs is a slight challenge, which is being handled but can be improved. The campus recently added a few parking spots for trucks with horse trailers.

The overall better financial climate of the last eight years helped improve Montana Western's facilities but it will remain a challenge with student growth and projected future budget cuts.

8.A.3

The institution's facilities are furnished adequately for work, study and research. The addition of the Swysgood Technology Center and Library basement remodel, Science Instruction & Research Center and the Learning Center, all appropriately furnished, were great additions for student study and research. The remodel and upgrade of the Office Simulation laboratory and improvements through grant funding to the biology lab have also been welcome enhancements. Montana Western's faculty and staff continue to be great at "repurposing" furnishings and a reserve for faculty/staff ergonomic work stations was created. Although there is not a central furnishing budget line in the operating fund, the departmental budgets make small purchases, the facilities budget provides moveable furnishings as needed, furnishing needs are planned in all renovation projects and required instructional furnishing can be purchased through the student equipment fee fund. Over the last decade the financial condition of the auxiliaries has improved, which has allowed for a more systematic replacement of furnishings in that area (**Exhibit 8.3**, Auxiliary Capital Plan).

8.A.4

The goal of Facilities Services is "to provide a safe and comfortable learning and working environment for the students, faculty and

staff of the University of Montana Western. Furthermore, Facilities Services will maintain the integrity of Montana Western's properties. The facilities staff respond quickly to all day-to-day maintenance issues to support this mission and this standard. The institution's commitment to safety is always a priority. Montana Western has a safety officer, a seat on the MUS Worker's Compensation Committee who works on risk management, an annually updated crisis manual, material safety data sheets in all janitorial closets, administrators trained as a Community Emergency Response Team. Montana Western also contracts with a security company to provide night watch.

Although the financial position of Montana Western has been better over the last decade, the Facilities Services budget has remained relatively flat in order to pursue instructional and student marketing and recruiting goals. This challenge is most apparent in the daily maintenance operations of custodial and grounds, which rely heavily on student workers. The permanent janitorial staff for instructional buildings has improved from one FTE to four FTE over this decade, making a marked difference, but still is not adequate per Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) square footage/janitor standards. Grounds are very well-cared for despite having only one permanent FTE.

Challenges in the area of deferred maintenance were helped through joint funding opportunities across the University of Montana system and through the state's Long Range Building Program (**Exhibit 8.4**, Major Campus Upgrades). This commitment

to facility improvement enhanced the student experience as well as the fulfillment of the academic mission and goals of the institution.

8.A.5

Montana Western follows federal, state, and BOR rules, codes and policies in its facility planning to ensure health, safety and accessibility (**Exhibit 8.5**, Policy Statements on Access, Security, and Safety). In all requests for deferred maintenance code, life safety and accessibility issues are ranked priority one. With the Main Hall lift project in 2008, Montana Western completed accessibility projects to provide access to all instructional spaces. The university was recently reviewed by the Office of Civil Rights regarding physical access per the Americans with Disabilities Act and is looking forward to considering the findings of that report as it becomes available. Montana Western has also done several ventilation, fire alarm and asbestos abatement projects during this decade to improve the safety of the institution's facilities.

8.A.6

Montana Western's off-campus offerings primarily consist of early childhood education programs and these sites are generally in other public entities that follow the same required standards. Montana Western also offers programs in other units of the MUS. In all instances, physical facilities used for these activities have been and continue to be appropriate to the educational programs offered.

8.A.7

Montana Western's use of other facilities is generally for skills classes such as swimming and horsemanship. These facilities are contracted and meet the standards required for the program. The lease for the Birch Creek Outdoor Educational Center is with the U.S. Forest Service and follows all statutory requirements regarding appropriate access and safety.

The improvements in the area of Montana Western's physical facilities and grounds are truly one of the great differences at Montana Western over the last 15 years.

Improvements were initiated when The University of Montana System began cross-pledging bonds to make much needed improvements in auxiliary buildings. This momentum has not stopped. The university is committed to providing appropriate instructional facilities and equipment for the unique requirements of the truly experiential education available through Montana Western's Experience One schedule. The hard work of the marginally-staffed Facilities and Information Technology departments are evident across campus. Adequate funding was found to provide sufficient physical resources and maintain them. Montana Western also made a commitment to sustainability with several successful projects in the last few years, including biomass energy, photovoltaic energy, lighting retrofits, tray-less food service and the chancellor's signing of the American College and University President's Climate Commitment. The challenge will be to continue this

momentum with what may become looming budget challenges in the next biennium.

Standard 8.B – Equipment and Materials

8.B.1

Montana Western has suitable equipment, including technology, to meet current educational and administrative requirements. The funding and management of Montana Western's equipment and materials involves many areas of the campus. Although the general fund operating budget has been able to provide little funding for equipment other than central computing resources, the university has maintained its commitment to provide up-to-date instructional equipment and materials through various funding methods, including mandated student fees approved by the BOR. Designated fund fee accounts for course/lab fees, equipment fee, and the computer/technology fees have provided a steady annual source for materials and equipment replacement cycles (**Exhibit 8.6**, BOR Policy 940.23; **Exhibit 8.7**, BOR Policy 940.26). Montana Western also works with The University of Montana and the State of Montana Surplus Property Division to maximize use of equipment. Experience One increased the need for motor pool vehicles and the university is responding to that need.

Montana Western has a centralized technology division that is responsible for support, maintenance, purchasing and replacement of all campus computing resources. This division works hand-in-hand with the technology center and library staff to support multimedia classrooms and student computer labs (see **Standard Five**).

The campus Technology Committee provides overarching support for this function, which is guided by the Campus Technology Plan and a computer lab R&R plan. (See **Exhibit 8.8**, Campus Technology Plan; **Exhibit 8.9**, Computer Lab R&R Plan.) Montana Western was an early adopter of SCT BANNER and has been on the BANNER student system since the late 1980s and a part of the BANNER Finance and Human Resource system through The University of Montana System since the early 1990s. WebCT is the current academic courseware system. The version of WebCT the campus is currently utilizing is being phased out. Therefore, Montana Western is in a process with the University of Montana System to acquire the rights to a common learning management system.

Instructional multimedia is provided and maintained by the Lucy Carson Library. The Library Director is responsible for planning the purchase and replacement of this equipment. There is a small general fund account for this purpose and the equipment fee fund is also a source for these purchases. Through the Technology Steering Committee additional funding sources are being pursued for the multimedia, "smart" classroom project on campus.

Equipment for auxiliary service is funded and maintained in each auxiliary area. The directors work with the Dean of Students and the Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance and Student Affairs to budget annual maintenance and purchases using the Auxiliary Capital Plan (**Exhibit 8.3**, Auxiliary Capital Plan). These equipment purchases are balanced with debt service

requirements. Significant strides were made in this area since the Auxiliaries have been maintaining a working fund balance the last eight years and have been able to fund an Auxiliary Renewal and Replacement account in the plant funds.

8.B.2

Equipment is maintained by Facilities Services, Information & Technology Services, Auxiliary Services and the Lucy Carson Library. Each area has reoccurring maintenance schedules. Each area is committed to making sure all equipment is in good operating condition. Procedures are in place to notify the appropriate entity of required repairs or maintenance or theft of missing equipment. Communication of and training in these procedures continues to be one of Montana Western's challenges.

In 1998, the state capitalization level raised to \$5,000. Any fixed asset over \$5,000 is capitalized on the accounting system and an inventory is maintained through the system. This is the required official equipment inventory and is maintained in Business Services. The four areas responsible for maintenance of specific campus equipment or materials maintain inventories of that equipment under the capitalization limit as required for renewal and replacement plans (**Exhibit 8.10**, ITS Computer Inventory; **Exhibit 8.11**, STC Computer Inventory). Campus departments and offices are responsible for the security of any equipment, furnishings or materials under their control. Missing or stolen equipment must be reported immediately to the Business Services Office, which then notifies the State Auditor.

8.B.3

Montana Western is classified as a small quantity generator of hazardous waste. The chemistry lab is the source of a nominal amount of hazardous waste. Toxic waste generated in the other science labs is handled by the chemistry lab. The department develops and maintains appropriate procedures to use and store hazardous waste. As an affiliate of The University of Montana System, the Environmental Health and Safety Officer at Montana Tech helps manage Montana Western's nominal amounts of hazardous waste through their contract. Materials are stored in approved biohazardous containers and safety cabinets.

Standard 8.C – Physical Resource Planning

8.C.1

Montana Western developed an extensive master plan in 1995, which guided the successful expansion and renovations now evident on campus. In the spring of 2003, a committee of campus constituents updated this plan and produced the current master plan (**Exhibit 8.2**, Campus Master Plan). This plan was reviewed annually with a list of accomplishments attached each year. During that same time, the university undertook several strategic planning processes that have also guided campus development and the development of the master plan. The 2003 Master Plan called for an update in 2009. Montana Western is behind on this initiative but appointed a committee to begin working on an updated plan for 2010. Many of the goals of both the

1995 plan and the 2003 plan have been accomplished or are in progress. The accomplishments over the last decade demonstrate the university's effective use of planning strategies.

Montana Western's on-campus facilities planning group is the Campus Development Committee. The membership of this committee is composed of representatives from faculty, staff, students and administration. The committee reviews and prioritizes various campus development planning documents, construction plans and maintenance projects. The committee also reviews the work prepared for submission to the State Long Range Building Program (LRBP) each biennium. A separate committee of stakeholders was formed for the Main Hall Renovation Programming and will serve as a communication body during construction. All of this work is guided by Montana Western's strategic plan.

8.C.2

As a public institution, most of Montana Western's capital projects are funded through the LRBP. Planning for the LRBP each biennium is a significant project for Facilities Services. Utilizing source planning documents, the Facilities Condition Inventory (FCI) and personnel knowledge, a list of critical compliance and deferred maintenance issues is submitted to Montana Western's administration. After the administration's review and prioritization the list is reviewed by the Campus Development Committee and the Campus Budget Committee for comment. This list is then forwarded to The University of Montana System to be prioritized with The

University of Montana System Long Range Building request (**Exhibit 7.4**, 2010-11 Long-Range Building Plan; **Exhibit 8.12**, UMW 2012-13 LRBP Request), Montana Western is represented in this discussion. The list is then forwarded to OCHE to be prioritized with the Montana State University System request. The BOR submits the final list to the Montana Architecture and Engineering Division for inclusion in the Governor's Budget Request to the biennial legislature. All projects on the list must include the projected continuing operating and maintenance costs. Montana's capital projects from the federal American Recovery & Reinvestment Act were authorized through this process in 2009. Montana Western was the only campus of the Montana University System to receive federal funds (for Phase II of the Main Hall renovation).

Montana Western also funds facilities development and renovation through monies appropriately transferred to the plant fund from operating budgets, state reversion dollars (**Exhibit 8.13**, BOR Policy 901.6), academic facilities fees net of required debt service, private donations and auxiliary renewal and replacement funds. The funding must be clearly identified and available before any project may be started at Montana Western. The continuing operating and maintenance costs are a consideration in the planning and approval of all projects.

8.C.3

All projects authorized by the state, the BOR, OCHE, The University of Montana System, or Montana Western are required to follow all appropriate laws, rules,

regulations and policies, from federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act to state and local building and fire codes and MUS and campus policies. Montana Western is also required to work with the state historical architect when working in certain locations. Montana Western follows the ADAAG guidelines.

8.C.4

Both governing boards and constituents are involved as appropriate or required in planning physical facilities. Policies and procedures are in place to authorize facility expansions, major renovations and purchases depending on the size, scope and cost of the project. Approvals may be required by the State of Montana, the BOR, OCHE, The University of Montana, or Montana Western's administration. Montana Western is cognizant of the myriad of policies for facility planning and works to ensure compliance.

Constituents are involved through the Campus Development Committee, University Council, Senior Staff, and through committees developed for specific projects such as the Main Hall Renovation Committee. Montana Western also holds open public forums concerning projects of community interest. Converting to biomass energy is an example of a project that involved community, federal and state agencies as well as campus constituents in its planning and approval.

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: Montana Western made significant improvements during the last

decade in updating instructional equipment and technological resources, especially in the area of courseware and multimedia classrooms. The university developed permanent funding sources to provide for renewal and replacement of equipment and continues to follow an excellent long-standing renewal and replacement plan for student computing resources. The additions of the Swysgood Technology Building and an instructional technologist and a computer specialist also made a difference.

Areas for Improvement: Appropriate planning is key to maintaining the improvements made in facilities and equipment during the past fifteen years. Montana Western has planning processes in place that need to be reviewed and strengthened now to ensure sufficient physical resources in the future. Due to the day-to-day workload of the current facilities staff and the vice chancellor, Montana Western has not updated the Facilities Condition Inventory (FCI), space utilization study, preventative maintenance schedules and Campus Master Plan. Plans are being developed to address these issues.

Montana Western established plans and procedures for its physical resources based upon its mission and goals. The challenge is to make the information more comprehensive and thorough. This is vital to protect the significant financial investment made during this past decade. This investment directly relates to the importance Montana Western plays in higher education in Montana.

STANDARD 9—INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION

The University of Montana Western seeks to provide an academic environment conducive to the achievement of its mission and for the pursuit of learning and knowledge.

Institutional integrity, as embodied in adherence to the highest ethical standards, is vital to the creation and maintenance of that environment. Institutional integrity is reflected in the university's interactions with its many constituencies: in its teaching, scholarship and service; in its treatment of students, faculty, administrative staff, and support staff; and in the performance of its management and operations. Reflecting the geographical region in which it is located, Montana Western's culture and character have historically demonstrated a commitment to honesty, openness, and concern for the individual.

Policy citations governing the ethical behavior of all members of the faculty, administration, support staff, and students are found in a range of official documents, the most important of which is the 2001 document, "Ethics: Standards of Conduct for State Employees," (Montana State Department of Administration, State Personnel Division, 2001). (See **Exhibit 9.1**, Montana State Department of Administration, State Personnel Division, "Ethics: Standards of Conduct for State Employees;" **Exhibit 9.2**, Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 708.1; **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-2010 Student Handbook, pp. 127-48).

Montana Western recognizes its obligation to represent itself accurately and consistently to its constituencies, to prospective students, and to the broader public. Through the ongoing work of the campus governance structure, including the Faculty Senate, standing and ad hoc committees, and the University Council, institutional policies, procedures, and publications are subject to continual review. This effort seeks to maintain the accuracy of the information contained in these documents while also ensuring consistency with state and federal regulations as well as policy and procedures requirements of the Montana University System (MUS) as approved by the Board of Regents (BOR). The administration regularly monitors policies and procedures, making changes only after input from affected constituencies. Collective bargaining negotiations for both faculty and staff may also result in changes in policies and procedures.

The university's primary policy publications include the annual catalog, the fall and spring semester course schedules, the Montana Western Policies and Procedures Manual, and the annual Student Handbook. (See **Exhibit 1.1**, 2009-2010 Catalog; **Exhibit 9.3**, Fall, 2009 and Spring, 2010, Schedule of Classes; **Exhibit 9.4**, UMW Policies and Procedures Manual; **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-2010 Student Handbook).

Preparation and release of these communication vehicles is completed under the direction of the two vice chancellors

with the approval of the chancellor. Annual revisions to these documents reflect changes in policies and procedures within the university, at the level of the MUS, or as necessitated by action at the state or federal levels.

The chancellor, vice chancellors, and the director of marketing, along with their respective staffs, work collaboratively in order to maintain the accuracy and consistency of university publications. The director of marketing carries primary responsibility for the relations of the university with its primary external constituencies, and ensures that all advertising, news releases, and publications are accurate, consistent, and support the mission and goals of the university.

The director of marketing serves as the university's spokesperson and, as such, reviews all official institutional statements prior to their release to the public or the media. Where these official statements represent university policy and procedures, they also are subject to review by the provost and chancellor before their release.

Board of Regents Policy, Section 770, provides that all employees of the MUS must endeavor to avoid conflicts of interest between their university system duties and obligations and their personal and other professional activities. A conflict of interest exists when:

a. When an employee has a personal interest in a matter that may be inconsistent or incompatible with the employee's obligation to exercise the employee's best judgment in pursuit

of the interests of the university system; or

b. When a non-university system activity unreasonably encroaches on the time an employee should devote to the affairs of the university system; or

c. When an employee's non-university system activities impinge on or compromise the loyalty, commitment, or performance the university system has the right to expect from the employee.

This policy complements the Montana state statute pertaining to standards of conduct of public employees (Section 2-2-101 Montana Code Annotated 2007) and is not intended to contradict or supersede those standards. (See **Exhibit 9.5**, BOR Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 770). Also, this policy is not intended to supersede the BOR policy on service on outside governing boards, as referenced below. In addition to these policies, Section 7.300 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement further reinforces these policies related to conflict of interest situations that may arise with faculty members. (See **Exhibit 4.7**, 2006-2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement, Section 7.300). In fall 2007, a formal campus policy concerning Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure was added to the campus Policy Manual (See **Exhibit 9.4**, UMW Policies and Procedures Manual http://www.umwestern.edu/campusinfo/policymanual/policies/700.2_ConflInterest_FinancialDisclos_Policy1.pdf). This policy defines the procedure for reporting possible

conflicts of interest involving campus personnel.

Board of Regents Policy, Section 760, allows senior level administrative employees (that is, the chancellor, vice-chancellors, provost, or comparable campus officers) to participate on outside governing boards. In no case, however, can the service on an outside governing board conflict with the individual's duties and responsibilities on campus. On or before July 1 each year, each covered employee must provide a list of any such service, along with the compensation received over the previous twelve months. The lists are submitted to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and then to the BOR.

Service on governing or policy boards of educational organizations other than campus foundations may be performed on state time, if such service is an integral part of the individual's job duties. (See **Exhibit 9.6**, Board of Regents Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 760).

The 2009-2010 Student Handbook contains a detailed presentation of the student conduct code, which embodies the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, human rights, and responsible citizenship. (See **Exhibit 1.2**, 2009-10 Student Handbook, pp. 127-48). The student conduct code ensures certain substantive and procedural rights to the student and establishes the grievance procedure used to resolve concerns over instances of conflict. In addition to being posted on the campus web-site, student handbooks are also distributed through the campus bookstore.

The standards of professionalism for students in the Teacher Education Program (TEP) are based on the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Principles as explained in the TEP Student Handbook 2008-2009. These standards demonstrate the ability of the individual to conduct himself or herself in a manner fitting to be a teaching professional. Individuals who fail to meet the standards may be removed from the Teacher Education Program (See **Exhibit 2.7**, 2008-09 TEP Student Handbook).

Recruitment activity is administered by the campus affirmative action officer to ensure compliance with state and federal affirmative action and equal opportunity regulations and to ensure compliance with The University of Montana system policies on recruitment of personnel. (See **Exhibit 9.7**, University of Montana Missoula Policy Manual, Section 400, <http://www.umt.edu/Policies/default.aspx>). The affirmative action officer provides instruction and guidance to all search committees and is involved in each step of the recruitment process. The faculty hiring process is further defined in Section 8 of the collective bargaining agreement (**Exhibit 4.7**, 2006-11 Collective Bargaining Agreement, Section 8.000).

Board of Regents Policy 401.1 provides broad guidance for faculty members who engage in outside consulting activities. Outside employment by faculty is also governed by Section 7.300 of the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement. (See **Exhibit 9.8**, Board of Regents Policy and

Procedures Manual, Section 401.1; **Exhibit 4.7**, 2006-2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement, Section 7.3000).

The State of Montana and The University of Montana, Missoula delegated authority to Montana Western to procure or supervise the procurement of supplies and services to certain dollar levels. The director of business services and the vice chancellor are responsible for ensuring Montana Western adheres to all state, MUS, The University of Montana, and Montana Western procurement policies.

Montana Western values personal and academic freedom and embraces the ideals of academic honesty and integrity. All members of the university community have the responsibility to promote an atmosphere of civility in which the free exchange of ideas and opinions can flourish. This is best fulfilled by learning from individual and collective differences and respecting every person.

The academic freedom of faculty is guaranteed by the provisions of Section 3.500 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Montana Western Faculty Association (Local 4323 of MEA-MFT, AFL-CIO, NEA) and the BOR. Academic freedom is also guaranteed by BOR Policy 302. All parties to the CBA recognize and accept the importance of academic freedom to faculty members and students. Academic freedom, which applies to both teaching and research, is the right of scholars to study, discuss, investigate, teach, and publish, and is accompanied by a concept of responsibility, as outlined in Section 3.600 of the CBA. (See **Exhibit 4.7**,

2006-2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement, Section 3.500 and 3.600; **Exhibit 9.9**, Board of Regents Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 302).

The only ethical restriction upon academic freedom prohibits the use of staff time or resources, and therefore, tax dollars, for the purposes of political campaign activity or lobbying. Such activity is permissible, however, on an individual employee's own time and at his or her expense.

CONCLUSION

Areas of Strength: The Montana Western community respects and is committed to maintaining the highest standards of institutional integrity, and the implementation of Experience One continues to provide the university with good reasons to protect its institutional integrity.

Areas for Improvement: Because The University of Montana Western is integrally connected to The University of Montana-Missoula, as well as to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Board of Regents, it is vital that its faculty and officials remember this institutional integrity cannot be maintained only by looking inside the institution. Rather, we must continue to assume an appropriate degree of responsibility for the overall integrity of the Montana University System, as its fate and ours are inextricably intertwined. Especially when the BOR and OCHE determine Montana Western's budget share of legislative appropriations,

and when system initiatives regarding student access, the developmental needs of students, and two-year education, for instance, all have significant implications for

Montana Western, it is critical that the institution pay attention to external and internal circumstances that affect its integrity.

SUMMARY

1) Experience One is working, thanks to the efforts of a highly motivated, dedicated, and skilled faculty. A learning outcomes assessment is helping to improve it.

2) Experience One is aiding admissions, recruitment, and marketing, helping increase student enrollment and retention, even while the reorganization of the admissions office and the development of the marketing office give Experience One excellent supports.

3) Student Success, through academic advising, TRiO student support services, The Learning Center, and Career Services, is professionally run and has played a significant role not only in promoting students' academic success, but also their retention.

4) Student Affairs, also managed by passionate professionals, supports students academically and holistically by making residence halls comfortable and safe, dining healthy, mental and physical health support available, and in many other ways. Together with the Associated Students of the University of Montana Western, Student Affairs supports students in developing healthy and engaging social lives.

5) Campus communications are sturdy and effective, both within the university community and also with external constituencies from the Board of Regents to our southwest Montana neighbors.

6) The Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance and Student Affairs and her excellent, hard-working staff brought order to and managed the university's limited

budget creatively, making the development and consistent improvement of Experience One and the gradual growth of the student body possible. The stability they brought to the university in the last decade cannot be underestimated.

7) Despite limited personnel and an increasing workload as the student population grows, the Registrar's, Financial Aid, and Business Services offices serve students professionally. This is not easy to do, given that students can now register for courses at the beginning of every block, as well as prior to the beginning of each semester. Further, because financial aid is increasingly tied to demonstrated student progress toward degree, constant vigilance is necessary to assure awards are distributed fairly, and that students moving into and out of the curriculum (which block scheduling makes easy) have their aid awards adjusted accordingly.

8) During the last decade, the university repaired, renovated, and modernized academic and other campus buildings, continually upgrading the quality of facilities for all constituencies. The Main Hall renovation is merely the most visible current improvement project. Thus, the physical campus is in good shape and getting better, important when the university has a chance to continue its growth in the next decade.

9) Inside the campus's buildings, the thoughtful management and upgrading of computers, smart boards, and other technology means faculty and students work

together in classrooms connected to the larger world. At the same time, every year administrators and staff learn to use new aspects of the BANNER system, generating efficiencies even while making the compilation of useful data for curricular and other purposes easier. Similarly, the library director and his staff are consistently making carefully-chosen new resources available to students, regardless of their location.

10) The Montana Western Foundation's capital campaign continues apace and its outcomes should make funding for additional badly-needed student scholarships and for enhanced faculty development (thus serving the cause of continued innovation) more available, even though state funding for the university may be reduced in the next few years.

11) The Athletic Department continues to support the university by recruiting student athletes—up to one-third of all Montana Western students in any year are athletes. Moreover, increasing collaboration between the coaches and Student Success and Student Affairs staff enabled the latter to successfully intervene so as to support and retain many academically struggling athletes.

12) Montana Western's new teaching and learning model is facilitating pedagogical and other experiments. These experiments go well beyond linking block courses into "stretches." At present, service learning is of growing interest to students, and Americorp volunteers are aiding their participation in important practical learning experiences. Similarly, there is increasing interest among faculty, staff, and students not only in

making campus more sustainable, but also in building sustainability into the content of the curriculum (at present there is no sustainability curriculum in Montana). The General Education Committee is examining means of bringing issues of diversity and globalization closer to the center of the general education program. The Department of Education is collaborating with arts and sciences faculty to enable secondary education students to complete a content degree, as well as the professional education program, essentially allowing students who wish to do so to "double major," maximizing the value of the students' dollars. Finally, the Industrial Technology secondary education program is relocating to the Helena College of Technology, accessing a larger demographic base, and enabling place-bound students in Helena to complete a four-year degree. The university is interested in pursuing other such useful articulations. In short, rather than marking the end of a period of innovation at Montana Western, Experience One is generating further innovations.

None of the above mean the university does not have more to do to improve its quality and academic reputation, only that Montana Western is demonstrating an on-going appetite to do so. Following are some issues Montana Western continues to think about and address:

1) Montana Western must continue to work with the president of The University of Montana-Missoula, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Board of Regents to normalize its degree offerings (changing from options and related

areas to majors and minors) so that the curriculum is as transparent as possible to prospective students.

2) The academic administration and the faculty must find means of making the curriculum more efficient and effective, reducing the number of under- and over-subscribed courses, and better serving students with developmental needs, especially in mathematics.

3) The university administration, even in the midst of difficult economic times, must find ways of improving compensation for both faculty and staff, and of maintaining the university's commitment to hiring full-time, tenure-track faculty.

4) The academic administration and faculty must find ways of making faculty pedagogical development consistently available, especially in summers.

5) The academic administration must enable the library to continue building its collection, especially of resources important to off-campus, as well as on-campus, students.

6) The university must discover better means of staying in touch with graduates, not only for the purpose of deepening

alumni relations, but also so as to increase returns of graduate and other surveys important for assessment.

7) Given the statewide emphasis on two-year education, the university must consider ways of making the two-year curriculum more visible, and of assuring students who enter two-year programs graduate from them successfully before they move seamlessly into the four-year curriculum.

8) The university must refocus energy on applying for grants for research and innovation to improve the quality of undergraduate education.

Administrators, faculty, staff, and students are largely aware of all of the above, and harnessing their energy to solve these and other, emerging problems and issues will be critical in the next decade. But Montana Western is a university that accomplished what so many of its peers too often believe is impossible: profound structural innovation in the delivery of undergraduate education and the construction of appropriate academic and other supports to make Experience One work. Surely maintaining the ground we gained in the last decade and building upon that firm foundation cannot be impossible for an institution as courageous and forward thinking as ours.