

Ad Hoc Report for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Fall 2015

The University of Montana Western (Montana Western), in response to the Northwest Commission of Colleges and University's (NWCCU) request (dated July 30, 2014), submits this ad hoc report to further address Recommendation 1 from the Spring 2014 Ad Hoc Evaluation. Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

The Commission does not find evidence that the commitment to assessment has been embraced throughout the curriculum. It is therefore recommended that the institution take immediate steps to implement frequent, regular and substantive assessment of learning outcomes in all academic programs. Furthermore, it is recommended that the assessment process explicitly connect student learning outcomes to program mission, the institution's strategic plan, the budget process and the University mission (Standards 2.C.2; 2.C.5; 4.A.2; and 4.A.3).

Each of the NWCCU standards cited in support of Recommendation 1 is addressed separately herein. Blue text represents a hyperlink to a website. Purple text represents an internal link to a bookmark.

Standard 2.C.2

The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to the enrolled students.

Montana Western publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Specific course learning outcomes are published in course syllabi. Electronic syllabi are posted for all courses, wherever offered and however delivered, on the campus learning management system, Moodle. Printed copies of course syllabi are also available. Program and degree outcomes are published in the college catalog. Printed and electronic copies of the catalog are available to all students ([Exhibit A. Catalog](#)).

Standard 2.C.5

Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, implementation, and revision of the curriculum and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

Montana Western faculty participate in shared governance through a faculty senate structure. Faculty Senate includes representatives from all academic departments and includes one member-at-large. Faculty Senate plays a major role in the review and approval of all curricular proposals. The full curricular process is explained in the [Exhibit B \(Curriculum Proposal Instructions and Form\)](#). Faculty Senate also oversees a standing general education committee and nominates three faculty members to the assessment committee (see more on the assessment committee in response to Standard 4.A.2). Faculty Senate is responsible for accepting the General Education Committee's recommendation to adopt the LEAP essential learning outcomes for Montana Western's general education program.

Montana Western includes teaching faculty in the selection of all new faculty. Tenure-line faculty positions are hired by the provost based on the recommendation of a search committee. Faculty search committees are typically chaired by a tenured faculty and include several members of an academic discipline. The provost may hire adjuncts and temporary instructors without conducting a search; however, department chairs are typically consulted prior to issuing a contract.

Standard 4.A.2

The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.

The Montana Board of Regents (BoR) requires campuses to conduct academic program reviews every seven years ([Exhibit C. BoR Policy 303.3](#)). A schedule of program review is required to be on file with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education ([Exhibit D. Academic Program Review Schedules](#)). Program review includes all programs listed in the degree and program inventory maintained by the OCHE, including options and certificates of more than 30 credits ([Exhibit E. UMW Program Inventory](#)). BoR mandated program reviews include graduation numbers and student major numbers for each of the last seven years for every program under review. Program reviews also include a narrative of future plans for the program. Campus administration uses the program review data, findings, and recommendations to inform decisions regarding resource allocation (facilities, equipment, faculty, operations, etc.). Montana Western is in compliance with the BoR review policy and further requires departments to address findings from annual program assessments.

Montana Western established an assessment committee in August 2013. The committee comprises three faculty members nominated by Faculty Senate, two department heads, the assistant provost, the registrar, and the director of student success. The committee is charged with overseeing a systematic campus plan for gathering information about student learning and sharing its findings with various campus leadership. The committee meets four times each semester, oversees annual program review, and prepares annual reports ([Exhibit F. 2012-13 Report to Leadership](#) and [Exhibit G. 2013-2014 Report to Leadership](#)).

In spring 2015, the assessment committee administered the National Survey of Student Engagement as an indirect assessment of student engagement and teaching practices. The population surveyed included freshmen and senior students in all programs, wherever offered and however delivered. Thirty percent of freshmen responded; 27% of seniors responded. NSSE reported survey findings to Montana Western in late August. The assessment committee is currently evaluating the NSSE results and the campus 2014-15 program assessment reports. The committee expects to complete its 2014-15 report to leadership by December 2015.

Standard 4.A.3

The institution documents, through an effective, regular and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

In fall 2012, Montana Western revised its annual assessment procedures using *Assessment Clear and Simple* (Walvoord, 2010) as a guide. Faculty with teaching responsibilities evaluate student achievement relative to the learning outcomes published in course syllabi. Each spring, faculty groups meet to discuss the outcomes of course assessment data relative to the general education program and academic program objectives. Faculty members of the general education committee lead the faculty discussions relative to general education outcomes. Department chairs lead faculty discussions relative to academic program outcomes. Results of these discussions are reported back to the provost and assessment committee.

In 2013, the assessment committee developed standardized assessment forms to assist with annual reporting ([Exhibit H. General Education Assessment Form](#) and [Exhibit I. Annual Program Assessment](#)). The forms were modified in 2015 to specifically address learning outcomes, Experience One, and the 2014 strategic plan ([Exhibit J. Experience the Difference: A Five-Year Strategic Plan 2014-19 for the University of Montana Western](#)). The general education assessment report is due in April; academic program assessments are due in May. The general education committee oversees assessment of the general education program; department chairs oversee program assessments. The assessment committee summarizes the findings of these reports in its annual report to leadership.

Summary

Montana Western has embraced assessment of learning outcomes throughout the curriculum. The campus continually refines policies and processes to ensure regular and substantive assessment of learning outcomes in all academic programs. Faculty are responsible for connecting course student learning outcomes to program mission statements and graduate outcomes.

Montana Western's assessment efforts are connected to the campus strategic plan, budget decisions, and mission. Priorities One and Two of the 2014 strategic plan address continual improvement of academic programs and services. Goal 1C explicitly aims to "improve academic programs through rigorous and ongoing assessment and review processes." The data collected and assessed as part of program review is utilized to allocate resources and make institutional improvements. Priorities Three through Six of the strategic plan address recruitment of faculty, students and staff; maintenance of facilities in alignment with institutional mission and needs; and responsible stewardship of resources. These efforts are guided by Montana Western's mission to "differentiate itself and achieve academic excellence by sustaining a culture of concentrated experiential education."

Instructions for filling out, submitting, and processing Curriculum Proposal forms

1. Only the “2015” form in this packet will be accepted. The form must be typed. An electronic form can be requested from Charity Walters at any time. Her email is charity.walters@umwestern.edu
2. Completely fill out the first two sections (A & B) of the proposal form **in Microsoft Word**. Delete these instructions and all used appendices from the curriculum proposal form once you have filled it out.

a. Section A: Classification

- i. Four rectangular areas appear at the top of the curriculum proposal form. Of these, fill out only the two that request the Academic year and Catalog year for the proposal and the one that specifies whether the proposal is to be approved at the campus level, the OCHE level (I), or The BOR level (II). In Appendix A, you can find an outline of the criteria to use in order to decide whether your proposal requires campus level approval, Level I (OCHE) approval, or Level II (BOR) approval.
- ii. Provide a unique and descriptive title for your proposal.
- iii. Provide your name and the department name on behalf of which you are submitting the proposal.
- iv. Provide the name of a contact person for your department. This might be you, it might be the chair, or it might be someone else. However, it should be the name of someone who is capable of justifying and explaining your proposal.
- v. Select one or more of the categories that describe the type of proposal you are submitting.
- vi. If your proposal creates a new course that will fulfill credit in the General Education Program or if it modifies an existing course in the General Education Program, mark the box titled “Proposed as Gen Ed Course?” with a “Yes” and state which general education category your course fits into. Otherwise, mark this box with a “No.”
- vii. If you are requesting to attach a course fee to a course that would be created by your proposal, mark the “Course Fee Attached to Any Course?” box with a yes. You will also need to completely fill out the Course Fee Request Form that is included at the end of the Curriculum Proposal Form. If you are not attaching a course fee to your proposed course, mark this box with a “No” and delete the Course Fee Request Form from the end of your proposal.

b. Section B: Description and Justification

If you have determined that your proposal needs only Campus Level approval, then you need only complete the items within section B. Delete Appendices A-D in this case. If you determine that your proposal requires Level I (OCHE) approval, fill out the Level I Request Form (found in Appendix B) in addition to the items within Section B. In the process of completing the Level I Request Form, you might find that your proposal also requires Level II documentation. If this is the case, you must also complete Appendix D: Level II Documentation. Finally, if you determine that your proposal requires Level II approval, you must complete Section B, Appendix C: Level II Request Form, and Appendix D: Level II Documentation. When completing either the Level I or Level II Request Forms, leave the Item Number, Meeting Date, and CIP Code fields blank. These will be provided by the Provost’s office.

- i. Succinct Statement of Proposed Change: Briefly outline the key changes to the curriculum that you are proposing. If you are creating a new course (or courses) attach a sample syllabus at the end of the proposal.
- ii. Provide information supporting the request (rationale): Describe the need you are attempting to address with your proposed curricular change. If you have collected data that illustrates this need, include it (and explain it).
- iii. Attach new or revised information as it should appear in the Catalog: If you are creating a new course or modifying an existing course in a way that requires a change to the catalog description for the course, provide the complete, new (or revised) catalog description for the course. This should include course rotations, pre-requisites (if applicable) and a description of how experiential learning is practiced within the course. If you are proposing the creation of a new major, minor, or option, provide a full catalog listing that describes the purpose of the program and lists all of the courses required to earn the major, minor, or option.
- iv. Transferability Considerations (if any): The MUS operates under a transferability initiative that maintains many courses with common course names and numbers. Changes to existing courses within the transferability matrix require approval by the FLOC that owns that course. Creation of new courses to be added to the transferability matrix also requires approval by the FLOC that owns that course. Therefore, if you are proposing the creation of a new course or the modification of an existing one, be sure to clearly state which FLOC will be affected by your proposed change. The approval process involving the FLOC begins when and if the proposal is approved by the UMW campus. The FLOC approval process is outlined in the document, “New Course Development

Process / Change in Content, Objectives, Outcomes, Level, Credit, Title Process” available from Charity Walters.

- v. Effects, if any, of this proposal on any of our degree programs: When in doubt, list any other academic program that might be affected by the changes you propose. Ways your proposal might affect other programs include, but are not limited to, changes in rotations of, pre-requisites for, or content of courses that other programs require their students to take, additions or deletions of courses offered by other departments from your own program’s list of required courses, and creation of new courses or programs that offer significant overlap to other courses or programs that already exist on our campus. It is a professional courtesy to discuss these kinds of proposed changes with the affected departments or programs as early as possible in the curriculum review process. If you begin this process early, it will increase the chances that the curriculum review process will go smoothly for your proposal.
 - vi. Resource Implications (if applicable): Clearly state the resources that will be required by your proposal. If a new course or program is proposed, who will staff it? If that person already has a full-time workload, how will their new responsibilities be met? Are there any institutional resources, such as special facilities, that are required in order to implement the proposed changes?
3. Once you have completed all of Sections A and B, the review and approval process begins. The following procedure uses Microsoft Outlook One Drive to process signatures. While curriculum proposals will be visible to all faculty through the one drive, only the Registrar, Provost, Chairs, General Education Committee and Chancellor will have access to add signatures and/or make changes to the document.
- a. *Section C: Signatures and Responses*
 - i. Departmental Approval and Comments: Your proposal should be read and discussed at one of your department meetings. Then, the voting members of your department should vote to approve or reject the proposal. Record the number of votes for, against, or abstaining on the proposal. If there were dissenting votes but the proposal still passed with majority approval, provide a summary of the opposing points of view and their concerns. Enter the number of votes onto the Microsoft Word document. The department chair copies and paste their electronic signature onto the document. Once approved email the document to the registrar’s office at charity.walters@umwestern.edu.
 - ii. Initial Review by Provost: After the document is emailed to the registrar’s office it will be uploaded to Microsoft Outlook One Drive Curriculum Proposal Folder. Schedule an appointment with the proposal in order to discuss resource requirements that are attached to your proposal. The provost must review your response to the “Resource Implications” section (see above) of your proposal and either certify that the proposal is resource neutral (i.e. requires in net, no new financial, staffing, or facilities resources). If the proposal is not resource neutral but the Provost is willing to allow it to continue in the approval process, he must provide a plan for how the necessary resources will be allocated. Resources are the only point of discussion at this meeting. The Provost will have an opportunity to weigh in on the academic aspects of the proposal later in the review process. The Provost will provide an electronic signature to the One Drive document once approved.
 - iii. All Chairs acknowledgement of receiving this proposal: If you haven’t already discussed your proposal with other departments or programs that will be affected by it, that discussion will begin at an All Chairs meeting. All curriculum proposals that pass the initial review by the Provost are forwarded to the next All Chairs meeting for a reading. The purpose of this is to inform all academic programs of the existence of the proposal. All chairs (or their designees) attending the meeting sign the proposal in order to acknowledge that they have seen the proposal. This does not signify approval or disapproval of the proposal at this stage in the process. However, if any department or program chair has an objection to the proposal, they may begin negotiations with the submitting department in order to resolve this objection. If a chair or their designee is not present at a meeting at which a proposal is read, their absence does not construe a reason to hold up the proposal in the approval process. However, the chairs may reject any proposal if they determine that the form was incorrectly or incompletely filled out or if it has not followed the full review process up to this point. Once reviewed, chairs should log into the Microsoft Outlook One Drive to provide a copy of their signature.
 - iv. General Education Committee Comments: If your proposal creates or modifies a general education course, it must be read and voted upon at a General Education meeting. The decision to approve or reject the proposal may be made only on the basis of its fitness within the General Education Program. Broader curricular issues are not on the table for discussion. If the General Education Committee finds it necessary to discuss the proposal with their constituent departments or programs, they may elect to vote for the proposal through email or with a paper ballot within two weeks of the meeting at which they read the proposal. The number of votes for, against and abstaining to the

proposal must be recorded on the curriculum proposal form. If the General Education Committee votes to reject the proposal, the submitting department may elect to forward the proposal on to Senate with its general education status removed, revise the proposal according to recommendations made by the General Education Committee and resubmit it to them, or withdraw the proposal. Once reviewed, the General Education Chair should log into the Microsoft Outlook One Drive to provide a copy of his/her signature.

- v. Faculty Senate: Once the proposal is acknowledged by the department chairs (and approved by the General Education Committee if necessary), it is forwarded to the Faculty Senate for an initial reading and discussion at one meeting and a vote at the second reading. The number of votes for, against and abstaining to the proposal must be recorded on the curriculum proposal form. If the Faculty Senate votes to reject the proposal, the submitting department may elect to appeal the decision with the Provost, revise the proposal according to recommendations made by the Faculty Senate and resubmit it to them, or withdraw the proposal. Once reviewed, the Faculty Senate Chair should log into the Microsoft Outlook One Drive to provide a copy of his/her signature.
- vi. Provost's and Chancellor's Approval: All approved (and appealed) proposals are forwarded to the Provost and Chancellor for a final decision to adopt or reject the proposed curricular changes. Once reviewed, the Provost and Chancellor should log into the Microsoft Outlook One Drive to provide a copy of his/her signature. If the administration decides to adopt the proposal it is forwarded to the FLOC that controls the part of the curriculum affected by changes implemented by the proposal and to OCHE or BOR if it is a Level I or II proposal.

Curriculum Proposal Form

A. Classification

Academic Year Proposal
Submitted _____

For: _____ Catalog

Date Received _____
By _____

Campus Level Approval
Level I - OCHE Approval
Level II - BOR Approval

Proposal Title: _____

Submitted by: _____ Department: _____

Department (Program) contact person: _____

Type of Proposal (check all that apply)

- ☐ Program Requirement Change
- ☐ Course Number Change
- ☐ Course Title Change
- ☐ Course Credit Change
- ☐ Course Description Change
- ☐ Prerequisite Change
- ☐ Delete Course from Catalog
- ☐ New Course
- ☐ Other (describe): _____

Proposed as Gen Ed Course? ___ Yes ___ No

Gen Ed Category: _____

Course Fee Attached to Any Course?

___ No ___ Yes (Completed Course Fee Request Form attached)

If course Number/Name with Lab Fee is changing, previous
course Number/Name: _____

B. Description and Justification

Succinct Statement of Proposed Change: (attach shell syllabus for new course(s) that includes course description, course outcomes, and assessment information)

Provide information supporting the request (rationale):

Attach new or revised information as it should appear in the Catalog (include course rotation(s) and/or revised degree requirements, if applicable; course descriptions should include assessment and experiential learning activities)

Transferability Considerations (if any):

Effects, if any, of this proposal on any of our degree programs. (Review other degree programs that may be potentially affected by this proposal; affected Dept Chair aware of possible implications_____)

Resource Implications (if applicable):

STAFFING:

Who will teach course(s)?

Effect on faculty member's workload?

OTHER (Facilities, Library, etc.):

C. Signatures and Responses

1. Departmental Approval and Comments (include dissenting opinions if applicable)

Votes For:_____ **Against:**_____ **Abstentions:**_____

Department Chair:_____ **Date:**_____

2. Initial Review by Provost (*If additional resources (financial, staffing, facilities, etc.) are required in order to implement this proposal, clearly state the plan for making these resources available*)

Provost:_____ **Date:** _____

3. All Chairs acknowledgement of receiving this proposal

Biology:_____ **Date:** _____

Business and Technology:_____ **Date:** _____

Education:_____ **Date:** _____

English:_____ **Date:** _____

Environmental Sciences:_____ **Date:** _____

Equine Studies:_____ **Date:** _____

Fine Arts:_____ **Date:** _____

HHP:_____ **Date:** _____

HPSS:_____ **Date:** _____

Mathematics:_____ **Date:** _____

Comments:

4. General Education Committee Comments (if applicable)

Votes For:_____ **Against:**_____ **Abstentions:**_____

Chair Signature:_____ **Date:**_____

5. Faculty Senate

a. First Reading Comments (if applicable)

b. Second Reading Comments (if applicable)

Votes For:_____ **Against:**_____ **: Abstentions:**_____

Chair Signature:_____ **Date:**_____

6. Provost's Approval

Signature:_____ **Date:** _____

7. Chancellor's Approval

Signature:_____ **Date:** _____

Appendix A: Determining the Level of Involvement By The Board of Regents

Determining Levels of Involvement

Two factors determine the level to which the Board of Regents becomes directly and formally involved in the process of approving or denying the development, implementation, suspension, and/or elimination of academic and research programs:

1. The degree to which the proposed program fits an institution's approved mission, and
2. The relationship between resources needed, resources available, and the projected benefit.

Some Academic items do not fit into either the Level I or Level II category. Board policy 303.1 states that revision of institutional mission shall be reviewed and approved by the board of regents. Please submit mission revisions as an Action item, not a Level I or Level II.

Mission Statement Revisions

Board policy 303.1 states that revision of institutional mission shall be reviewed and approved by the board of regents. Please submit mission revisions as an Action item, not a Level I or Level II.

Removal of Items from Moratorium

Please submit notice of a campus' intent to reinstate a program from moratorium a numbered Information item done on the Item Template. No Level I Proposal Form is required to remove an item from moratorium.

Level I Proposals (Approved by the Commissioner or Designee)

Level I Proposals are those that may be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education or the designee. The approval of such proposals will be conveyed to the Board of Regents at the next regular meeting of the board. Level I items include campus initiatives typically characterized by minimal costs, clear adherence to approved campus mission, and the absence of significant programmatic impact on other institutions within the Montana University System and community colleges. Examples include:

1. Re-titling existing majors, minors, options and certificates (e.g. from B.S. in Mechanized Agriculture to B.S. in Agricultural Operation Technology);
2. Eliminating existing majors, minors, options and certificates via Intent to Terminate followed by a Program Termination Checklist (a two-meeting process);
3. Placing programs into moratorium (requires item and Level I Request Form) or removing items from moratorium (does not require the Level I Request Form, only the item)
4. Adding new minors or certificates where there is a major;
5. Adding new minors or certificates where there is an option in a major;
6. Departmental mergers and name changes;
7. Program revisions; and
8. Distance delivery of previously authorized degree programs.

Further, with Level II documentation circulated to all campus chief academic officers in advance, the Commissioner or designee may propose additional items for inclusion in the Level I process. For these items to move forward, the Commissioner or designee must reach consensus with the chief academic officers. When consensus is not achieved, the Commissioner or designee will move the item to the Level II review process.

Examples of Level I proposals of this type include:

1. Options within an existing major or degree;
2. Eliminating organizational units within larger institutions such as departments, divisions and colleges or schools with the exception of the five Colleges of Technology where changes require Board action;
3. Consolidating existing programs and/or degrees.

Certificate or Associate of Applied Science Degree Programs may be submitted as Level I proposals, with memo and backup documentation, when they are offered in cooperation with and/or at the request of private or public sector partners and the decision point to offer the program is not consistent with the regular Board of Regents program approval process. Level I approval for programs under this provision will be limited to two years. Continuation of a program beyond the two years will require the normal program approval process as Level II Proposals. All other Certificate or Associate Degree programs may be placed on submission at any Board of

Regents meeting. They will be placed on action agendas at subsequent meetings. All campuses agree to insure that all other campuses receive program information well in advance of submission.

Level II Proposals (Approved by the Board of Regents)

Level II proposals require approval by the Board of Regents. These proposals entail more substantive additions to, alterations in, or termination of programs, structures, or administrative or academic entities typically characterized by the (a) addition, reassignment, or elimination of personnel, facilities, or courses of instruction; (b) rearrangement of budgets, cost centers, funding sources; and (c) changes which by implication could impact other campuses within the Montana University System and Community Colleges.

Board policy 303.1 indicates the curricular proposals in this category:

1. Change names of degrees (e.g. from B.A. to B.F.A.)
2. Implement a new minor or certificate where there is no major or no option in a major;
3. Establish new degrees and add majors to existing degrees;
4. Any other changes in governance and organization as described in Board of Regents' Policy 218, such as formation, elimination or consolidation of a college, division, school, department, institute, bureau, center, station, laboratory, or similar unit.

Appendix B: Level I Request Form

Item Number: **XXX-XXXX+XXXXX** Meeting Date: _____
Institution: _____ CIP Code: _____
Program Title: _____

Level I proposals are those that may be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education or the Commissioner's designee. The approval of such proposals will be conveyed to the Board of Regents at the next regular meeting of the Board. The institution must file the request with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education by means of a memo to the Deputy Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs, by no later than five weeks prior to the final posting date for the next scheduled meeting of the Board. The Deputy Commissioner will review the proposal and respond to the proposing campus with any questions or concerns within one week, allowing the proposing campus one week to respond before the Item is posted for the BOR scheduled meeting.

A. Level I (place an X for all that apply):

Level I proposals include campus initiatives typically characterized by (a) minimal costs; (b) clear adherence to approved campus mission; and (c) the absence of significant programmatic impact on other institutions within the Montana University System and Community Colleges. For Level I actions on degree programs or certificates, the process must begin when the proposing campus posts its intent on the MUS academic planning web site.

- 1. Re-titling existing majors, minors, options and certificates**
- 2. Adding new minors or certificates where there is a major** (Submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form)
- 3. Adding new minors or certificates where there is an option in a major** (Submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form)
- 4. Departmental mergers and name changes**
- 5. Program revisions** (Submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form)
- 6. Distance or online delivery of previously authorized degree or certificate programs**
- 7. Placement of program into moratorium** (No Program Termination Checklist at this time – document steps taken to notify students, faculty, and other constituents and include this information on checklist at time of termination if not reinstated)
- 8. Filing Notice of Intent to Terminate/Withdraw existing majors, minors, options, and certificates** (No Program Termination Checklist at this time)
- 9. Terminate/withdraw existing majors, minors, options, and certificates** (Submit with completed Program Termination Checklist and updated catalog copy)

B. Level I with Level II documentation:

With Level II documentation circulated to all campus chief academic officers in advance, the Deputy Commissioner or designee may propose additional items for inclusion in the Level I process. For these items to move forward, the Deputy Commissioner or designee must reach consensus with the chief academic officers. When consensus is not achieved, the Deputy Commissioner or designee will move the item to the Level II review process.

- ___ 1. Options within an existing major or degree (Submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form);
- ___ 2. Eliminating organizational units within larger institutions such as departments, divisions and colleges or schools **with the exception of the Colleges of Technology where changes require Board action** (Submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form)
- ___ 3. Consolidating existing programs and/or degrees (Submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form)

___ **C. Temporary Certificate or A.A.S. degree programs**

Certificate or Associate of Applied Science Degree Programs may be submitted as Level I proposals, with memo and backup documentation, when they are offered in cooperation with and /or at the request of private or public sector partners and the decision point to offer the program is not consistent with the regular Board of Regents program approval process. Level I approval for programs under this provision will be limited to two years. Continuation of a program beyond the two years will require the normal program approval process as Level II Proposals. All other Level I Certificate or Associate Degree programs may be placed on submission at any Board of Regents meeting. They will be placed on action agendas at subsequent meetings. All campuses agree to insure that all other campuses receive program information well in advance of submission.

___ **D. Campus Certificates**

Although certificate programs of 29 credits or fewer may be implemented by the individual campuses without approval by the board of regents, those certificates do need to be reported to the office of the commissioner of higher education and listed on the Montana University System's official degree and program inventory. These Level I proposals will be listed as information items at the next regular meeting of the board.

Specify Request:

Appendix C Level II Request Form

Item Number: **XXX-XXXX-XXXXX**

Meeting Date: _____

Institution: _____

CIP Code: _____

Program Title: _____

Level II proposals require approval by the Board of Regents.

Level II action requested (place an X for all that apply and submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form):

Level II proposals entail substantive additions to, alterations in, or termination of programs, structures, or administrative or academic entities typically characterized by the (a) addition, reassignment, or elimination of personnel, facilities, or courses of instruction; (b) rearrangement of budgets, cost centers, funding sources; and (c) changes which by implication could impact other campuses within the Montana University System and community colleges. Board policy 303.1 indicates the curricular proposals in this category:

- ___ 1. Change names of degrees (e.g. from B.A. to B.F.A.)
- ___ 2. Implement a new minor or certificate where there is no major or no option in a major;
- ___ 3. Establish new degrees and add majors to existing degrees; and
- ___ 4. Any other changes in governance and organization as described in Board of Regents' Policy 218, such as formation, elimination or consolidation of a college, division, school, department, institute, bureau, center, station, laboratory, or similar unit.

Specify Request:

Appendix D: Level II Documentation

1. Overview

2. Provide a one paragraph description of the proposed program. Be specific about what degree, major, minor or option is sought.

3. Need

A. To what specific need is the institution responding in developing the proposed program?

B. How will students and any other affected constituencies be served by the proposed program?

C. What is the anticipated demand for the program? How was this determined?

4. Institutional and System Fit

A. What is the connection between the proposed program and existing programs at the institution?

B. Will approval of the proposed program require changes to any existing programs at the institution? If so, please describe.

C. Describe what differentiates this program from other, closely related programs at the institution (if appropriate).

D. How does the proposed program serve to advance the strategic goals of the institution?

E. Describe the relationship between the proposed program and any similar programs within the Montana University System. In cases of substantial duplication, explain the need for the proposed program at an additional institution. Describe any efforts that were made to collaborate with these similar programs; and if no efforts were made, explain why. If articulation or transfer agreements have been developed for the substantially duplicated programs, please include the agreement(s) as part of the documentation.

5. Program Details

A. Provide a detailed description of the proposed curriculum. Where possible, present the information in the form intended to appear in the catalog or other publications. NOTE: In the case of two-year degree programs and certificates of applied science, the curriculum should include enough detail to determine if the characteristics set out in Regents' Policy 301.12 have been met.

B. Describe the planned implementation of the proposed program, including estimates of numbers of students at each stage.

6. Resources

A. Will additional faculty resources be required to implement this program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.

B. Are other, additional resources required to ensure the success of the proposed program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.

7. Assessment

How will the success of the program be measured?

8. Process Leading to Submission

Describe the process of developing and approving the proposed program. Indicate, where appropriate, involvement by faculty, students, community members, potential employers, accrediting agencies, etc.

Appendix E: COURSE FEE REQUEST FORM

Any course or lab fee charged in addition to the normal tuition and fees must be approved by the Board of Regents.
NO ADDITIONAL MONEY MAY BE COLLECTED. Return this completed form with Department Chair's Approval to the Provost.

This form provides basic information for these additional fees. Course fees can only be used for:

- Specialized activities or equipment fees, where payment is made to entities generally conducting these types of business (such as downhill skiing, bowling, etc.);
- Field trips;
- Pass-through fees (such as Red Cross Certifications);
- Laboratory consumables, excluding computer supplies and paper products; and
- Materials used by students to create a product that becomes the student's property after use in a specific course.

Date _____ Course Name and Number _____

Please indicate if this is a: ____ New justification ____ Increase ____ Decrease

Current Fee _____ Proposed Fee _____

Per Student

Annual

Revenue

Expenditures list (Please be specific)

Explanation of Fee:

Requested by _____

Department Chair _____

Provost _____ Date _____

Chancellor _____ Date _____

Index Code # _____ (Approving Department Chair will be authorized signatory for expenditure unless other arrangements are made)

Cc: Registrar
Business Services
Department Chair

Regent Approval: Yes _____ No _____ Date _____ Item # _____

Montana Western Assessment Committee
Report to Leadership
December 2013

Executive Summary

The Provost and the leaders of the Faculty Senate at the University of Montana Western (Montana Western) decided in August 2013 to establish an Assessment Committee for the campus. Using a guide written by Barbara E. Walvoord – *Assessment Clear and Simple* (2nd Ed., Jossey-Bass, 2010), key faculty and administrative leaders from across campus developed a charge, a list of members, and a three-year plan for the committee. The committee met first in September 2013 and continues to meet as needed to guide and reinforce a re-energized faculty commitment to assessment of student learning.

Experience One was implemented at Montana Western as a learning model to improve the student learning environment. This student-centered, experiential approach to learning engages students as responsible partners in the learning process. Since switching to the block scheduling that is part of *Experience One*, both student retention and graduation rates have trended upward. Now, the faculty and departments are prepared to demonstrate once again their commitment to improvement of student learning by focusing on refinement of student learning outcomes at the course, department, and institution level. Faculty and staff also have committed to gather both direct and indirect information to routinely and systematically assess learning at Montana Western and to use that information to take actions to improve the student learning environment.

Assessment Activities in 2012-13

- **General Education**

The General Education Committee voted unanimously in Fall Semester 2012 to adopt the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes as the learning outcomes for General Education at Montana Western. Montana Western already had endorsed the goals and learning outcomes for each of the Montana University System core content areas: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences/History, Mathematics, Communication, Humanities/Fine Arts, and Cultural Diversity. (<http://mus.edu/Transfer/MUScore.asp>)

The committee acknowledged the need for an assessment plan for general education but felt they lacked sufficient expertise and direction to devise a suitable plan. Nonetheless, the committee collected student writing samples from general education courses and worked with the Assistant Provost to try to analyze those samples using an assessment rubric for writing. Several committee members expressed that the exercise felt artificial and was not linked to a clear plan for general education assessment. That feedback led the Provost's office to purchase several copies of *Assessment Clear and Simple* for background and guidance for the committee, department chairs, and others.

- **Program Assessment**

The Assessment Committee provided departments with a paper template for reporting on their department assessments of student learning. Those reports are posted on the Provost's Moodle site. Montana Western's School of Education, Business and Technology already have implemented assessment of learning outcomes as part of their specialized accreditation.

As expected with a new process, reports were uneven. Many departments did not express their learning outcomes in standardized format. Also, many reported on activities undertaken or data gathered but were less specific on action plans. What was more encouraging was the serious participation of all the departments and the faculty discussion within their departmental groups about assessment plans and processes. The Assessment Committee initiated development of an electronic survey that faculty may use to report learning outcomes following a standardized procedure. [A summary of department targeted areas for improvement, action plans, and resource requests is appended to this report.]

- **Student Success**

Student Affairs regularly administers a three-page student feedback survey and a one-page athletic interest survey. Both surveys are administered at the end of fall term. Respondents live primarily on-campus and are first or second year students (82%). Satisfaction with campus environment and services has remained fairly high and consistent from year to year. However, there was a noted drop in the percentage of respondents who reported participation in student activities. This might have been an expression of confusion about the question since only 55% of survey completers answered that specific question. Because student engagement is an important marker for student retention and success, student affairs and student government are working to increase the marketing of activities and will continue to monitor future survey results.

Survey respondents and other students this past year expressed frustration with the speed and coverage of wireless internet services on campus. In response to student concerns and concerns from other campus sectors, the administrative team allocated resources towards upgrade of the residence hall system in fall 2013. Additional wireless upgrades across campus are scheduled for spring 2014.

With the hiring of a new staff person with considerable experience, the career services center last year was able to tailor services to fit better the needs of students who use the center. Changes included the purchase of "Optimal Resume Services" for current students and alumni; utilization of MCIS, MBTI for career explorations; and reinstatement of Wednesday workshops that cover topics related to student retention and career exploration/placement. In response to

feedback from students and prospective employers, the career services center also is in the process of modifying the management of placement files for the education students.

- **Institutional Research**

This last year, Montana Western was able to hire a new director of institutional research (IR) who came with considerable experience in using IR data to support assessment. Institutional Research at Montana Western has been operating at a Tier I Level - Technical and Analytical Intelligence, but hopes to move into Tier II - Issue Intelligence. [Patrick T. Terenzini. "On the Nature of Institutional Research and the Knowledge and Skills it Requires." 1993. *Research in Higher Education* Vol.34, No.1 (Springer)] With the new IR leadership, Montana Western will progress from accessing basic data and information as needed to the regular practice of analyzing, discussing, and using IR data to determine impact and interconnection across the whole campus community. [See IR Plan at (link).]

For 2012-13, IR reports on census, retention, and completion, added to the understanding of the assessment committee. Census for Fall 2013 remained relatively stable at 1364 FTE, down just 2.5% from Fall 2012. Retention of first-time full-time students from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013 also was essentially stable, and the impact of *Experience One* is reflected in the 6-year graduation rate for those seeking bachelor degrees that has increased by 18% since the transition was made in 2005.

Data of concern are the reports of total credit hours at graduation with Montana Western graduates with bachelor degrees averaging 144 hours total credit accumulation. As the IR office helps contribute data for Montana Western's participation in Complete College America, credit accumulation will be monitored more proactively. The goal will be to get students to move forward steadily to obtain needed credits while still helping students refrain from taking unnecessary credits that could increase their costs.

Assessment Activities in Progress (AY 2013-14)

- The Assessment Committee and the General Education Committee are helping to organize local workshops and/or mentoring activities to assist faculty in the writing of clear learning outcomes.
- The Assessment Committee will monitor the mandatory inclusion of learning outcomes in course syllabi and will provide feedback to departments as needed.
- Members of the assessment committee will be available to help departments strengthen their assessment plans and annual assessment reports.
- The Assessment Committee will receive the General Education Committee's report in April 2014.
- The Assessment Committee will review the annual department assessment reports and the minutes from the departments' annual assessment meetings. [Due May 31, 2014]
- The Assessment Committee will review factors contributing to excessive credit accumulation by our graduates and will recommend changes as needed.

- As the entity charged with reporting on student learning assessment to Montana Western's decision makers, the Assessment Committee will synthesize all sources of information relevant to student learning outcomes and will produce an annual report with recommendations for action. That report shall be presented to the Provost and Faculty Senate by October 1st each year.

Recommendations

Based on findings in the departmental assessment reports for 2012 – 2013, the Assessment Committee presents the following recommendations. These recommendations are presented as starting points for program improvements, and should not be viewed as limiting actions. Furthermore, these recommendations span a range of both short-term and long-term approaches. It is not expected that Montana Western would immediately adopt all of these steps. All recommendations should be considered and implemented as institutional resources allow.

1. All undergraduates need explicit instruction in effective reading, writing, and public speaking skills throughout their college careers, in order to master course content and transfer their learning to career and lifetime pursuits. For students who come to the university significantly underprepared in these skills, remediation should be provided.

The committee requests that the university administrative and faculty leadership consider the following actions:

- expand the hours of service for the Montana Western Learning Center, and strengthen tutors' skills in supporting academic reading and writing;
 - develop a system to assess incoming students' reading and writing skills;
 - identify courses across the curriculum that can serve as reading-, writing-, and speech-intensive courses;
 - provide professional development for faculty who teach reading-, writing-, and speech-intensive courses;
 - develop a remedial reading course that can be linked to a variety of reading-intensive courses;
 - hire a faculty member trained in teaching reading to adults.
2. The General Education Committee and the various academic departments need support to continue the work they have begun in developing and maintaining their assessment systems. The Assessment Committee recommends that the university administrative leadership consider hiring a full-time staff member to assist the academic departments (particularly those departments with national accreditation processes already in place) and

the General Education Committee in collecting, aggregating, and analyzing data in an ongoing manner.

3. Experience One at Montana Western is unique in public universities in the United States. As is evidenced in a variety of measures (e.g., high hiring rate for graduates of the education degrees; high number of award-winning faculty; anecdotal reports of the success of graduates pursuing graduate education), it is clear that faculty have developed many effective strategies to ensure student success, many of which are enhanced by block scheduling. Yet faculty members have very little access to funds for professional development or opportunities to collaborate with peers within the institution. Montana Western provides a unique venue for further development of teaching and learning strategies to enhance student success at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Faculty members need access to continuing professional development related to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). The Assessment Committee recommends that the university administrative leadership consider the following actions:
 - provide strong mentoring for faculty new to block scheduling and new to experiential learning strategies;
 - allocate increased funding for ongoing professional development for all faculty to develop skills in experiential teaching, and in both formative and summative assessment;
 - begin the process of developing a Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at Montana Western;
 - Support faculty research and professional development in SOTL
 - Support departments in their assessment of student learning and in program assessment
 - Provide testing services for exams such as the PRAXIS, GRE, and GED, through the “assessment arm” of the center.
4. External forces (e.g., federal guidelines for financial aid; performance funding initiatives from the MUS Board of Regents) have made it clear that the Montana Western average number of credits to degree completion (144) is too high. The committee recommends that the university administrative leadership consider the following strategy to help decrease this average:
 - Since the advising provided by faculty and student support services both have a significant impact on students’ course selections, the committee recommends that the university develop an improved system of providing advising training to faculty and to staff, to ensure that all have the knowledge base to provide timely and consistent advising to students.

**Montana Western Assessment Committee
Report to Leadership
December 2014**

Executive Summary

The following report summarizes the Assessment Committee's activities from December 2013 to December 2014. It is intended to document and inform leadership on the continuous efforts to improve student learning outcomes at Montana Western. These efforts were undertaken to improve student learning outcomes and to comply with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation standards.

Assessment Activities 2013-2014

The Assessment Committee's activities from 2013 to 2014 were largely focused on responding to NWCCU recommendations to improve assessment of student learning outcomes in general education courses and academic programs.

General Education. A number of actions were taken to establish student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the General Education program. These actions were reported in the ad hoc report and are duplicated below:

- Montana Western administrator attended the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) States Summit in July 2013.
- Consultant hired to assist with establishment of general education and academic program assessment processes.
- Faculty Senate approved LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) for the General Education Program, fall 2013.
- All general education faculties were required to include student learning outcomes on course syllabi by Block 4, 2013.
- A faculty accreditation and assessment resource site was established in Moodle, November 2013.
- A SLO/ELO assessment survey was beta tested at the end of Block 4.
- The SLO/ELO assessment survey was administered four times throughout the spring 2014 term (Blocks 5 through 8).
- SLO/ELO assessment survey results for Blocks 5 through 6 were shared with departments to facilitate annual review.
- Four faculty attended an AAC&U conference, *General Education and Assessment: Disruptions, Innovations, and Opportunities*, at the end of February 2014

- The General Education Committee conducted a review of LEAP ELOs in April 2014. The committee's report is attached to this report.
- Faculty requested and received financial support to conduct an all faculty meeting at the end of AY13-14. The goal of the meeting was to promote collegial discussion of Montana Western's general education program, assessment, and experiential education.
- Assistant provost attended the NWCCU meeting on year seven evaluations. Montana Western's year seven evaluation will occur in spring 2017.

Program Assessment. One seven-year program review and 11 annual program assessments were completed during AY13-14.

The Mathematics Department completed its seven-year program review. The review included an external evaluation. Recommendations from the external evaluator report included:

- Allocate additional resources to address needs in developmental courses
- Implement use of a placement exam
- Increase tenure-track teaching faculty
- Reduce teaching load for new instructors
- Adjust ratio of tenure-track and adjunct faculty from 50:50 to 70:30
- Provide administrative release for departmental leadership activities
- Support technology upgrades and instructional innovation

Academic departments and the General Education Committee conducted annual assessment and submitted reports during AY13-14. These reports are posted and available in the Moodle learning management system.

The Equine Department was informed that it needed to complete its seven-year program review by the end of AY14-15.

Assessment Activities in Progress 2014-2015

The following assessment activities were carried out during fall 2014.

- Ongoing administration of the SLO/ELO assessment survey at the end of each block.
- The provost and assistant provost attended a meeting in Missoula to address accreditation requirements. Drs. Thornton, Engstrom and Lindsay made presentations regarding the NWCCU requirements for year seven reports.
- Assessment committee members are working with several other campus committees to review the general education program guidance, review the campus catalog, and forward recommendations for catalog improvements.
- The campus registered to conduct the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) in spring 2015.

- The assessment committee developed a five-year plan to direct committee activities. The plan was shared with the General Education committee. The plan spans from AY2013-14 to AY18-19.
- The Equine Studies Department is currently working on its seven year program review.
- The Education Department is preparing for national CAEP accreditation review scheduled for fall 2015. The department collects large amounts of data regularly, on student performance, using Chalk & Wire and an ACCESS Database. The faculty review the data regularly and use data to inform program improvement.
- The UMW Business and Technology Department is preparing for an IACBE accreditation review scheduled for AY14-15.

Additional Updates

Meeting Schedule. The Assessment Committee met biweekly throughout AY13-14. The frequency of meetings was necessary to address NWCCU recommendations and prepare an ad hoc report to the NWCCU. Following submission of the ad hoc report, committee members determined that once-a-block meetings would suffice in the future.

Ad Hoc Report to the NWCCU. Montana Western submitted an ad hoc report to the NWCCU in February 2014. The report was prepared in response to a letter the university received from the NWCCU in July 2013. On July 30, 2014, the NWCCU issued a letter accepting Montana Western's Ad Hoc Report and stating that Montana Western met the expectations of all but one recommendation. The university was substantially in compliance with the remaining recommendation, but asked to address the recommendation in a follow-up ad hoc report due fall 2015. The remaining recommendation reads as follows.

The Commission does not find evidence that the commitment to assessment has been embraced throughout the curriculum. It is therefore recommended that the institution take immediate steps to implement frequent, regular and substantive assessment of learning outcomes in all academic programs. Furthermore, it is recommended that the assessment process explicitly connect student learning outcomes to program mission, the institution's strategic plan, the budget process and the University mission (Standards 2.C.2; 2.C.5; 4.A.2; and 4.A.3).

Student Success. In November 2014, Deputy Commissioner Tyler Trevor presented Montana University System data on UMW progress and outcome measures. His data from the MUS Data Warehouse documented a 29% increase in annualized FTE from FY06 to FY14; a pre-Experience One fall-to-fall retention rate of 65% versus post Experience One retention of 74%; a pre-Experience One 6-year graduation rate of 30% versus post-Experience One 6-year graduation rates between 43% and 55%; and an increase in annual degrees awarded from 162 in AY04 to 292 in AY14—an 80% increase.

Recommendations

The following recommendations follow from the Assessment Committee's work during spring and fall 2014.

- Continue work with the General Education Committee and academic departments to improve course and program assessment.
- Continue work toward providing evidence of commitment to assessment throughout the curriculum. Evidence of this effort includes establishment of learning outcomes for all courses and programs, publication of changes in the course catalog, regular administration of SLO/ELO survey, and annual departmental review of programs.
- Continue to support faculty interest in an end-of-year professional development meeting (after Block 8 in May)
- Support General Education Committee's recommendation to support faculty training on use of LEAP value rubrics.
- Investigate the possibility of participation in an AAC&U Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment. The 2015 Institute is scheduled for June 2 through 6, 2015 in Edmond, OK. Deadline to register is February 13, 2015. Go to <https://www.aacu.org/summerinstitutes/igea> for more information.

Committee Members

The Assessment Committee includes ten individuals who represent the interests of students, faculty, and staff. Makeup of the committee was determined by the provost.

Dr. Anneliese Ripley, NWCCU Liaison and Committee Chair
Ms. Ilene Cohen, Director of Student Success
Dr. Heather Haas, HPSS Faculty
Dr. Delena Norris-Tull, Education Faculty
Ms. Pinky Saxton, Student Senate representative
Dr. Laura Straus, Education Faculty
Dr. Judy Ulrich, Fine Arts Faculty
Ms. Charity Walters, Registrar
Ms. Jessica Winans, Director of eLearning
Dr. Eric Wright, Math Faculty

Attachment

General Education Committee, 2014 Annual Assessment Report

**General Education Committee
Annual Assessment Reporting Form**

(Upload to Moodle by End of Block 7 of each year)

MM/DD/YY of Completion: _____

Person Preparing Form: _____(name); _____(signature)

1) Attachments:

2) Names of Faculty Actively Participating in Annual Assessment:

3) LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes Assessed:

4) Means of Assessment:

5) Brief Commentary:

6) Area/s for Targeted Improvement (especially as related to learning outcomes, Experience One, and the 2014 strategic plan:

7) Plan/s to Implement and Assess Targeted Improvements:

8) Financial or Other Resources Necessary to Facilitate Planned Improvements:

Departmental Program Reports, based on Graduate Outcomes for each Major

Annual Assessment Reporting Form

(Upload to Moodle by May 31 of each year)

MM/DD/YY of Completion: _____

Department: _____

Major: _____

Person Preparing Form: _____(name); _____(signature)

1) Attachments:

2) Names of Faculty Actively Participating in Annual Assessment:

3) Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessed:

4) Means of Assessment (e.g., course rubrics, student portfolio, employer survey, graduate survey, etc.):

5) Brief Commentary:

6) Area/s for Targeted Improvement (especially as related to learning outcomes, Experience One, and the 2014 Strategic Plan):

7) Plan/s to Implement and Assess Targeted Improvements:

8) Financial or Other Resources Necessary to Facilitate Planned Improvements:

Experience the Difference

A Five-Year Strategic Plan (2014-19) for the University of Montana Western

Preface

Experiential education is defined as learning by doing what the professionals do in a discipline, and it serves as the foundation for all of Montana Western's academic programs.

A shared commitment to that idea motivated the faculty, administration and staff to develop Experience One scheduling, where students take and faculty teach a single course at a time.

Experience One engages students and faculty in actively exploring the knowledge, purposes and practices in every field of study.

— UMW Faculty Senate, 2014

Experiential education dominates Montana Western's face-to-face and on-line distance learning programs. This educational approach drives the mission and strategic planning for this campus.

As a unit of the Montana University System (MUS), Montana Western's strategic plan relates to the MUS Strategic Plan 2013 (mus.edu/data/StratPlan/StrategicPlan.asp).

Montana Western's priorities and goals work towards achieving the overall goals of the MUS. Campus functional areas will develop tactical actions plans for their respective areas that serve to assist Montana Western in achieving the goals and objectives of the MUS as well as those of Montana Western. This plan is to be viewed as a dynamic plan that responds to emerging opportunities and areas of concern.

Mission Statement

The University of Montana Western differentiates itself and achieves academic excellence by sustaining a culture of concentrated experiential education.

Vision Statement

The University of Montana Western transforms students and its greater community through experiential teaching and civic, environmental and multicultural engagement. Students learn by engaging in the authentic practices of a discipline under the expert guidance of faculty members. Student success is maximized by providing the means for each student to identify and achieve their educational goals.

NWCCU Core Themes

The following Core Themes were developed to meet the requirements of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Most of the goals and objectives found in this plan are closely related to these Core Themes.

1. Continuously improve undergraduate education and experiential learning.
2. Maximize campus-wide support for student success and completion.
3. Foster responsible campus efficiency and stewardship of resources.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are used to help shape the priorities and goals of this plan:

LEARNING – Montana Western maximizes extended opportunities for concentrated experiential learning.

COMMUNITY – Montana Western supports a constructive community by creating a climate that promotes diverse thought and supportive environments.

SUCCESS – Montana Western utilizes its resources to maximize student recruitment, retention, progression and timely completion.

DIVERSITY – Montana Western serves all people with its academic, service and lifelong learning programs.

STEWARDSHIP – Montana Western promotes and practices creative and efficient use of resources.

DEVELOPMENT – Montana Western is resourceful and creative in identifying existing and alternative resources to support university initiatives.

Priorities and Goals

This new five-year strategic plan reaffirms the mission, commitments and history of Montana Western. It consists of seven priorities. The university has also developed measurable objectives and baseline metrics, available in a separate document, which will allow the campus to assess how well it has achieved its priorities, core themes and mission.

PRIORITY ONE: Encourage academic excellence and innovation.

GOAL 1A: Develop a cohesive general education program that utilizes experiential education and achieves universally accepted student learning outcomes.

GOAL 1B: Enhance and promote experiential teaching and learning across the curriculum.

GOAL 1C: Improve academic programs through rigorous and ongoing assessment and review processes.

GOAL 1D: Promote and support academic innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit among students, faculty and staff.

GOAL 1E: Deliver high-quality, innovative experiential education to the new generation of digital learners by anticipating and delivering the technology needs of the future.

GOAL 1F: Engage students, faculty and staff in meaningful experiential learning, service, creative and scholarly activities.

PRIORITY TWO: Develop, strengthen and expand creative co-curricular programs and campus collaborations to promote student learning, development, retention and success.

GOAL 2A: Link student affairs and student academic support by adopting a developmental approach to co-curricular experiences and academic support.

GOAL 2B: Equip students with the knowledge and skills that inspire them to be civic-minded and enable them to lead.

GOAL 2C: Coordinate programming that explores issues of personal health and safety, decision-making, and social responsibility for students, faculty and staff through collaborations across the university community.

GOAL 2D: Build on the important opportunities for student development in leadership, teamwork and community consistently provided by the university's athletic and other non-curricular programs.

GOAL 2E: Demonstrate the power of experiential education by achieving greater student success than comparator institutions.

PRIORITY THREE: Develop enrollment management strategies that support the experiential mission and contribute to student success.

GOAL 3A: Manage class enrollments to achieve optimal efficiency.

GOAL 3B: Identify and recruit best-fit students.

GOAL 3C: Increase the diversity of the student body.

PRIORITY FOUR: Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

GOAL 4A: Provide faculty and staff with the support and tools necessary to act on their commitments to excellence.

GOAL 4B: Ensure that Montana Western's working environment reflects and supports diversity.

GOAL 4C: Increase awareness of the strengths of the university community for prospective employees.

GOAL 4D: Develop staffing and salary plans to attract and retain faculty and staff.

PRIORITY FIVE: Maintain facilities and infrastructure commensurate to the mission and priorities of the university.

GOAL 5A: Maintain residential and co-curricular spaces that are safe, functional, environmentally responsible, and marketable.

GOAL 5B: Align campus facilities planning with the priorities outlined in the strategic plan.

GOAL 5C: Align information and technology services with the priorities outlined in the strategic plan.

PRIORITY SIX: Efficiently steward resources and operations to sustain the university for future generations.

GOAL 6A: Continually assess services, operations and energy consumption to achieve greater efficiency and creative use of resources.

GOAL 6B: Pursue state and federal funding opportunities that contribute to Montana Western's mission and core themes.

GOAL 6C: Engage alumni in the life of the university.

GOAL 6D: Work with the UMW Foundation to increase extramural funding and support of the university.

PRIORITY SEVEN: Increase Montana Western's local, regional and national profile.

GOAL 7A: Promote and enhance Montana Western's regional and national profile.

GOAL 7B: Continue implementing an integrated marketing and communications plan that reflects Montana Western's mission.