

NWCCU Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report

THE UNIVERSITY *of* MONTANA WESTERN

MARCH 26 - 28, 2018



Photo by Harv Lake



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Submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

February 7, 2018

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At Montana Western, I have determined my true passion and goals for my future career.

- Miranda Martinez, Secondary Education and Social Sciences

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INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW



“ The block system allows you to fully explore your interests and the field experiences make you want to continue to push yourself as a student.

- Wyatt Sarrazin, Fine Arts



Institutional Overview

Our History

The federal Enabling Act of 1889 established Montana, Washington, North Dakota and South Dakota as states and included a provision to set aside federal lands to establish and maintain schools of higher learning. In Montana, 100,000 acres were set aside to be managed by the state in support of normal schools (teacher's colleges). Montana's first state normal school was legislatively authorized in 1893 to offer two-year degrees in Dillon. The State Board of Education approved conferring a bachelor's degree in 1931. In 1932, the State Normal College received accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Additional bachelor and master degrees in education were approved in 1954 and four-year liberal arts degrees were approved in the 1970s. After a major restructuring of the Montana University System in 1987, the institution was administratively merged with the University of Montana in Missoula as an affiliate campus. Graduate programming in Dillon was terminated as part of the merger with the University of Montana. While over its history the institution has operated under numerous names, since 2001 it has officially been recognized as the University of Montana Western (UMW or Montana Western).

University of Montana Western Today

Today, Montana Western is a comprehensive, four-year, regional university offering certificates, associate, and baccalaureate degrees. The campus is located in Dillon, which is the county seat and largest town in Beaverhead County. Geographically, Beaverhead is the largest county in Montana, covering an area nearly as large as the combined areas of Rhode Island and Connecticut. The county has a population of 9,341 (1.7 people per mile), as reported by the U.S. Census. The 2010 population of Dillon was 4,134, as reported by the Montana Department of Commerce. UMW largely serves a rural population of in-state students—as of the most recent fall semester 7% are from Beaverhead county, 69% from other Montana counties, and 24% from out-of-state.

UMW is unique among small, public four-year universities. It formally operates on the semester system, but it is the only public university in the United States that utilizes a form of immersion scheduling, called *Experience One*, to facilitate greater collaborative and experiential learning. Experience One is a block-scheduling model, adopted on campus in 2005, that promotes the University's experiential teaching philosophy and intentionally creates authentic practice and learning within a student's chosen academic field. On-campus students enroll in four 4-credit courses each semester, but they take one course at a time, with each course meeting three hours per day for 18 days. The format accommodates many learning strategies that emphasize high impact practices (HIP) including classroom-based problem solving, collaborative projects, field trips, research collaboration, peer tutoring, service learning, and other day-long experiences because there are no competing courses. Prior to UMW's adoption of Experience One in 2005, only students at private liberal arts institutions (e.g., Colorado College and Cornell College) could benefit from this form of immersion scheduling.

Experience One offers students a remarkable educational experience, which has proven to enhance student learning, success, retention, and persistence. Since Experience One's inception in fall 2005, headcount has increased by 25% and full-time equivalency (FTE) has increased by 27%. Six-year graduation rates have increased from 26% to 43%, and more specifically bachelor degree graduation

rates improved by 29%. Among Montana Western's increases in student success based on Experience One, perhaps most impressive is the fact that this model greatly supports students who typically struggle to complete a college education. One example of high achievement of students in this population is highlighted through UMW's TRiO program: Students involved in the TRiO program achieve an 83% persistence rate and a six-year graduation rate of 51%. These examples of student success and others illustrated throughout this self-study reveal the high achievement resulting from the University's focus on undergraduate education and the unique teaching philosophy associated with Experience One.

A Future of Continued Innovation to Ensure Sustainability

As we near completion of this accreditation cycle*, we also near the end of a year-long celebration of our University's 125th Anniversary. Perhaps no theme has emerged more clearly as a result of this self-study than that of innovation. At the turn of the 20th century, the Normal School faculty pioneered the practice of student teaching in the schools. As you will see throughout this document, we have maintained our dedication to excellent teacher preparation, re-designing programs and delivery methods to meet the needs of today's students and today's schools.

The completion of this self-evaluation also coincides with Montana Western's entry into the second decade of Experience One, an approach to higher education that is among our nation's public universities' most innovative experiments. Twelve years after its implementation, the evidence shows that the experiment has worked. Student success has increased dramatically, and enrollment has increased and stabilized, ushering in a period of financial stability and strategic reinvestment.

Looking to the future, it is clear that to build on this positive momentum and to fulfill the promise of Experience One, UMW must not rest on past innovation and present success, but instead continue to change and innovate in ways small and large to ensure the sustainability and continual improvement of the model. Experience One was born of an urgent need to change and was propelled by creativity, perseverance, and collaboration. Innovation is now part of Montana's Western's DNA. This spirit of innovation, the willingness and ability to adapt, developed over 125 years, provides a solid foundation for the University's second century.

*UMW was scheduled to complete the seven-year cycle during Spring 2017 but was asked by the NWCCU to delay the visit until Spring 2018.

BASIC INSTITUTIONAL DATA FORM



" The faculty provides the support to be able to be successful in school and in the future, while experiencing hands-on learning in places like Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks.

- Colter Feuerstein, Ecology with option in Fish and Wildlife Ecology



NWCCU Reports | Basic Institutional Data Form

Institutional Information

Name of Institutional: The University of Montana Western

Mailing Address: 710 South Atlantic Street

City: Dillon

State/Province: Montana

Zip/Postal Code: 59725

Main Phone Number: (406) 683-7331

Country: United States of America

Chief Executive Officer

Title: Dr.

First Name: Beth

Last Name: Weatherby

Position: Chancellor

Phone: (406) 683-7151

Fax: (406) 683-7343

Email: Beth.Weatherby@umwestern.edu

Accreditation Liaison Officer

Title: Dr.

First Name: Deborah

Last Name: Hedeen

Position: Provost and Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs

Phone: (406) 683-7115

Fax: (406) 683-7343

Email: Deborah.Hedeen@umwestern.edu

Chief Financial Officer

Title: Ms.

First Name: Susan

Last Name: Briggs

Position: Vice Chancellor, Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs

Phone: (406) 683-7349

Fax: (406) 683-7012

Email: Susan.Briggs@umwestern.edu

Institutional Demographics

Institutional Type

Comprehensive

Calendar Plan *(Choose one that applies)*

Semester

Institutional Control

State

Public and Non-Profit

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

Classification	Current Year: 2017	One Year Prior: 2016	Two Years Prior: 2015
Undergraduate	1318.60	1340.55	1256.32
Graduate	n/a	n/a	n/a
Professional	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unclassified	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total all levels	1318.60	1340.55	1256.32

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

Classification	Current Year: 2017	One Year Prior: 2016	Two Years Prior: 2015
Undergraduate	1454	1501	1378
Graduate	n/a	n/a	n/a
Professional	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unclassified	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total all levels	1454	1501	1378

Faculty (all locations)

- Numbers of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff
- Numbers of Full-Time (only) Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff by Highest Degree Earned

Include only professional personnel who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

Total Number: 66 Number of Full-Time (only) Faculty and Staff by Highest Degree Earned

Rank	Full-Time	Part-Time	Less than Associate	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Specialist	Doctorate
Professor	31							31
Associate Professor	12							12
Assistant Professor	10							10
Instructor								
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant								
Research Staff and Research Assistant								
Undesignated Rank	13				2	6		5

Faculty (all locations)**Mean Salaries and Mean Years of Service of Full-Time Instructional and Research Faculty and Staff.**

Include only full-time personnel with professional status who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

Rank	Mean Salary	Mean Years of Service
Professor	\$70,181	17.29
Associate Professor	\$56,716	8.42
Assistant Professor	\$50,005	2.20
Instructor	\$41,071	6.31
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant		
Research Staff and Research Assistant		
Undesignated Rank		

Institutional Finances

The following documents are attached except the Projections of Non-Tuition Revenue. This information is integrated into the university's operating budget. See notes on table.

- Statement of Cash Flows
- Balance Sheet – collapsed to show main accounts only; no details
- Operating Budget
- Capital Budget
- Projections of Non-Tuition Revenue

The University of Montana Western Statement of Cash Flows As of and For the year ended June 30			
	2017	2016	2015
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received for revenues:			
Tuition and fees	\$ 8,353,035	\$ 7,606,063	\$ 7,449,475
Federal grants and contracts	1,200,574	945,860	821,474
State grants and contracts	831,863	532,683	372,727
Nongovernmental grants and contracts	249,315	224,168	230,806
Grant and contract indirect cost recoveries	70,220	12,698	17,433
Education, public service, and outreach revenues	260,703	291,516	397,940
Sales and services of auxiliary enterprises	5,094,560	4,658,731	4,583,997
Interest on loans receivable	854	1,194	6,877
Other operating receipts	191,545	170,635	181,185
Cash paid for expenses:			
Payments to employees for salaries and benefits	(14,562,799)	(14,001,559)	(14,089,761)
Payments for other postemployment benefits	(992,876)	(799,861)	(729,167)
Operating expenses	(8,476,783)	(7,578,125)	(7,267,668)
Payments for scholarships and fellowships	(1,464,086)	(1,262,634)	(1,363,525)
Loans made to students	(143,363)	(109,052)	(20,076)
Loan payments received	65,759	94,221	74,094
Inter-campus payments	230,080	(14,107)	(59,400)
Net Cash Provided (used) by Operating Activities	(9,091,399)	(9,227,569)	(9,393,589)
CASH FLOWS FROM NONCAPITAL FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Direct lending proceeds	5,393,892	5,457,133	5,679,409
Direct lending disbursements	(5,393,892)	(5,457,133)	(5,679,409)
Federal financial aid grants and contracts	2,378,152	2,281,343	2,281,117
State appropriations	8,040,212	7,975,495	8,043,128
Land Grants	451,419	301,760	612,124
Private gifts for other than capital purposes	341,647	546,751	274,138
Net Cash Flows from Noncapital Financing Activities	11,211,430	11,105,349	11,210,507
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Earning received on investments	63,258	30,149	8,521
Net Cash Provided (used) by Investing Activities	63,258	30,149	8,521
CASH FLOWS FROM CAPITAL AND RELATED FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Cash paid for capital assets	(933,180)	(1,262,145)	(258,835)
Private gifts for capital purposes	635,421	273,969	15,000
Other capital financing activities			
Principal paid on notes payable	(143,419)	(149,221)	(139,426)

Principal paid on bonds payable	(570,205)	(363,051)	(179,560)
Interest paid on capital debt	(273,331)	(307,649)	(366,022)
Net Cash Provided (used) by Capital and Related Financing Activities	(1,284,714)	(1,808,097)	(928,843)
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	\$ 898,575	\$ 99,832	\$ 896,596
Balances at beginning of year	7,457,453	7,357,621	6,461,025
Balances at end of year	\$ 8,356,027	\$ 7,457,453	\$ 7,357,621

The University of Montana Western			
Statement of Net Position			
For the Year Ended June 30			
ASSETS	2017	2016	2015
Current Assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 8,352,322	\$ 7,453,625	\$ 7,353,658
Securities lending collateral	-	-	-
Investments	-	-	-
Accounts and grants receivable, net	895,648	944,544	625,736
Due from Federal government	65,138	13,837	15,499
Due from other State of Montana component units	23,689	7,729	28,959
Inventories	424,472	615,592	547,730
Due from component units	-	2,054	-
Loans to students, net	62,476	60,353	57,853
Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	145,414	109,446	98,924
Total current assets	9,969,159	9,207,180	8,728,358
Noncurrent Assets:			
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	3,705	3,827	3,963
Loans receivable	-	-	-
Loans to students, net	465,590	448,373	443,870
Bond issuance costs	-	-	-
Capital assets, net	21,642,302	20,311,409	18,401,358
Total noncurrent assets	22,111,597	20,763,609	18,849,192
Total assets	\$ 32,080,756	\$ 29,970,789	\$ 27,577,550
DEFERRED OUTFLOWS	\$ 1,648,939	\$ 1,083,412	\$ 1,027,559
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities:			
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	237,806	153,379	262,884
Due to primary government	140,346	145,414	151,046
Property held in trust for others	125,148	118,067	96,881
Deferred revenue	280,083	294,512	232,945
Accrued compensated absences	568,662	540,083	521,365
Current portion of long-term obligations	587,601	570,205	363,052
Total current liabilities	1,939,646	1,821,660	1,628,173
Noncurrent Liabilities:			
Accrued compensated absences	739,605	671,019	706,471
OPEB Implicit Rate Subsidy LT	3,583,410	3,376,598	3,138,855
Net Pension Liability	5,616,086	4,847,141	4,470,115

Due to Other Agencies	896,356	1,033,877	1,177,296
Long-term Liabilities	4,270,283	4,856,850	5,426,021
Due to Federal Government	481,325	531,242	532,709
Total noncurrent liabilities	15,587,065	15,316,727	15,451,467
Total Liabilities	\$ 17,526,711	\$ 17,138,387	\$ 17,079,640
DEFERRED INFLOWS	\$ (46,750)	\$ 359,085	\$ 1,024,141
NET POSITION			
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	13,798,607	11,425,753	11,992,771
Restricted - nonexpendable	76,169	76,304	80,817
Restricted - Expendable	111,225	109,845	98,683
Unrestricted	2,263,733	1,944,829	(1,670,945)
Total net position	\$ 16,249,734	\$ 13,556,731	\$ 10,501,327

The University of Montana Western Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position As of and For the Year Ended June 30			
	2017	2016	2015
Operating Revenues:			
Tuition & fees, net of scholarship allowances	\$ 8,353,035	\$ 7,606,063	\$ 7,449,475
Federal grants and contracts	1,200,574	945,860	821,474
State operating grants and contracts	831,863	532,683	372,727
Nongovernmental grants and contracts	249,315	224,168	230,806
Grant and contract facilities and administrative cost recoveries	70,220	12,698	17,433
Educational, public service, and outreach revenues	260,703	291,516	397,940
Auxiliary - residential life, net of scholarship allowances	1,301,190	1,253,753	1,188,601
Auxiliary - food services, net of scholarship allowances	2,537,045	2,450,324	2,249,288
Auxiliary - other revenue	1,256,325	954,654	1,146,108
Interest earned on loans to students	854	1,194	6,877
Other operating revenues	191,545	170,634	181,185
Total operating revenues	16,252,669	14,443,547	14,061,914
Operating expenses:			
Compensation and employee benefits	14,562,798	14,001,559	14,089,761
OPEB Expense - Health Insurance	310,427	312,562	311,700
OPEB Expense - Pension	682,449	487,299	417,467
Operating Expenses	8,476,783	7,578,125	7,267,668
Scholarships and fellowships	1,464,086	1,262,634	1,363,525
Depreciation and amortization	1,358,828	1,365,727	1,376,244
Total Operating Expenses	26,855,371	25,007,906	24,826,364
Operating Loss	(10,602,702)	(10,564,359)	(10,764,451)
Nonoperating revenues (expenses):			
State Appropriations	8,040,213	7,975,495	8,043,127
Land grant revenues	451,419	301,760	612,124
Private gifts	341,647	546,751	274,137
Federal Financial Aid	2,378,152	2,281,343	2,281,118
Investment income	63,258	30,149	8,521
Interest expense	(271,356)	(305,074)	(289,899)
Net nonoperating revenues (expenses)	11,003,333	10,830,424	10,929,128

Income before other revenues, expenses, gains and losses	400,631	266,064	164,677
Capital grants and gifts	2,085,926	2,800,615	426,329
Gain (Loss) on Sale of Capital Assets	(4,048)	-	-
Transfers in (out)	230,080		(59,400)
Change in net position	\$ 2,712,589	\$ 3,052,572	\$ 531,605
Net position, beginning of year	13,494,497	10,441,925	14,187,610
Restatement (pension)			\$ (4,277,290)
Net position, end of year	\$ 16,207,086	\$ 13,494,497	\$ 10,441,925

The University of Montana Western Capital Budget As of June 30			
	2017	2016	2015
BUDGETED REVENUE:			
Tuition & Fees	\$ 571,500	\$ 583,000	\$ 591,500
Land Grant Income	250,000	250,000	250,000
Private Gifts, Grants and Contracts	180,000	485,000	-
Investment Income	13,100	6,400	6,450
Sales and Service	500	500	500
Transfers	2,239,417	1,823,333	1,588,170
Other Sources	9,965	-	53,230
TOTAL BUDGETED REVENUE	\$ 3,264,482	\$ 3,148,233	\$ 2,489,850
BUDGETED EXPENSES:			
Personal Services	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300
Other Services	-	11,000	-
Supplies	449,660	393,200	447,000
Communication	-	-	900
Rent	7,000	7,000	16,000
Repair & Maintenance	516,016	429,969	552,310
Other Expenses	8,300	408,700	413,700
Capital Equipment	145,996	165,500	150,500
Capital Building	1,091,417	576,500	255,747
Other Capital Improvements	40,000	115,000	-
Debt Service	645,292	653,360	497,200
Transfers	1,630,932	1,258,500	776,400
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	\$ 4,534,913	\$ 4,019,029	\$ 3,110,057

The University of Montana Western
Unrestricted Funds Operating Budget
As of June 30

	2017	2016	2015
BUDGETED REVENUE:			
Tuition & Fees	\$ 9,752,693	\$ 9,287,490	\$ 8,759,317
State Appropriation	7,996,144	7,862,864	7,922,051
Federal Grants and Contracts	4,498,365	4,361,793	4,328,629
Student Financial Aid	16,000	16,000	18,000
State and Local Grants and Contracts	942,828	757,250	781,450
Private Gifts, Grants and Contracts	823,232	733,554	688,881
Investment Income	11,300	7,550	75,000
Sales and Service	1,701,500	1,772,500	1,670,300
Indirect Cost Recoveries	60,000	79,000	79,000
Auxiliaries	4,879,500	4,526,000	4,255,500
Transfers	543,150	664,150	407,150
Other Sources	321,234	233,600	386,282
TOTAL BUDGETED REVENUE	\$ 31,545,946	\$ 30,301,751	\$ 29,371,560
BUDGETED EXPENSES:			
Personal Services	\$ 15,777,681	\$ 15,484,351	\$ 15,341,296
Other Services	2,231,498	2,045,672	1,513,610
Supplies	2,290,740	2,777,555	1,435,435
Communication	268,463	242,722	234,839
Travel	1,223,735	1,052,533	1,027,601
Rent	382,601	379,901	374,593
Utilities	673,495	727,545	712,700
Repair & Maintenance	671,453	665,963	628,563
Other Expenses	617,415	444,638	483,849
Goods Purchased for Resale	1,166,400	1,215,900	1,188,000
Capital Equipment	111,643	104,825	163,757
Debt Service	142,000	73,000	65,000
Waivers & Scholarships	5,109,616	4,952,066	4,900,816
Indirect Costs	163,290	146,077	154,618
Transfers	1,223,900	1,003,200	835,200
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	\$ 32,053,930	\$ 31,315,948	\$ 29,059,877

Unrestricted funds consist of general unrestricted, designated, auxiliary and restricted (grant) funds.

Budgeted expenses exceed budgeted revenue to use existing fund balances.

Projections of Non-Tuition Revenue are integrated into the operational budget.

New Degree / Certificate Programs

Substantive Changes

Substantive changes including degree or certificate programs planned for 2017-2018 approved by the institution's governing body. If NONE, so indicate. *Please feel free to create the list using the headings we have specified and submit it as an Excel spreadsheet.*

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

Substantive Change	Certificate/Degree Level	Program Name	Discipline or Program Area
Glass Program (currently under review at NWCCU)	Certificate, Associate of Arts, and Bachelor of Arts	Glass Program	Glass

Domestic Off-Campus Degree Programs and Academic Credit Sites

Report information for off-campus sites within the United States where degree programs and academic credit coursework is offered. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

- **Degree Programs** – list the *names* of degree programs that can be completed at the site.
- **Academic Credit Courses** – report the *total number* of academic credit courses offered at the site.
- **Student Headcount** – report the *total number (unduplicated headcount)* of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.
- **Faculty Headcount** – report the *total number (unduplicated headcount)* of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

Programs and Academic Credit Offered at Off-Campus Sites within the United States

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

Distance Education

Degree and Certificate Programs of 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more where at least 50% or more of the curriculum is offered by Distance Education, including ITV, online, and competency-based education. Adjust entries to category listings below as appropriate. ***If your list is longer than ten entries, please create a list using the heading we have specified and upload it in the box provided as an Excel spreadsheet.***

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

Name of Site	Physical Address	Degree/Certificate Name/Level	Program Name	Student Enrollment (Unduplicated Headcount)	On-Site Staff (Yes or No)	Co-Sponsoring Organization (if applicable)
Billings	1500 University Dr.	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education;	0	No	No
Billings	1500 University Dr.	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	0	No	No
Bozeman	32 S Tracy Ave.	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	0	No	No
Bozeman	32 S Tracy Ave.	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	0	No	No
Butte	1300 West Park	BS	Elementary Education	16	No	No
Butte	1300 West Park	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	3	No	No
Great Falls	2100 16 th Ave.	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	1	No	No

Great Falls	2100 16th Ave.	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	4	No	No
Hamilton	103 S 9th St.	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	0	No	No
Hamilton	103 S 9th St.	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	0	No	No
Havre	300 13th Street West	CERT/AAS	Early Childhood Education	0	No	No
Helena	1115 N. Roberts	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	0	No	No
Helena	1115 N. Roberts	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	0	No	No
Missoula	University of Montana	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	0	No	No
Missoula	University of Montana	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	0	No	No
Lewistown	773 Airport Road	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	0	No	No
Lewistown	773 Airport Road	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	0	No	No
Salish Kootenai College	58138 US Highway 93	BS	Elementary Education	0	No	No

Salish Kootenai College	58138 US Highway 93	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	0	No	No
Online/Hybrid	n/a	CERT/AAS/BS	Early Childhood Education	89	No	No
Online/Hybrid	n/a	BS	Elementary Education	96	No	No
Online/Hybrid	n/a	BS	Secondary Education	88	No	No
Online/Hybrid	n/a	BS	Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade	79	No	No

Programs and Academic Courses Offered at Sites Outside the United States

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

(Add additional pages if necessary)

- **Degree Programs** – list the *names* of degree programs that can be completed at the site.
- **Academic Credit Courses** – report the *total number* of academic credit courses offered at the site.
- **Student Headcount** – report the *total number (unduplicated headcount)* of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.
- **Faculty Headcount** – report the *total number (unduplicated headcount)* of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

Programs and Academic Credit Offered at Sites outside the United States

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

PREFACE



" The hands-on learning experiences combined with instructor one-on-one time allow you to gain a large amount of knowledge in a short period of time.

- Daisy Coulson, Natural Horsemanship "

Preface

The process of developing the Year Seven Self-Evaluation provided a great opportunity to reflect on the changes since the Year Three Self-Study of March 2013, evaluate how those changes affected the University, and visualize the future to come.

Updated Mission and Strategic Plan

At the time of the Year Three Self-Study, the University was in the middle of a planning process developing the next stage of the strategic plan. This included revising the previous mission statement that while comprehensive and descriptive required a clearer focus on mission fulfillment. Out of this campus-wide review process emerged the document [Experience the Difference](#), the formal documentation of the Strategic Plan.

Two Mission review documents were presented at the November 2014 meeting of the Board of Regents to outline the updated Strategic Plan ([Mission Review Document-Board of Regents November 2014](#) and [Mission Review Presentation-Board of Regents November 2014](#)). The Board of Regents approved the new Mission Statement during that meeting ([Minutes-Board of Regent Minutes November 2014](#)). In addition, the updated Mission, Core Themes, priorities and goals were submitted to the NWCCU.

Leadership Transitions

Executive Leadership Transition

Table Preface 1. Changes in Campus Leadership AY13 to Present

Campus Leadership	Academic Year					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Chancellor	Richard Storey			Beth Weatherby		
Interim Chancellor			Roberta Evans			
Provost	Karl Ulrich				Deborah Hedeem (ALO)	
Interim Provost				Sylvia Moore		
Assistant Provost	Brian Price (ALO)					
Interim Asst. Provost		ALO	Anneliese Ripley (ALO)		ALO	
Note. ALO designates the NWCCU accreditation liason officer.						

After successfully leading UMW through ten years of Experience One and finalizing UMW's current strategic plan, [Experience the Difference](#), Chancellor Richard Storey elected to retire in August 2014. Actions were immediately taken to conduct an executive search and name an Interim Chancellor to ensure a smooth leadership transition. Dr. Roberta Evans, Dean of the University of Montana's College of Education and Human Sciences, served as Interim Chancellor until the search was completed. Dr. Beth Weatherby assumed the duties of Chancellor in January 2015.

Similarly, after successfully serving as Provost for 18 years, Dr. Karl Ulrich elected to return to his faculty position in UMW's Biology Department. Dr. Sylvia Moore, retired Deputy Commissioner of Higher

Education in Montana, served as Interim Provost during the 2015-16 academic year. Dr. Deborah Hedeem assumed the duties of Provost in July 2016.

Responsibilities for leading accreditation efforts also changed between the Year Three Self-Study and the present time. Assistant Provost Brian Price retired at the end of June 2013. Dean Anneliese Ripley was named as Interim Assistant Provost in October 2013 to address the NWCCU's recommendations stemming from the Year Three Self-Study. Dr. Ripley returned to her position as Dean of Outreach after fully responding to the NWCCU Commission's Year Three recommendations. Dr. Deborah Hedeem assumed the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) duties in fall 2016.

In summary, Chancellor Storey's retirement initiated a leadership transition. Various long-serving MUS professionals, with knowledge of UMW and its programs, were tasked with interim duties during the transition.

Additional Leadership Changes

As illustrated in Table Preface 2, in addition to the executive leadership transitions there have been several administrative leadership changes since the previous self-study.

Table Preface 2. Changes to Administrative Leadership AY13 to Present

Position	Name	Year Hired
Director of Admissions	Matthew Allen	2014 Interim 2016 Permanent
Director of Facilities Services	Cole Cottom	2015 Maintenance Services Manager 2017 Director of Facilities Services
Director of Athletics	Dr. Russell Richardson	2016
Director of Athletics	Bill Wilson	2018
Director of Information Technology Services	Chad Baver	2015
Financial Aid Director	Louise Driver	2017
Director of the Library	Anne Kish	2017 Interim
TRiO Director	Ilene Cohen	2015- added responsibility to Director of Student Success role.

Although many changes in leadership at various levels occurred since the 2013 Year Three Self-Study, UMW's resolute commitment to experiential education, student success, and responsible stewardship allowed the campus to thrive during a dynamic period.

Highlights of Other Institutional Changes and Recognitions

- The University celebrated ten years of Experience One along with Dr. Weatherby's inauguration in spring 2015.
- Experience One and the block system continued to attract students not only for the experiential education opportunities, but the ability to take one course at a time, increasing a student's potential to attend full-time. As of fall 2017, the University's census headcount was 1466 and FTE was 1416.4. This is a 24% increase in headcount and a 32% increase in FTE in the past ten years.

- UMW saw a steady increase in the awarding of degrees. The University awarded the highest number of degrees in annual year 2015-16 with the awarding of 452 degrees and the second highest in 2016-17 with 423 degrees awarded. 2016-17 represents a 108% increase in the awarding of degrees over a ten-year period.
- The IPEDS six-year graduation rate increased dramatically since the inception of Experience One. Montana Western anticipates six-year graduation rates in the 2017-18 IPEDS reports to be 43%, an increase of 17% over 10 years. Most encouraging is the increase in the bachelor's degree graduation rate, which hit record highs last year with 59% and second record highs with 57% in 2017-18. This is a 29% increase since the start of Experience One.
- Retention rates for bachelor degree seeking students continue to increase, with a retention rate of the fall 2016 bachelor cohort of 75%. This is a 6% increase over a ten-year period.
- A Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education: Pre-kindergarten through Third Grade degree was added in fall 2015.
- The Bachelor of Science in Ecology degree with three option areas was added in fall 2017.
- Two new certificates were added in Farrier Science and Small Animal Grooming during the 2015-16 academic year.
- Pending NWCCU approval for implementation, as of spring 2017, the University and MUS approved the addition of a glass program which includes a minor, certificate, Associate of Arts, and Bachelor of Arts.
- The Health and Human Performance program became its own department in summer 2015. It was originally paired with the Education Department.
- The Education program's CAEP accreditation and the Business and Technology program's IACBE accreditation were renewed.
- The Biology Club, with the support of the department, continued to expand the Montana Western Research Symposium, an opportunity for students from across disciplines to share the results of their internships, projects, capstones, and research with the campus and community.
- The online course catalog will be launched by February 2018.
- The CAPP degree audit system was launched in spring 2016.
- Stage three of the Main Hall renovation project was completed. This stage included completing structural updates to campus's Main Hall, the addition of two classrooms and a model classroom for education, faculty office updates, and the addition of the Legacy Plaza to bring the campus and community even closer together.
- A Wellness Coordinator was hired in spring 2013 to oversee high risk clubs and student wellness to help with retention efforts.
- Paw Prints for Success began in fall 2016 as a new student pilot program. Paw Prints for Success is designed to encourage students' attendance to different events on campus throughout the year to increase co-curricular engagement. In fall 2017 the program expanded to the entire campus.
- Curious Minds, the Early Childhood Education lab, closed as of spring 2016, providing the opportunity to increase community partnerships through student placement.
- The Veterans Military Exchange (VMX), a center for veteran's, military, and dependents opened in spring 2013.
- The Multicultural Center was added to the campus in spring 2017.

- In spring 2016, ground was broken for the expansion of the Montana Center for Horsemanship to increase opportunities for UMW's Natural Horsemanship students.
- In fall 2017, the Health and Human Performance lab opened providing access to state-of-the-art equipment for students on campus.
- The University, as part of the Montana University System (MUS), joined Complete College America.
- Cheerleading, Cross-Country, and Track and Field were added to the NAIA athletic teams; however, cheerleading returned to club status as of fall 2017.
- The restoration of the historic "M" was conducted in 2016 through the collaboration of UMW Facilities Services, the UMW Foundation, the Athletic Department, the Environmental Sciences Department, and the Dillon community.

Response to Year Three Recommendations

While reaffirming UMW's accreditation with the [Year Three Self-Evaluation](#), the NWCC requested an Ad Hoc report on progress toward addressing the Year Three evaluator's recommendation and four prior recommendations ([Year Three Reaffirmation Letter](#)). Recommendations cited in the Commission's letter are summarized in Table Preface 3.

Table Preface 3. Recommendations Resulting from Year Three Self-Study Report

Report	Evaluator's Recommendations	
Spring 2010 Comprehensive Peer-Evaluation	1	The evaluation team recommends that the university develop and implement procedures necessary to accomplish the following:
		Provide students with a substantial and coherent general education program with identifiable student learning outcomes.
		Establish program assessment procedures based on these outcomes.
		Implement the assessment procedures and use the results to improve the achievement of student learning outcomes.
	2	While the evaluation team recognizes that some departments have produced exemplary assessment of student learning outcomes, it does not find evidence that the commitment to assessment has been embraced throughout the curriculum. The team therefore recommends that the institution take immediate steps to implement frequent, regular, and substantive assessment of learning outcomes in all academic programs. Furthermore, the team recommends that the assessment process explicitly connect student learning outcomes to program mission, the institution's strategic plan, the budget process, and the university mission.
	3	As the university acknowledges, many entering students are underprepared for college-level learning in math and writing. Therefore, the team recommends that the institution continue to assess and improve its developmental mathematics and writing courses in order to heighten student competence in quantitative reasoning and written communications.
Spring 2011 Year One	1	The institution should define mission fulfillment in the "context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations." The evaluation panel recommends that the definition of mission fulfillment should look forward, build upon the successes that have followed the adoption of <i>Experience One</i> , and usefully guide the University in its self-study activities.
Spring 2013 Year Three	1	While the university has identified core themes and has made progress on the identification of objectives and indicators of achievement, the evaluation committee found that levels of mission fulfillment have not been defined. The evaluation committee recommends the indicators of achievement need to be better aligned with clearly defined and meaningful levels of mission fulfillment.

The Ad Hoc Report ([NWCCU Spring 2014 Ad Hoc Report](#)) was prepared and submitted in spring 2014 to address recommendations 1, 2, and 3 from the spring 2010 Comprehensive Peer-evaluation; recommendation 1 from the Year One Report, and recommendation 1 from the Year Three Report. The Commission response received July 30, 2014 ([NWCCU Spring 2014 Ad Hoc Report Response](#)) confirmed that expectations had been met in relation to all recommendations except recommendation two of the spring 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Report. An additional ad hoc report was requested to address this recommendation.

The Ad Hoc Report addressing the recommendation was submitted in fall 2015 ([NWCCU Fall 2015 Ad Hoc Report](#)). The report was accepted, and the Commission determined that all of the recommendations had been met. However, the Commission urged UMW to “submit a strongly data focused Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report with explicit connections between data and assessment leading to continuous improvement and mission fulfillment ([NWCCU Fall 2015 Ad Hoc Report Response](#)).

NWCCU’s recommendations were constructive and extremely helpful in guiding UMW’s efforts to better articulate mission fulfillment and assess learning outcomes. The Commission’s feedback also influenced UMW’s 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, associated tactical objectives, and this report.

STANDARD ONE

MISSION, CORE THEMES, AND EXPECTATIONS



“ It’s really nice having concentrated time with the professors. I wouldn’t have heard about my internship with the National Institute on Drug Abuse without that, let alone applied for it. The Experience One program is preparing me for graduate school.

- Roberta Irvin, Psychology



Standard One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3

Eligibility Requirement 2: Authority

The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.

The Montana Constitution vests the governing of the public higher education system solely with the Montana Board of Regents. The University of Montana Western is authorized to award degrees through the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR), the governing body for the Montana University System. The authorization of the units of Montana public higher education system is found in Montana Code Annotated (MCA) Title 20 Chapter 25 Part 2 ([20-25-201](#) and [20-25-253](#)).

Eligibility Requirements 3: Mission and Core Themes

The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined and adopted by its governing board(s) consistent with its legal authorization, and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interests of its students and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes.

In 1993, the BOR approved a plan to restructure the Montana University System into two primary units: The University of Montana (UM) and the Montana State University (MSU). Each of the units included affiliates with differing levels of degree authority: a doctoral granting institution, several baccalaureate and masters granting institutions, and several certificate and associate granting institutions. Goals of the restructure included centralizing administrative functions at the doctoral institutions, improving student access, and creating differentiated tuition incentives. Montana Western was designated as a UM affiliate. Figure 1.1 outlines the four primary UM campuses, identifies where they are located, provides their Carnegie classification, and lists their accredited degree levels. Note that several of the affiliates including the University of Montana and Montana Tech include embedded two-year colleges with separate facilities and leadership. These embedded colleges are not independently accredited. UMW does not include a separate two-year campus as all UMW two-year programs are embedded in the main campus leadership structure.

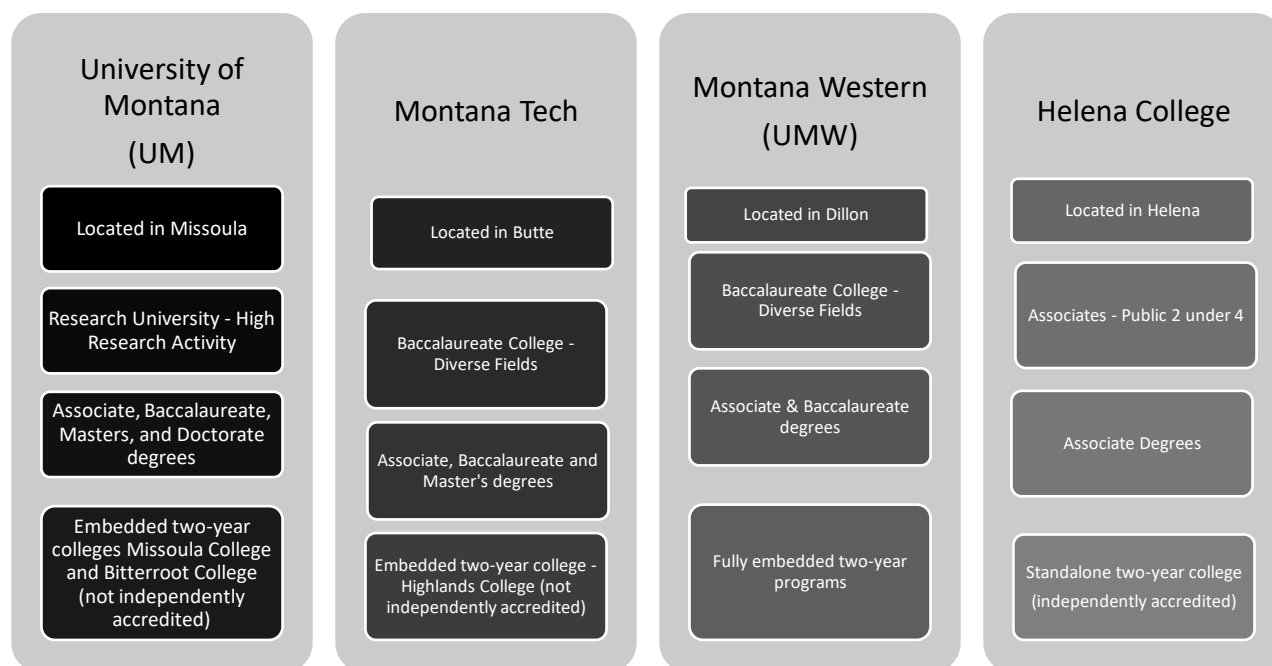


Figure 1.1. Carnegie Classification and Accredited Degrees for Standalone University of Montana Affiliate Campuses

Over the years, the MUS has continued to define the overarching structure of the mission and roles of the colleges and universities within the affiliation structure. Most recently at the May 2017 BOR meeting, the Board approved [Policy 219.1 Institutional Mission Parameters](#) which organizes the parameters of the institutional missions into four classifications. The four classifications are: Research Doctoral Universities; Special Focus Universities; Four-Year Regional Universities; and Two-Year Colleges.

Montana Western is classified in the four-year regional universities which is defined as:

“offering comprehensive education across the certificate, associate, and baccalaureate level in academic and professional program areas of need within the state and across the region. They may also offer select graduate-level programs. Basic and applied research may occur at these institutions. These institutions contribute to economic development, social and cultural enhancement, and civic engagement within their community and regions. Admission policies at these institutions define minimum level of preparation matching the academic focus of the institution.”

Montana Western’s BOR approved mission meets these parameters.

Each degree and program that is approved and offered on the campus must not only go through an extensive on-campus approval process, but a highly involved MUS approval process as well. In addition to annual assessment processes, each program must submit a review to the Board of Regents every seven years. These campus and system-based assessment processes require the University to review and justify regularly that the degrees offered through UMW are beneficial to students and deliver the expected program and student learning outcomes.

Montana Western continually meets the Board of Regents recommendation that 50% of expenditures supports instruction and at least 70% supports the combination of instruction, academic support, and student services. Table 1.1 demonstrates meeting this criteria during this accreditation cycle.

Table 1.1. Expenditures and Percentage of Academic Services, Instruction, Academic Support, and Student Services

Expenditures	FY14		FY15		FY16		FY17		FY18	
Instruction	\$6,823,733	53%	\$7,000,405	52%	\$7,116,442	53%	\$7,269,736	52%	\$7,792,081	53%
Total Instruction, Academic, and Student Support	\$9,886,698	76%	\$10,155,602	76%	\$10,313,232	77%	\$10,766,655	77%	\$11,444,098	78%

Standard 1.A: Mission

- 1.A.1** The institution has a widely published mission statement-approved by its governing board—that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.
- 1.A.2** The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

The Mission

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

The mission of the University of Montana Western is widely published on the website, in the [University catalog](#), and [the Strategic Plan](#). After the revised mission was approved by the Board of Regents in November 2014, a UMW campaign communicated the Mission to the campus and Dillon community through news releases, web articles, emails, and published “Experience the Difference” Strategic Plan. Additionally, the Associated Student Body of University of Montana Western (ASUMW) sponsored a bookmark ([ASUMW bookmark](#)) released to the campus and community to celebrate and spread the revised Mission.

The University continues to actively use the Mission and corresponding Strategic Plan to give direction to the plans of the University. Soon after the Mission was approved and released to the community, a [Tactical Document](#) was created to track metrics, initiatives, and projects supporting the priorities, goals, and Core Themes attached to the Mission. While the Tactical Document has gone through a few revisions since its initial inception, it continues to be updated with metrics and initiatives that measure mission fulfillment. In annual years 2016 and 2017, Provost Deborah Hedeon led sessions for faculty and staff discussing the Mission and Core Themes, with specific exercises to encourage employees to think about their positions from the perspective of the Core Themes and gain a deeper understanding of their connection to mission fulfillment ([Faculty Strategic Plan Presentation 2016](#); [Staff Strategic Plan Presentation 2016](#)). Strategies such as the Tactical Document and the aforementioned presentation not only create a general understanding of the mission, but ultimately form a culture of integrated mission and strategic planning.

Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment

Ultimately, mission fulfillment is defined as connecting the measures and strategies described in the Tactical Document and other University plans to the priorities and goals of the Strategic Plan. These

priorities and goals, in turn, directly support the Core Themes which directly support fulfillment of the Mission. When this relationship between action and the Strategic Plan is sustained, UMW's Mission of experiential education is fulfilled.

The heart of the Mission is concentrated experiential education, and Experience One acts as the driver leading to mission fulfillment, connecting the metrics and strategies described in the Core Themes, priorities, goals, program assessment and the Tactical Document. Experience One focuses on "authentic practices of discipline" and "engages students and faculty in actively exploring the knowledge, purpose, and practices in every field of study." Using Experience One as the foundation, the University connects its Core Themes, priorities, and goals through metrics and initiatives to achieve "a culture of concentrated experiential education" or in other words, mission fulfillment.

Articulation of Acceptable Threshold, Extent, or Degree of Mission Fulfillment

The Core Themes, priorities, and goals of the Strategic Plan are all firmly planted in the Mission and are the foundation to create measurements for progress. Each Strategic Plan goal serves as an objective with indirect and direct measures attached which are reviewed annually by the Academic and Administrative Council (AAC) as part of the annual update of the Tactical Document. The Tactical Document lists campus projects and initiatives that support the objectives and measures. Through this annual review, the AAC is able to determine progress related to mission fulfillment. As the Provost and Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs co-chair this committee, they are able to deliver key information about Mission fulfillment to the Chancellor's Cabinet or other strategic committees such as Strategic Planning. Faculty Senate also has representation on this council, which provides a connection back to the faculty regarding measures and fulfillment that are related to academics.

Standard 1.B: Core Themes

1.B.1 The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.

Authorized by the BOR and NWCCU in 2011, the University adopted three Core Themes to support the fulfillment of its Mission:

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

These Core Themes were reaffirmed with the approval of the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan.

1.B.2 The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core theme.

Recognizing that a cohesive strategic plan's core themes do not exist in isolation from each other, but instead interact and overlap to accomplish the mission, the priorities and goals associated with the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan are designed with the possibility of aligning with more than one Core Theme. However, as each Core Theme has two primary emphasis areas that expand on the Mission, for the purpose of the Year Seven Self-Evaluation, the priorities and goals of the Strategic Plan are aligned with the Core Theme they predominantly support. Built from the Core Themes, priorities, and goals of

[“Experience the Difference,”](#) the following section describes the Core Themes and the rationale regarding why each indicator attaches to the objective leading to mission fulfillment.

Core Theme 1: Continuously improve undergraduate education and experiential learning.

Description

Core Theme One emphasizes the University’s academic purpose by focusing on undergraduate education and experiential learning. Each objective and indicator that primarily aligns with this Core Theme focuses on improving one of these areas. In addition, the improvement of undergraduate education and experiential learning fulfills the Mission by assisting in “the achievement of academic excellence and sustaining a culture of concentrated experiential education.”

Core Theme 1, Objective 1: Priority One- Encourage academic excellence and innovation.

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

Rationale: General education is the foundation of a liberal arts education and provides most of the pre-requisites for courses in major cores. Because of this vital influence on student formation, general education programming with universally accepted student learning outcomes assures academic excellence across the curriculum. Additionally, as general education courses are often the first courses a student participates in at the University, utilizing experiential education is paramount to exposing students to Montana Western’s unique approach to learning.

Indicator 2: Goal 1B- Enhance and promote experiential teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Rationale: As experiential teaching is the niche and educational delivery method at Montana Western, enhancing and promoting experiential teaching and learning encourage the pursuit of academic excellence and innovation for both faculty and students.

Indicator 3: Goal 1C- Improve academic programs through rigorous and ongoing assessment and review processes.

Rationale: Assessment and review processes provide the programs the opportunity to explore what is working in relation to program and student learning outcomes and how the outcomes or courses need to be adjusted to improve or innovate. Assessment propels the process that encourages academic excellence.

Indicator 4: Goal 1D- Promote and support academic innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit among students, faculty, and staff.

Rationale: Academic excellence and the entrepreneurial spirit are required to stay relevant in Experience One and to achieve academic excellence with faculty, staff, and students.

Indicator 5: 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.

Rationale: The use of technology is an integrated part of students’ lives. Anticipation and delivery of the use of technology not only helps with their co-curricular experiences, but also supports their knowledge of technology required in their academic discipline.

Indicator 6: Goal 1F- Engage students, faculty, and staff in meaningful experiential learning, service, creative and scholarly activities.

Rationale: One must engage in an activity in order to encourage and experience academic excellence and innovation. Encouraging the campus community to regularly and meaningfully interact with experiential learning, service, creative and scholarly activities supports and leads to innovation.

Core Theme 1, Objective 2: Priority Two- Develop, strengthen and expand creative co-curricular programs and campus collaborations to promote student learning, development, retention, and success.

Indicator 1: Goal 2B- Equip students with the knowledge and skills that inspire them to be civic-minded and enable them to lead.

Rationale: Co-curricular programs and campus collaborations provide the bridge between the academic, social, and emotional development of students to equip them with the skills to build leadership abilities and a civic-mindedness that carries beyond student learning, development, and retention leading to success in their future lives beyond the University.

Core Theme 1, Objective 3: Priority Four- Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

Indicator 1: Goal 4A- Provide faculty and staff with the support and tools necessary to act on their commitment to excellence.

Rationale: Highly qualified and diverse faculty and staff feed innovation in Experience One through their qualifications and experiences. Providing faculty and staff with the support and tools to act on their commitment to excellence furthers strategies that support the experiential mission.

Core Theme 2: Maximize campus-wide support for student success and completion.

Description

The University of Montana Western employs experiential learning to maximize students' opportunities to succeed and complete their degrees. Student success and completion are the ultimate indicators of mission fulfillment.

Core Theme 2, Objective 1: Priority Two- Develop, strengthen and expand creative co-curricular programs and campus collaboration to promote student learning, development, retention and success.

Indicator 1: Goal 2A- Link student affairs and student academic support by adopting a developmental approach to co-curricular experiences and academic support.

Rationale: Co-curricular opportunities enhance the entire student experience. Developing opportunities by linking the efforts of student affairs and student academic support, the university bridges potential gaps in student learning and personal development, promoting retention and success.

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

Rationale: Personal health and safety are required in order for students to thrive. Providing students with co-curricular activities that promote understanding of personal health and safety issues promotes sound decision-making and the development of social-responsibility skills.

Indicator 3: 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.

Rationale: The non-curricular events and activities provide supplemental support to the experiential education in the classroom, providing additional and important opportunities for leadership, teamwork, and community holistic development.

Indicator 4: Goal 2E- Demonstrate the power of experiential education by achieving greater student success than comparator institutions.

Rationale: Comparing direct measures to comparator institutions provides quantitative evidence of the success of Experience One and how this educational program and philosophy provides increased student success.

Core Theme 2, Objective 2: Priority Three- Develop enrollment management strategies that support the experiential mission and contribute to student success.

Indicator 1: Goal 3A- Manage class enrollments to achieve optimal efficiency.

Rationale: A vital part of Experience One involves faculty working directly with students to provide opportunities for learning through experience about the knowledge, purposes, and practices of the various academic disciplines. Small class sizes facilitate experiential learning. The majority of UMW classes are capped at an enrollment of 25 students.

Indicator 2: Goal 3B- Identify and recruit best-fit students.

Rationale: While Montana Western is an open admissions university because of its two-year mission, identifying and understanding who succeeds in the experiential education environment helps provide data that supports the best use of dollars in the recruitment process, and also helps direct effort and initiatives that support those who are most likely to succeed in the Experience One model.

Indicator 3: Goal 3C- Increase the diversity of the student body.

Rationale: Experiencing diversity in the college environment supports students' holistic development; prepares them for interactions with differing people, thoughts, and experiences in their future careers; and supports the growing concept of a global society.

Core Theme 2, Objective 3: Priority Four- Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

Indicator 1: Goal 4B- Ensure that Montana Western's working environment reflects and supports diversity.

Rationale: A working environment that reflects and supports diversity exposes students to a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, expertise, careers and cultures, and promotes understanding of the global society in which they will live and work.

Core Theme 2, Objective 4: Priority Five- Maintain facilities and infrastructure commensurate to the mission and priorities of the university.

Indicator 1: Goal 5A- Maintain residential and co-curricular spaces that are safe, functional, environmentally responsible, and marketable.

Rationale: The practice of experiential learning has required the University to re-think the nature of teaching and learning spaces. Given this need, continual maintenance of campus spaces assures students and other campus constituencies of their safety and security. Personal safety and security are foundational to the ability to concentrate, work, teach, and learn.

Core Theme 2, Objective 5: Priority Six- Efficiently steward resources and operations to sustain the University for future generations.

Indicator 1: Goal 6C- Engage alumni in the life of the University.

Rationale: Alumni engaged in the University not only provide financial support, but provide students with examples of individuals who completed their student goals successfully.

Core Theme 2, Objective 6: Priority Seven- Increase Montana Western's local, regional, and national profile.

Indicator 1: Goal 7A- Promote and enhance Montana Western's regional and national profile.

Rationale: Promoting Experience One locally, regionally, and nationally enhances the University's reputation; attracts students, faculty, and staff; and develops connections to support the continued success of the program and of students.

Indicator 2: Goal 7B- Continue implementing an integrated marketing and communication plan that reflects Montana Western's mission.

Rationale: The communication plan guides the interaction with prospective and current students, alumni, potential donors, faculty and staff, providing the opportunity for a deeper connection with the University on multiple platforms.

Core Theme 3: Foster responsible campus efficiency and stewardship of resources.

Description

Core Theme Three highlights the administrative purpose of mission fulfillment by focusing on campus efficiency and stewardship of resources. By fostering responsibility in these areas, the University develops the resources to fulfill the undergraduate education and experiential learning components that support student success and completion.

Core Theme 3, Objective 1: Priority Four- Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

Indicator 1: Goal 4C- Increase awareness of the strengths of the University community for prospective employees.

Rationale: Experience One relies on an excellent, strong, and dedicated faculty and staff who are innovative and knowledgeable to fulfill the mission. This requires strategies to bring employees to a small community.

Indicator 2: Goal 4D- Develop staffing and salary plans to attract and retain faculty and staff.

Rationale: Supporting innovative experiential learning, the cornerstone of Experience One, requires excellent and experienced faculty and staff. Resources must be available to support the Strategic Plan, especially in human resources.

Core Theme 3 Objective 2: Priority Five- Maintain facilities and infrastructure commensurate to the mission and priorities of the university.

Indicator 1: Goal 5B- Align campus facilities planning with the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Rationale: It is critical to have the appropriate spaces for experiential learning and student services in support of the Mission and Strategic Plan.

Indicator 2: Goal 5C- Align information and technology services with the priorities outlined in the strategic plan.

Rationale: The faculty and students must have access to information and technology necessary for teaching and learning to support the mission. The students must be prepared to use the tools they will use in their future careers which is key to experiential learning.

Core Theme 3, Objective 3: Priority Six- Efficiently steward resources and operations to sustain the University for future generations.

Indicator 1: Goal 6A- Continually assess services, operations, and energy consumption to achieve greater efficiency and creative use of resources.

Rationale: A path of continual review and improvement is necessary to keep relevant by using best practices and maintaining compliance with state and federal mandates. It is also important to continue the campus's commitment to green initiatives.

Indicator 2: Goal 6B- Pursue state and federal funding opportunities that contribute to Montana Western's Mission and Core Themes.

Rationale: Pursuing state and federal funding opportunities creates research opportunities that enhance experiential learning and generate additional resources to support the University.

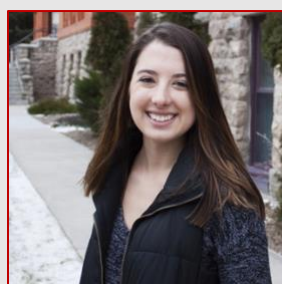
Indicator 3: Goal 6D- Work with the UMW Foundation to increase extramural funding and support of the University.

Rationale: In times of limited state resources, the UMW Foundation is an important and sometimes vital funding source to fulfill the Mission of the University.

Further Exploring Core Theme Objectives, Indicators, Measures and Metrics

Standard One alignment of Core Themes, objectives, indicators, and rationale demonstrates the University of Montana Western's knowledge of the Mission and Strategic Plan. However, for UMW, the Mission is not just knowledge, but an embedded part of every activity, goal, and project of the campus. To that end, Standard Four will further explore and feature not only the metrics and measures associated with the University's Core Theme planning, but provide narratives of Montana Western's use of "Experience the Difference" to assess, implement, and improve to fulfill the Mission.

Student Success Spotlight: Baleigh Doyle



University of Montana Western junior Baleigh Doyle spent summer 2017 at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland analyzing data for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

"NASA was awesome. It was a culture shock. I had to sit in traffic for three-to-four hours a day, but the NASA community also reminded me of Dillon. It's very tight-knit and supportive."

Doyle was asked to continue working for NASA remotely at the conclusion of her internship. She accepted and believes it wouldn't be possible without the one-course-at-a-time block scheduling system and Experience One program at the University of Montana Western.

For more information, the full article is available on the [UMW website](#).

STANDARD TWO

RESOURCES AND CAPACITY



" The coursework has helped me develop a more open mind about the world.

- Connlee Gray, English

"

Standard Two: Resources and Capacity

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 4 through 21

Eligibility Requirement 4: Operational Focus and Independence

The institution's programs and services are predominantly concerned with higher education. The institution has sufficient organizational and operational independence to be held accountable and responsible for meeting the Commission's standards and eligibility requirements.

Though reporting to the Board of Regents (BOR) and Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), UMW has sufficient authority over the budget, curriculum, and governance to make it accountable and responsible for meeting NWCCU's accreditation standards.

Eligibility Requirement 5: Non-Discrimination

The institution is governed and administered with respect for the individual in a nondiscriminatory manner while responding to the educational needs and legitimate claims of the constituencies it serves as determined by its charter, its mission, and its core themes.

UMW subscribes to BOR [Policy 703—Non-Discrimination, and UMW Campus Policy](#) and campus policy [701.1—Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity](#). Statements regarding non-discrimination appear in the [UMW Catalog](#) (p. 18) and on the faculty and staff campus policy area of the website.

Eligibility Requirement 6: Institutional Integrity

The institution establishes and adheres to ethical standards in all of its operations and relationships.

The ethical conduct of all public employees is governed by [Montana law, Standard of Conduct—Code of Ethics—Title 2, Chapter 2, Part 1, MCA](#) and the BOR [Conflict of Interest Policy BOR 770](#).

Eligibility Requirement 7: Governing Board

The institution has a functioning governing board responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for each unit within a multiple-unit institution to ensure that the institution's mission and core themes are being achieved. The governing board has at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual or employment relationship or personal financial interest with the institution.

The seven members of the BOR, appointed by the governor and ratified by the state legislature, compose the governing board for all public colleges and universities in Montana. It is supported and its goals implemented by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The members of the BOR have no contractual or financial interest with any institution of higher education.

Eligibility Requirement 8: Chief Executive Officer

The institution employs a chief executive officer who is appointed by the governing board and whose full-time responsibility is to the institution. Neither the chief executive officer nor an executive officer of the institution chairs the institution's governing board.

Appointed by the BOR under [Policy 205.2.1](#), Dr. Beth Weatherby has been Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer of UMW since January of 2015. During the fall 2014 transition from Dr. Richard Storey, Chancellor 2005-2014, to Dr. Weatherby, Dr. Roberta Evans served as interim Chancellor and CEO.

Eligibility Requirement 9: Administration

In addition to a chief executive officer, the institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and achievement of its core themes.

UMW has adequate administrators to fulfill its Mission and Core Themes. The *UMW Leadership Organization Charts* in 2.A.9 describes the current organization and reporting lines of the primary administrators of the institution.

Eligibility Requirement 10: Faculty

Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution employs and regularly evaluates the performance of appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever offered and however delivered.

In 2017-18, UMW employed 67 full-time faculty (34 tenured, 19 tenure-track, and 14 non tenure-track) in addition to part time adjuncts to teach just under 1500 students, enabling the University to maintain average course caps of 25 across the curriculum. These faculty are appropriately qualified and regularly evaluated to assure the quality and rigor of the curriculum. Normal full-time faculty workload is six four-credit courses per year.

Eligibility Requirement 11: Educational Program

The institution provides one or more educational programs which include appropriate content and rigor consistent with its mission and core themes. The educational program(s) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes, and lead to collegiate-level degree(s) with degree designation consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

UMW offers two-year and four-year degrees in a range of professional and liberal arts and sciences degrees, each of which provide students with clearly identified program outcomes to guide their progress toward appropriately-designated degrees in recognized fields of study.

Eligibility Requirement 12: General Education and Related Instruction

The institution's baccalaureate degree programs and/or academic or transfer associate degree programs require a substantial and coherent component of general education as a prerequisite to or an essential element of the programs offered. All other associate degree programs (e.g., applied, specialized, or technical) and programs of study of either 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more for which certificates are granted contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Bachelor and graduate degree programs also require a planned program of major specialization or concentration.

The UMW General Education program, in compliance with [BOR Policy 301.10](#), requires 32 semester hours of coursework in broad categories that facilitate easy transfer of General Education credit from

one Montana public higher education institution to another. The general education curriculum utilizes the [LEAP essential learning outcomes](#).

Eligibility Requirement 13: Library and Information Resources

Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution maintains and/or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's programs and services wherever offered and however delivered.

UMW's library continues to increase acquiring online databases, rather than hard copies of texts, in order to make research and reference sources available to all on and off-campus students twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. Because UMW is institutionally connected to the University of Montana and other public higher education institutions, it shares database usage, as well as inter-library loan, across campuses.

Eligibility Requirement 14: Physical and Technological Infrastructure

The institution provides the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to achieve its mission and core themes.

The University maintains a safe, accessible, and secure physical infrastructure that is conducive to productive learning and working. Maintenance and improvements to physical infrastructure are guided by the [Campus Master Plan](#). UMW's technological infrastructure meets the needs of on and off-campus students, and continuous improvement is guided by the [Campus Technology Plan](#).

Eligibility Requirement 15: Academic Freedom

The institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. Faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general.

Academic freedom for both students and faculty is assured by BOR [Policy 302](#), as well as [UMW Policy 200.4](#).

Eligibility Requirement 16: Admissions

The institution publishes its student admission policy which specifies the characteristics and qualifications appropriate for its programs, and it adheres to that policy in its admissions procedures and practices.

UMW admissions policy is guided by BOR [Policy 301](#) and the policies are communicated in detail to students through the admission section of the [UMW catalog](#) (p. 9).

Eligibility Requirement 17: Public Information

The institution publishes in a catalog and/or on a website current and accurate information regarding: its mission and core themes; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses; names, titles and academic credentials of administrators and faculty; rules and regulations for student conduct ; rights and responsibilities of students; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.

UMW's public information is conveyed through both its website and the [UMW catalog](#). Both are regularly updated as information changes.

Eligibility Requirement 18: Financial Resources

The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and, as appropriate, reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and long-term financial sustainability.

The University is financially stable, with adequate cash flow and reserves, and has operated in the black for nearly two decades, despite reduced state funding. Financial planning is grounded in the realities of the biennial budget and oriented by UMW's Mission and Core Themes.

Eligibility Requirement 19: Financial Accountability

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

UMW undergoes an annual financial audit by the State of Montana Legislative Audit Office. Results and recommendations are considered in a timely manner and improvements implemented prior to the subsequent year's audit. Accountability is assured by BOR [Policies 901.15](#) and [930.1](#), regarding reserve accounts and audit reports.

Eligibility Requirement 20: Disclosure

The institution accurately discloses to the Commission all information the Commission may require to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions.

UMW maintains a policy of transparency and accuracy regarding disclosure of information to the NWCCU.

Eligibility Requirement 21: Relationship with the Accreditation Commission

The institution accepts the standards and related policies of the Commission and agrees to comply with these standards and policies as currently stated or as modified in accordance with Commission policy. Further, the institution agrees that the Commission may, at its discretion, make known the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding the institution's status with the Commission to any agency or members of the public requesting such information.

The University accepts the standards and related policies of the Commission and agrees to comply with these standards and policies.

Standard 2.A: Governance

2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.

Montana Western's governance system is well understood by all its constituencies and participation in decision and recommendation-making is distributed to ensure that the appropriate voices have opportunities to express and have their views considered.

The Montana Board of Regents (BOR) provides system wide policies and procedures for governance and operations ([BOR Policies](#)). The Chancellor leads the institution, with the Provost/Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Vice-Chancellor for Administration, Finance and Student Affairs reporting directly to her. This administrative leadership team meets frequently to coordinate decisions and to share information.

Also reporting to the Chancellor are the Director of University Communications, the Director of Development and Alumni Relations (who is also the Executive Director of the Montana Western Foundation), the Director of Information Technology Services, and the Director of Athletics.

Organizational charts ([Chancellor](#), [Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs](#), and [Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs](#)) outline the reporting structures and positions in Montana Western's core administrative offices. The Chancellor's direct reports plus the Dean of Students make up the Chancellor's Cabinet which meets weekly to discuss a full range of University business.

Additionally, other councils, senates and committees are advisory to the Chancellor in a shared governance structure to both communicate and consider the work of the University.

The University Council is a representative body of community members, University faculty, staff, administration, and students. Community members are appointed by the Chancellor and represent a broad section of community organizations and interests. The purpose of the group is twofold: to serve as ambassadors and advocates in the community, providing two-way communication and spreading the positive story of the University, its students and programs and to provide advice, insight and counsel to assist the University in creating a supportive and enduring connection with the local community, and with influential individuals and organizations at the state and national level. The group meets once each semester. Community members serve staggered three-year terms ([University Council Statement of Purpose](#)).

Faculty leadership is through two distinct bodies determined under the auspices of the [University of Montana Western Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\)](#). The Faculty Association represents the faculty on all matters pertaining to salary, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment. The Faculty Senate was created by the agreement of the campus executive leadership, the Board of Regents, and the Faculty Association. [Faculty Senate's Constitution and Bylaws](#) exist as a vehicle for shared governance. 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. While the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors choose the memberships of many committees, Faculty Senate is responsible for peopling their sub-committees, for example, the Academic Standards and the General Education Committee. Faculty Senate meets once every two weeks. The Chancellor and Provost participate in every second Faculty Senate meeting.

Student representation is through the Associated Students of the University of Montana Western (ASUMW) Student Senate. ASUMW holds an annual election for both the senators and the executive

team of the Senate. Student Senate is governed by their [Constitution](#) and [Bylaws](#), meets weekly, and frequently invites members of the administration and faculty to address specific issues of interest.

Nearly every University governance committee is designed to facilitate appropriate representation of the range of University constituents creating collaborative planning.

2.A.2 In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.

Under the Montana State Constitution, governance and control of the Montana University System (MUS) rest exclusively with the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR). The BOR possesses full authority and responsibility to supervise, coordinate, and manage public higher education. Currently, the MUS is a multi-unit system composed of the University of Montana affiliation and the Montana State University affiliation. Montana Western is in the University of Montana affiliation. Under state constitutional mandate, the BOR appoints a Commissioner of Higher Education as the chief administrative officer of all units of the MUS.

The [BOR Policy and Procedures Manual](#) is a public document governing the MUS and clearly defines authority and responsibility between the system and the institutions. The manual is regularly reviewed and periodically updated.

BOR meetings are normally held six times per year, with advance public notice, on MUS campuses to consider the needs of the MUS. [Meeting notices, agendas, and minutes](#) may be found on the MUS website.

Montana Western's governance practices take into account its collaborative relationship with the BOR, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), and with the other Montana public higher education institutions. While clear, BOR governance policies do not define all aspects of daily practice. In practice, each of Montana Western's upper level administrators works with counterparts at 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, and arrange through OCHE for committees of faculty and administrators from the campuses to participate in implementing the project. It is possible for proposals to be implemented whether they are initiated at the top or the bottom of the state-wide governance chain.

2.A.3 The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.

The Provost serves as the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Compliance with the Commission Standards is monitored through multiple processes on campus including but not limited to: Core Theme alignment with the [Strategic Plan](#); [collective bargaining](#) processes with the faculty; curriculum processes that are monitored through the Provost, Faculty Senate, the Registrar, and the Board of Regents; and reporting processes associated with accreditation standards, eligibility requirements, and policies.

Governing Board

- 2.A.4 The institution has a functioning governing board consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.**

The Montana BOR consists of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Montana State Senate. The Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Commissioner of Higher Education are non-voting, *ex-officio* members of the Board. BOR members, other than the single student member, are appointed to overlapping seven-year terms. When a vacancy occurs, the Governor appoints a replacement to serve out the remainder of the term. The [names, biographical information and terms of the current members](#) are available on the BOR website.

The composition and responsibilities of the BOR and OCHE officers are defined in [Section 200 of the BOR Policy Manual](#) and the [Code of Expectations](#) for the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education does not allow members to have any contractual, employment, or financial interests in the MUS or its institutions.

Members of the campus community are familiar with the role of the Board of Regents as it relates to campus matters. The Board of Regents' website provides relevant information for the campus and the meetings are broadcast live.

- 2.A.5 The board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the board acts on behalf of the board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing board as a whole.**

The BOR operates as a committee of the whole or through formal delegation as outlined through policies and administrative rules and regulations. The operating rules of the BOR are found in its [bylaws](#) and are consistent with the standards of NWCCU.

- 2.A.6 The board establishes, reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.**

The [MUS Strategic Plan](#) approved in July 2006 and updated annually guides the agenda for higher education in Montana. This plan guides the strategic plans and directions of the campuses. BOR policy requires many reviews including of its own organization and operations ([Policy 705.1](#)), campus mission statements ([Policy 219](#)), major academic program changes on campuses, program review cycles, regular review and development of policies ([Policy 103](#)) to name a few examples. The University of Montana Western follows the guidelines set out by the BOR.

- 2.A.7 The board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer board-approved policies related to the operation of the institution.**

The BOR appoints a chief executive officer to lead the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. The current Commissioner is Clayton Christian. The BOR also appoints the presidents of the University of Montana campus and affiliation and the Montana State University campus and affiliation who are accountable to operate the institutions per the duties outlined in [BOR Policy 205.1](#) and who are evaluated annually per the requirements in [BOR Policy 705.2](#). The presidents recommend chancellors to the BOR to lead each affiliated campus and delegate authority and responsibility for the institution to

them. Chancellor Beth Weatherby is the CEO of Montana Western. Since January 2017, during a time of transition, the CEOs of the University of Montana affiliation are reporting to the Commissioner of Higher Education.

2.A.8 The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.

The BOR meets annually with the Commissioner and his staff to review and, when necessary, update duties and responsibilities. The BOR regularly evaluates its operations, policies, and procedures to ensure a strong MUS. Specifically, the BOR policies stated in [section 705.1](#) outline the requirements for performance reviews, self-studies, and external reviews.

Leadership and Management

2.A.9 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

The Chief Executive Officer of Montana Western is the Chancellor. Since the creation of the University of Montana Affiliation, the Chancellor has typically reported to the President of the University of Montana. During this past year's UM presidential transition, however, and pending the outcome of a Board of Regents review of the affiliation structure, Montana Western's Chancellor has reported directly to the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Strategic planning and operational policy development, including program development, staffing, budgets, and enrollment management, are overseen by the Chancellor. The Chancellor solicits input from the Chancellor's Cabinet. The Chancellor's Cabinet includes the Dean of Students and administrators who report directly to the Chancellor. Input is also sought from the Faculty and Student Senates, University Council, Academic and Administrative Council, and various committees.

Montana Western operates with an executive team of a Chancellor, a Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and a Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs. The organization charts demonstrate an appropriate level of qualified directors and deans to provide an effective system of leadership to manage the institution and assess its achievements and effectiveness. These administrators are given appropriate authority, responsibility and accountability to help fulfill the mission of Montana Western. The organization chart will change with the retirement of the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs at the end of June in 2018. At that time, Student Affairs will move to the Provost.

Clearly defined job responsibilities through position announcements and annual goals are in place for administrators. State of Montana and BOR ethical responsibilities are outlined by policy.

Annual evaluations of the Vice Chancellors and other direct reports are conducted by the Chancellor based on goal statements submitted each year. The Vice Chancellors regularly evaluate their direct reports who evaluate their staff.

Cooperation and coordination across administrative units is easily facilitated at Montana Western through Chancellor's Cabinet, University Council, Academic and Administrative Council, Faculty and Student Senates, Faculty Forums, and other University committees. In addition, the Chancellor holds open meetings to facilitate two-way communication with all campus constituencies. Thus, communication between faculty, staff, and administrators is comprehensive and routine. An example is

the work of the Strategic Planning Committee and Assessment Committee in the assessment of institutional effectiveness.

These administrators have a record of innovative and responsible leadership guided by the strategic plan that has clearly advanced Montana Western during the accreditation period.

2.A.10 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board, but may not serve as its chair.

Montana Western's Chief Executive Officer is Dr. Beth Weatherby, D.A., Chancellor since January 2015. She held faculty and leadership positions including Dean of Arts, Letters and Sciences, and Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at Southwest Minnesota State University. The Chancellorship is a full-time position contractually obligated to the University which reports to the President of the University of Montana, although, as explained above, the UMW Chancellor currently reports to the Commissioner of Higher Education. The Chancellor is not a member of the governing board.

2.A.11 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

The efficient administrative structure explained previously is well suited to support the Core Theme objectives and the institutional Mission of Montana Western. Qualified administrators with appropriate education, credentials, and many years of experience with appropriate job responsibilities and authority lead the institution. The vitae of the senior administrators including [Chancellor Beth Weatherby](#), [Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Deborah Hedeon](#), and [Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance and Student Affairs Susan Briggs](#) describe their qualifications, but, more importantly, the success of the institution demonstrates their collaboration and effective leadership.

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 recruit and retain first-rate administrators and staff, many of whom are attracted to Dillon by the innovative possibilities available at a transformed institution.

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 UMW 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. The success of Experience One speaks well of the malleability and collaborative capacities of the University's administrators, as well as its faculty, staff, and students.

Policies and Procedures

Academics

2.A.12 Academic policies—including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation—are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.

[Academic policies and procedures](#) are available in the BOR Policy Manual and the UMW Policy Manual, both online and fully searchable. Specific policies are also communicated through trainings, orientation, and email reminders.

Academic policies related to students are contained in the [catalog](#) and on the [policy manual on the UMW website](#).

Academic policies relating to faculty are contained in the Board of Regents Policy Manual and in the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). Additionally, all academic units have adopted [Unit Standards](#) that detail specific “department-level” requirements for the ways in which teaching, research, and service are to be reported. All of these documents are available online.

2.A.13 Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources—regardless of format, location, and delivery method—are documented, published, and enforced.

Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources—regardless of format, location, and delivery method—are documented, published, and enforced by the Lucy Carson Library. All library material is accessible from any on-campus computer that falls within the campus internet protocol range. Off-campus computers or personal devices that fall outside of the campus IP range can also access all library resources, but an additional authentication step is needed. The method for [accessing library resources from off-campus](#) is described on the library website. The Lucy Carson Library offers ample opportunities to borrow materials from other libraries. The process of [accessing materials from other libraries](#) can be explained in the Library and is also posted to the Library website. The Lucy Carson Library provides scanners and photocopiers with step-by-step written instructions posted at the point-of-need next to the equipment. Signs posted by copiers reference U.S. Code: Title 17, which governs copyright laws. [Borrowing policies](#), including those governing loan periods, fines, University account holds, and confidentiality of library records are posted to the Library website. Campus Library information is also published in the [2017/ 2018 campus catalog](#). Lastly, the Lucy Carson Library website is embedded into each Moodle course, where it can be accessed with one click.

The Lucy Carson Library policies and procedures are reviewed on an as-needed basis and on a regularly-scheduled annual basis by the campus Library Committee. Recommendations to changes in policies or procedures are discussed with the library staff and with the Academic and Administrative Council. The Library Director submits final proposals for changes to the Academic Provost.

Policies and procedures are enforced through a variety of mechanisms including [Alma integrated library](#) system configurations, which are set to control due dates and to automatically send late notices and recall notices through email. E-resources are delivered securely through on-campus computers defined by an IP range and through off-campus devices via a proxy server that requires authentication. The Lucy Carson Library uses a 3M Bibliotheca system to secure physical library items using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags. These tools allow the Lucy Carson Library to enforce published policies, so that the Lucy Carson Library can continue to be a good steward of the collection.

2.A.14 The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.

Transfer-of-credit policies are published in the [online catalog](#) (p. 11). Within the Montana University System, transfer of credits from one institution to another is as simplified as possible through Common Course Numbering (CCN). [CCN policies](#) guarantee “that equivalent courses at different campuses will have the same title, number, and prefix, and that all such equivalent courses will be accepted in transfer as if they had been taken at the receiving campus.”

Montana Western follows the MUS policies related to CCN established in 2006 allowing Montana resident students to transfer seamlessly between any Montana community college, tribal college, or two-year or four-year college or university. The initial project which brought together Montana Legislature, the BOR, and OCHE, as well as with faculty colleagues from across the state, to implement a transferability plan has grown to include common course numbering liaisons for each campus who help maintain each campus’ CCN lists and requests and an online system hosted by OCHE that provides electronic opportunities for new and updated course submissions. Policies related to the Common Course Numbering initiative are found at the MUS website. In addition all approved [CCN matrices and information](#) about the initiative are available through the MUS website.

At Montana Western, transfer credit policy is stated in the catalog. 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.

Students

2.A.15 Policies and procedures regarding students’ rights and responsibilities—including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities—are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.

Policies and procedures regarding students’ rights and responsibilities are readily available in the [University of Montana Western’s catalog](#) (p. 21). Starting in mid-spring 2018 Montana Western will publish its catalog through a web page to both prospective and enrolled students. Prior to that, content was published and distributed through PDF on the website and physical copies. Catalog contents describe the University’s mission, admission requirements and procedures, student rights and responsibilities, academic regulations, student code of conduct, course descriptions, graduation requirements, and tuition and fees. The catalog is currently published on an annual basis.

Policies on students’ rights and responsibilities, including those related to academic honesty and procedural rights, are clearly stated and published on the UMW website.

All student disciplinary actions follow set policies and procedures described on the UMW website. Informal disposition of a case is possible when the facts of the case are not disputed. 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 on the website. The process for appeals, student complaints against faculty or requests for grade changes are also outlined in the catalog and on the website. Grade complaints are reviewed by the Dean of Students for compliance changes.

2.A.16 The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs—including its appeals process and readmission policy—are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.

The Office of Admissions of Montana Western is guided by policy [301](#) and [301.1](#) established by the BOR. The policies are published in the University's annual [course catalog](#) pp. 9-15, office publications, and is navigable from Montana Western's website homepage.

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.

Policies and procedures for placement of students in appropriate courses are based on both the Montana University System's standards and individual standards required by departments at Montana Western. Information about admissions requirements is available on the UMW 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](#) (p. 34).

2.A.17 The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.

The Associated Students of the University of Montana Western (ASUMW) is responsible for student activities and intramurals. ASUMW hires students to organize, inform, and staff all the activities and intramurals. All student clubs have either a faculty or staff advisor. These policies are in the [ASUMW by-laws](#) and the [High-Risk Clubs Forms and Handbook](#). A list of student clubs can be found on Montana Western's website.

Any educational activities, such as sexual assault prevention, suicide prevention, and health promotions are carried out through the Dean of Students, Student Counselor, and/or Wellness Coordinator. Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities sponsored by these offices to meet the needs of the majority of the University's students.

The University owns a student-operated radio station managed through ASUMW and supported by a faculty advisor and an advisory committee. The latter helps ensure the proper use of the radio, as well as compliance with broadcast policies and procedures. The station file resides in the Lucy Carson Library.

The [Student Code of Conduct](#) provides policy and academic integrity expectations for co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution.

Human Resources

2.A.18 The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews them to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.

As part of the Montana University system, Montana Western adheres to several layers of personnel policies. These include the BOR personnel policies, those of The University of Montana Missoula, those specified in the Montana Western Policy Manual, and those operationalized through the Montana University Staff Compensation Plan, and the collective bargaining agreements between the University and its faculty and staff unions. When policy changes or updates are made at any level, they are reviewed for consistency and changes are communicated to the appropriate committees, beginning with Chancellor's Cabinet. These policies are reviewed both on campus and by the Human Resource Directors of the Montana University System who meet together on a regular basis to develop consistent application of MUS policy and procedure and management of the enterprise systems. All policies are available in print as well as online ([Board of Regents Policy Manual](#); Section 700 & 800; [UM-Missoula Policy Manual](#); [UMW Campus Policy Manual](#) Section 700; Exhibit 2.1, [Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2015-2017 MPEA](#) and [Operating Engineer's CBAs](#)).

2.A.19 Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.

All full-time employees (classified, professionals, and faculty) participate in an orientation process with the Payroll and Benefit Supervisor and receive a packet of information and specific policies and disclosures (*On Campus Exhibit: Payroll and Benefits Packet*). Conditions of employment are available in print and online in the human resources sections of the policy manuals referenced in 2.A. 18 and in the [MUS Staff Compensation Plan](#) and Collective Bargaining Agreements ([Faculty](#), [MPEA](#), and [Operating Engineers](#) CBA). Position descriptions and letters of hire outline work expectations. There is an active labor/management committee for faculty and an inactive staff committee operating on campus. There is also campus communication and training on policy and operational changes with annual communication about the evaluation process.

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

Montana Western uses the BANNER HR system operating on the University of Montana campus for tracking and processing personnel records. Security of electronically processed HR records is protected through limited access which is password secured. BANNER security processes and profiles are available at UM and are regularly audited. Paper records are secured in locked fireproof cabinets with limited access stored either in the office complex of the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs or in the office complex of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Archived records are in a locked storage room in the basement of the James Short Building and are managed by the Payroll and Benefits Supervisor. The MUS system-wide directive on [record retention guides](#) these processes.

Institutional Integrity

2.A.21 The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic

programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

Montana Western recognizes and is committed to 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 Academic and Administrative 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.

In compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) requirements for [Consumer Disclosures](#) are made available on the University website. These compliance disclosures are updated and released to students each semester through email and other campus outreaches.

The University's primary policy publications include the [annual catalog](#) and the Montana Western [Campus Policy Manual](#) available on the website.

Preparation and release of the catalog and policy manual is completed under the direction of the two Vice Chancellors with the approval of the Chancellor. 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 University Communications, along with their respective staffs, work collaboratively in order to maintain the accuracy and consistency of University publications. The Director of University Communications carries primary responsibility for University relations 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 University Communications 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, Vice Chancellor, and Chancellor before their release. This position is currently vacant and the Chancellor is assuming review and spokesperson role.

2.A.22 The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.

The applicable ethics code for all campus personnel is the Standard of Conduct for State Employees as administered by the [Department of Administration, State Personnel Division, last revised in March of 2011](#).

Complaints are addressed in a timely manner and grievance procedures are outlined in the BOR and UMW policies. The CBAs also outline procedures to address grievances. The MUS also has a compliance

hotline as an independent avenue for confidential reporting of concerns about nonacademic/non-student conduct, and legal, regulatory or policy violations.

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.

2.A.23 The institution adheres to a clearly defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.

[Board of Regents Policy 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.

This policy complements the Montana state statute pertaining to standards of conduct of public employees ([Section 2-2-101 Montana Code Annotated 2017](#)) and is not intended to contradict or supersede those standards. Also, this policy is not intended to supersede the BOR policy for 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 ([The University of Montana Western Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement](#), 2015-17). In fall 2007, a formal campus policy concerning [Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure](#) was added to the Campus Policy Manual. This policy defines the procedure for reporting possible conflicts of interest involving campus personnel. The annual reports are available in HR.

Board of Regents [Policy 760](#) allows senior level administrative employees (that is, the Chancellor, 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.

2.A.24 The institution maintains clearly defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.

BOR [Policies 401.2, Invention and Patents](#); [401.3, Copyright Policy](#); [406, Ownership of Electronic Course Materials](#); and [407, University System/Employee Joint Benefits](#), regulate outcomes from the creation and production of intellectual property, with the intention of protecting both the institutions which employ research and creative personnel and the personnel themselves.

2.A.25 The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms "Accreditation" and "Candidacy"

(and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The University of Montana Western is diligent and appropriate in its references to its accreditation status. The accreditation status is published as well as specialized accreditations of specific academic programs.

2.A.26 If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services—with clearly defined roles and responsibilities—is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation.

Montana Western complies with BOR, UM, and Montana Western policies regarding contractual agreements for the procurement of goods and services from external entities to uphold state procurement law. Authority is delegated including within the UM Affiliation ([UM Policy Manual](#)). These require fidelity to state and federal law and requirements, designate the Director of Business Services as responsible for major purchases, and delegate smaller purchases to departments. At Montana Western, the Director of Business Services and the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs approve contractual agreements and procurement activities and are responsible for ensuring Montana Western adheres to all state, MUS, [The University of Montana](#), and [Montana Western](#) procurement policies.

Academic Freedom

2.A.27 The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.

Montana Western is committed to academic freedom and adheres to policies protecting it. Academic freedom for faculty is adumbrated in [BOR Policy 302](#). In this policy, the BOR endorses the Association of American University Professors (AAUP) 1940 Statement of Principles on academic freedom, and asserts its commitment not only to the entitlements, but also to the responsibilities declared therein. The statement reads:

- a. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of results, subject to the performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
- b. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.
- c. College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times

be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinion of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

The Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement echoes much of the language of the above statement. The only ethical restriction upon academic freedom prohibits the use of staff time or resources and, therefore, tax dollars, for the purpose of political campaign activity or lobbying. Such activity is permissible, however, on an individual employee's own time, off-campus, and at his or her expense.

Montana Western's campus policies manual contains a strong policy, [Policy 200.4](#), regarding student academic freedom. Its intent is to more clearly inform students of the meaning and implications of academic freedom and to assert that no avenue of resolving intellectual and academic disagreements other than rational discourse is appropriate in an institution of higher learning, thus reinforcing the official statements above.

2.A.28 Within the context of its mission, core themes, and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.

The statements on academic freedom detailed in section 2.A.27 underwrite the concerns addressed in this section. They are reinforced by the broad dissemination of statements regarding student rights, responsibilities, and conduct.

2.A.29 Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such.

The items above are implied and assumed in the statements of academic freedom and responsibility noted in section 2.A. 27 of this report. Also, the items above are explicitly addressed and affirmed in [Policy Number 370 of the University of Montana](#).

Finance

2.A.30 The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.

As a public institution Montana Western has the required policies to provide oversight and management of financial resources. These many policies are found in [BOR policies](#), and in policies delegated by the Board to the campus. In addition, the BOR and each campus are responsible to follow required State of Montana statutes and administrative rulings regarding the oversight of public monies. The Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Higher Education develop and approve appropriations distribution, budgets, tuition and fees, borrowing, capital projects and appropriate policies regarding oversight and management of financial resources which are followed by the campuses.

Montana Western has a long record of excellent audits verifying all required policies regarding budgets, reserves, investment, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds are consistently followed.

Standard 2.B: Human Resources

2.B.1 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.

Montana Western employs qualified staff through required search procedures as outlined by state law and BOR policy. Montana Western remains lean but through planning, management, and flexibility maintains its operations successfully. Per the [MUS System Level Summary and Metrics](#) 85% of current operating expenses (less waivers) go to personnel services. These metrics also show a very consistent amount of staff over the last four years in every employment category. Currently the faculty/student ratio is 17.3 to one. According to the [2016 IPEDS Feedback Report](#), Montana Western remains proportionate to its peers' institutions. The dedicated and flexible faculty and staff make the operations of the University possible. Role descriptions are available for all staff positions, and job announcements reflect the duties, responsibilities and authority of the contract positions.

Montana Western follows prescribed steps in all hiring processes which include publicly stated selection criteria and accurate [job descriptions](#).

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

Montana Western has procedures for annually evaluating administrators and staff according to employment type. The Chancellor is evaluated by the President of the University of Montana. Annual evaluations of senior administrators are conducted by the Chancellor based on goals statements submitted each year. Other administrators are generally evaluated annually, but at least biannually, by the Vice Chancellors who communicate the procedure to be used for their reports. Classified staff are evaluated as outlined in the MUS Staff compensation plan using a [standard evaluation form](#). This form is often also used by the Vice Chancellors for administrator evaluations. Evaluations are on file in the Human Resources office.

2.B.3 The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.

The institution encourages professional development and growth internally through the support of managers and collaboration among divisions. Although direct funding for professional development remains relatively low, the institution continues to make it a priority. Faculty have access to Foundation and University professional development funds to facilitate travel to regional and national conferences. A strategic budget commitment was made to increase institutional professional development funding and Montana Western has a consistent record of increasing the budget each year. Experience One's block schedule gives tenure track faculty a professional development block each semester providing time for professional growth and research. Faculty also organize opportunities in many ways to share research, creative work, and pedagogical ideas. In addition, administrators travel to regional and national conferences addressing issues critical to the University, the Montana University System, and

the nation. The MUS also provides opportunities through regular meetings of directors across the system and pre-meetings at BOR with system colleagues.

Each year funds are transferred to the Staff Professional Development Account to give staff opportunities for professional development and to supplement department budgets used for professional development travel. Funds are used to bring speakers or seminars to campus or to fund travel opportunities at other campuses or Montana cities.

2.B.4 Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs, wherever offered and however delivered.

To fulfill the mission of a sustained culture of experiential learning, it is critical to have sufficient qualified faculty. A core component of Experience One is small class sizes and Montana Western has a goal of 25 or fewer students in every class. In a few cases, to accommodate the needs of students, classes are expanded to 30/32. Montana Western has maintained a faculty/student ratio of around 17:1 to 18:1 for many years.

Table 2.1. IPEDS Faculty to Student Ratio 2011-2017

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Faculty to Student Ratio	18-1	16-1	17-1	16-1	16-1	17-1	19-1

This need is met through a core component of tenure and tenure-track faculty, long-term full-time one-year instructors, and qualified part-time adjuncts.

Faculty are recruited and hired through consistent hiring procedures as approved by the Provost. The needs of departments for faculty are continually monitored by the Provost and requested new lines are brought to the Chancellor and the Budget Committee.

The faculty have substantial authority and responsibility for the institution's educational objectives including curriculum development and delivery of existing academic programs.

These standards are applied to all programs both on and off campus and on line.

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

Faculty responsibilities are found in the CBA, the [department unit standards](#) and in the position descriptions and hire letters. These include teaching, service, publication and research. The normal, expected teaching load of all full-time faculty is 12 credits per semester. 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. Having one block each term to pursue scholarship, research and artistic creation is one form of ongoing institutional support for faculty. 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. Faculty

must report planned activities to the Provost in advance of their development blocks. If faculty are off-campus for their planned activities, they leave contact information with the Provost and also post the information on their office doors.

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. The small class size required for effective experiential learning makes this challenging.

In addition to teaching responsibilities, all full-time, tenured faculty are assigned student advisees. In addition, full-time non-tenure-track instructors are often assigned advisees by their departments. 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.

Regarding service, faculty participation in curriculum development and academic and university governance is demonstrated through the University Committee List which comprises complete lists of [University committees](#) during the 2017-18 academic year.

Regarding scholarship, research, and artistic creation, the CBA contains general parameters, stating that, for example, no faculty member can be promoted to full professor without demonstrating scholarly and/or creative productivity ([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 ([UMW Departmental Unit Standards](#)).

Multiple examples of faculty scholarship, research and creative activity are available. To an increasing extent under block scheduling, faculty include students in their original research. It is now common to have students present their research on campus during culminating course presentations and every April at the student research symposium. A number of students and their faculty have presented papers or posters at regional and national meetings and some have published in peer-reviewed journals.

2.B.6 All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.

Faculty performance is regularly evaluated by the Provost. The [CBA](#) (pp. 15-22) details evaluation processes regarding the quality of faculty teaching and other institutional responsibilities. These processes are consistent with [BOR policy 705.3](#).

Different categories of faculty are evaluated in different, but similar, ways. Tenure-track faculty are evaluated every year. Tenured faculty are evaluated every two years. Evaluation of temporary appointees and adjunct faculty shall be done at the discretion of the Administration in accordance with

applicable unit standards. 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. Faculty portfolios, which include the written responses of the peer evaluator and the numerical 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 may appoint a formative support committee to assist the faculty member in improving his/her professional performance.

Standard 2.C: Education Resources

2.C.1 The institution provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

All programs complete curriculum proposal processes and assessment planning and reports that not only identify content and rigor consistent with the mission, but establish and evaluate student learning outcomes. The assessment process ensures that the degree requirements lead to a collegiate-level degree or certificate in a recognized field of study.

2.C.2 The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.

Montana Western offers certificate, associate and bachelor degrees. Information regarding the course requirements, program and degree learning outcomes are published annually in the catalog. Students are provided access to the catalog through the University of Montana Western website. Students may also access additional supportive information about their chosen program through admission materials and the academic department's pages on the University website.

Course learning outcomes appear on the course syllabus which are distributed at the beginning of each course or made available in Moodle as students log into their courses. While majority of syllabi list course learning outcomes, there are still some that need to be updated. Montana Western anticipates 100% compliance with posting course learning outcomes by the beginning of the fall 2018 semester.

2.C.3 Credit and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.

Course syllabi state the student learning outcomes and assignments upon which students will be evaluated. Faculty usually evaluate student tests, exams, essays, research and creative projects, and,

because block scheduling and experiential learning require regular attendance and active classroom participation, evaluation of these is taken seriously. Because all courses and course changes are evaluated by the proposing department, Academic Chairs, the General Education Committee, Faculty Senate, the Provost, and the Chancellor, the maintenance of academic and institutional standards is quite systematic.

2.C.4 Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.

Montana Western's degree programs are coherently designed to build upon students' skills and knowledge developed through their participation in the General Education Program. Courses are sequenced from the 100 to 400 level and all programs culminate in significant demonstration of student learning, whether through the successful completion of internships, senior research or thesis, or capstone classes. Program expectation and requirements are detailed in the [catalog](#) (pp. 74-158).

2.C.5 Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

Changes to the curriculum are the responsibility of the University of Montana Western faculty. Most changes, including course additions and deletions and changes to course content, are initiated by individual faculty who first seek approval at the department level before proposals go to the Provost, who evaluates them from the perspective of resources. Curriculum proposals are then further evaluated by Academic Chairs, the General Education Committee, and Faculty Senate. At each step the responsible body or person may accept or reject proposals or advise changes to the original proposal.

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

Faculty from the department that is hiring are directly involved in the hiring process of new faculty.

2.C.6 Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.

The Lucy Carson Library staff regards collaboration with faculty as an essential service of the library. The Lucy Carson Library staff strive to work with faculty to integrate library materials into the learning process. Information on [the procedure for requesting research assistance](#) is posted to the library website. The Lucy Carson Library ensures that library and information resources are integrated into the learning process in the following ways:

A Shared Collection Development Model:

Collection development is ultimately the duty of the Library Director, but a model is used that encourages faculty participation in collection development. The underlying philosophy that supports this model is that faculty are more likely to make use of library and information resources if they have significant input into acquisitions. At the beginning of each academic year, faculty are provided with information regarding the amount of funding that can be allotted to developing the collection within their disciplines. A funding formula based on student enrollment in each discipline is used to make sure

that the collection reflects the offered disciplines proportionately. Throughout the year, communications are sent and meetings are held to encourage faculty to help build quality collections in their particular areas and to encourage them to ensure that the library holdings will support their courses. The Library Director accepts all faculty requests for materials via in-person requests, emails, or [the online materials request form](#) available on the library website.

A shared collection development model is the first step in ensuring that faculty have the collection that they need so that they will have the appropriate resources to integrate into the learning process.

The Lucy Carson Library Committee:

Membership on the Library Committee includes representation from administration, faculty, staff, and students. The Library Committee exists to promote library materials and services to patrons on and off-campus. One function of the Committee is to assist library staff in writing, revising and supporting policies and procedures that will ensure that library and information resources will be integrated thoroughly into the learning process. The Committee membership also serves as a vehicle to communicate to faculty all of the ways in which the library can support and partner with them throughout the learning process.

Library Support for Formal Reviews:

Through reviews, the Lucy Carson Library regularly demonstrates that the partnership with faculty is ensuring that library materials are integrated into the learning process. The Library Director provides information for and participates in every academic program review as well as every state and national accreditation review. Most recently, the library has been a part of the following accreditation reviews:

- Business and Technology Department: IACBE Accreditation 1/19/2016
- Education Department: CAPE and Montana Office of Public Instruction Accreditation Evaluation 10/22/2015
- Mathematics Department: Program Review 4/25/2014

For each review, the library creates documentation of library contributions to the learning processes of the students within a department or to the students of the campus as a whole. Data include information requested, such as information literacy efforts, title holdings, circulation statistics, and interlibrary loan statistics.

Resource Sharing:

Resource sharing augments the library collection's depth, breadth and currency. Resource sharing includes making the collection of the Lucy Carson Library available to other libraries and providing the materials from other libraries' holdings accessible to Lucy Carson Library patrons. In 2016, the Lucy Carson Library became a founding member of the [TRAILS organization](#) (Treasure State Academic Information and Library Services). Prior to 2016, the Lucy Carson Library was able to quickly and easily obtain materials from the University of Montana libraries. With the library's added membership of TRAILS, the availability of materials was expanded to holdings from any of the libraries in the Montana University System. This collaborative effort more than doubles the number of materials that the Lucy Carson Library can quickly and easily access for its patrons.

Resource sharing is an important piece in partnering with faculty to ensure that the use of library resources is integrated into the learning process, as well as vastly increasing the number of items that

the library can access. In a number of courses, students are required to make use of resource sharing so that they will learn about the many options available to them throughout their academic careers. Also, many faculty utilize resource sharing to integrate new materials into their courses and to preview the materials for consideration for purchase by the Lucy Carson Library.

2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.

Credit for prior experiential learning is guided and implemented by the [BOR Policy 301.19](#). Montana Western is currently using this policy to further develop a campus policy to determine credit for prior experiential learning, however the guidelines of the campus policy will align with the BOR policy.

2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.

As described in 2.A.14, by the inclusion of its faculty in statewide transferability councils in the MUS system, Montana Western has exercised its judgement in accepting automatic transfer credits from students transferring among Montana institutions. The University continues to exercise final judgement regarding the acceptance of transfer credit from elsewhere.

Undergraduate Programs

2.C.9 The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.

The General Education Program at Montana Western requires 32 credits of all students (except those in AAS degree programs). The program requires credits from each of the following categories: written and oral communication, mathematics, behavior and social science, history, expressive arts, literary and

artistic studies, and natural sciences. Four credits of each category are required except natural science, which requires eight ([UMW Catalog](#) p. 75).

The program is designed to meet or exceed the nationally recognized Essential Learning Outcomes of the Liberal Education for America's Promise (LEAP) program created by the Association of American College and Universities (AAC&U). These program outcomes unite our general education courses by focusing on skills and values that will be important for the rest of their undergraduate education as well as "work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment" ([UMW Catalog](#) p. 75).

Courses are designated for inclusion in the general education program by going through our Curriculum Proposal Process, which includes input from the faculty of that category, the General Education Committee, the Faculty Senate, the Provost and the Chancellor. The basis for judgment regarding inclusion is how well courses meet the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes.

The AAS degree programs require an abbreviated set of general education requirements that fulfill a subset of the LEAP learning outcomes that support that particular degree.

2.C.10 The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.

It is recognized that the skills developed by fulfilling the LEAP learning outcomes are common to all of the University's degree programs and the Mission Statement of the University.

The LEAP learning outcomes are assessed every year through an evolving assessment process that uses data from course assignments and culminates in a meeting for each category that includes the instructors who taught classes in that category. Data are discussed and recommendations for improvement are made that are collected into a formal report ([2014-15](#), [2015-16](#), and [2016-17](#) General Education Assessment Reports).

2.C.11 The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas.

All AAS degrees have learning outcomes as described in the [UMW Catalog](#) (pp. 79-85). The BAS degree does not have fixed program outcomes, but the student works with a faculty member and the Provost to design a rigorous program of study. Learning outcomes for certificate programs are aligned with the bachelor program they support.

Graduate Programs

The University of Montana Western does not offer graduate programs. Standards 2.C.12 through 2.C.15 do not apply.

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

2.C.16 Credit and non-credit continuing education programs and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals.

In accordance with [UMW Policy 201.1](#), the School of Outreach oversees and facilitates all off-campus, continuing education and special learning programs. The School of Outreach's mission is to provide high quality learning opportunities to citizens of all ages, support the University of Montana Western's unique experiential mission, and implement the Montana University System's Comprehensive Community College Mission/Vision ([School of Outreach Strategic Plan, FY2018-23](#)). [Schedules](#) of offerings are printed in a variety of publications each semester (e.g., the Professional Development and Personal Enrichment Schedule and the Distance, Online, Weekend and Night Courses schedule). Outreach programs are designed to enhance Montana Western's Mission and Core Themes. The unit is focused on expanding experiential learning opportunities, supporting student success initiatives, and making efficient use of resources.

2.C.17 The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses. Continuing education and/or special learning activities, programs, or courses offered for academic credit are approved by the appropriate institutional body, monitored through established procedures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and assessed with regard to student achievement. Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution's continuing education and special learning activities.

In accordance with [Montana Western Policy 201.1](#), the School of Outreach oversees all continuing education and special learning activities. The School of Outreach resides within Academic Affairs and the Dean of the School of Outreach reports to the Provost. Outreach offerings, wherever offered and however delivered, are approved, administered and evaluated under established institutional procedures for academic programming.

The School of Outreach provides administrative support for Montana Western's electronically mediated and distance delivery courses. Electronically mediated and distance delivery courses are scheduled as semester-long stringers to meet the needs of off-campus students; however, they are designed to achieve the same learning outcomes as on-campus sections. Stringers are typically a half semester or full semester course (i.e., they "string" over more than one block), allowing off-campus students sufficient time to interact with faculty, meet other challenges (e.g., work, family, health, etc.), and achieve the intended learning outcomes. Students in electronically mediated and distance delivery courses have access to Montana Western's library and student support services.

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. The common course proposal form for credit-bearing courses 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, approved, and assigned a course number and routed for academic approval ([School of Outreach Credit Bearing Course Proposal](#); [Non-Credit Bearing Course Proposal](#)).

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. The Dean is responsible for evaluating and approving course offerings. In addition to working with faculty to ensure quality programming, the Dean tracks enrollment and financial metrics. Five-year enrollments and annualized full-time equivalents for state-supported and self-supporting, credit-bearing programs are summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. State and Self-Supported Credits by Enrollments and Annualized FTE, 2012-16

Academic Year	State-Supported Credit		Self-Supporting Credit	
	Enrollments	Annualized FTE	Enrollments	Annualized FTE
2016-17	2150	252.5	537	30.9
2015-16	2427	260.8	720	47.1
2014-15	1976	246.5	922	60.7
2013-14	2422	240.5	735	47.2
2012-13	2702	267.1	479	42.4
5-Year Average	2335.4	253.5	678.6	45.7

Information on all programs administered by the School of Outreach is available in the School of Outreach Strategic Plan. [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.

Online 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 resides 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.

Montana Western utilizes Moodle as its learning management system. In 2011, all affiliate campuses of the University of Montana contracted with MoodleRooms to host Moodle. MoodleRooms supports the system and software requirements for hosting Moodle. Montana Western manages the system elements, course shells, content, and backup files for all courses on and off-campus.

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.

Students access Moodle via the campus website or [DAWGS](#). DAWGS is the student registration and information website. Once signed into Moodle, students have access to information about their classes, campus schedule, library resources and links for technical support.

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 School of Outreach provides additional support for off-campus students by helping them to navigate and understand campus procedures.

Because most School of Outreach contracts with faculty represent additional teaching load, the School of Outreach evaluates all online and off-campus courses. Course evaluation forms are posted to students on Moodle. 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.

2.C.18 The granting of credit or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for continuing education courses and special learning activities is: a) guided by generally accepted norms; b) based on institutional mission and policy; c) consistent across the institution, wherever offered and however delivered; d) appropriate to the objectives of the course; and e) determined by student achievement of identified learning outcomes.

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.

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

The School of Outreach administers non-credit programs and courses in accordance with [BOR Policy 304.2](#). Table 2.3 shows the extent of use of, and revenues derived from the two primary Outreach self-supporting, non-credit programs—Community Outreach and Road Scholar.

Table 2.3. Self-Supporting, Non-Credit-Bearing Programs Enrollments and Revenues, AY 2012-16

Year	Community Outreach		Road Scholar	
	Enrollment	Revenue	Enrollment	Revenue
2016-17	104	\$11,733	1199	\$1,967,944
2015-16	144	\$9,318	1028	\$1,629,861
2014-15	74	\$4,538	1229	\$1,461,581
2013-14	59	\$3,973	1142	\$1,155,063*
2012-13	152	\$4,965	NA	\$1,046,773*
5-Yr Ave.	107	\$6,905		\$1,452,236
*Includes Targhee Institute. Targhee Institute was discontinued during AY 2014.				

Montana Western's non-credit programs are:

a) Community Outreach: Montana Western operates a small non-credit community outreach program. A wide range of topics are offered including dancing, art techniques, soft skills and medical terminology to provide a few examples. Since 2012, between 59 and 152 community members enrolled in the offerings each year. Community Outreach Programs annually generate between \$3,973 and \$11,733.

b) Road Scholar/Elderhostel: Montana Western has been an Elderhostel program sponsor since 1978. Elderhostel, Inc. changed its program name to [Road Scholar](#) in 2010. Montana Western is the seventh largest provider of Road Scholar programs in the United States. Most Montana Western programs feature the history, geology and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. From 2009 to 2014, Montana Western offered a small number of programs in Wyoming and Idaho under the name Targhee Institute. Montana Western currently offers between 25 and 35 unique Road Scholar programs with over 80 start dates each year. The programs annually attract over 1,000 participants and generate between one and two million dollars in revenue.

Standard 2.D: Student Support Resources

2.D.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.

The physical learning environments are regularly assessed by the Executive Team and the Campus Development Team. With the advent of Experience One, teaching spaces are a high priority in allocation of resources.

Student services comprise academic and non-academic dimensions, all of which are described in Montana Western's catalog and can be accessed from the University of Montana Western website, including the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Student Life services that support student learning needs include: dining services, residence halls, safety and security; student wellness, mental health counseling and disability services; student activities, including student governance (Associated Students of the University of Montana Western, or ASUMW) and student clubs; intramural and club sports; the Birch Creek Education Center; and conferences and events. All of these services report through the Dean of Students to the Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs.

Academic Student Success Services reports through the Director of Student Success to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The Office of Student Success encompasses Academic Advising, TRiO Student Support Services, the Learning Center, Career Services, the Veteran and Military Exchange Center, the Native American Scholar Initiative and the Multicultural Center.

The fall 2016 orientation launched a pilot program for all new students titled Paw Prints for Success. This program was designed to support student engagement through positive reinforcement. Students were encouraged to utilize campus resources and engage in campus activities and receive incentive points (Paw Prints) for participation. At the end of each semester, students are given the opportunity to attend an auction to bid on prizes with their Paw Prints. Both events were very successful with a 72% participation rate. The intention of this program is to increase student engagement which will improve retention and persistence. In fall 2017, this program was expanded to include the entire student body.

2.D.2 The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.

The [UMW Campus Policy Manual](#) contains policies relevant to student safety, especially policies 100.1 Tobacco Free Campus, 100.5 Campus Alcohol, 100.6 Drug-Free Campus, 101 Student Rights & Responsibilities, 101.1 Student Conduct Code, 101.2 Timely Warning/Crime Alert, 101.3 Student Right to Know/Release of Confidential Information, 101.4 Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Stalking and Retaliation, 200.4 Student Academic Freedom, 500.1 Acceptable Use, 500.6 Wireless Network, 601.6 Keys, 700.5 Property/Equipment Use, 701.1 Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity, 703.2 Employee Assistance, 705.3 Drug-Free Workplace, 705.4 Drug & Alcohol Testing, 705.12 Child Labor, 705.13 Emergency Closures, and 705.14 Sexual Harassment. The Policy Manual along with the [Facility Safety Guide](#), guides the safety and security of the campus. These are the responsibility of the Dean of Students and the Director of Facilities.

The Campus Safety and Security Committee serves the campus community by informing the campus of health issues, safety procedures, drills, and any crises that may occur. An emergency messaging system which communicates through emails, texts, and phone messages is used for these alerts. The Dean of Students chairs the Committee, arranges for the training of the campus Emergency Operations Plan, and manages regular fire alarm drills. In addition, the Dean maintains close relationships with the local police, fire and ambulance services.

The federal Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act, also known as the Clery Act, applies to all universities offering federal financial aid to their students. The [report](#) is currently distributed online. Other information on safety and security is contained in the catalog, and online through the [Code of Conduct](#) and other documents distributed to students. These documents are also provided during informational sessions at new student orientation each semester.

Securitas, the University's night watch, completes safety and security rounds for the University between 10:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. 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, the Dean of Students, and/or Residence Life when there are situations that warrant attention beyond its scope. Emergencies or situations involving students are reported to Residence Life through the after-hours emergency line, while situations involving facilities are reported to Facilities Services after-hours emergency line. Securitas is not an armed response service and thus, the Dillon Police Department serves as the on-call emergency back-up.

2.D.3 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

The Office of Admissions of Montana Western is guided by [Policy 301](#) and [Policy 301.1](#), established by the BOR. The policy is published in the [University's annual course catalog](#) (p. 9), office publications, and is navigable from Montana Western's home web page.

All admissions decisions are made based on potential for success without regard to ethnicity, socioeconomic status or religion. Because of its two-year mission, UMW admits resident students on a "right to try" policy.

The Director of Admissions has developed a [Recruitment Plan](#) using recruitment and enrollment data starting in 2005 for targeting students and determining recruitment travel locations. The Recruitment Plan is used to better match students to the University and to better serve the state and the region. Each year, the Director of Admissions updates the Recruitment Plan based on enrollment data.

The offices of Residence Life, Student Success, and Admissions collaborate in organizing student orientation programs that include Bulldog Bound Days and a four day on-campus orientation prior to the start of classes. The purpose of Bulldog Bound events is for new students to learn about campus policies, procedures and services.

Natural Horsemanship is Montana Western's only selective major which requires a separate admissions process. In the fall of 2015 the Admissions Office assumed responsibility for collecting the Natural Horsemanship applications and then distributing them to the Equine Studies Department. The Admissions Office is also responsible for the communication plan with students once they declare Natural Horsemanship as their major.

2.D.4 In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.

Montana Western follows [Board of Regents Policy 303.4](#) and procedures when it is placing programs on moratorium, eliminating programs, or conducting significant alterations to programs. The BOR requires a [Program Termination Form](#) showing how current students will be accommodated. Opportunities are consistently afforded students to complete their programs in a timely manner.

2.D.5 The institution publishes in a [catalog](#), or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes:

- a) **Institutional Mission and Core Themes:** Page 1 of the catalog
- b) **Entrance requirements and procedures:** Pages 9-15 of catalog
- c) **Grading policy:** Pages 57-59 of the catalog
- d) **Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings:** Pages 73-217 of the catalog
- e) **Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty:** Pages 219-224 of the catalog
- f) **Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities:** Pages 21-40 of the catalog
- g) **Tuition, fees, and other program costs:** Pages 66-71 of the catalog
- h) **Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment:** Pages 71-72 of the catalog
- i) **Opportunities and requirements for financial aid:** Pages 48-52 of the catalog
- j) **Academic calendar:** Pages 6-8 of the catalog

2.D.6 [Publications](#) describing educational programs include accurate information on:

- a) **National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered.** Pages 73-217 of the catalog describe the academic programs including introductory information regarding any national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or

profession. The main program on campus with professional licensure opportunities is the Teacher Education Program. This program has established gateways and policies that assist students in preparing for licensure and the gateways and policies are available in the catalog as well as through materials in the Education department.

b) Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession. Job or employment opportunity information is available through the academic departments and the expertise of faculty advisors.

2.D.7 The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.

Montana Western must follow both FERPA and state law to protect a [students' right of privacy](#). 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 each night and stored in a fireproof safe. Older transcripts are secured in fireproof files and stored in the basement of the James Short Administration Building. Student identifiable records are shredded when the office files are purged. Transcripts are stored on a CD-ROM. The [Record Retention Policy](#) as established by the Montana University System is posted outside of the vaults and is available on the registrar's website.

2.D.8 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

In concert with Core Theme Three- Stewardship, the Financial Aid Office awards federal Title IV, state, institutional waivers and private scholarships to students who might not otherwise be able to have access to higher education due to limited resources. These services are critical in meeting recruitment, retention, and graduation goals. 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 by making satisfactory 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 its students receiving Pell Grants.

Available aid is outlined in the [catalog](#) and [financial aid website](#). The student's award letter also explains the details of their financial aid. In addition, the University of Montana Western Foundation annually publishes a list of the scholarships it manages and makes the list available to students through the Financial Aid Office.

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 available 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 Services, 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 in which we participate, as well as 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 DAWGS website and the UMW website.

2.D.9 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution's loan default rate.

Montana Western students are informed of repayment obligations through award letters, entrance counseling, exit counseling and meetings with the Financial Aid Office.

The University of Montana Western manages its Federal Direct Loan Programs in accordance with Federal Title IV Regulations by performing monthly reconciliation, adequate separation of duties, daily cash monitoring, and timely originations, returns and disbursements. Default prevention and monitoring of loan portfolios are currently being handled on campus as we are developing a contract with a third-party default service. Our current default rate information is monitored regularly ([2004-2014 Cohort Default Rates](#)). Default and Delinquent Borrower Reports are monitored monthly for Perkins, FFELP, and Federal Direct Loans.

The University of Montana Western also employs a dynamic student-centered default prevention program inclusive of the following:

- Required online entrance counseling for all borrowers through [studentloans.gov](#).
- Required live exit counseling for all student loan borrowers.
- Personal debt and repayment counseling offered on-campus bi-weekly by appointment.
- Financial literacy workshops offered periodically throughout the semester.

2.D.10 The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.

UMW's program on academic advising is managed under the Provost and is conducted through the faculty and the Office of Academic Advising. Student Success programs were enhanced and consolidated to support Experience One beginning in 2005. The Director of Student Success now oversees Academic Advising along with the Learning Center, Career Services, TRiO Student Support Services, the Veteran Military Exchange, and the Montana American Indian Scholar Program, all of which support the development and success of students.

Academic Advising is staffed by two advising experts, and provides general advising for all new students, as well as transcript evaluations, information and assistance related to Prior Learning Assessments, and a centralized place for students to gain information and assistance in navigating the university system. Multiple resources are used to support student advising including an advising manual the students are provided during Bulldog Bound to track their progress towards their degrees during their time at Montana Western ([Advising Manual](#)). In fall 2015, the Advising Office in collaboration with the

Registrar's Office, implemented the [Curriculum, Advising, and Program Planning](#) (CAPP) degree evaluation system, a tool that is used by students and advisors to track course requirements needed for graduation from a specific degree. It is available for students who began in the 2015-16 academic year catalog. Students pursuing a bachelor's degree are assigned a faculty advisor in their first year.

The increased completion and graduation rates of recent years is an indicator of success generated with the supports recognized as necessary to meet the needs of Experience One as illustrated by Figures 2.1 and 2.2. The overall graduation rate has increased by 17% over a 10-year period and the bachelor's rate has increased by 29% in that same time frame. The awarding of degrees has increased by 108% in ten years as well. This increase can be connected to UMW initiatives including actively encouraging two-year degree completion.

Figure 2.1. Completions by Annual Year

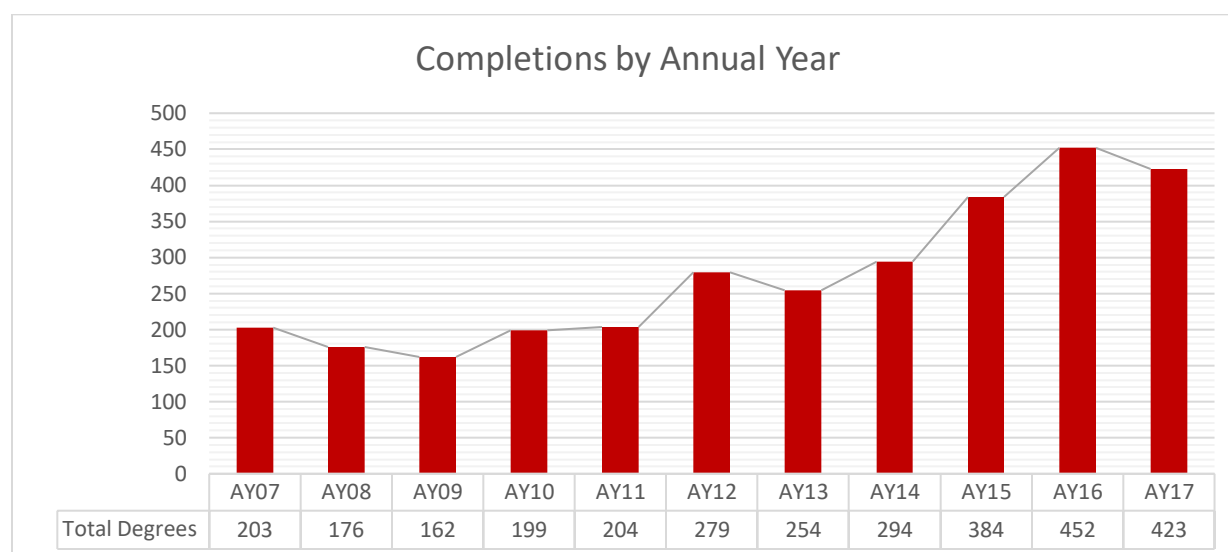
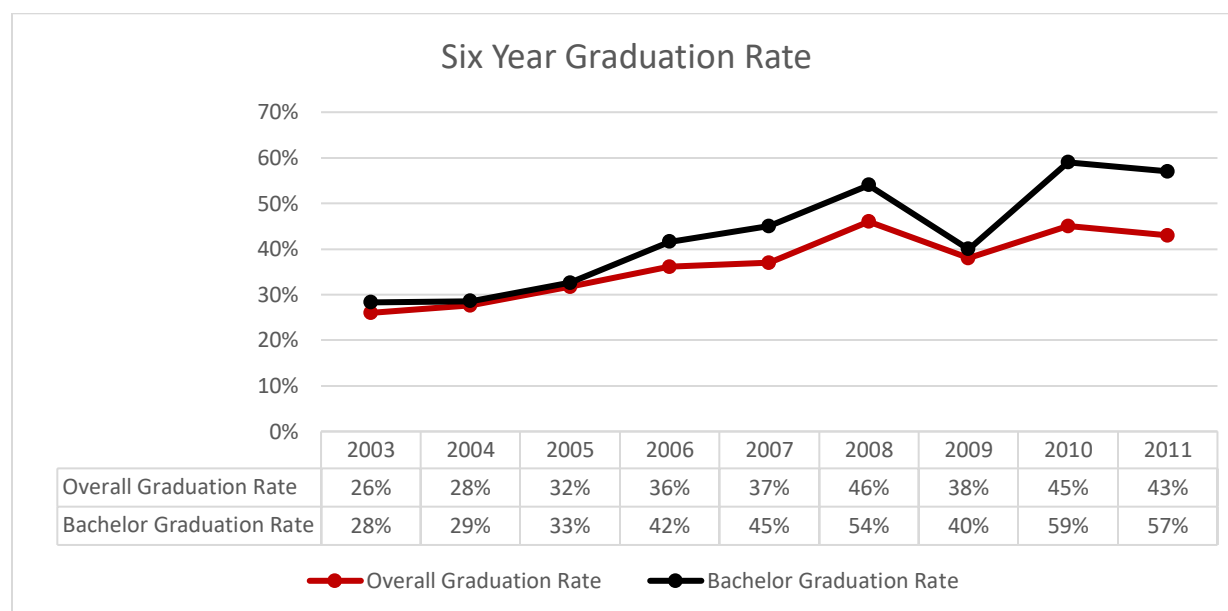


Figure 2.2. Six Year Graduation Rate



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

The Associated Students of the University of Montana Western (ASUMW) maintains student governance through Student Senate. ASUMW works to supplement and complement formal education at the University of Montana Western by representing student interests, needs, and welfare within the University community. ASUMW oversees all student clubs, student activities, and intramural athletics. In return for funding (sourced by Student Senate), each student club and intramurals/activities program is required to provide frequent campus events and activities for all UMW students. A list of [student clubs](#) can be found at on the ASUMW web site.

Health education activities, such as sexual assault prevention, suicide prevention, and health promotions are implemented by the Dean of Students, Director of Student Counseling, and Wellness Director, usually in collaboration with interested student leaders. Required by Title IX directives from the federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the University continues to significantly enhance its educational and training activities regarding sexual harassment and gender inequity.

All of these activities underscore the Mission and Core Themes, especially Core Theme Two.

2.D.12 If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution's mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.

Montana Western has a full complement of self-supporting auxiliary services to enhance the campus and learning environment and support, especially in regard to Core Themes Two and Three. These include Residence Life, Dining Services, the Bookstore, Bulldog Athletic and Recreational Complex, Student Union, Student Health, Student Wellness, traffic and parking, the [Birch Creek Education Center](#), rental properties, and the Auxiliary Administration Account which includes the management of long term leases with the Montana Youth Challenge Academy, PIMA Veterinary Technician program, the Montana Center for Horsemanship, and Conference and Event services.

The Auxiliary Fund is self-supporting and does not require transfers from other Montana Western funds to meet operating expenses. It enhances the student environment through both programming and planned renovations through the Auxiliary Capital Plan.

Annual student surveys and various committees, including Campus Development and Campus Budget are informed and inform the management of the auxiliaries. Several key campus administrators manage these operations with overall strategic and fiscal oversight managed through the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs.

Auxiliaries adhere to all policies of the MUS and UMW. Each operation serves Montana Western students and enhances the Montana Western experience.

2.D.13 Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution's mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.

The Mission of Montana Western Intercollegiate Athletics is closely aligned to the Mission and Strategic Plan of the University and the Montana University System. Reporting to the Chancellor, the Director of Athletics manages the BARC athletic complex as well as Vigilante Stadium; directs intercollegiate athletics (9 varsity teams), and ensures that department goals and objectives are developed and assessed consistent with the University's goals and objectives. The Director regularly communicates with the athletics trainers, athletic staff, and head coaches of the intercollegiate sports teams and, through them, to the assistant coaches, to ensure that all [policies and procedures](#) are followed. The department and all its personnel are accountable for following all UMW policies and procedures and for supporting the Mission and Core Themes for the advancement of UMW student-athletes.

The Admissions Office handles admission procedures for student-athletes who 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 aid are reviewed by a Financial Aid Officer and appropriate amounts are entered in the database and award notices are provided 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. The Registrar's Office verifies initial and continuing eligibility for all student-athletes consistent with UMW academic policies and the NAIA and CNFR rules.

The Athletic Director prepares an annual budget using historical information. All funding sources, including State appropriations, ticket sales, Booster Club sponsorships, 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 of Administration and Finance, and Student Affairs.

The budget is submitted during the regular budget process. Like all campus fiscal transactions, Athletic Department expenditures are processed through the UM and 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. An annual [MUS Athletics Report](#) is prepared and presented to the BOR.

Funds deposited with the University of Montana Western Foundation for support of the Athletic Program are accounted for under the generally accepted practices followed by that separate entity. Scholarships and gifts are transferred to the university to be disbursed and recorded through the BANNER accounting system. The financial activities of the Foundation are subject to annual independent audit which is sent to the BOR.

2.D.14 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

As for all students, unique usernames and passwords serve as the primary measure of identity verification in all Montana Western's enterprise and learning management systems. User names and initial passwords are assigned by the institution in the student records enterprise system, Banner. This information is relayed to DAWGS, the online student information and registration system. Students are required to change their password upon initial login to DAWGS; however, prior to changing the

password in DAWGS, students are required to set security questions to verify their identity. Login to Moodle, the learning management system, requires knowledge of the unique username assigned in Banner and user password established in DAWGS. Additional identity verification is possible via strong course design. Wherever offered and however delivered, Montana Western promotes small classes and experiential learning activities which engage students in class projects. This approach promotes relationship building and allows instructors to know the strengths and qualities of individual students. It is worth noting Montana Western's distance programs all include face-to-face components such as coaching, mentoring, and site-based instruction. These elements further result in relationship building and instructor knowledge of unique student characteristics. All of this creates an effective identity verification for distant students.

Standard 2.E: Library and Information Resources

2.E.1 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The Lucy Carson Library relies on the Core Themes of the University for guidance in providing access to appropriate resources that support the needs of the institution, using a variety of delivery systems.

Continuously improve undergraduate education and experiential learning:

With the advent of the Block System, the library faced an unexpected change regarding collection development. Rather than developing a cohesive collection that broadly represents all fields of study, the library was asked to support a wide assortment of courses that focused on currency and depth of information, but that lacked the breadth of information typically found in an academic library. Many of these classes were only offered once or twice, and then the library continued to house niche titles that wouldn't be found in a typical academic library.

A two-fold solution was developed in order to maintain the currency, depth, and breadth of the collection and to avoid the path to an eclectic collection. The Library Director has been able to sensitize the faculty to the concern both in one-on-one conversations and through the many committees on which the Library Director serves. The faculty are regularly sensitized to the need for breadth in the collection as well as currency and depth in order to support undergraduate education. The other half of the solution is that the library staff have become accepting of the fact that the Lucy Carson Library collection will not mirror other library collections. The block system often necessitates greater currency and depth than traditional systems require.

In order to assess the adequacy of the library collection, normally a library would identify similarly-sized libraries that support similar curricula, and compare collections using data points such as collection age and the number of holdings in each classification area. The Lucy Carson Library followed that traditional model until it became clear that there were not any peer libraries to use as a reliable comparison. The block system and the focus on experiential learning have transformed this library collection into something entirely unique.

Because of the unique qualities of the collection, the Lucy Carson Library now relies on alternative forms of assessment while retaining two important check-and-balance elements to ensure that the library collection supports the needs of the institution. The Library Director relies on faculty and student input for assessment. If either does not have a library item that is necessary for their coursework, the library

orders the needed item. In addition, the Library Director explains the uniqueness of this collection to each new faculty member, encouraging the faculty members to examine the collection and to order materials they need for their courses as well as what would generally support a quality undergraduate education. The check and balance elements are both budgetary. Regardless of the needs for specific courses, the budget allotment formula stays in place to be certain that each department receives a fair share of the materials budget. The Library Director recognizes that the block system lends itself to developing a collection that is current and has significant depth and uses the general funds in the book budget to supplement the collection with materials that provide the breadth that is also needed to support an academic institution. These novel approaches to collection development and assessment have resulted in the Lucy Carson Library developing an admittedly unique collection that maintains appropriate levels of currency, depth, and breadth to support our one-of-a-kind University.

Maximize campus-wide support for student success and completion:

The block scheduling system and Experience One require the Lucy Carson Library to utilize a more flexible workflow than a library that supports a traditional system. Because classes begin ten times during an academic year, materials are ordered on an on-going basis rather than on a scheduled basis. The library also eliminated schedules for processing acquisitions, placing items on reserve, and processing resource sharing. The Lucy Carson Library performs each one of these tasks on most days in order to meet the needs of the campus. Regular reminders are sent out to faculty to submit book orders in time for delivery for the next block. Because more courses are offered each year than would be offered at a traditional university, a higher percentage of the library budget is allotted to physical materials as opposed to e-resources. In order to best support student success, the Lucy Carson Library operates with an alternative workflow to ensure that the collection items are available when needed within the structure of the unique institutional timeframe.

Foster responsible campus efficiency and stewardship of resources:

In 2016, the Lucy Carson Library became a founding member of the [Treasure State Academic Information and Library Services Consortium \(TRAILS\)](#). Along with the TRAILS consortium, the Carson Library adopted two [Ex Libris library management technologies](#), ALMA and PRIMO, which together comprise a new Library Management System. Prior to this university system consortium, the libraries in Montana were not using the same Library Management Systems, making resource-sharing more difficult and expensive. Sharing the cost of one system allows for less expensive exchanges of items and allows increased flexibility in creating smaller consortia within the larger consortium. For example, any libraries in this consortium are now able to negotiate cost-shared subscriptions to online databases and e-book packages. Prior to this consortium, the Lucy Carson Library was limited to negotiating with only a few universities for shared electronic resource subscriptions.

The opportunities for the acquisition of multitudinous and diverse resources allow UMW to provide a library collection with a level of currency, breadth, and depth that goes beyond the needs of the current program offerings.

2.E.2 Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate faculty, staff, and administrators.

The Library Director reports to the Academic Provost and is a member of the Academic and Administrative Council and the Provost's Management Team. In addition, the Library Director serves on the Strategic Planning Committee, co-chairs the E-Learning Committee, participates in the Budget Committee, and sits on the Technology Steering Committee as well as the Rape Prevention Education Task Force. Lastly, the Library Director acts as the chair of the Library Committee. As a member of all of

the aforementioned groups, the Library Director is actively involved in University academic planning and policy discussions. The feedback from all of these groups informs the Library Committee in planning for library services and resources.

Membership on the Library Committee includes representation from administration, faculty, staff, and students. All members of the Library Committee provide regular feedback regarding planning for library and information resources. One function of the Committee is to assist library staff in writing, revising and supporting policies and procedures that pertain to planning for library and information resources. The committee membership also serves as a vehicle to communicate current library plans to the campus.

There are several other sources of concrete data that the Library uses to guide planning for future services and resources:

- The Library compiles information for every state review (Montana Office of Public Instruction), every national accreditation review (Business and Technology IACBE Accreditation, Education CAPE/MT OPI Accreditation, NWCCU Accreditation), and every review of individual departments. The accreditors and reviewers examine the library and information resources that are available, and offer feedback to the Library. The feedback is used to guide planning for future library and information resources.
- The Lucy Carson Library has an operating practice of adding any material to the collection once it has been requested three times through resource sharing.
- The library section of the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey is examined, and any area of low satisfaction guides planning for future library information and resources.
- The Student Senate provides regular feedback to the Library. Notably, the Student Senate voted to enact a student fee that provides funding for a three-quarter-time classified staff position to provide night and weekend library support. That position has been hired, and reports to the Library Director.
- The Library keeps statistics of numbers using the Library each hour, and the system provides data on use of the library resources.

2.E.3 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The Library Director structures library instruction for all patrons according to the University's core themes. There are instructional opportunities, for all users of the library, to ensure that patrons know what resources and services are available and how to effectively use these resources and services in print and electronic formats.

Students researching from home or via distance learning have training and support materials available to them, both on the [library website](#) and through a free introductory mini-course delivered through Moodle. New faculty are provided with collection development information and technology literacy instruction at the beginning of each academic year.

The Library Director offers reference assistance in-person, through email, or through the use of the [Ask-A-librarian feature](#) on the library website. Reference assistance, one-on-one instruction, and small-group instruction is usually conducted in the library. Large-group and class instruction is conducted in a computer lab to ensure hands-on experience with information resources. The Library Director also creates a [LibGuide](#) upon request that is tailored to the assignment at hand, and that includes instruction on using the library catalog, databases, and selected Internet sites. Citation of resources and website evaluation is also emphasized. The Lucy Carson Library also provides instruction on using [EasyBib](#), a citation tool to which the Lucy Carson Library subscribes.

Table 2.4 provides a total by year (2010-2017) of the formal information literacy instruction sessions provided by the library. The numbers do not reflect one-on-one instruction provided.

Table 2.4. Library Instruction Classes by Academic Year

Academic Year	Library Instruction Classes
2016-17	25 Classes
2015-16	39 Classes
2014-15	35 Classes
2013-14	22 Classes
2012-13	48 Classes
2010-2012	59 Classes

The library offers additional instructional opportunities and services, provided either one-on-one or in a class setting:

- Resource sharing instruction which focuses on borrowing materials from other libraries, either from within or from outside of the Montana University System.
- Copyright and Fair-Use instruction, either for a group in need of general information or for individuals with specific questions.
- Library displays focusing on special events such as: new additions to the collection, faculty publications, Banned Books Week, study skills, and job hunting skills.
- Instruction regarding the use of primary sources.
- Instruction on using the Lucy Carson Library physical archive which includes campus newspapers and yearbooks.
- Instruction on using the [Montana Memory Project](#), to which the Lucy Carson Library has uploaded a large digital archive, which includes most items in the physical archive and includes over 100 years of Dillon and Beaverhead County newspapers.

2.E.4 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.

The Library staff constantly evaluates the quality, effectiveness, and security of its resources and services as well as evaluating the effectiveness of meeting patrons' information needs. This evaluation

creates a steady stream of acquisitions and results in on-going weeding of the collection so that the library is able to maintain a timely collection supporting the current curriculum.

Evaluation mechanisms include:

- Formal surveys including the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey.
- Informal measures such as listening sessions for faculty, staff, and students to share their library opinions individually and collectively through such groups as the Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and Staff Association.
- Analysis of library and material usage statistics including a count of the number of people physically using the facility each hour, the number of times individual titles circulate, the age of items in the collection, resource sharing statistics, and the hours maintained by other Montana academic libraries, etc.
- Participating with the [TRAILS consortium](#) (Treasure State Academic Information and Library Services) to address system-wide collection needs and other consortium business.
- An annual physical inventory of the collection, which includes identifying and finding or replacing lost items.

Based on evaluations of quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, three recent notable changes have been enacted:

- In 2016 the Lucy Carson Library replaced an obsolete security system with a new Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system that includes RFID reader tags on every item, specialized software, and security gates that sound when items pass through without being processed through the proper checkout protocol.
- In September 2017 administration of the proxy server, which provides off-campus database access, was reassigned to the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at the University of Montana due to increases in database security requiring an update to EZPproxy.
- Within the last year, the Lucy Carson Library has implemented cross-training of employees as much as possible. This has allowed more library staff members to assist with most tasks and technologies. The increased self-sufficiency and added ability of troubleshooting of the library employees has dramatically improved library services.

Standard 2.F: Financial Resources

2.F.1 The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.

Like other educational components of the State of Montana, Montana Western primarily draws its funding from state appropriations and student tuition and fees. The primary sources of revenue for the University budget are state appropriations and 6-mill levy, tuition and fees, grants and contracts,

mandatory and class/lab fees, land grant income, sales and service fees, investment earnings, financial aid programs, and private donations.

While the dollar amount of state support has increased over the last several years, the proportion of University costs that state funding covers has steadily declined and in 2017 accounted for only 25.3% of the current unrestricted budget (state general, designated, and auxiliary funds), a proportion that is likely to keep decreasing. At the same time, the tuition and fee burden upon the students and parents remained stable but is now increasing. The administration and Budget Committee have handled budget reallocations over the last decade to maintain the resources to support the singular mission of experiential learning.

Nevertheless, despite funding limitations, Montana Western has been able to maintain a consistently strong record of financial solvency and stability. By necessity, financial planning and budgeting are ongoing, realistic and support the Mission of the University while adhering to policies and procedures mandated by the State Office of Budget and Program Planning and the State Department of Administration. In the last decade, financial planning has been linked to the [University's Strategic Plan](#) and directions, privileging high priorities such as low course caps (averaging 25 students per class), increased academic support, enrollment management and marketing.

Montana Western's financial statements and [IPEDS reports](#) reveal a history of financial stability at the operational level, with no material deficits and years of clean audit opinions that indicate financial stability and compliance.

Montana Western's financial stability and careful budget planning have facilitated not just the protection of the academic program, but also the implementation of new initiatives and academic programs. The University has worked hard to ensure that the percentage of annual budget allocated to instruction, academic support, and fee waivers has remained stable or has increased. Indeed, Experience One itself was only possible because of such circumspect, mission-driven budget planning.

Another aspect of Montana Western's careful fiscal management during the last decade has been the building of reserves. This will always be a challenge, in part simply because of the size of the budget and, in part, because funding rules are specific about the transfer of general fund monies, as described in [BOR Policy 901](#). Reserves are funded annually at the level allowed by the Board of Regents. Reserves have also been developed in the plant funds as allowed by state law and fund transfer policies. This has allowed the University to fund projects to enhance the classroom and technological environment to support teaching and learning. Additional fund balances in the auxiliary and designated funds are managed to offset temporary setbacks.

Montana Western budgets a one to two-percent enrollment reserve in the annual general fund budget for contingencies. This reserve can be carried forward within the two years of the biennium, but not across biennia. Thus, the reserve is used for one-time budget allocations (usually additional course sections), 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.

The aggressive pursuit of reserves over the last decade helped create a more stable financial environment. Given current state revenue projections, these reserves will most likely be required in Montana Western's response to funding changes.

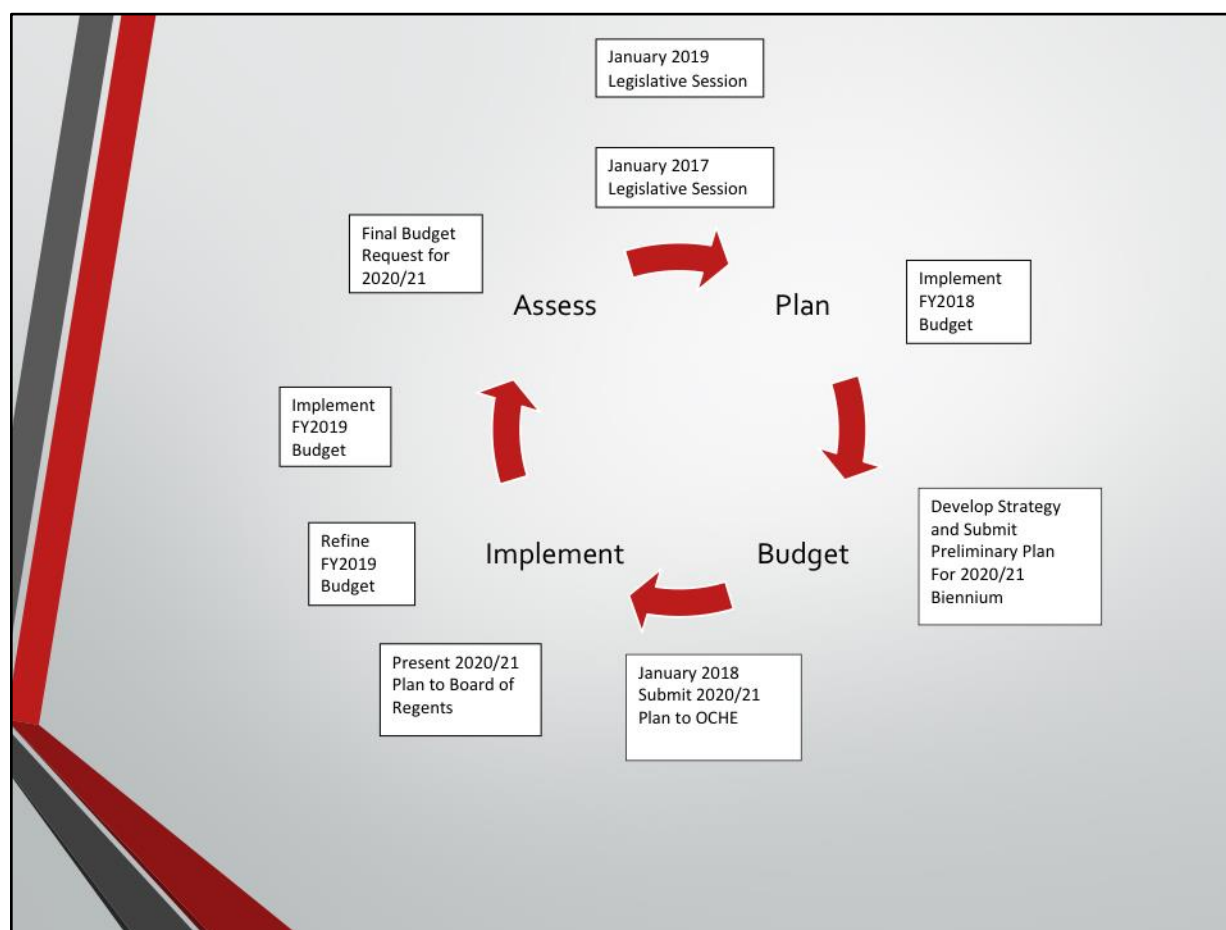
In regard to debt, state and BOR policy guides the use of debt in the MUS. The majority of the long-term debt at Montana Western consists of a series of revenue bonds, cross-pledged and issued by the

University of Montana, when the UM President and the leaders of the four campuses resolved to invest in the system through improvement of the physical resources on all UM campuses. These BOR-approved bonds are detailed in the footnotes of the [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 and is clearly defined as pledged revenues within the bond documents, and 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. The additional debt through the Montana InterCap Loan program is also managed annually and is covered through stable revenue sources as indicated in the [UM Debt Schedule](#).

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

Figure 2.3. Budget Cycle



At Montana Western, there are two concurrent financial planning processes in progress at all times as illustrated in Figure 2.3. The first involves planning and monitoring the disbursement and spending of the budget approved for the current biennium. The second is the multi-tiered process of developing the budget request for the next biennium. Working within guidelines established by the BOR, the Montana Western Budget Committee meets regularly to discuss the University's request, taking into account fixed

expenditures, annual cost inflation, and high-priority new initiatives. The Vice Chancellor of Finance, Administration, and Student Affairs meets with peers from the University of Montana Affiliations to share information emanating from the Governor's office and the Legislature, integrate priorities, and adjust individual campus budgets to fit within an overall, coherent budget proposal to send to the Governor for presentation to the legislature. The chief financial officers discuss and develop the model by which the lump sum received from the Legislature will be distributed. The distribution of the lump sum is recommended by OCHE and approved by the BOR. The Long-Range Building Program (LRBP) to be presented to the Legislature is also discussed and prioritized by the CFOs for the BOR for inclusion in the Governor's Budget.

While this second process is highly collaborative and iterative, Montana Western retains an appropriately high degree of autonomy to budget its share of state resources, tuition revenues, and non-appropriated funds based on the University's Mission and goals ([OCHE Operating Budget](#); [UMW Operating Budget](#)).

Montana Western employs a four-year campus operating budget projection model based on the current and upcoming biennium and focused by the current Strategic Plan. This includes realistic projections of enrollments and other revenue sources to budget campus operations. Currently Montana Western, based on size, limited resources and structure has a very centralized budget process managed by the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs in conjunction with the Chancellor and Provost with input from the Budget Committee or the Academic and Administrative Council. Both the Strategic Plan and the Master Plan are updated annually to reflect progress. Enrollment has been increasing steadily underwriting Experience One, providing financial stability facilitating further innovation and change at Montana Western.

2.F.3 The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies.

All state and BOR rules, regulations, procedures, and accounting principles 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, and budgetary and internal controls.

Montana Western's annual general operating budget development is a campus community process led by the Budget Committee comprised of administrators, faculty, students from ASUMW, and staff who take into account the Strategic Plans and goals of Montana Western, the University of Montana, and the BOR. The Budget Committee is responsible for recommending a budget that balances institutional needs and constituent requests to support Experience One with the funds available. The final proposal is approved and implemented by the Chancellor. The annual general operating budget is finalized in accordance with 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 of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs. The needs of the departments, students, and University priorities guide these budgets. These budgets are approved by the BOR in the annual budget approval process.

A copy of the approved [Operating Budget](#) is provided to all budget managers through BANNER Finance and is available on the BOR and Montana Western website. During the budget year, the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs recommends necessary budget revisions from reserves to

the Chancellor and Provost, and the revisions are made promptly when approved. Additional budget authority is requested through OCHE as needed.

2.F.4 The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.

The University follows the standards of accounting and reporting prescribed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). For financial reporting purposes, the University is considered a special-purpose government engaged in business type activities. The University continually monitors new and proposed standards promulgated by GASB to ensure that applicable pronouncements are implemented in a timely manner. 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.

Maintaining an effective system of internal controls is critical at a small institution and managed carefully. Montana Western evaluates internal controls constantly and maintains a [schedule of internal controls](#).

2.F.5 Capital budgets reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution's mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.

Capital project planning and implementation is guided by the 2015 [Campus Master Plan](#). The current plan is updated with a list of accomplished projects that are indicative of the University's effective planning strategies.

Montana Western's on-campus facilities planning group is the Campus Development Committee, composed of representatives from faculty, staff, students and administration. The Committee reviews and prioritizes various campus development planning documents, construction plans and maintenance projects, as well as reviewing the work prepared for submission to the State Long Range Building Program (LRBP) each biennium.

Biennial planning for the LRBP is a significant project for Facilities Services. Utilizing source planning documents, the Facilities Condition Inventory (FCI) and personnel knowledge, a list of state building 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, forwarded to the University of Montana System to be prioritized with the University of Montana System Long Range Building Request ([Long-Range Building Program \(LRBP\) Request and Deferred Maintenance Plan](#); [LRBP Request to Missoula](#)). 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.

In addition to state and federal funds for facilities development and renovation, Montana Western funds capital projects through monies appropriately transferred to the plant fund from state reversion dollars ([Board of Regents Policy Manual Policy 901.6](#)), academic facilities fees net of required debt service, private donations and auxiliary renewal and replacement funds. Regulations require that funding sources must be clearly identified and available before any project may be started and that continuing operating and maintenance costs are a consideration in the planning and approval of all projects.

Finally, Montana Western is required to follow all appropriate laws, rules, regulations and policies, including federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, 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, such as Main Hall.

2.F.6 The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.

As reflected in the financial statements and the revenue bond audit, auxiliaries and the education and general operations budgets of the University 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 education and general fund 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 and plan collaboratively to meet Strategic Plan objectives.

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

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 along with the four campuses of the University of Montana System and the LAD issues a single University of Montana System report ([2015 Annual Financial Audit](#)). The results of that audit are also used 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.

Montana Western is 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.

The internal audit office of the University of Montana manages external audits and works with the administration of the campuses to review and present to OCHE. All audit findings are reviewed and resolved in a timely manner. The Legislative audits are presented through OCHE to the BOR and the Legislature Audit Committee.

The University of Montana Western has a long record of clean audit opinions and management letters. Audits of Montana Western are a matter of public record and are available for review.

2.F.8 All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.

The University of Montana Western Foundation was established in 1978 by BOR Policy 901.9 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 serves as a non-voting member on the full, 22-member Foundation Board and on the Executive Board. The Foundation sets its fundraising priorities in conjunction with the University Strategic Plan and input from the Chancellor. The Foundation is an independent charitable non-profit organization under an Internal Revenue Service 501c(3) designation, and is the official fundraising office of Montana Western. The policy requires a BOR approved operating agreement between the University and the Foundation and an annual review of the [Foundation audit \(Operating Agreement\)](#). The Foundation completed a [new Strategic Plan in 2017](#).

Guided by 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 gifts with appropriate donor recognition and stewardship, the Director seeks gifts, grants, bequests, and other forms of financial support; conducts public relations programs with alumni, students, faculty, government entities, the business community, the general public and other appropriate groups; and manages the assets of the corporation in accordance with its purpose and fiduciary responsibilities ([UMW Foundation Policies and Procedures](#)).

The Foundation works in close partnership with the University administration, faculty and staff to determine needs and establish priorities for the Foundation's programs. Recent successes include the completion of Legacy Plaza, an endowment for men's basketball and a significant increase of donations.

Because the Foundation is the official fundraiser for Montana Western, University policy requires each person and campus organization to discuss and receive approval from the Foundation Director prior to initiating any on or off-campus fundraising activities or events, including solicitations, raffles, and auctions. However, the Director works with individuals and campus groups whose fundraising activities are approved to maximize their success. Thus, for instance, any literature that may be prepared to

cultivate or solicit private funds by any department or program is first approved by the Foundation to ensure a consistent, quality image to the external community.

Standard 2.G: Physical and Technological Infrastructure

2.G.1 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.

The Montana Western campus consists of approximately 39 acres, 30 acres of which comprise the main campus. The athletic field, approximately seven city blocks from the main campus, makes up the remaining nine acres. The main campus provides a backdrop for 16 major instructional and student support buildings which have an estimated replacement value of \$135,388,821 and represent approximately 531,654 square feet of usable space ([FCI Summary Report](#) and [FCI Detailed Report](#)).

The Birch Creek Education Center, located approximately 20 miles north of Dillon on seven acres of leased U.S. Forest Service land, provides Montana Western with additional outdoor experiential education opportunities. Birch Creek contains the Bender Center, a teaching, conference, and dining facility of 7,016 square feet, and six other buildings, originally part of the Civilian Conservation Corp, used for instructional space and housing, totaling 12,406 square feet.

The space for practical teaching in the Equine Studies and Natural Horsemanship programs is two miles south of campus at the non-profit Montana Center for Horsemanship, a site leased by a collaborative arrangement with the owners and benefactors.

Montana Western's off-campus offerings primarily consist of early childhood education programs located in leased or donated rooms in public buildings in several cities. The University 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.

Facilities Services, in the division of Administration and Finance, is primarily responsible for meeting and ensuring facilities will meet the needs of Montana Western's unique Mission. In constructing and maintaining its physical infrastructure, UMW is required to follow all applicable laws, codes, regulations, and policies.

Montana Western was recently reviewed by the Office of Civil Rights regarding physical access required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and has completed the majority of identified issues.

Montana Western has demonstrated its commitment to sustainability as demonstrated by the biomass heating system and many successful projects over the last decade, including lighting retrofits, domestic water efficiency upgrades, and window upgrades.

Instructional facilities are sufficient for current enrollment and for some continued steady growth. The University buildings contain adequate classroom, computer laboratories, art studios and other learning spaces which are easily scheduled because Experience One is delivered through three-hour morning and afternoon blocks, while semester-long (stringer) classes are scheduled in the evenings and typically meet once per week. Most classrooms are now properly outfitted with modern multimedia technology.

Montana Western's science laboratory space is out of date requiring safety and technological upgrades, and the science programs are a growth area on campus. The University has prepared a request for a laboratory upgrade as a priority in the next biennium State Long Range Building Program (LRBP).

The third, and final, phase of the Main Hall renovation has recently been completed, providing the University with three additional classroom spaces. The Main Hall renovation project has been a ten-year project involving three phases to complete infrastructure, cosmetic, ADA, and building code upgrades to a historic building. The outcome is a technologically modern classroom and faculty office building that provides a safe and comfortable learning environment for the campus and upgraded facilities that are also utilized by the community.

A seismic stabilization project in the Dining Hall, located in Mathews Hall, was completed in the summer of 2016. The opportunity to complete this work was made possible by utilizing money from a FEMA grant to pay for a portion of the project. At present, student support spaces are adequate on both the state side and in auxiliary services.

The campus continues to update and renovate classrooms, including the Glass Studio, and is currently remodeling the outdated restrooms in Mathews Hall in its continuing effort to support the Mission and all three Core Themes.

2.G.2 The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.

Montana Western is classified as a small quantity generator of hazardous waste. The Chemistry Lab is the main source of a nominal amount of hazardous waste. Toxic waste generated in other labs is handled by the chemistry stores. The department develops and maintains appropriate procedures to use and store hazardous waste. A handbook regarding procedures is available on campus.

As an affiliate of the University of Montana, the Environmental Health and Safety Officer at Montana Tech helps manage Montana Western's nominal amounts of hazardous waste through that contract. Materials are stored in approved biohazardous containers and safety cabinets.

2.G.3 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.

A new [Campus Master Plan](#) was finalized in 2015 after a long open collaborative process. It replaced the 2003 Plan which, very successfully, guided over a decade of building projects. Both plans supported the Strategic Plan in place at the time and aligned with the Core Themes and financial plans of Montana Western.

2.G.4 Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution's mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.

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 campus offices. 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, academic equipment fees, and the computer/technology fees have provided a steady annual source for materials and equipment replacement cycles (Board of Regents Policies [940.23](#) and [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 has responded to that need by increasing the amount of large SUVs in the fleet and developing a replacement plan conducted through a student fee.

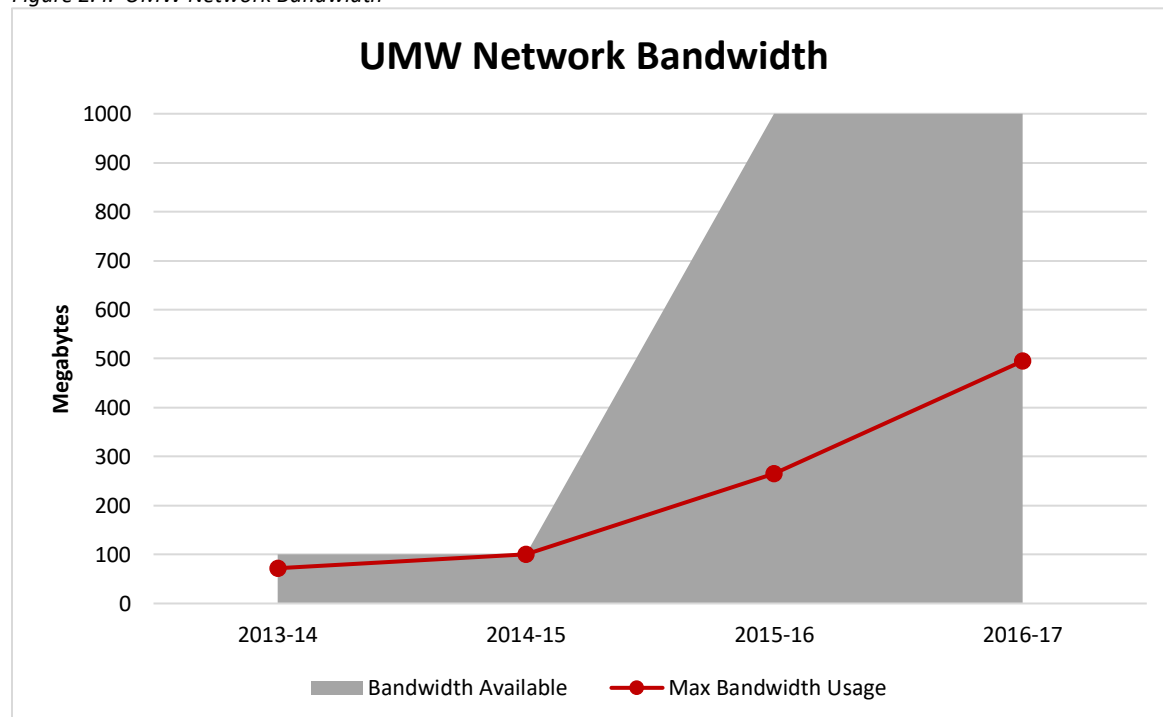
The Provost works with a faculty committee annually to distribute the academic equipment fee. This fee provides a steady source for equipment to enhance equipment and supplies across the departments. Experience One requires, with three-hour classes and field experiences, more equipment than the traditional one-hour lecture model of learning. In addition to the increased number of vehicles, some recent purchases that enhance the classroom experience include a metabolic measurement system for research on maximal exercise testing, a freeze dryer/lyophilizer for drying soils, sediments, plants, etc. for carbon dating and other analyses and a coring system for coring snow fields, glaciers, and lake ice.

Technological Infrastructure

2.G.5 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.

Since the inception of Experience One, Montana Western has been committed to upgrading and providing up-to-date technology systems and infrastructures to support experiential teaching and learning. The University has appropriate student computer labs, faculty and staff computers, email systems and enterprise systems such as Banner and Moodle, and specific faculty requested software for a productive learning environment. An example is the recently completed UMW Network Bandwidth project.

Figure 2.4. UMW Network Bandwidth

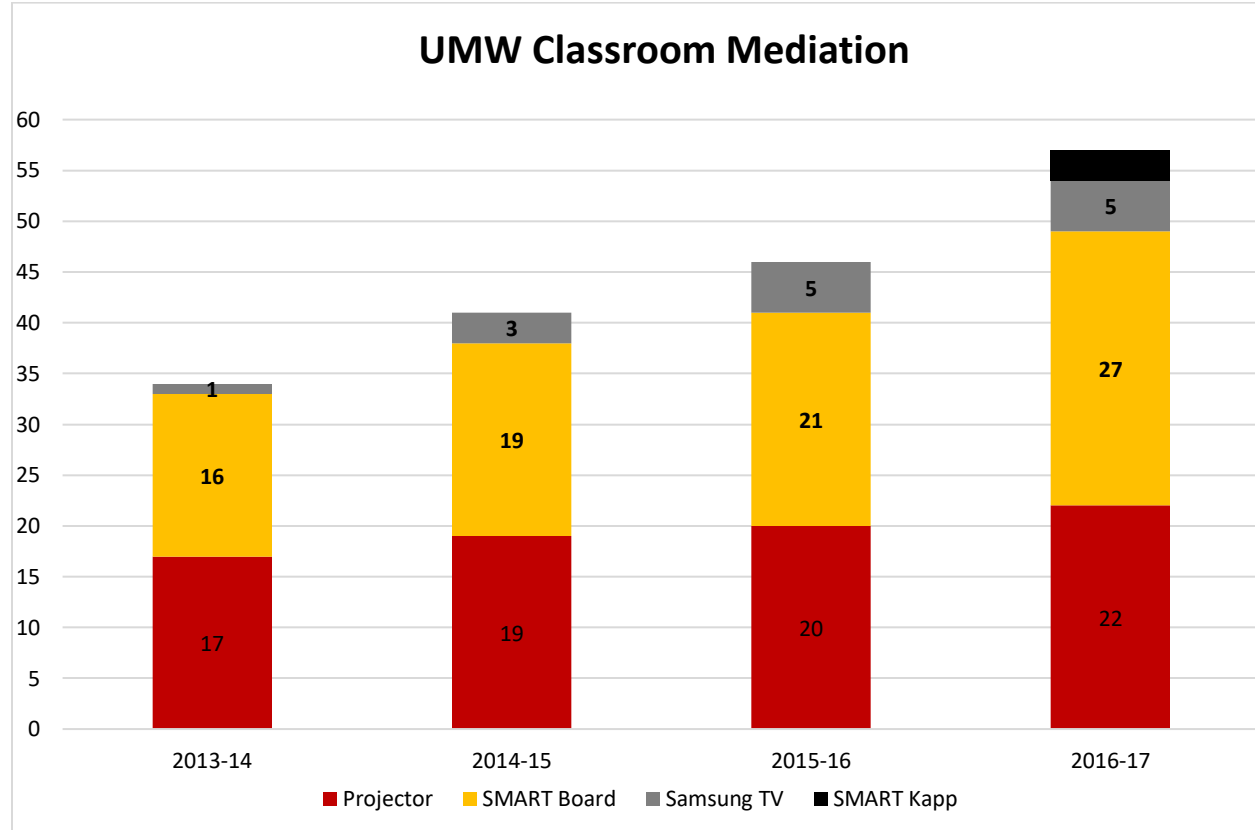


Montana Western network bandwidth usage continues to grow from year to year. The available bandwidth for increased academic and administrative use began to become saturated at around 72% during the 2013-14 academic year (see Figure 2.4). At this time, UMW had 100 Megabytes of total bandwidth available. The University started the process of acquiring additional bandwidth with the help of the University of Montana and Charter Communications. It was determined that Charter could update the existing fiber connection from 100M to 1 Gigabyte. This 10-times increase would more than offset the saturation UMW was currently experiencing at the time. Receiving the bandwidth increase became a longer process than anticipated due to the wait time for Charter to complete hardware updates in order to accommodate this upgrade. While waiting for this update during the 2014-15 academic year, the campus reached 100% saturation at times of peak usage. By 2016, Charter had completed the upgrade to 1G with the campus usage topping out at 265M during 2015-16. Currently, the campus is averaging around 325M with a max of 495M at peak hours. The next step will be to obtain 10G of fiber bandwidth. UMW has begun to formulate and implement a plan for updating the network infrastructure to accommodate 10G fiber bandwidth.

2.G.6 The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.

The dedicated and knowledgeable staff of the IT department provide instruction and support to the campus on the effective use of technology. Through their efforts, and based on the needs of Experience One, Montana Western has a record of providing appropriate teaching spaces demonstrated by the on-going classroom mediation projects.

Figure 2.5. UMW Classroom Mediation

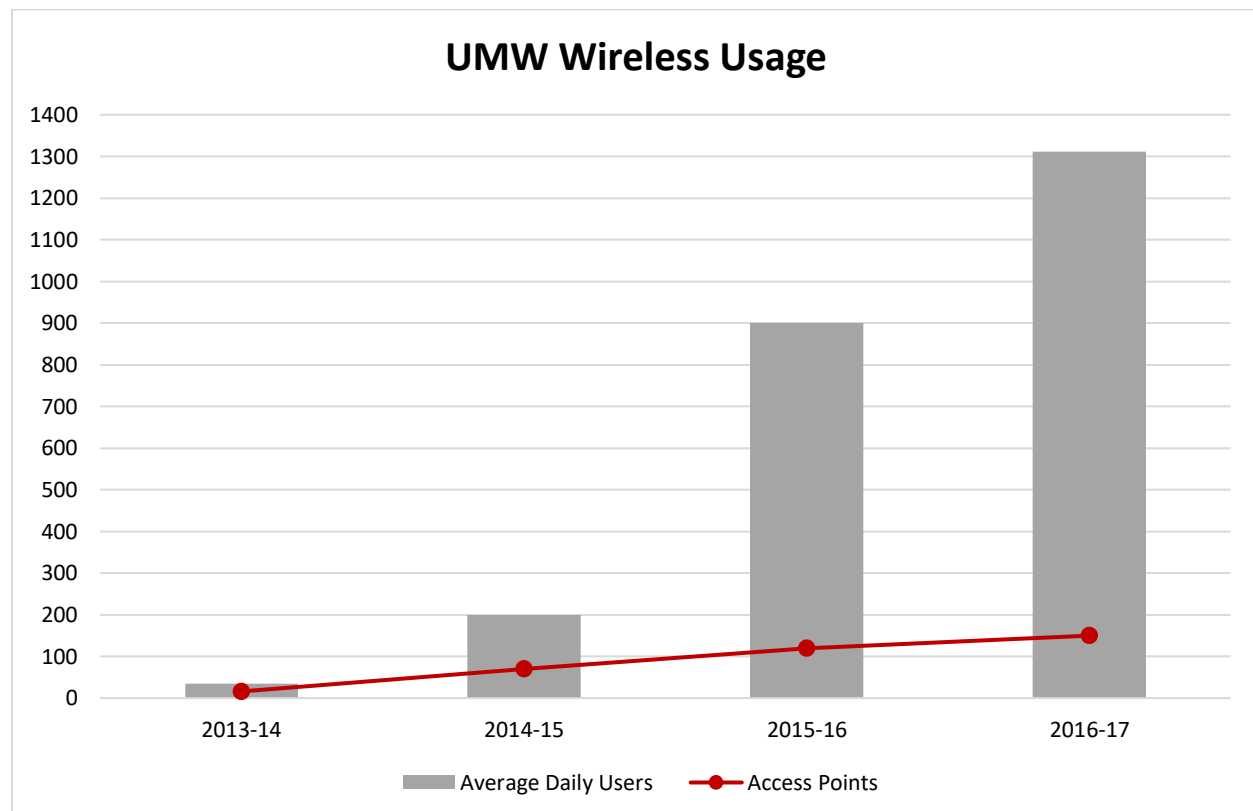


Classroom mediation continues to expand across the campus with SMART Boards and projectors being the current standard. In addition to the expansion of these existing classroom mediation devices, new technology in the form of SMART Kapp Boards (whiteboard capture devices) have begun to be installed in a limited number of classrooms (see Figure 2.5). UMW has aggressively pursued expanding classroom mediation throughout academic classrooms and labs. With experiential learning being the foundation of UMW, technology in the classrooms serves to enhance this experience. It is therefore imperative that this technology be readily available in classrooms and labs. In the last four years, the availability of mediation devices in classrooms and labs has increased 60% across the campus. Since the block system occupies a classroom for a three-hour segment of time both morning and afternoon, it quickly became apparent that almost all classrooms on campus will need some form of mediation. This led to assessing how classrooms are used and a plan of action was developed to mediate those rooms where mediation would have the highest impact. Taking action based on this plan has led to 47 rooms across campus being mediated with various forms of technology. Moving forward, UMW will continue to evaluate each classroom and lab to determine how best to meet the technology needs of those learning environments.

2.G.7 Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services.

The [Technology Plan](#) guides infrastructure planning and is reviewed and updated by the CIO. Technology planning and project implementation is vetted through the Technology Steering Committee, a representative group from across the UMW campus constituencies. Ideas and project requests are presented to the Committee for recommendation to the Chancellor and to identify funding sources. Improving wireless availability has been an important project for the University.

Figure 2.6. UMW Wireless Usage



The wireless network has been upgraded and expanded across the entire campus providing improved service and support to students for both academic and personal needs. The number of average daily users has increased exponentially each academic year as illustrated in Figure 2.6. Starting in the 2013-14 academic year, UMW had a very small wireless footprint that included only 16 wireless access points (WAPs) distributed across the campus. Beginning in 2014, UMW made the decision to begin the process of expanding the wireless offering to provide a more robust wireless service throughout the academic classrooms around campus with an additional 54 WAPs being installed. During 2015-16, the campus residence halls were rewired to provide a strong wireless presence. This allowed students to exclusively use their wireless devices and not depend upon a wired connection to their rooms. In addition, classroom wireless access was further enhanced with additional WAPs placed in key locations. This brought the total number of WAPs placed by 2015-16 to 120 units which covered the majority of the buildings across the entire campus. Starting in 2016, UMW began to assess the saturation rate of areas due to the sheer number of users. Additional WAPs were then installed in identified areas to provide improved service. As more students bring multiple wireless devices on campus, the number of access points to accommodate these connections will have to increase in high traffic locations.

2.G.8 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.

Over the last two decades a renewal and replacement plan has kept UMW, despite limited resources and budgets, able to provide appropriate computer resources to meet the needs of the faculty and students. The latest update of that plan made significant changes based on the needs of the new Mission and speaks to both instruction and student service areas.

Table 2.5. Technology Renewal and Replacement

Academic Year	Rotation Cycle 1	Rotation Cycle 2	Rotation Cycle 3
2014 – 15	Tier 1 Rotation 1 – New Tier 2 Rotation 1 – Used		
2015 – 16		Tier 1 Rotation 2 – New Tier 2 Rotation 2 – Used	
2016 – 17			Tier 1 Rotation 3 – New Tier 2 Rotation 3 – Used
2017 – 18	Tier 1 Rotation 1 – New Tier 2 Rotation 1 – Used		
2018 – 19		Tier 1 Rotation 2 – New Tier 2 Rotation 2 – Used	
2019 – 20			Tier 1 Rotation 3 – New

			Tier 2 Rotation 3 – <i>Used</i>
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UMW currently has central computer facilities that consist of computer labs, classroom mediation computers and laptops that can be checked out upon request. In addition, there are a number of computers that are strategically placed throughout the campus in various departments for student use. The purpose of the renewal and replacement plan is to maintain a computing environment that is up-to-date and relevant in supporting student technological needs moving forward. The equipment in these labs/classrooms needs to be replaced or upgraded on a regular basis. To utilize generated student revenue to its full potential, the renewal and replacement plan for computers incorporates rotation cycles within groups of tiers. This consists of two tiers composed of three rotation cycles each. A rotation cycle is completed within an academic year. Tier one labs receive new computer hardware during their cycle. The corresponding cycle in tier two receives slightly used hardware from tier one. Tier one consists of primary labs being used for education that demands the newest technology, thus, warranting their priority in receiving new hardware. Tier two is made up of computers that are used in an auxiliary setting to further support the needs of students. Using a replacement cycle of 3 years, updates to the lab/classroom computer infrastructure on campus are completely updated with newer hardware as shown in Table 2.5. This means that any computer in the primary student labs/classrooms will be no more than three years old before it is replaced with newer hardware. In addition, auxiliary labs/classrooms will be no more than six years old before being updated with newer hardware. With the limited funds that UMW has available for computer lab/classroom updates, this plan ensures that new technology is being continually rotated into areas on campus for student use.

Student Success Spotlight: Joey Paulsonmorgan



Senior Joey Paulsonmorgan will soon complete his degree in elementary education with a minor in health and human performance. His interest in health and education make it no surprise that he is heavily involved in Peers Advocating Towards Health (PATH). This program is dedicated to helping people live healthier lifestyles, including educating other students about the dangers of tobacco.

With his fellow PATH members at the University of Montana Western, Paulsonmorgan works with student representatives across the state.

Recently, he also presented on the health effects of e-cigarettes in Kansas City, Missouri at a national conference and collaborated with fellow senior Brandon Piazzola on a 30-page literacy study conducted at a local middle school.

For more information, the full article is available on the [UMW website](#).

STANDARD THREE

INSTITUTIONAL AND CORE THEME PLANNING



At any other school, my internships with NASA just wouldn't have been possible. Because of the block scheduling system, I'm able to make a clear path to my future goals.

- Baleigh Doyle, Mathematics and Business

Standard Three: Institutional and Core Theme Planning

Standard 3.A: Institutional Planning

Standard 3.A.1 The institution engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission. Its plans are implemented and made available to appropriate constituencies.

During the previous comprehensive accreditation cycle visit, Montana Western was six years into its innovative new program Experience One. Since that time, the University has continued to mature in the development of Experience One with Core Theme development (Year One Report 2011); a revision and simplification of the Mission Statement, including an updated strategic planning document to drive the future of the University ([Experience the Difference](#)) and an increased focus on data-driven planning and decision making. This continued development led to sustaining and continuing to enhance the Experience One model. Past innovation, maturation in the past eight years, and future sustainability require the institution to engage in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning.

Strategic Planning 2011-Present

Strategic planning has gone through several evolutionary stages in the past eight years, particularly as leadership transitions occurred. During 2011-2014 academic years, strategic planning was housed in the University Council, which at that time consisted of the Chancellor, Provost, and Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs as well as all of their direct reports, three to four members of faculty representation, and student representation from ASUMW. It was this group that researched, prepared, and received approval of the 2014-2019 strategic plan, *Experience the Difference*.

In fall 2014, Interim Chancellor Roberta Evans restructured several committees during her semester as Chancellor, including University Council. With this restructure of University Council, strategic planning, while still maintained through several groups and committees such as Academic and Administrative Council and the Provost's office, was not officially rehomed until after Chancellor Weatherby started her role as Chancellor in January 2015.

In 2015-16, Chancellor Weatherby in consultation with the Chancellor's Cabinet, Faculty Senate, Student Senate and Academic and Administrative Council (AAC), drafted an official charge, process, and membership for a new Strategic Planning Committee ([Strategic Planning Committee Charge; 2015-16 Strategic Plan Committee Membership; Strategic Planning Process](#)). This group was led by Interim Provost Sylvia Moore from spring 2016 through July 2016 with a charge to "lead and enact process that will foster the use of data and assessment to foster continuous improvement and Mission fulfillment" and the responsibility to provide recommendations to the Chancellor regarding:

- Strategic direction and priorities of UMW
- Mission, vision, and Core Themes
- Priorities and goals
- Functional areas' tactical action plans
- Measurable objectives and baseline metrics
- Identification of new challenges or opportunities, or emerging strategic issues that might require planning adjustments

- Possibilities for structural or operational changes in order to support achievement of the mission, vision, and priorities of the University
- Alignment of all University activities with the Mission, vision, and priorities
- Alignment of resource allocation with the Mission, vision, and priorities

Because of this broad charge and goals, the newly formed Committee included representation from all areas of the campus, allowing for broad-based input and opportunities for communication among all areas of the University. While this Committee began to meet during the end of spring and summer 2016 it did not have full membership representation until the fall of 2016 when many representatives were back on contract.

In fall 2016, new Provost Deb Hedeon became the chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and led the newly formed group to finding its purpose related to the committee charge and responsibilities. This process included developing a deeper understanding of the Core Themes, developing a working knowledge of the Tactical Plan and how it connects to the overall Mission and Strategic Plan, and determining how these processes will be maintained through this Committee for the campus. During these conversations, one of the major topics that emerged related to how the Strategic Planning Committee could be responsible for the present (i.e., the current Strategic Plan and Tactical Document) and simultaneously apply the time and energy needed into developing the quickly approaching next stage of the Strategic Plan for 2019-2024. It was decided by the Committee to split the responsibilities of these two perspectives between the full Strategic Planning Committee and the Academic and Administrative Council whose membership was already included in the Strategic Planning Committee. Based on this decision, as of the fall 2017 semester the Strategic Planning Committee is responsible for evaluating and preparing the next stage of strategic planning while the Academic and Administrative Council will maintain the Tactical Document and documentation supporting the present strategic planning priorities and goals. As membership between strategic planning and AAC greatly overlap, both groups may now not only focus on the goals of strategic planning and Mission fulfillment but also plans to be implemented and made available throughout the campus.

Departmental Planning and Integration

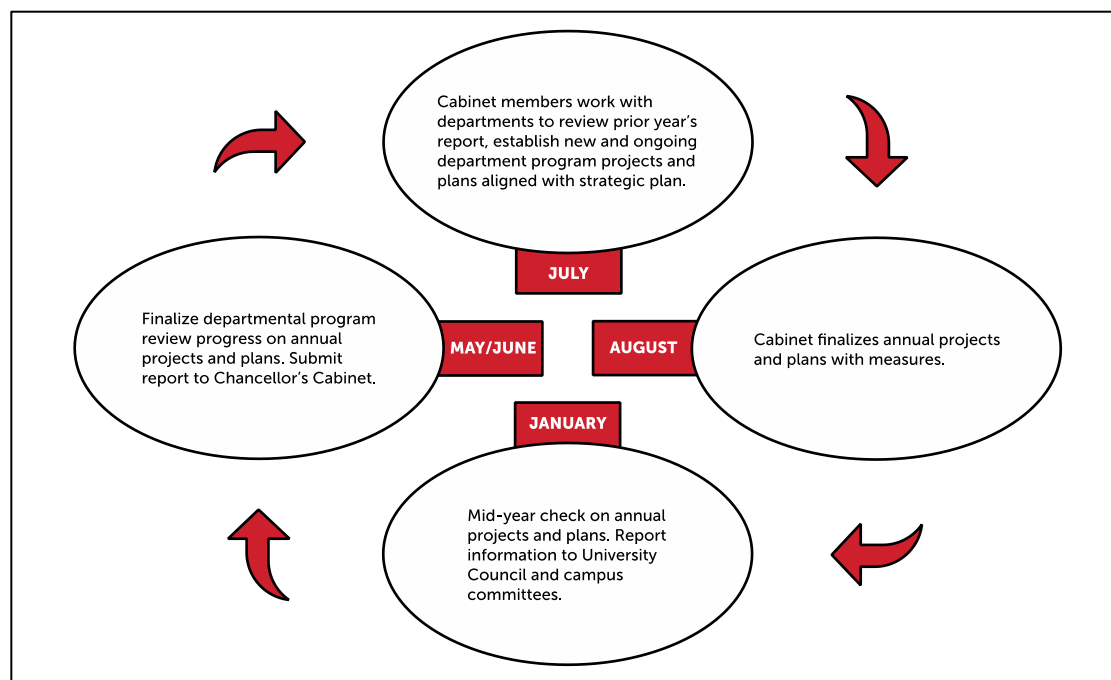
In addition to the overarching strategic planning processes, most academic and administrative departments have strategic plans or assessment plans which interconnect with the Mission and Core Themes and drive planning during the academic year. While executive leadership is aware of their direct reports' strategic plan or goals and help to make sure the goals of the University align with the Mission, most of these plans remain at the middle-management planning level for implementation ([Annual Admissions Recruitment Plan](#); [LRBP Deferred Maintenance Plans](#); [Administration, Finance Student Affairs Goals and Accomplishments](#); [10 Year Master Plan](#); [School of Outreach Strategic Plan](#)).

The Future of Integrated and Comprehensive Planning: 2017-Forward

As of summer 2017 the University began the next stage of planning by developing a process titled "Strategic Planning and Programming." It is expected that all Montana Institutions of Higher Education will implement some form of program prioritization. During the last few years, the Montana University System has provided workshops on program prioritization based on the book *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance* by Robert C. Dickeson. While this book offered some invaluable insight and advice regarding program assessment and examination, the time frame and investment into the process was not practical to carry forward from year to year. The University of Montana Western was interested in developing a process that would be manageable by departments annually in order to guide progress of the Strategic Plan aligned with the

budget. As a result of this consideration, the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs merged strategic planning and program prioritization to form Montana Western's Strategic Planning and Programming Process. During summer 2017, the Academic and Administration Council was instrumental in providing guidance and defining Strategic Planning and Programming as a structure and process for effective decision making and stewardship of resources that leads to sustainability. Within departments, an academic or administrative service program is any activity or collection of functions and activities that are goal-oriented and consume measurable and discrete resources: dollars, people, space, equipment or time. As illustrated in the proposed Strategic Planning and Programming Process Figure 3.1, the Process will begin during July of each year when Cabinet's leadership works with departments to review the prior year's Strategic Planning and Programming Report and establishes new and ongoing annual department program projects and plans aligned with the Strategic Plan, Core Themes and Priorities with University goals and the Tactical Document. Information is entered in the Montana Western Departmental Program-Review template. This will help centralize the process with easy access by faculty and staff. The categories in the template are: Department, Program, Program Purpose, Core Themes, Priorities and Goals, Stakeholders, Measured Success, Status and Next Steps. In August, the Chancellor's Cabinet finalizes new or ongoing annual projects and plans with measures. At midpoint in January, a mid-year check on annual projects and plans is completed and reported to the University Council and to campus. The final phase of the Process occurs during May and June as each department finalizes progress of annual projects and plans in a report to the Chancellor's Cabinet. Implementation of the Strategic Planning and Programming Process is expected in the 2018-19 academic year.

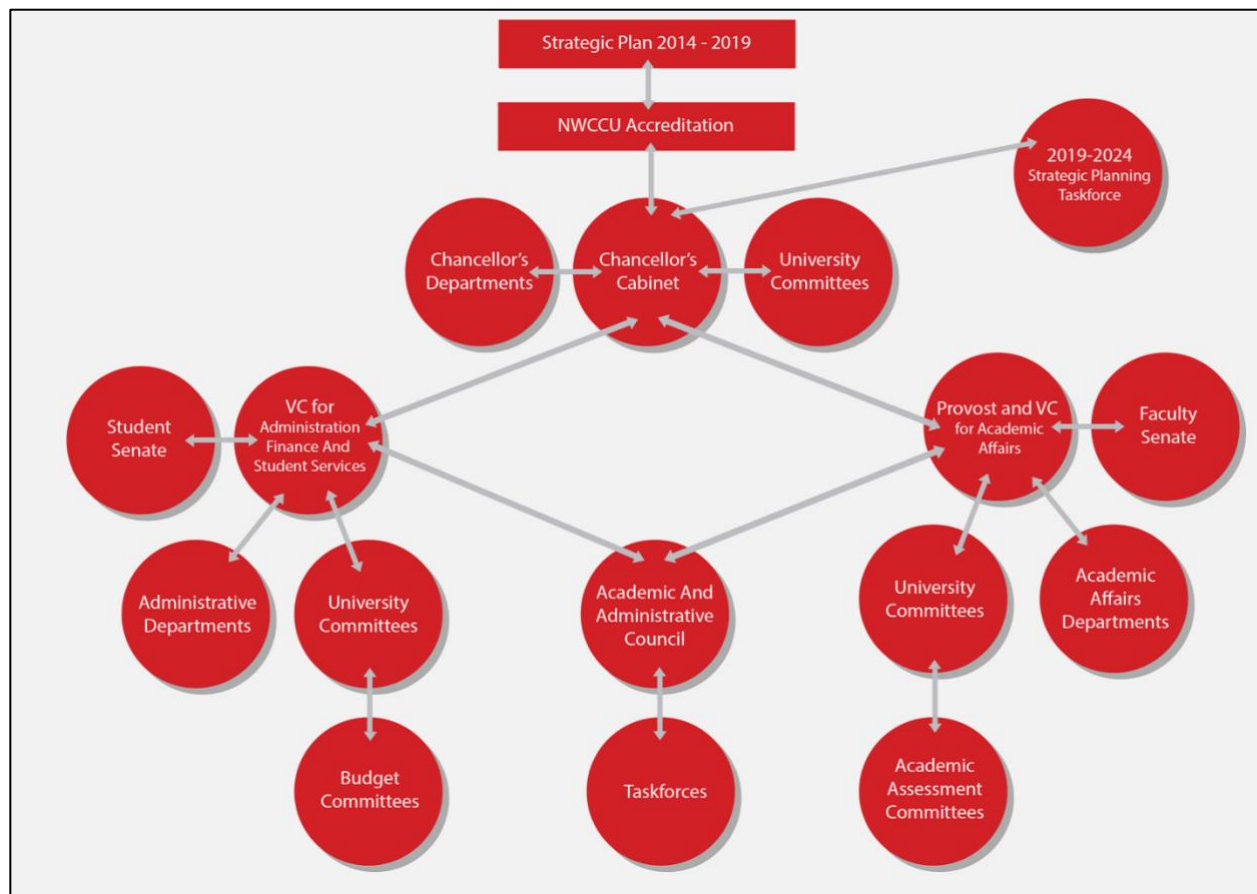
Figure 3.1: Strategic Planning and Programming Process



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

The University of Montana Western has a comprehensive planning process which is executed at all levels of the University providing ample opportunity for input by appropriate constituencies. Figure 3.2 outlines the communication flow of departments and committees as of fall 2017. All planning is driven by the Strategic Plan, sustaining the culture of Experience One, and ultimately fulfilling Montana Western's Mission.

Figure 3.2. The University of Montana Western Communication Flow Chart



While planning processes impact all areas of campus and work their way through the communication and approval systems, there are several primary groups in academics and administration that facilitate informing communication and planning across the campus: Strategic Planning; Budget Committee; Faculty Senate; Academic Department Chairs; ASUMW; Academic and Administrative Council; and the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Strategic Planning Committee

As described in section 3.A.1, the Strategic Planning Committee is a broad representation of the campus encompassing membership from administration, faculty, Academic and Administrative Council, and students. This wide representation allows the campus to provide feedback from all departments and

programs providing a comprehensive view of institutional planning ([Strategic Planning Committee Charge](#); [2017-18 Strategic Plan Committee Membership](#); [Strategic Planning Process](#)).

Budget Committee

The Budget Committee has a two-fold charge. First, the Committee uses the Mission and Strategic Plan as guides to work collaboratively and recommend a thoughtful and balanced budget to the Chancellor. Second, the Committee serves to provide communication and information regarding the institutional budget to the campus. As a result of the second part of the charge, the Committee, similar to Strategic Planning, has representation from almost all areas of the University. The Committee's first and often last meetings of the year are held as all-campus forums and address the financial state of UMW, providing an opportunity not only for the Committee to gain an understanding of the budget they are working with during the academic year, but also to provide the broader campus community the opportunity to provide input into the process.

Faculty Senate

As described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Faculty Senate serves as the "democratic governance system for Faculty in areas of academic concerns." This Committee includes representation from all academic departments (voting members), the ASUMW President or Designee (non-voting); and the Provost and Chancellor (Ex-officio, non-voting). This representation positions this Committee as a primary voice not only to administration but to the academic departments and overall faculty. In the spirit of shared governance, the Faculty Senate reviews and makes recommendations regarding: "curricular changes; requirements for various degrees and nomination of candidates for graduation; general requirements for admission and retention of students and guidelines for student recruitment; issues that pertain to the academic affairs of the University and matters of critical concern about the welfare and administration of the University; and establishment of committees necessary to carry out their responsibilities" ([Faculty Senate Website](#); [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)).

The chair of Faculty Senate or their Designee attends Chancellor's Cabinet as needed as well as the Montana University System Board of Regents meetings. This provides additional opportunity to not only speak to the plans of the University through the Chancellor's Cabinet but also to hear firsthand the goals of the BOR and how they will affect the university system.

Academic Department Chairs

Based on the faculty CBA, the academic department chairs do not serve as a supervisor or evaluator of their colleagues, but instead act as liaisons. Academic Chairs meet with the Provost once per block to discuss department issues and concerns as well as provide opportunity for the Provost to communicate issues, up-coming deadlines, and the general state of academic affairs. These meetings also provide opportunity for issues to be discussed that directly influence the academic departments including but not limited to: course scheduling; strategic planning and programming; and MUS initiatives.

Associated Students of the University of Montana Western

ASUMW functions as a student senate representing the Montana Western student body to faculty and administration as well as the Montana University System. Student Senate has a leadership team consisting of a President, Vice President, Activities Coordinator, and Intramural Director. Each academic department is represented by a student with a declared major in that area as well as six general student Senators that may be from any discipline. Student Senate Representatives serve on the majority of campus committees to provide student insight into the planning and decision-making processes. The ASUMW President or their representative additionally serves as needed on the Chancellor's Cabinet,

Faculty Senate, and Academic and Administrative Council. In addition, a faculty advisor as well as the Dean of Students is available to assist ASUMW with bringing forward their initiatives to the larger campus ([ASUMW Constitution](#), [ASUMW Bylaws](#)).

In the larger MUS, Student Senate participates in the Montana Associated Students (MAS) with each campus' student president serving as a member as well as electing officers. MAS works with OCHE related to initiatives from the student perspective and lobbies with the OCHE team during the legislative session, which in turn, is brought back to campus Senate to determine how to participate and respond. These relations help facilitate planning and communication not only with Montana Western faculty and administration but with the larger Montana University System.

Academic and Administrative Council

In the fall of 2012, the Academic and Administrative Council was initially reconstituted from the Experience One implementation team as a working committee to provide opportunities for the administrative support and academic support directors to discuss shared projects and implement plans. This group initially consisted of the direct reports of the Provost and the Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance. It has since expanded to include Faculty Senate and Student Senate representation as well as some of the Chancellor's direct reports. As mentioned in relation to the Strategic Planning Committee in 3.A.1, as of spring 2017 AAC was charged with the update and continuation of the Tactical Document.

As the Council consists of representation from all administrative and academic support departments, including Faculty and Student Senate, and is responsible for managing the Tactical Document for the campus, planning and communication has become a primary goal of this Committee. The working Committee is also charged with overseeing the implementation of shared administration and academic projects through task forces. Table 3.1 provides examples of the communication and implementation projects accomplished since the Committees' inception.

Table 3.1. Academic and Administrative Council Communication and Implementation Projects

Academic and Administrative Council Communication and Implementation Projects	
2013-14	VMX Center; Summer School Restructure; Revised Structure of Published Catalog; AAC focused Decision-Making and Facilitative Discussion Workshop
2014-15	EverFi; Financial Literacy; Administrative Services for EdReady; Student Withdraw Procedures
2015-16	Student Withdraw Procedures Continued; Reviewed NSSE Results; CAPP Degree Audit Program; Summer Semester Reschedule; Central Data Area
2016-17	Online Catalog; Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM); Central Data Area Continued; Federal Consumer Information Compliance; Paw Prints for Success; Bookstore Textbooks and Fiscals; Multi-Cultural Center; Strategic Planning and Programming; Tactical Document
2017-18	Strategic Planning and Programming; Compliance Mailer; Satisfactory Academic Progress Revisions; Policy Review; Online Catalog Continued; Posting Work Study Positions; Tactical Document Continued

Chancellor's Cabinet

Formed by Chancellor Weatherby upon her arrival in January 2015, the Chancellor's Cabinet serves as the Chancellor's executive leadership team, primarily charged with ensuring that the University is

fulfilling its Mission. The membership includes the Chancellor's direct reports and the Dean of Students. The chairs of the Faculty Senate and Associated Students of UMW and other directors or committee chairs are invited to attend meetings when they have items to discuss with the Cabinet.

The Cabinet meets every Thursday morning for one to two hours. Standing agenda items typically include weekly enrollment and retention statistics, budget updates, strategic planning updates, policy and procedure updates and discussion, Academic and Administrative Council and other committee updates, and updates on position vacancies and searches.

2018-19 Restructure and Communication Flow

Beginning in July 2018, leadership will implement several structural changes in order to better support faculty and staff in achieving academic excellence and to strengthen the alignment of Academic and Student Affairs.

First, upon the retirement of the Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs, Student Affairs will be added to the responsibilities of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. This move includes the Dean of Students and the Director of Admissions and their reporting areas.

Second, to address Montana Western's flat academic structure, the ten academic departments are being organized into four divisions, each of which will be led by a Division Chair. In the current structure, and as reflected in the CBA, Department Chairs do not have the authority to make decisions, provide supervision, or conduct evaluations and reviews. The Division Chair structure outlined in the exhibit is intended to better support the work of the faculty and staff, to allow for the increased responsibilities of the Provost, (with the transition of Student Affairs to her responsibilities), as well as to create leadership opportunities for faculty ([Academic Affairs Restructure](#)).

Third, a new Strategic Enrollment Management and Completion Committee (SEM/C) has been developed that will make recommendations to the Chancellor's Cabinet. The Committee is charged with the alignment of curricular and co-curricular activities to embrace and encourage the student experience from recruitment through completion, and to support the development of engaged alumni. The initial Committee will meet in early spring 2018 to work through the SEM workbook to develop a SEM plan, goals that support Mission fulfillment, and ultimately, integration into the committee structure of the campus ([SEM presentation](#), [SEM workbook](#)).

Standard 3.A.3 The institution's comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate fulfillment of its mission.

The University engages in ongoing collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data. While data for the overall institution are primarily collected and released through the Office of Institutional Research, the Provost's Office, and the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs, all departments and programs maintain their own data sets and bring that information to the planning process as needed or requested. The majority of the directors of departments and faculty representatives from Faculty Senate and academic departments participate in one or more planning committees, allowing their data to be at the forefront of discussion when required for planning related to the comprehensive Strategic Plan.

As mentioned, the majority of departments participate in at least one area of data collection that feeds the comprehensive planning processes of the University. The Registrar and Office of Institutional Research assist with the development, analysis and distribution of institutional data related to enrollment, FTE, retention rates, graduation rates, and other reports as requested by the departments. Budget, financial, and personnel data from the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs and Business Services Office further provides data regarding the financial state of the University and departments, as well as state and federal regulatory influences on the institution. Departments including but not limited to Admissions, Financial Aid, School of Outreach, Student Success (Advising, Career Services, and TRiO), and Student Life regularly provide information that connects with planning to other departments across campus. As will be described in Standard Four, faculty engage in regular and ongoing assessment of their courses and programs. Based on the results of collected data, improvements are then implemented.

The following list provides further examples of how academics and administration have developed additional data sources in the past eight years helping to inform the campus for individual and comprehensive planning.

- A Central Data Area (CDA) was created in spring 2017 to be used by administrative departments to store non-confidential reports and data that may be valuable to use across the entire campus. This area continues to be developed. After administrative programs pilot the currently available centralized area, discussion will take place with faculty to determine how academics might use the CDA.
- Creation of annually released academic enrollment, graduation, and course dashboards that provide program-specific data for decision making within the academic departments ([Academic Enrollment Dashboard Examples](#); [Academic Graduation Dashboards Examples](#)).
- Development of the Tactical Plan to annually track movement towards Strategic Plan priorities, goals and campus initiatives. The Tactical Document provides baseline measurements and goals.
- Use of the NSSE and BCSSE reports to measure students' progress in relation to benchmarking high impact practices and beginning student expectations.
- Retention and graduation rates are now tracked by all student cohorts, not just first-time students. This includes the development of an annual retention report which shows the demographics of the first time and transfer cohorts that were retained or lost ([Fall 2015 Cohort Retention Report](#)).
- Annual assessment reports are submitted by academic departments. This review drives decisions related to program and student outcomes.
- MUS metrics for [Performance Based Funding](#), [Tableau Data](#), and funding models.
- The Library, Information Technology Services, Human Resources, Budget and Finance, and Facilities Services all provide and have increased analyses of data used in institutional planning.

As consistent reporting continues to increase throughout the University, analysis and application of data are becoming an ingrained part of planning at Montana Western, priming constituents to continue using analyzed data to start the next planning cycle.

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

Montana Western's Mission and Strategic Plan articulate, prioritize and guide decisions related to resource allocation and institutional capacity. The Budget Committee guides the process related to resource allocation by using the Mission and Strategic Plan to guide the committee to recommend a thoughtful and balanced budget to the Chancellor.

Based on size and actual resources, the University does not have a standard budget request process except through the Budget Committee. Instead, the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors work with their divisions to bring forward the most pressing issues and priorities as related to the Strategic Plan to the Budget Committee.

The Strategic Plan guides and helps track the performance-based funding metrics required by the Board of Regents. In addition, the Strategic Plan also assists in guiding goals related to enrollment and retention numbers, making sure the budget is data-driven ([Budget Committee Presentations](#)).

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

The University of Montana Western has a strong commitment to maintaining a safe, secure, resistant, and resilient environment to support the Mission, students, faculty, and staff. The Dean of Students and the Director of Facilities Services work collaboratively in this effort. The Dean of Students chairs Montana Western's Safety and Security Committee that meets on a regular basis to update plans, organize and implement trainings, and address emergent issues in emergency management. This committee includes a wide variety of campus constituents, the Beaverhead County Sheriff's Department and DES Emergency Planning Officer, the Dillon Police Department, the Fire Department, Public Health and EMTs. This is an excellent example of the collaboration of Montana Western and its community in meeting the needs of a rural county.

The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP [On Campus Exhibit](#)) was developed using emergency planning guidance, best practices, and regulations at local, state, federal, and BOR levels. This Plan, which was first developed many years ago, is updated annually under the guidance of the Dean of Students. The Plan considers the Beaverhead County Disaster Emergency Plan, the Montana Emergency Response Framework (MERF), Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) guidelines, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Plan identifies the policies, responsibilities and procedures required to protect health and safety, University property, and the effects of natural, technological or human-caused emergencies and disasters. It outlines the management organization (Incident Command System) to handle a significant disaster effecting Montana Western. A flip-chart, the Emergency Preparedness Check Off List, which provides information based on a list of potential incidents, is placed in every classroom and office on campus ([On Campus Exhibit](#)).

The Director of Facilities Services inspects the grounds and buildings for safety issues on a regular basis and has protocols in place for managing utility issues in an environmental disaster. Safety is also a regular discussion at staff meetings.

Montana Western subscribes to REGROUP, an emergency notification system that sends an email and/or text to faculty, staff, and students who subscribe to the service. The campus also utilizes phones, emails, and a notification horn, with the Incident Command Group having bullhorns to use as needed. The Director of University Communications is the public information officer and part of the Safety/Security Committee in order to provide information during an incident.

Montana Western does not have an on-campus police department but works very closely with the Dillon City Police who respond within minutes to the aid of the campus. The Dean of Students and local law enforcement have a very collaborative relationship.

The University of Montana Affiliation works together on enterprise risk with shared systems and services that can be handled from any campus to keep the business operations functional. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education is currently working to update enterprise risk issues and the Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs is a member of system groups that are reviewing overall and consistent policies and procedures to mitigate the interruption of normal operations.

Standard 3.B: Core Theme Planning

Standard 3.B.1 Planning for each core theme is consistent with the institution's comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme's objectives.

Standard 3.B.2 Planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of contributing components of those programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.

As Standard One noted, the Strategic Plan is connected through the Mission, Core Themes, priorities (objectives), and goals (indicators) described within this document, which in turn drives the Tactical Document and the Academic Assessment Plans of the institution. The Tactical Document is used to track institutional projects that support the accomplishment of the objectives and indicators that support the Core Themes, and in turn lead to Mission fulfillment. The Tactical Document is evaluated and maintained once per semester by the Academic and Administrative Council.

Academic Assessment Plans guide the academic programs in evaluation and consideration of next stages of program development. Academic Assessment Plans are submitted annually to a faculty-shared Moodle area for documentation and review by the Assessment Committee and the Provost ([Assessment Plan Template](#); [Program \(Graduate\) Outcomes Template](#)).

Standard 3.B.3 Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for programs and services is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.

Between the core indicators, measures included in the Tactical Document, the Annual Academic Assessment Plans, and administrative department plans and goals, the University has multiple sets of indicators and measures that provide both direct and indirect metrics to provide evidence of planning

for programs and services guided by data, alignment and contribution to achievement of goals, and the pursuit of objectives.

Student Success Spotlight: Samantha Hubbard



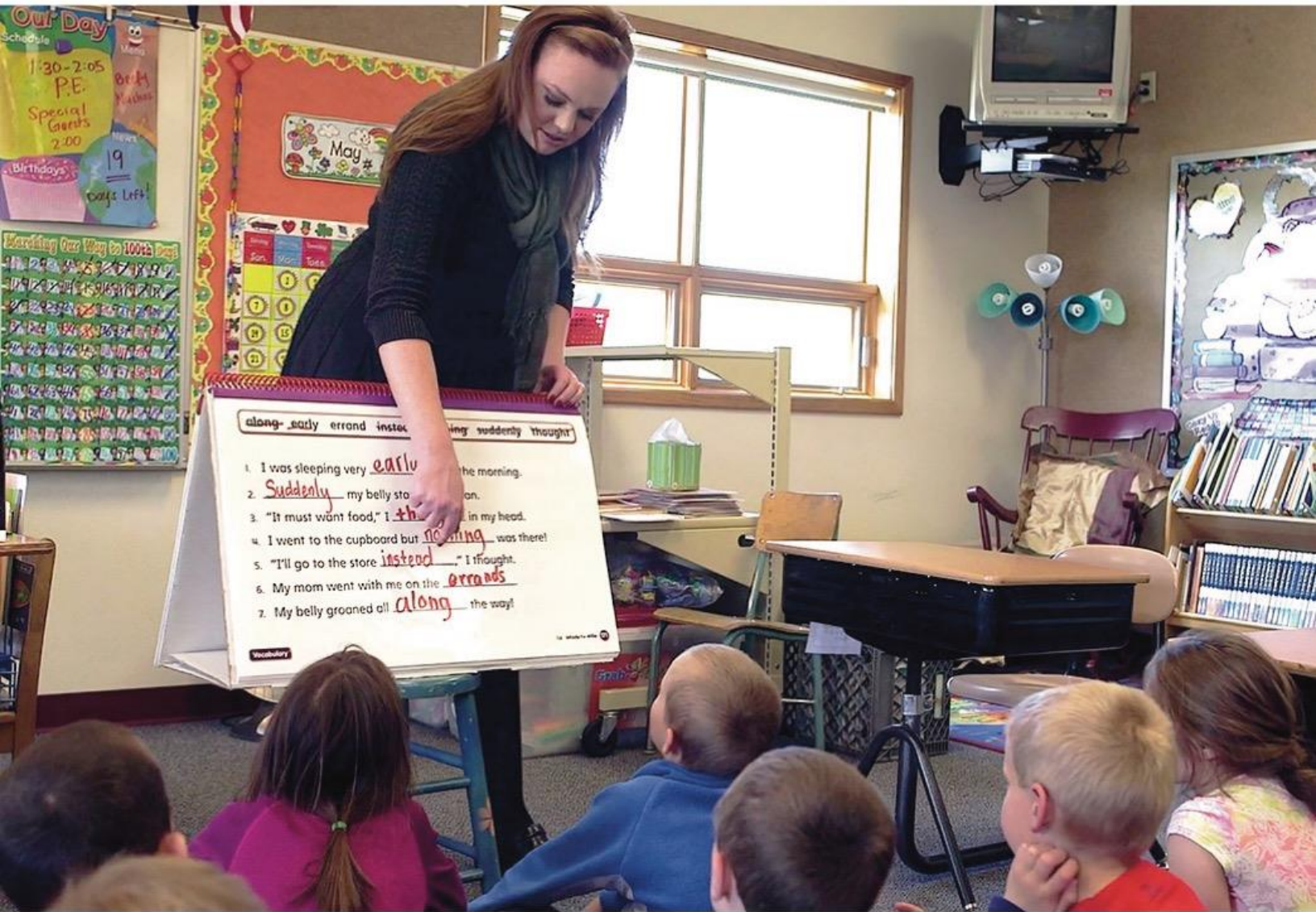
Montana Campus Compact, a seventeen campus higher education network, honored twelve student athletes from the state of Montana in November 2017, including Montana Western sophomore Samantha Hubbard for her outstanding community service work.

A cheerleader at UMW, Hubbard was honored for her commitment to making the University a better place. As a member of the ASUMW Student Senate, she planned much of the school's homecoming festivities, served on the Bulldog Mascot committee, and volunteers with the Jaycee Rodeo.

For more information, the full article is available on the [UMW website](#).

STANDARD FOUR

ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT



The faculty are very supportive and have provided me with several unique field experiences as part of Experience One.

- Brandon Piazzola, K-12 Physical Education and Health

Standard Four: Assessment and Improvement

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 22 and 23

Eligibility Requirement 22: The institution identifies and publishes the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. The institution engages in regular and ongoing assessment to validate student achievement of these learning outcomes.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each certificate and degree are written by the department that oversees the program. SLOs are posted in the annual catalog. As of the February 2018, student learning outcomes also appear on the degree worksheets which are printed directly from the degree page in the online catalog. Annual program assessment facilitates the evaluation of student learning outcomes to validate student learning.

Eligibility Requirement 23: The institution systematically applies clearly defined evaluation and planning procedures, assesses the extent to which it achieves its mission and core themes, uses the results of assessment to effect institutional improvement, and periodically publishes the results to its constituencies. Through these processes it regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact the institution and its ability to ensure its viability and sustainability.

The University of Montana Western has created defined procedures for the purpose of data driven evaluation and planning of the University's Mission and Core Themes. As documented throughout this self-study and exhibited in the communication flow chart described in Standard 3A, assessment and evaluation processes occur in every area of the University and results and recommendations flow through the communication process ultimately connecting to the Strategic Plan. Results of assessment and evaluation are made available through multiple sources including but not limited to: assessment reports, committee minutes, web publications, campus reports, and program reviews for the Montana Board of Regents.

Standard 4A and 4B: Assessment and Improvement

Introduction to Assessment and Improvement

The Year Seven Self-Evaluation process, as well as the planning that has occurred over the last eight years related to the Core Themes, the updated Strategic Plan, and the systems needed to support this planning have enlightened the campus to areas that are meeting or exceeding expectations and highlighted several areas needing improvement related to planning and each Core Theme.

The institution has performed well at creating an environment where the Core Themes are a part of annual assessment and evaluation. This is supported through activities such as launching of the Strategic Plan and updated Mission in 2014; the development of the Strategic Planning Committee to facilitate the strategic plan; the creation of the Tactical Document to track measures and initiatives that support the objectives and Core Themes, and most recently, annual meetings with faculty and staff that

review the Mission and Core Themes and help employees understand how their roles and goals connect with the overall Strategic Plan ([Staff Strategic Plan Presentation](#); [Faculty Strategic Plan Presentation](#)).

While great strides have been made in embedding the Mission and Core Themes into campus daily work, the institution is still developing systems that assist with integrating departmental projects and initiatives into the larger campus Core Theme communication and feedback processes. While acknowledging the importance of developed systems to support the planning processes and increase feedback to ensure Mission fulfillment, system development has been slow-moving in recent years. However, with the implementation of the new Strategic Planning and Programming process, the campus anticipates that this need for improvement will be addressed.

Standard 4.A.1-4.A.3

Standard 4.A.1 The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable and verifiable data—quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement—as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

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.

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.

(4.A.1) The University engages in ongoing collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data. While data for the overall institution is primarily collected and released through the Office of Institutional Research, the Provost's Office, and the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs, all departments and programs maintain their own data sets and bring that information to the planning process as needed or requested. The majority of the directors of departments and faculty representatives from Faculty Senate and academic departments participate in one or more of the following planning committees, allowing their data to be at the forefront of discussion when required for planning and data driven decisions related to the comprehensive Strategic Plan: Strategic Planning; Academic and Administrative Council; and Chancellor's Cabinet.

(4.A.1) As mentioned in Standard Three, Academic and Administrative Council oversees the Tactical Document which records the progress made towards many of the overall institutional goals supporting the Strategic Plan. Once during each semester, the Tactical Document is reviewed by this group, allowing for academic and administrative feedback. The AAC, in turn, reaches out to departments that may own parts of the Tactical Document metrics for any updates or changes. Annually, a summary statement of progress is made on the Tactical Document. The Office of Institutional Research records these updates on behalf of the AAC. In the most recent review cycle, the AAC and the Strategic Planning Committee recognized that a further loop of communication needs to occur to keep data and updates moving forward as well as developing a potential feedback loop to the institution. With that in mind, the Provost and the Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs will offer an update to the Chancellor's Cabinet on a semester basis regarding Tactical Document progress as well as new

initiatives that should be potentially added to the Tactical Document. In addition, a Strategic Plan annual update report will be prepared by the Office of Institutional Research each summer to highlight progress made regarding the Mission, Core Themes, objectives and indicators starting in the summer of 2018. A previous draft of this report was developed as a pilot in fall 2016 and will be further developed in the coming years.

(4.A.1; 4.A.2) Assessment of academic programs is a primary part of the data collection and evaluation process. This process is guided by faculty through department assessment plans and annual program evaluations and the Curriculum Proposal Process. As Montana Western is part of the Montana University System, faculty are accountable to both a campus-based and system-based assessment and curricular proposal process.

The Curriculum Proposal (CP) Process requires several stages of evaluation and must be backed by data that supports the reason for the request as well as the future impact of the request. CPs ask departments to determine the need of the change including supporting data, how the change will appear in the upcoming catalog, and effect on future resources ([Campus Curriculum Proposal Form](#)). After the academic department submits the proposal, the CP is reviewed by the Provost, Academic Chairs, General Education Committee, and finally Faculty Senate. If there are any concerns, any of the previously listed bodies may send the curriculum proposal back to departments for department clarification and/or revisions. Once Faculty Senate approves the curriculum proposal it receives a final review by the Provost and Chancellor for approval. All CPs are tracked and maintained through a shared OneDrive which allows editing through a catalog spreadsheet in the Registrar's Office.

If a program is planning a major change to an existing academic program or creating a new degree or major, the curriculum proposal will then move on for approval to the state system ([MUS Academic and Student Affairs](#)). Each May, the institution must submit an updated list of new programs they may be pursuing over the next three years ([Montana Western's Academic Program Plan](#)). Any program on this list may move forward after campus approval to the MUS Level I or Level II approval process. With most major curricular changes, the institution must submit to OCHE and ultimately the BOR an Intent to Plan, providing highlights of the description of the program, the need for the program, how the program ties to the institutional Mission and/or Strategic Plan, and any known overlap in the MUS system ([MUS Intent to Plan Form](#)). After the Intent to Plan is submitted, the campus prepares a curriculum proposal form submitted to OCHE for the BOR. This MUS Curriculum Proposal form takes assessment and planning to an additional level through the use of their curriculum proposal forms which require verification of processes and data that led to decision-making, explanation of the assessment processes to be established for the program, a description of the need for the program, the process to initiate the program, and budget impact, and a budget form with enrollment and funding projection approved by the CFO ([MUS Curriculum Proposal Form](#)). This form and additional materials are forwarded through OCHE to the Board of Regents for official approval.

(4.A.2; 4.A.3) Assessment of existing academic programs occurs on campus on an annual basis and a seven-year review through the MUS. The annual program review requires each department to submit an assessment review based on their assessment program plan and answer the questions listed on the template for academic program review ([Department Assessment Report Form Template](#)). These reports are reviewed by the assessment committee after submission to make sure that basic assessment processes related to program and student learning outcomes are occurring. The Assessment Committee then prepares a Report to Leadership that outlines the processes the Assessment Committee has worked on during the year, highlights points of interest from the department assessment reports, and makes recommendations to leadership. This report is given to the Provost who then forwards it to the

Chancellor's Cabinet ([2013](#), [2014](#), [2015](#) Assessment Reports to Leadership). The General Education Committee also submits an annual report on behalf of the General Education program, but are not required to submit a MUS seven-year review.

All academic programs on campus are required by the MUS to participate in a seven-year review process. Submission guidelines and review schedules are established and regularly updated by the MUS on their website ([Montana Western's Program Review Schedule](#)). These reviews are based on [BOR Policy 303.3](#) and while what is ultimately submitted to the Board of Regents is a two-page summary of the review, the review itself is comprehensive and addresses quantitative and qualitative metrics ([2011-12](#), [2013-14](#), [2014-15](#), [2015-16](#), [2016-17](#) MUS Seven Year Program Reviews).

During the previous Year One and Year Three Self-Evaluation, one recommendation developed related to the assessment procedures of programs on campus. While some programs are still in the early development stages of their assessment processes, the University has made great strides related to offering resources for assessment and requiring departments to participate in the assessment process. The following figure outlines the academic years since the Three-Year Self Study (2013-2017) and the progress made each year. The Education Department and Business Department are not required to submit annual reports as they are subject to assessment and accreditation standards through CAEP (Education) and IACBE (Business). However, the Assessment Committee requires the Education and Business Department to post the summary results of their accreditation assessments either in Moodle or through the Accreditation website.

Table 4.1 highlights by annual year the progress made regarding collecting assessment reports, progress of the assessment committee, and communication links between executive leadership and the annual assessment process.

Table 4.1. 2013-2017 Highlights of Montana Western Assessment Progress

2013-2017 Highlights of Montana Western Assessment Progress	
2013-14 Assessment Progress	Montana Western hired a consultant to assist with creating further assessment processes including the creation of an Assessment Committee; General Education Survey created to establish rudimentary metrics regarding using LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes in the classroom; In December 2013, the first Report to Leadership was submitted to the executive leadership team highlighting accomplishments and potential goals of assessment in the next academic year.
2014-15 Assessment Progress	Four faculty attended an AAC&U conference, General Education and Assessment: Disruptions, Innovations, and Opportunities, at the end of February 2014; Representatives of the Assessment Committee offered open forums to assist faculty and programs that desired further assistance with assessment tools; Conducted the NSSE in spring 2015; The Fall 2014 Adhoc Report was submitted to NWCCU with updates regarding the University's growth in assessment.
2015-16 Assessment Progress	Dr. Nathan Lindsay addressed accreditation requirements at the all campus fall meeting. Dr. Lindsay is the University of Montana's designated accreditation liaison officer;

	<p>Presentation regarding Montana Western's student success metrics at the American Association of State Colleges and University's Academic Affairs Summer Meeting;</p> <p>New Strategic Planning Committee was formed by the Chancellor.</p>
2016-17 Assessment Progress	<p>Assessment Committee under the direction of the new Provost, developed a charter that would guide their efforts;</p> <p>Assessment Committee piloted a process to review the departments' assessment plans and to provide feedback to the department as well as the Provost regarding the reports;</p> <p>The Academic and Administrative Council was designated with the responsibility of maintaining the Tactical Document;</p> <p>Ongoing discussion regarding department Annual Assessment Reports and Student Learning Outcomes in all syllabi during Department Chair meetings.</p> <p>The Assessment Committee renamed the committee the Academic Assessment Committee because their focus is on academic assessment and not assessment of all University departments.</p>

During fall 2016, three faculty members were tasked with reviewing course syllabi across all ten departments to ensure the inclusion of student learning outcomes. The faculty members met with departments to assist with examples of course syllabi student learning outcomes. Faculty are aware that student learning outcomes are to be in all syllabi. In spring 2017, the Academic Assessment Committee revised its charge; membership and voting; and committee responsibilities. The document was shared with all faculty. The Committee used the UMW Department Assessment Plan Checklist to review 2015-2016 Program Assessment Reports. The Committee determined that the checklist process needs revision for use as a tool for the review of the annual assessment reports. The Committee has also made progress in relation to setting up the assessment Moodle page with documents to support the program assessment process; provide documentation of assessment agendas and minutes; reports to the Chancellor's Cabinet; and a place for programs to submit their assessment plans and reports.

The Academic Assessment Committee in 2017-2018 is working on the following goals: 1) define what the Committee will assess in the review process, 2) review with departments and faculty how to use the assessment planning and reporting documents, 3) share examples of assessment that explicitly connects student learning outcomes to program Mission, the institution's Strategic Plan, the budget process and the University Mission, 4) use the results to improve the achievement of student learning outcomes, and 5) provide a model that shows the flow of the assessment processes for programs to reference. Overall, eight of ten departments have been submitting annual assessment reports. Faculty with experience in assessment are working with the two departments to develop their assessment plans. Due to the leadership transitions of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs from 2015-2017, the 2015-2016 assessment's Report to Leadership was not prepared and the 2016-2017 assessment report to Leadership is late and will be submitted during spring 2018. The 2017-2018 assessment report to Leadership will be submitted by June 2018.

Standard 4.A.4-4.A.6

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

Standard 4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.

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

The processes described to address standard 4.A.1 through 4.A.3 as well as the processes described in Standard Three illustrate the holistic approach that UMW takes regarding aligning and collaborating on programs and services to determine that all processes and plans lead to Mission fulfillment through alignment with the Core Themes. The indicators and Tactical Document provide evidence of holistic correlation, and integration of programs and services to support the Mission and Core Themes. In addition, these documents assist the planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment of achievement by providing metrics to show improvement, progress or completion. The following sections in this standard highlight each Core Theme, the associated objectives, and the indicators and metrics which are used to show improvement. Examples of progress and improvements are outlined with each Core Theme as well as highlighting standard 4.B.1 in relation to using the results of Core Theme assessment of programs and services to develop meaningful indicators, improve the informing of planning, decision-making, and allocation of resources, and making sure information is available to constituents in a timely manner. Further, the examples illustrate how the institution used the results of assessment to inform academic and administrative planning and practices.

Standard 4B: Improvement

Standard 4.B.1 Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

The University of Montana Western uses the goals developed for the strategic plan as indicators of achievements, measures, and projects in the tactical document; academic assessment reports; and other planning to support and accomplish the goals. Information related to planning documents is updated at least annually and used for informed decision making. As revealed through upcoming examples in this self-study (the Ecology Degree, Glass Program, Paw Prints for Success, Health and Human Performance Lab, and the description in standard 4.B.2 of assessment of student learning to inform academics), meaningful, analyzed data and indicators lead to informed planning and decision making which helps to prioritize resources and capacity. The metrics on the tactical document are posted on the campus shared drive, UMWdata. In addition, student success stories, highlights of experiential learning, and projects that resulted from stewardship and planning are often published as news articles on the Montana Western website or in the Campus Reports submitted prior to each Board of Regents meeting. The campus anticipates that with the start of the new Strategic Planning and Programming process, as well as annual published updates on the Strategic Plan, communication about indicators of achievement, results of using metrics for improvement, and informed decision making will continue to positively increase.

Standard 4.B.2 The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

The Assessment Committee was established in 2013 and developed the Annual Assessment Reporting Form to be completed by departments at the end of each academic year. The Annual Assessment Report addresses program outcomes and targeted areas for improvement in order to “close the loop” of meaningful assessment. Since 2013, five of nine departments (Biology; Math; History, Psychology and Social Sciences; Education; and Business and Technology) have consistently submitted annual assessment reports. As of 2017, eight of ten departments have submitted annual assessment reports (2013-2017 Assessment plans are available on campus). The Departments of Fine Arts and Equine Studies are aware of the importance of annual assessment and are working to develop plans. By May 2018, 100% of departments will submit annual assessment reports to guide program improvement and student achievement.

The following are 2016/2017 Annual Assessment Report examples of how departments use assessment results to inform academic planning which leads to implementation of practices that enhance and improve student learning, achievement and success:

Biology

Based upon program assessment data, the Biology Department has successfully streamlined its course schedule, designing it to integrate with course offerings in the Mathematics and Environmental Sciences Departments so that biology students can successfully graduate within four years to increase graduation efficiency. The Department has also worked to ensure that course syllabi, Student Learning Outcomes and Essential Learning Outcomes are consistent across different sections of department courses.

The Department developed presentation guidelines for students that will allow them to successfully deliver more professional presentations based on data collected at last year’s capstone Research Symposium. A review of assessment data indicated students have difficulties in writing scientific papers. In courses where written papers are required, modifications have been made in assignment instructions. For example, in the Cellular and Molecular Biology course, initial drafts of written work are required to be submitted well before the final project is due (something that was optional before). This allows the professor to review the work and make constructive suggestions for revision. This has anecdotally resulted in improved work and scores will be reviewed during this year’s assessment.

Business and Technology

Over the past six years, the Department of Business and Technology has used its assessment data for continual improvement of its program. The Department has established an annual assessment retreat after each academic year to review assessment data and adjust curriculum for deficiencies in student performance. The Department invites its program advisory board members to attend and be involved in the assessment retreat.

In 2012, the Department established criteria that defined performance measures of Direct Measure One: a national standardized business exam. Students were expected to score two points less than the national average (48/50). After the first assessment cycle, students were underperforming in a number of core areas, specifically in Economics, Marketing, Accounting and Finance. These identified deficiencies were then taken to the departmental assessment retreat, discussed at length, and curricular changes were developed to minimize those deficiencies. The Department implemented those changes for the next cycle of assessment. Currently, the performance levels are above the national average in all areas of core business concepts. This is due specifically to Outcomes Assessment Plan (OAP), the assessment retreat, and continual monitoring of performance levels.

Education

One program change driven by assessment data is the addition of a two-week field experience for elementary education majors. This extended placement was designed to allow students to develop stronger connections between the theories of education, as presented in the professional education core, and the real-world application of these techniques. During roundtable discussions, students reported that the extended field experience allowed them to make better connections between pedagogical theory and practice and to feel better prepared for student teaching. The two-week field placement also allows for better information to be gathered on the observation forms based on Danielson Framework components, as many of the items relate specifically to candidate performance during teaching events. The increased validity of data from the observation forms will be beneficial as the Education Department continues to evaluate program effectiveness.

Environmental Sciences

In the end of year Department meeting, faculty discussed gaps in student outcomes for upper division students. The following issues were identified:

- Students still need significant training in basic software programs.
- Writing of technical reports still requires significant oversight by faculty.
- Consistent integration of quantitative skills into course work at all levels.

Faculty also discussed how quantifiable each of the student outcomes were. It was determined that the outcomes listed in the catalog were measuring multiple factors within each outcome and not all objectives could be quantified. The strengths of new faculty were identified and the Department considered how student needs and new faculty strengths could be aligned programmatically.

In addition to quantitatively assessing learning objectives and whether course design supports learning outcomes, the Department also solicits student feedback on courses to make sure that students feel that they are receiving instruction that benefits their education and meets expectations and objectives. A few themes that have emerged in response to teaching and course design evaluation this year are:

- Students appreciate producing real products for real agencies rather than completing canned labs.
- Students can see how the work they do in a course directly prepares them for work in the environmental sciences.
- Students consistently comment on the enthusiasm of instructors within the Department.
- Students appreciate exposure to conducting authentic scientific research.

Equine Studies

Equine Studies faculty revised the performance skills required of students to eliminate the requirement that students perform skills bareback (without the use of a saddle) in addition to the skills performed in a saddle. The change was driven by student performance data and also by an assessment of the required skills of equine professionals across the nation which indicated that performing skills bareback was unnecessary.

An additional change made in the past year driven by assessment data is the addition of an Instruction Option within the program. Feedback from internship student performance evaluations and interest from the equine industry led to the creation of the option. Students were successfully mastering the performance objectives in the degree, but no focus was being placed on equipping students with the instructional skills necessary to develop the skills in others learning to ride a horse. The new Instruction

Option allows students to combine the mastery of skills with the application of instructional methods and a thorough understanding of the legal and ethical considerations of equine instruction.

Health and Human Performance

When the HHP department was formed in the fall of 2015, one of the challenges to address was the further development of written communication skills for students in both degrees offered by the department. The Department instituted a standardized general writing rubric for use in a freshman level, mid-point, and senior level course to gather data about the work of students. The spring 2016 Department assessment report noted that students were earning very low scores early in their career, and while many improved during their careers, a systematic approach to developing writing skills was necessary.

For the freshman level course, an existing writing assignment was used and a week-long scaffolded unit was created to introduce students to the conventions of writing in a scientific field. Faculty guide students step-by-step through the evaluation and interpretation of peer-reviewed articles, introduce resource management strategies, teach APA formatting expectations, and present tools and exercises to increase student competence in proofreading and reading for revisions. The deliberate approach to this assignment assures that all HHP/PEH students understand the Department expectations and have the resources to continue to develop their skills before reaching the mid-point class during which they are responsible for creating a literature review. This approach has led to increased proficiency during the mid-point and senior level assessments of writing.

Assessment of student writing proficiency has allowed the Department to share findings and strategies with other departments and has led to new courses and opportunities across campus. The development of the new Education writing course has created a support for students across disciplines to further develop writing skills. A work group has also been formed to determine how a “writing across the curriculum” model could be implemented on campus

Mathematics

Most recently, the Mathematics Department revised the curriculum for its major. This was the biggest area for targeted improvement after the 2014-2015 assessment year. The new curriculum was designed to seamlessly integrate instruction in undergraduate research skills at all student levels. The Department successfully designed and proposed the curriculum, effective in the 2016-2017 academic year.

During previous assessment cycles, the Department noticed an overall weakness in student technical writing skills, and decided to add specific instruction related to mathematical communication to M210 *Introduction to Mathematical Software*. Later, the Department noticed that students were picking up the use of the LaTeX typesetting software fairly quickly, so Department faculty decided to shift much of the specific instruction on using this software to a self-study so that students would have more time to focus on algorithm development and implementation in MATLAB and on communicating clearly about their work in that area. These were also changes to the M210 curriculum.

Finally, over the past several assessment cycles, the Department has observed that it is difficult to accurately assess student mastery in aggregated core skills such as calculus, linear algebra, algorithm development, probability and statistics. Faculty had little success at measuring this mastery with an exam or assignment in any one class, so they decided to develop a comprehensive exam that mathematics majors will be expected to take once they have completed coursework in these areas. This exam is currently under development.

English

In order to more accurately gauge student achievement in various courses as it relates to the program outcomes associated with that specific course (or course level), a new rubric was devised. This rubric largely builds on the language used for assessing Lit 110 and Lit 300 last year, but does not apply all program outcomes to all courses. Since this year the Department assessed 400-level courses, student essays were assessed only on Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 5. Next year, the Department will assess 110 and 300-level courses, and different rubrics will be used according to the course level. Fall 2017 Department assessment meetings discussed ways to standardize some aspects of assignments in courses (i.e., research expectations) where students have a choice among several courses taught by different faculty. This will ensure that student learning is more consistent in the program, regardless of choices in coursework, and also provide more consistency in terms of the documents assessed from multiple courses taught at the same level. Additionally, faculty continued to revise the rubrics used for assessing student achievement of program outcomes.

History, Psychology and Social Sciences

The Department is developing a system to closely monitor the enrollment distribution across general education and upper-level courses. In the first case, if numbers suggest continued resistance on the part of students to enroll in 2(X)-level classes for general education credit, the Department will investigate revising courses at that level so they can be offered at the 100 level. In the case of upper-level classes, determine if adjustments need to be made in the rotation of course to maximize enrollments, or if other steps can be taken to ensure healthy enrollment numbers across the board.

Primarily through increased advising efforts, the Department has made considerable progress in filling the 200-level general education sections and expects to adjust several classes from 200 to 100 level to better reflect the expectations of students and to potentially make the 200 level classes more useful to our majors. Revisions have been made to the two-year course rotations in the Fall of 2016 to reduce the amount of competition for students among faculty, by essentially reducing each faculty member's upper-class load (from a guarantee of one each semester, to three in the two-year cycle). This also has the effect of adding a general education section each semester.

Core Theme Emphasis, Objectives, Indicators, Metrics, and Outcomes

The following sections further highlight how the concepts of Standard 4A and 4B are used at the University. The measures are aligned with Core Themes and Priorities (objectives) listed in the [Strategic Plan](#) and [Tactical Document](#) and measures and metrics are tracked annually by the Academic and Administration Council. As mentioned earlier, this area will also make note of select examples of measures and projects that support the integration of Core Themes throughout the campus.

Core Theme 1: Continuously improve undergraduate education and experiential learning.

Emphasis	Undergraduate Education
	Experiential Learning
Objectives	Priority One: Encourage academic excellence and innovation.
	Priority Two: Develop, strengthen and expand creative co-curricular programs and campus collaboration to promote student learning, development, retention, and success.
	Priority Four: Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential Mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

Core Theme 1, Objective 1: Priority One- Encourage academic excellence and innovation.

The objective to encourage academic excellence and innovation connects to Core Theme One through both emphasis areas: undergraduate education and experiential learning. While these two areas may appear to logically align with the academic departments' best practices, the following table of indicators, measures, and outcomes as of 2017 reveal holistic involvement in programs and services for planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment of achievement.

Indicator 1: Goal 1A- Develop a cohesive general education program that utilizes experiential education and achieves universally accepted student learning outcomes.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Annual review by the General Education (GE) committee and GE faculty regarding the LEAP ELOs and general education categories.	Met: Starting in spring 2014, the GE faculty meet annually to review what ELOs they are teaching and how they link to the general education categories. These meetings occur in each GE category and are led by a GE Committee representative.
100% of general education syllabi will list the ELOs and SLOs to be achieved in the course and general education category.	In Progress: Starting in spring 2018, GE Committee will complete an annual review of general education syllabi to determine when and where ELOs and SLOs are listed. Faculty not listing these items will be followed up with by the Committee to reach the goal of 100% compliance.
Develop an evaluation between registrar and advising offices to evaluate and post the MUS core completion on transcripts.	In Progress: Goal to have a system in place by the end of summer 2018.

Indicator 2: Goal 1B- Enhance and promote experiential teaching and learning across the curriculum.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Use the NSSE survey to evaluate High Impact Practices.	Met: Next survey will be offered in spring 2018. Longitudinal data will help to further develop the ability to use this NSSE scale as an indirect measure.
100% of programs conduct formal program assessment.	In Progress: As of the 2016-17 academic year, 80% of programs complete annual program assessment. The Assessment Committee is working with the remaining programs to make sure an assessment plan and evaluation are prepared and submitted this year. However, 100% of programs participate in the seven-year review required by the MUS.
Maintain or increase the number of faculty development awards given each year to support Experience One scholarship and learning.	Met: A budget priority was made to increase the general fund faculty travel by \$1000 each year, this has been met for the last twelve years. In FY17 a new process for recording the Foundation Faculty Development funds was instituted which will improve tracking.
Track the number of Experience One grants awarded by ASUMW annually.	In Progress: The ASUMW office currently tracks the names and amounts awarded to the students, however the office does not currently track comparison between year to year or how the Experience One grant was used. Starting in 2017-18 ASUMW will also begin recording this information.
Indicator 3: Goal 1C- Improve academic programs through rigorous and ongoing assessment and review processes.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Use the portion of the NSSE survey related to "Level of Academic Challenge" as an indirect measure of assessment.	Met: Next survey will be offered in spring 2018. Longitudinal data will help to further develop the ability to use this NSSE scale as an indirect measure.
100% of programs conduct annual program reviews.	In Progress: As of 2016-17, 80% of programs are completing their annual program review. Assessment Committee is following up with the delinquent programs to make sure 100% compliance occurs in 2017-18.
Development of a BS in Ecology.	Met: The BS in ecology was approved by the campus, BOR, and NWCCU as of fall 2017.
Development of a Glass program.	In Progress: The glass program is approved on campus and through the BOR and is currently pending NWCCU approval.
Restructure of academic reporting processes.	In Progress: This measure is still in process through the spring 2018 semester. Changes will be implemented as of July 1, 2018.
100% of programs conduct the MUS seven-year review requirement.	Met: All academic programs and departments participate in the seven-year review requirement.
Indicator 4: Goal 1D- Promote and support academic innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit among students, faculty, and staff.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
At least two faculty and/or campus meetings a year that	Met: This has been met every year since 2012-13.

support the engagement and discussion of academic innovation and entrepreneurial spirit.	
Indicator 5: 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.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Document use of the sandbox classroom.	Met: ITS documents who is using the sandbox and for what purposes.
Use results of student satisfaction survey to determine technology needs of students.	Met: The student satisfaction survey has been used to drive several improvements in technology (Student Satisfaction Survey).
Document technological innovation through the agenda and minutes of the Technology Steering Committee.	Met: Technology Steering Committee meets once per block and keeps record through the agenda and minutes of technology recommendations and approval for the campus (Technology Steering Committee Minutes 2017-2018).
Indicator 6: Goal 1F- Engage students, faculty, and staff in meaningful experiential learning, service, creative and scholarly activities.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Participate in the Montana Campus Compact Survey each year.	Met: The campus annually participates in the Montana Campus Compact Survey.
Record staff professional development activities to note and encourage meaningful service and creative scholarly activities.	Met: The Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs office tracks this information each semester and records it on a spreadsheet.
Integrate data from Champion of Character athletics report to support student service opportunities on campus.	In Progress: Data are available, but have not yet been integrated into the student service tracking process (2016-17 Champions of Character Scorecard).
Create a system to record experiential learning, service, creative and scholarly activities in order to develop baseline metrics and benchmarks.	In Progress: The data are able to be collected as accurate estimates through individual reporting by faculty, staff, and students, however a formalized system needs to be created. A plan to create a "Campus Civic Engagement Plan" is in the works for 2018-19.
Use the NSSE "High-Impact Practices" Scale to measure service learning in students benchmarked with comparative institutions.	Met: Next survey will be offered in spring 2018. Longitudinal data will help to further develop the ability to use this NSSE scale as an indirect measure.

Core Theme 1, Objective 2: Priority Two- Develop, strengthen and expand creative co-curricular programs and campus collaboration to promote student learning, development, retention, and success.

Co-curricular programming and campus collaboration are synonymous with a holistic approach to planning. As part of Mission fulfillment, Montana Western works together to promote student learning, development, retention, and success, in turn, supporting progress and success in undergraduate

education and experiential learning.

Indicator 1: Goal 2B- Equip students with the knowledge and skills that inspire them to be civic-minded and enable them to lead.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Record accumulated points and unduplicated headcount of students who participate in "Paw Prints for Success" to determine a baseline metrics to measure increase in activity.	Met: Information is tracked by the residence life staff and shared with institutional research. Next stage will be to break down points and participation by type of activity and use this information to develop a baseline and goals.
Use the NSSE "Supportive Campus-Environment" scale to provide an indirect measure for civic-mindedness and leadership and to benchmark with other comparative colleges.	Met: Next survey will be offered in spring 2018. Longitudinal data will help to further develop the ability to use this NSSE scale as an indirect measure.
Count of the general education syllabi that include the LEAP ELOs "Civic Knowledge & Engaging Local and Global."	In Progress: This will be met as of Spring 2018 when GE Committee conducts their review of syllabi for listing of essential learning outcomes.

Core Theme 1, Objective 3: Priority Four- Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential Mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

Holistic strategies and approaches in planning human resource strategies are key to developing and attracting a qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff. The undergraduate education and experiential learning across the campus are supported by the diversity and experiences of these groups.

Indicator 1: Goal 4A- Provide faculty and staff with the support and tools necessary to act on their commitment to excellence.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Develop system to report to leadership requests for academic resources through the annual program assessment processes to provide evidence of resources required to support commitment to excellence.	In Progress: The Assessment Committee will include this information in their report to leadership as of the 2017-18 year.
Record request for resources to the budget committee for short and long-term prioritization to provide evidence of resources required to support commitment to excellence.	Met: Lists that track requests are provided to the Equipment Committee which then makes awards which are tracked by the committee and through the accounting records.

Track request for faculty development funds to provide support and evidence of funds provided to support commitment to excellence.	Met: This is tracked by the Faculty Development Committee (Faculty Development Summary).
Record department equipment requests to provide evidence of resources required to support commitment to excellence.	Met: Lists that track requests and awards are provided to Equipment Committee.
Track staff training and professional development opportunities to provide evidence of professional activities that support commitment to excellence.	Met: The Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs office tracks this information each semester and records it on a spreadsheet.

Examples of Improvement through Core Theme One

Improving through Innovating and Expanding Undergraduate Education and Experiential Learning:

The following narratives are examples of various academic programs using the emphasis of “Undergraduate Education” and “Experiential Learning” to improve the academic programs. A further exhibit will be available on campus during the visit providing examples of planning, assessing, and improving through Core Theme One.

Development of an Ecology Degree and a Pre-Professional Medical and Veterinary Sciences Option

The BS: Ecology degree emerged from assessment of the Biology degree and a recognition of a thriving student population related to the previous Wildlife Ecology option associated with the existing BS: Biology degree.

In 2011, the structure of the Biology Program was revised to create a BS: Biology degree with Options in Molecular Bioscience, Wildlife Ecology, and Integrative Biology. While this revision strengthened aspects of the program offerings, a certain degree of disciplinary flexibility and career-path transparency was lost in comparison with the Biology degree prior to 2011. Growth in the Biology Program was rapid from 2005 – 2009. From 2010 – 2015, the Biology Department supported between 98 – 129 majors per year. During this period, Biology majors chose to pursue Option areas at a rate of 17 – 27 per year in the Wildlife Ecology Option and 45 – 65% of Biology majors were interested in wildlife studies based on advisement data. Over this same period, 21 students graduated with a Wildlife Ecology Option Area in comparison with 13 students graduating in the Molecular Bioscience Option Area, and 18 students in the Integrative Biology Option Area. Creation of the new BS: Ecology degree capitalized on existing enrollment growth patterns in wildlife and integrative biology, offering a more targeted curriculum to students interested in these disciplines.

The creation of the BS: Ecology degree takes advantage of a national trend in 25% increased enrollment in undergraduate biological science programs. With that in mind, the new program aligned with a predicted increase in workforce demand in ecological services fields. According to the Ecological Society of America, “job opportunities in the ecological and environmental fields are predicted to grow enormously over the next several years.”

Due to careful planning through assessment in the Biology Department, there was very little additional resource reallocation required for this program. In the previous year, the Biology Program added three new courses and implemented them into their course rotation without adding additional faculty. With these three courses as well as the existing Wildlife Ecology option, resources were in place to propose the degree without taxing the existing Department or requiring outside support. The BS Ecology program was first offered in fall 2017 ([NWCCU Ecology Approval Letter](#)).

The Biology Department also recognized the need to create cross-discipline collaboration and efficiencies by creating a Pre-Professional Medical and Veterinary Sciences Option to accompany the existing BS: Biology degree. Each year, students from various disciplines such as Biology or Equine Studies pursue postgraduate degrees in medical and veterinary sciences. Over the years, these students have had the assistance of the faculty advisors to organize their electives and minors to meet the pre-requisites of their graduation programs. After reviewing quantitative reports surrounding graduation and hiring trends as well as qualitative data from students and faculty, the Biology Department realized they had an opportunity to further support students at the University who desired to pursue career options in these fields. The option, coupled with the core Biology degree requirements, is aligned with prerequisite entrance requirements for nursing programs, physician's assistant, physical therapy programs, medical school, dental schools, and veterinary colleges. The option in Pre-Professional Medical and Veterinary Sciences was offered for the first time in fall 2017.

The Glass Program

The Glass Program is currently in the major substantive change process with the NWCCU, but the story of its progression provides insight into the data collection and change process used to embrace and develop experiential learning and undergraduate education. Montana Western has offered glass courses for over 45 years with consistent enrollment. Combining this history with the hiring of a new visual arts professor with an expertise in glass, and funding through the Emerick Trust to establish the Emerick Studio, a new opportunity in undergraduate education and experiential learning was born.

Prior to the proposal moving through the campus and the MUS curriculum processes, data were collected to further support the program. Information was collected to define what a glass program would offer and how it could be collaborative with the STEM programs on campus through offering a scientific glass focus, the competition in the surrounding area, and Mission alignment ([Glass MUS Proposal](#)).

Once the Program was approved on campus, the Program proposal moved forward for consideration of OCHE and BOR level approval. As the concept of a glass program was new to the state, further data and specifically projections and opportunities were required in order to answer the Board's questions about the Program. To that end, the Office of Institutional Research and the Fine Arts Department worked together to build a future map for the program in order to highlight the potential of the Program, as well as the University's awareness of potential concerns or pitfalls of adapting the program ([Glass Program Future Map](#)).

As of the March 2017 BOR meetings the approval for the Program was received. And while the University is still pending NWCCU approval, the Fine Arts program has begun strengthening its glass courses by restructuring their offerings and adding trips to explore glass development such as the spring 2018 opportunity for students to visit Venice, Italy, as part of an Honors course offering.

Health and Human Performance Lab

The experiential learning mission of the Health and Human Performance (HHP) program is "to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the nutritional, physiological, biomechanical, psycho-social,

artistic, and recreational dimensions of human activity and health, and to prepare them with the skills to successfully apply this knowledge to graduate study or professional careers in the field. Through extensive hands-on and authentic field research and experiences, students will become critical thinkers capable of applying knowledge, evaluating complex issues in the field of Health and Human Performance and creating new relevant knowledge based on their own investigations.”

Through this mission, the HHP department not only serves students in the Health and Human Performance Major, but students enrolled in the Physical Education and Health K-12 major and minor as well as students enrolled in the BS: Business Administration Health and Fitness option and the BS: Biology Integrative Biology option. In 2016-17 alone, this represented upwards of 170 students enrolled on campus increasing the need for a facility with state-of-the-art equipment to support the experiential education of the students pursuing these areas of study. In 2016-17 the Department used their gathered data to create a proposal for the University to re-furbish the vacated Curious Minds facility as a Health and Human Performance Lab. The Lab would not only support the students in the associated programs but provide support to the Dillon community ([HHP Curious Minds Proposal](#)).

Established at the end of the spring 2017 semester, the HHP Lab has provided immediate and measurable improvements to the experiential learning opportunities available to Montana Western students. Since the inception of the Lab, students have completed health and fitness testing on their peers as well as members of the Dillon community. The access to equipment necessary to perform both maximal and submaximal exercise testing protocols provides students with experience aligned to industry standards, helps them to secure opportunities in further study, research, and employment in the HHP field.

Additionally, the undergraduate research opportunities available to students now has increased greatly through this new facility. For example, recently an HHP student completed a research abstract based on field testing of firefighters that was accepted for presentation at the regional conference of the American College of Sports Medicine Symposium in spring 2018. Students are conducting research alongside faculty members on the topics of VO2 max changes in collegiate distance track athletes over the course of the indoor competitive season, and on the effects of warm-up methods on power output in a maximal cycling protocol.

An additional benefit of the HHP lab is the opportunity for HHP students to generate data sets which they can use during their statistics coursework. This has enhanced the experience of students by providing them with data they are invested in and increases collaboration between the HHP and Mathematics Departments. Students are also expressing an increased interest in participating in the campus-wide Research Symposium held each spring as they recognize the high-quality and value of their research efforts.

Development of the HHP Lab has significantly increased the ability to provide organizations and individuals in Dillon with meaningful assessment and educational opportunities. To date, the Dillon Volunteer Fire Department, Beaverhead County Sheriff's Department, and individuals interested in health and performance have visited the lab for testing. Participants are provided with valuable feedback and guidance based on their assessment data, allowing them to work closely with HHP students and faculty. The visibility of the HHP Lab has also led to off-campus events designed to enhance health including senior fitness assessments at the Southwestern Montana Family YMCA and Legacy Assisted Living. A partnership between the YMCA and HHP Department is in the works to expand

our abilities to provide assessment and instruction to members ranging from teen fitness courses to educational workshops.

Inventory and Assessment of Poindexter Slough in the Beaverhead River Drainage

One way to improve student learning through experience is to assist the local Dillon and Montana community with their goals and projects through student participation. One example of the classroom embracing the community is through the [Inventory and Assessment of Poindexter Slough in the Beaverhead River Drainage](#), completed through a course offered in the Environmental Sciences Program.

From September 25 through October 18, 2017, six students in the Environmental Field Studies class at the University of Montana Western conducted a post-restoration inventory and assessment of stream morphology, in-stream macroinvertebrates, and stream habitat (including a vegetation survey) over the 4.73-mile length of Poindexter Slough, located three miles south of Dillon, Montana.

Poindexter Slough is a low-gradient side channel, likely a former channel of the Beaverhead River, fed primarily by the diversion of water from the Beaverhead River through a head gate located at the headwaters of the slough. An upgrade to the diversion gate was installed in 2016; this upgrade was intended to reduce the sediment input from the Beaverhead River.

The purpose of the UMW study was to gather comparative data to assess the riparian restoration and fish habitat improvement project completed in 2015 by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and The Beaverhead Watershed Committee. The data collected in 2017 was compared to pre-restoration and post-restoration data to provide recommendations for management. The *Inventory and Assessment of Poindexter Slough in the Beaverhead River Drainage* report submitted to Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks highlights the students' discoveries and results of their studies.

Natural Horsemanship Colt Sale

The Natural Horsemanship program continues to develop and has now expanded to include a colt training and an annual sale where the colts are donated by local ranchers. Throughout the year students train the horses and learn how to produce a major equine event, ultimately leading to the annual colt sale. While the Natural Horsemanship Program has participated in colt sales throughout Montana for several years, after assessing the cost and benefits of traveling and participating in the sale, they realized that students would gain more experience and the Department would be better served to offer its own colt sale. For example, in addition to the fall and spring courses that assist students in training their colts for the sale, students also participate in a course that provide them hands-on experience organizing and producing natural horsemanship events. The Montana Western Natural Horsemanship program had its inaugural Colt Challenge and Sale on March 31 and April 1, 2017 with over 400 in attendance from the surrounding communities. The Colt Sale raised \$100,000, with some colts selling for as high as \$10,000. The proceeds of the sale support the National Horsemanship Program.

Rural Fridays

Rural Fridays is a unique partnership with rural schools in Southwest Montana. Students and teachers from one and two room rural schools, and home-schooled children travel to the University of Montana Western on Fridays to be taught by teacher candidates who are in the elementary methods courses. Rural school teachers and students experience the available University resources, educational equipment and materials. When Rural Fridays is in session, the entire campus functions as a lab school, enhancing experiential education for students and faculty. The Rural Fridays program is a true clinical

experience which provides authentic assessment of teacher candidates. Teachers from the rural schools and Education Department professors observe and critique the instructional practices of the teacher candidates with a debriefing during the following Monday college class. There are a number of benefits for students including expanding social skills, interacting with same age peers, and developing friendships that will be helpful during the transition to high school.

Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation Model Classroom for Education

The Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation Model Classroom for Education located in Main Hall was carefully designed to be flexible, modular and innovative and feature micro-environments that showcase educational tools and technology. This unique teaching and learning environment is dedicated to using experiential learning to enhance rural education and prepare educators for the 21st century. The Model Classroom is used for instructional purposes and for Rural Fridays.

Writing Remediation, Linked Classes and the Co-Requisite Model

The English Department provides a general education and foundational service to the University through its offerings of remediation courses in writing. Building remediation into the block system has its challenges, and as the Department evaluated these courses, they realized that students required a more consistent approach supporting student success in undergraduate education. To that end, in fall 2009 the department started "linking" courses. Linked courses provide students the opportunity to experience WRIT 095 and WRIT 101 with the same 17-student cohort and professor over two blocks. This provides students a cohesive environment to practice writing. This course, called *Stretch English*, gives developmental writers the chance to learn various composition and revision styles. The class essentially "stretches" the requirements of WRIT 101 across two blocks, while integrating remedial resources such as in-class peer tutoring, strengthening the students' skills in writing.

The Stretch Program has placed the University in a prime position to easily incorporate the Complete College America suggestion of Co-Requisite Models, which the Montana University System has embraced with plans for all colleges offering remediation to implement. As UMW continues to improve remediation offerings in writing, it anticipates using a new stretch pilot in fall 2018 to adapt the course registration and block model to align with the co-requisite model.

Math Pathways and Remediation Development

Like the English Department, the Mathematics Department provides courses for remediation and gateway. Math remediation courses influence not only students passing their general education mathematics requirement, but also act as the pre-requisite for many of the courses in the Biology and Environmental Science Departments. To that end, math remediation opportunities and improvements are a core influence on student success, undergraduate education, and experiential learning. Furthermore, unlike the English department where WRIT 095 (remediation) feeds into only one gateway, WRIT 101, the Math Department remediation course must prepare students for a choice of gateway courses. To address this need, the Department has actively used MUS resources such as EdReady. It has also worked with several academic departments to restructure some curriculum to support a foundation for Math Pathways. EdReady is a remediation program created and operated through the Montana University System. The program began in fall 2014 and UMW served as one of the pilot institutions for its implementation in the System.

Originally, the Department used the EdReady diagnostic at the beginning of the class, had students complete the "Check Your Knowledge" (CYK) tests to demonstrate mastery, and then used EdReady as the final exam. There were several problems with this approach. First, the CYK tests are typically one multiple-choice question, so students could get it right by chance or just by trying it a few times to eventually get it right. In other words, students were not needing to actually learn the material to be

successful on the CYK. Second, the topics from class and topics on the CYK tests and final were not completely in alignment. Finally, the final exam frequently had technical problems.

After a year of practice with the system and working with the EdReady programmers, the Department decided to change a few approaches. First, instructors changed their curriculum to better match what EdReady offered. There were a few mathematics topics lost that the program felt were important, but in trade, some new topics were added that further supported the curriculum. Students were now also required to complete practice and review problems on EdReady for the majority of their homework. This ensured that the homework and curriculum were more closely aligned. Because EdReady is still unable to give instructors reports about the students' practice and review problems in a reasonable format, students now provide screenshots of math work that prove that they have completed these problem sets satisfactorily. Finally, they stopped using EdReady as the final exam, to avoid unwanted technical issues. The course now offers a paper final again instead, which may be adapted as needed. The Department still uses the EdReady diagnostic on the first day, which gives instructors a rough sense of what a student's mathematics skills are when they enter the M090 or M095 course. Over time and through a constant relationship between the Department and EdReady, the course has significantly evolved. While there are still some technological issues to address, the Department believes those will be resolved soon.

In addition to adapting EdReady for remediation support, the Mathematics Department also participated in a MUS system initiative to develop Math Pathways. Math Pathways is a "Complete College America" initiative that helps colleges and universities set up math pathways for students that align with their academic goals rather than a one-size-fits-all remediation and gateway model. To that end, Mathematics worked with other departments to create recommended math pathways for their students. Students studying STEM or professional related fields are encouraged to proceed through the traditional M095 to Gateway path as many of their major core courses require a strong math foundation. Another pathway has been created for students that have more of a liberal arts focus. The Department designed a linked course between M090 and M127. Students needing remediation enroll in this linked course and receive the remediation support that attaches to the M127 topics in the math course they are pursuing. Advising protocols as well as catalog descriptions of courses have been set up to explain to students what each path means and how to choose a path. While this is an initial phase of Math Pathways, it has set up a strong foundation for future improvements related to co-requisite models with remediation and gateway courses.

General Education Program

Integrating LEAP and the Essential Learning Outcomes

Montana Western adopted the Liberal Education & America's Promise (LEAP) outcomes in fall 2013. At the end of each year, the General Education Committee leads seven meetings with the faculty who teach in specific disciplines related to general education. During these meetings, the faculty discuss the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes (ELO), compare and contrast pedagogy approaches in general education, and the alignment of student learning outcomes. As of 2017, the General Education Committee annually checks the general education syllabi to confirm ELOs are listed.

Teaching Development Committee (TDC)

The Teaching Development Committee (TDC) has undertaken a number of diverse initiatives over the last six years to advance pedagogical practices, build collegiality, and support faculty development. Each year the TDC is responsible for organizing the Faculty Fall Conference that aims to address faculty-

selected topics. Additionally, the TDC chooses yearly initiatives. The following is an overview of those initiatives:

- 2012-13: Faculty forums (faculty and guests presented on a range of topics); open-door classes which allowed faculty to visit one another's classes
- 2013-14: Faculty Fridays (social time on Friday afternoons once a block to promote collegiality); organized and supported efforts to define Experience One
- 2014-15: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- 2015-16: PLCs and established a faculty space for shared discussion
- 2016-17: PLCs and Faculty Forums (once per block to discuss topics around teaching)
- 2017-18: "What is Experience One?" discussions with faculty and staff to clearly communicate and implement the definition developed in 2014

All of these initiatives have grown out of conversation with faculty in an effort to support areas in which the faculty is most interested in learning and advancing professionally.

In May of 2014, more than 60 faculty members came together to define Experience One. Through facilitated, participatory decision making in cross-disciplinary groupings, the faculty constructed the following definition: Experience One engages students and faculty in actively exploring the knowledge, purposes, and practices in every field of study.

Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Effective Teaching Practices Course

The ACUE Evidence-Based Effective Teaching Practices Course is endorsed by The American Council on Education (ACE). As explained on the ACUE website, decades of research show that when students receive quality instruction their rates of course completion and program retention go up, achievement gaps narrow, and graduation numbers improve. These critical outcomes align with Montana Western's Mission, Core Themes and Strategic Plan. Currently, there are two cohorts (Cohort A: 10 faculty and Cohort B: 9 faculty) taking the course with the anticipation of a third cohort of 10 faculty to begin during spring semester 2018. The Cohort Progress Reports indicate faculty are engaged in the evidence-based teaching practices course, have improved their knowledge of evidence-based practices and are implementing those teaching practices in their courses ([ACUE Cohort Progress Report 1](#); [ACUE Cohort Progress Report 2](#)).

Engagement

Faculty find the course and its presentation of evidence-based teaching practices engaging and relevant to their work. In Cohort A, after completing 19 of 25 modules, 95% of responses indicate faculty agree or strongly agree that the knowledge and skills presented in the modules are relevant to their work. In Cohort B, after completing 17 of 25 modules, 89% of responses indicate faculty agree or strongly agree that the knowledge and skills presented in the modules are relevant to their work.

Learning

Faculty improved their knowledge of evidence-based teaching practices. In Cohort A, after completing 19 of 25 modules, faculty learned 31 new techniques (an average of 1.6 techniques per person, per module) and they learned more about 54 techniques (an average of 2.8 techniques per person, per module). In Cohort B, after completing 17 of 25 modules, faculty learned 23 new techniques (an average of 1.4 techniques per person, per module) and they learned more about 33 techniques (an average of 1.9 techniques per person, per module).

Implementation

Faculty are implementing evidence-based teaching practices. In Cohort A, after completing 19 of 25 modules, faculty indicate they implemented 15 new techniques (an average of 0.8 techniques per person, per module). Faculty plan to implement 43 additional techniques (an average of 2.3 techniques per person, per module). In Cohort B, after completing 17 of 25 modules, faculty indicate they implemented 14 new techniques (an average of 0.8 techniques per person, per module). Faculty plan to implement 20 additional techniques (an average of 1.2 techniques per person, per module).

Faculty have until the end of spring semester to complete the 25 modules. A number of faculty have completed the course and are recognized as ACUE Teaching Scholars. This semester, faculty ACUE Teaching Scholars are facilitating Student Learning Outcomes Working Sessions. Based on content learned during the course, faculty are assisting and supporting colleagues to review and revise syllabi student learning outcomes to align with evidence-based practices.

Improving through High Impact Practices:*NSSE Survey and Embracing High Impact Practices*

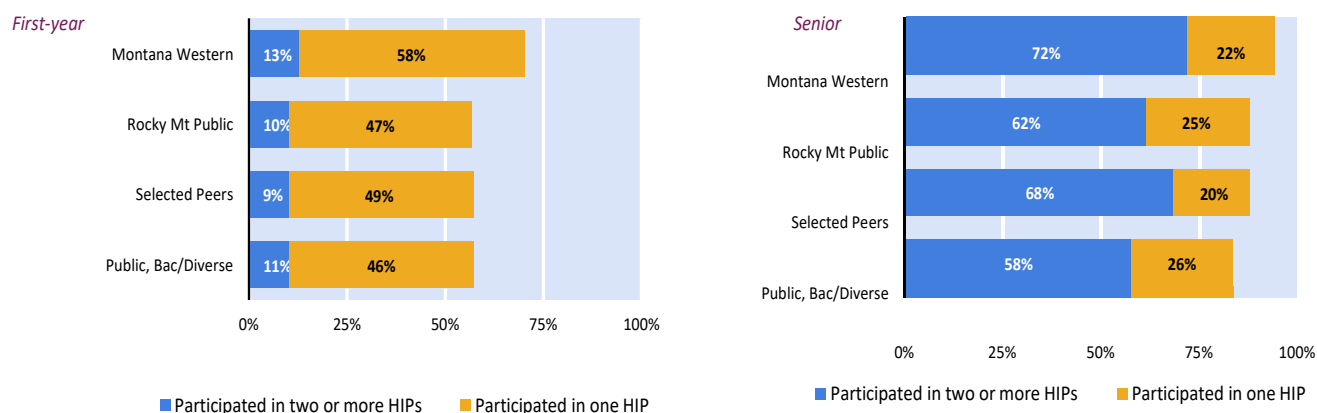
The University of Montana Western believes that the experiential learning emphasized in Experience One is an opportunity to not only embrace high impact practices (HIP), but to embed them in the programs and curriculum. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) describes high impact practices as:

- Learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together
- Courses that included a community-based project (service-learning)
- Work with a faculty member on a research project
- Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement
- Study abroad
- Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)

To assist in measuring this potential, the University utilizes the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). As the University is only in its second cycle of the most recent updates to NSSE, longitudinal data is not yet available regarding the utilization of high impact practices. However, the most recent survey conducted in 2015 shows that Experience One truly improves the opportunity for high impact practices in undergraduate education to comparative colleges and universities. As Figure 4.1 from the [NSSE High Impact Practices Report](#) reveals at least 71% of the first-year students participate in at least one high impact practice and 58% of that percentage participate in more than one practice. On average, only 57% of first-year students at the selected peer institutions participate in high impact practices. Of that 57%, only 47% average of peer institution first-year students participate in more than one. By the senior year, approximately 94% participated in at least one high impact practice in comparison with an average of 85% at peer institutions.

Figure 4.1. NSSE Overall High Impact Practices

The figures below display the percentage of students who participated in High-Impact Practices. Both figures include participation in a learning community, service-learning, and research with faculty. The Senior figure also includes participation in an internship or field experience, study abroad, and culminating senior experience. The first segment in each bar shows the percentage of students who participated in at least two HIPs, and the full bar (both colors) represents the percentage who participated in at least one.



The NSSE High Impact Practices report expands on the use of high impact practices comparison between UMW and its peers. Figure 4.2 illustrates, in most categories, Montana Western integration of high impact practices is higher than comparative institutions. While this accomplishment is celebrated, the data also provide an opportunity for the University to continue to shape and improve opportunities in experiential learning throughout the undergraduate experience.

Figure 4.2. NSSE High Impact Practices Comparison with Peer Institutions

	Montana Western		Rocky Mt Public		Selected Peers		Public, Bac/Diverse	
	%		%	Effect size ^a	%	Effect size ^a	%	Effect size ^a
First-year								
11c. Learning Community	8		12	-.14	8	-.02	12	-.15
12. Service-Learning	71		52 ***	.39	55 ***	.34	52 ***	.39
11e. Research with Faculty	10		5 *	.19	5	.15	6	.12
Participated in at least one	70		57 **	.28	58 **	.26	57 **	.28
Participated in two or more	13		10	.08	9	.12	11	.05
Senior								
11c. Learning Community	32		22 *	.22	25	.15	23 *	.21
12. Service-Learning	86		62 ***	.55	67 ***	.46	60 ***	.59
11e. Research with Faculty	27		25	.06	31	-.08	22	.11
11a. Internship or Field Exp.	61		49 *	.25	58	.07	46 **	.30
11d. Study Abroad	10		9	.03	16	-.18	8	.07
11f. Culminating Senior Exp.	54		48	.13	51	.06	44 *	.21
Participated in at least one	94		87 *	.25	89	.19	83 **	.34
Participated in two or more	72		62 *	.22	68	.08	58 **	.30

With that in mind, while longitudinal tracking is not yet available, the current and upcoming information

is and will be used to further explore the potential of using high impact practices with experiential learning to improve the University and the student experience.

HIP Example- Culminating Senior Experience: All Campus Research Symposium

One way the campus encourages the high impact practice of culminating senior experience is through the Annual Research Symposium. While the first campus research symposium in 2007 was prior to the accreditation cycle covered by this self-study, over the past eleven years the Symposium has become an annual campus event that is well-attended and provides Montana Western students with a formal venue to present their academic endeavors and highlight their scholarly work.

Organized and funded by the Biology Club, the Symposium has provided a venue for over 330 students from any academic discipline across the campus to present their scholarly work including senior thesis, internships, independent research and course projects. In addition, each Symposium features a keynote presentation by a regional scientist on various research topics, generally focused on a topic that applies to a wide audience.

The sciences represent the largest student population to participate each year as they are required to present either a senior thesis or internship at the Symposium as part of their program requirements; however each year there is an increase of more students from other disciplines participating including History, Social Science, Psychology, Mathematics, Health and Human Performance, English and Business ([2017 Symposium Abstract Book](#)).

The Symposium is organized much like a scientific meeting with both oral and poster presentations. Presenters have to submit abstracts by a given deadline in the spring. Abstracts are then organized into an abstract book and a schedule of events is generated. The typical schedule includes a Friday evening oral presentation session, a poster session, and the keynote lecture. Saturday typically has a morning oral presentation session, a lunch poster session and an afternoon oral session.

HIP Example- Study Abroad: National and International Travel

NSSE responses indicate that Montana Western's seniors have a higher level of participation in study abroad than seniors in two other peer groups (Figure 4.2). The block scheduling system provides a unique experience for students to travel nationally and internationally in a registered course. Because a course occurs over 18 days, students have the opportunity to travel not just locally but nationally and internationally without interrupting their studies or class schedules. This is particularly significant as Montana Western has a high population of low income and first-generation students who, due to lack resources, do not often receive an opportunity to travel for a full semester at other institutions. Traveling in the block opened the doors for this population to gain access to a HIP they may not receive at another institution. This high impact practice not only broadens their undergraduate education but enriches their experiential learning through embracing diversity and other cultures in learning. Typically, each semester has two to three courses with travel as a major core of the course curriculum. These courses often provide a community connection by allowing community members to travel with the students and courses. Table 4.2 highlights the trips students have participated in during the past five years and the courses that supported these endeavors.

Table 4.2. National and International Trips During the Past Five Years

Semester/Year	Destination	Associated Courses	Number of Students
Fall 2013	Scotland	HON 101B, 201A, 301B, 401C	27
Fall 2013	Greece	EDU 311	5
Fall 2014	New York	HONR 193A, 293A and ARTH391A	18
Spring 2015	Russia	EDU 311	6
Fall 2015	France and Spain	HONR 193B, 293B,	12
Spring 2016	Iceland	HONR 193C, 293B, 393A, 493A	9
Spring 2017	Death Valley, CA	LIT 339	11
Spring 2017	Yellowstone Winter Studies	ENVS 391A	5
Spring 2017	Austria	BGEN 491A/BUS 304	23
Fall 2017	Greece	LIT 302	10
Spring 2018	Seattle, WA	EDU352/EDU311	11
Spring 2018	Venice Italy	HONR 193D, 393D	13

Next Stage of HIP Development- Montana National Association of System Heads (NASH) and High Impact Practices (HIP) grant

Montana is one of four states out of fifty applications who recently selected to receive the Lumina funded NASH Taking Student Success to Scale (TS3) HIP grant. The goal of Montana's grant is to ensure that all students experience one or more high quality HIPs before graduation. As part of the grant process, Montana Western's Dean of the School of Outreach and Director of Research attended the ACE-NASH Leadership Academy and a team with four faculty attended the High Impact Practices and Equity-Minded Guided Pathways Initiatives Conference.

Montana Western faculty define experiential learning as authentic practice within the discipline. Experience One fully integrates and scales guided pathways and High Impact Practices into all campus-based instructional programs. The 2015 NSSE results indicate Montana Western's students are highly engaged in service learning (86%), research with faculty (27%), field experiences (61%), and culminating senior experiences (54%). These data align with Montana Western's unique Mission and Core Themes. Participation in the HIP grant will further UMW's ability to collect the necessary data to rigorously document, assess, and disseminate the results of faculty teaching strategies specific to each High Impact Practice.

Core Theme 2: Maximize campus-wide support for student success and completion.

Emphasis	Student Success
	Student Completion
Objectives	Priority Two: Develop, strengthen, and expand co-curricular programs and campus collaboration to promote student learning, development, retention, and success.
	Priority Three: Develop enrollment management strategies that support the experiential mission and contribute to student success.
	Priority Four: Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.
	Priority Five: Maintain facilities and infrastructure commensurate to the Mission and priorities of the University.
	Priority Six: Efficiently steward resources and operations to sustain the University for future generations.
	Priority Seven: Increase Montana Western's local, regional, and national profile.

Core Theme 2, Objective 1: Priority Two- Develop, strengthen, and expand co-curricular programs and campus collaboration to promote student learning, development, retention, and success.

Embracing student success and completion cannot be fostered without the holistic development of co-curricular programs and full campus collaboration. While the Mission drives the University, ultimately student success and completion fulfill the Mission. An institution where faculty, staff, and administration are invested in co-curricular programs, student learning, development, retention and success are ultimately promoted.

Indicator 1: Goal 2A- Link student affairs and student academic support by adopting a developmental approach to co-curricular experiences and academic support.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Record of annual projects and accomplishments for the Academic and Administrative Council.	In Progress: Minutes are kept for every AAC meeting that reflect projects and progress pursued by academics and administration. Results will be submitted in a report to the Chancellor's Cabinet.
Purchase and develop an online catalog.	Met: This project concludes as of February 2018.
Annual review of results of the Student Satisfaction Survey by each department.	Met: Each year the Residence Life Department which owns this survey releases the results to the departments for analysis and improvement.
Indicator 2: Goal 2C- Coordinate programming that explores issues of personal health and safety, decision-making, and social responsibility for students, faculty, and staff through collaboration across the University community.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Document number of staff and faculty who attend all campus and/or mandatory campus meetings as well as the topics.	Met: All campus meetings that are mandatory have sign in sheets tracked by the Human Resources office.

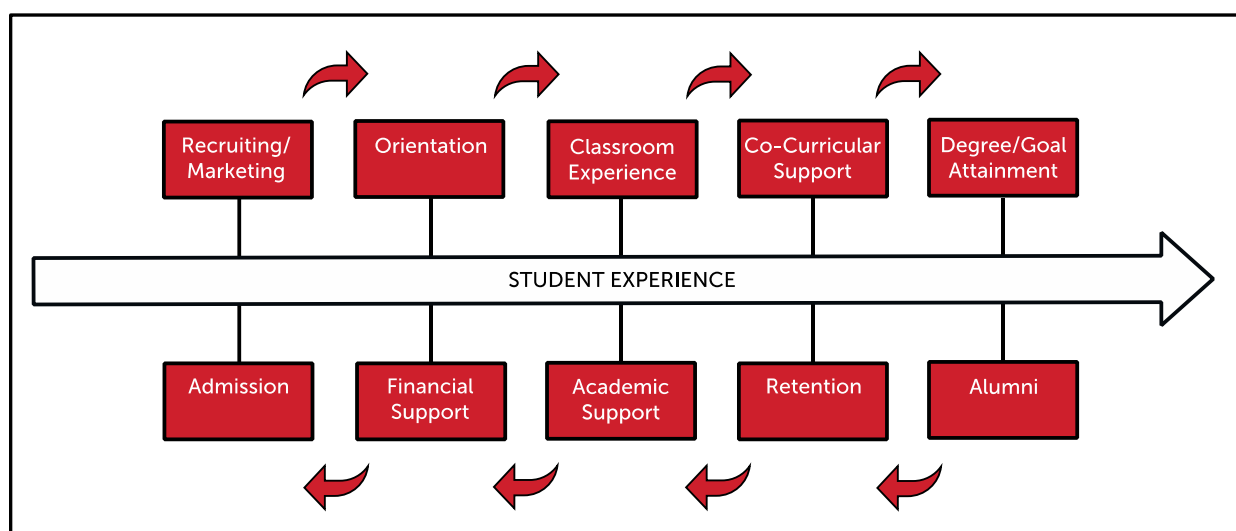
Track headcount, retention, and graduation rates of students who participate in athletic life skills courses to set baseline metrics and benchmarks.	In Progress: Headcount is currently tracked. By 2018-19 a column reflecting this information will be built into the retention and graduation dataset.
Track headcount, retention, and graduation rates of students who participate in TRiO program.	Met: The TRiO program tracks this information as part of their grant requirements (TRiO program 2014-15 and 2015-16 reports).
Provide the National College Health Assessment to students on a regular basis.	Met: The Dean of Students Office offers this survey and uses the results to determine programming for health and safety on campus.
Indicator 3: 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.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
The headcount and retention percentage of students participating in ASUMW or athletic programs.	In Progress: Athletic information related to this measure is currently tracked. ASUMW tracking needs to be developed.
Use the NSSE "Service-Learning" scale to benchmark and compare with other colleges.	Met: Next survey will be offered in spring 2018. Longitudinal data will help to further develop the ability to use this NSSE scale as an indirect measure.
Track the percentage of classes with service learning integrated.	In Progress: There is an estimate of classes using service learning tracked through the campus compact survey; however, a formalized system needs to be created.
Indicator 4: Goal 2E- Demonstrate the power of experiential education by achieving greater student success than comparator institutions.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Increase first year and transfer student retention rates.	In Progress: Retention rates for bachelor seeking students have increased; however, associate-seeking students have decreased or remained similar in the past 10 years. When the bachelor and associate cohort rates are combined the overall retention rate has not increased. Supporting reports are available in the registrar's office.
Increase IPEDS six-year graduation rates by 2% each year.	Met: IPEDS six-year graduation rates have continued to increase or maintain previous increases. Supporting reports are available in the registrar's office.
Increase IPEDS outcomes measures rates.	In Progress: IPEDS outcomes measures surveys have only been conducted for the past two years. Changes that support outcomes measurements will require more longitudinal data. Supporting reports are available in the registrar's office.
Performance-based Funding Metrics.	Met: Performance-based funding from the state has been received every year since its inception. Supporting reports are available in the registrar's office.
Utilize MUS benchmarking reports to compare standard metrics against other MUS comparative colleges.	Met: Comparatives to other MUS and IPEDS colleges have been available through MUS system reports and are being used to set baseline goals. Supporting reports are available in the registrar's office.

Measure graduation success for 100% of the student population.	Met: Reports have been created that measure retention and graduation for all student cohorts. Supporting reports are available in the registrar's office.
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Core Theme 2, Objective 2: Priority Three- Develop enrollment management strategies that support the experiential mission and contribute to student success

Enrollment management strategies drive student success and completion. While often associated with headcount only, UMW is striving to see beyond numbers as enrollment management is about the entire student experience. It is through all areas of campus embracing the understanding of the student experience that the indicators and measures are developed for this objective.

Figure 4.3. Strategic Enrollment Management/Completion (SEM/C): Perspective of the Student Experience



Indicator 1: Goal 3A- Manage class enrollments to achieve optimal efficiency.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Maintain an average of 18:1 or 19:1 faculty to student ratio.	Met: The average faculty to student ratio reported to IPEDS in 2016-17 was 19:1.
Develop reports that track the average class size in categories of off campus/on campus/online courses.	In Progress: Data is currently available through the Office of Institutional Research and the School of Outreach. Formalized reports will be developed in 2017-18.
Creation of a SEM Plan.	In Progress: An AAC taskforce has been working since spring 2016 to determine how SEM could be utilized on the Montana Western campus. As of fall 2017 a decision was made to create a SEM Committee. This Committee will begin meeting in spring 2018 with a priority goal of creating a SEM plan.

Average student credit hour reports.	Met: Student credit hours are tracked each term and are available to campus decision makers.
Measure and report to Provost and department leads faculty FTE and load reports.	In Progress: This report, while available, has not been widely released. By 2018-19 this report will be available on an ongoing basis.
Indicator 2: Goal 3B- Identify and recruit best-fit students.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Track first-time and cohort annual retention in relation to demographics and academic pursuits in order to provide baseline data to determine best fit-students.	Met: A retention report related to first-time and transfer student cohorts was released for the first time in fall 2016.
Track graduation rates of first-time and transfer cohorts with demographic and academic information in order to provide baseline data to determine best fit-students.	In Progress: Graduation rates for all student (first-time and transfer) cohorts that enter in the fall semester are now tracked when previously only first-time student information was readily available. Demographic and academic information needs to be added to reports. Goal to be completed by 2018-19.
Reports that track headcount and retention of students by major in order to provide baseline data to determine best fit-students.	Met: Starting in 2015, each year the academic departments are provided dashboards for enrollment, graduation, and course headcounts. Dashboards are available on campus.
Tracking residency headcount and retention rates in order to provide baseline data to determine best fit-students.	In Progress: Residency headcount is tracked each semester; however, retention has not been tracked from this perspective.
Five-year comparisons of admission funnel rates in order to provide baseline data for recruiting patterns and best fit-students.	Met: The Director of Admission maintains this information each year to compare and contrast the incoming classes and variances between those classes.
Indicator 3: Goal 3C- Increase the diversity of the student body.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
Track headcount by demographics: ethnicity; gender; residency; veteran/military; non-traditional; and Native American students.	Met: All of these demographics are tracked in demographic reports.

Use the NSSE “Interaction with Diverse Others” scale to provide an indirect measure for how students experience diversity through the student body.	Met: Next survey will be offered in spring 2018. Longitudinal data will help to further develop the ability to use this NSSE scale as an indirect measure.
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Core Theme 2, Objective 3: Priority Four- Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential Mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

As mentioned in Core Theme One, holistic strategies and approaches in planning human resource strategies are key to developing and attracting a qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff. Students and their success and completion benefit from the diverse mix of experiences and background of UMW faculty and staff.

Indicator 1: Goal 4B- Ensure that Montana Western’s working environment reflects and supports diversity.	
Measure	Outcome as of 2017
100% of faculty and staff participate in and complete Title IX and EverFi training.	Met: During fiscal year 2017 all faculty and staff completed EverFi training. This is an ongoing and annual effort.
100% of incoming students complete EverFi and Haven annually.	Met: All students completed EverFi and Haven during their admission process since fall 2015.
Maintain or increase number of advanced degrees held by faculty, administration, and staff.	Met: The faculty and staff are appropriately qualified. 89% of faculty have a terminal degree.
All full-time faculty curriculum vitae are updated and kept on file in the Provost’s Office.	Met: All curriculum vitae are on file with the Provost’s Office.

Core Theme 2, Objective 4: Priority Five- Maintain facilities and infrastructure commensurate to the Mission and priorities of the University.

Supported and maintained facilities and infrastructure enhance students’ well-being and ability to use the campus to further their education. Holistic collaboration from faculty, staff, and administration to identify needs and support facilities and infrastructure are an indirect measure of student success and completion.

Indicator 1: Goal 5A- Maintain residential and co-curricular spaces that are safe, functional, environmentally responsible, and marketable.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Complete seismic reinforcement of Mathews Hall.	Met: Mathews Hall seismic reinforcement was completed in summer 2017.
Renovation of Mathews Hall bathrooms.	In Progress: Planning completed, and construction will be completed by spring 2018.

Core Theme 2, Objective 5: Priority Six- Efficiently steward resources and operations to sustain the University for future generations.

Budgeting, evaluation, and distribution of resources are the responsibility of the entire campus. Efficiently handling resources and operations directly impacts the ability to serve students and meet their educational needs. When resources are managed through a collaborative process, priorities are developed that allow distribution that encourages student success and completion.

Indicator 1: Goal 6C- Engage alumni in the life of the University.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Develop system of collaboration between Alumni and Admissions to support recruitment opportunities.	Met: Admissions now has a relationship with the Alumni Office to recruit alumni to attend admissions events and recruitment opportunities.
Improve the annual calculation of alumni contacts through the Alumni Office annually.	Met: With the addition of an alumni and events coordinator the Alumni Office has been able to increase alumni engagement opportunities. In FY16 there were approximately 15 events. In FY17 there were 22 alumni events.
Create an alumnus-based website.	Met: Alumni website went live as of fall 2017.

Objective 6: Priority Seven- Increase Montana Western's local, regional, and national profile.

Multiple communications regarding accomplishments of faculty, staff, administration, and students support the ability to increase Montana Western's local, regional, and national profile. In addition to the University gaining recognition and in turn marketing that information, successful rates of retention and completion increase the exposure of Montana Western both through marketing and student stories.

Indicator 1: Goal 7A- Promote and enhance Montana Western's regional and national profile.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Track and maintain completion of ranking surveys completed each year as well as any recognition received based on rankings.	Met: Each time a ranking survey is completed the survey is documented as a record in the Central Data Area.
Rebrand the Bulldog mascot in athletics.	Met: The Montana Western bulldog was rebranded and a new brand was released during the spring 2017 semester during Alumni Weekend.
Track social media interactions.	Met: Data are tracked through the Communications Department.
Update the UMW website.	In Progress: Update is currently in process and on track for completion by the end of spring 2018.
Track admissions information regarding where students hear about Montana Western.	In Progress: While information is available and used for recruitment in the Admissions Office, a formalized report is not currently available to the campus.
Indicator 2: Goal 7B- Continue implementing an integrated marketing and communication plan that reflects Montana Western's Mission.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Develop a communication and marketing plan that is maintained and updated annually.	In Progress: The former Director of Marketing and University Relations retired before accomplishing this measure. Development of a plan will be assigned to the new University Communications Director when the position is filled. Meanwhile, communication marketing planning and implementation are being directed by the Chancellor in collaboration with the leadership team.

Examples of Assessment and Improvement in Core Theme Two

Improving Student Success through Retention and Graduation:

Retention and Graduation rates are two of the most important measures of student success and completion. The University of Montana Western has focused in recent years on supporting Core Theme Two by improving these rates through several established goals. Based on these retention and graduation objectives, UMW has experienced extraordinary results and growth in both of these metrics as discussed earlier in the Institutional Overview of this self-study.

- UMW has experienced a steady increase in degrees awarded. The University awarded the highest number of degrees in annual year 2016 with 452 degrees awarded and the second highest in 2016-17 with 423 degrees awarded. 2016-17 represents a 108% increase in the degrees awarded over a ten-year period.
- The IPEDS six-year graduation rate has increased dramatically since the inception of Experience One. Anticipated six-year graduation rates for this year are expected to be 43% which is an

increase of 17% over 10 years. Most encouraging is the increase in the bachelor's degree graduation rate, which hit record highs last year with 59% and second record highs with 57% to be reported in the 2017-18 IPEDS 150% Graduation Survey. This is a 29% increase over the eleven years of Experience One.

- Retention rates for bachelor's degree seeking students continues to increase, with a retention rate of the fall 2016 bachelor's cohort of 75%. This is a 6% increase over a ten-year period.

Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 further explore these percentages growths. Examples of initiatives such as updated withdraw and retention reporting and progress towards the awarding of associate degrees are used to support retention and graduation highlight how assessment of these metrics has led to goals and improvement.

Figure 4.4. Completions by Annual Year

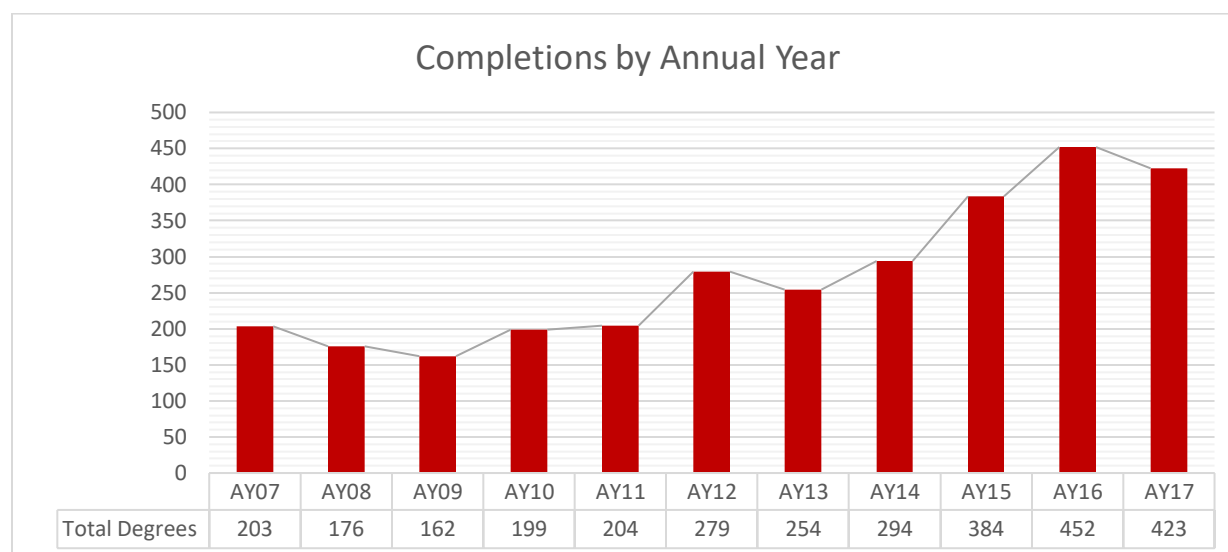


Figure 4.5. Six Year Graduation Rate

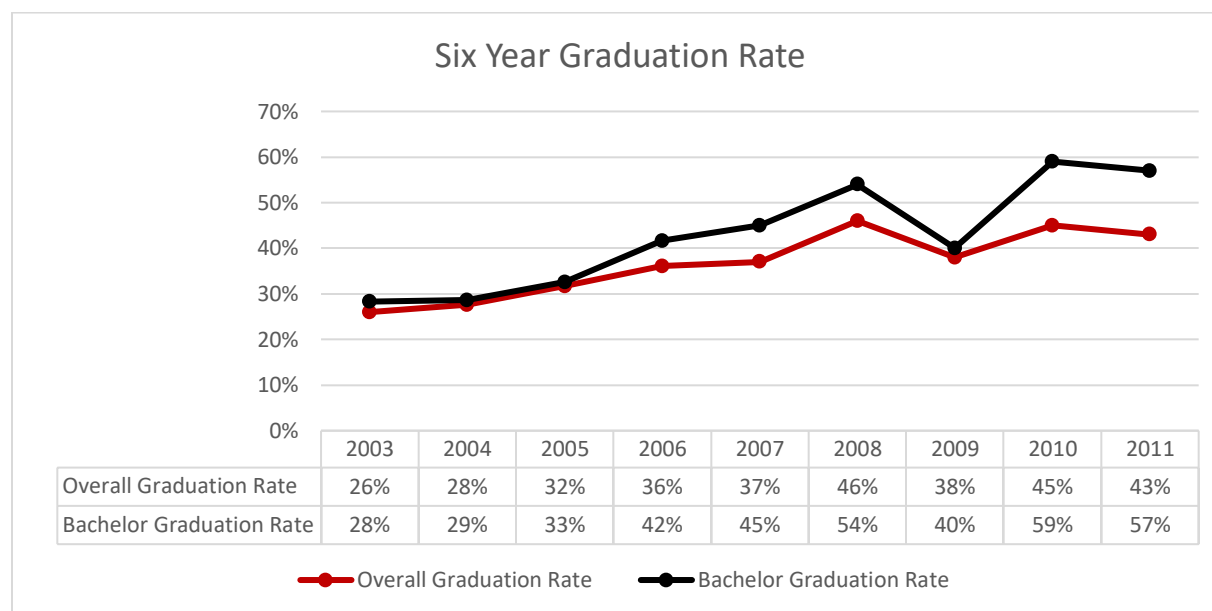
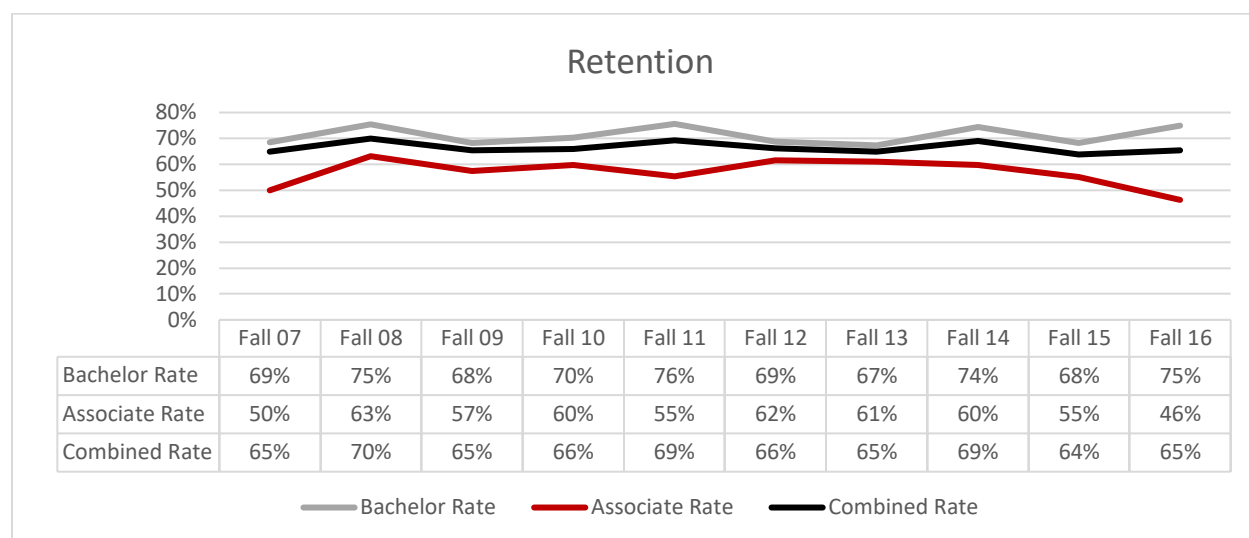


Figure 4.6. Associate and Bachelor First Year Cohort Retention



Updated Withdrawal Procedures and Retention Reports

As an increased focus on retention to support student success and completion emerged in the past eight years, the need for qualitative and quantitative data to inform retention and student success emerged. Academic and Administrative Council revisited the withdrawal processes for the University for a two-fold purpose: to provide students who may be in a stressful situation one-on-one assistance with the withdrawal processes and to collect qualitative data regarding students' reasons for leaving and their experiences at the University. A task force of AAC consisting of the Registrar, Director of Student Success, Dean of Students, Financial Aid Director, Financial Literacy Representative, Director of Residence Life, and the Business Services Director met during spring 2016 to review and revise the existing procedures and policies. Several areas were discussed, including who should be meeting with students, and what information students should submit and receive when withdrawing from the University. As a result of this semester-long process, AAC developed a new role to integrate with several positions at the University, the "Withdrawal Representative." Students who are withdrawing from the University are encouraged to meet with a Withdrawal Representative who uses two packets to go over the reason for the withdrawal and to help the student avoid trips to offices that they need not visit to complete their withdrawal. One packet is for the student to take with them after they withdraw and provides contact information and other "important facts" the student may need to know for the future. The other packet is for the Withdrawal Representative to work through with the student and to document for the University that the student withdrew ([University Withdraw Packet](#) and [Student Withdraw Packet](#)). This process has existed since fall 2016 with three to four representatives available located in offices including the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, and Business Services.

In fall 2016, the Office of Institutional Research released the first new student retention report using the fall 2015 cohort as the data set. The purpose of this report was to provide decision-makers the demographics and academic endeavors of the first-time and transfer students. The report projects forward the potential graduation rate of the cohort based on annual trend retention and graduation rates. In addition, it synthesizes data from withdraw reports providing summative information regarding why students are withdrawing from the University ([Fall 2015 Cohort Retention Report](#)).

While these processes and data analysis have just begun, the University anticipates that the data collection from the updated procedures as well as the personal assistance to students as they withdraw will provide a new opportunity to support retention and graduation efforts.

Increased Awarding of Associate Degrees

Associate degree awarding is an important part of the two-year regional mission of Montana Western. In 2011-12 after an assessment of the awarding of associated degrees and graduation rates, multiple departments including Advising, academic departments, and the Registrar's Office decided to focus on improving the awarding of associate degrees. One of the first initiatives came from the Advising Office. They collected data from the Registrar's Office regarding the cohort that was about to approach the 150% graduation rate, determined who was still enrolled, and completed associate of arts and associate of science degree evaluations for each student to determine and communicate what courses they needed to complete the degree. Furthermore, University administration decided to waive the graduation fee for any associate degree. Between these two initiatives, awarding of associate degrees became a more focused and natural part of applying for graduation.

Shortly after this initiative, the Education Department also decided to encourage associates degree awarding and support their students' educational pursuits by requiring that students apply for and complete an associate degree as part of the teacher education gateways. During this policy update, Education also restructured their Associate of Applied Science: Education Studies in order to align it with requirement in both the Elementary Education or Secondary Education bachelor's degrees. Other programs such as Business Administration and Early Childhood Education followed suit in the following years and encouraged the completion of an associate degree as part of the programs. Early Childhood Development now requires an associate degree as part of the gateways as well.

As Table 4.3 demonstrates, these implementations and changes to policy or procedures have positively affected and improved the awarding of associate degrees.

Table 4.3. Associate Degree Awarding during the Accreditation Cycle

Completions	AY11	AY12	AY13	AY14	AY15	AY16	AY17
Associate Degrees	26	68	49	92	129	199	177

As Montana Western continues to seek ways to improve associate graduation rates, an upcoming goal in the next accreditation cycle will be to encourage stackable degrees, which encourage students to finish degree levels along the way toward their bachelor's degree. This way, even if they do not finish the full program, they are gaining education markers toward success. Programs currently with the potential for developing stackable degrees include: Glass (NWCCU approval pending); Early Childhood Education; Education; Business Administration; and Early Childhood Education: Prekindergarten through Third Grade.

Paw Prints for Success

A recent program to support student success through engagement, Paw Prints for Success, emerged from the Residence Life Office. The Residence Life Office discovered a similar project at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT, that was showing positive gains in not only student engagement but also retention rates. At an AAC meeting in spring 2016, the Residence Life Office presented their PowerPoint on the potential of the Paw Prints Program and was met with great enthusiasm ([Paw Prints Presentation](#)). It was decided that in the academic year 2016-17 the Program would pilot to the entering first-time and transfer students. A working group was formed with Residence Life taking the

lead. Students have opportunity to gain “Paw Print Points” by attending or participating in co-curricular events and opportunities on campus. At the end of the semester, students receive their cumulative Paw Prints and have the opportunity to bid and win prizes at an end of the semester event ([Paw Print Events Advertisement](#)). Table 4.4 highlights the number of students participating and the total points earned throughout the semester.

Table 4.4. Paw Prints Participation and Cumulative Points

Semester	Headcount	Total Points Accumulated
Fall 2016	376	3,337,500
Spring 2017	352	1,503,300

The pilot program was a rousing success and Paw Prints was expanded to include the entire campus the next academic year, 2017-18.

While data regarding retention rates is still being longitudinally collected and analyzed through the Residence Life Office and the Office of Institutional Research, there is great anticipation to show through Paw Prints that encouraging engagement will ultimately foster retention.

Improving Student Success through Complete College America

Complete College America (CCA) and the Montana University System have a shared commitment to the Momentum Pathway Scale Project beginning 2018 with full implementation by fall 2020. The pathway strategies dramatically increase the number and percentage of students who earn a postsecondary credential. The “Game Changer” strategies are associated with achieving student momentum in the first year and result in retention, success and completion. The following four successful Game Changer strategies have been implemented at Montana Western.

15 to Finish

Students who take 15 credits every semester have better grades and are more likely to graduate.

Percentage of new first-time freshman taking 15 or more credits across the Montana University System, fall 2016:

- University of Montana Western 94%
- Montana Tech of the University of Montana 75%
- Montana State University 61%
- Montana State University-Billings 55%
- University of Montana 52%

Co-requisite Remediation

Remediation is designed as co-requisite courses rather than a prerequisite course leading to a required course. Co-requisite remediation increases student success in gateway courses.

The University of Montana Western’s English Department has designed a “stretch course” for ENG 095 and ENG 101. The co-requisite remediation stretch course connects two block courses with the same instructor and same group of students. The word stretch is intentionally used because the curriculum of both courses is stretched over both block courses. The stretch course also provides just-in-time support for students with in-class tutors during critical writing projects. The Math Department has developed a

linked course for MATH 090 and MATH 127. The two-block course sequence is taught by the same instructor with the same group of students. The word link is intentionally used because MATH 090 content is taught first and then linked to content in MATH 127 during the second block course.

Guided Pathways to Success

Guided Pathways provide highly-structured degree maps, monitor student progress, and boost completion rates.

The University of Montana Western's catalog includes program course plans. The Wellness Intervention Team and the Maxient reporting system alert Student Services about students who are at-risk academically to provide just-in-time support in order to stay on target for graduation.

The University is considering the purchase of *Degree Works* for comprehensive advising that tracks student progress on degree plans to completion.

Math Pathways

Most universities offer one pathway to fulfill the math requirement – College Algebra. Multiple math pathways increase the likelihood students will successfully complete gateway math courses.

The University of Montana Western's Math Department has developed two pathways to meet the gateway required math course: 1) Mathematical Literacy Pathway and 2) Probability and Statistics Pathway. These options will better prepare students to understand mathematical content they are more likely to use in their professional careers.

Core Theme 3: Foster responsibility, campus efficiency and stewardship of resources.

Emphasis	Campus Efficiency
	Stewardship of Resources
Objectives	Priority Four: Employ human resource strategies that support the experiential mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.
	Priority Five: Maintain facilities and infrastructure commensurate to the Mission and priorities of the University.
	Priority Six: Efficiently steward resources and operations to sustain the University for future generations.

Core Theme 3, Objective 1: Priority Four- Employee human resource strategies that support the experiential Mission and attract and retain a highly qualified, diverse mix of faculty and staff.

Campus efficiency and stewardship of resources provide the foundation of the campus's plans and are vital to the assessment and evaluation process. Faculty and staff that are of a diverse background provide opportunity to see from multiple perspectives from all areas when determining the priorities of resources for the campus.

Indicator 1: Goal 4C- Increase awareness of the strength of the University community for prospective employers.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Job Descriptions.	Met: All job descriptions include an updated description of the Dillon community and the University.
Present information about rankings and publications of scholarly works of the University, faculty, staff, and administration.	Met: This information is reported through the Campus Reports submitted to the Board of Regents and published on the Board of Regents site. Furthermore, the Communications Department post articles to the UMW website regarding accomplishments of the faculty, staff, students, and administration.
Indicator 2: Goal 4D- Develop staffing and salary plan to attract and retain faculty and staff.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Update and changes to the Collective Bargaining Agreement.	Met-revolving process: The collective bargaining agreements are negotiated every two years. Negotiations are based on legislature appropriations and the salary goal of the MUS.
Seek to meet the average administrative, faculty, staff	In Progress: Participation in the CUPA & AAUP surveys annually for national benchmarks by Carnegie type. Progress has been

salaries compared to peer market.	made in increasing the average salary through six years of faculty market adjustments.
Complete the IPEDS human resource report each year to provide comparisons with other institutions.	Met: IPEDS are completed and documented on an annual basis.
Complete the CUPA survey for comparison to other colleges and universities.	Met: CUPA survey is submitted every year by Human Resources. Data are available for comparison and plans for salary plans.

Core Theme 3, Objective 2: Priority Five- Maintain facilities and infrastructure commensurate to the Mission and priorities of the University.

Holistically approaching the maintenance of facilities and infrastructure as it relates to the Strategic Plan drives the planning of resources and campus efficiencies and organization.

Indicator 1: Goal 5B- Align campus facilities planning with the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Completion of Phase III of Main Hall.	Met: Phase III of Main Hall was completed in the fall of 2016.
Annually maintain the Campus Master Plan.	Met: The Campus Master Plan is regularly reviewed and used to develop campus plans.
Bi-annually maintain the Long-Range Building Plan.	Met: The Long-Range Building Plan is developed for the Governor's Biennial Budget every two years and informs campus development plans.
Annually maintain the Facilities Condition Inventory.	Met: The Facilities Condition Inventory is regularly reviewed and updated.
Annually maintain the Auxiliary Capital Plan.	Met: The Auxiliary Capital Plan is regularly reviewed and updated.
Indicator 2: Goal 5C- Align information and technology services with the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Update and maintain the Technology Development Plan.	Met: The Technology Development Plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
Track technology requests, approval, and implementation from the Technology Steering Committee.	In Progress: The Technology Steering Committee keeps regular agendas and minutes, however there is no formalized tracking of annual technological implementations throughout the campus.

Creation of the position and hiring of a Director of eLearning.	Met: Position was created and has been filled twice. Currently in the hiring process for this position.
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Core Theme 3, Objective 3: Priority Six- Efficiently steward resources and operations to sustain the University for future generations.

Operation management is interconnected through all programs and services of the University. By looking through the perspective of assessment and evaluation, UMW is able to sustain the University for all future generations.

Indicator 1: Goal 6A- Continually assess services, operations, and energy consumption to achieve greater efficiency and creative use of resources.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Semester completion and record of the student satisfaction survey.	Met: The student satisfaction survey is offered at the end of each semester through the Residence Life Office.
Creation of a community garden.	Met: A project led by the Environmental Sciences Department, the Community Garden updates and continues its mission each year (Community Garden Mission Statement and Project Goals 2017-18).
MUS Shared service review.	In Progress: There have been shared systems across the MUS system since the creation of affiliations in 1994. The MUS has initiated a review of these shared services. The Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance, and Student Affairs as well as the Director of ITS represent Montana Western on this committee.
Indicator 2: Goal 6B- Pursue state and federal funding opportunities that contribute to Montana Western's Mission and Core Themes.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Track the grants and amount of dollars received each year.	Met: The Business Office currently tracks and records dollar amounts from awarded grants. Sponsored program expenditures increased from \$577,623 in FY13 to \$934,471 in FY17.
Development of the Veteran's Military Exchange (VMX).	Met: The VMX was built from state funding.
Development of the Multi-Cultural Center.	In Progress: The Multi-Cultural Center was renovated using a room in the Student Union Building through state grant funding. While the room exists, and had a dedication service, mission statements and activities are still in development.

Indicator 3: Goal 6D- Work with the UMW foundation to increase extramural funding and support of the University.	
Measure	Outcomes as of 2017
Increase the total number of faculty and staff who annually donate to the foundation.	Met: The Foundation Office tracks this percentage annually. FY15 20.85%; FY16 43.22%; FY17 42.18%
Increase the percentage of funding solicited each year and their sources.	Met: The Foundation Office tracks this percentage annually. FY15 7%; FY16 6.3%; FY17 8.7%

Examples of Assessment and Improvement in Core Theme Three

Improving Stewardship through Facilities and Building:

Performance Funding

In line with current trends in higher education, the Montana University System adopted a basic [performance funding model](#) in May 2013 to augment the University System's allocation methodology for distributing state appropriations to the campuses in fiscal year 2015. Following this initial phase, a BOR Performance Funding Task Force was constituted to design a more detailed model. The UMW Vice Chancellor of Administration, Finance and Student Affairs served on this group as the representative of the four-year regional campuses. This more robust model, based on type of institution, was approved by the Board of Regents in May 2015 for the allocation of funds in fiscal years 2016, 2017 and beyond. The current version of the model allocates \$30 million of the state allocation, about 8% of the total amount appropriated to the MUS educational units.

The goal of the model is to increase degree production and increase the percentage of Montanan's with higher education credentials. The objectives and details can be seen on the BOR website.

All of the campuses must meet metrics in degrees awarded and student retention rates and then each develops other measures as appropriate. For 2016 and 2017 the four-year regionals used these two metrics only and for this coming biennium have added either a Masters-level degree production or a Dual Enrollment metric. UMW added a dual enrollment metric.

Meeting the requirements of performance funding is dependent on the work accomplished under all three Core Themes. The increase in retention and completion directly relates to Experience One and the new robust planning and assessment processes have ensured that Montana Western has met its performance funding requirements each year and received 100% of its performance funding allocation.

These improvement-associated metrics, which are closely monitored and assessed, are met collaboratively by the good stewardship of the entire campus. Meeting the performance funding criteria is critical and well understood by the campus as an important piece of sustaining and building the capacity of the University.

Main Hall

The renovation and remodel of Main Hall is another example of creativity and stewardship to enhance the needs of the Mission, Core Themes, and Strategic Plan fulfillment. It is a story of persistence, hard work, and very generous support from the legislature, state, donors and state-wide collaboration.

Montana Western has long had a philosophy to take care of the existing facilities but knew that money for new construction was very limited. Between critical needs to improve safety based on old HVAC systems and seismic issues and the changing need for teaching spaces under the Block system, the University moved forward with defining the requirements to maintain and improve the finest old brick building and longest serving classroom building at UMW and in the MUS. In 2007 the University moved forward a request to the 60th Legislative Session to renovate Main Hall to continue to serve students as the main classroom building on campus. The result was funding of \$4M to begin a Phase one piece of the project. Construction started in 2009. The project was funded and constructed in three phases for a total investment of \$18.5M. The final phase was approved by the 63rd legislature in 2013 and construction was completed by fall 2016 including a wonderful new centerpiece for campus: Legacy Plaza.

The project updated technology, classrooms, faculty offices, flexible classroom furniture, added classrooms, and improved the environment through new HVAC systems and wiring. Each phase was designed and vetted through campus-wide programming teams who used the spaces. It was an important piece supporting the implementation and continued growth of Experience One.

It is also a testament to the UMW commitment to stewardship of facilities not only with the current renovation that will make this building the focal point of Montana Western for the next 100 years but because of the excellent care and stewardship given over the previous 100 years to make the renovation possible.

Commitment to Enhancing Faculty Salaries and Facilities

Using the Strategic Plan to allocate limited resources is critical to support the work of the University. This includes the long-term care of human and physical resources. Balancing these needs with new initiatives necessary to fulfill the expectations of Experience One has been the work of the entire campus. Both the ability to maintain what we have while continually growing are important to build capacity and sustain the University. Following are two examples of the work of maintaining resources in place.

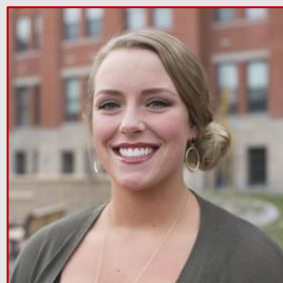
Montana Western continues to find and reallocate resources as a first budget priority to meet the pay plans developed by the MUS through bargaining and Regents' approval. Based on the legislative budgeting system and the MUS appropriation system these pay plans are never fully funded and require the campuses to reallocate resources to meet these plans. This has been especially hard in a decade of very few tuition increases and increasing health insurance costs. Despite these challenges, through the work of the Executive Team and Budget Committee the increases to wages and benefits negotiated have been made without using reserves and with a balanced base budget preserved.

The Faculty Association and administration have been trying to move faculty salaries closer to CUPA averages for UMW's Carnegie classification – baccalaureate diverse fields - despite funding challenges. Since fiscal year 2012, \$373,100 has been added to faculty base salaries through market adjustment pools. While there is still work to be accomplished to reach this goal, it continues to be a high priority. This commitment reflects focus on the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Improving facilities and being environmentally prudent has been a major focus of the University over the last two decades as outlined in this and previous reports. Table 4.5 lists a few of the projects accomplished since 2011 outside of classroom and equipment renovations that are directly related to stewardship of our resources and include several green projects to continually work on the goal of environmental stewardship.

Table 4.5. Projects Accomplished Since 2011

BUILDING	PURPOSE	COMPLETION DATE	COST
Block Hall	HVAC Improvements	2010	\$146,595
Main Hall	Phase II Renovation	2011	\$6,000,000
Block Hall	Window Upgrade	2011	\$176,553
Library/Admin, Block, B&T	Lighting upgrade	2011	\$112,000
Emerick	Energy Upgrade	2012	\$465,587
B&T	Upgrade Fire Alarm	2013	\$62,427
Mathews Hall	Seismic Stabilization	2014	\$98,890
Library/Admin	Replace Hydronic Piping	2015	\$236,307
Grounds/Emerick	New Parking Lot	2015	\$110,000
Main Hall	Phase III Renovation	2016	\$4,000,000
Grounds	Construct Plaza	2016	\$500,000
Dining Hall	Seismic Stabilization	2017	\$255,795
Mathews Hall	Restroom Upgrades		\$1,200,000
Front lawn	Irrigation/ADA access	2017	\$60,000
Total			\$6,362,102

Student Success Spotlight: Delaney Hansen

In November 2016, University of Montana Western student Delaney Hansen participated in the first-ever national convening of Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellows at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate in Boston.

Hansen, who was also President of the Montana Western Student Senate, has been an active force in the local community during her college years.

"I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to engage with other students in the network," she said. Student leaders underwent workshops and training sessions geared toward positive communication strategies and community empowerment.

For more information, the full article is available on the [UMW website](#).

STANDARD FIVE

MISSION FULFILLMENT, ADAPTATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY



“ The University of Montana Western has afforded me the opportunity to work with professionals and gain the field experience I need to be competitive with regards to graduate school and the job market.

- Kelsie Field, Environmental Sciences



Standard Five: Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirement 24

Eligibility Requirement 24: Scale and Sustainability

The institution demonstrates that its operational scale (e.g., enrollment, human and financial resources and institutional infrastructure) is sufficient to fulfill its mission and achieve its core themes in the present and will be sufficient to do so in the foreseeable future.

The University of Montana Western conducts ongoing evaluation of its resources and distributes these resources based on a budgeting and planning process. Planning for resources is data-driven and based on long-term planning and department assessment and evaluations that link to the Strategic Plan. As described throughout this self-study and specifically in 3.A and 3.B, committees and budgetary processes align planning and resources with the Core Themes, not just for the current fiscal year, but also for the future of the institution to support long-term, sustained resources to fulfill the University's Mission.

Standard 5A: Mission Fulfillment

Standard 5.A.1 The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.

As introduced in Standard One, the institution currently follows the Strategic Plan "[*Experience the Difference*](#)." The Mission Statement, Core Themes, priorities and goals included in *Experience the Difference* were approved in the fall of 2014 by the Montana Board of Regents. Academic and administrative departments regularly assess their programs and services to ensure progress, improvement, and connection with the institutional Mission and Core Themes. Through its established assessment, evaluation, and tracking systems the University demonstrates that it actively engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.

Academic Assessment

As described throughout this self-study, the University engages in regular and systematic assessment of its academic programs. Each academic department is expected to complete an annual assessment of programs offered and submit a report summarizing self-reflective and evidence-based assessment of progress in relation to student learning outcomes and accomplishments within the department as well as potential changes and improvements in the programs. Academic assessment reports are submitted to Moodle annually, where they are available to all faculty as well as administration. After all reports are submitted to Moodle, the assessment committee completes a review of each submitted report to determine that all assessment requirements have been met and provide feedback to the programs about their assessments. Once this review is completed, a report to the Chancellor's Cabinet is submitted summarizing not only the results of the program assessments, but the activities of the Assessment Committee during the previous academic year. This report, as part of the developing Strategic Planning and Programming system, will highlight potential resource needs of the programs to be considered for institutional budgetary and resource development.

Academic programs are also required to complete a comprehensive assessment every seventh year and submit a summary of this assessment to the Montana Board of Regents. This summary includes a review of the program, enrollment and graduation rates, sustainability of the program, and alignment with the Mission and Strategic Plan. The BOR reviews these reports at their regular Board of Regents meetings held throughout the year and provides feedback to the campus and programs as appropriate.

Tactical Document

The Tactical Document is a supporting document to the Strategic Plan which tracks metrics associated with the priorities and goals of the Strategic Plan as well as supporting initiatives from departments and programs. The Tactical Document is regularly reviewed and updated by the Academic and Administrative Council which has a wide representation of University directors, managers, and faculty to provide feedback and updates. During these reviews, the AAC communicates with the departments charged with maintaining the metrics or initiative and requests an update regarding their progress. A summary of the metrics, departments, or programs' progress is then noted on the document. While the Chancellor and executive leadership are ultimately charged with approving which metrics or initiatives appear on the Tactical Document, the AAC takes a large role in making recommendations regarding updates or new metrics and initiatives to consider adding based on the feedback received from departments and programs. All items that appear on the Tactical Document must be connected to a Core Theme, priority and/or goal of the Strategic Plan. The Tactical Document is available to the campus through the Central Data Area folder located in the All Campus Drive, UMWdata. To increase communication of accomplishments and updates, beginning in 2018-19, the AAC will submit a summary report to leadership regarding tactical plan progress, updates, and future considerations.

Administrative Department Evaluations and Strategic Plans

Administrative departments evaluate their employees annually. As part of this evaluation process, each employee sets goals related to either position, professional development, or larger campus initiatives which are tracked and reviewed throughout the year for progress. When employees select these goals, they are asked to consider how their goals connect to the Core Themes, priorities, or goals of the University in order to deepen an understanding of how their position interacts with Mission fulfillment and support to the overall University.

Furthermore, many administrative departments have strategic plans or select annual goals that tie the departments' overarching initiatives and goals to the Mission and Strategic Plan. Towards the end of spring 2018 and throughout 2018-19, the AAC will be working with all represented departments to create and regularly maintain department strategic plans.

The Future: Strategic Planning and Programming

The University is currently in the process of developing and engaging in a process and tracking system titled "Strategic Planning and Programming." This will be a system not only to assist departments and programs with strategic planning in relation to their institutional goals and offer tracking of strategic goals, but a communication system that provides appropriate representation access to planning, goals, and resource requests needed to accomplish these goals. Both academic and administrative departments will have access and use this system to track strategic prioritization. Development of this tracking system began in the fall 2017 semester with the goal of implementation in 2018-2019.

Standard 5.A.2 Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, the institution uses assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicates its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public.

The University defines Mission fulfillment as using Experience One to connect the measures and strategies described in the Tactical Document, assessment plans and reports to the Core Themes, priorities and goals described in “Experience the Difference” and prove through evidence-based accomplishment the fulfillment of the Mission. Assessment of measures and goals is used to determine the quality, effectiveness, and Mission fulfillment.

Mission Fulfillment through Assessment Results and Metrics

Montana Western reviews and publishes its assessment results through two primary communications. For academic assessment, the annual assessment reports are published and communicated through posting to the faculty and administration in Moodle and through the annual report to leadership submitted by the Assessment Committee. Through this process, faculty are accountable to each other as well as leadership for their assessment processes, results, and using these results to make decisions regarding the future sustainability and improvements of the academic programs.

The University furthermore uses the Tactical Document to review, update and communicate progress on metrics and initiatives connected with the Strategic Plan. Each metric or initiative in the Tactical Document relates to a Core Theme, priority or goal, and is updated at least annually. Table 5.1 outlines the count of current Tactical Document initiatives according to Core Theme, and the progress related to each Core Theme.

Table 5.1. Tactical Document Metrics by Core Theme

Core Theme	Number of Metrics Associated with the Core Theme	Number of Metrics Met	Number of Metrics in Progress
Core Theme 1	24	13	11
Core Theme 2	22	14	8
Core Theme 3	18	13	5

Based on the current Tactical Document and update, 54% of the current metrics associated with Core Theme One have been met, 63% of metrics in Core Theme Two are met, and 72% of Core Theme Three metrics have been met. With these tracked percentages of accomplishments as well as the planning, assessment, and improvement examples listed in Standard 4A and 4B, the University is achieving Mission fulfillment. As evidenced in this table and throughout this report, Montana Western truly understands Mission fulfillment through Experience One and is accomplishing its goals.

The University of Montana Western also recognizes that Mission fulfillment is not a stagnant process and must be evaluated on a regular basis, with tactics and metrics updated as needed to move to the next stage of Mission fulfillment. With that in mind, UMW not only continues to focus on the metrics and assessment plans that are still in progress supporting the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, but looks to the future through the previous stated evaluation processes to determine next steps and sustainability.

Standard 5B: Adaptation and Sustainability

Standard 5.B.1 Within the context of its mission and characteristics, the institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

Through the established assessment and evaluation processes departments, programs, committees and leadership consider the resources available and required to accomplish their measures and enterprises for program and Mission fulfillment.

As described in Standard 3.A.2, the Budget Committee has a two-fold charge. First, the Committee uses the Mission and Strategic Plan as a guide to work collaboratively and recommend a thoughtful and balanced budget to the Chancellor. To implement and sustain Experience One, budget and financial resource allocation had to become very centralized due to limited resources and organizational structure, with much to be accomplished. The Executive Team, working with their departments, consider the needs to fulfill the Mission and for strategic planning. Then, the Executive Leadership Team, working together with the data derived through assessment, evaluation, and current budget move forward strategic initiatives for discussion by the Budget Committee who recommend a final general operating fund budget. The Executive Team also recommends use of contingencies and one-time monies for discussion and input by the Budget Committee. This data-driven centralized system of evaluation using all of the planning processes put in place has also worked well during times of state appropriation cuts and unfunded pay adjustments over the last few years. During this time of intense work to build and sustain the capacity of the University with limited resources, through base balanced general fund budgets, creating appropriate experiential teaching spaces, aggressively pursuing reserves and building capacity by enrollment growth and new programming, this budget model has worked as demonstrated by the report. With increased enrollment, tuition, and organizational restructuring a more standard model of budget requests can now be developed.

The increasing enrollment and retention related to Experience One and the centralized budget process have allowed Montana Western to have the resources to make strategic adjustments to build capacity and sustainability. The University strategically added or expanded programs that not only diversify the curriculum but will grow capacity and enrollment such as Natural Horsemanship, PK-3 Education, Ecology and Scientific Glass. Improvements to assessment were made through consultant resourcing and building an administrative position for e-learning and Moodle management. These assessments also include reviews of the general operations of the University through evaluation and goal building. The new planning processes will further underpin the continued ability to sustain this University. In a commitment to continual support, excellent teaching and learning resources have been added to faculty salaries. In comparing the FY 11 budget to the FY 18 budget, there are 10 more tenure track faculty and the total faculty salaries budget is \$1,139,879 higher. The on-going partnership with the Montana Youth Challenge Academy has continued to stabilize auxiliary revenues creating resources for debt management and helping fund the Auxiliary Capital Plan. Deliberate decisions regarding improving classrooms, technology, and equipment have been made using student fees, designated and auxiliary revenues, and plant funds that increase the capacity and improve the environment of the University. At the base of each of these resource decisions are the Mission, Core Themes and Strategic Plan of the University.

The charge and processes of the Budget Committee, regular open budget forums, and the work of planning and assessment of all areas of the campus provide the opportunity for UMW to strategically continue to fulfill its Mission through resources and capacity.

Standard 5.B.2 The institution documents and evaluates regularly its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to ensure their adequacy, alignment, and effectiveness. It uses the results of its evaluation to make changes, as necessary, for improvement.

The University of Montana Western embeds the documentation and evaluation of its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and the assessment of results into its ongoing assessment and evaluation processes. Multiple committees and programs own planning and assessment on campus. Table 5.2 highlights those groups and the documents they are charged with evaluating in the planning cycle.

Table 5.2. Assessment Charges of Strategic Committees and Departments

Committee or Department	Document or Plan
Strategic Planning Committee	Strategic Plan
Academic and Administrative Council	Tactical Document
All Academic Departments	Assessment Plans and Reports
All Administrative Departments	Evaluations and Annual Department Goals
Technology Steering Committee	Technology Master Plan
Campus Development Committee	Campus Master Plan
Facilities Department w/ Vice Chancellor Finance	Facilities Inventory and Long-Range Building Plans
Strategic Enrollment Management/Completion (2018-19)	SEM/C Plan
Budget Committee	Budget Planning and Cycle

During the annual cycle of assessment processes for each of these areas, the departments or committees are charged not only with evaluation but also making recommendations for change and improvement. If the change only affects the department, communication occurs with the department and its executive leader regarding the change. However, if it is an institutional change, the recommendation will be made to the Chancellor for consideration.

An example of this improvement in process may be found in the evolution of one of the metrics in the Tactical Document. When the Tactical Document metrics were initially created, there was a concern among several groups regarding student credit accumulation towards degree, and as a result, a metric was added to the document tracking credit accumulation. After two cycles of updates and analysis of data related to this metric, it was discovered that many students chose to take an extra major and minor to support their program and skill development. In addition, while most of our bachelor's degrees are only 120 credits, the majority of our Education degrees, which represent almost 50% of the student population, require a minimum of 128 credits as well as additional credits to pursue teacher licensure. With these data, the AAC recognized that while credit accumulation could be managed from a department perspective, the possibility of dropping the accumulation of credits as a cumulative whole was not achievable. Based on the information collected during this analysis, the AAC decided that while it should be encouraged for departments to consider credit accumulation within their programs, it was not a valid metric for the Tactical Document. Rather than just removing the metric, the committee continued to review the data, and discovered that time to degree would be a more accurate measure to connect to the Core Theme (student success) and still watch credit accumulation while also managing students' progress to graduation. The examples in Standard 4A and 4B highlight other changes and improvements due to the assessment and evaluation responsibilities and cycles.

Over the past eight years, many aspects of the University have evolved to adapt to the new reality of Experience One. Radical transformation of a traditionally organized institution intensifies and accelerates the planning cycle and practices as new needs and requirements continually surface. To fulfill the Mission, UMW has made major changes in not only the ways teaching and learning take place,

but to the library, the use of space, technology and vehicles, the allocation of resources, how the University is described to the public, hiring practices and evaluation of faculty and staff, and even engagement with the community.

The physical environment for teaching and learning has evolved to support the experiential focus. Examples include the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Model Classroom for Education, the Health and Human Performance Lab, the Community Garden, Birch Creek Education Center, the Technology Sandbox, and the Montana Center for Horsemanship.

Classrooms themselves had to be reconceived as flexible spaces facilitating three-hour experiential activities. The lecture orientation, including existing furnishings and technology, no longer worked. The creation of appropriate learning spaces became a high priority of the planning and budgeting processes. Most classrooms now have movable furniture, full mediation, and appropriate equipment. Funding mechanisms already in place through the student fee process provide annual allocations for faculty, ITS, and Facilities. The Main Hall renovation project also enhanced the learning environment. As a result of these adaptations and changes, the least preferred space on campus is now the 1960s built-in desk lecture style classroom in Block Hall, which was once considered to be state-of-the-art.

Furthermore, UMW has learned that Experience One increases opportunities to efficiently share resources with the surrounding community in mutually beneficial partnerships. As a result, relationships with Dillon's larger community are becoming stronger, building on a foundation of meaningful engagement with the faculty and students.

The Natural Horsemanship Program is a prime example. The content of the program was offered to UMW by a local ranch-owner. He actively engaged other community members in the creation of the Montana Center for Horsemanship, without which the program could not operate. The program continues to develop and has now expanded to include colt training and an annual sale where the colts are donated by local ranchers. Throughout the year students train the horses and learn how to produce a major equine event, ultimately leading to the annual colt sale. The proceeds of the sale support the National Horsemanship program.

The science faculty provide numerous examples of partnerships benefiting both the partner organizations and the students. Students frequently undertake research that is used by governmental and non-profit organizations. One example, from Environmental Sciences, is a major project undertaken for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Students conducted an inventory and assessment of the entire length of the Poindexter Slough. A 476- page report presented "data, analyses and recommendations regarding stream morphology and function, in-stream macroinvertebrates, riparian vegetation and stream habitat on Poindexter Slough" (*Inventory and Assessment of Poindexter Slough in the Beaverhead River Drainage Near Dillon, Montana*, November 2014).

As these examples reveal, through embedding the processes for change and improvement into the assessment and evaluation procedures, Montana Western not only documents and evaluates regularly planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity but provides opportunities to continue Mission fulfillment by actively looking for progress and positive improvements in our systems.

Standard 5.B.3 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it uses those findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, core themes, core theme objectives,

goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement.

Experience One was itself originally a response to the institution's continual monitoring of emerging environmental patterns, trends, and expectations. Enrollment had declined precipitously; to attract students, Montana Western needed to create a niche to differentiate itself from the rest of the institutions in the Montana University System. Experience One was developed as a visionary attempt to sustain the University into the future. As this self-study has documented, twelve years after its implementation, the evidence shows that this experiment worked. Student success has dramatically increased. Enrollment has increased and stabilized, ushering in a period of financial stability, strategic reinvestment, and increasing community engagement.

The new Mission Statement, revised during the strategic planning process, and approved by the Board of Regents in November 2014, is unusual both in its brevity and focus. In a higher education environment that is dynamic, volatile, and challenging, the Mission Statement is a powerful guide for assessment of emerging patterns, trends, and expectations, decision-making, and responsive action. As Montana Western creates, reviews, and revises the departmental plans and processes in alignment with the University Strategic Plan (*e.g.*, ITS, Campus Master Plan, Recruitment, UMW Foundation Strategic Plan, etc.), the Mission will continue to be the guide to measuring effectiveness, accomplishing objectives, and adapting as necessary.

The Montana University System is fortunate to be guided and assisted in the continual monitoring of current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations by the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Deputy Commissioners, Directors, and Staff, and by the Board of Regents. Montana Western's Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and Deans or Directors, as necessary, participate in five Board of Regents meetings each year. These meetings typically include high quality presentations on a range of current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations and provide context for them as they impact system institutions. On a complete range of issues, from suicide prevention to demographic trends to work-force development needs, OCHE staff and system colleagues share expertise and create system working groups. Communication with Montana State Government is also coordinated by the Commissioner and his team. Through the University governance system, information is shared resulting in adjusted goals and plans to meet the expectations of the Commissioner and the Board of Regents, the Governor of the State of Montana, and our Legislators. In addition, performance funding measures are developed for the system through a collaborative method, setting clear expectations that impact planning and responsive action at each institution. Performance metrics are shared at most Board of Regents meetings so that Montana Western may consider its performance in the context of its sister institutions and adjust, as necessary. OCHE's Division of Planning and Analysis/IT/Research provides robust analytics and continual support of Montana Western's efforts to gather essential data to support planning and decision-making.

The Division provides updated analytical presentations of student success trends, which have been of great value in striving to build momentum created by Experience One and to tell an accurate story.

Engagement with the community is essential to UMW's ability to monitor the environment and adapt, as necessary. This is achieved through formal groups such as the University Council and the UMW Foundation, through community participation in planning development and assessment, and through frequent informal engagement on the part of Montana Western's employees in every aspect of community life. The University of Montana Western looks forward to creating a highly collaborative, broad-based approach to the next University strategic planning process.

Student Success Spotlight: Tyler Richardson

When he transferred to the University of Montana Western, Tyler Richardson felt it was “too good to be true.” The tight-knit community and positive atmosphere have made him feel at home.

Senior Tyler Richardson is a math major as well as a tutor in the subject, who has helped many other students during his time at UMW. With Montana Western’s block scheduling, courses are taught one-at-a-time for 18 consecutive days. When it comes to math, Richardson said “it can be challenging,” but the experience is ultimately more fruitful because students are completely immersed in one subject.

As a highlight of Montana Western’s Experience One program which focuses on creating immersive learning experiences, students present their final projects and internship experiences at the annual student research symposium each spring. Richardson will end his tenure at UMW by speaking about his year-long work coding with MATLAB during the 2018 symposium.

For more information, the full article is available on the [UMW website](#).

CONCLUSION

Alder School, Alder, Montana



- Picture of a rural school house in Montana.
- There is not very much information in the public domain about Alder School, Alder, MT
- 23 Students as of 2016-2017 school year



Montana Western provides personal attention to students from professors.

- Demitrius Balark, Business Administration

Conclusion

Essential Lessons Learned as We Strive to Fulfill Our Mission: The Promise of Experience One

This period in the history of higher education has been distinguished by increasingly intense calls for accountability and change. Montana Western, a small university located in one of the most rural areas of our nation, may seem an unlikely candidate to have now located itself on the leading edge of that change. The story of Experience One, though, is an answer to these calls, as it proves that change is possible when it is grounded in a focus on student success.

Our reflections on the past eight years reaffirm our conviction that creating an environment that facilitates student success leads to excellence achieved through *experience*. Our focus on student *success*, too, has been the most effective foundation for *stewardship*, as it has guided our decisions regarding how to best allocate our resources and foster the pillars of financial sustainability: growth in enrollment, retention, and completion.

This comprehensive evaluation has also reinforced what we have learned from daily experience: that our planning, assessment, and communication processes do not match the clarity and simplicity of our Mission. Through our governance system, we have begun the development of institutional structures and processes designed to strengthen our capacity to fulfill our Mission, build on our historical tradition of innovation, and fulfill the promise of Experience One. We look forward to using everything we have learned as we embark on the creation of our next Strategic Plan in the fall semester of 2018.

Our Mission Statement, approved by the Board of Regents during its November 2014 meeting, succinctly encapsulates Montana Western's promise:

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

We promised ourselves that we would meet the challenge of declining enrollment by reimagining our University and dedicating ourselves to change completely centered on student success. We have become a remarkably different university; at this writing, as far as we know, we are the only public university in the United States offering experiential learning one course at a time.

We promise our students an excellent education distinguished by the opportunity, in every course, to experience the power of concentrated teaching and learning, the beauty of an environment created to promote the ability to actively focus. Our report shows that we are dedicated to continually enhancing and sustaining this "culture of concentrated experiential education."

It has also become clear, as we move into our second decade of Experience One, that the model holds enormous promise for improving student success beyond our own institution. We believe that what we are doing could work for others. We receive frequent requests to help others explore Experience One, but currently must tell them that we implemented this model with fairly thin staffing, and with the lowest tuition and lowest state allocation per student in Montana, that the transformation is not a simple process, and that, as much we would like to assist and mentor others, we do not currently have the capacity to devote the resources necessary to do so effectively.

To address these calls for assistance, we are actively seeking the resources to support the creation of an Experience One Institute. The Mission would be to create opportunities for faculty and staff to research why Experience One works, to create opportunities for higher education colleagues to explore the potential of the model to increase student success at their colleges and universities, to continually improve upon what we are currently doing, and to sustain the University of Montana Western's focus on fulfilling the promise of Experience One.